This is George Lewkowicz for the Don Dunstan Foundation’s Don Dunstan Oral History Project interviewing Ms Bronwen Dohnt. Bronwen was the first child and daughter of Don Dunstan and Gretel Dunstan. The date today is the 9th October 2009.

Bronwen, thanks very much for doing the interview for the Don Dunstan Foundation Oral History Project. Can you just talk a bit about yourself, your education, employment and some early recollections of family life in the Dunstan household?

Okay, George. Well, I guess I probably didn’t have what was a really normal childhood, although it seemed fairly normal to me at the time. I mean Dad was in Parliament from the time I was about two and a half – yes, not three – so my life was always full of politics right from very, very early on and I can’t remember anything really before that very much. And I guess obviously there was some involvement even then because he was going off to meetings and organising his preselection and that sort of thing. So that certainly I can remember, and people coming to the house.

We lived in George Street, Norwood, and we lived down the other end from where we ended up at 104, which is the house that everybody seems to remember, but we lived at 11A George Street, and I went to Norwood Primary School, which was our local school. And it was interesting that my parents decided that they were not going to send me to Norwood High, and the reason that that happened was that there was a dragon of a principal there, a guy called Ivan Coward I think, and he used to pick on kids quite a lot. And Dad had some constituents who’d actually been to see him about the fact that this principal was making people’s lives a misery, so he decided that it would not be a very good idea for us to go to that school because we might become victims ourselves. And my mother had been educated at Walford and Dad at St Peter’s Boys’, so in the end I was offered the choice of going to PGC1 or Walford and I don’t know why I chose Walford, I think it was just probably because my mother had been there. Maybe not a really good idea, actually, because she was

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1 PGC – Presbyterian Girls’ College.
very clever and I kept (laughs) getting told how clever she was and why wasn’t I as clever? And then I finished year twelve there and then went on to Adelaide Uni and I did an arts degree with a major in Politics and English, did honours English. And I kind of needed a job.

I was very involved in the student theatre at Adelaide Uni and I really kind of wanted to go and do something with that, but Dad always said, ‘Oh, no, that’s not really secure enough’, and, given his interest in the arts, it’s always rankled a bit that I didn’t get that chance. But anyway, I got to the end of my degree and thought, ‘Now what? What does one do with an honours English degree?’ So I went off to the Education Department and said, ‘Hire me’. And because I had an honours degree and because there was a bit of a teacher shortage at that stage, they said, ‘Come right this way’. So that was how I got into teaching, and I’ve been teaching ever since but did other things like curriculum writing and so on.

For the school?

No, actually; for the Education Department, in multicultural education as well as English and Language Arts, and I was a multicultural education adviser for about three years.

Then I went overseas on an exchange with the Education Department, then came back and taught at Elizabeth West High School for a year, and that was a pretty tough year; and then I was offered a job at Annesley College, where I stayed for about twenty-two years; and now I’m at Eynesbury Senior College, which is in the city. So that’s basically me.

Very good. Just the early period, I think when I was talking to you off the record a while ago you were talking about the house really being the electoral office.

Oh, yes.

There wasn’t an electoral office back in those days.

Oh, there was no such thing, no. So every election campaign was organised from the house. So I can remember there were pamphlets that would arrive in the house and
we’d have to spend nights folding them, and sometimes there’d be working bees of people folding these things. And there was always a big roster for people to do the sort of door-to-door stuff, and letterboxing as well, so I was involved in that. All the pamphlets had to then be given to people with an area and they’d go out and put them in people’s letterboxes; and the doorknocking was a huge thing as well. My mother just walked and walked and walked and walked doing that stuff, all round St Peters, Maylands. I got to know the backstreets of the electorate quite well.

On election day there would be a huge flurry of sandwich-making, and loaves and loaves and loaves of sandwiches would be made, and my mother would bake scones and jam and cream and stuff, and then we would get in the car with all these things packed up so that we could take them round to the polling booths for the people to have while they were handing out how-to-vote cards. And then it was always really sort of fun but scary on election night because all the results would be phoned in to the house and then they’d have what the results were from the previous time and, ‘Oh, no, that comes from that box, so that’s all right, we’ve lost that one, but – oh, that’s really good, that box, we’ve won that one, we didn’t win that one last time’. So that was always quite interesting. And a lot of campaign meetings and things like that were held at the house.

