JACK KEMP
ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Interview with

JEFFREY A. "JEFF" KEMP

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Interviewer

Morton Kondracke

JACK KEMP FOUNDATION
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Morton Kondracke: This is a Jack Kemp oral history interview with Jeff Kemp, the eldest of Jack Kemp's children. Today is December 5, 2012; we're doing this at the Jack Kemp Foundation in Washington, DC, and I'm Morton Kondracke. Thank you, Jeff, for doing this. What would you say were your dad's foremost character strengths?

Jeff Kemp: [William J.] Bill Bennett coined the term "lift" to describe Dad, so I would say that is it, but lift means optimism, it means encouragement, it means vision casting. It means bringing people to a better place in the future, and giving them the vision and hope and encouragement for what they can be that maybe they don't ever realize. Dad brought that to all of us in the family, and he brought it to every audience he ever spoke to: he brought it to busboys and chefs in the back room of some hotel kitchen when he was supposed to be giving a speech to $1000-a-plate donors. He brought it to politics, he brought it to both parties. He definitely brought it to football, "We can do anything. Let's come together." So that really was kind of the word that I used to describe Dad. Passion was one of his great characteristics, intellectual curiosity, and he passed that on to us. We had conversations about ideas, and books were his food, and he was voracious, dog earing all the pages and reading papers like crazy. He loved his ideas, but he loved to spar to test his ideas. And he explored lots of other people's ideas, because he felt that it was a competition of ideas. The good ideas would win out, so you better be open to dialogue and debate. Intellectual curiosity and historical appreciation, to understand the big context, I think that was a great characteristic of his. His persistence, 'indefatigable' was his favorite word, and it was also a character trait of his hero [Winston] Churchill, and one of his. He wouldn't have made it in life, politics, football,

without that. I totally drew upon that and made it a part of my character that somehow helped me make it to the NFL [National Football League]—both my character and obviously Dad's encouragement. He was always saying, "Your day's going to come, your chance will be there. Be ready. You can do it. Think like a starter." And in my case God's providence of amazing blessings to overcome the odds and end up there, but Dad's encouragement.

Kondracke: Speaking of football and all that, both of you were NFL quarterbacks, or pro quarterbacks anyway, so what did he tell you about the role of the quarterback as leader?

Kemp: It was pretty clear that he thought that football was the greatest sport in the world, that quarterback was the greatest position. He never denigrated any other positions. He knew you needed everyone. Quarterbacks are nothing without linemen, and he made that sort of team interdependence clear. But he also said that someone has to take the risk, someone has to step up, someone has to caste the vision, someone has to have confidence when others are faltering or worried or fearful, and the demeanor you project in the huddle is critically important. You don't say, "Oh, they're big. The sleep play [phonetic] hasn't been working. I'm not sure if it will work this time." The persona of confidence that you impart to others, the vision that, "Hey, we're down three touchdowns. That's no big deal. We'll get 'em in the fourth quarter," or "We lost this game by 30 points, everyone booed us, we're in third place in the division, no problem. We'll win the next four games, win our division and go to the playoffs and we'll still win." That ever-optimistic persistent confidence is part of the quarterback's job. He talked a lot about the quarterback

needed to envision things, and sometimes I struggled with it. I tried lying in bed envisioning touchdown passes and fourth quarter rallies and drives down the field. He was a big believer in the power of optimistic thinking and visualization.

Kondracke: Did he tell you any stories about his own experience with picking up his team and having confidence be the deciding factor?

Kemp: One of my favorite stories—and he didn't tell it often—he wasn't really a bragger when it came to football. One of my favorite stories was a game in Buffalo, it was during the [Daryle] Lamonica-Kemp era when Dad was the starter but Lamonica was the highly touted and much-loved backup close-to-starter from Notre Dame [University], Catholic guy, big arm, young, could throw the bomb. My dad could throw the bomb as well. Dad could throw anything. And Dad was being booed. They were playing poorly. And they were in Buffalo, at home, being booed, and they were backed up, like on the five yard line trying to come out, and he was being booed for going back onto the field on this series, after the fans had hoped that in the next series they'd put in Lamonica. And when Dad came out they were booing and booed in the huddle, and they booed him coming out of the huddle, and they were booing at the line of scrimmage. I think the way Dad tells stories, there may be some hyperbole mixed in there, but it becomes true to us. And that's how you felt, they're all against you. That's just extra fuel for saying, "I'm not worried about that, but I'm going to show that I can do it." So he lets go on an audible, and throws against man-to-man coverage, hits his receiver, the ball's in the air, and while the ball's in the air going over the safety and the defense, the crowd is stopping their boos and turning to a kind

of anticipated quiet, and then all of a sudden when they see the receiver's open, the ball's going to hit him, they start cheering, and pretty soon the guy's running the next 50 yards for a touchdown and everyone's cheering. I think that's the quintessential story of the underdogs overcoming, and I know I lived for that, Dad lived for that.

Kondracke: Were you there?

Kemp: I could have been there. I don't remember it. I didn't go to all the games. I would bet that was in 1964 or so, so I probably wasn't there, and if I was, I was only five. There's a quarterbacking memory.

Kondracke: Did he ever recount any other of his greatest games?

Kemp: Greatest games, no. He told the story about being cut in the first game he ever played as a pro football player, after making the team supposedly. I think it was Pittsburgh Steelers in Los Angeles, at the Coliseum in front of his mom and his dad and his brothers and his family, and returning home to say, "Hey, the long shot has made it in the NFL. Here he is playing against his heroes, the [Los Angeles] Rams," and the coach, [Raymond] Buddy Parker warned him to punt the ball out of bounds, not punt it to Jon [D.] Arnett—we always remember 'Jaguar Jon Arnett'—and Dad kind of saying, "That's a warning for normal people. I'm not a normal competitor. I'm going to show them that I've got something special, so I'll punt it over his head. I'll gain our team some extra yards." And he punted it long, long, long, but the guy went back, caught it, and ran it back 95 yards for a touchdown. And when he walked to the bench, the coach said,

[an aside to office aide: "Thanks Emma."] Kemp, you're going to make a good kicker in this league some day, but not for us. You're cut." On the spot. Pretty brutal business. And that was in front of his family, so I remember that story. Not a whole lot of others.

Kondracke: How did he handle getting cut? He was cut five times. What did he tell you about the way to handle that sort of thing?

Kemp: Some of those were probably trades. He got cut by—

Kondracke: He didn't make it in Calgary [Calgary Stampeders].

Kemp: He was with the [Detroit] Lions, the [Pittsburgh] Steelers—

Kondracke: [New York] Giants.

Kemp: Giants. One of those was a trade, two of those were cuts. He didn't make it in Canada, there's a second cut. He got sold from [sic] the Bills through a kind of careless move that they really should have protected their star quarterback, but they had a young up and comer and they let him go, by taking a risk with the rules, and he got sold for a hundred bucks. So I guess it's fair to say that he hit a dead end many times, and he just kept going. And then a new league had to start for him to even get to play. And the question is what about that, Mort? What are you asking?

Kondracke: Just how did he handle it. I mean what lessons did he learn and how did he tell you to handle things like that, disappointments?

Kemp: He came in the league as the last draft pick, from the smallest-level school. So he was totally comfortable being the underdog, and I think I was as well. I came from a small school, not typically a pro-football draft breeding ground. And you really don't mind how far back you are, you just want to get a shot, and you figure, "Eventually I'm going to make it." And you're not going to let any knockdown prevent you from getting back up. Dad's always quoted that great quote about failure isn't getting knocked down; it's failing to get back up. It doesn't matter how many times you get knocked down. If you keep getting up, your day's going to come, you're going to rise. So, it was perseverance, and it was kind of some dogged confidence that my identity is wrapped up with being a quarterback, and I'm going to make it. And he had that. And he wrapped an awful lot up in football, too much. And many football players today would probably wrap too much up in football. Many times it's because they had an insecurity driven by not knowing their father, not having the affirmation of their dad. Dad had a neat father. But there were insecurities, I think, that drove Dad. He had all the brothers that were more intellectual than he, he had older brothers that were much bigger than him, taller, more accomplished in high school, went on to USC [University of Southern California], famous pitcher, better football player than Dad. He was [Thomas P.] Tom Kemp's little brother. Paul was really into arts and technology, and had great grades. Dad was a jock, didn't have as great grades or anything. Of course he went to a good school. And I don't know whether it's the way we're born or bred that shapes our insecurities. I ended up with a bunch of them, not because my dad made me insecure, but because my dad's status as a famous person made me

insecure. Apart from a really radical spiritual experience where someone finds out who they are and God loves them, and you're okay no matter what the world says about you, most of us are insecure. And I think Dad had a lot of insecurities that drove him, but the cool thing is he had this internal world and confidence that didn't need the immediate success to keep his batteries charged.

Kondracke: His insecurities, partly family insecurities, and then, I've been told a number of times that because he was a PE [Physical Education] major at Occidental [College]—

Kemp: Intellectual?

Kondracke: Yes.

Kemp: Well, and some would say in politics he was always quoting more history, more economists, more books, more stats than other people, and he was reading more, and he studied harder than most, not than all. And some of that was just a drive to succeed, but some of that was a drive to overcome the impression that you're a jock, not a statesman, not an economist. And the cool thing is, he didn't count on the title. He did it the old-fashioned way, he rolled up his sleeves and read books. He was very much like [Abraham] Lincoln in that regard, you know, self-educated. He didn't need to prove anything. But I think he was driven by some athletic insecurities. As a little brother, small guy, freckle-faced kid that kind of didn't had a spot yet in the world. And then politically he didn't want to be just thought of as an entertaining character and strong leader. He wanted to be

thought of as an intellectual leader of our nation with the ideas that could turn things around.

Kondracke: One aspect of leadership and quarterbacking is sort of maintaining aloofness from your players, not being part of the gang?

Kemp: Did he say anything to you about that ever?

Kondracke: No, but people have said that there was a certain aloofness there.

Kemp: To quarterbacks.

Kondracke: Yes. Well, to Jack Kemp. I mean, it was very hard to be intimate with Jack Kemp and that somehow people associated that. And I think I've even read somewhere that he said that you can't really be totally one of the guys. You've got to be, because you're the leader, sort of aloof.

