

# Robert Parrish Interview

*Recorded February 11, 2022*

**General Disclaimer:** *The content of oral history interviews is personal, experiential, and interpretive because, by its nature, it relies on the memories, perceptions and opinions of individuals. Interviews should not be understood as statements of fact or opinion endorsed by the Bolch Judicial Institute, Duke Law School, or Duke University.*

## Interview Transcript

**Judge Gerald B. Tjoflat:** We are going to have a nice session today with Robert Parrish about the Boy Scout movement. Bob clerked for me from May 1978 to May 1979, and he's an Eagle Scout, so this is right up his alley. And one of the touching things about this program today is that I just came from a funeral for Captain William McCamy, retired Navy, who was very close friend, an Eagle Scout, and very involved in scouting after he retired from the Navy. He flew two missions in Vietnam, flew attack helicopters for the Navy. And so it was a very moving burial ceremony at St. Catholic of Sienna Church in Orange Park. I will have him in my mind while we're talking about Scouting. So, Bob, I'll let you start.

**Robert Parrish:** Well, I'm going to go off of script just for one moment and say that you've been in my life for many years, 50 years plus, and I've witnessed some of the fine and great things that you've done, and not only on the bench, but also collateral matters while you were serving on the bench. Many hours outside that, such as the Boy Scouts. And I just want to, for posterity, say that it's a mark of the breadth of the man. Today we'll talk about one of the many, I'll call them collateral non bench activities that the judge is engaged in, and we'll jump right into it. Judge, how did you get involved in the scouting movement?

**Judge Gerald B. Tjoflat:** Well, I was not a boy scout. This is about 1973, sometime during the year, three or four gentlemen came to see me. They were old friends older than I. One, Tom Baker, had a big cement contracting business, and had been a marine colonel fighting in the Pacific during the war. Another was Bill Mills, who was very active in the DuPont empire, we'll put it that way. And Bill Gay, who was the largest mechanical contractor at North Florida. At any rate, these guys were the moving force behind the North Florida Council of the Boy Scouts of America which covered about 19 counties from here, going southwest toward Tampa. At any rate I'm very busy as a district judge. And in they come, and we have a cup of coffee. I asked them, what's on your mind?

And they said, we'd like you to be the president of the Boy Scout Council. I told them, you don't want me to do that. I had the Duval County School desegregation case just about two years earlier, which was highly controversial, as all those cases were. And I said to them, why do you want to have somebody like me who has been in very controversial cases as a judge to run the Boy Scouts? Well, we think you can do it. So I said, well, what are the terms? One year. You can serve one year as president of the Scout Council I said, since I wasn't a scout, but I know something about Scouting. Why don't you let me be

president elect for one year, and then I'll serve the one year as president? So I was president elect for the calendar year, 1974.

It got indoctrinated, got acquainted with these 19 counties. And one of the things I told these gentlemen, I said, if I'm going to do this job, you're coming with me because you're the horses in this part of the world. And they said, we'll do that. So I spent 1974 going around the various districts in scouting. We have districts, the organization has a district chairman, you'll have a membership chairman, and you'll have a finance chairman and a commissioner. They called the key three, and there was the Scout Executive, the commissioner, and the chairman of the district. They are responsible for Scouting in any geographic district. So we had about 15 of these districts. The scouting movement was in trouble nationwide at that time.

We were deep in the Vietnam War, and there's a lot of controversy, a lot of people didn't like the military because we'd been in the war and the Scouts are going to be wearing a uniform. So, that means of going into the service. There was an attitude against boys joining up like that. And the society was declining somewhat, starting what I call the revolution in late sixties, 68, 69, 70. It kept on going. I was told that the Scouting movement in the United States, the size of it, has shrunk from 9 million adults and kids in say, 1970 to about three and a half million in 1980, over a 10-year period. So the North Florida Council was having the same problem. Our finances were not good. We were financed by the United Way, and the Council ran out of money in September or October each year.

So that's the way it was. So, anyhow, one thing I did notice when I went to these districts and visited with the district chairman, the commissioner and the Scout Executive was that the district chairmen, by and large, were former Scoutmasters. They had been Scoutmasters, and now they're district chairmen, and they're doing something they're not really attuned to be doing. They are great Scoutmasters. They can deliver the program in the field but were not the types to be district chairmen. You've got to be able to call up a lot of people and get them involved and the membership chairman has got to have a lot of connections. And the finance chairmen have to have a good idea of where they can raise money. And that was not the talent most of Scoutmasters who were running these districts had. So we had to recruit some people to do those kinds of jobs. That was the diagnosis of 1974 at the end of the year.

**Robert Parrish:** Judge, tell us about your team of business leaders that you utilized to invigorate the North Florida Council.

**Judge Gerald B. Tjoflat:** Well, what we did in order to recruit mainly businessmen, the movers and shakers in the community, was this. Bill Gay had a mobile home, and we would get somebody in Jacksonville who was head of, say, Florida National Bank, we're going down to Chiefland a hundred miles away. He'd get in touch with the chairman of the Florida National Bank in Chiefland. Then somebody else in our crowd would have a business connection in Chiefland. We'd put eight or ten guys in Bill's mobile home and have a stake fry, a cookout, in Chiefland. The guys in Jacksonville and their counterparts down there. So now we're telling them that we need to organize down there in Chiefland, and you guys need to do the recruiting. We need to call on the churches and synagogues and other institutions and create Scout troops.