But also I think we had – well, it was sort of open slather. People used to ring up. We’d sit down to a meal and there’d be a knock on the door. And it might be a friend; usually it was a constituent with a problem. Sometimes it was a really bad problem like a wife had been bashed or somebody who just didn’t have anywhere to go to sleep or what have you, various things. I remember Dad was called out the night that Dawn Fraser was picked up on Norwood Parade.

Loitering.

Yes. (laughter) And there were no staff, either. And once he got to be Premier the phone would ring at five-thirty in the morning or six o’clock, that was the first media call, so somehow we’d have to sort of juggle everything around that so that then he
could leave the house at about – because he used to drop me in town to catch the bus out to school, so probably we used to leave about quarter to eight, I think.

**And where would the people go when they would come into your house? Was it some office?**

Near the front door we had a sitting room and that’s when we were at 104; I can’t really remember what happened when we were at 11A because I was too little, but I imagine – we had a room that was a sort of study and I think Dad probably would have taken them there. But they were always brought into the house and Dad would sit down with them and try and sort out whatever.

**What about the Greeks and Italians, would they come on their own or bring somebody that spoke better English if they didn’t speak it well?**

I can’t really remember. I remember people coming and very broken English. I mean we didn’t use interpreters much in those days, it was just not something that was part of life. So they probably brought a child or somebody who could speak, because in the early ’50s of course that was the days of the post-war migration and so there weren’t such things as interpreters, that just really wasn’t an issue. So I imagine they would have had to have – you know, and there were certain people within the community, and I’m not sure who they all were, I don’t know names really, but people like maybe John Kiosoglous or there was a Mr Minicozzi and there was another guy called Danny Panozzo, and his nephew’s actually my doctor these days. But those names stand out a little bit as people in the Greek and Italian communities who might have come or told people to come and see [Dad].

But there were also some very, very funny things that happened because I remember one very early election and the DLP\(^2\) were running so it would have been probably 1956 and they were all a bit worried about what might happen with the DLP, and they also put out a white how-to-vote card and we, Labor, traditionally had white how-to-vote cards and the Liberals had blue and what have you. And so this

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\(^2\) DLP – Democratic Labor Party.
was all very worrying, and this guy came along and said, (adopts strong Italian accent) ‘Ah, Mr Dunstan, I’m so pleased to see you! I give you three votes, I give the Liberal one vote’, and Dad went, ‘Oh, my god, how many people might have done that?’ It was a bit of a worry. And I think it was after that or sometime after that they started having how-to-vote cards in multiple languages so people could follow it.

And can you remember some of the political people that came in those early times?

Yes. Clyde Cameron and a guy called Cyril Hutchens and Jack Jennings. Dad got elected to Parliament at the same time that Jack Jennings got elected and so they were always quite good friends, I think. Jim Toohey. And then of course there were the federal people as well like Gough, but that was probably later on, and Hawke.

You mentioned Gough slept in your bed when he -- -- --.

Yes, he did actually – I mean not when I was in it – and I don’t know how he fitted because he’s a very, very big man. But I had the nicest bedroom in the house and when he came to South Australia he used to stay with us so I’d have to vacate and he would have my room. He was always very lovely and very generous, always used to come with books for us.

And did Aboriginal people come, were they in the area?

Yes. Well, now, I remember people like Gladys Elphick and of course Lowitja, who then we knew her as ‘Lois’, and we had an Aboriginal housekeeper for a while, a woman called Mrs Wanganeen, and I think we had another couple of younger ones for a while but I can’t really remember their names. But I know Dad used to go off to meetings of the Aboriginal Advancement League. I don’t think we ever had any meetings of those things in our house, but he certainly used to go to those meetings. And if he had to go out for some sort of fact-finding something we used to go quite often with him, so we’d go over to Point Pearce or sometimes down to Point McLeay. There was always an Aboriginal ball at Point Pearce, some time in the ’60s it would have been, and used to go over there for that sometimes; and they had one in
Adelaide as well, at the Olympic Hall in Franklin Street, so we used to go to that, too.

