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EXCERPTS FROM AN INTERVIEW WITH RETIRING U.S. SENATOR JOHN EAST

How is your personal health?

"I'm doing pretty well now, thank you. I had a challenging year last year as I think many people are aware, but I'm doing much better, thank you, and we're trying to move ahead."

How much a part did your health play in your decision not to run for re-election?

"It played a critical role in the sense that it came at a time that a decision had to be made. I didn't feel at that juncture that it would be appropriate for me to undertake a campaign for re-election, as well as do the best job that I could in terms of serving this office until the end of my term. So yes, it did play a critical role in that decision. I'd have to say that."

What do you think of television in the Senate and what effect do you believe it will have on that body?

"I was one of those who voted against television in the Senate. I'm not convinced that it's a positive development, but I think it's here to stay and I think the Republic will certainly survive the introduction of TV into the Senate. Several things, though, concern me about it. First, in the Senate we have the idea of unlimited debate and we don't require germaneness in terms of amendments on bills. My point is, I think there will be a tendency here to encourage senators from over on the Senate floor to engage in extended debate and to offer a variety of amendments whether they'll pass or not, simply for local consumption. And I think what it tends to do is to lengthen our proceedings - could make them more protractive, more drawn out - we really don't need that."

"Ultimately what I think it tends to do is to put a greater premium on what occurs actually on the Senate floor than what is warranted. What occurs on the Senate floor, don't misunderstand me, is important. The debate that goes on, the discussion goes on and the voting goes on, but every senator will concede that's a very small portion of what he does here in the Senate. Most of a senator's time, a great portion is spent at hearings, is spent with constituents, is spent back at

home, speaking, moving about, etcetera. And now we're putting this tremendous premium on being on being on the Senate floor because when you're on the floor this means television exposure - not only in the immediate capital area, but throughout the country. It will probably work out some way or another in the long run, but it is going to sacrifice a number of things. I think ultimately the fillibuster will have to be modified. Perhaps so, and I'm not sure that's good. The germaneness rule may have to be changed. That may be for the good or for the ill, I don't know. It depends on who's talking. But you're going to have to have some rules changes."

"It obviously makes senators much more sensitive to how they appear - their looks, where they are situated in the chamber, and ad infinitum. Once you let the television camel get its nose under the tent it's an all consuming passion that it has and everything has to yield to it. I fear in time that may greatly alter in subtle ways - that we can't for the moment foresee - alter in subtle ways the great institution of the United States Senate. So I was one of those who voted no."

What was the influence of Senator Jesse Helms on your decision to run for the United States Senate in 1980?

"He was certainly supportive of my effort in that race. I had been a strong supporter of his in 1972 and 1978, and so we ran a strong campaign in 1980 and we won."

What's been your working relationship with Senator Helms in the Senate.

"We've had a very cordial working relationship. I think most senators do, particularly those from the same party."

Are you involving yourself in the race to fill your seat in the Senate?

"Yes, I certainly am. I am a very strong supporter of Congressman [James] Broyhill [R-NC], the nominee of the Republican party for my seat. I'm a very strong supporter of him, yes. Prior to the Republican primary I had endorsed Mr. [Amb. David] Funderburk. Mr. Funderburk had announced and I knew him, knew he was an able man, and had endorsed him. Subsequently Mr. Broyhill entered the race. I did not take an active part in the campaign. I thought we had two fine candidates. Mr. Broyhill won that primary and he has my full endorsement and my full support. I think with the right handling of that campaign it can be won."

What about the general election in November?

"It will be a hard fought campaign on both sides. But Mr. Broyhill has had an extraordinary record of contribution and service in the House of Representatives, is

highly regarded in North Carolina and I think you're going to have a fascinating political contest."

Will you campaign?

"I will do as much as I can. I certainly will, and I'm strongly in the camp of Mr. Broyhill. I've done a number of things already and want to do everything I can within the limits of the demands placed upon me on trying to serve in Washington."

What are you going to do in January of next year after you leave the Senate?

"Well, I have a number of alternatives that I'm pursuing at this time, but I do not at the moment have a firm and final decision on that. That will come in due course."

Is academia under consideration?

"It is, and that of course is what I was doing prior to my election to the United States Senate and I have a great interest in it and a great affection for it."

What about politics?

"I'll always be tremendously interested in politics, because it has been in many ways, my whole life in terms of teaching and actually running for public office. There will always be a keen interest in it yes."

Will you stay in Washington or go back to North Carolina?

"I'll very likely go back to North Carolina, but I haven't made a final, categorical decision on what I'm doing. I'm weighing several alternatives, but I love North Carolina and there's an excellent chance I'll go back there."

What's the best part of being a member of the United States Senate?

"It's a challenging and exciting job, as one could imagine. I think the most exciting thing is the honor to have been here and to have been a part of this great institution. You obviously meet many, many people along the way in getting here from your state, and the nation and the privilege of knowing colleagues and others who are part of the federal government while you are here and members of the press. I suppose it's two things really that stand out in your mind. One is the honor to have been here and, two, the extraordinary number of fine people that you've met along the way and hope to keep your contacts with. So it's quite an excitement."

What is the worst part of being a member of the United States Senate?

"I suppose every senator would say you'd like to be able to have a little better control over your time and schedule. The demands are great, in terms of people want access. Whether it's your constituents at home or some other senator or congressman, or people who are part of the federal government - there's just never enough hours in the day to do all the things you'd like to do or, or more important, the things you feel you must do. So it's the demands on time that probably is the most unsettling aspect of the job. But then that's true of many jobs, so I don't know whether we have any particular right to lament that."

Would it be too much to say that when January comes, the voice of John East will not be heard in public debate again?

"No, I haven't said that at all. What I'm trying to do at this time is to concentrate on doing the very best I can to finish out my term. Then I'll face that challenge and those alternatives."