

ONNEN, TONY D. INTERVIEW

S - 1935 Onnen, Tony D. (1938 -). State Representative, District 22B. Independent Republican, Cokato, Minnesota.

1973 Tony Onnen has been in the State House of Representatives for District 22B from 1977 to the present (1980). District 22B covers most of Wright County as well as parts of McLeod and Meeker Counties.

The interview covers Onnen's personal background including his boyhood in Nebraska and successive jobs in the field of taxes which eventually led to his present day independent tax accounting firm. The interview also covers Onnen's eventual involvement in politics. Included are Onnen's views on campaigning, and current issues, and the role of government.

INTERVIEWERS: Calvin Gower and Al Nielsen.

DATE: October 30, 1979.

SUBJECTS COVERED: TAPE 1 PART 1.

010 FAMILY BACKGROUND:

- 012 - Both parents from Germany.
- 025 - Born and raised in Hebron, Nebraska.
- 040 - Father's occupations, Trading , also raised animals.
- 067 - Born July 5, 1938, Hebron, Nebraska.

070 EDUCATION:

- 070 - Graduated Hebron, Nebraska High School, 1955.
- 088 - Omaha, Nebraska Business College, 2 year program in accounting.

100 EMPLOYMENT:

- 100 - Worked as a Bell hop at nearby hotel while in school.
- 114 - Worked for Pruack, transportation.
- 120 - Hotpoint, worked for 3 years.

130 CONTINUED EDUCATION:

- 130 - Went to night school while working at Hotpoint.
- 140 - Returned to the University of Nebraska, Lincoln.
- 145 - Interested in Pre - Law.
- 153 - Wanted to go into Advanced R.O.T.C., didn't for medical reasons.
- 165 - Continued working for Hotpoint while in school.
- 170 - Graduated August, 1963, Bachelor of Finance and Business Administration.

177 EMPLOYMENT POST - COLLEGE:

- 177 - Moved to Minnesota and worked for a national C.P.A. firm.
- 195 - Worked as a Trust Auditor for Northwestern Bank.
- 200 - Worked as a Office Manager for Stitchcraft of Winnebago, Iowa. 1967 -
- 220 - Married JoAnn Thorland, June 13, 1970.
- 222 - Moved back to Minnesota and worked for a C.P.A. firm. June 1969.
- 250 - Bought a farm in Cocato, Minnesota.
- 284 - Worked as an accountant, St. Mary's Hospital, September 1970, later became Assistant Administrator.
- 298 - Worked as Hospital Administrator, Big Lake Hospital, 1974.
- 302 - Set up own tax and Accounting office at home, January 1975.

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POLITICAL ACTIVITY:

- 457 - Convened the Republican Caucus, February 1976, 1st political involvement.
- 500 - Worked on Search committee, District 22B.
- 532 - Discusses District 22B.

SUBJECTS COVERED: TAPE 1 PART 2

- 037 Campaign 1976, 38% of the votes , lost. ²⁷
- 161 - Ran in the Special Election in September 1977, won. ⁶⁰⁷¹
- 169 - Issues of 1976 - 1977.
- 201 - Campaign 1978.
- 218 - Sworn in October 11, 1977 after the Special Election.
- 250 - Onnen discusses the Party System.
- 270 - The Legislature as a learning process.
- 317 - Committee Assignments - General Legislation and Veterans Affairs
 - Labor and Management
 - Governmental Operations
- 341 - Campaign 1978, Full Time campaigning, received 63% of the Votes.
- 367 - Committee Assignments 1978 - Taxes
 - Health and Welfare
 - General Legislation and Veterans Affairs.
- 388 - 67 - 67 SPLIT, There had to be compromises.
- 389 - Bob Pavlak Case.
- 475 - Bills carried by both parties, more questions asked.

*Ann
Barr*

SUBJECTS COVERED: TAPE 2 PART 3

- 008 - Appropriations committee
- 022 - Bob Pavlak case.
- 065 - Discussion of the decision of the Pavlak case.
- 074 - Pressures of the party.
- 108 - Important bills of the 1978 session.
- 311 - Views on a Full-Time legislature.
- 340 - Salary and Per Diem.
- 442 - Ammendments Appropriation bills.

SUBJECTS COVERED: TAPE 2 PART 4

- 028 - liked to help people with thier problems.
- 080 - Onnen's view of what he thought people thought of politicians.
- 110 - Lobbyists.
- 140 - Constituent Communication.
- 160 - Areas where government should be less involved in.
- 296 - Localized Government.