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Interview with A. Robert Abboud

Date: 3 December 2009

Location: UIC Historian's Office, 815 W. Van Buren St., Chicago, IL

Present: A. Robert Abboud; Dr. Robert V. Remini, Ph.D.; and Dr. Tim Lacy, Ph.D.

(The interview has already begun)

Dr. Robert V. Remini (RVR): We are interested in your career, as we are with late Mayor Richard J. Daley.

A. Robert Abboud (AA): Well, I'll tell you, the Daley family will never get enough credit for the University in Chicago. This university here—the Circle Campus—was his pride. He talked about it all of the time. You know, this was a realization—a dream.

RVR: And you've been close with the family?

AA: Well, I have. And of course, I've been closer with Richard the mayor.

RVR: Did Michael call you yesterday?

AA: Michael did not call me yesterday. I was away, though.

RVR: He's invited you to lunch. Did you know that?

AA: I didn't go to the office yesterday. I was out of the office—I was travelling, so he may have left a message at the office.

RVR: Is there somebody in the office that can tell you?

AA: Yes, I can call them right now. Well, I don't know—He had an appointment this morning. Let me see (AA calls his office).

RVR: Tell us more about your relationship with the late mayor.

AA: Well, when I first joined the bank in the late fifties, I remember a meeting we had at the Chicago Club, in which he had convened all of the senior business officials, academic officials, and political officials. I was a young vice president at that time at The First National Bank of Chicago. He called us in and he said, "We want to do three things here in Chicago—We want to make Chicago an international city, we want to bring headquarters for companies here, and we want to build Chicago for its people." He was always attentive to the working families and the working people of Chicago who needed jobs. He said, "We need jobs."

That meeting always had an impression on me because it really started something. I was particularly interested in it because I had come to join The First National Bank of Chicago under the guidance of Gale Freeman, who was then a senior vice president, and later became the chairman—I succeeded him. We wanted to build The First National Bank of Chicago into the international arena. You may not be aware of this, but in 1871, The First National Bank of Chicago was the largest international bank in the United States. It was financing the cotton crop that was coming up the Mississippi—the bankers' acceptances and so forth. The cotton made its way to Europe, so this was of interest.

We were working on that. It was delegated as part of my job to build the international department and contacting foreign companies and helping them to get established here in Chicago. It was so that we could create that I was sent abroad. So I served some tours of duty for the bank abroad, opening branches in Germany and the Middle East, before I came back in 1968.

At that time, we had just completed our first building—The First National Bank of Chicago building. It was on the site of the old Morrison Hotel. It was very familiar to the mayor because that had been the headquarters of the Democratic Party—He had entertained presidents there and so forth. The next time, at a personal meeting with the mayor—was in 1968—there was a lot of turmoil on the South Side. You remember the demonstrations that came up the streets and so forth.

RVR: I do indeed.

AA: We were concerned because we had just opened our new building. Gale Freeman, who at that time had ascended to the chairmanship of the bank, called me and said, "We just built this building. I want you to contact the black community—I don't want this building damaged down here." I said, "What am I going to do about that?" But I contacted a young guy named Jesse Jackson, and I said, "My career is on the line here. When you guys come up, I want you to turn west on Adams Street (AA and RVR laugh)—Don't come up here." (AA and RVR laugh) Anyway, we had a conversation—that's a little vicious, but it really happened—and I said, "What is it that's driving this thing?" He said, "Well, we can't have access. We need to talk."

So I went back and I talked to my bosses. Gale Freeman then came up with the idea and said, "Well, why don't we have a once-a-month breakfast up on the top floor of the bank? We'll invite the political leaders, the educational leaders, the business community, and the members of the black and Latino communities to come together."—So, Chicago United was born. That turned out to be very successful. Nothing could happen unless the mayor said that this was a good idea and blessed it—and he was really the driver behind it that gave it the credibility, because all of the other powers that be wouldn't come not only if the mayor hadn't blessed it, but if he hadn't attended some of the meetings.

AA and RVR: He did.

