

Retired Assessor Historical Questionnaire

July, 2005

1. Describe your career before becoming Assessor.

I was hired by the County of Shasta in September 1965, right out of College at the ripe young age of 22 as a Social Worker in the Welfare Department(that's what it was called in those days). After a year working with AFDC mothers and children, I jumped at the opportunity to become a real property appraiser in the Assessor's Office and my pay went from \$395 per month to \$495.

I worked as a real property appraiser for one year and then tested for Auditor-Appraiser and in 1967 was hired as an Auditor-Appraiser. In 1974 I was promoted to Supervising Auditor-Appraiser.

In 1985, I was promoted to Deputy Assessor in charge of Administration by Virginia Loftus. And in July of 2000, the office of Assessor and Recorder were combined and I became the Deputy Assessor-Recorder, Administration. My duties were to prepare the budget, produce the assessment roll, and oversee the Recorder's function.

2. Give the milestones of your Assessor career, year elected/appointed, reelection dates, date of retirement.

In June of 1994, I was elected Assessor-Recorder with 55% of the vote in a race with three opponents. In August of 1994 Virginia Loftus retired due to ill health and since I had been elected in the primary, the Board of Supervisors appointed me Assessor-Recorder on August 19, 1994. I was re-elected in 1998 and 2002 without opposition.

I am proud of my service to Shasta County and I am proud of my participation in the California Assessors' Association. I served as the Forms Sub-Committee Chairman for several years. I then served as the Business Property Subcommittee Chairman for several years. After that I was the Standards Chairman for two years. In 2001 I served as the CAA Secretary serving under CAA President John Winner. In 2002 I was CAA Vice-President and in 2003 I served as the President-Elect. I was CAA President in 2004.

During my time in office, Shasta County hosted a Northern Assessors' Conference and an Annual California Assessors' Association State Conference.

3. Describe your career, if any, after retiring.

Since I am still in office at the time of writing this it is hard to describe. I imagine that I will spend more time with my grandchildren, do some volunteer work, and play more golf. I will not be working as a consultant or as a Walmart greeter.

4. What was your relationship with your predecessor?

I had an excellent relationship with Virginia Loftus. She was not only a great boss but a dear friend and mentor. She encouraged me to reach beyond what I thought I was capable of and supported my efforts in the campaign of 1994.

When Virginia was first elected in 1978 (Prop 13) she was an unknown quantity and most of us in the Assessor's Office were skeptical of her ability. She proved us all wrong and I along with the majority, was glad for it. She was a class act and taught me the meaning of public service.

In 1994, even though she was deathly ill with cancer, she was a tireless campaigner helping to assure my election in the primary against three other candidates.

5. What was your relationship with your successor?

Don't know yet. But if it is who I am supporting, then it will have been a good relationship.

6. Why did you run for assessor?

I ran because I thought it was the right thing to do and because I had the encouragement of the former Assessor, Virginia Loftus. I also believed that I was the most qualified person in the office and that I had learned what being Assessor-Recorder was all about.

7. What do you consider your greatest accomplishments?

My greatest accomplishment is getting us through Y2K. In 1995 I became acutely aware that our main frame computer would not survive past 2000. The Tax Collector, Auditor and myself became a committee and looked at every possible solution and eventually settled on Megabyte as our property tax system vendor. To this day I am proud of that decision and we have produce a roll on time each and every year since we became a Megabyte county.

I am also proud of the work we have done in the Recorder's Office including restoration of historical documents and on-line access for customers to recorded documents.

I am proud to have served as the CAA's President in 2004. I was the third Shasta County Assessor to serve as President and was humbled to do so.

8. What did you wish you could have done differently?

I can't think of a thing. I know I have made some bone head calls on appraisals and while I think I did the right thing on the Viacom settlement, I am haunted by the fact that we reached a compromise rather than reaching a good appraisal decision.

9. What do you remember most fondly about your time in office?

Our move to the new administration building was exciting. For the first time my clerical staff had desks where they could see outside. In addition I am pleased that I had a good relationship with the Board of Supervisors, the other elected officials, and the CAO. Not many can say that.

10. Were there any parts of your career that you wish had not happened?

No.

11. What was your relationship with the CAA?

Greatest organization I have ever belonged to. I am very proud of my service and hope to be remember for that service and for the CAA Logo that I designed and had made into a lapel pin.

12. What is your recollection of the “Assessor Scandals” of the 1960s?

I was around in the mid 60’s and remember the passage of AB80 which was a result of the scandals. I know that CAA conferences changed dramatically, no more hosted hospitality rooms where everything flowed freely but with expectations from industry.

13. Describe the pressure and stress of the Assessor’s job prior to the passage of Proposition 13?

I worked as an appraiser and as an Auditor-Appraiser prior to Prop 13 so I do remember that the public was very upset with our cyclical appraisals and for good reason. We would reappraise and the spending agencies wouldn’t reduce the tax rate so our assessment increases resulted in increased taxes.

- **Did you actively oppose or support Proposition 13?**

I supported Prop 13 because the Legislature wouldn’t do what should have been done to control the increase in property tax. The citizens had no choice and retrospect it has made the job of Assessor somewhat less stressful.

- **How did you feel about Proposition 13 now?**

I believe there inequities but I also believe that Prop 13 makes property tax predictable so that when you buy property you know what the tax burden will be today and 10 years from now and I think that is important.

14. Were you involved in State or County politics, other than the Assessor’s Office?

I was involved in Republican politics and also helped with local races. I was an elected school board member for 10 years long before I became Assessor.

- **Were there other offices you ran for while in office as Assessor?**

NO.

15. What kind of person do you think it takes to make a good County Assessor?

I think you have to like to help people. You have to be accountable and accessible to all of the citizens and taxpayers. You should be a person who is analytical and one who has a sense of humor.

- **Should an Assessor be required to have an appraisal or real estate background?**

I don't know. We have had good assessors who were good administrators without a lot of real estate knowledge. But certainly it helps.

16. Please add anything that we may have missed in the interview that you think would be interesting.

More later.

- * Any interesting photos are encouraged. Please include description.