

BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY: Donald D.H. Ching

Donald D.H. Ching was born in Honolulu January 13, 1926. He was educated at Farrington High School, the University of Hawai'i and George Washington Law School, where he received his degree in 1953.

Ching began practicing law in 1954. He left private practice in 1963 when he became vice president of the Bank of Hawai'i.

Ching was elected as a Democrat to the territorial house of representatives in 1959. He served in the state house from 1959 to 1966, and in the state senate from 1967 to 1978. Governor George Ariyoshi then appointed him to the State Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs as the deputy director, a position he held for four years.

Donald Ching died in 1993.

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ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

Donald D. H. Ching (DC)

April 19, 1988

Honolulu, O'ahu

BY: Chris Conybeare (CC) and Daniel W. Tuttle, Jr. (DT)

Joy Chong: The following is an interview with Donald Ching. It took place on April 19, 1988 at KHET studios. The interviewers are Chris Conybeare and Dan Tuttle.

CC: Why don't we start. It's April 19, [1988] and this is one in the series of our oral history interviews on Hawai'i politics with Mr. Donald Ching.

And we'll start the way we have with everyone. If you could give us briefly a little bit about your early background. Where and when were you born, and what were your parents involved in at that time?

DC: Well, I was born in Honolulu, January 13, 1926. Makes me sixty-two years old today. I hardly knew my father [Dai Sun Ching]. He died when I was at a very early age. And my mother [Sun (Hoo) Ching] and my older siblings sort of brought me up. I was the youngest of four children. I remember the height of the [Great] Depression, and the aftermath of it, and things were pretty tough.

DT: Did your mother---your mother had to. . . . What kind of work did she do to survive?

DC: She did a little work in a cannery to pull everybody together, but by that time my siblings were old enough, so they all took on part-time jobs while they continued their education. In fact, my older sister never finished high school. She went out to work to, you know, sort of support the family. I was the youngest in the family, so it made it a little easier for me. I could go right on to college, whereas both my---there are two sisters, a brother, and then myself---my two older siblings who went on to college had to delay their education while they helped to support the family. I had it easy. I went right on to college.

The war [World War II] came along before I could finish high school, even, and I got into the service, and because I was able to get into the service and because of the G.I. bill, I was able to plan for professional school. Otherwise, [I would] either have been a schoolteacher, or go into agriculture, you know. Those were the choices.

DT: Let's backtrack a little bit. What part of Honolulu did you grow up in?

DC: Pālama.

DT: Pālama, uh huh.

DC: My mother still lives in the family house. She's ninety-four years old right now. She's by herself, although we have a lady staying in with her. She's able to care for herself, thank god. It's been a long life.

DT: You went to what grammar school?

DC: Ka'iulani, which was across the street from my home. And then Kalākaua Intermediate School, Farrington High School. Then I started at UH [University of Hawai'i] till the army caught up with me. My draft was delayed for approximately a year because while I was a senior in high school they formed the 442nd Regimental Combat Team. So they filled up the draft quota for the state [territory] of Hawai'i. For about six months they didn't draft at all, and then they started drafting and they caught all the guys who had been left behind—the twenty-year-olds, the nineteen-year-olds. And then shortly after I became eighteen, they got me. They reached me. So I got into the service, spent two years in the service, got out, finished university, and then went on to law school [George Washington University Law School].

DT: Did you have any interest in politics back in high school or anything like that, or. . .

DC: Not prior to coming back from law school. When we got back from law school, we came back just at a time of the Democratic revolution, the '54, '56 elections. And we were young, we were starving, we had nothing else to do, so we jumped on the bandwagon. And it was exciting in those days, you know. It was exciting. There was a lot of room, there was a lot of activity, and there was a lot to do. So I got involved in the '54 campaign, '54 and '56 campaigns. I worked in Masato Doi's campaign [for territorial House of Representatives], even though he was not in the district, but I knew him professionally. We had a lot of friends in common, worked on his campaign, liked what he said and did. He was one of those that got elected in 1954, part of the Democratic tide. He goes back to Dan [Daniel K.] Inouye, George Ariyoshi's days. And . . .

DT: Was there ever any question in your mind about being a Democrat or a Republican?

DC: My mother and father were both Republicans. Those days, the generation of Chinese who were active in the community sort of went with where the power was. I don't know. Maybe because of the economics or whatever it was then. And most of my relatives and a lot of the neighbors who. . . I lived, at that time, believe it or not, it was a predominantly Chinese neighborhood. All of my neighbors were, practically, Chinese. At that time, back in the '30s. Since, moved on to bigger and better things. But, you know, everybody that I grew up with were Republicans. But then I (chuckles) went away to school, and everybody around me became Democratic, so I—no, it was the thing to do at that time. And I think we realized the battle that we were in for. The kind of problem that we were faced with, the social problems of the state, territory at that time. So we jumped on the bandwagon, and I worked in the '55 and '57 session of the legislature lobbying for the then [Honolulu] Board of Supervisors [predecessor to the Honolulu City Council]. Along with the legislature, the board was taken over by Democratic majority for the first time. My first employer in the lobbying position was a high school teacher of mine, Mitsuyuki ["Mits"] Kido, and it's really too bad you can't record his statement because he has a very interesting story to tell. He was my teacher as a sophomore at Farrington [High School], and he said some of the things that sort of made me

wonder about society in the territory of Hawai'i at that time.

DT: In effect, you were more or less recruited into the Democratic party by Mits Kido then . . .

DC: Partly. I think Bob Chang and I both talk about the days we were students of Mits Kido. Bob was a student of his at Kalākaua Intermediate School, but came under his influence, so. [Kido taught at Kalākaua, 1928–36; at Farrington, 1936–44.]

DT: This was Robert Won Bae [Chang]?

DC: Won Bae. The retired [circuit court] judge.

DT: Uh huh.

DC: The retired judge. You know, he was my colleague in the house [of representatives].

DT: That's what I thought you mentioned. Mm hmm.

CC: You know, in many ways, Mits is sort of an unsung— . . .

DC: That's right.

CC: . . . he just gets overshadowed by Jack [John A.] Burns a lot when people talk about those days in the party. Do you remember any other people on whom he was influential in terms of getting into the party?

DC: Mits? Oh, let's see now. Yeah, there were others that. . . . See, he was very close to [former state senator] Sakae Takahashi, and [state chief justice] Herman Lum. They were all sort of in the same group. And he was very close to Jack Burns. He and Jack were very active together during the war [World War II, in the Emergency Service Committee] and after the war. And they were, you know, the beginning of the Democratic party the way we know it now. At one time, you could count them on your two hands, they were so few and far between.

DT: There's been some feeling that maybe Mits Kido recruited Jack Burns into the Democratic party rather . . .

DC: That's very possible.

DT: . . . than vice versa, which some people say.