So anyway, we did that throughout the districts in 1975, throughout the council, and these guys were real horses who went along with me. So by the end of 1975, things were beginning to turn around and something else was going on at the same time. I was on the Judicial Conference in the United States a committee overseeing the probation system and the criminal justice system basically. I was holding sentencing institutes for judges in that capacity. I was deeply involved in the criminal justice system at the federal level. I discussed all of this in another oral history session with Judge Corrigan, but at any

rate, I saw in Scouting a tremendous crime prevention program. During that year, the lights started going on, the bells were ringing.

**Robert Parrish:** You agreed to stay on as president for an extra year.

**Judge Gerald B. Tjoflat:** Yeah, I stayed on another year, 1976.

**Robert Parrish:** And what did you see as the potential in the scouting movement for crime prevention?

**Judge Gerald B. Tjoflat:** Well, first of all, you've got these boys 10 to 14 years of age, below 10 when you had the Cubs included. And a Scout troop is a gang, just a regular gang but the gang has a Scout Oath and a Scout Law that they abide by. The Scouting program through the merit badge system transfers values to the young boys, and they get a better impression of themselves. So the best thing I saw was the development of young men who had a good impression of themselves and were confident. And they had earned merit badges. So they had praise. They gained praise from their colleagues and people around them and became very versatile through the merit badge system. You learn how to do so many different kinds of things. So the idea was that here you're going to turn out -- hopefully if they make Eagle Scout or life Scout -- young men who are confident, have pride in themselves in what they are doing, and can resist the bad elements in their peer group.

In the criminal justice system, basically, as I looked at it, you have three cohorts. You have older people who are hardened criminals. Then you have another cohort that's say 18 to 26 years of age. And then you have the younger people. And so my concern was the younger people.

**Robert Parrish:** Tell us about your last case as a state court judge, the marijuana case as an example.

**Judge Gerald B. Tjoflat:** The last case that gives you some idea of the drug trafficking. The last case I had in 1970, shortly before I came on the federal bench, was in Fernandina Beach. And somebody was charged with a possession of one marijuana cigarette, and they had a crowd. I took a guilty plea. That was the first drug case I had ever seen. As a matter of fact, to give you some idea of how drugs were going on during this time, when I'm getting acquainted with Scouting, when I went to the federal bench, we had a what was called a Youth Corrections Act. A person under 18 years of age who had no record and was convicted of a federal crime, if they behaved themselves and did some time in custody, by the time they were 26 and released, they could have their conviction expunged. By 1975 this age group was heavily involved in drug trafficking. So that's another thing that was going on, and why the Scouting movement was so promising as I saw it.

**Robert Parrish:** So now I think they kept you and asked you to serve two more years as the council president, right?

**Judge Gerald B. Tjoflat:** Well, '75 went into 1976.

**Robert Parrish:** How did you fit that around your official duties working as a federal judge?

**Judge Gerald B. Tjoflat:** Well, the signs were so good, and we were gathering a lot of volunteers and the Scout troops, more troops, more explorer posts, more cub packs. So this became very exciting, I'll put it that way. So now we get into 1977. So in '75, '76, '77 and we were really cooking.

**Robert Parrish:** I think part of the excitement you were generating, I came in 78, and I remember you were heavily involved with Scout World. Tell us about that.

**Judge Gerald B. Tjoflat:** Scout World, that was a very exciting proposition. The problem that North Florida Council had was that everything seemed to be centered in Jacksonville. People in places like Chiefland and Ocala and St. Augustine, they felt like they were outsiders. So we decided to have a jamboree for the whole Council, for about 5,000 scouts, let's say, they would come to Jacksonville. We had a jamboree in the Gator Bowl, at the football stadium. At this time there was a lot of support from the Naval personnel, the hierarchy in particular at the Naval Air station. The admiral in charge of the anti-submarine warfare in the Atlantic Ocean was stationed there. So I made him the honorary chairman of Scout World. So here we are in the Gator Bowl on Armed Forces weekend around May 19 with 5,000 kids, and they set themselves up under the stands. We have all kind of show places.

We had two astronauts paratroop into the middle of the football stadium before a large crowd. Then we did it the next year, and the next year we had the Koshare Scouts from Colorado who came in with full Indian dress, and put on a program in the Jacksonville Coliseum. So Scout World became a big thing and we got a lot of people involved. It was healing the 19 counties and the North Florida Council. About this time, I'm so convinced that the value of Scouting is a crime prevention program.

Of course, the greatest value is turning young men, young boys, into confident citizens in the long run, well trained. They're imbued in the Scout Oath and the Scout Law. Very solid citizens. So I started making speeches in some of these places like Lake City and Live Oak and Chiefland and all of the towns where scouting was going on. Sometimes I'd get up at six o'clock in the morning for a speech at a Rotary club or Kiwanis. Sometimes it would be at a luncheon. If you'll remember, Ferris Bryant had been governor of Florida in I guess 58 to 62, somewhere in there, and he had retired. He was in the insurance business here in Jacksonville. He was all excited about what was going on, and he would ride with me to these places in the mornings or whenever it was. So that was really coming together. The council was increasing in membership month after month and comparing this year with last year and so forth and setting some records, I guess, with what we were doing.