Kemp: You've got to be, in his mind, above susceptibility to the emotional ups and downs and some of the game playing that the workers, the guys, are going through. They have to know that you're operating at a different level when they see you in that huddle. I don't believe that has to create an aloofness, per se, but it's common that it does, somewhat. And I think Dad probably saw that there was some need for staying above the fray so that they could look to you in a special way the way we look to George Washington on that horse. But I don't think he tried to cultivate that. I think his aloofness as it grew, perhaps, came more with achievement and the pride that comes from

achievement, that isolates you a little bit from people and lets you get away with it. The irony is he had a mix of that, and then a very good self-deprecating sense of humor in public. He also was very good at laughing at himself when I made fun of him, which you might not have thought he'd be able to, because he was thin-skinned in a number of other ways.

Kondracke: How did you make fun of him?

Kemp: I imitated his voice, I used his vocabulary and exaggerated on it, I did run-on sentences about 'I'm a Lincolnian, Churchillian, Lafferian, O.J. Simpsonian Republican'—

Kondracke: I'm going to ask you to do it at some point, anyway, so let's hear Jack Kemp.

Kemp: Oh, you're saying now's the time.

Kondracke: Yes.

Kemp: I would amalgamate all the crazy things he said, not crazy things, but the iconic things he said, the repeated clichés, his special phrases, into sentences like [imitating], "Here we are at dinner, in America, where a rising tide will lift all our boats to be anything God calls us to be, a mezzo soprano, a quarterback of Churchill High School, or perhaps a B student at Dartmouth College on his way to some day maybe making it to the pros. But remember that I am a Lincolnian, Churchillian, O.J. Simpsonian, Art Lafferian Republican." And I'd just throw all that together. I'd use the word 'inculcate' and

'indefatigable' in these run-on sentences, and we'd just get a kick out of it. Christmas time, sitting around the dinner table, that sort of thing. So he could laugh at himself in that way. You know, character, I mentioned his strengths, weaknesses-wise, I mean, insecurity and pride, I think, lead to all of our weaknesses, because we all have pride, but some of us denigrate ourselves because we worry so much about our self. There's a certain pride in that. Others over-inflate themselves out of insecurity, but it's still kind of going back to, "Boy, I'm important, and I've got to make the world feel good for myself." So he had some infatuation with finally being successful and significant, but that really—

Kondracke: In what way?

Kemp: That he wrapped up his identity in the ideas and achievements and impact that he made in the world more so than, "Let's strip all that away and we'll sit in this room, you and me, two people." And that's what sometimes made it harder to connect with him for people. He was very hugging and touching and encouraging and kind, and wasn't putting pressure on his kids and stuff, but we didn't get drawn into his personal struggles and intimate things, that you'd kind of like to. "What was it like when you were third string in high school, Dad?" "You lost that debate against Al Gore. How'd that feel?" He wouldn't avoid admitting that he lost it, but he'd want to get off the topic right away. It was like he always wanted the next chapter to come rather than maybe processing the past chapter. And there's some health in that, because some of us get trapped in the quagmire of looking for excuses and victimhood and blaming stuff on others, or we can dwell on our weaknesses, but I think there's also, you know, health in

transparently processing what really happened, and where I was wrong or where I was hurt and what I was feeling, and those were the chapters of his life that I yearn for, that came at the very end when he was facing tough things, and cancer being the peak of it. And I felt like he turned a corner in that regard in my relationship with him, so I look back on that bad time as a good time, because it allowed the relational depth and dropping of the guard, and there was no longer insecurity or pride or image, or worries about our imperfections or faults.

Kondracke: I want to get to that.

Kemp: He could be kind of obsessive about something.

Kondracke: Like?

Kemp: Like Michael [J.] Jordan basketball. And I think when he wasn't completely happy with how his political career or his personal living up to his standards was going, like [Robert M.] Rob Norris said at his funeral, that he was a wonderful man, but he faced some demons. And some of that kept him secret and hidden inside.

Kondracke: What were his demons?

Kemp: I think a lot of them were tied to this need for approval, and also not being able to candidly face what my weaknesses are and apologize. And they kind of build up. And Rob kind of left that to—it was like Dad wanted to be the very best possible person he could be for Mom and for us and for himself, for God, but he wasn't, and didn't

really know how to process that well. I don't think really understood the grace and forgiveness that Christian faith represents. That's what was exciting about the end, the sense that he had that, "Phew, I don't have to earn or fix or hide or perform. I'm loved, and not for a list of things I've done or achievement, et cetera, or bad things I've conquered or not done." So sometimes it would seem like he'd get obsessive on his ideas. You know, some would say he would obsessively just, "Tax rate reductions are going to change the moral code of America." And I heard the more full story. I knew what he thought about the comprehensive scope of history and that family matters so much, and social issues, like Bill Bennett understood, were very important. Dad had some good instincts about how to get to them. You weren't going to jam anything down people's throats, especially in America. But like Michael Jordan, I can't remember when his political career was starting to be on the wane a little bit, and it wasn't as fun to not be on the rise anymore, not be thought of as the next hopeful—

Kondracke: After '88, or what?

Kemp: Yes. I imagine that was it, and Michael Jordan was in his heyday. Dad would fly to Chicago or New York City, and go watch Jordan play basketball, and get ringside seats, and just love that. He was friends with [Donald] Don King, and he'd go to boxing matches, and those weren't things that—he had no time to be a fan early in his life. He was either a player or he was a doer, leader, politician.

Kondracke: So what was the Jordan thing about?

Kemp: It was a fun hoopla. This was one of the greatest in the world, and he liked watching it, he liked being close to it. I'm sure he met him. Anyone that was interesting he would meet, and they'd be interested in him, because Dad was big and passionate and interesting. He was almost compulsive over our sports games ourselves. "I'll give a speech, but you've got to have a private jet to get me to Dartmouth to get to the game on time." And I appreciate all that, but it was just like maybe over the top. So I was just trying to give you a balance of this passionate, excitable, encouraging, leadership-giving guy, that also had a quest to succeed, that when things weren't going as well, he could be compulsive toward either trying to succeed or distracting with something else when it wasn't going the way he wanted.

Kondracke: Were you expected to be a quarterback from day one?

Kemp: We never had any issues, because I loved quarterbacking. We threw the ball together as a little boy. That's something I loved doing with him, and he could tell, so he never thought that he was pushing it on me. He didn't really do very much crafting and coaching, planning of my career. We did switch high schools because it was clear that this kid that was a starter my sophomore year would get to be the starter for the next couple years. He had been ahead of me.

Kondracke: That was at [Walt] Whitman [High School]?

Kemp: Yes, and [Winston] Churchill [High School] had a really good football coach, and a really successful program, and we wanted to move homes, and that district, went into an area where we had a good

friend. He knew a Dow Chemical lobbyist named [Charles T.] Chuck Marck, and his son Charlie [phonetic] was a star on that team and was one of my friends. And I don't remember having talks about, "Hey, you'll have a better chance to play here" or anything, but that probably was in Dad's thinking, to help me have the opportunity, and so we moved to this other school, and it turned out. But I was third string my junior year. It might have looked like it was a bad move, because I was low on the depth chart on a really good team. But we played catch all the time, we talked about games, he taught me to throw with a good throwing motion, we threw on my knee. We'd play catch at Balboa [Island, California] on summer vacations, some of my best memories. And each summer I'd try to throw over, there'd be these little individual piers on these little rental homes, and we'd—

Kondracke: Balboa?

Kemp: Island in California, near Newport. And I'd throw the football over one pier to Dad on the other side, and then the next summer we'd see if I could throw it over two piers, and you know, if I could get to three piers I was really throwing it far, 50 years or something.

Kondracke: He threw it 90. How far could you throw it?

Kemp: I could throw 73, and that we could verify. Can we verify his 90? I'm not sure.

Kondracke: There is a story about how he was on the field, I think in Buffalo, and threw it into the upper deck.

Kemp: He could throw more than most any quarterback around. He had a rocket arm. When we were watching TV games, he would comment on showboating, and kind of denigrate showboating. "Hey, act like you've been there before." And maybe that's—

Kondracke: Like?

Kemp: If you score a touchdown, don't dance. Act like you've been there before. You know, like I expected to do this. And I've got to do it again next series, so this is just part of the job. I kind of took that same approach and kind of low-keyed it. Looking back on it ,I almost wished I was more exuberant. And we talked about play calling, and aggressiveness, risk taking. Boring play calling killed Dad. He wanted to see someone pass on first down and run the play fake on third and short, go for it in fourth down, be aggressive, give the offense all the tools and confidence. And I feel the same way. I don't like it when a coach sends signals that, "I don't have confidence in you guys." Dad wanted the team to have confidence. Now his era he was the play caller. It was normal men, for the most part, in normal bodies, getting paid fairly normally, playing for the love of the game. They were the best in the world even then. It's always been only the very few who were the best, who played in the NFL, but their bodies weren't freakish, for the most part. And the quarterback called the plays. The quarterback had more control. He ran more of the team, he had more influence. Dad was almost like a player-coach, to some degree. I was in an era when the coaches were more dominant, there were far more coaches on a team, they worked all year long to create their game plans and stuff, it was year-round, whereas Dad's group had jobs in the off season. My dad could really exert a lot of leadership, and the

players needed it, and he had some power with the coach. I remember Dad talking about [Louis H.] Lou Saban being down in the dumps, and not talking to the team for a week one time, and Dad went to his hotel room and knocked on his door and said, "Coach, you've got to talk to us. You're the coach." You know, it's like a minister that doesn't want to come to church. "They need you there. It's your job." And Dad talked him into that. Another time he wanted to bench Dad after they lost the first game of the year and thought that the season was over, and he said, "Coach, we just lost one game. I was your starter. I took us to the championship last year. I can take us there again this year. Don't worry, let's go." So, he had a lot of influences with coaches. I was more intimidated by the coaches, and I was also in an era when the coaches dominated things more and the quarterbacks called the plays that the coaches sent in, and as a backup quarterback it took a lot of guts for me to change the play, because I thought they may not like it, or I may be kicked out. Dad had guts more than I did in that regard relative to coaches. Some of it was the era, some of it was his personality. I was a first-born son that wanted to please my folks, please everyone. I'm not a typical first-born. I'm pretty bold and very impulsive, and not afraid to say things. I don't play a cutesy game, but I definitely wanted to please my parents and I wanted to please coaches. I did have a respect for authority.