DC: That's very possible. I don't go that far back. When I got on board, Mits was already—had already served one term in the territorial house [actually he had been in the house from 1947–53], and for some reason he decided to run for the board of supervisors. He remembered me from high school, and when they took over the board of supervisors, they didn't know how to pass out jobs as far as patronage was concerned. And James Shigemura and I were hired, and Jimmy served in the '58 session of the legislature with me. And he was a senior attorney. (Chuckles) I remember the good old days. And that was the year that the Democratic majority on the board of supervisors had a feud with the house of representatives. The two Kauhanes were at it, Noble Kauhane on the board, and Charlie [Charles E.] Kauhane in the [house] over Waikī property. Noble wanted it to be rezoned and---I'm sorry, Charlie

wanted it rezoned. He had an interest in it. And Noble refused to give it to him. And Jimmy and I had to go and lobby in the legislature, you know, and Charlie taught me my first lessons on how not to do things.

DT: (Chuckles) You were in—you were working for the legislature then, in [the] '55 session when the young Democrats had so much—many problems with Charlie.

DC: Right.

DT: You recall . . .

DC: Charlie was . . .

DT: . . . any of those stories?

DC: Charlie was the speaker. Yeah, I recall how the last night of the session he actually took the clock off the wall, took it to his car and locked it in the trunk of his car, you know. And how he used to pilfer bills. You know, in those days, you had to have the original bill or otherwise you couldn't act on it. He used to take these bills home. That's how he ran the house. And then they stopped the clock for something like twenty-nine, thirty days [twenty-eight days], and they just refused to do anything. Nobody met, and they really got a black eye. You know, the public reacted to it. But they just revolted against Charlie. Finally, he didn't come back as speaker the following year. That's the session [1957] that Vince [O. Vincent] Esposito took over as speaker of the house, you know.

DT: Later, he [Kauhane] became a Republican, I believe.

DC: Well, he went back and forth, I think.

(Chuckles)

DC: He's very, very versatile.

DT: Now what was your actual position in '55 session?

DC: We were counsel to the legislative committee of the board of supervisors.

DT: Oh, uh huh.

DC: That's a fancy term for lobbyists for the City (chuckles) and County of Honolulu.

DT: Right.

DC: We were actually lobbyists for the board. The administration did their own lobbying.

DT: So you're really lobbying before the legislature, rather than being employed by them.

DC: Oh yeah, yeah. I'm sorry. I was never employed by the legislature.

DT: Before you, until you became a legislator yourself.

DC: Right. Funny thing about it was that the five house attorneys at that time were names you'd—in the '55 session, there were names that I think all very familiar to you. If I can recall them, Herman Lum was chief attorney. I think he had George Holt, the deputy ombudsman who's now passed away, Hiram Kamaka, and Ed [Edwin H.] Honda, were the house attorneys at that time. I even remember the salary they made. We used to tease them about it. I think they got \$1,000 for the whole session, which came out to about ten cents an hour.

(Laughter)

DT: They weren't exactly overpaid in those days.

DC: No.

DT: Of course, neither were the legislators.

DC: Right, right. That's the tenor of the things. The legislator said, "You're not going to get a higher salary than I was." The legislators were only getting \$1,000 per session those days, in the '55 session.

DT: Well, you couldn't exactly make a living out of it.

CC: What made you decide to try to be a legislator? How'd that happen?

DC: Well, in 1955 or '56 [1955], some citizen [John F. Dyer] decided that he was going to call on the one section of the Organic Act which called for periodical reapportionment of the territorial legislature, and it had never been, you know, looked at or enforced since 1898, and he brought a court suit before Judge [Jon] Wiig, I think it was, [actually, it was J. Frank McLaughlin] to reapportion the legislature. Nobody thought very seriously about it, and lo and behold he prevailed, so the judge ordered an election, you know, a reapportionment. And I think, if I'm not mistaken, he just took the terms of the proposed state constitution and imposed it upon the legislature. He said, "Hey, this is the way you guys want it, we'll put it into effect early." And that was the reapportionment plan that went. Otherwise, you know, you would still [have] been arguing about it. So . . .

DT: That applied to the last territorial legislature?

DC: Right. [Beginning with] the 1958 session. And that's when a lot of us who had any inkling about getting into politics decided this was our chance, because the size of the legislature was just about doubled, and the districts became much smaller. The senate, prior to that, [had one district representing the entire] island of O'ahu. The senate district. They cut the senate district in half, and the house districts became much, much smaller. And even those days it was still rather large and cumbersome. I think we had about ten [six] house districts on O'ahu, the first go-around, until it was further reapportioned. [In the reapportionment effective with the 1958 session, the senate increased its number of districts from four to six, and its membership from fifteen to twenty-five; the house went from six districts to eighteen, increasing its membership from thirty to fifty-one.]

DT: But you didn't run the first time around with the new districts, did you?

DC: I did.

DT: Oh, you were in the territorial legislature?

DC: Yeah.

DT: So you . . .

DC: My first . . .

DT: . . . served in the '59 [territorial] session?

DC: Yeah.

DT: That was your first.

DC: Right.

DT: Mm hmm.

DC: I---yeah, I did serve in that session. That was when Bob [Robert Won Bae] Chang was my colleague.

DT: Right, right, okay.

DC: And I ran from that Pālama district where I was born and raised. And later on I moved to Pearl City, and my subsequent races were all from the Pearl City home.

DT: Well, then you were immediately presented with a massive problem, weren't you, in terms of party factionalism. You had a coalition legislature, which was sort of an eruption between so-called [John] Burns faction and the [Tom] Gill-[O. Vincent] Esposito faction, wasn't it?

DC: Right, right.

DT: Recall anything about that?

DC: (Chuckles) Yeah. That was a hard way of getting started in politics. The Gill-Esposito faction really had a majority of the Democrats, but they didn't have a majority of the house of representatives, and no one thought that anyone would pull off a coalition, and lo and behold we organized, except we didn't have the twenty-six votes necessary to put the organization into, you know, full play. On opening day, much to our embarrassment, the coalition voted us all—the tentative plan right out the window. And some of us who even had office space had to move out of their office space. It's something that most of us will not forget very easily. But we buried the hatchet and Elmer Cravalho became speaker of the house. He was rammed down the throats of many of us, but we learned to get along. And . . .

DT: In other words, at that time you were sort of aligned with the Gill-Esposito faction?

DC: Well, I was, definitely. Yeah, yeah.

DT: And so, out of that Gill sort of survived, didn't he? Because Elmer kept him on, but Esposito never really recovered politically, did he?

DC: No. Tom was the floor leader of the house. It was a move to sort of, you know, patch things up. And he was a very active floor leader, too. He really played the role of majority leader, because a majority leader didn't really do what he should have done as far as the position was concerned. Tom acted more like the majority leader, as well as being the floor leader.

DT: What was really at stake there? Was it mainly personality disputes, or was there some . . .

DC: Primarily. Now we think back about it, philosophically we weren't that far apart. And there was a bugaboo about who was going to run the Democratic majority. And they were afraid that if Elmer had his way, the union would dominate. Not necessarily the union—a union, the ILWU [International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union]. Because they had a controlling vote—a control over most of the neighbor island Democrats. There was no question about it, you know. You had to be beholden to the union to get elected those days. I don't think it's necessarily so anymore. They play a role, but a less important role in the election of the neighbor island legislators.

DT: Yeah, this is still sort of a hangover from the days when the ILWU was openly trying to take over the party in the late '40s . . .

DC: Right.

DT: . . . and early '50s, wasn't it?