AA: That's why I rattle a little bit at some of the history of the conventions—with this, that, and the other thing. The mayor was basically very much concerned—you know, he loved Chicago, he loved this city, he loved the people. He was a great uniter of all of the ethnic communities. And he was one of the founders and promoters of it. That started a relationship. So we had it back and forth—I was the executive vice president in charge of lending international and domestic—so we had contact with the mayor's office about the comings and goings.

The next real time that I had contact with the mayor was, I believe, in 1974 or 1975. New York had defaulted on its bonds. I had been working with the other bankers, like Continental, Northern, and Harris Trust, with the mayor's office and so forth. We were maintaining Chicago's bond rating—the AA bond rating. So we had a two-hundred-million-dollar bond that was about to be issued—a bond offering for the city of Chicago. The two big banks, Continental and First Chicago, had the larger portion. Harris Trust and Northern had the smaller portion.

John Perkins of the Continental Bank was the manager of that particular issue—He would rotate it. He called me and said, "We can't issue the bond—New York has just pulled its bond in the bond market." And I said, "Nuts! We're not New York—We've got a AA bond rating. If we do that, we're going to be in the same position as New York." He said, "I'm the manager—That's what we're going to do." I said, "I'm going to call the mayor." So I called the mayor's office and I talked to his secretary. She said, "He's on his way."—I think it was St. Louis, but I'm not sure—But that was a long time ago.

I said, "Well, I've got to get him on the phone." I called him and I said, "Mr. Mayor, I've got to talk to you." I explained it to him briefly. He said, "I'm turning around and coming right back." He came back. I said, "Mr. Mayor, we're going out with this bond issue because we're going to differentiate from New York. If we don't, we're going to be in the same pot as New York. Look, if the other banks don't come along, we'll break that issue up into thousand-dollar pieces. I'll sell it on the first floor of The First National Bank of Chicago. The people of Chicago will buy the bonds because they believe in Chicago." He said, "Okay."

So he called the four bankers in again—Perkins, myself, Northern, and Harris Trust. I'll never forget it. (AA laughs) He said, "Look, we're going out with the bond issue. If you guys don't want to go along, Bob says he'll sell it off." So Perkins got me aside and said, "You blankity blank! You know that we have to go along. (RVR laughs) We can't do this." So anyway, we did—and it was very successful. The publicity was very favorable. You know, it differentiated Chicago from everything.

RVR: Cleveland was going bankrupt.

AA: Yes, Cleveland was going bankrupt, Detroit was down, New York was down. So the mayor said, "I want you to go down and testify in Washington, D.C. before the Banking Committee [U.S. Senate Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs], and you tell them that we don't need all of those things that they're talking about with rescuing and taking control. We can run our own city." So I did. [Bill Proxmire, D-WI] was the chairman of the Banking Committee at that time. Of course, the mayor had it all set up for me—He called up and said, "My representative is coming to town to testify." (AA laughs) I mean, you'd get the red carpet in those days.

We had the congressional delegation and so forth—We did that—And from that point forward, I was kind of his liaison with the business community. Whenever we had a thing, we'd get in there and so forth. I was really his gofer. He'd say, "We want to do this and that. What do you think?"—Then I'd go around to do that. We then began to have a pretty good run in Chicago. I mean, the city was flourishing—New business was coming in, everybody was on board, Chicago United was vibrant, we were reaching out to all of the different communities and so forth. Everybody was working as one.

RVR: And you credit the mayor for that?

AA: Oh, it was his leadership! I mean, nothing happened in Chicago. The mayor was the boss.

RVR: He was?

AA: He was the boss. Everybody understood that, and properly so. I mean, that's where the center of authority should have been. It was, and it worked. There were two or three incidents—and these are all disconnected because I'm rambling—You may not want that.

RVR: That's fine.

AA: There had just been the Yom Kipper War between Israel and Egypt. About a year later—It must have been 1975, 1976, or so—President Sadat of Egypt was coming to the United States, so he came to New York. [Abraham D.] Abe Beame was the mayor of New York, and he wouldn't meet with him because the Jewish community was riled up. New York Governor Carey called President Sadat and said, "Well, I'll come up and visit you, but I'll come up through the back door—I can't be seen." So President Sadat said, "Look, if you're going to come up through the back door, don't come. I don't want to see you."