Kondracke: So other than the size of the players and the fact that the coaches called the plays, what do you think the differences are in football between that time and when you played?

Kemp: The money is a big aspect, because each player's personality now is a part of a brand, his performance, his whole package, the way the draft is treated now, these days. And there are more prima donnas. There's a lot more pressure these days. The speed and the danger are higher now. And it was more when I played than when Dad played, and it's more now than it was when I played. The complexity of it has gone up to where you have got to devote 80 hours a week as a quarterback to knowing your stuff. And Dad was bright, he knew how to pick up a defensive par [phonetic], but he wasn't afraid to take risks and throw interceptions. Back then great quarterbacks had more intersections than touchdowns, because they were always taking risks. [Robert A. "Bob"] Griese and Dad and [Leonard R. "Len"] Dawson and [Joseph W. "Joe"] Namath, you know. Today quarterbacks are so disciplined, and they know all the statistics, how important it is to avoid interceptions. And their study of the other team, game film, is really intense. It's more demanding now than even then, but when you're on the field it's still pretty pure, it's still football.

Kondracke: He went to all your games, 90 percent of them?

Kemp: Yes.

Kondracke: So from the time that you were at Churchill all the way through. How did he behave at the games? Did he pace the sidelines, did he sit in the stands? How did he—

Kemp: I think he would pace occasionally, but not right on the sidelines to where he would interfere with coaches or be visible to

players. He may have to take a walk or something if he was frustrated by the play calling or something. He would sit in the front row at the Harvard [Stadium], with this eight-foot, 10-foot cement wall around the stadium, and I know from everyone that had ever seen him that he'd rubbed his slacks and wear down the tops of them from nervousness. And he was more nervous for me playing or [James P.] Jimmy [Kemp] playing than he was for himself, but that's not that uncommon. I felt the same thing with my kids to some degree, but not as intensely. I could remember the tapes of my dad, so I could kind of calibrate, tell myself, "Hey, chill a little bit, Jeff."

Kondracke: What do you mean by that?

Kemp: Just to be calm and not get overly nervous around your kids' performance. He was intense. I remember one time it was frustrating him that Dartmouth versus Harvard, we weren't moving the ball well, and part of the reason was that our coverage was deep, and we were trying deep routes. And he said, "They're playing so far off. You should just take the ball and throw it to [David D.] Dave Shula on a hitch or a quick out." So I'm on the sidelines and he's saying, "Take the quick out, take the quick out!"

Kondracke: Now where is he?

Kemp: He's in the first row of the stands, you know, 30 yards away.

Kondracke: And you can hear him yelling at you?

Kemp: Twenty yards away. And I said something like, "Be quiet. I know." And I did end up taking the quick out and it ended up helping. It was good advice. But I mean all the parenting and coaching books would say for parents to stay out of the game and just tell the kid they look great in the car ride home. But I didn't have problems with my dad at all. He was awesome overall. That was more a humorous story. He was not an intrusive dad, but he was intensely a fan.

Kondracke: So if you did something right, you'd hear it from the stands?

Kemp: I don't remember really hearing him yell, "Way to go Jeff" or anything. He didn't make a spectacle of himself.

Kondracke: If he went to a game, did he attract attention?

Kemp: Yes, he attracted attention. He brought [Alvin R.] Pete Rozelle to a game one time at Columbia, and had other people with him to watch games.

Kondracke: So did he become a focus of attention at these games?

Kemp: Moderately so, I mean—

Kondracke: Television camera switch to Jack Kemp in the stands?

Kemp: In the NFL they'd locate him, they'd have him up in the booth at halftime sometimes when I'd play. It never became excessive or bothered me. And Dave Shula and I asked questions frequently at

Dartmouth about the father shadow, you know, "What's it like being Don Schula's son?" Well I think it was a bigger deal being Don Schula's son than Jack Kemp's son, because Don was still in football, he was a Super Bowl coach. Schula was just like an icon in all of football. But Dad was a big deal in Congress and football, so I had my own cloud of expectation that I'd be a leader, that I'd be a success. That was probably the only option for me, that I could anticipate. Dad didn't really tell me that, Mom didn't tell me that, but I viewed life that way. I think my being a pro athlete, and not as huge a figure, or star, as my dad, it's still been a big deal to my kids. And I've kind of gone out of my way, knowing what it was like under his shadow, to let them know, "Dude, you are awesome. You know yourself, you don't have to play or impress me." And I tell them about the silly things I did and mistakes I made, and kind of reduce the pedestal, so to speak. Dad didn't add to the pedestal any, but people would say, "Oh, you're Jack Kemp's son. You should be a good quarterback." You know, that kind of thing. I even had a son of mine get drafted first in a baseball draft, just because his name was Kemp, and I was a [Seattle] Seahawks quarterback, and he was terrible at baseball. They got him on the team, he's big, he's fast, he can throw hard, but he's terrible. The kid throws it all over the place, he's uncoordinated, he can't hit, but they just assumed the kid's going to be great.

Kondracke: So did he talk about his mistakes?

Kemp: He told those funny stories.

Kondracke: Did he coach you while you were a player? Churchill, Dartmouth?

Kemp: No, he was never a Little League coach, and we'd occasionally talk about looking out for the blitz, or you've got to step into that pass, or something, can't throw it off your back foot. Moderate little things like any dad would probably say to his son, but I believed what Dad said.

Kondracke: No big critique after games?

Kemp: No big critique after games, no. He was positive. He was proud.

Kondracke: What did he think about your going to Dartmouth as a football position?

Kemp: Well, we tried to go to ACC [Atlantic Coast Conference] schools. He drove me down the coast, and we visited coaches, and he knew coaches, and they were all polite to Dad, but I wasn't high enough caliber to play at those places, so I ended up going to Dartmouth, which was one of the Ivys that recruited me, and about the largest level that I could make it, and it was obviously the best education of any of the schools I looked at. And I think Dad ended up being really proud of that. He thought Dartmouth was cool. It was a cool, macho male atmosphere of three-to-one guy-to-girl ratio back then. They had history, and obviously he valued the fact that it was a strong academic environment and that I'd be tested and prepared well for life. I think by the end of college he wasn't thinking I was going to go pro. I was not touting that or mentioning that. I was hiding, I was kind of sandbagging, because I didn't want my dreams to appear

foolish to people, and then be disappointed when I didn't make it. So I really hadn't been talking to Dad about pro football. I was a good quarterback, but I wasn't great, and there was not much likelihood I'd be drafted, and of course I wasn't. I was lucky I even got scouted. The Rams happened to be in town, and sent a scout over to watch a Brown [University] game, my best game ever, and so when I called Dad from the pay phone at Beta fraternity house at Dartmouth to tell him that Jack Faulkner had called me from the Rams to sign me to a free agent contract, and that I'd negotiated him up from $500 to a $1,500 signing bonus, that wasn't the big deal. The big deal was that I was going to get a chance. When I told him that and he heard the excitement in my voice, he was thrilled. I think he'd given room for me not to want to be a pro quarterback, though he would have loved for me to be a pro quarterback.

Kondracke: So it wasn't as much of an obsession with you as it was with him when he was at Occidental. That was his whole life. He was going to do it.

Kemp: No. I didn't work hard enough to get it. I mean, if it really was an obsession, I would have worked harder and harder. I worked pretty hard, you know? But I wasn't willing to be the fool who said "I'm going to make it to the NFL." I wasn't willing to be [Daniel E.] Rudy [Ruettiger] at Notre Dame. Dad was willing to be Rudy. I worked hard, but a little bit behind the scenes. I wouldn't tell people my intentions to make it to the NFL. So when I revealed them to Dad, and my enthusiasm, he was thrilled. He said wow, he was surprised that I had that much passion in me. But some of that was a function

of being this famous dad's little brother, or, excuse me, this famous dad's little son, and just the way I processed it.

Kondracke: What kind of life lessons did he take from his experiences as a pro?

Kemp: See the big picture. You don't let one game or one loss or one interception define things at all. You see the big scope. If he was a general he'd be like [Ulysses S.] Grant, "Hey, we lost six battles. We're going to win this war." He saw the long scope, he saw history, he saw a vision. You know we love that quote, I got it from him, the Jonathan Swift quote, "Vision is the art of seeing what is invisible to others." That's the quarterback's job. Dad felt that was the coach's job. He felt that was the secretary of Housing and Urban Development's job, he felt that was the president's job, or the presidential nominee or a candidate. You need to have vision that lifts people to the future, and helps them see more of what's possible. [Ronald W.] Reagan was a great political visionary that Dad loved. And Lincoln's speeches, Jefferson's Declaration, that's quarterbacking in his mind. So the quarterback has to see the big scope. That lesson came through. Secondly, "You're a Kemp, be a leader." Jennifer [Kemp Andrews], Judith [Kemp Nolan], [James P.] Jimmy, we all heard it. Every time we walked out the doors, "Remember, you're a Kemp. Be a leader."

Kondracke: What did that mean?

Kemp: What that meant was live up to your high standards, live up to your potential, make a difference, don't follow the crowd. I think it

was probably a parenting phrase for "make good choices and don't compromise." Don't go out and drink and get drunk and do dumb stuff, don't mess around with girls and get yourself in a bad spot or treat someone wrong. But I took it, I know it meant that. Stacy [Kemp]'s dad would say "Be safe" when she left the house. So from a parenting standpoint, "Be a leader" meant God has a big purpose for your life. Stay on that path. Don't deviate to lesser activities or efforts. Don't think small; think big, think well, think correctly, think optimistically. Over the course of life I knew that 'be a leader' meant use you life to make a difference for others. Help chart the path, don't follow the crowd. If everyone's saying it and it's wrong, be willing to speak up against it. [unclear]

Kondracke: Did all of that get spelled out?

Kemp: Parts of it did, but no, it did not get spelled out. It was an amalgam of all the different dinner conversations and certain Bible verses that he liked, "Trust the Lord with all your heart," "Lean not on your honors and understanding and all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will direct your paths." "Be like a light shining on the hill." "You're the salt and light of the earth. Let your good works shine before men in such a way that they will give glory to your God," or something like that, I think that's in the New Testament somewhere. "So let your light shine," which meant love, lead, inspire.

Kondracke: You talked about all this at dinner.

Kemp: Yes.

Kondracke: Life lessons at dinner.

