

## Mayor and Citizen of the Year

CG: Vienna's governing is done by you and six other council members, correct?

JS: Right.

CG: Can you explain more about your role within the system?

JS: The mayor is definitely the figurehead, I guess you could say, or the representative. I represent Vienna on many, many boards and commissions, meetings and so forth. I run the meetings. I sign all the official papers. We hire a Town Manager, and he runs all the day-to-day operations. We give him directions, tell him what our policies are. He'll do the development and carries those things out. So it works very well.

VH: What year did you become mayor?

JS: In 2000, I was sworn in. It's easy to remember that.

JS: Charles Robinson.

VH: Now he was mayor for a very long time.

JS: Long time, yeah. 27 years, 26 years, something like that. But time goes pretty fast, now I'm thinking. (all laugh)

CG: Going on 14 (years)?

JS: Yeah.

VH: Was it kind of strange, following someone who'd been Mayor for such a long time?

JS: It was. I really had decided that I *couldn't* follow him exactly. (V: Sure.) This had to be me, my own shoes that I was filling, my own philosophy about being a mayor and so on. I had pretty much made up my mind. Not that I didn't respect him, or respect his ideas. Very moral man, very high ideals, but—and I could certainly do that, but I also had other ideals that I wanted to carry out.

CG: What inspired you to run for office in the first place?

JS: Well, he was very ill. I was on Council at the time and had no idea about this. Even being on Council was more than I would have thought. But he asked. He said 'would you think about it', and I thought, 'Gee, I don't know. I don't know why I would.' But I really looked around Vienna and I thought, 'Vienna has been so good to me and my family. It's been such a wonderful place to raise my family. It's been so good to live

here that you know, if you—at some point, you have to step forward. It was a big step. I felt like I had swallowed a rock, I really did. I was so scared when I called people and told them what I was going to do. But sometimes you just have to put yourself out there. I don't where that came from within me, because that's usually not me. But that was it. That was my decision.

VH: We wanted to ask you about being voted Citizen of the Year?

JS: I think that happened right before I decided to run for Mayor. I don't know how that happened. But I thought, 'Gee, I'd better take advantage of this.' With publicity like that, you don't just let that go away. I thought, 'Well, I'll just put that on my resume.' I have no idea how that happened, but it was pretty cool.

VH: What did that entail, exactly?

JS: You get to ride in the Halloween parade in a convertible. My granddaughter, who's graduating from high school now, rode with me and she was dressed up like Madeline. She was the hit of the parade. Nobody looked at me. 'Oh, look it's Madeline!' She kind of has that little look of Madeline. She was dressed so cute. Everybody was yelling, 'There's Madeline!' She was the star, which was fine with me.