**Robert Parrish:** I know you don't like to brag about the overall effect of this on Scouting, but you have a fantastic memory about the relative growth in the membership and adult volunteers and units of Boy Scout sponsors.

**Judge Gerald B. Tjoflat:** Well, we were growing at such a pace when we got to 1979 that the national office was wondering what in the world's going on. I'm talking about the headquarters in Texas. You can't be doing this. But the fact of the matter was, I probably made 400 - 500 speeches in different places – in Williamsburg, Virginia, Norfolk and Richmond, in Charlotte and Raleigh, North Carolina, Columbia, South Carolina, Atlanta, and Augusta, and Savannah in Georgia, and Birmingham, and Tuscaloosa and Tupalo, Mississippi and Knoxville, and Chattanooga, Tennessee. All these talks were to stir people with the idea of supporting Scouting. Now, I had four different speeches. All were tied to the development of young men and the prevention of crime.

Now, if I'm talking to the Chamber of Commerce, what I had, Bob, was the data over long period of time of the growth of prison populations in the United States by age group, by offenses that were committed. So I would go to a chamber of commerce meeting, say a couple hundred businessmen, and I'm going to appeal to their financial interest. So I would say, alright, here is the increase in crime that's predicted over the next 10 years, and then using 1980 dollars, I would say, here's what it costs to build a prison, \$550,000 per prison bed. So if the ideal prison is for 500 inmates, that's \$25 million to build a prison,

forget about the land cost. And depending on the level of inmate supervision required, it could cost \$50,000 a year per inmate. So that's \$25 million more.

You're going to pay for these prisons and pay for the inmates' upkeep through taxes. And so you get the attention of the business community, which is paying a lot of the taxes. Then there's another pitch in that same speech to that group, which is how would you like to have nothing but Eagle Scouts apply for jobs? That's obvious. So that would be in the speech too. Chamber of commerce types. Or I'm going to give a speech to clergy, and I do remember meeting with the African Episcopal AME bishop and his clergymen in Jacksonville twice over a period of about five years. So I would talk about the development of boys and what it does, and how Scouting can be used as an evangelistic tool.

You have a neighborhood boy who comes to the troop in your church, and his family is not churched, but pretty soon he comes to an honor court. Now he brings his parents or his friends, and now the church grows. That was true in a lot of places. There was a Presbyterian minister in Fort Caroline who had about a hundred of his church in the troop. He told me that's the biggest evangelism tool he had. There was one in Mandarin, they had about 125 Scouts. It was the largest troop, so that's the approach to clergy, for example. Let's say I'm talking to the daughters of the American Revolution, the pitch here is: who are your granddaughters going to marry?

Your daughters and granddaughters? What kind of boys do you want them to see? Then there's one last group, and that is Scouters themselves. For example, I talked several times to what we call regional meetings for the whole southeast. So you would have 300 or 400 Scouters there. These are people who are committeemen or Scoutmasters, and of course, a lot of them did really understand the real purpose of Scouting. I mean, they saw it as a lot of activity in that was healthy in one thing or another. But the idea of convincing them that this was a value-transfer program where values of yesteryear are transferred today and tomorrow and the next day. So those were the speeches. I'll tell you one last one to give you an idea.

I couldn't raise money. I couldn't be involved before a group seeking contributions. So I never asked for money in any of these appearances. I would call the group the Chamber of Commerce. Statewide they would meet in Columbia for two or three days to talk about lots of business things. One night they would have a banquet. This was traditional, and the banquet was for Scouting, and the purpose of the banquet was to raise money for Scouting statewide. So they asked me to come up there. I said, well, I can't come up there because you're going to raise money. Bob Chapman, a judge of the court of appeals for the fourth Circuit, said, you've got to come up here. Here's what we're going to do.

You could come into the meeting, have dinner, there'll be nothing said about money. Then you can give a speech and then immediately leave and go back to Jacksonville. Well, Bill Jung, a district judge now in Tampa, was clerking then. I'm going to fly to Columbia. But they had a rainstorm, so I couldn't fly to Columbia, I couldn't get through Atlanta. So Bill drove me to Columbia, it took about five hours. We got there right before dinner. They had about 400 men there for the dinner meeting and I made a talk. And it was the talk that appealed to their financial interests. I talked about taxes, increase in crime, which is going to cost them in several ways, and how would you like to have nothing but Eagle Scouts as your potential employees. The minute I finished, Bill and I got in my the car and drove back through a rainstorm to Jacksonville. Got back about midnight. I'm told they raised about five times more money than ever before.

**Robert Parrish:** Let's get back. I want to talk about your progression. They get you involved in 73 and you get hooked and you start revving up the scouting movement, but they get you to stay another couple years. Now it's 78, which is coincidentally when I clerked, and they get you in for another couple years. So what prompted you to stay on?

**Judge Gerald B. Tjoflat:** Here's what happens. As you know, Winn Dixie Stores headquarters was here in Jacksonville, and when Winn Dixie was formed by the five Davis Brothers, J.E. Davis, the second oldest became the chairman of Winn Dixie stores. When I practiced law way back yonder, I'd done some work for Winn Dixie litigation wise. Of course, I knew J.E. Davis, I knew all of them. His office was small then. So I got a phone call one day at about 11AM. Judge, you have to come out here. He was very excited. I said, Mr. J.E., what's the matter? He said, I've got to talk to you. I said, alright, how about one o'clock? That's good. So I go to the Winn Dixie office. I walked in his secretary for life was there. She says, go on in. His office wasn't that big.