Kemp: Sometimes in the car, on the way home from church, dinner time a lot, on the chair lift, after games. A lot of it came to us in JFK-grams. There'd be a little inspirational phrase, maybe a quote from Lincoln, maybe a Churchill quote. Obviously "Never give in" has been quoted frequently. And then maybe a scripture, and often "Be a leader."

Kondracke: How often did you get a JFK-gram?

Kemp: There were times in life when you might be getting them every couple of months. Other times one or two a year. In college I'd get them in the mail. High school you'd get them sitting on your car, the seat of your car, he'd slip one in. My sisters got them in pillows sometimes. And then they turned into letters later in life. When I went to football Dad and I would write long letters back and forth together.

Kondracke: Do you have those?

Kemp: Yes, I do.

Kondracke: I'd like to see some of those.

Kemp: Okay.

Kondracke: Injuries and playing hurt. He got injured a lot. I don't know if you did, but what was his attitude toward injuries, playing hurt?

Kemp: Well, you can't be indefatigable if you let an injury stop you. I saw him with a cast on in 1968, blew his knee out, and he came back and played in '69. We've all heard the political stories about "I've been knocked out 11 times, broke my shoulder twice, my finger eight times," this, that. He played through pain. That's part of leading, that's part of football. A lot of the linemen endured worse stuff than Dad, at quarterback, but one of the things that endears you to the linemen, the people who do the tough work all game long, is that you're willing to put your body on the line, play with an injury, go into the pile and stick your nose in it, not run out of bounds to protect yourself. I was in Shea Stadium, 1969. Dad's in his last season, I'm 11. Mom took me. We're sitting in the stands and he's running down the sidelines. Doesn't duck out of bounds, middle linebacker hits him. He takes him on. You wouldn't do that today. The coach would be mad at you for that. Dad was knocked out. He was out cold, laying in the mud for minutes, not moving, and he went to the hospital, spent the night. You know that's one of the infamous jokes that he tells. Came into being that the papers in Buffalo read, "X-rays of Kemp's hear reveal nothing" the next morning. And I've used that joke. I've had the same x-rays of my head, and I was able to play the next week, so in essence it did reveal nothing, but it's a great play on words and a fun way to make fun of yourself at the beginning of a speech or something.

Kondracke: So that's like the commander leading troops into battle. You've got to do it fearlessly.

Kemp: Yes. Toughness.

Kondracke: How did he handle losing and especially his own mistakes and other people's mistakes, both football and otherwise?

Kemp: He hated to lose, but he didn't brood on it. He remembers seeing coaches who brooded on it, stewed, sank in depression. Saban was that way. And I don't know if Dad learned by observing how dumb that was. I think Dad grew up in a Christian Scientist family; Mom is Presbyterian, he joins the Presbyterian Church. He maintains what he can't help but maintain, a mental framework drawn from his optimistic metaphysical 'think well and be well' outlook on life. Think good thoughts, things will go well. He can't help but—what question am I trying to apply this to?

Kondracke: Well this was injuries, but to losing.

Kemp: Oh, losing. Yes, he can't help but think, "This is but a temporary distraction to the ultimate goal. We will win next week. We will turn around in the fourth quarter. We'll win next season." That's one of the great things, to be that intensely competitive in the moment, which he was. You know what he was like speaking to an audience, in the moment, he was completely, absolutely, totally there. "Jack, you're five minutes till your plane." "Tough." He speaks for 20 more minutes and they barely get to the plane, which means he accomplished his goal of wasting as little time in airports as possible,

and just landing in that plane when the door closes. He was all there, but it's a great skill to be able to be all there in the moment and then not sink to the depths of depression afterwards, because you're seeing the next chapter, the whole story. That was one of Dad's great visionary gifts. And history helped him with that. He looked at history. Look at Lincoln's history. I think Dad drew from that sort of defeated, defeated, defeated, defeated, defeated; finally wins. Or Churchill's "wilderness, wilderness, wilderness, on top, and then wilderness, and then on top.

Kondracke: He didn't chew out players who ran the wrong route or missed a block, or—

Kemp: He didn't stew on people. He would, I think, point someone out. I know he got upset with Sharon [Zelaska] when something went wrong, or with Mom when things went wrong. That was character disappointment, "I can't believe this. How can you let that happen?" And he's kind of blowing off steam, more so than attacking the person, but it could feel like an attack if you didn't know him. I think he was very careful not to do that to us, and I think my mom allowed him to be a great dad, which he really was, but she gets a huge assist in setting him up to be a great dad. And he did a lot of his parenting through her, like discipline and stuff. He'd make comments to her about things we were doing wrong, and if it really got serious then it would be him. I got spanked in second grade for convincing my sister I'd died jumping off the trampoline, and making her cry and run home. And that was more than Mom alone could deal with, and she told him when he came home, and he explained to me how totally wrong it is to hurt your little sister that way and not be truthful, and I got a bare-

handed, bare-bottomed spanking. And I don't think I got many spankings from him. Several, that one probably being one of the last.

Kondracke: So it stopped at little kid stage.

Kemp: Little kid, oh yes. I remember him being frustrated with me, but never criticizing me or being angry with me. It was more kind of when things became inconvenient to him, "Everything should work out for me because I'm doing something so important." And he'd lose sight of the person next to him being a person, as opposed to an assistant to him getting things done. That was where some of these maniacal, goal-oriented stuff could—lose his temper and say something brief and cutting to Mom, or to his assistant. He wouldn't do that with opponents in the political sphere.

Kondracke: That's one question I've asked a number of people. Here he is, he's highly competitive, he's a veteran of the most violent sport there is, where people hit each other all the time, and yet he could never hit an opponent. How do you account for that?

Kemp: There's a certain decorum to the sport where you respect the guys on the other side in football. I think a quarterback especially does. You may find some middle linebackers that just hate people, but a quarterback, he is using his mind and his personality and obviously his body to try and strategize and out-maneuver the other side. But you're shaking hands afterwards, and you're respecting them, and, you know, you get traded from team to team too. It's all one big league. You need each other to play the game. And I felt like he had a fundamental idea that people were not opponents; ideas

were, in politics, and he didn't really lock someone down to the ideas they espoused, as always being stuck with those ideas, that they can be changed. Like Lincoln said you can turn an enemy into a friend and he's not an enemy anymore. Dad saw some of that from Lincoln, but I think from football he had this magnanimous good sport philosophy that he took in too. And I think he saw Democrats and Republicans actually as being on the same team, fighting the problems of America rather than fighting each other to see who gets elected. He wasn't perfect. He'd get more mad at Republicans than Democrats because he wanted Republicans to win so they could advance their ideas, and when they didn't advance the ideas, well, it bothered him like crazy. It's like yelling at a lineman for not getting his block, and I'm sure Dad was tougher, probably, on his linemen than I was.

Kondracke: We've covered a little bit of this, but what was it like growing up with a famous father?

Kemp: Fun. Went to the stadium on Saturdays in Buffalo. Paul [L.] McGuire and [Orenthal J.] O.J. Simpson and [Edward J. A.] Eddie Rutkowski and [Charlton C.] Cookie Gilchrist and those guys. Cookie gave me a train set for Christmas, and other players were friendly to me. They'd come over and play bumper pool at Dad's house. Dad had Buffalo Bill rookies lead my birthday party, come home and lead us in games, races, relays, contests, throwing contests, speed races. For one of my birthdays he brought two rookies home. Kind of made them feel part of a veteran's family, and made me and my friends have a great time with these rookies organizing these games.

Kondracke: What exactly was his relationship with O.J. Simpson? They just played one season together.

Kemp: One season together, and O.J. complained that Dad threw too much that year. I read that in the book, *O.J. Simpson: Education of a Rich Rookie*, which talked about Dad. I read the chapters about Dad a lot, and he talked about Dad reading books on the plane. He really respected Jack, but he thought he was pass happy, threw the ball too much. Probably should have been giving them to O.J. Probably the case. And then Dad was from L.A. [Los Angeles, California] and O.J.'s from L.A., so they had that in common. Dad's brother went to USC and Dad loved USC and O.J. went to USC, so they were friendly and got to know each other. Then they stayed in touch through the years. Dad was in touch with [James N.] Jim Brown, I remember, and when there were riots in L.A. Jim Brown has worked with the Crips and the Bloods [Los Angeles street gangs] was the security for Dad going in to places that Maxine [M.] Waters wouldn't go, and was upset that Dad did go. And that was just like Dad feeling like, "If there's a fight in the locker room, man, I've got to go in there and heal it, because I know these guys. I'm going to help them." And we know he identified with the underdog. And we know that his religious, political philosophy was the gospel of the good shepherd, leave none behind. So African-Americans going through the civil rights movement, seeing them say, "We're not going to play in New Orleans. They won't let us go into the same hotel," or my dad said, "You're not going to play the games? We support you. We won't either." So they moved it to Houston. Going through all that, he was an underdog, and I think he viewed many immigrants, and especially African-Americans, because of slavery and discrimination and prejudice, as underdogs. So he was a hyper-buddy

to them. And O.J. was one of those success stories and talented guys that he enjoyed.

Kondracke: That's when you were a kid, and then through Churchill and Dartmouth and so on—

Kemp: People expected a lot of me, and there was a little bit of, you know, it was helpful sometimes, because they'd let me have leadership positions. But then if I was little and couldn't play yet, then it would be a little surprising. "Oh, he's not that good yet." The expectations were more in my head of what everyone thought of me. My own self-centered little psychosis. For the most part it was good. It was fun to have the attention, it was fun to have the role model of my dad having been a quarterback and being a persevering quarterback, and knowing that, "I don't have to be great right away. It took him a long time. I can do it too." I think it got you looked at some, and I got looked at in the pros maybe more, because they knew my dad from having coached him. The guy actually coached Dad who scouted me. There was no way I was going to make the team unless I was good, but they could afford to take a look at me because they noticed the name Kemp, so that's helpful. It was funny, you know, guys called me Senator. Jackie [R.] Slater, who's in the Hall of Fame, big tackle on the Rams, great guy. He and the guys, Dennis [W.] Harrah on the Rams, used to joke, call me Senator when I'd walk in the huddle, occasionally, because I'd hear as this rookie occasionally gets in the huddle, "Oh, the Senator's here." So it was just funny. I was kind of a caricature to them. An Ivy League kid, they'd try to use big words around me and stuff.