DC: That was a little before my time, but from what everybody tells me, that's exactly it, Dan.

DT: This had its effect on statehood, this coalition battle, didn't it? The statehood election came rather rapidly because statehood came shortly after you'd resolved the coalition situation.

DC: Yeah, that's true. We got organized. Right after opening day, you know, we got organized pretty well, which set us back maybe four or five days. But we were off and running, and long about in March, I think [March 12, 1959], the statehood bill passed Congress, and it called for the special elections to be held in August. So here we were, a bunch of lame ducks, and most of us had just been elected for the first time. So naturally everybody's mind was not on legislation, they were on, you know, hey, let's adjourn, go home, and start campaigning. Most of the fellows came back. There were a few that were lost along the way, but most of the people that were elected in '58, served in the '59 session, went on [and were re-elected in the special statehood election].

A few of them opted to go for the new elected positions: governor, lieutenant governor, and the three congressional positions [two U.S. Senate and one U.S. House]. A notable Sparky [Spark M.] Matsunaga tried out for lieutenant governor. A lot of people don't remember this, he didn't make it as lieutenant governor. Dan [Inouye] opted for the—he was going to move to the [U.S.] Senate seat but he backed off for Oren E. Long. [Inouye] ran for the [U.S.] House instead, the congress. Let's see. Who else did we lose, now, in that first session? I guess, those were the legislators.

DT: Well, you lost Patsy Mink, I guess, because she tried for the U.S. House. Dan defeated her.

DC: That's right. That's right. She did leave the [state] senate to run [for the U.S. House]. But she did come back after that, yeah.

DT: Okay. We'll pick this up in just a few moments after we've changed tapes.

(Taping stops, then resumes.)

JC: This is tape two of the Donald Ching interview.

DT: All righty. Statehood came rather rapidly, and with it came a mid-year election. That forced you into, really, two campaigns in the space of less than a year.

DC: Right.

DT: How did you survive that or what do you recall about that early period?

DC: Well, I took that opportunity. The funny thing about it was, with the advent of statehood, we had our second reapportionment. It was a small one, but it was a readjustment of what was an original proposed state plan which was already outdated. Well, this was done in 1950, and this was already in '59. And lo and behold, one of my seats were—one of the three seats that I filled, in the Pālama district, was reapportioned because we had lost some residents out there. Fortunately, I had a residence to move to in interim, so with the support of my two incumbent colleagues, Robert [Won Bae] Chang and Sakae Amano, who urged me not to make a primary battle of it, I moved into Pearl City. And there was one incumbent at that time. George Okano was the incumbent person from Pearl City, but the Leeward district was growing tremendously, so instead of two seats, they had four seats. They were the recipient of one from Maui and one seat from my former district. So it was poetic justice, in a way. [The 1959 reapportionment did not affect total numbers. O'ahu gained three house seats, while Maui, Kaua'i/Ni'ihau and the Big Island each lost one house seat.]

I ran the first time, and that was when I first met Larry Kuriyama, you know, who—there's a sad story about him. And he missed the '58 election, but he had always wanted to run. And actually, he was a few years older than I was, and had been practicing law, and he got in on the '59 statehood election and served right up to the time of his demise [in 1970]. It was a real hectic election, and here's when the ILWU came into play. When you run from an urban district, they don't bother you at all, but when you run from the—those days, the representative district encompassed the communities of 'Ewa, Waipahu, 'Aiea, which were very strong union precincts. And they played a big role in the elections. They endorsed candidates, and it meant quite a bit. Larry and I, unfortunately, were never their fair-haired boys, so we always had a rough go of it as far as the union endorsement was concerned. They didn't like the way we reacted to their overtures. And that was a history of our—you know, our political lives in the district. However, with the passage of time, from the '59 election up until the last election that I ran in, which was in '78, the union influence was on a decline. Became more and more urbanized, and in fact, the agricultural interest, you know, had a lot to say about—one section of the district, anyway. But the fourth senatorial district, which was my last political district, encompassed about one-fourth of the island of O'ahu. It went from 'Aiea, all the way out to Pearl City, Waipahu, all of 'Ewa, the Wai'anae Coast, over the Wai'anae Range, out into Kahuku. Went right around the coastline, all the way to Kahuku.

DT: Well, this involved a—when did you switch from the house to the senate?

DC: Eight years in the house.

DT: Eight years in the house, so that would have been the '66. . . .

DC: So, the '66 election I jumped over to the senate.

DT: Sixty-six.

DC: And that was because of another reapportionment. That is when the neighbor islands lost their majority vote in the senate. And they were cut down to six votes with that reapportionment. [In the 1966 reapportionment, the neighbor islands lost nine senate seats to O'ahu.] That '66 reapportionment was brought about by. . . . I was going to say the constitutional convention, but that's not true, either.

DT: I think it was a one-man, one-vote, Supreme Court decision [Reynolds v. Sims, and Wesberry v. Saunders, both 1964].

DC: No, not yet.

DT: Not yet?

DC: Not yet. Later on down the road, they had that one-man, one-vote. I think what they did was, they reapportioned because they were going to go into the con-con, and they were afraid that the con-con would have done it. And they had a special—I don't recall exactly what the mechanics were, but there was a further reapportionment, and that's when the neighbor islands lost most of their senatorial seats. And the true reapportionment, numerically, came about.

DT: So you made the switch [to the senate], and Larry Kuriyama, he'd run as a house member with you first. You switched with him about the same time?

DC: Yes. Larry Kuriyama, John Lanham, and I think it was Philip Minn, we all switched at the same time. No, I'm sorry. That was the year Nadao [Yoshinaga] moved over.

DT: Moved over, mm hmm.

DC: Nadao Yoshinaga moved from Maui. They [neighbor islands] lost their seats, he moved to Waipahu, and he became the fourth member of our group. Lanham came from Wahiawā, the house district in Wahiawā, and Larry and I represented the 'Aiea-Pearl City district.

DT: This was in the [senate]?

DC: Right. And we became the four senators with Senator Yoshinaga.

DT: Yoshinaga, mm hmm.

DC: He was a senator from Maui, but he moved over with the reapportionment in the '66 election. And there about came another battle [in 1967]. This time the battle was in the senate, and then practically the same type of organizational battle. That was the Yoshinaga-[Nelson] Doi battle. And I was involved right in the middle of that one, too.

DT: You pretty much had to go along with Yoshinaga . . .

DC: No.

DT: . . . because of your district or you . . .

DC: We didn't. We didn't.

DT: So you went along with Nelson Doi even though your district was heavily influenced by the ILWU?

DC: That's where we really caught a lot of flack. Senator [John] Lanham went with Yoshinaga, and Larry and I opted not to go with him. And the Doi faction was Sakae Takahashi, Walter Heen, Duke Kawasaki, Vince [Vincent] Yano; and Senator Yoshinaga had Lanham, and the neighbor island senators. And there was one senator all by himself, he never aligned himself with either faction. He later on became the governor of the state.

DT: Yeah, well, this was, (chuckles) this was [George] Ariyoshi then.

DC: Right, right. In fact, after we organized, he became the [senate] majority leader, the thinking being that he was the only one that could talk to both sides. That rift was very deep. And it went two weeks into the session. For two weeks, all we did was—we went into session, convened the session, each side would put up its candidate for [senate] president and neither side would have a majority, moved to adjourn, and went home until the next day. We did it for two weeks.

