

Gale

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"The 1971 session elated those of us who worked in the environmental field," she said. "It was the first time there was a continuing environmental presence in Salem."

During that session, she helped pass the bottle bill, which put a five-cent deposit on beverage cans and bottles. Gale said that bill is no longer effective because there is less of an incentive to turn in empty containers.

"At the time it was perfect," she said. "But five cents doesn't mean as much anymore."

Nancie Fadeley, University assistant vice provost, chaired the House Environment and Land Use Committee during the 1971 session. She said Gale was an active leader for other environmentalists of the time.

"She really gave them a voice," she said. "It was truly an exciting time."

Fadeley said Oregon environmentalists were successful in the early '70s because no one in the state legislature expected them.

"One of the reasons we got so much work done is because we were underestimated," she said.

Protecting Oregon's ocean beaches was also a main goal for Gale in the early '70s. But Gale said both committee members and citizens in Coos Bay at the time were more concerned with economic development than environmental issues.

"No one was happy to have six outsiders imposed on them," she said.

Richard Benner, director of the Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development, said although there was initial hostility, once people realized Gale had sincere motives, the sides were able to work together.

"There were so many meetings

that the people got to know each other," he said. "And Maradel had a very nice manner that helped overcome the hostility."

Benner said although not everyone agreed with her ideas, many people in the community came to respect her.

"People listened to her because she had a different take on things," he said. "No one ever questioned her motives or sincerity."

Gale also was active in Eugene by confronting the issue of air pollution from farmers burning over grass seed fields. So when the city of Eugene asked her to lobby in the 1975 session for limits on how often farmers could burn, she agreed.

"Our air would be totally polluted from areas of fields being burned," she said. "We would have days when you couldn't see across the street."

Gale's lobbying was successful, and laws were enacted that limited burning to a few days of the week.

"Today the burning is a fraction of what it used to be," she said.

While she was lobbying in Salem, Gale also attended law school at the University. She said she had no intention of becoming a lawyer but wanted to learn how to write laws more efficiently.

University President Dave Frohn-mayer was a state legislator at the time and also one of Gale's law professors. He said he enjoyed having her in class and working with her on the field burning issue.

"She had a very formidable statewide reputation even while she was in law school," he said.

Frohn-mayer said he hopes this is not the last the University sees of Gale.

"She's been an incredibly valuable citizen both to the community and the University," he said. "I certainly hope she keeps her ties to the University."

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