Kondracke: Talking about your family life, are there certain memories of your family life that just blaze out at you?

Kemp: Yes. I'd have memories of reciting poetry about positive thinking and achieving and leading that I memorized. I don't know if Dad gave me a poem and I'd memorize it, or if I found it and I memorized it, but he encouraged it, and promoted it, and would have me stand up in front of the table when we'd have guests, and, "Jeffer, say your poem." And I'd recite my poem. It was something like "Invictus." I don't think it was that one, but it was something along those lines . And also my great vacation memories. Dad was great to gather our family together once we all grew up, and get us back together at Vail [Colorado], but we did it when we were a young family, and they'd scrape the money together and go to Vail or Snowmass [Colorado] was where we went the most in the first years. He got in early at this new little ski resort outside of Aspen [Colorado]. So we'd have these ski vacations with other family friends. We'd all wear yellow hats and yell "Yogi Berra" to each other on the chairlifts, kind of a big team of families. And that was fun. Going on the chairlift with my dad, knowing that I impressed him and that he was proud of me as a skier, because I was a really good skier. He got me started racing and stuff. Going to the ski store in Buffalo, in Williamsburg, to his friend Donny Sharis' [phonetic] ski store, and seeing all the cool skis and knowing Dad was going to get me some for Christmas, maybe a little version of the cool Rossignols [brand skis] that he had, because he always had the best skis. That was fun, time with Dad alone. Throwing the football in Balboa Beach, especially alone time with Dad, was awesome, and those summer vacations. I went to Congress. When he went to Congress in '70, I was kind of thrown out of my

comfort zone in Buffalo into a cosmopolitan, more mature area, and I didn't have dodge ball or my little touch football skills as a calling card anymore. I was just a new kid, and Dad used to take me to Congress and he'd have me go on the floor with him sometimes. I'd meet all the Congressmen; take me on the Senate floor. He would show me around the building and let me go free, and I'd find my way through the Capitol underground to the gym. You couldn't do this today I don't think, but I'd just work out at the gym on my own. Take saunas, Jacuzzis, lift the weights, play racquetball, paddleball, test out every machine possible. [William S.] Bill Cohen and I used to play not exactly racquetball, I think it was paddleball against the wall, together. And he remembers me from when I was a little kid there. So being brought to Dad's office, checking out all the things on his wall, the pictures and trophies and gifts from other leaders and stuff. Those are good memories.

Kondracke: What's dinner like at the Kemp household? Just coming back to the point about your dad feeling like an underdog with the African-Americans. What was that about?

Kemp: Well, I said he was a champion of the underdog, and I said that as the third boy in a family of four successful boys, and little brother to Tom, he felt like an underdog. And then he goes to Occidental and wants to go to the NFL? He's an underdog. You know, 17th-round draft pick? He's an underdog. He's cut, he's traded, he's cut, he's rejected in Canada, the NFL can't accept him with the [San Francisco] 49ers, a new league starts, he scrambles over to that new league, he makes it for two years, they take a risk, not quite valuing him enough perhaps, and he's sold for a hundred bucks because he's

picked up by another team when they put him on a waiver wire. So his career was a come-from-behind, persevere, persevere, persevere, overcome-the-odds type of Horatio Alger story, so he identifies with the underdog, (A). (B), he grows up in L.A., heavily Jewish culture, sees different minorities than most people in America are seeing regularly, and sees blacks and not always treated well, but treated really well by his dad, and gets to hang out with them and have lunch with them because he's on the docks, working with these shipping and truck drivers. And Dad's grandpa, my grandpa, wouldn't allow Dad to have lunch with him and his uncle in the office. He would eat with all the rest of the workers. That only made sense to my grandpa. He did the same with his other sons. You guys are learning to work and you're part of the workforce. And I think they really valued the mixing of my dad and his brothers with the people from all walks of life and different races that worked for them. Then you go into the NFL and you see the racial challenges our country's going through during the civil rights uprising to straighten out some stuff we'd left aside for over a hundred years, and Dad really learned and identified, empathized, and made good friends with, felt comfortable with. And then football, you're brothers with everyone on the team, and since so many guys are black, you have a comfort zone that maybe is lacking from other folks running businesses, or political leaders in the country, and you naturally kind of have a yearning to support the underdog. I'm not saying anyone else wouldn't have done it as well as Dad under the same circumstances, but those same circumstances helped drive Dad toward that passion.

Kondracke: Did he use his position as president of the AFL Players Association to hasten integration in any way in pro football?

Kemp: Integration? I don't know that there was any particular issue that came up with that. John Mackey was the NFL Players Association; Dad was the AFL Players Association president. Mackey was black, Dad was white. And those two guys talked and merged the unions together and gave players a more united voice. I think they did that before the leagues joined. But I don't know, I've never heard anything about any particular racial issues of change this policy or change that policy.

Kondracke: There was that all-star game in New Orleans.

Kemp: That was going back a few years earlier, where the black players on the all-star team in the AFL said we don't want to play in this city of New Orleans that won't let us be in the same restaurants and hotel. And the rumblings were going around, and Dad as the captain of the team found out what was going on and how serious they felt about it, and he said, "We're with you. We support you." An example had been set for him by [Sidney] Sid Gilman, who had taken, I remember Dad was sitting next to Gillman one time and he said "Jack, where are all the black guys?" And they were up in the balcony, Dad said. And when Gillman heard that, because of the segregation, he said, "Come on." And Dad got up with Gillman and they all walked out. So he'd seen some appropriate public display of leadership in the face of injustice.

Kondracke: Are there any other incidents of Jack's leadership on the racial question?

Kemp: Not that come to mind.

Kondracke: Okay.

Kemp: Just an aggressive desire to include and go out of his way to highlight leaders that he thinks are making a difference, or call up African-American players. He was very supportive of some who had troubles.

Kondracke: Cookie.

Kemp: Yes.

Kondracke: Right. Back to family life. So dinner. Dinner is a major event, I gather, at the Kemp family.

Kemp: Yes, I give Mom and Dad both credit, him for wanting us to be at the table with him and for the conversations that we had; Mom for flexing to make sure that she waited long enough to have dinner so that he would be home and we would be with him. And she also flexed, you know he'd call her and say, "I'm bringing such and such home," and she'd scramble together some food. Macaroni and cheese was not beneath serving to Senators at the Kemp house, but it was always something that Joanne cooked, and there was always garlic bread, there would always be a conversation that Dad would not let be an adult-only conversation. He would include the kids. I specifically remember Jeane [J.] Kirkpatrick being at dinner, and Dad saying to me when I was 12 or 13, maybe 14, "Hey, Jeane, could you explain détente to Jeff and the kids?" What 14-year-old was interested in

détente, or could pronounce it? We weren't. But he was bringing us into the world of ideas, the adult world. I share parenting talks and fathering talks through my career, and one of the great things I talk about is that your job as a parent is to give your kids a compass, and a compass is how to find their way in the world, and the way to find your way in the world is you bring kids into the adult world early. Take your kid to work like Dad brought me, both to football and to Congress. Bring people home to your dinner table, and then make sure the conversation includes the kids, and let them be a part of it. He urged me to recite poetry at the dinner table, and that kind of got me ready to be in front of people. I wasn't afraid to speak. So Dad did a good job of giving me a vision and a compass and getting me ready for an adult world, and he did that with all of his kids, at the dinner table, largely.

Kondracke: Any other famous visitors that you remember particularly?

Kemp: We had Wendell Wilkie Gunn, an African-American economist, I believe; and Jude [T.] Wanniksi was one of the frequent guests, with vigorous economic talks. And I mean I got supply-side far before I went to Dartmouth, and it was just coming out, and I would get to debate it in classes, but I'd learned it from [Arthur B. "Art"] Laffer and Wanniski and Dad.

Kondracke: Talk about Wanniski a little bit. What kind of a guy was he, and what was his relationship to your dad?

Kemp: They were both passionate for ideas, and they were both creative, and Jude was like hyper-creative. And Dad really loved Jude's creative intellect, and that he would be a risk-taker, like he would throw a bomb with ideas and testing things and coming up with policy prescriptions that could unlock American potential.

Kondracke: He wanted your dad to run for president against Reagan, for heaven sakes. That would have been a bomb.

Kemp: You know, he loved Dad, and Dad sometimes was too susceptible to loving people that loved him. And one of the most fun ways that I made fun of him, and Dad allowed this, which is another one of Dad's great characteristics. But in pointing out what I thought was one of his weaknesses, was that he let his importance and success and achievements and ideas and notoriety become kind of fused with his personality sometimes. And when he would describe someone to us that loved supply-side, empowerment, freedom-oriented politics, or particularly the Kemp-Roth bill [Economic Recovery Tax Act of 1981], or the enterprise zone bill, or homeownership or something, he would describe someone that he just met, [imitating] "I met the ambassador to Zaire. Great guy, loves me. Great guy, loves me." And so that would be the way I'd make fun of Dad. "Don King, great hair, loves me." And even O.J. You know O.J. loved Dad. Dad would see by his faults. I'm not saying he excused any of that, but he just loved the people that loved him for his ideas, and he'd kind of fuse those together sometimes. Sometimes they like you for your fame; sometimes they like you for the power you provide.

Kondracke: Did he get confused about why people loved him?

Kemp: He was very astute politically. He was less ambitious, which was his biggest problem, politically. He was ambitious in one way, to be significant and make a mark, but the political ambition to pay any price, sacrifice time with your family, not being around Mom or make Mom have to do crazy things, subject the family to outrageous scrutiny and stuff, skip our games, turn all his friends into fundraising relationships, those things he didn't like. Toughen up and make his message more harsh because political consultants recommend you do so—all that stuff hurt him. Maybe he wasn't even that disciplined, because he liked so many things. They said he was Johnny One Note with economics, but he loved history, he loved lots of topics. He'd want to talk about Soviet Jewry or the gold standard, and be, quote, off message. I don't know how I got into that.

Kondracke: It was about dinner.

Kemp: Yes, it was about dinner. Great guy. Yes, Jude Wanniski, yes, and he loved that Jude was a character and that he would throw the bomb and that he was creative, and that he would challenge things and debate.

Kondracke: So did Wanniski and your dad and [Robert D.S.] Bob Novak have a kind of cabal going? Did you know Novak too?