So he's sitting behind the desk. He said, let's have a cigar to start. So we had a cigar. I said, Mr. J.E., what's the matter? He said, they have killed my best manager in Miami, and I've lost another manager through arm robbery. He said, we have to do something about this crime. I chuckled a little bit - what are you chuckling about? I said, they finally got your attention. And so for four hours and three more cigars I'm telling him that the criminal justice system has three different cohorts of offenders. I focused on the little ones. I said, J.E., we have to keep the little ones from joining their older brothers or their fathers in trouble.

Well, I did not know this at the time. But I'm talking to an Eagle Scout. As a matter of fact, all five Davis brothers are Eagle Scouts. So now he's buying into this idea that we have got to get more young men involved in the Boy Scout movement and Explorers, the high school age kids. Explorers are career oriented. So we put them in different career Explorer posts to help them out. J.E. Davis had a ranch along the inland waterway, about 40,000 acres. They called it the D-Dot. And he said, we're going to have a breakfast at the D-Dot. So he has about 75 high powered businessmen for breakfast at the D-Dot one morning. And I talk to them about crime and the Scouting movement.

Out of that group came some committees. We had a long-range planning committee. These are officers at banks, and high level businessmen. And then the word got out about the breakfast. Two or three men from the black community attended that breakfast. So, J.E. had another breakfast, and the leaders of the black community in Jacksonville appeared. We had the same session. Out of that came joint committees that covered this whole part of the state. That was a big thing. That really was a huge shot in the arm, and that takes us into 1980, 1981. We're continuing to grow.

There's this story about boy prison and its Scout troop. On the other side of Jacksonville near Orange Park was a facility called the Jacksonville Youth Correction Center. It was on Ricker Road, consisted of about three acres. It was basically a boy prison. It housed 40 of the worst boys in Florida, ages 10 to 14. They had failed under all kinds of supervision. They were from all over Florida, and they were tearing the place apart. There was a barb wire fence around the 40 acres. A woman by the name of Marilyn Heck, who had been made superintendent of this place. She didn't know it, but she was there to close down the prison. Several superintendents had preceded her, but they couldn't stay for more than five or six months. The boys were so bad that they'd have to move on.

Marilyn Heck happened to come across a Scoutmaster's manual and she called the Scout office. A guy named Travis Johns, one of our executives, went out to see her. She had an assistant by the name of Dave Sharpless, and Dave Sharpless had been an Assistant Scoutmaster. So they started a scout troop in this boy prison. This is August 1982, and they start out with 10 in a patrol. The ruffians who were hanging around the edges initially refused to join them. Of course, this place was just like any adult prison, the toughies ran it.

So Sharpless wound up planning a weekend outing in the Osceola National Forest. The head HRS bureaucrat in Tallahassee didn't want the boys out there. He thought they'd run away at night. Of course, these boys had never been in a forest with bears and deer running around in the dark. So they

went out there for a weekend and it poured rain, and they had a ball. The next thing that happened was, pretty soon we've got all 40 boys in this Scout troop.

To the neighborhood, this boy prison was "not in my backyard." In other words, the neighborhood for a couple of miles around did not like it being there. They'd just soon have it gone. Even so, Marilyn Heck and Dave Sharpless decided to have a barbecue to raise money for this Scout troop. It would be held on a Saturday afternoon in October. There was a little squib in the local newspaper, and the wire services picked up the story. It got national attention.

So one morning, Marilyn Heck calls me at seven o'clock and said, "Judge, there's a reporter coming here from New York with a camera crew from Miami to see this facility, to see these boys. You have got to get out here." So I got out there, and there was a nice lady, a reporter, and she's checking this place out. By this time, it is like a marine barracks. Everything is clean, beds are made, shoes under the bed. The boys are respectful, they're clean, wearing clean clothes. The boys had built two towers with a swinging bridge over a little creek on the property. And she (the reporter) said, "no, the adults did that." Dave Sharpest, the Scoutmaster, said, "no, the adults helped them, but they did the work." And so she was having a hard time believing the transformation of these boys.

Finally he says, "young lady, when I can't eat breakfast until I hear two or three or four or five Scouts recite the Scout Oath and the Scout Law to see that they got it down pat, then you know something is happening." Well, what happened was she interviewed an African American youngster by the name of Anthony Scott while she was there that day, and about two days later on NBC Nightly News, the anchor, Jessica Savitch, did a piece on this boy prison including the reporter's interview with Anthony Scott.

The Center eventually released the boys on parole, and they went to different places in Florida. Sometimes a boy on parole got into trouble so he could come back to the Center. So Marilyn Heck had to tell the boys when they're going to be released that if they got into trouble, they were not coming back.