DT: Let's see. Who was the candidate [for senate president] of the Yoshinaga group?

DC: See now, I know the Doi faction put Nelson . . .

DT: Nelson up.

DC: . . . up himself. I'm not sure who the Yoshinaga group put up. I think that they might have put him [Yoshinaga] up, you know.

DT: I'm just trying to recall myself. I couldn't remember whether it was Yoshinaga or . . .

DC: Anyway, we compromised with John Hulten. [The Yoshinaga faction nominated John Lanham, John Hulten, and George Ariyoshi. On the eighth day of the session, Hulten was elected senate president. He served two sessions: 1967–68.]

DT: So Hulten served a while, and then later, Nelson Doi became senate president?

DC: No, Nelson Doi had [already] served for two years before [1963–64].

DT: Served before. Oh, I see. And so he got bounced in the process of ironing out this difficulty, all right.

DC: Right.

- CC: And you say, this is what brought George Ariyoshi to the [senate] majority leader's job.
- DC: Yeah. He was sort of the compromise candidate, and both sides felt that since he hadn't taken part and none of the blood had come from him, you know, he would be able to work with both factions. And it was true to a certain extent.
- DT: This strategy on the part of Ariyoshi at this earlier stage of his career was sort of symptomatic of the Burns strategy. Hadn't [John] Burns always been, many times when there were vigorous personality disputes, he would stay neutral and then come in, sort of as a person to heal the wounds?
- DC: Well, not after he became governor, I think.
- DT: But I mean in . . .
- DC: Prior to that.
- DT: . . . his prior to becoming governor.
- DC: Right. But that was before my time, Dan. I wasn't around at that time. That's what I understand. But if you know George Ariyoshi, that was the role he always played as a legislator.
- DT: Well, not always. On the substantive issue like the Maryland Land Bill [giving persons living on leasehold land the right to buy the land], he did take a stand, that's for sure.
- DC: Well, yeah. Only when it came time to vote on it, he had to . . .
- DT: Right.
- DC: . . . but he was not a leader, one way or the other.
- DT: That's true.
- DC: He was not a proponent.
- DT: That's true.
- DC: For or against. But he voted.
- DT: He ended up casting out that deciding vote [defeating the bill, thirteen votes to twelve] which plagued him, I guess, throughout his career.
- DC: Right.
- CC: At the same time, you folks were kind of battling in the senate. Mr. [Tom] Gill and Governor [John] Burns were not exactly getting along as governor and lieutenant governor very well, were they?
- DC: Right. That was part of the overall scene, too. And at that time, the people in our faction

were closer to Tom than they were to Jack. And in fact, the organizational battle in the senate led to the split between Senator Kuriyama and Governor Burns who were very close. From the time the governor first ran for governor, Larry had been always close to him. But the governor did try to talk to some of us privately. He wasn't successful and that really turned Larry off. Of course, neither of them are here now, so it's kind of a sad thing to relate, but I was there at the meeting and that was the [end] of what was a real close, political and personal friendship. And in fact, the night that Larry got killed [October 23, 1970], he was telling me that this was going to be his last campaign, his last term. We were running unopposed that year. It was kind of ironic. This was the 1970 election. Four of us were running unopposed: Yoshinaga, Lanham, Kuriyama and myself. And we decided to go out and help the ticket. And we had a big rally up in [Pacific] Palisades, where I live, and the four senators were there trying to move the crowd. And on his way home, Larry got killed.

DT: Now that assassination, I guess, remains one of the big unsolved murders in the history, isn't it, of Hawai'i?

DC: Well, it's unsolved as far as the courts are concerned, but the police are pretty much satisfied that they did get the actual trigger man, and they think they know what the motives were. The person [Alfred "Freddy" Ruiz] who was tried for hiring the killer was not convicted. But I think everybody was satisfied that they had the right person. There were some evidence that they just couldn't come up with.

DT: You mean he was incarcerated on—based on another crime, or anything . . .

DC: No. He was never incarcerated. He died after the second trial, either of a heart disease or. . . . Anyway, he had complications and he died before they could—I don't know whether they would have retried him again.

DT: Yeah, that's about the only instance of an assassination, I guess, in . . .

DC: And it had nothing to do with politics, you know.

DT: Business or . . .

DC: Yeah. It was a business battle and, I mean, an emotional thing more than anything else. It had nothing to do with—the ironical thing about it was that the person accused of his murder was his close political supporter.

DT: Hmm. Well, even though you, most generally, most of the time, you did side with Tom Gill in his factional disputes with Burns; nevertheless, you seemed to have pretty good relations with Burns throughout his career as governor, didn't you?

DC: Well, not the first term. It was only after I became majority leader in the senate. And in the meantime, Tom had made his try for the Senate, the U.S. Senate seat. He failed, and he sort of faded out of the picture. Vince [O. Vincent] Esposito had already left the legislature and then, later on, passed away. During my tenure as majority leader, I got to work very closely with the governor, Governor Burns. And this was during the latter years of his second term. And that's when I got to be very close to him. And we worked very closely together during the last term, but what had happened in the past, you know, was sort of forgotten, and he never held it against me. If anything, I think his son, Jim [James S.], always remembered the

fact that I was close to Tom Gill, and had talked to me when Tom was running for lieutenant governor against Kenny [Kenneth F.] Brown [in 1966]. And I remember telling Jack Burns he couldn't elect Kenny Brown as lieutenant governor of the state. And he asked me why, and I said, "Well, you're not going to be able to sell him to the people." But he thought he could. The ironical thing about it, Ken turned around and became my colleague in the senate and was a very good colleague, too. And he knew that I didn't support him during the lieutenant governor's race, but he never held it against me, at least not knowingly.

DT: Well, Jack was more realistic about these feuds than some of his supporters. Among his supporters, I guess, once you were in the doghouse, you were always in the doghouse.

DC: Right.

DT: Whereas that was not necessarily the case with Burns, was it?

DC: Well, I think he would judge us on what we were doing, what we could do for him, you know, let bygones be bygones kind of attitude. He had to be, if he's the governor of the state. He couldn't hold the grudges; otherwise, he'd have seventy-six people to contend with. And it was never anything personal about him. The thing is, I think some of the things I told him during his first and second term, came back to haunt him because they were true, except that he didn't face up to some of these things, or maybe he was a little too idealistic.

DT: Yeah, well, a lot—actually Burns changed in many respects between the '59 election and the '62 election . . .

DC: That's true.

DT: . . . because he lost in '59.

DC: That's very true.

DT: And he came to accept the support of people who had not really been with him in '59. He made room for them, shall we say, in the party structure which helped in '62.

DC: That's absolutely true, you know. In the '59 election, his people wouldn't let us do anything for him. They thought they had it in the bag, and they didn't want to share the spoils with anybody else. And you know how wrong they were.

DT: Right.

DC: That's absolutely true, Dan. I don't think Jack, himself, had anything to do with it, but you know the [Dan] Aokis, and the Mike Tokunagas, they were the ones that carried this out, and said, "Hey, look. We don't need any more friends at this point. He can't lose this election."