So then, I got a call from the State Department. They said, "We have a head of state who has been insulted in New York. He's coming to Chicago. Can you do anything?" I said, "I don't know, I've got to go and talk to the boss. I'll call you back." So I called the mayor's office for an appointment. I went over and explained the situation, and he said, "Wonderful! The head of state

is coming here. We'll meet him at the airport—We'll have a police escort—We'll welcome him." I said, "Okay." So I called the State Department. I said, "The mayor says come in," and so forth. "The mayor will greet him," and so forth.

So President Sadat came in (AA laughs). The mayor then sent out invitations to everybody saying, "We're going to have a meeting at the Palmer House in the Grand Ballroom, and we're going to have President Sadat here."—Now remember, at that particular time, this was very unpopular with the Jewish community in Chicago. My wife Joan, President Sadat, Jeanine Sadat, and I were in a little room in the back before we came out on stage, then Mayor and Sis Daley came in.

The mayor had had a hard, busy day. He was kind of relaxing. He began taking a couple of drinks. Mrs. Sadat was beautiful—She still is a beautiful woman—She was very beautiful at that time. She began flirting with him—I mean, it was just casual. I mean, he loved it—He was tickled! He was sitting there and so forth, and he was drinking. So we went out on stage—the whole audience was there.

RVR: Were you sitting with him on the dais?

AA: Yes, I was the master of ceremony. He said, "You be the master of ceremony." I said, "I don't want to be the master of ceremony—you're the boss." He said, "You be the master of ceremony." I said, "Yes sir." So I was up there, because we at the banks have a lot of Jewish clients, too. Anyway, we went up there—Joan and I were sitting on the dais, along with Mayor and Sis Daley, and President and Mrs. Sadat. I remember looking as I introduced the president and so forth—I introduced the mayor and he introduced the president.

I looked down and Dan Rostenkowski was in the front row. He had his head between his hands like this. He said, "Oh my God!" (AA laughs) The mayor got up and said, "We've got a head of state here. This man has come. Chicago has always welcomed everybody. We're friends with everybody. This man wants a homeland for his people. We Irish want a homeland for our people. What's wrong with that?" (RVR laughs) Rostenkowski was like, "Oh my God!" And he just went on and on and on.

President Sadat was thrilled. He got up. This was before he went to Tel Aviv and made that famous speech about how he was going to do the reconciliation. It had been very

comfortable because I'd known President Sadat since 1970, when he first took over. That was when we (The First National Bank of Chicago) made the first loan so they could buy the Boeing 707 for Egypt Air—so there was a comradeship that went on. So anyway, that went on. It wasn't long after that that he made the trip to Tel Aviv. Then he became a hero, so this worked out very nicely.

There was another occasion. We were having trouble with school funding in Chicago. The mayor said, "We're going to go down to Springfield—We're going to address the legislature and ask them for funding. I want you to come with me." I said, "I'm a banker, what do I know?" He said, "You're coming with me." So anyway, we got in a plane and we flew down there. Madigan was there. As a matter of fact, Madigan has that picture behind his desk with the mayor and me.

RVR: We interviewed him, too.

AA: Oh you did?

RVR: We were in his office.

AA: Oh, you saw it?

RVR: We saw the picture.

AA: We made our pitch that, "You ought to increase school funding." It didn't go very well—We still ought to do it—We still haven't done that—but I remember on the plane coming back, the mayor turned to me and said, "The most important thing we can do is to educate our children. We can never have our city working together as one unless all of the children in the city have a good chance at education." He talked about the Circle Campus—the University of Illinois.

RVR: Do you remember what year that was?

AA: No I don't, but that picture in Madigan's office ought to tell us. It was thirty to thirty-five

years ago—It must have been 1975 or 1976.

RVR: But the university was already here.