**What are your recollections of some of the discussions or the issues of the time on the Aboriginal area?**

I think mainly poverty, lack of jobs. I don’t think the health issues and things like that were really to the fore, but maybe I was too young to know about it. Certainly when I got to uni I got involved with ABSCOL which was a group that was organised to help fund tertiary education for Aboriginal people, and John Moriarty was part of that at the time, and I got to go to a conference in Canberra as part of that and met some people like Kath Walker, the poet, whose name is now Oodgeroo Noonuccal; she took on her Aboriginal tribal name. And the issues were mainly lack of employment opportunities and just sort of discrimination, name-calling and poverty, that sort of stuff. Well, obviously it was starting by the late ’60s to become very evident that Aboriginal children were not given anywhere near the same opportunities for education that white children had.

**The issue of voting was probably around at the time.**

Oh, yes, that’s the referendum, the ’67 referendum. That was an important issue and Dad did a lot of work for that, because not only did it give rights, it actually enabled Aboriginal people to have the same sort of human footprint as other people who lived in Australia.

**And one of the things I’ve come across in talking to other people was that when they were quite young students or whatever else, maybe in employment, they were sometimes invited around for dinners on a Sunday night. Was that some discussion group that your family had or just ——?**

I think no, there just used to be people – sometimes they were people that Mum had run into at uni, I think, and sometimes people that had been involved in Young Labor. Well, I mean Greg Crafter was sort of picked up like that. And then they’d just be invited around for a meal. But early on in my childhood there used to be, every once a month on the Sunday night my parents used to have what they called a
'do', which was a party – probably finger foods or, you know, spaghetti. When I say ‘spaghetti’, I mean proper spaghetti bolognaise, not tinned. But it was a time when there weren’t very many restaurants, you could almost name the restaurants in Adelaide on the fingers of one hand. But they used to have – I think they thought they were a bit Bohemian or something, so they would have flagon red wine and, as I said, things like spaghetti bolognaise which were not really well-known, or rye bread with certain toppings on.

**Pickled cucumber.**

That sort of stuff, yes, that was not really well-known. But they were more I suppose you’d call them the intelligentsia.

**Who were some of those people?**

Both Medlin brothers and their wives, so Harry and Brian. Harry was married to Di Medlin and she later became Principal of Pembroke, actually; and Brian, who was very, very militant in the anti-Vietnam days. The Ballantynes. Max Harris and Von and Samela. Now, there were some people called the Wahlquists and it’s a Scandinavian name so I think it might be with a ‘V’ and not a ‘W’, but I’m not sure. And the Dows – I don’t know, he was a lawyer I think. One of his sons is called Alastair and I think he’s around the place – might be an academic, I’m not sure.

**Yes, I know Alastair.**

Yes. So that family used to come. The Gents, John and Alison Gent.

**Milton Smith?**

Oh, Milton, yes, Milton and Joy.

**Can you remember any of the things they were talking about or was it mainly fun?**

I thought it was so cool because I was little and I was allowed to be up and go around and hand round the savouries and things like that. But obviously it was a group of people – and we used to go to their houses as well. And the conversations were quite political but I can’t really remember the topics.
And some of the Economics people?

Yes, but that was probably later, because Mum didn’t go back to uni really until we moved to 104, and these parties were early, they were at 11A, and I think they probably stopped by the time I was about seven.

Through the years, how did Don relax? You mentioned the cooking.

He liked gardening, so we had a veggie patch and he used to do that; and he always read huge amounts, so reading was really important; and playing the piano and listening to music.

What sort of reading?

Oh, all sorts. He would sometimes do things like translate Greek poetry – Ancient Greek poetry; but then novels or plays. He loved the theatre.

Did he comment about the quality of the arts at all or of the theatre? Any recollections you have that he went and saw a play?