DT: And they weren't about to oblige him if they had that kind of attitude either.

DC: Well, not only that, I personally had moved into a new district. I had to run for my life, you know. And in fact, most of us was getting started, either our first or second election. Larry [Kuriyama] was running for the first time, so he had no room to help anybody else with. Plus

the guy [Burns] was really an incumbent. He was a delegate to Congress, just got us statehood. Who thought that he would lose to Bill [William F.] Quinn? That was a shocker. [Burns lost to Quinn by 4,139 votes in the 1959 gubernatorial election.]

DT: And shortly after, something else intervened in there, too, that may have enabled you to broaden your contacts, and that was the constitutional convention of '68. Didn't you serve in that?

DC: Yeah, I served in that. I played a very minor role in that convention because, hey, everybody who was anybody served in that convention, and the big guys really dominated that convention. And there was a public reaction to it that led to people being ostracized in the '78 convention, elected officials. Only a few crazy fools like me decided to run in '78, but I really felt that the *Star-Bulletin* in its editorial policy did everybody a disservice by scaring everybody off. I think there were only five or six incumbent office holders serving in the '78 convention, and there weren't enough to go around, really. I mean, even as to the logistics and the parliamentary procedures, it was a brand-new thing for everybody. And it was like conducting a political science 101 class. And it was really hectic in that '78 convention; whereas in '68, we got right down to the nitty-gritty. And we had some good people there. I think it was a good split. I think it was 45-55, the split between elected officials and non-elected officials. And the non-politicians really got their licks in. There were some strong-minded people in there.

DT: Well, let's pick this up. I'd like to ask you about the New Hawai'i Program, and then we'll come on down to the '78 con-con. (Chuckles)

(Taping stops, then resumes.)

JC: The following is videotape number three of the Donald Ching interview.

DT: . . . we were chatting informally here when we were off camera about *Hawai'i Pono*. Because you contributed to it, we'll try to pick that up a little bit later, but let's get back to your legislative career where we were in the earlier tape, and you'd been talking about the con-con of '68. Get back to roughly the same period and maybe just a little bit before that, there was another program of substance known as the New Hawai'i Program which had been proposed by Elmer Cravalho.

DC: Right.

DT: This was something which sort of united all Democrats, putting the frosting on the cake after the '62 election. Is that not correct?

DC: That's right.

DT: Do you have recollections of that period?

DC: Yes. And I think if Elmer is to be remembered, he must be acknowledged as the architect of the plan. He had the out-and-out support of Jack Burns. And Elmer ran a very tight house. I still remember very vividly when the then president of the senate [John Hulten], who was also a Democrat, came over to Elmer to get a bill out of one of the senate committees. That's how all-pervasive Elmer's power was. And most of us, even though we had had our battles

previously with Elmer, supported him in this New Hawai'i Program because it was a step in the new direction, in the right direction as far as the state of Hawai'i was concerned. And I think that you can't give him too much credit for having thought of this program and then put it into being, really.

DT: Guess this was my recollection and I'd be interested in your reaction that whereas Burns got a lot [of] credit for the New Hawai'i Program, the person who put it together, because the governor really hadn't done anything, was actually Elmer. Is that not correct?

DC: Right. Absolutely. I give him a lot of credit for it. What the one thing lacking was, I think, after the program—well, the program was never really finished. There were always various segments of it, but somewhere along the line, maybe if Elmer had consented to becoming the lieutenant governor when Bill [William] Richardson was appointed chief justice [1966], that might have led to the implementation. Because if he had been lieutenant governor—he could have had it on an appointment basis, and then later on run on his own, and he would have been elected along with Jack Burns during his third term, but he decided not to. Maybe he could have gone out and implemented some of these ideas that he had put on the law books. You know, it's a far cry from getting statutes and implementing it. I think there was some failings along those lines as far as implementation was concerned.

DT: Nevertheless, it was considered quite a high accomplishment on the part of the house of representatives, particularly.

DC: Oh, no question about it.

DT: We also mentioned, I think in earlier discussions that not only did you serve in the constitutional convention of '68, but also in the '78 one. Now, this was a different proposition. I think you had probably filed to run for the con-con before all the furor arose about the legislators having dominated the '68 convention.

DC: No, the furor was there from the time that . . .

DT: You stepped into it knowingly, then?

DC: Yeah.

DT: Okay.

DC: Actually, it was going to be my swan song. I was going to run for the con-con and not run for reelection, you know. I felt that I had served twenty years, and I thought that was enough time in the legislature, I'd done as much as I could. Some people say I'd done my bit, and I'd done enough damage. But it was my plan to just run in the con-con [regardless] of the consequences and call it a career. I had no ambitions for further service or for higher office. And I talked to my friends and my employers and I told them what my plan was. They said, well, that's fine and dandy, you go and run and get elected to the con-con, but we'd like for you to stay in the senate for another term. So, like a fool, I tried to do both, and I was not successful. It was a hectic session. We were under the magnifying glass. It was a case of being darned if you did and darned if you didn't.

DT: You're talking about the con-con, now?

DC: Of '78.

CC: What were the kind of factions in terms of that con-con if you could sort of draw a picture of the—I know it was more than two camps, but there's—you got involved with, I believe, with Mr. Paty [William W. Paty, Jr.] and that group, right, in terms of your organizing?

DC: Yeah. What had happened was—the people that represented the establishment, you know, and I guess I was foremost among them. One, because I was an incumbent legislator who was going to run for reelection and because I was working for a large bank [Bank of Hawai'i], everybody epitomized me as being, you know, the establishment. There were others who were outside the establishment, the have-nots, if you will, wanted to come in and just tear the establishment apart. That was their goal. And I was in there to try to preserve whatever we had, and if I had my druthers, we would have done five or six housekeeping things and gone home and left it [the constitution] alone. My attitude was, if it ain't broke, don't fix it. And I'd always run on that, I promised nothing to anybody when I campaigned before. I mean, I promised no changes, whatsoever. I said, "Hey, look. There are a few things we gotta do in there." I don't even remember what they were. They were so insignificant. But I always maintained that I was not for drastic overhaul of the constitution.

There were others that wanted the change in the selection of judiciary as far as—I mean, they were going to the extreme of electing the judiciary. They talked about a unicameral legislature. They talked about electing statewide officers like the attorney general. Most of us were not for that.

I had made up my mind that I was going to run, and for the first time in my life, I was going to serve in the minority. I was going to be—if there is such a position, the minority leader in the constitutional convention. That was my goal. And I also had another plan in mind that with this bunch of neophytes running a convention, I'd throw a monkey wrench into the whole operations and just hold it up because we had a deadline. You know, we had to adjourn by September the 20th for the lieutenant governor to be able to put it together on a ballot and get it on the ballot for the general election. And my plan was, whatever they came out with, which I thought would be, you know, bad for the state of Hawai'i, they weren't going to see the light of day. That was my plan.