AA: Yes, it was here. But he was talking about basics. Before, he had talked in the early seventies. He was really excited in the sixties about building the thing. But it was young and fledging in the middle seventies as it was coming up—the Circle Campus. One of the reasons I think it came up at that particular time was because there was some issue in the city council. And I don't remember exactly when, but it was about the construction of access, roads, and infrastructure that had to be built to support—I don't know if it was the comings and goings of the students or what it was—It was access and transportation.

The founding here wasn't the end of it. It took sequential additions to do it. Oh, I remember—There was also the question about the neighborhood around here. There was some controversy—They had to displace some people that owned some property and so forth. So it was an issue. But he wanted the community colleges, he wanted the high schools, he wanted the grammar schools.

Education, to him, was a huge thing. He felt that if you were going to have democracy, you have to have the city working as one. You've got to have education—Without education, you can never pull people together. I don't know, off of the top of my head, I can't think of any particular vignettes after that. I remember, of course, exactly the day when it was announced on the radio that he'd been taken to the hospital and died.

RVR: Now, wasn't the bond issue what tied you closely to him?

AA: Yes, I was just another business guy.

RVR: You helped him with that.

AA: Yes, and that led to a close relationship. Well, one thing we did was building Chicago. Our people had come up with the idea of an advertising campaign where we said, "First Chicago, Chicago's bank." We did that all over, and he loved that. When we'd be out together, he would

tell Sis Daley, "Chicago's bank'—Bob thought of that." I said, "Well, Mr. Mayor, we've got a staff that does these things." But oh, he loved it—We were advertising Chicago—We were proud of Chicago. He liked Tom Miner. Tom [Thomas H.] Miner really worked very hard in the early seventies. I don't know if you've interviewed Tom.

RVR: No we haven't. Is he still alive?

AA: Yes, he's alive. He started the international forum where we'd bring in leaders—You know, this was part of the whole thing of building the city. But it was the bond issue that really—

RVR: —that made it.

AA: Well, I was the right age for it. Oh, I know another thing—I had been running a campaign after I became the CEO and chairman of the bank for branch banking in Illinois, and I had talked to him and said, "You know, Chicago is going to be a great city. We've got to have branches out there," and so forth. I was in his office, and he called the general council of the City of Chicago—I forgot his name—I know him very well.

RVR: We can look it up.

AA: Yes. And he said, "We're a home rule city. Aren't we?" And he said, "Yes." And he said, "If we're a home rule city, why can't we override the state law against branch banking?" (RVR laughs) Thompson [General Counsel for the City] said, "Okay. We'll try." So he did. To make a case, I opened a branch down on Wabash and Monroe. The Illinois Bankers Association filed a suit.

RVR: This was Wabash and...?

AA: It was on the corner of Wabash and Monroe. The Illinois Bankers Association filed a suit and it went up to the Supreme Court—and they ruled against us. He said, "Well Bob, we tried." It's too bad because our banks would have been a lot stronger if that had happened. The other

vignette was this—The bank built First National Two, which was to the west of The First National Bank, across Clark Street. But to the north, in that block, it was nothing—It was just low-lying buildings. There were some strip joints in there, and some bars and stuff. The mayor was always upset about that.

Over a period of time, partially because of the recession of 1974, where a lot of the bar owners kind of went under, we had acquired most of the property—the bank. So the mayor said, "We've got to do something. We've got to build something there." And I said, "Mr. Mayor, we can't do that because with the Illinois Branch Banking Law, I can't put a branch over there because it's across the street. Unless it's contiguous, we couldn't be within the law. The comptroller of the currency won't let us go out and build real estate. It isn't a banking facility." The Mayor said, "We'll build a bridge." (AA and RVR laugh)

So we built a bridge. It went from First National Bank One over to First National Bank Three—We built First National Bank Three. The bridge went across Madison Street, which then made it contiguous, which allowed us to have a banking office. So that's how First National Bank Three got built (RVR laughs).

RVR: That's great.

AA: Yes.

RVR: Did you regard the mayor as your personal friend? Or was he always the mayor, somebody to help you?