Well, we used to be taken to stuff. I remember going to, it must have been the Old Vic, when they came to the Theatre Royal in Hindley Street, and we used to get taken to Tintookies. I think he was very, very pleased when a State Theatre Company actually was formed, and he used to go to the plays; but I did right from its inception, too.

Colin Ballantyne, was he the first Director of the State Theatre?

Yes.

And played the piano. Where did his interest in cooking really start?

I’m not really sure. I know that he didn’t like sort of stodgy, Englishy-type food that he’d been fed when he was a child, and my mother of course came from a German heritage and so he’d been introduced to that European style of food. I really am not sure. They used to cook together a fair bit, and they were always experimenting with things and they bought some of the early Elizabeth David cookbooks and so on, and so they used to try things out. Even when they were in Fiji, just when they were
married, and they used to have to cook on a primus stove, but they still used to try and experiment with things.

**Were Indian curries there?**

That came from his childhood because he loved things like mutton curry and goat curry and things, yes.

**And were there any things that particularly frustrated him at the time that you can recall?**

Oh, the gerrymander. (laughter) I can remember hearing a lot about that. He used to get very, very angry about that. Even though he was good friends with Tom Playford, he just was so frustrated that he couldn’t get past that or didn’t seem to be able to get past that any way and felt that that was very unfair, the one-vote-one-value was a really – – –. I don’t know, I think people who were sort of conservative for the sake of being conservative, I think that was a source of real irritation to him and he felt that people adopted positions that they couldn’t really sustain intellectually.

**Because that’s what their scene was.**

Yes. And talking about other things he used to do, he was very good at woodwork, actually, so he built all our cabinets – you know, the kitchen cabinets and all the bookcases. Not like these ones we’ve just had put here at vast expense; he built the lot himself – and nearly took his fingers off one day, which was rather nasty, with a buzz-saw and came in screaming and blood everywhere.

**And did he talk about the Adelaide Establishment, can you recall anything like that?**

Oh, yes, always ridiculing this one or that one. He used to get very annoyed with Rupert Murdoch and he used to talk about the Adelaide Club.

**But he never wanted to join them – – –.**

(laughter) No, I don’t think so.
Unless to go in and stir them up.

Yes.

Now, some of the political ideas – you mentioned the gerrymander. We talked about Aboriginal people and people from non-English-speaking background. I think in talking to you previously you mentioned his experience in Fiji as a young boy might have shaped some of his political views.

Yes. I mean he went to Suva Grammar School and I think he formed a friendship with a young Indian boy, and I actually met this man – I imagine he’s probably dead now – I think his name was something like Rambutan Singh, and he was a very good friend of Dad’s but Dad was never allowed to go to his place and he was not allowed to go to Dad’s place; it was because his parents wouldn’t let him go to Dad’s place; but it wasn’t because his parents wouldn’t let him come because he was Indian, and Dad always thought that that was extremely unfair. And he also felt there was a lot of discrimination, and there still is, in Fiji between Fijians and Indians and of course the colonial people as well. But he was always very, very upset about that. He was quite involved in Fijian politics, from the outside, and when there was a coup, one of the first coups, he actually mustered quite a lot of support in Australia as a sort of anti-coup force. But yes, I think that the poverty and the lack of social opportunity really always struck him as something that should not be, and he was able to do something about it.

Then he, I guess, followed things through a bit in his time at the university.

Yes.

He was, I think, involved in some of the early political clubs at Adelaide Uni.

Yes. I think actually that’s where he and my mother first met. It might have been called the Socialist Club. And he was involved a bit with the Fabian Society, I know.

And do you have any recollection of his interest in how changes were best followed through? Like the Fabians, I recall him saying they were gradualist, they weren’t revolutionaries.
Well, he didn’t ever really talk a lot about that round the dinner table or anything like that, but in retrospect he talked about it. So he had seen that this needed to be done and he saw that there was a course of action that could be taken. So all sorts of things like developing restaurants and freeing up the drinking hours – apparently it was the anniversary of the end of six o’clock closing last week sometime.

Oh, really?

Yes, the fortieth anniversary or something.

You could go and celebrate.