Kemp: I knew Novak, but I wasn't aware of the political background stuff going on until I really got out of, later in my football career. I wasn't really paying attention to the strategies of all that.

Kondracke: What was the division of labor in parenting between your dad and your mom?

Kemp: Dad talked and Mom worked. Dad would read papers, watch all the news shows simultaneously, and Mom would run the household, get the yard raked. I mowed the lawns, I raked, we bailed water in the basement one time when it was flooding, and he walked in, I don't know if you heard this story. He was upset walking in after a flash rainstorm and then it had stopped raining, and he gave it about a half hour to go to the tennis courts, which he could walk through the fence to the school next to our house, and try to play tennis. And he came home frustrated. My wife was on her first visit to see my family as my fiancée, maybe not even my fiancée but just a girlfriend. And we're all bailing water out of a flooding crawl space in the basement. I'm up in there giving buckets to people that are doing a Chinese fire drill and dumping it. And Dad walks in in his white tennis shorts, and says, "Dangit. The courts aren't dry. What are you guys doing?" "Bailing water." "Oh," and goes upstairs and starts reading the *Times* and watching games.

Kondracke: He didn't do chores.

Kemp: He didn't do chores. He didn't do chores, no. Early on in life he must have done some, but he just eventually he'd chuckle and say "Somebody's got to concern themselves with saving the world. Someone has to handle the big things. That's what I'm doing."

Kondracke: That's a little selfish, isn't it?

Kemp: Yes, oh yes. Narcissistic, even. But accepted in the dynamic of our family. He'd do other things that we thought compensated for it. The affirmations, the hugs, the kisses, the love, the desire to be with us, the big efforts he'd make to leave political events. He skipped a ton of social stuff, the parties and stuff that Congress had. He would come home.

Kondracke: So, people have described your mom as his ground. What does that mean?

Kemp: Grounding agent.

Kondracke: Grounding agent, yes.

Kemp: You know Dad had a great idealism as to how he could live under God's goodness and His blueprints and His love, His truth, and he kind of had this distance from the Christian Science family upbringing, even though he loved his family and respected them and felt kind of bad that he wasn't practicing that, I'd call it an intellectual system based off Christianity, but I wouldn't call it faith in Jesus per se. It's more of an intellectual approach to life, very metaphysical. But he left that and got involved in Mom's church, and then it became his church, but there were times when he'd bounce back and forth, especially under pressure for the presidential thing and wanted God's help and blessings and stuff. And I think Mom kind of lived what he wanted to live, spiritually. He could say it very beautifully for a church's banquet or Athletes in Action or Fellowship or Christian Athletes or the Christian Journalists' convention. You can read his speeches, and you couldn't see it articulated much better by [Michael

D.] Mike Huckabee or someone, who's a Christian minister. But obviously he didn't practice it in the way he would not serve in the family, and I think he kind of knew he wasn't a servant that way, but he just got comfortable letting others take care of the dirty work, losing his temper, being kind of selfish. I think he knew that he, to some degree was egotistical and not happy about it, but he had to be a success to get his ideas across. So anyway, Mom practiced humility and servanthood and prayer, and grasped a whole lot of the scriptures, and folded it into her natural life, and could talk about it naturally, and could talk about "I messed up. Will you forgive me? I know God forgave me and I'm growing through this." That was all natural and comfortable for her. And for him—

Kondracke: Was she the values person, or both of them?

Kemp: They both were values people, pro-life, Soviet Jewry, treating people right, like in the civil rights era, the family, the importance of the family; that sex is something God made powerful but it's really designed to go with marriage, and that all the things we've done from a revolution standpoint to kind of make everything an a la carte item, Dad and Mom both saw those as dehumanizing and not healthy. The American family was probably more important than tax policy, but he knew you couldn't go out and preach it back into existence, you couldn't pass a law to make it go into existence

Kondracke: What was his attitude toward gays, by the way?

Kemp: Never in conversations that sounded mean, judgmental or joking. Definitely knew that marriage had a biological and natural role that shouldn't be changed.

Kondracke: He was for the Equal Rights Amendment, for example, for women. But I just wonder whether he, granted, the whole gay rights movement didn't come

Kemp: He wasn't for changing, we didn't talk about gay rights as a movement in our family, that I can recall. And the marriage issue, by the time it came up, there was never—

Kondracke: That was late.

Kemp: That was late, and he wouldn't have felt any differently, that we should change the definition of marriage, but he wouldn't probably have agreed with the way that some people did it. Same way he didn't like the way the immigration issues were handled in the Republican Party.

Kondracke: Let's talk a little bit about this Christian Science and regular Christianity issue. So besides this positive attitude, what else comes from Christian Science in his personality? I think your sisters said that your mom was even more of a Christian Scientist in some ways as to the health business than he was, in other words seeing doctors and things like that. Just take a drink of water and you'll be fine. But what was there in Christian Science that was part of his character?

Kemp: (A) you can think it and speak it into being, which is a certain part of his positive optimism and sunny disposition on the positive, but it's also a lack of facing a reality of maybe you disappointed or offended someone, but you're not really apologizing, you're more just embarrassed that the moment happened and you're better than that in your mind, so let's just go to the next moment and you'll be better, because that's not really who I am and we know.

Kondracke: So guilt and sin are not really part—

Kemp: Guilt and sin don't get dealt with. And I remember him being disappointed with sermons at our church that dealt with the prognosis of humanity as opposed to the prescription, and the prescription being God fixes things, but mankind messed them up, and they're messed up. The man has fallen. We are evil. All of us have turned our own way. We are sinners and we can't fix it ourselves. We need to face these things and not be afraid to confess it. Boy, he didn't like those. They sounded pessimistic to him. But I think he's filtering it through his childhood upbringing that kind of felt like, you know, if God has fixed it, and he has forgiven us, and he has lived a perfect life through Jesus, let's try and act more like that in our mind, or think more like that, and that will be our reality. I see that, for a guy that didn't really practice Christian Science intently, but had it in his DNA from his upbringing, and then was kind of moderately committed in his own personal Biblical Christian faith and participation in the church, it left him with weakness on both sides. Not fully practicing one and not fully practicing the other, and some of the ideas from Christian Science cancelling out the willingness to face sin and evil and a fallen world, and at the same time not being able to see the beautiful grace and

forgiveness and love of God that really settles us. "Ah, I can relax. I can tell you when I really messed up."

Kondracke: So if he had done something wrong, would he be able to dismiss it as something temporary?

Kemp: "It's not the real, it's not the real me. I feel bad, but I need to not feel bad because I need to start acting like who I am, and to do that I need to start thinking who I am, so to spend time talking on it doesn't make sense." And Mom understood and knew of this battle in him and where he was, and I think she, uniquely, because of her maturity, and letting God's love fill the gaps that Dad's love couldn't fill in her, and knowing that he was doing the best he could for who he was, she was a great wife for him, and helped him be a great dad. And he also did respect us kids, and never had any—I mean I had long dialogues and debates. We'd write letters back and forth about my concern that he didn't appropriate the full truths that Jesus manifests on this world, and the words that he taught, which give us, "Hey, the problem's really, really deep, and the solution is really amazing, and the solution doesn't depend on us. It's faith, it's grace, be accepted, and with that you can be more transparent and more straightforward and more forgiven and more free, and even from an evangelical standpoint my outlook is I kind of take everything that Jesus says to be truthful, and I feel like if you humble yourself in life and accept him, then his promises of eternal life and forgiveness are applied. If you don't humble yourself and try to fix things yourself, try to just be good enough or avoid bad stuff or practice some religious thing, then those words "I'm the way, the truth in life and there's not way to the

Father but by me" mean that you're trying it some way other than by him, which is obviously not by our own merit,

Kondracke: So—

Kemp: So I was concerned for him. Maybe even the whole picture of having a relationship with God in itself, and the eternal life that comes with it, wasn't as clear to him, because it was fogged by this. Secondly, I just knew that the peace and freedom and personal humility and style of living that Mom had and that I was aspiring to and kind of opening up to, was something that I felt he needed. So we'd have these dialogues, and very respectful and loving, with lots of affirmation for each other going both ways. It was very hard to, he's so talented with words, to have a conversation across a private table with him about this topic or something that maybe he did that offended you. Very hard to have. Very hard to have. Sometimes it would be language, sometimes it would be a spirit, you'd just not feel as comfortable going there. But in letters we went there, and he was pretty transparent and honest and generous in his letters with me.

Kondracke: I look forward to reading them. It sounds fascinating.

Kemp: That stuff is so much more complicated for anyone to analyze, categorize, and write about other than what he and I would know was in our relationship. The simplest thing that I'd like to come across at the end is it isn't a particular church or his particular family upbringing as much as the simplicity of humility or self-dependence before your creator. And in the end I felt like there was great humility and great connection between him and me and great connection between him

and God, and he prayed blessing over me that changed me and I'll always remember, and I prayed blessing over him that I know he counted on and appreciated, and viewed the love of his family next to God as the greatest thing that ever happened.

Kondracke: Now you've described that you got really close to him when he was dying.

Kemp: About four months' worth.

Kondracke: Talk about that.