AA: He was like a father figure. I mean, there was our age differential—I was in my forties, he was, what, in his late sixties or seventies?

RVR: But you were close? He called you by your first name?

AA: Oh, absolutely.

RVR: But you always called him Mr. Mayor?

AA: It was Mr. Mayor. You bet. I called Sis Daley "Sis."

RVR: You did call her Sis?

AA: I called her Sis, but it was Mr. Mayor.

RVR: Were you ever invited to his home?

AA: Yes I was, many times. We were at all of the functions, Joan and I—if you've seen pictures. Oh, the other thing was that we were having the bicentennial here in 1976, so he called me and he said, "I want you to be the chairman of the Bicentennial Committee. I want you to have Bonnie [Bolding] Swearingen [wife of John E. Swearingen, of Standard Oil fame] as the co-chairman." And I said, "Mr. Mayor, you and I are going to be working for Bonnie, you understand that." (AA and RVR laugh) He said, "I understand that—just go do it." (AA laughs)

So we did—We formed the committee. Emperor Hirohito was a guest and came here. We had this big function—I forget if it was at the Hilton, the Palmer House, or where it was. We had this huge function. We had a branch bank in Japan, so our staff wrote a haiku for me and they taught me how to say it. We were on a stage—The audience was out there, the emperor was there, along with the empress, the mayor, Sis Daley, Joan, and me.

I got up there, and for the first time, I got the doggoned thing right on the haiku. The emperor was so impressed that he gave me an autographed photograph of himself with the empress and the Imperial seal. He can't talk to a commoner, you know. I asked his aide—I said, "What does his dentist do? I mean, how does he say whether it hurts or not." (AA and RVR laugh) But he can't. We had all kinds of gala functions for the bicentennial. This was huge, with parades and things. I mean, it was a gala period. Those are just some of the things.

RVR: Do you remember anything about his relations with the university, or how he helped to bring the university into being?

AA: I can remember conversation after conversation after conversation. When he talked to the

business community, he'd talk about the university—He'd talk about his Circle Campus. After a point, it was so frequent and so common that everybody just kind of expected it.

RVR: I didn't know that. That's interesting.

AA: This was a passion. I think it was one passion that the mayor had, besides the city of Chicago. And it was part of the city of Chicago—It was education, all the way, from the bottom to the top.

RVR: He told me that the best thing he ever did for Chicago was right here.

AA: Yes. He told me that, too. He said, "That's my memorial."

RVR: And it is.

AA: Yes.

RVR: In fact, he thought that all of the land between this university and the medical center—which is about a mile away—would be one vast complex of education and sports. He was going to build a stadium there and tear down Soldier Field. We were going to have a big football team like UCLA. It didn't happen that way—We went to the south.

AA: Well, from day one, the relations of surrounding land—It was always an issue.

RVR: Did he ever complain that when he came to this university, many of the students would boo him, even some of the faculty, because he was a boss?

AA: No.

RVR: He never mentioned that?

AA: No.

RVR: I don't think it bothered him in the least. He was used to that.

AA: I was not even aware of it.

RVR: Yes, it was dreadful. Here was the man who could do more for this university...

AA: Well, was it because of the Vietnam War or something?

RVR: It was because he was called a Boss.

AA: Well he was a Boss!

RVR: Yes!

AA: I liked the Boss! We need a Boss! (RVR laughs)

RVR: Yes. Madigan said it, too—He was the Boss.

AA: The alternative is anarchy.

RVR: But with academics, they're "holier-than-thou," and if you're a Boss, it's like, "We don't like you, we don't want you here, and we're going to boo you."

AA: But they all want a leader. How can you be a leader if you're not the Boss?

RVR: I don't think he came as often then—Why should he come to be booed? But he came when necessary, for those activities which advanced the building or the operation of this campus.

AA: This was his love. I mean, they're students—they're kids—what do they know?

RVR: And he wanted it close to public transportation.

AA: Oh yes. They'd have access.

RVR: It was so poor kids could come here for an education.

AA: Yes.

RVR: There were a lot of excellent private schools, but no excellent public school. And he wanted it here.