And I think he sort of manoeuvred himself into a position where he was able to do some of those things. I guess the thing that really struck me was that he had so many wide-ranging views about things, so it wasn’t just sort of racial discrimination, it was all sorts of types of discrimination; but it was then also lifestyle in general, so that restaurants should be able to serve wine, so the pubs should stay open, \textit{et cetera, et cetera}, but also so that there would be cultural things, activities, which would enrich the community; and other social reforms that were really important, as well as trying to develop the State – probably people would say, ‘Well, he didn’t really develop the manufacturing or anything like that’, but he certainly had plans as in Monarto and that sort of thing.

Yes. It’s one of those debatable areas, the one of economic development and how a state can influence in comparison with national and international.

Yes.

Just when he became a minister in the mid-’60s –

Yes, ’65.

– and then Premier, late ’60s –

’67.

– yes.

It was during my year twelve year so it was a bit disruptive.
Oh, really?
Yes.

**How did you see that activity? Was there a significant shift in what he had to do?**
Oh, yes.

**What sort of things do you recall?**
Oh, well, I mean just a lot more public. So right from when he became Attorney-General, because I think at that stage he was Australia’s youngest Attorney-General and so on, our lives changed because we had things like a government car and Bronte Faehrmann, (not sure about spelling) who was the driver, became like a member of the family but Bronte would always be there more or less at breakfast time and he’d have his cup of tea with us. And then just a lot more meetings and media attention.

It was interesting, actually, because previously he had just been a Member of Parliament so he had a little space in Parliament House but mostly he operated out of his legal office or out of our house. And so of course he had a ministerial office and so on and a secretary, and I can remember they sort of used to ‘Yes, Minister’ him and he found that really funny – although the program hadn’t been on TV; but they’d always call him ‘Minister’ or ‘Premier’, and I can remember John White from the Premier’s Department who did that and Dad used to put a bomb under it. ‘No, no, no, this will not do. Just call me Don’. Actually, John White was a really nice man in the end and I remember when I went to London, because he was South Australia’s Agent General in London by then, and he was wonderful to me: took me out and helped, and I was able to make a phone call home from the office. So yes.

**And do you recall some of the key things Don wanted to do at that stage when he became minister, Attorney-General, I think social welfare – – –.**

Oh, well, I think there was a lot of social reform and he just tried to ramp up the legislative agenda and get a lot of stuff, especially anti-discrimination stuff, through as quickly as he possibly could. And things like appointing Roma Mitchell to the bench. And, yes, I mean he was also at that stage I think Minister of Aboriginal
Affairs, so that’s probably when we got more involved in those trips to Point Pearce
and Point McLeay and so on.

**And we talked about some of the people in the early days from the Labor Party: were they still around in that time?**

Yes, they were. It was interesting, I went to a conference the other day in the
Treasury Hotel and their conference room is actually the old Cabinet Room, and so
there were pictures there of the Cabinet and they looked like a lot of old codgers.

**What, the first Labor Cabinet?**

Probably it was, actually, I think, yes.

**Interesting. Who were some of the names? Well, Clyde wasn’t State, but – – –.**

Well, Clyde was federal. Oh, Des Corcoran, and Glen Broomhill – well, obviously,
Frank Walsh. Oh, Bert Shard, yes. I can sort of really – he’d come home but – and
they didn’t really come to our house or anything and he didn’t really talk a lot about
what they did, I suppose because Cabinet was Cabinet and confidentiality had to be
respected and so on.

**Was there any talk about some big successes he managed to get through notwithstanding his own party and then the conservatives?**

I don’t know, we always had a big celebration on election night, or some important
piece of legislation finally got through there’d probably be a round-table discussion
that night at home, but –

**You don’t recall any of the specific ones.**

– can’t really remember, no. I was supposedly doing senior high school and I
supposedly had a lot of homework, which I didn’t necessarily do. But yes, we used
to just eat and then – I mean we’d often have to eat quite late because he’d be at a
meeting and then he’d come home, or otherwise we’d have to just eat quickly and
then he’d go off again. I suppose the other big change was that he wasn’t around as
much.
Yes, people demanded his time. He went interstate a lot too, didn’t he?