In December, I convinced HRS in Tallahassee to give us the addresses of the boys when they were paroled so we could call a Scoutmaster or the Scout executive nearby get them in a Scout troop. Well, Anthony Scott fell through the cracks. He was released before we knew it. I learned that that he went to home to Immokalee Florida. Immokalee is in the middle of the agriculture belt in South Florida. I didn't know where he actually was, I just knew he was there. So I called the Scout executive in Fort Myers. This is just before Christmas. I told him that this young man, Anthony Scott, was in Immokalee, could he go up there? Maybe he could put some paraphernalia together, a Scout shirt, maybe some other things, and take it to him. The Scout executive wrote me a letter shortly after New Year's which I showed to Chief Justice Berger. It brought a tear to his eyes. His letter said that he got to Immokalee after Christmas, and found Anthony Scott. He learned that the first thing Anthony Scott did when he got to Immokalee was to find a Scout troop. He found a Scout troop in the first Methodist Church. The executive went to a Scout meeting with Anthony. The Scouts there had taken him in. He was working on the merit badge for citizenship. As the executive was leaving Immokalee, he saw Anthony's mother. She was single parent, an itinerant agricultural worker who followed where the harvesting was taking place. She went to New York to pick cherries when summer came. What Anthony Scott had going for him was that Scout group. Of course, we lost track of Anthony Scott over the time.

I close this episode about the boy prison this way. Scout World was now held at the Naval Air Station on the weekend around Armed Forces Day in May. We moved the event there from the Gator Bowl. We had thousands of Scouts coming in on Friday. They would have a campfire that night and camp out, then have another campfire and camp out on Saturday. Then on Sunday, we'd have a balloon race early in the morning from the Air Station, and the Scouts would be putting on their shows and exhibits during the day. We talked HRS into allowing the 40 "prison" boys to go to Scout World that year.

As you know, the Naval Air Station's has that big grassy area adjacent to the Station's entrance. When you go in the main gate, it was all the way back where the flagpole was. So there was a lot of acreage out there and they had marines bivouacking with 5,000 Scouts on Friday night. Of course, nobody went to bed. But anyway, the Troop 644. Six and four is 10, and you add four, that's 14. So that's the age group, 10 to 14. They won the major prizes at Scout World in the competition with other troops. About a month later, we are back at the boy prison. They had a big day room there and Marilyn Heck wanted to have a luncheon for some juvenile judges.

So we had a luncheon. Seven or eight juvenile judges came. We had another luncheon for the county sheriffs. And both lunches, all the boys were there. They were showing off merit badges. By this time, the boys were well on their way to earning merit badges. I will never forget when Sheriff Dale Carson, who was there for the Sheriff's lunch, was listening to a boy showing off a couple of merit badges. I said, "Dale, he had two B and Es (breaking and entering) and some other crimes. Dave Sharpless made a little talk at the end of the judges' lunch. He said that two Saturdays ago, he decided to take a van load of boys to the beach. Now, these boys hadn't ever been to the beach. They didn't grow up where they had beaches. Sharpless said that he had about 20 boys in the van when he drove to a shopping center at the beaches to buy suntan oil. So when he parked the van, the question was whether he would go alone into the Eckerds Pharmacy or take the boys with him. As he put it, "do I take them in there or leave them sitting there?" He said it was very crowded. So he left them in the van, and went in and bought the sun tan oil. He came out in about 25 minutes. It was a big crowd in the pharmacy, a long line. He said, "I jumped in the van and immediately did a head count. One boy is missing." He told these judges that he sat down in the driver's chair of the van, and said to himself, "they're all going to say, we told you that you can't trust them." He looked out the window, and saw the missing boy. He was helping a crippled woman put her groceries in the car. After he put her groceries in the car, he ran back to the van.

The Post-Newsweek enterprise owned Channel 4 in Jacksonville at the time, Channel 4 was affiliated with CBS. And they were so impressed at what was going on about these boys that they put a crew together (to go to the Philmont Scout Ranch in New Mexico). Every summer a troop is made up and sent to the Ranch. For those who are unfamiliar with the Philmont Scott Ranch, it's about 220 square miles. That's the size of the ranch. Its altitude runs from about 6,500 feet to 12,500. So, at any rate, there was a large troop or two from Jacksonville that went out there. They stayed at military reservations on the way, and a camera crew and a reporter from Channel 4 went with them.

And they had about 10 or 15 of these kids in that group and it became a television production of about a half hour or an hour on the CBS affiliate. That was a big story and what that led to about the same time, Bob, as a result of the meeting with J.E. Davis, the putting together all these committees. We decided that there wasn't going to be anywhere in North Florida that we weren't going to try to penetrate. So we had a meeting in Mayor Godbold's office in City Hall. Ed Austin, the State Attorney, was there, the school superintendent was there, and the head of the fire department and safety was there. We had a map showing all of the crime beats in Jacksonville. We put little pins, different colored pins, in the crime beat areas. A red pin would be a Boy Scout troop, a yellow pin would be a Cub pack and a green pin, maybe an Explorer post. Then of course, you know what the story is, where crime was more prevalent, there were less Scouting units.

So we decided to put Scout troops in fire stations. Why fire stations? Because firemen aren't armed, and firemen are liked by the community. They were there all the time. So the boys in a unit in a fire station, they got the right kind of adults working with them. Two things happened before this meeting. By the way, Ed Austin and I had gone to Durham, this would be December 1982, about the same time the boy prison activity is going on. I'm telling Ed Austin, he needs to have an Explorer post in the state attorney's office.