AA: Absolutely.

RVR: The administration wanted it out in Garfield Park—Daley said no.

AA: Oh no, it was, “Circle, Circle, Circle”—That's what he wanted. He just believed it. I don't understand the history. Maybe I'm not familiar with it. If there was ever a mayor that was for the poor, the downtrodden, for the different races, and for cohesion, it was Mayor Richard J. Daley. He was a union man, but he wasn't a coward with the unions. I sat in meetings where he was talking with union leaders. He'd say, "No, this is not good for business."

I can remember when we'd have meetings sometimes—People would want to come in and either establish a company or build something. He would call some of the business community in, and he'd say, "Look, you tell me whether this is good for Chicago or not. I'm going to leave the room. My criteria is that if it makes jobs, I'm for it. If it doesn't make jobs, I'm against it," and he'd leave. We'd sit and talk—Then he'd come back.

RVR: Then he'd come back later and say, "Well, what did you decide?"

AA: Yes. We would call him—He'd say, "Well, what did you decide?" We'd tell him, and he might modify it. He didn't accept everything. He accepted some things. I mean, he was a CEO—

That's what CEO's do.

RVR: Yes. Do you remember anything that he wouldn't accept?

AA: Well, I'm trying to think. I think there was something down on the lakefront that was going to happen. For some reason, the business community wanted to do it—I can't remember what the specifics were. He said, "We're not touching that." That was it—There was no discussion. He said, "We're not touching that." (AA and Tim Lacy laugh)

Dr. Tim Lacy (TL): He just said, "We're not doing it."

AA: He said, "We're not touching it (AA laughs)."

TL: He didn't cite the Grand Burnham Plan for Chicago, he just said, "We're not doing it."

AA: He just said, "We're not touching it." (AA and RVR laugh)

TL: If your voice is starting to go—I don't mean to cut things off. We can postpone this.

RVR: Yes, we don't want to wear you out.

AA: No, as long as it's all right for you, it's okay with me.

TL: We have about ten minutes left on the tape.

RVR: I wanted to ask you about Sis Daley. What was your relationship with her?

AA: Well, she was the first lady of Chicago. She was gracious in every way. My wife Joan adored her. She was so kind and so all-inclusive. Every time we'd have functions and we'd get together, she'd bring the younger women in and so forth. There were no pretensions. I had talked to Bill Daley about the library that she had saved up here—that building. I said, "She saved the

building—This ought to be the Sis Daley Memorial Building." Bill said, "Well, I'll talk to Rich about it." I said, "No. Rich doesn't want to do that." Oh, when the mayor died, I was named the head of the committee to determine a memorial for the mayor, and so I talked to Sis about it. She said that what she'd really like was an extra star on the flag.

RVR: Really?

AA: Yes. I couldn't get it done. I tried. I think what finally happened was that it was concluded to build a statue in the Daley Plaza.

RVR: Was it already the Daley Plaza?

AA: I don't know.

RVR: It wasn't named for him because he had died and that was the memorial?

AA: I don't remember. My memory would be that it was named after him. I don't know, I can't remember it. But I think it was there—I think it was the Daley Plaza. I don't remember. I remember all of the controversy came in when he had approved the statue of the Picasso that was out there. People would go, "Ah, what is this thing?" Now, the people don't want to tear it down.

RVR: What influence, would you say, that Sis Daley had on the mayor?

AA: Oh, it was terrific—and on the whole family. I mean, she brought everyone back to ground zero. I mean, there were no pretensions. We would go places with the mayor—Joan, Sis, and I—We'd go to functions. I remember one function they had where an Irish tour group was coming in. They would show how arts and handicrafts were done in Irish towns, and they'd spin. We were there and so forth. There were a number of functions that we attended together. He would laugh and giggle. Sis was there.

RVR: Do you think she advised him on any of the issues?

AA: Well, I don't think she advised him on policy. I think she advised him on common sense like, "No Dick, you can't do that."—I mean, I heard that.

RVR: Or if he asked her, "What do you think?"