Lo and behold, the day after the [con-con] election—the election was on a Saturday—Sunday morning, few of us exchanged some telephone calls, exchanged notes, and all of a sudden, we realized we had a workable margin. We could get people together to form a majority. And that's not an easy majority to work with, you know, I mean, from a guy who served in the senate where all I had to do was count up to thirteen votes, I had to count up to fifty-two votes. But we thought we had the makings of a majority. But working on a majority such as that, you have to make concessions to a lot of people that were on the fringes. And we came up with about sixty people in our bloc, but that took a lot of doing. And it's not easy for a person like me who is—I am not an organizer, you know. I like to do my thing behind the scenes, work with people, but I'm not an organizer, and it took some outside forces. And we came up with the majority of about sixty people. And we had to satisfy those sixty people, you know. And every one of them had only one pet idea, so we had to take care of sixty pet ideas.

DT: So, that's how we got into such things as OHA [Office of Hawaiian Affairs], for example?

DC: Right. That's right.

DT: Which seemed to be a little bit, well, certainly breaking new ground. Put it this way, it sort of created a government inside of a government.

DC: That's right.

CC: The tax refund question, I think?

DC: The tax refund question, I tried to tell them that it wasn't going to work. And the people that pushed it and passed it, all come up to me and say, "Uncle Donald, you were right." You know the tax refund, they give you a dollar credit, and then it makes a mockery out of the whole thing. I told them it wasn't going to work.

DT: There was another kind of interesting group in there, they're sort of an environmental faction [which] was one of the real heavy factions, right?

DC: And most of them were in our group. We had to take care of their needs, too. And they got their licks in, you know. The water code came up as a result of that. Whatever had to do with the environment was the result of that influence of that group there.

DT: You know, it's kind of an interesting development, I thought, as an observer, and that was this young, sort of radical law school graduate by the name of John Waihee, ended up being friends with Bill Paty. Did you see that shaping up back then, or . . .

DC: Yeah. What had happened was that the organizers felt that they needed someone to stand up and take the brunt from what they felt would be a very militant media. And they felt that we needed somebody who was established, who could hold his own, who could speak, articulate, and not be cut down by someone who was a maverick, as far as their establishment was concerned. John, I think, had ideas, he wanted to become the president himself. But we talked him out of it, saying that, "Hey look." You know, "No one of us could stand up on this onslaught. You gotta put a *Haole* up front there." He could articulate and they would be a little easier on him. That's exactly the way we put it to John and the others in our group. And Bill, Bill was told this in no uncertain terms. He knew what he was getting into, but he had already served out a career, I don't know whether he had planned to go back to work for Castle & Cooke, but he felt that this was his pitch, and the thing is, once he got into it, he was so carried away by the group that he worked with, that at one time, they were talking about him. They were going to put him up to run for mayor. The Waihee group.

DT: The Waihee group.

CC: The Waihee relationship with Bill Paty really, sort of cemented in that con-con, right?

DC: Well, I think so. I mean, you know the funny thing about it, they talked Bill into heading up John's campaign, and I thought that was the icing on the cake. But, it was an odd group, you know. I mean, I never met John Waihee before, and all of a sudden, he and I were—he came in with his bloc of votes, I came in with my bloc of votes, and—well, it was not [only] myself—Bob [Robert] Taira was the other guy that served with me and he carried a lot of the load with me. But we actually represented the political establishment of the time. The rest of the guys had political careers in mind. Bob actually retired after that term. He didn't run for

office anymore. And then a few others that had come and gone like Akira Sakima. Akira was an old friend from the '58 election on, but he had retired already from public office. But he came back, he served in the convention with us. He was a rock, very steady, you know, solid as a rock kind of person. We could always count on him. And we had some others that were up-and-coming people. I counted today, you know, just by chance because we're going to have reunion very shortly. There's thirteen members of the legislature, present legislature [1988], that served in the [1978] con-con. And some of them were just wet behind the ears at that time. I don't dare say that to them now, they're the leaders of, you know, the majority leader [Tom Okamura], the vice-chairman of finance [Joseph Souki], my god, we got several senators that served in the convention with us.

DT: They probably learned a lot of strategy from you, in putting together your coalition, majority coalition there.

DC: No, I can't take the credit for any of that. It was an interesting group, though.

DT: Anything else in the con-con that you recall that you'd like to . . .

DC: Well, you know, I was asked two years ago whether I supported a convention in '88, you know, went on the '86 ballot. I said, no, I didn't. I didn't even support one in '78. It was foisted on us. You know, the people decided they wanted a convention. Then the next question the reporter asked, he said, "Well, if the people vote for the convention, will you run?"

I said, "Yes, I think I'd have to."

I honestly feel that the convention can do a lot to decide what's going to happen in the state of Hawai'i for the next ten years, at least, until we have another to undo what you did ten years prior. And you know, when you say that you want to get into a convention, you get 102 people together or even 76 together, if that's what they—they could stop at 76. They could stop at 50, for that matter. And knowing that it's a one-shot deal, people really get polarized, you know. They come in with that one idea, and all they want is that one or two pet ideas, and they'll do anything to get it passed. It's not like the usual legislative session when you know that if you don't succeed one year, you're going to come back with it, maybe in an amended form, or you put it on the books and you can amend it. This, you put on the books, you can't amend, unless you go through the constitutional amending process. And that's long and cumbersome. So you know, the makeup of the group, the group dynamics, is a little different from the legislative session. And that's what people can't realize. A lot of them come up with the idea [that] all this is is a big legislative session, you know. It isn't. It's really a different kind of being. And more so, you can't control the kind of people that are elected in it [a con-con]. You know, even in '68, 55 percent of the people were serving in their first elective office, and they stumble around, making the kind of mistakes that first-timers do. And the same thing happened now, I mean, we had maybe, oh, I would say, fifteen people that had held elective office of various kinds; school board members, county councilmen, all serving. And there were, I think, five or six people [who] had served in the legislature. That's all the experienced people you had. And it was hectic, you know, I mean, there was no . . .

CC: What was your biggest achievement, you think, out of all that?