Kemp: Interestingly, Dad had come out to Whitworth University to speak to a political science class for my son, and he was kind of ill, not feeling as good, energy drained, he had a bad hip and a sore rib, that he pulled on an airplane flight to Israel, and just digestively not doing that well and not feeling his best. He gave this speech and it went like 20 minutes longer than they wanted him to, and did a great job, and waved the professor off when she said, "That's it, class is over." He said "No, let's keep going." Everyone loved it but he couldn't even fly to Seattle after that flight, to visit us, family, he had to go home because he was so tired. Well, soon after that in early December, I was down in Atlanta at a marriage movement retreat of leaders, trying to create collaboration, and there was a devotion time before one of the days, a lot of Christian leaders for the most part. A few government leaders. And during this music time I started thinking, "You know, Dad could get ill and pass away some day." And I've never thought of that. I've never thought of Dad dying. He's just an assumed force in my life and a big one, and one that I take for

granted. I have so many blessings from him and so much encouragement. I am so much of what he's done in my life. But he could die. What's it going to be like when he's gone? And I let myself go into that moment and go into that picture for a minute, and I started to really become sad in a way I'd never become before, and I was kind of heaving a little bit, and this, this is a weird story, a great story, a poetic story. A formerly fatherless man who had fathered kids out of wedlock, who'd been a drug addict and been in jail, and had his whole life turned around by coming to God, and then found his ex-girlfriend and married her, despite the government saying, "That's not smart." And then they collected all these kids, some of which they had together, some of which they had separately. And then they had more kids themselves. And they started an organization to teach other dads how to connect with their kids when they're estranged. And he's mentored 2500 prison and drug-addicted and estranged fathers. Amazing program called D.A.D.S. [Divine Alternatives for Dads Service] in Seattle. Marvin [L.] Charles, big African-American guy, a friend of mine, and he's at this conference with me, and he says, "You okay, Jeff?" And I said, "Marvin, I think I'm going to cry." And he said, "Ah, brother, what's wrong?" And I just told him, "I'm thinking about my dad. Some day he'll be gone. I wonder what that will be like." And so I just started crying, and he put his hand on me and prayed for me. Here this fatherless guy praying for me who had a great dad. All of my life I've had this great dad. So the rest of that conference I was in a pretty somber mood as I considered this. And I didn't think anything was going to happen or anything, but I was just in a different place emotionally. Within a week I found out he had cancer and it was stage four and he was going to die, and when I got the news I was like, "Hm, wow, I'm prepared." And I felt like I didn't

grieve during the cancer time. If I made any mistake it was giving Dad too much of a fighting spirit attitude, that "you can lick this with some chemo and some radiation, whatever the doctor says." The doctors are really saying, "You can try this, you can try this, but it's really going to make you uncomfortable," and I'm saying "Oh, yes, a little discomfort before you get better for two years," and I'm just hoping for some last hurrah of a very wonderful chapter of life for Mom and Dad together, and all these spiritual truths coming to fruition with becoming comfortable with not being a star, just being Jack, Dad, friend, imperfect person, transparent. And I'm seeing some of this. Anyway, I loved those visits with him, and we had those type of talks, and I looked for it and couldn't find it. I had a four-page bullet point letter of all the things I wanted to thank him for, and I sat Mom and him down in their little family room, this is probably on my second visit to Bethesda, maybe in February. He's pretty ill and pretty weak, but not in terrible shape yet. And I read him this list, and it took a while, like 15 minutes, and I'm laughing some, and then crying a little bit. Mom is crying and laughing just a little bit. Dad is laughing and then crying and then crying, and then we're all hugging. And it came just the way I wanted it. I wanted it to be optimism and blessing and encouragement and thanks, that that stuff continues, and you're doing it in your grandkids' lives, but an appropriate farewell thank you if he is going to pass away, without being pessimistic, the way he wouldn't want me to be pessimistic. Although in this case Dad was the realist and I was not the realist. He knew he was going to die. I think he accepted, "I'm an imperfect person and I've lived a long and amazing life. God has blessed me in tons of ways. It's not shocking that I would face a really rotten illness at the end of my life, and I'm just going to buck up and persevere through it, and enjoy my family in the

meantime." And we'd have great conversations. He'd invite me up to the room and he'd have me read Psalm 16, or Colossians, or John, or First John, certain passages he really loved. Psalm 16 says my lot in life has fallen well. The things that God has unfolded for my life have been good. Just a really interesting one.

Kondracke: So does he have a reversion to regular Christianity at the end, and forget about the Christian Science?

Kemp: Yes. I would say to Christ. And to the Bible, as the words of Christ and the comfort of Christ. And he did talk to our pastor. He didn't pour into Christian Science. But it wasn't a religious expression looking for any specific dogma or ritual or sacrament or theological discussion, but it was just a more personal time on the same page with us, praying. And it was more transparent spirituality than—the Christian Science chapters were more private, because maybe he felt like we didn't approve of it, Mom and Jimmy and me.

Kondracke: Did he read Christian Science chapters at the end?

Kemp: No.

Kondracke: That was '88.

Kemp: There were times when he read that stuff earlier, during little start and stop phases, maybe bigger phases when I wasn't around, but then there wouldn't be as much dialogue with us. At the end, for years, Mom and he read the Bible or passages or devotions together, and we'd do that together. One of my favorite memories of all time

was going with him to Oshkosh, Wisconsin, to watch my son Corey throw the javelin in the national championships, and just hanging out with him, sharing a hotel room, having dinner together and just talking life, and reading, and I think we did a devotion, read scripture in the morning. He'd recommend a verse and I recommended one. That was probably a year or two before he died.

Kondracke: You said at one point that you became much more intimate with him than you'd ever been.

Kemp: During those four months in particular, and somewhat in the six months or so before that, like that trip up to Oshkosh. Years earlier, though we fell away from this intimacy, I remember in '96 he and I drove out to Jennifer and Scott [Andrews]'s house in Middleburg [Virgina] during the campaign, during a brief moment free, and him telling me, I think I was asking him, "You know, I've always been yearning for just tell me more about your life. What was it like? What emotions did you go through?" and talking about the lord and spiritual things. And he said, "You know, Jeff, my dad didn't talk to me about that stuff. He worked, he cared for us. I didn't really have a model of knowing how to talk about that stuff, and I so appreciate you and your transparency and how open you are. And I'm proud of what you've done with your life," which he was. At times Mom and Dad made it feel like, "wouldn't it be great? There's a Congressional seat available. I know John [R.] Miller asked you to run for his seat." And there was excitement in the voice. They'd never say, "You should do it." They'd never be pushy. But you could just tell. In their world view what a great thing. "Our son could run for Congress and lead." And I didn't do that, and I kept running a ministry. But they were supportive of it.

He got me speakers all the time. He came out and spoke. They donated. He was a great support. But that intimacy that we had on that little one trip wasn't continual for all the years. And at the end, those four months was really intimate. Praying together, talking about things. Part of it, Mort, is that life was dominated by activities, ideas and events. Jeff's game, Jennifer's tennis match, Jimmy's game up in Canada, the debate, "Am I going to run for president or not?" There was always stuff going on. Michael Jordan's season, the news, big things, but less personal things sometimes. Even though we were a personal, laughing and close huggy, touchy feely family, I think intimacy means when you stop having the events of the world dominate what you relate about, and it's more about the people. And that's where we got to then.

Kondracke: Right. Okay, we've got to cover some politics. So what are your memories of his early days in Congress?

Kemp: Early days in Congress: the many ethnic picnics that we went to, most of them Polish, probably. And they would be held at these outdoor parks all around the Buffalo area, in Erie County, and we would go and have some food, maybe play darts with some of the kids that were there, sometimes we wouldn't have time to do all that. We'd just kind of roll in, Dad would give a little speech, and then we'd shake a bunch of hands. People would have signs. It was not really fancy and big, it was really mom and pop, hometown campaigning. And we would do it as a whole family. So I definitely remember that as an early political memory. I told you about the Bill Cohen memory, and going to the gym and being kind of set free in the Capitol to wander the halls and find my way around. Dad was pretty trusting in

giving me free run of the place. I would have liked it if he had not been as busy, and we played racquetball together. I didn't play with him, I played with Bill Cohen. [laughs] But then again my dad, he did his time in quality hunks. Ski trips and playing catch, and we definitely did have dinner and stuff.

Kondracke: Then during the time when he was building up to Kemp-Roth and all that, you were around.

Kemp: I was around, yes. I remember talking a lot about the tax ideas that he was coming up with, and how passionate he was that we could turn things around if we could strike a big blow at the disincentives

Kondracke: Did you go to the House and watch him in action?

Kemp: I don't think I went to see many debates. I was on the floor just during mingling time, not during debate time. We did go up in the gallery occasionally. I don't have a memory of seeing Dad speak per se.

Kondracke: Did you go to the '80 Convention?

Kemp: I did. I went with Charlie Marck, that friend that I used to ski with, and I was a college guy, and I was more in a college mood than a political mood, and I don't think I was paying as much attention as I should have been. I knew there was a pizzazz and energy around Dad.

Kondracke: There were demonstrations.

Kemp: The demonstrations, the Kemp signs, the Reagan-Kemp signs and stuff. That was exciting, and I thought that would be cool to see that happen, but I wasn't like heartbroken when it didn't, and our family hadn't been talking about it. We had not been talking about "Hey, Dad might be vice president, or—"

Kondracke: So who organized that demonstration?

Kemp: I have no clue, no clue.

Kondracke: And he made a speech, and made his first—I mean he made a speech at the '76 Convention. I don't suppose you were there for that.

Kemp: I wasn't there for that.

Kondracke: But he did make a speech at the '80 Convention.

Kemp: Can't recall what he said, and that may be due to concussions. Xrays reveal nothing, remember.

Kondracke: Okay, so what part did you take in the '88 campaign?

Kemp: I helped organize Athletes for Kemp, and just went through the NFL alumni lists and people I knew and stuff, and then I went on the road for a couple months, not gone the whole time, but took like some week-long trips over about a two or three-month section of my

off-season. And did some joint events, but campaigned at little locations giving my own speeches for them.

Kondracke: How did he take the fact that he didn't do as well as he must have hoped that he would?

Kemp: I think he took it well. I think like I said, he had the long scope of history, seeing Churchill and Lincoln and others advance ideas and not get the political venom in their favor, and felt like it was yards down the field, even if they didn't push in the end zone. And I do remember his concession speech—what is it when you drop out, you give a speech when you drop out—and that was noble, and positive and uplifting, and, "These ideas live on, and I'm here to keep advancing them, and you people have done great things, and very much appreciation for everyone." It was humble and positive, and just felt good about him having tried. So I don't think he felt terrible. I think he felt another chance is going to come.

Kondracke: Did he act like he really, really, really wanted to be president some day when you were growing up, I mean was that—

Kemp: No.

Kondracke: Was that part of the "I'm going to be president?"

Kemp: No.

Kondracke: Like "I'm going to be a pro football player."