Oh, yes.

What was that for?

Oh, well, there were all sorts of things: premiers’ conferences, and attorney-generals’ meetings; and then that was the time with that referendum so the Aboriginal issues; there was the White Australia stuff.

And the national Labor Party.

Yes. Well, then he was very involved in that as well.

And the advisers, the ministerial office: who were some of the people that you remember from that time?

Gerry.

Gerry Crease.

Yes. Gerry actually lived with us for quite a long time. And David Combe – we used to call him ‘Harvey David Matthew’. And, well, Peter Ward.

Did they come around?

Yes.

What, briefing and general discussions on tactics – – –?

They were sort of friends, they used to just come. I’m trying to think who else. Oh, Steve Wright.

Stephen Wright, yes.

Yes.

I’ll just pause there.

Okay. (break in recording)

One area I wanted to just ask you about was your recollections of Don and one, his ability to pick up a brief very quickly and, two, his speeches and whether he practised them at home and how that might have worked.
I don’t ever remember him actually practising any speeches at home. I know that he used to get given them. I mean he obviously must have written his own campaign speeches and he used to go out – oh, one thing I remember was they used to have a sort of speakers’ corner thing in the Botanic Park behind the Zoo. And he used to go down there sometimes. It was always a bit of a treat to go along. And it was a bit like Hyde Park in London, or in Sydney they have it as well. And so he’d get up on the soapbox and give a speech about something or other, and I don’t remember what the something-or-others were because I was much more interested in the ice-cream that came through, the van and getting one of those little dinky tub things. Yes, so obviously he had the gift of the gab and was able to get up and do that. And he used to do factory-gate meetings as part of campaigning as well and he was able to carry that over. You know, there was the famous time when he went out and caused all havoc in Gawler Place because of the credit union thing.

Yes, Hindmarsh.

Hindmarsh Building Society or something, that’s right. And then the time that he went down to Glenelg and was like King Canute holding back the tidal wave (laughs) or something. And he certainly had that gift of being able to – you know, rhetoric, he was very good at it. And I think that if people gave him a series of points he would be able to string it together quite well.

I can remember when we were going to functions, particularly when we’d be going in the government car, he would always sit in the front next to Bronte and we’d sit in the back, and he’d get out his notes and he’d sort of mutter his way through on the way to whatever the thing was that he was supposed to open or introduce or what have you.

Interesting, yes.

The big speeches that he’s probably most famous for now I think he probably did spend a lot of time drafting and writing, some of the orations that he was asked to give after he left Parliament. And yes, I remember him getting a bit stressed about
having to actually get them together; and especially once he wasn’t well, because he had his first bout of cancer in the early ’90s and from then on – I mean he was well, but he wasn’t really well and had to be very careful what he did. So he’d get a bit stressed, I think, then. But once he had it written he was very okay with delivering it; and some of that came from his acting training, because he’d actually had some formal acting training and elocution and so on, so that was why he was able to speak so clearly and confidently.

**Interesting. And just going the other way he would get speech writers, he would get his speech writers to write what his suggestions were, the topic and maybe some of the skeleton ——?**

Yes, I think usually they’d actually sit down, from what I remember. And that’s because of my relationship with John in those days.

**John Templeton.**

Yes. He and John would have a discussion about the line that was going to be taken and then John would go away and write it and he’d take it back and then if it was okay that was okay, and if not Dad would say, ‘Now, look, chum, no’.

**Chum, right.**

If you got ‘chummied’ you were in trouble. (laughter) And Mike Rann was one of his speechwriters as well, and I knew Mike pretty well in those days, and I think it was the same sort of routine. And Mike probably had a more intellectual take on it than John did. I mean John was very good with words but John was a journalist and Mike was much more of an intellectual and he had a much stronger commitment, I would say, to the political philosophies and things that underlay a lot of what was going on.