- DC: Ah, okay. Let me tell you what my goal was. Governor [George] Ariyoshi was up for reelection in the '78 election. Whatever we did or didn't do, was going to be up for ratification. And my one goal was to make sure that we did enough to satisfy a very restless population who had not been satisfied with the status quo kind of thing. We had to pass some reforms in the way of, you know, the judicial appointive system. I was even willing to give them the elected attorney general. I thought that, that was a lesser of many evils. I was going to stand steadfast as far as the unicameral legislature was concerned. Initiative and referendum, no. But we couldn't say no to the popular views, initiative, referendum and elected attorney general, without giving them something. So we came up with a modified, and I think, a good system, as far as judicial selection was concerned. And we came up with some environmental things that would satisfy the—and you know, I think, with good reason for it. We all should be concerned with our environment. We came up with OHA because there was a big group in the—and it was, you know, not only the part-Hawaiians or Hawaiians that were in the convention, there were others who felt that the Hawaiians should have a stake in their government, and they felt that OHA was the way to do it. There were others that didn't feel that way about it, but like I point out, I say, you should have seen the proposal that came out of Frenchy DeSoto's committee [Adelaide "Frenchy" DeSoto, chair of Hawaiian Affairs] the first time around. And remember Frenchy was the chairperson of that committee. Maybe we should have left it the way it was, you know, but what if the people had ratified it the way we put it on the ballot? My god, we would have had the legislation that had been going on for the last twelve years, they're trying to implement OHA.
- DT: In other words, even though a number of things passed which you just, personally, weren't in favor of in '78, by the time we got to the question of a convention in '88, you didn't want to risk opening up Pandora's box again, even though '88 might have reversed some of those things that had happened in '78.
- DC: Dan, no one ever wants to take a chance when going into a convention because, first of all, you don't know what the people of the state of Hawai'i are going to elect in the way of delegates. You're going to have a group that you can't size up. Hey, look. By and large, you're going to have most of the incumbents come back to the legislature. You know what to expect. Not so in a convention.
- DT: That's putting it very well. We're going to have to pause now and change tapes.
- JC: This is tape number four of the Donald Ching interview and it's the last tape.
- DT: Okay, we did not have a con-con in '88, obviously, and so we are not going to face another one in all probability until '98. But for all of your extra heavy work, more than you'd bargained for in '78 to preserve that convention and end up in as reasonable position as you could get, that led up to a lot of frustration in another election later on in '78, right?
- DC: That's right. Yeah. You're talking about the election that I didn't get elected in . . .
- DT: Yes, you tasted defeat for the first time, I guess, in your political career, right?
- DC: Well, what had happened was that, I guess I had stepped on enough toes during the course of running for con-con, and during con-con itself. Plus, you know, by the time the constitutional convention adjourned, I had ten days before the primary election. In the meantime, I had four very able opponents out there campaigning for about four months before I even got out there.

But that's not what led to my defeat. I saw it coming, you know. And I think I had outlived my usefulness as far as the district was concerned. Frankly, I wasn't even planning to run for reelection, but the call of the wild, (chuckles) or whatever it was, made me run again. I should have just gone out a winner. But the con-con was not a very popular group, and having served in the con-con as an incumbent legislator did not stand me in good stead. For a person who had served in the con-con in elective office the first time, who was [then] running for office—and there were quite a few of them that got elected in that same election that I lost. I would say about six or eight of them ran, and John Waihee was one of them. They weren't tarnished with the same brush. I knew better, I didn't do it better. That was, you know, what was held against me. And I'm sure that there were some people that were muttering about the things that we did or didn't do in the con-con. Hey, in a convention like that, we came out with about forty proposals. You can't make everybody happy.

DT: It was a very cumbersome voting procedure, too, on the con-con proposals, was it not?

DC: Yes. There's no other way you can do it though, Dan. We've tried it. The year before, you could vote for the whole thing—not the year before, but the '68 convention. You know what happened, we raised the salaries of the legislators, something that I never thought would pass, it was a big pay raise. We lowered the voting age to eighteen. People didn't even realize what they were doing, in voting for that, that whole block of things. It was passed that way. So we decided to do it [in] a little better fashion in '78, and I think we did a better job of shredding out the issues.

CC: Well, you—your participation in con-con, you feel, probably led to your defeat for your own . . .

DC: Yes.

DT: But you did say that one of your goals was to sort of let the pressure off, some of the discontent out there, and maybe to see that George Ariyoshi was reelected, wasn't that a . . .

DC: Only because my—okay, prior to deciding to run for con-con, if I had the choice of coming back as a senator or serving in the convention, I'd rather serve in the convention. I thought it was important enough, especially when you realize that there was nobody else that was going to go in there among my contemporaries who was going to sacrifice his political career to run in the convention. You know, I was willing to make that—it wasn't a sacrifice, I was willing to make that choice, you know. I'd much rather serve in the convention because I thought a lot of damage could have been done in the convention, real damage, you know, to the state of Hawai'i; whereas, hey, how much damage can you do in the legislative term of office, you know. So, I thought that was the greater responsibility for me as an experienced legislator. And I think events proved me right, you know. Maybe it would have been so chaotic that nothing would have been passed. But I honestly felt that I was going to play a minority role, that I was going to be a spoiler. I don't know if I could have pulled it off or not, but I tell you, I'd been floor leader, I'd been majority leader long enough so that I think I could have fouled up the works long enough for the convention to run its time.

CC: But there had been that year a lot of, kind of rumblings out there about Ariyoshi, too. There seemed that he was ripe for a fall maybe, yeah?

DC: All kinds of rumblings, not only for Governor Ariyoshi, it was for the Democratic party, you

know. The Republicans could have made a—maybe not a dramatic change, but it could have made some inroads. All they had to do was win the governorship and few more seats in the legislature and they were well on their way. You know, I thought it was sort of a turning point. George got elected for his—well, that would have been his—'78 would have been his second term.

DT: No.

DC: Not his . . .

DT: Third term, I guess. No, Governor Burns was elected in '70, so it would be '74 was his [Ariyoshi's] first term, '78 was his second term.

DC: Second term.

DT: Mm hmm, right.

DC: Yeah, so.

DT: Well, at any rate, the defeat didn't disillusion you or greatly surprise you.

DC: No, no. The funny thing about it, I think, my wife and my kids were very relieved, and I can't complain about it. I'm not saying they did me in, you know, I did myself in. I have no regrets about it at all. I'm sorry that I even ran. I should have just called it quits and . . .

DT: Well, certainly since you've had so little time to campaign, and had a much larger role in the '78 con-con then you'd anticipated.

DC: Yeah, that's for sure. But I can't blame any one thing, though. I mean, it was a combination of factors.

DT: But that didn't really end your public service career, did it?

DC: No, I was asked by the governor if I wanted a job in his administration. I said yes, it would fit in real well with my plans . . .

END OF SIDE ONE

SIDE TWO

JC: . . . the continuation of the Donald Ching interview on tape number four, slight overlap.

DC: . . . if I wanted a job in his administration. I said yes, it would fit in real well with my plans. And unfortunately, he couldn't appoint me right away, but after a period of about eight or nine months, and it was a logistical thing more than anything else. Jack Suwa and I got appointed at the same time and Jack was serving in the house of representatives at that time. Jack had been elected along with me, back in 1958. He was one of the original group that came in with me. But he had never left the house. He had the longest continuous service in

the house up until that point. I'm sorry, Yoshito Takamine was there also. But we joined the administration at the same time, and I served four years with the [State] Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs as a deputy director there. That sort of rounded out my governmental service, and it made it very interesting. I'd always wanted to go work in administration. In fact, I was almost tempted when I got to be on good terms with Jack Burns to ask him if he wanted me to work on his staff, not in an administrative position, right on his staff. Then I thought about it, I said, no, life is too short. I don't want to spend those kinds of hours. (DT chuckles.) So I never did ask him for a job.

DT: You have anything, Chris?

CC: No, why don't we get some reactions to some of those.

DT: Yeah, I'd like to get some reactions. If you would sort of give a capsulized version. Although he seemed to be a very promising person for service in state government and you were a friend of his, I know, for a long time, what would you have to say about Tom Gill, in that respect?