I said, "Ed, can you imagine what it'd be like to have kids from all walks of life in Jacksonville learning about grand juries and learning how the police operate and how the prosecutor operates, how the jury system works, all those kinds of things." Now they will be part of the system as it was. And so that's what prompted this meeting in the mayor's office. So you'll remember this yourself, Bob. There was a February night in 1982 when we had a big reception at the Duval County Courthouse. The school board had a system of sending out questionnaires to 11th and 12th grade students asking them about the kinds of careers they wanted to pursue. And one of the careers was law enforcement. One was as a prosecutor, another in medicine. And so we sent invitations to 700 kids who indicated that they'd had an interest in law enforcement and prosecution. And we thought we'd be lucky to get 70 or 80 to the Duval County Courthouse on a rainy night on February. We had about 600, I think you were there, Bob. They were in every courtroom. They were sitting in the jury boxes. They were on the bench. So Ed Austin and I went from courtroom to courtroom to explain to them what an Explorer post would be like in the State Attorney's office. What they'd get to see and what they can participate in.

**Robert Parrish:** Judge, I'm going to butt in here real quick and change subjects a little bit to show how far ahead of your time you were back in the seventies and eighties. You brought the Girl Scouts and the Boy Scouts together, as I recall.

**Judge Gerald B. Tjoflat:** What happened was, at this meeting in the mayor's office, one of the school board school people was there was Rita Reagan. She was the assistant superintendent in charge of something. And she turned to me and said "Judge, what about the girls?" All this talk about Boy Scouts, Cub Scouts? What about the girls? Oh, I said to myself, we have to fix that. There was a lady in Jacksonville, her name was Betty Skinner. The Skinner family had dairies, and she was married to Bill Skinner, who ran a dairy farm. Betty Skinner was the perennial head of the Girl Scouts. If she wasn't the Council president she was still running it. She was a really great woman. So I had lunch with Betty Skinner one day after this (mayor's office) meeting, and I said, "Do you think we could have a Girl Scout roundup and a Boy Scout roundup in the schools in August together?"

And she thought it was a great idea. One of the problems was that the Girl Scout executives didn't want to meet with the Boy Scout executives who covered their territories. The Boy Scout guys didn't want to meet with the women. So we solved it this way. We divided up greater Jacksonville, and we had lunch at the Girl Scout headquarters. We put a man, a male scout executive, sitting next to a female scout executive that covered the same territory as it were. Betty Skinner is at one end of the table, and I'm at the other of the table, and we tell them that if there's any disagreement amongst them, they're going to have to answer to us. So we launched joint Scout roundups. What happened as a result of the planning group that came into being after the D-Dot breakfast was that the William Cook Advertising Agency, which did all of Winn Dixie's advertising nationwide, did some public relations work for the Boy Scout-Girl Scout joint recruiting effort. It was a big advertising agency. Bill Cook and JE Davis were joined at the hip. So Bill Cook said, we've got to have some television spots and some radio spots. So we had television spots and radio advertising. We used the television soundtrack for radio for the Boy and Girl Scout Roundup and of course, the school system loved it because the female principals were going to have girls there as well as boys. So there was no sex problem, as it were. And out of that came, and you may remember this, Chuck Yeager, the general who broke the speed record or sound barrier as a test pilot in the fifties. He cut a couple of television commercials Scouting in North Florida, and talked about how Scouting for the boys and the girls helped raise the academic performance in the schools.

It was true and it was terrific. This happened a month or two after I stepped down as Council president in 1985. Then, former president Gerald Ford came to a dinner at the Times Union Center, 1500 to 2000 people were there to hear him talk about scouting. Of course, he's an Eagle Scout. Gerald Ford is a

Distinguished Eagle Scout. To have Gerald Ford, a Distinguished Eagle Scout, talk to this crowd of people from all sections of Jacksonville and every neighborhood was a shot in the arm. That was really unbelievable. So that's where we went.

**Robert Parrish:** Judge. Let's talk about your global approach to increasing Scouting to help with crime prevention. It's obvious to those who see this years from now, that there was no barrier to whom you would or would not try to get involved, and you reached out to all aspects of the community. We've talked about bringing the Girl Scouts and the Boy Scouts together. You've talked about your working with the State Attorney, and about the advertising people, the grocery people. I think it's also true that you reached out to the black community early on, and I'd like you to tell about that.

**Judge Gerald B. Tjoflat:** At the same time in 1980-81, when things were really moving, we had a roundup in the black community in the gymnasium of a formerly black high school. About 500 black adults appeared. One was a North Florida Council officer, a retired Air Force colonel, who spoke about five languages and had been on duty in Paris and London during his career, and was a native of that neighborhood. Also with us was the owner of all of the McDonald's fast food outlets in the black community. In the inner city, one of the tough things we had to do was recruit black male volunteers. In part, that's a matter of peer pressure. So when you have guys like those gentlemen involved, recruiting Scouting volunteers is much easier.

**Robert Parrish:** So how did you do that, judge? How did you know who to call? How did you make that happen?

**Judge Gerald B. Tjoflat:** Well, we had this map of Greater Jackson with all the crime beats and it showed how many Scouting units we had here and there. Then, with a good cadre of responsible people (like the men I mentioned) showing the people the need for Scouting, it becomes obvious that we've got to do something. So the best way of getting people together is you pick out people who can call up three or four people and get them to come to a meeting. When J.E. Davis said he was having a breakfast at the D-Dot, it took him and his secretary, about 25 minutes to get 75 people signed up -- because J.E. Davis spread his money for charity all over the Jacksonville area and beyond and lots of people were doing business with the Winn Dixie. So when the chairman calls and says, you've got to come to a meeting, you come to the meeting, and when the chairman says you've got to have some young people in your organization and your business devote some of their time to the Scouting movement, you respond. So that was the game plan, Bob, in that community.

