

City of Hazard Courthouse

Bill Gorman, Mayor

September 9, 2004

John Malpede: Just for clarification, we are at the moment in the year 2004.

Henriette Brouwers: We don't hear you John...

J: I just wanted to clarify that the year is 2004 at this moment. And in 2004, we're very pleased...I'm very pleased to have been, uh, had the opportunity through this project to get to work with and know Mayor Bill Gorman, who in 1968 was, uh, ran, started and ran a television station here in town and he both, was with Kennedy on Liberty Street and also conducted an hour long talk show with him. And, actually, he had known the Kennedys before. But he's been the Mayor of Hazard for, I believe, 28 years, right?

Bill Gorman: 27.

J: 27 years. So, I asked him to talk a little bit about his relationship to the Kennedys and also a little bit about what he's done here in Hazard. So, it's my pleasure to introduce Bill Gorman.

B: It certainly is a pleasure for me to welcome you all to Hazard. It's a pleasure seeing the people from Appalshop. I saw Herbie Smith and his wife a little earlier, but I don't seem 'em here, so... But anyway, we'd like to welcome you all.

One thing, in 1968, no, in 1961, Bobby Kennedy made the remark, "I believe that as long as there is plenty, poverty is evil." He made that remark in a speech in Athens, Georgia. I think that set, probably, the theme for Bobby Kennedy's life. Tell you how I got to know Bobby Kennedy was, uh... When I was a very young fella, sixteen years old, I got my driver's license. And Senator John Sherman Cooper's wife gave me a his credit card. So I drove the Senator for years and years and years, all over Kentucky, and wherever else he had to be. And when I'd go to Washington and visit the Senator, usually after the day's work, Jack Kennedy, later President Kennedy, would come into the Senator's office or he'd go over to the Senator's office and they would talk about the day and have a drink of water or something like that. But anyway, I saw in the Courier Journal, Tuesday, and I saw this picture. And it brought vack, a long time ago for me. But I believe that one of the highlights of my life was knowing Bobby Kennedy. He was a year younger than I was, and so we would, got along pretty good. And I think Peter'll tell you that - we had a wonderful energy with him, didn't we Peter? But, those were the days...

We talk about poverty and we talk about eastern Kentucky and we talk about our people. We have enjoyed a great quality of life, mainly by our people. But the only thing is we have some that've been left behind, as one other president put it. And I think it's time that we work hard, follow the wishes and the wills of Bobby Kennedy.

Bobby Kennedy came to Hazard in '68, and when he came he brought, not only new ideas, but he enforced old ideas - that of helping people to help themselves.

We've been very fortunate in Hazard – and the reason I'm saying this – I'm not saying it in any way except John told me to tell you this. We've enjoyed a pretty great quality of life. You all just left Liberty Street. In 1971, Liberty Street was transformed from the street that Bobby Kennedy walked up in 1968. Bobby Kennedy called attention to the problems that we were having, primarily, in our case, in the city of Hazard, where we had some marginal housing, we had problems and all this kind of thing. And because of Bobby Kennedy's attention to this fact, we were able to get fifty new housing units up there that cost almost a million dollars. That was the, really, the effort of his coming to Hazard.

Well, since that time – and John would like me to tell you about Hazard today. Hazard today is a thriving city and we have a pretty good county. We have over 3500 people who're involved in the medical profession. Back when Bob Kennedy came to Hazard, it was primarily coal. We have 180 doctors in Hazard. We have a new Veteran's Nursing Home. We just cut the ribbon here about a week ago for the UK Center for Rural Health. The, uh, we just finished our new Justice Center down on Main Street, which is a ten million dollar project. The UK Center for Rural Health was a 14.1 million dollar project. The Veteran's Nursing Home, I think, was about 14 million dollars.

We don't have too many problems here in this town. We have good law enforcement. I think we have an excellent city government. I think that with a little bit of luck that we can pass this on to the next generation.

I'm honored to be asked to speak to you all today. I'm honored because I think, if Bobby Kennedy had lived, this world would have been a much better place than it is today. Thank you very much.