

*Marjory Stoneman Douglas and Marjorie Harris Carr discuss changes of attitude towards the environment in state agencies. Marjory Stoneman Douglas discusses bureaucracy and the importance of the Governor's appointments to office*

Interviewer: You know you were discussing before the state agencies, mentioning the Department of Commerce and Department of Natural Resources. How do you feel that today's state agencies and state officials view and value Florida's environment and has that changed, over time, in your experience?

Marjorie Harris Carr: Uh-uh.

Marjory Stoneman Douglas: That's a very hard question.

MHC: Well, it's certainly changed from fifteen years ago, Marjory.

MSD: I think so, I think so, I really do.

MHC: Department Of Natural Resources (indistinguishable) I understand.

MSD: Yes, of heavens yes. Good heavens. Well, that's why they made it into two departments. You remember? Why they presented the DER as well as the DNR and I guess it's been a good thing.

MHC: Yes.

MSD: I do think the DNR could do more of that kind of thing, though, from an objective point of view.

MHC; Yes.

MSD: We've forgotten what your question was. It was a little complicated. Now keep it a little simple.

Interviewer: It was complicated. I try not to interrupt.

MSD: We don't know what to say.

Interviewer: I'm trying not to interrupt. What I'm trying to ask is whether you have seen a change in the way state officials and state agencies view Florida's environment and also the value that they assign to environmental features in this state?

MSD: Well, I don't think they've changed as much as they should.

MHC: Right.

MHC: They've changed...

MSD: That's a hard question to answer.

MHC: They've changed, they've changed, but and they will give lip service to environmental protection but I think this is the whole crux of our problem. That we have got to increase their awareness about the environment and the only way you can do that, in my mind, is to increase the awareness of their constituency.

MSD: Yes, exactly...the scope

MHC: Or increase its intensity and then they will respond.

MSD: I find the bureaucratic mind, which is what you're talking about, deals completely with the status quo. They have no past and no future and yet we know that things change and have to change. They're so interested, like the Water Management District, they deal completely with 1983. They're not looking forward enough. That's the bureaucratic mind. They handle things as they are today.

MHC: So much of this, of course, depends on the individual. I mean the set up of the government may be very good, but unless you have the proper individual in there, it doesn't.

MSD: Of course. Yes. That's why we're so pleased with John DeGrove for that particular job. Now we think we've got a good man there.

MHC: Yes! Of course that's where the Governor, I think, has an enormous impact on the environment and the people he appoints

MSD: Yes.

Interviewer: That's an interesting point you bring up, because a number of people feel that once we have the laws in place and once we have the regulations and the rules in place then, it really is less important that the kind of people, the type of person who is elected or appointed, because the laws and the regulations are supposed to take care of all that.

MSD: Yes, but they don't.

MHC: No, no. You need both.

MSD: You need both of them. Our problem is now the laws are on the books. Our problem is to get the laws enforced.

MHC: Yes.

MSD: Half the time we're struggling to get laws enforced, that have been on the books for years. And they just won't do it! Like polluting Lake Okeechobee. We have the laws to get that lake un-polluted, to be cleaned up and we've threatened to sue the government, some years ago, on that. We won in the hearing and the hearing officer said to the DER, 'tell the people they've got to clean up their act,' that is, the sugar people, but, the DER has told them how to clean up their act but they've had several years to do it in and they still haven't made them do it.

MHC: Did they use the term 'all deliberate speed'?

MSD: All deliberate speed.

MHC: Oh, I hate that term.

MSD: That is a horrible term. What is deliberate speed?

MHC: There's a century ahead...

MSD: It is a contradiction in terms.

MHC: It is.

MSD: One thing cancels the other out. It's ridiculous.

MHC: I got into that in the Barge Canal.

MSD: I bet you did. You've had that around your neck for years.

MHC: They said, 'This will be resolved in all deliberate speed,' eight years ago.

MSD: Eight years. That's their idea of deliberate speed. You still haven't got that barge authority off the books yet.

MHC: Well, the authority will go off the books. That's coped with as soon as the project is de-authorized.

MSD: De-authorized. That's what it means. Yes.

MHC: The bottleneck is in Congress. (19:05)