**Robert Parrish:** Now, your interest in scouting wasn't limited just geographically to this area. I think you sort of spread it regionally. It had a competition with Birmingham.

**Judge Gerald B. Tjoflat:**

Well, the Birmingham Council was bigger than our Council. So we challenged Birmingham over a couple of periods to see who could grow the fastest. By this time, I was making an awful lot of speeches. I probably made three or four in Birmingham. I made talks to the Scouters in Birmingham and Tuscaloosa, and a lot of these places. You remember, Dot Bradley, my secretary, the Boy Scout headquarters in Dallas wanted Dot to write a letter and give it a list of all the speeches the judge had made, say between 1982 and 1985. She wrote a letter and she attached about seven or eight pages, single lines, maybe 200 speeches that are all over the place. And so it was just kind of a wildfire coming as to what was going on, basically. That's sort of the best way to put it with a lot of people doing a lot of work.

**Robert Parrish:** How did you go about getting together with Birmingham and have this competition?

**Judge Gerald B. Tjoflat:** Well I had made a talk to a Southeast Region of BSA, a group of scouters probably 300 or so in Knoxville, Tennessee at an annual meeting. And there was a man named Charlie Clayton, who was the chairman of a New York Stock Exchange company located in Birmingham. Clayton Bromberg is his grandson who runs Underwood's Jewelry. Okay. So Charlie Clayton and I became good friends. Charlie would be probably 110 years old now. He was the one who said, "Judge, you have to come up here in Birmingham and talk to these people about what we've got to do with Scouting.

The myth was that Charlie had four or five daughters. And when a young man would come calling on a one of his daughters, he would ask him, are you an Eagles Scout? I'm serious. They all married Eagles Scouts, and all of their sons became Eagle Scouts. But it was that kind of pressure, you might say, just plain peer pressure, setting an example. And the same thing happened around Florida. Take, for example, the founder of Publix supermarkets. I was holding court in Tampa. He came over to see me and he said, "you got to come over here to Lakeland." That's where Publix's corporate office was. So I spent an afternoon and an evening on a Saturday in Lakeland with the chairman of Publix. Then he said, after I leave, "you heard what the man said, we have got to do this." And Scouting takes off in Lakeland.

**Robert Parrish:** Well, who wanted to bet with Birmingham, who could exceed whose membership? I have to ask that question.

**Judge Gerald B. Tjoflat:**

We had a bet. We beat them.

**Robert Parrish:**

You beat them. Ok, good.

**Judge Gerald B. Tjoflat:** Yeah, we beat Birmingham in size.

**Robert Parrish:** We're going to make sure that's on the record for posterity.

**Judge Gerald B. Tjoflat:** We had some kind of trophy.

We had a deal with Atlanta of all places. Of course, Atlanta was a lot bigger. I'm involved with the reform of criminal justice system, sentencing reform, bail reform, up to my knees all through the seventies to 1984, right? We're really making hay when the Comprehensive Crime Control Act is passed by the Senate and then the House. Because crime in 1980, by that time, had become the number one issue politically. The Scouting work was sort of an outreach of things I was doing in the judicial branch.

**Robert Parrish:** Judge, there was that one time you had President Ford came to town, or you had a President Ford dinner in February '86. Tell us about that.

**Judge Gerald B. Tjoflat:** That was Bill Cook and J.E. Davis. They got him down here. They had a dinner in the Time Union Center down on the river, about 1500 people at dinner. I introduced the president, and he made one hell of a stemwinding speech about Scouting. It just had an enormous effect. I mean, in a dinner like that, you bring the broadest section of the population there, every neighborhood is represented as it were, this is not a closed shop proposition.

**Robert Parrish:** Judge, in 1996 you received a thing called the Fordham Stein Prize. I actually had the honor to be in New York when you were received that prize and to attend the dinner. You told a story of a troop 644 at the boy prison.

**Judge Gerald B. Tjoflat:** That's a story that I mentioned a little bit ago about the boy prison. It was on C-SPAN, and that was in the Pierre Hotel. It was a big affair. It was on C-SPAN because retired Justice Byron White introduced me. So he was the attraction I'm certain of that, so he did the introduction and I made a speech about the boy prison and I got communications from several places in the United States, places like Colorado and others, from people who said, can't we do something like that here? C-SPAN ran that speech probably 15 or 20 times over a three or four months spread and there was a lot of inquiry in why can't we have things like the Scouting movement in juvenile correction facilities? And there's no reason why you can't, right.

The secret to that whole thing is these young boys who get into trouble aren't really macho. The fact is they don't think very well of themselves. Now you get them into the structured environment and they're working on merit badges, then there's an honor court, and you make a fuss over them properly. So they've accomplished something. They feel they have a better self-image. And the main thing is they are loved L O V E D by adults who are delivering the program. Adults who aren't being paid to do that. The adults are doing it out of their own charity, as it were. So the boys respond to that. So in that kind of a setting, the children will respond. And I'll tell you, these 40 boys, there were some very rough characters in that group. I mean, they had committed felonies, but they weren't prosecuted because they were juveniles. I'm talking about assaults with deadly weapons. There may have been a killing amongst them but lots armed robbery, all kinds of things, violent crimes. These weren't economic crimes that they had committed, but Scouting turned them around.