DC: You know, I think it's kind of too bad that Tom never got elected to, you know—that he and Jack Burns clash came up. I think if Tom had bided his time, I think he would have succeeded Jack Burns as governor of the state. If he didn't take him on head on. I guess we'll never know, but I was always an admirer of his, you know. I thought the guy [Gill] was probably one of the most intelligent people I'd met and certainly the most honest. But he was also a very rigid person, you know, he wouldn't listen to pragmatic suggestions. He was not that type of person. And he would brush you off, if you ever talked compromise to him. I think therein lies his biggest fault. But I still have the greatest admiration for the guy. I'm sorry that he never became governor of the state. And I don't think he would have been as dangerous as some of the people down Merchant Street [the business community] felt he would be. You know, I mean, Jack Burns was a big question mark the first time he got elected, too.

DT: Oh, yes. And that's when he really went down and sort of signed the peace treaty with Merchant Street . . .

DC: Absolutely.

DT: . . . right after he was elected governor.

DC: I don't think Tom would have signed the peace treaty as such. But I think the result would have been the same.

DT: In other words, he would have been a—become a more practical politician once in office was your feeling.

DC: Yes, right.

DT: Well, what about Ariyoshi?

DC: George Ariyoshi was also a very honest person. He was not as decisive and as much of a leader as either Jack Burns or Tom Gill could have been. Everything was status quo with

him. He just didn't want to make waves or make new inroads, and I think that that's what it was. And yet, everybody was satisfied, you know, the people within the establishment felt comfortable the way it was because nobody was rocking the boat and no harm, no foul, you know. There were some in his administration got a little restless after a while, you know; but by and large, I think most of them were just interested in preserving what they had, their jobs or whatever it was, the influence. And they were willing to go along with it, the way it was. And that led to a lot of unrest as far as the legislature was concerned. And there were times when it exploded.

DT: And probably during his tenure, too, quite a goodly number of the legislators, people who had been in the legislature, decided to retire. Did they get discouraged, do you think, by this sort of attitude or . . .

DC: By, yeah. I think it was out—some of it was out of sheer frustration.

DT: Or do you think they got out [seeking a governmental post] for three years, and that sort of thing.

DC: Well, the system, being the way it is, a lot of them did have that in mind. And you can't blame us, you know, I mean this is the lesser. When I lost my last bid, I had two ways of doing it. I could serve three years in a state position, there were several I felt I could have taken, or work with the bank that I was with. I was fifty-three years old at that time with another twelve years before I could get a fairly decent retirement pension, you know. I opted for the three-year term.

CC: Well, you'd served twenty years, as you mention, in the legislature, and the legislative salaries certainly were not—you weren't overpaid, as such, as I recall.

DC: I was making \$12,000 when I . . .

DT: Well, when you finished, and much less than that when you started.

DC: Yes.

DT: And of course, that didn't give you really much of a base for a pension plan, even though it's raised a little bit more liberally for legislators in terms of service than it is for the average employee.

Alrighty, what about [John] Waihee? You've already alluded to him some, maybe you feel that you've covered him enough with your contacts with him in the constitutional convention of '78.

DC: Well, what, particularly, would you want me to react to, Dan?

DT: Just whatever's on the top of your mind. Is the jury still out on him as a present governor and a future governor?

DC: Oh, yeah. As far as his gubernatorial activities are concerned, I think we still have to reserve judgment. I mean, until he served one full term, you know, you won't really be able to say yes, no, maybe. I always knew that he was a natural leader, you know. I mean, it was

amazing what he did during [the] convention, when you realize that he had never served in elective office before. And yeah, he has that charisma, he was the one guy that could go out and talk and get along with the other 101 delegates. No one else could do it. Bill Paty couldn't do it, I couldn't do it. I was really the point of the spear, really, but John would come in and, you know, pat everybody on the shoulder and go out and drink beer with just about anybody. Whoever was caucusing, he could walk into their caucus. Bill, yeah, he got along pretty well, too, but John was really the exception, and he was one of the few people in the convention that got along with everybody. So we knew that he was going to be a—that he was a comer. I didn't realize so soon after the convention, you know, that's miraculous, what he went through. I had my doubts even, as far as when he announced for lieutenant governor even, that he would make it. In fact, I tried to talk him out of it.

DT: Oh really?

DC: I really did. But he said he had no place to go, okay. I've heard that one before, too. But he made it. He proved me wrong. I think that if he sticks to his principles, that he'll make a good governor, a great governor.

DT: Really, mm hmm.

DC: I really do. I'm a little concerned about the people that are around him, you know. He's had to satisfy people after he got elected. You know, it was a real makeshift kind of election. Money and support came from different people, different factions and all over the place, and if he decides that maybe after the second election when he says, "Okay, I'm going to do my own thing," maybe, he'll end up being a great governor.

DT: Mm hmm. So you see that potential. Alrighty, I don't have much more, unless you do, Chris?

CC: There's one other name we've asked everybody else about, and I just wondered, the reaction to Frank Fasi. What about Frank Fasi as just a fixture in politics. What's your reaction to his . . .

DC: Well, I didn't—I think Dan will remember this, but I was—one campaign, I headed up the Democrats for [D.G.] "Andy" Anderson when Andy ran against Frank. Some of you might not even remember that election. But I headed up that group. That's how much I think of Frank Fasi. And Frank was a Democrat at that time.

DT: Now that he's a Republican . . .

CC: Well, now he's a Republican . . .

(Chuckles)

DC: So now, it's a natural. I have never supported Frank, and I don't think I ever will. I actively campaigned against him in just about every election he's run in, when I was an office seeker myself. I worked on Eileen Anderson's campaign, I worked for Andy Anderson's, and whoever else ran against Frank. I just don't trust the guy.

DT: That puts it very succinctly, I guess.

CC: Yeah, that's . . .

DT: One thing I did mention earlier, maybe if we still have enough tape here going, we started to talk about *Hawai'i Pono*, the book by Lawrence Fuchs, and I think you had some observations. You've been one of those who had been interviewed by him and this was a volume which many people will recall had quite an ethnic bias to it, at least it was an ethnic story, and then it served very prominently in the campaign of 1962 which led to Jack Burns's first victory.

DC: Right. I played a very small role in it. I was mentioned a couple of times in there, but it's just that the way he set it up, you know, he sort of exaggerated what actually happened during his interview. I think he spent about an hour in my office when I was practicing law then, that time. He called and asked for an interview. I was kind of taken aback because he walked in with Bermuda shorts and zoris on. And I thought, I was wondering whether he was for real. He said he came from Brandeis University and was doing an issue paper on racial bloc voting. That was the way he presented himself. So, he came in and talked to me and I guess I told him what I thought about, you know, racial bloc voting here. And then later on, he turned around and says that, "Mr. Ching, do you mind if I put your thoughts in a book?" He said, "I've gathered so much information and I've decided to right a book about the social processes, the political processes in the state of Hawai'i."

I said, "Maybe you better let me take a look at the excerpts where you're going to quote me." He did, and I had no objections. So he came out with that. But what I didn't realize was so many other people had been interviewed by him.

DT: It later turned out that he didn't do a survey at all, but that he did a socio-economic, socio-political history, as he called it.

DC: Right.

DT: That's very interesting. Well, I don't have anything more, Chris?

CC: No, I think it's good.

DT: I think we'll say thank you very much for being with us.

DC: Well, my pleasure. I hope that this does some good. Really.

DT: Well, I think people will enjoy it in the future.

CC: Yeah, I think so.

JC: That's it for the Donald Ching interview.

END OF INTERVIEW

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