**Interesting. And what about the area of economics, I was going to ask you, his briefings from Gretel on that sort of thing?**

I think they used to have a lot of discussion about that sort of thing because, obviously, Mum being a professional economist. The thing that always used to
surprise me was the fact that Dad was terrible at maths and he couldn’t even work out a percentage, and we tried to explain to him (laughs) one time – we were down at the beach house at Goolwa, sitting around the table at night, and somehow this came up and we said, ‘Come on, it’s really quite simple’. He just couldn’t get it.

Interesting.

And yet he could get it when he sat down with Treasury officials and so on.

He was Treasurer for a while as well.

Yes.

Interesting.

So he was able to manage the State finances and in actual fact he was quite clever with them at times, like when he sold the railways.

What did he say about that?

Oh, he was very proud of that. Yes, he thought that was a great coup.

Very good. Just talking about Gretel and her influence, you mentioned the campaigning and most certainly her knowledge about economics; was there also a link through her with the Jewish community in Adelaide or other parts of Australia?

I have no idea about other parts of Australia but I know that my grandparents were friendly with Anne Levy and her parents, actually, and Anne’s got an older sister Julia, and so they certainly knew them. Our dentist, the first one we had was a guy called Bernie Freudenthal, and then another young Jewish guy called Alan Mendels, who’s very high up in the Jewish community. So he was our dentist but he was also a friend. Yes, they also were friendly with Horst Salomon, but Horst – there’s been some question these days about whether Horst actually was Jewish or not. I don’t know, but he certainly had a lot to do with the Jewish community, so they were friendly with Horst and Betty Salomon. And I’m not sure what the influence was, but I suspect – I mean people like Horst possibly were donors to campaigns; now,
maybe not to the Labor Party, it might have been to the specific campaign in the electorate, I don’t know.

Interesting. Just by way of rounding up on our discussion, you mentioned the railways agreement. Were there any other important areas that you recall Don saying, ‘This is really great’? You talked about electoral ....

Well, he was very proud of the restaurant business and the sort of Mediterranean lifestyle that he was trying to promote. What else? Well, obviously, the discrimination laws. And I think, as I said before, the promotion of women such as Roma Mitchell; and appointing Bray as well as Chief Justice.

John Bray, yes.

Yes. Oh, he was another one that used to come to those Sunday nights as well.

And did he ever talk about his Cabinets or his colleagues?

Oh, yes. Actually, a name I didn’t mention is Len King. Now, he actually head hunted Len because Len hadn’t come up through the Party at all and he headhunted him to be Attorney-General once he became Premier. And Don Hopgood he used to talk about. And I’m just trying to think who that person was and he died – he might have actually been a federal politician. (break in recording) He was Minister of Education, I think, wasn’t he?

Hugh Hudson was, yes.

So he was headhunted as well. But he had been in the Economics Department, hadn’t he?

Yes.

Yes, and Peter Karmel, he was another one of that group. And he also – now, not Cabinet – but he used to talk about Chris Hurford, we used to see a bit of Chris and Lorna. Also the Blewetts, Neal and Jill were close friends

That was the sort of electorate link as much as – – –.

Yes.
And the Labor Party more broadly.

Yes.

Good. And just another extra roundup, was there anything else you wanted to get on the record about your recollections of your father and the politics and achievements of the time?

I don’t know. The more I learn the more I’m amazed that one person could do so many different things and do them well. It’s a bit intimidating, actually, (laughs) to have a father who’s a genius.

Right, yes.

But I can also understand he also did some very, very silly things which I don’t want to go into, but he had an amazing vision but in some ways he wasn’t always the best judge of character, and probably I can leave it at that.

Okay, yes.

But he was able to inspire people and get on board a team. I mean the other day I heard someone say after Mike Rann got attacked and so on, ‘How can they do this? He’s the Premier, likely to be the greatest Labor Premier ever’. And I thought, ‘No, sorry. He might be the longest-serving, but I don’t think he’s got the same kind of vision at all’. So yes. In some ways it was wonderful, though, because Dad was still Dad and he was able to fulfil that role. It got harder as he got busier, but he was always very interested in what we were doing, and the grandchildren as well.

Good. All right. Well, thanks very much, Bronwen. Great.

Okay.

END OF INTERVIEW