Kemp: Well, it would be one thing to say, "I'm going to be the MVP [Most Valuable Player] of the league and go down as a Hall of Fame QB [Quarterbck]." He didn't say that. He said, "I'm going to be a pro football player, and a great one, and lead my teams." I think the same thing in politics. "I want to make a huge mark in America. And I want other people's ambitions to push me to the highest office possible, if that is appropriate, and if God wills that." And he used to always say, "You're in your right place." This is part of Dad's macro-theology that I cherish and appreciate. He always said, "God has a plan. You're in your right place. You may be third string now, you may have just lost this election, you may have been beat by [Albert A.] Al Gore [Jr.] in this little VP debate, you may have blown your knee out, you may not be popular in the fraternity or with the girls, but you're in your right place. Things are being seasoned. The stew is still cooking. The end of the story hasn't been written yet. Your day's going to come." This is a direct quote: "Think like a starter, act like a starter, your day's going to come. Hang in there. You'll be a great starter." That was what he said to me in football to keep me going. And I think he had the same attitude about political leadership and significance, but he didn't ever, I don't know if he had a thing about not wanting to admit that he wanted to be president, but I also know that he didn't worship that position. He did want power for influence sake, not for the power sake, not for the platform, or the being treated special for it. That was another good thing about him.

Kondracke: There are some politicians who just have, who will do anything to be president. He wasn't very good at raising money, and he—

Kemp: No. I read this article, this letter, on the way up here. Here's one I sent to him, 1997, some thoughts, post the loss. And I said, [reading] "You have a huge future as a cultural leader. Political, yes. Corporate influence, racial influence, urban influence. Maybe you'll run for office again, but even if you don't, lead like this." Well, he went into his business mode in that last chapter. Still gave speeches, wanted to campaign, wanted to be thought of as politically relevant, writing columns and stuff, but it was easier just to go into a new venue. Sports, then politics, then business. We all like to measure, and he could measure in business. But this article, this letter I got, was a letter from Sol Russo and Steve Mercimer, that they gave him before 2000. They wrote it in '97. "Our Advice from Here." And it said, "If you want to help the country the way you have been designed to help the country, you've got to get disciplined and focused, and go for it whole-heartedly, and put aside any distractions and get your supporters riled up. They're drifting because you haven't given them the signal. You're not maniacally going for this. Your discipline isn't strong. In fact, you're undisciplined." Those were some of the critiques. And he didn't want to sell out. I remember him saying, "I don't want to spend every minute on the phone and every other minute on a plane. And I definitely don't want to change my message just to win."

Kondracke: What do you remember, if anything, during the HUD [U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development] years when he was trying to push through his policies.

Kemp: I remember getting speeches sent to me. Dad sent us all of his speeches, as well as JFK-grams. And I know he turned on the light

bulbs. That place was dark and dingy and cement, and felt like a tomb, and he said, "We need some optimism. We need some lights I think. Get some new bulbs in here." And so they got new bulbs and brightened the place up, and he started putting pictures on the walls. And he saw that most of the staff were African-Americans, so he had all sorts of Frederick Douglas and George Washington Carver, and obviously [Martin Luther] King, [Jr.], and other leaders posted. Lots of Lincoln stuff too, the Homesteading Act and things like that. He went back to the roots. He said, "We're supposed to make opportunity and ownership available." And the stories. He just lit up telling about Bertha [K.] Gilkey and Alice Frazier, and the Queen's visit to Alice's house, and Bertha's transformation of the neighborhood with her leadership in cleaning up the gangs and starting little businesses. I think he loved the Alice Frasier story the most, where she hugged the Queen and "I just wanted to welcome her to my palace." That contrast meant the world to Dad, that he didn't bemoan the Queen living in a palace and he didn't bemoan the CEO [Chief Executive Officer] of IBM [International Business Machines] having a yacht and a big home, but he definitely wanted that person to understand that they had to have begun at some point in the past as the person that didn't even have a job and was just looking for an education. More than that, he wanted that person who has yet to have a job and own a truck or a trucking company or a corporation to know that you can be that, and we better make sure our government and our society doesn't divide us into categories, that you're stuck in one class forever. It's all upward mobility. It's all upward mobility. That's the American story, that's the American idea, that's the American dream. And so he did love those HUD days. I think that brought the best out in him, and he was very alive doing that.

Kondracke: And so when you said that he didn't want to do all that stuff, was that when there was some talk about his running in '96?

Kemp: Yes, leading up to it.

Kondracke: And he decided he just didn't want to do it. So were you surprised when he became [Robert J. "Bob"] Dole's running mate?

Kemp: No. I was surprised at the request. I wasn't surprised he said yes.

Kondracke: How did you find out about it?

Kemp: I was at a beach camp, a family camp down at Cannon Beach, Oregon, with my family, and we got a call from my office in Seattle at the Families Northwest organization that I ran saying, "We're getting all these press calls for you to comment on your dad being chosen by"—that Dad might be chosen. So I called Dad and they told me they were just barely finding out. They just had that secret flight in Kansas and stuff. And so I think I kind of found out simultaneous with the rest of the country, and it was pretty much a surprise, kind of like Dad was excited when he heard me say the Rams signed me as a free agent, this was Dad being excited that Bob Dole drafted him as a free agent, who'd been his sparring not partner, but—

Kondracke: Historically what was his attitude toward Dole?

Kemp: He was part of the stodgy, boring, too much status quo Republican Party. So Dad's attitude toward Bob wasn't good, like he'd be tougher, like I said, on a Republican that he would be on a Democrat, you know? If you're a Republican you should know better. You should be for Lincoln and growth and this. And since Bob Dole was a party leader, what was he, Senate Majority Leader?

Kondracke: Senate Majority Leader.

Kemp: Yes. He was easier for Dad to critique than someone else. Nothing about his personality, but just the fact that he's kind of like a offensive coach who just calls run plays. First down, second down and maybe third down he'll throw a pass, but everyone in the world knows you're going to throw a pass. It's just [gestures]. But one of the interesting things is that he was humbled to be chosen, humbled by Bob, and humbled in his cosmic sense that you're in your right place, God has a plan, and God was allowing Dad this chance. And he never really wanted to aim for president. He would have loved to have been drafted. And he just thought all the pieces would come together probably, and my ideas and me will be swept into the opportunity to change America, bring this American renaissance about. In that sense, I think, he would have liked to have been president. You saw that sheepish grin when they asked him, "What about president?" And he would never answer with ambition, but he would always have a twinkle in his eye, like, "You mean if I can't be commissioner of the NFL, that might be a good job." He do it as a little joke, but you could tell he'd like that. But it wasn't for the job, it was for the opportunity to do the things that you had wanted to do. So he was humbled by it, by Bob, and kind of, I think, by God. And then he grew to greatly

admire Bob, seeing his price paid as a war hero day to day, in the campaign, and then just the strength an older guy had on the campaign trail, and with that pen in the hand, and getting to know him and Liz [Mary Elizabeth Dole] more personally. And seeing when face-to-face with Dad and his ideas, they did well, and Bob lit up and embraced all the ideas, and Dad understood where Bob was coming from better. It was easier for Dad to have been critical when they weren't really in the huddle. That was a fascinating chapter.

Kondracke: We're just out of time, so what haven't I asked you about that I should have?

Kemp: I did love it when Dole and Kemp campaigned together. I saw the energy feed off each other. Dad respecting this war hero, and this leader, this guy that served the nation forever, Bob respecting Dad's courage and passion and good shepherd philosophy. Bob was a compassionate guy. Didn't know how to voice it in the same way, but he had it, and didn't know how to convert it into the right policies or speak the language of someone in the inner-city per se, but he would stir that language up, [imitates] "Like Jack says, we need a rising tide for everyone." And I think he really meant it, but he was just in the huddle with the right guy at that time, rather than with others when it wasn't the dominant theme. And they both had more energy. But then much of the time the campaign split them up, separate organizations, and Dad would go off to the hinterlands and campaign in inner-city Memphis, and Bob would be in New York City. And they never got the benefit of the synergy between those two. And as much respect as I have for Bob Dole as a political analyst, I'd say Dad was the visionary idea-generating Ronald Reagan type, not to over-praise

Dad, but he was that type of guy. And Bob Dole was the fabulous, knowledgeable, proven dealmaker, government executor, and that would have been a switched ticket, that would have been powerful.

Kondracke: Speaking of that, what was your dad's relationship with Ronald Reagan?

Kemp: I remember being at Reagan's house out in California, the mansion, by seeing the pictures of it. I was in second grade. We just went to Sacramento for him to work for him. And Dad's relationship with him was I think really respectful and humble, and yet knowing that Reagan played a special role in history, Dad wasn't over-awed by him to the point where he wouldn't challenge, or make his case as he did going out to California and saying, "You've got to find a way to unleash the economy, and tax rate reduction can do it. We've got to get incentives going again." Speaking of that, I wish they'd call it 'incentive-based economics,' which I think is something my mom said, "Jack, it would have been so much better to have called it that. That makes sense to people."

Kondracke: Instead of supply-side?

Kemp: Yes. That was a Wannsiki and Laffer, [Robert] Mundell language from the ivory tower, but you shouldn't identify it with the ivory tower or with Wall Street. You should identify it with the farmer—

Kondracke: Was it too far gone to change the name of it? In other words, it was so identified as supply-side that—

Kemp: No, I think it wouldn't be easy, but you could start having the people on your side calling it incentive-oriented, and the press wouldn't switch right away. The other side certainly wouldn't, but eventually they would have, and it would have explained the term at the time that you're talking about it.

Kondracke: How did your mom tell him to do that? Do you remember?

Kemp: That wasn't something that she told him before they really could do something about it. It was kind of a little bit later in the cycle, and I can't remember her saying it and Dad not agreeing, as much as Dad's kind of saying it already is what it is, and it's a little bit after the chapter, more Monday morning quarterbacking. And not in a critical way, just Mom wanting the ideas to gain more traction and thinking that that would have helped.

Kondracke: Your mom knew a lot about what he was into? About his issues and votes on the floor and—

Kemp: Pretty well. They talked. She was his confidante. They talked about leaders, she helped him with people, judgment on people, she helped him with names. They were both good with names. She was great. They definitely talked about issues and debates. She's the one who helped encourage him when he got sent from San Diego to Buffalo, and that made him probably not want to keep playing, at least at first. And she and both his mom encouraged him. His mom and my mom did. "God has a plan. There's a bigger purpose here." I

think Dad would have come around to that, but they kind of sped him around to that. So Mom was key at encouragement and perspective. He bounced ideas off her. I heard him disagree with her sometimes. "Oh, Joanne, that's simplistic." But he gained wisdom by sparring with her and seeing how she gave him advice, and other times she told him what really worked well in a speech or what didn't, and he listened.

Kondracke: Right. Okay. Thank you.

Kemp: Thank you.

[end of interview]