**Robert Parrish:** Judge, I sort of had a wrap up question but as always, you were ahead of me and I think you summed up the big picture of why you have been so involved for so long at great sacrifice to yourself, I might say, all the speeches you've given and why you did it, why you think scouting was so important. I do want to sort of close, we've been through your history of Scouting involvement. How have you been involved in Scouting since you stepped down as the Council president? I know you're still on the board.

**Judge Gerald B. Tjoflat:** I'm still on the executive committee. I was Council chairman for a couple of years. Dan Davis was the president, and I have been on the executive committee ever since. So this is a committee of about 20. They're all very able guys. I hope it doesn't sound like I was doing all these things. We had a theory of Scouting. It was called Project Scouting. You take Scouting's table of organization, and then you have something like Scout World, which didn't fit in the table of organization. So you get some guys together to do Scout World, like Curly Gordon, my CPA, and you know, Curly. They were selling tickets to Scout World. Then Bell South was selling tickets. Bell South, the president of the Bell South Office here in Jacksonville had a cadre of people doing all kinds of things for Scout World, so it was a lot of projects. We needed a new dining hall in Camp Shands. It's going to cost about \$400,000 to have a dining hall with hotel type, kitchen equipment and so forth. So Bill Gay, one of my horses there - there's a Holiday Inn across the street from his office complex. So it's 6:30 in the morning. Once a week there would be about 15 guys. None of them had titles in the Scouting organization. One is a roofer. Then there was another guy who represented the biggest hotel freezer, kitchen outfit, a national company.

He's there. You have somebody else who does windows. You have a contractor who does this or that. you know 15 people are sitting around this table for about an hour and a half, and the sparks are flying. Somebody said, well, we have to have this much roofing. Oh, I know where I can find that. We've got to

have a kitchen. Well, they took a kitchen out of the Robert Meyer Hotel that closed in Jacksonville. You remember Robert Meyer? The whole Robert Meyer kitchen equipment, freezers and everything winds up in the new place at Camp Shands. So instead of 450 grand, it probably cost about \$75,000 and the rest is people giving, who wanted to do that. You've been at those kinds of meetings where the sparks fly.

**Robert Parrish:** Judge, you've told us about all the nuts and bolts and the history. But I want to close by asking you for history. What has all your efforts in Scouting meant to Gerald Bard Tjoflat as a human being, as you look back on it. What did you accomplish? What do you think about the effort?

**Judge Gerald B. Tjoflat:** It's what you see in the faces of the boys. It's what you see in the faces of the Scoutmasters and the committee people. You can't buy that. You can't put a value on that. There was a Scout troop at St. John's Presbyterian Church on St. John's Avenue below Avondale. The Scoutmaster is now dead. But he had a swagger stick, like a British swagger stick. They had a waiting line to get into that Scout troop that was always about a hundred. I went on camp trips, weekends with that troop. This explains what I'm talking about. On a weekend, say, up in the Rayonier forest in Nassau County. They had five adults who were world class cooks. One of the guys was a baker. Another knew how to do Italian cooking. Another knew how to do French cooking. So we get up there on Friday evening. We have this whole troop around in this forest, and we've got a tent (for a dining room). I'm with them, and they're cooking some kind of pie or cake in the ground, where you dig a hole, and I don't know how you do it. So the first night is French cooking and it's gourmet. They've got a stove, and the white hats are on. So we have dinner and you got these little cub scouts and the little tenderfoot scouts around. They want something to eat, and the problem is they've got to fix their own chow.

So the next morning you've got these patrols, they're cooking breakfast. Well, let's say they're having pancakes. Well, the griddle has to be perfectly hot for pancakes. So you have one guy who collects wood. You have another guy who puts the fire on. You have another guy that does the pancakes. And if they're not working together, the pancakes come out mush. So this one little patrol has nothing to eat. So they'll go on a march and have lunch. And some of them, their mothers gave them a piece of candy to stick in their knapsacks. Then they come back and have dinner. The next morning, whoever was supposed to collect the fire wood would have done that. It all happened. And you can see it in the faces of these kids, and of course you see it in the faces of the adults. So that's the secret.

**Robert Parrish:** Well, you get the last word, Judge. As we wrap up this session, I know you could go on forever with boy scout stories, but do you have anything in closing?

**Judge Gerald B. Tjoflat:** Well, the last word is something like this. What happened back in those days isn't something you throw in the trash and say, well, that was another time. It can happen now. It takes the same chemistry. You just get some people together who forget about themselves and decide to pitch in and do a job, and when they start seeing the rewards -- it's just like watching little Cub Scouts at a Pinewood derby getting all excited. So it can happen now is the point I'm making.

**Robert Parrish:** Well, I'm not sure there's another Gerald Bard out there to make it happen, but I'll pray that there is.

**Judge Gerald B. Tjoflat:** Thank you. One of the secrets was, of course, making talks to these groups. Here I am at the United States Court of Appeals judge knee deep in criminal justice work. So you're carrying a hell of a lot of credibility when you are making these talks. I'm talking about what's going to

cost to build a prison, and I'm talking about what the crime rate's going to be. The audience believes you. It's not just somebody reading off of a piece of paper. So, the credibility of where I was coming from had a lot to do with it. It was also the guys who were working with me, the volunteers, all kinds of volunteers, like JE Davis, when he called me up and said, we have to do something about this crime.

**Robert Parrish:** Well, I think you're being too humble, as always. But we all thank you.