AA: Yes. He'd say, "What do you think?" And she had opinions about people—I mean, that's probably where her influence came in.

RVR: Oh yes?

AA: Oh yes.

RVR: In what sense?

AA: Well, I mean, she'd say, "So and so you can trust and is genuine," or, "Someone is taking advantage of you." I mean, he valued her counsel about her judgment on people.

RVR: I'm happy to say that she allowed me to interview her, and it so amazed the family. And I've had very good relations with the family as a consequence. I consider that to be a great honor.

AA: Sure, it is a great honor. There's no question about it.

RVR: She unfortunately died before I was able to complete the interviewing.

AA: This was a woman of immense dignity. I mean, when she came into a room, there was nothing pretentious.

RVR: And she was a beautiful woman.

AA: She was a beautiful woman. And you know, we entertained many heads of state—we had

the Emperor of Japan, we had King Hussein of Jordan come in. We invited them to the bank—I used to have these heads of state come into the bank. We'd always take them over and introduce them to the mayor, and they all loved Sis. I remember King Hussein loved her. Sadat loved her. We had different people in from Japan and China—We were the first American bank into China, after the mayor died. We had been courting the Chinese since 1972, so we had some of their leaders coming over here in the mid-seventies and so forth. The mayor was always receptive. Whenever we had dinners at night or functions and so forth, Mrs. Daley would come. Sometimes these heads of state would bring their children—young women or young men. She'd engage them. It was a very comfortable conversation that they would have.

RVR: He was a marvelous husband and father.

AA: Yes. Well, look at the kids—I mean, they're terrific.

AA and RVR: Every one of them.

AA: What's wrong with that? What other product is important?

RVR: Sure. And I don't think that the people of Chicago know that about him—They know about him being a Boss.

AA: Yes. Well, the other thing I don't think is generally known is that, when he died, what did he have? He had the house down here on the South Side and the house up in Michigan. She had the city pension. He could have walked away with the sidewalks. He never took a penny—not a nickel!

RVR: Yes. He always advised everybody, "Just give them your business card—Don't take any money."

AA: Yes. I mean, people, when they talk about Chicago with this, that, and the other thing—He was a mayor that was the longest serving mayor. Rich may exceed that now. He never took a

nickel.

RVR: Yes. And when he died, she wanted his papers to come to this...

AA: Yes, she told me that.

RVR: And that's where they are now.

AA: That's what she said. She said they'd go to the University of Illinois.

RVR: They're really a remarkable family—and he protected them.

AA: Well, he not only protected them, he let them, to some extent, have free rein. When they got off track, he scolded them. When they did well, he praised them. And he was loyal—I mean, if there's one thing you could say about the mayor, he was loyal. If you were loyal, he was loyal.

RVR: Yes. He disagreed with President Johnson about the Vietnam War, but in public, he was always supportive.

AA: Yes.

RVR: It was the president of the United States—He would support him.

AA: He was very respectful about the office.

RVR: And you know, after Jack Kennedy was elected president—thanks to the mayor—he asked the mayor if there was anything that he wanted. All he wanted was a tour of the White House for his family. (AA laughs) And he wouldn't let Rich come because Rich was in school—His place was in school, so he didn't go. Rich didn't mind—He understood that that was what he had to do. I think that as father, as husband, and as the mayor, he really was remarkable.

AA: Yes. As an American citizen—I mean to me, the mayor was a great American. He embodied everything about America—his Irish lineage. He came up here, boot straps up, had a family, built a family, the members of the family became leaders of the country and leaders of the community—He built a city.

RVR: He was an only child who then had a family. (RVR laughs)

AA: Yes.

RVR: I don't know how many there are, but there are a good many.

AA: And the girls did good, too. It was too bad we lost Eleanor.

RVR: Yes, that was a great blow to lose a child.

AA: Yes. That hurt.

RVR: Do you have any questions that you'd like to ask?

TL: I don't think so. I feel pretty good about everything you've asked. They were the same things that I would have brought up.

AA: Okay.

RVR: Let me go and call Michael.

*****END OF INTERVIEW*****