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Interview with Edward J. Bedore, (Second Session)

Date: 1 October 2009

Location: Home of Edward J. Bedore, Springfield, IL.
Present: Edward J. Bedore; Dr. David W. Veenstra, Ph.D.; and Jason Marcus Waak

Dr. David W. Veenstra: Okay. Why don't we pick it up?

Jason Marcus Waak: Yes. It is 1 October, 2009. We're at the home of Ed Bedore here in Springfield, IL. This is the second session. When we last left off, we had a few lingering questions for you, Mr. Bedore. One of them was that—if you could talk a little bit about life after Mayor Richard J. Daley's stroke, which I believe was in 1971 or 1972. Then walk us from that point to his final campaign. Then, upon his death, what was the climate of the Democratic Party at the time—and the city of Chicago? Obviously, since you transitioned into the Bilandic administration, maybe you could tell us a little bit about that transition.

Edward J. Bedore: It all started in the afternoon. The mayor had gone out to some event, had given a speech, and came back. Tom Donovan and myself were in the office. His speech definitely was slurred—We knew something was wrong—so I believe some family members or his secretary got him in to see the doctor in the hospital. That's when he had the corroded artery—There was a blockage, and that's what caused it all. During that time, there was Tom Donovan, myself, and a group of other people—Mayor Daley really had a very good, hardworking cabinet.

And that was one of his greatest attributes: He knew how to pick people—people that were not only loyal, but hardworking and competent. So it was very easy to continue on. We all knew what he wanted and what he would want—That's what we did. There were some decisions to be made with the upcoming budget, but we got through it very easily, because we all had a sense of where he would like us to go. As he was recuperating, there was communication with Tom Donovan, so we had a sense of what was happening. And I say it again—I think that one of his greatest assets was picking a good group of department heads. They were hardworking and young, like Jim McDonough. They really were a good group. They worked hard.

And so, that's how we got through this. It was because of the direction, the training, and the exposure we had to Mayor Daley over the years. It was no surprise. We knew what he would want—That's what we did, and we carried on with that. I'm jumping now all the way to when he died. But a year or so before all of that—that was a good time to be in city hall. It was the bicentennial, so there were events. You were talking about Colonel Riley—that was his forte, these various events with kings, queens, and heads of state.

JMW: Can you talk specifically about any that stick out?

EB: Okay. Being a fairly young person, I didn't own a tux. But it seemed like there were events every three or four weeks, so I went out and bought one, rather than rent one. But all of these events were outstanding. The one that did stand out was somebody from the Middle East that was here, and the singing group was The 5th Dimension. So, good old Colonel Riley (EB laughs) in his fashion said, "Now, I'd like you all to hear the Five Dimensions (EB, DWV, and JMW laugh)." We were like, "Okay (EB, DWV, and JMW laugh)." But every one of them was great.

The mayor really had a great program. The bicentennial was fabulous. Then, when he died—that morning was the cabinet breakfast, which was our annual holiday breakfast with the Mayor and Mrs. Daley. It was at the Bismarck Hotel. We had all chipped in to buy them tickets to Ireland. Aer Lingus was there. They had a harpist. It was beautiful. It was a very beautiful breakfast. From there, the mayor went to the Daley Plaza—It was then called the Civic Center at the time. He went to see the ice sculptures.

Then they drove out to the Tenth Ward to open a gymnasium for the park district with Eddie Vrdolyak and Eddie Kelly. He was shooting baskets with Eddie Vrdolyak and had made more baskets than Vrdolyak. Then, on his way out, he had told his guards in the detail to take him to his doctor's office. They drove to the doctor—It was off of Michigan Avenue somewhere? It was near Northwestern. There was also a famous picture of Rich Daley going into the doctor's office with him. He was painting his house at the time, so he had his casual clothes on. We all know that he died.

Then afterwards, there was a little turmoil in city hall—people vying for the position. There was always some concern that Alderman Frost thought that he automatically would get the position. That's because he was president pro tempore of the City Council. It was ceremonial, but he took it to be more than that. And the interim mayor—the appointed mayor—had to come from the council. It's required. So it was after that—There was a lot of vying and jockeying around. But I thought, "I guess it's not unusual. People start doing this before the person is put into the ground." But they were doing it.

After the burial, they held a special City Council meeting and Mike Bilandic became the mayor. A lot of people thought that that would be just an interim until the next election, but then there were a series of events like the cab strike, a teachers' strike, the meat cutters, and the cemetery workers. With the cemetery workers, you wouldn't think it would be such a big deal—they'd just put the bodies in storage or something. But it wasn't. It was affecting the Jewish burials—They had to be buried. So there was one after another, and that gave a rise to Mike Bilandic to run. But anyway, that's it.

JMW: Okay. Do you have any thought about Mayor Richard J. Daley—Did he have an opinion? Did he have a handpicked person of who would follow him, if it were up to him?

EB: No. As far as I know, he never said anything to Tom Donovan or myself. That was always, "What happens when he leaves?" type of thing, and he thought, "Whatever." But he had a lot of confidence in Mayor Bilandic, who was Alderman Bilandic at the time. He always gave him the tough jobs for City Council. That's because he knew he was honest, very intelligent, and hardworking. He gave him the issue of phosphates in detergents—Well, Chicago took the lead in that through Mike Bilandic. I know all of this because he used the budget office and my office for a lot of meetings and conference rooms. He would research everything.

Then, he also had him handle the cable TV ordinance, which was very hot and troublesome. We're talking in the seventies—It was a different world. In other cities, council members across this country were indicted because of cable TV. Mayor Daley

gave it to Mike Bilandic to usher it and come up with an ordinance, first of all, and then to sell it—and he did. He didn't put the sword on his shoulder and say, "You're my pick," but he gave him very sensitive matters to handle.

JMW: Within the cabinet, at any point, were you guys discussing, "The mayor hasn't necessarily picked anyone. He's not going to be here forever."

EB: No, I never discussed it at all.

JMW: But no one ever kind of worried like, "Oh, the day will one day come. What are we going to do?"

EB: No, I don't really believe that. I don't think that we ever did—I don't think we ever talked about that. First of all, we were all so loyal to him. You know, we never did. And I suppose all of us thought it but never said it. But down deep you would move on. That's because we had such great training with him.

JMW: Well, I guess you had the stroke as sort of a case study.

EB: It worked. There was very little change. There was some change after Mike Bilandic came in—It was a pretty good team that stayed on. But when it came to Jane Byrne, I couldn't. I'm labeled in her book as a "snake in the grass" (EB and JMW laugh). She took this whole taxicab thing way out of line. There was millions of dollars spent by the federal government and they couldn't find a thing.

JMW: I was just at Jim McDonough's office two weeks ago. He was telling this story. I guess he just completely lost it. He actually went to apologize in regards to Jane Byrne's husband, a newsman. (JMW laughs). He apparently had taken a swing at him—I don't know if he actually hit him or took a swing at him—so he knew he lost it and apologized. And when the press guys were in to see him, I guess he was like, "I really blew it. But this guy's a crook," and they were like, "Oh no, we know (JMW laughs)!"

EB: Jane Byrne sent an emissary to me—I believe he was from Northwestern. It was to see if I would stay on. I said, "No, I will not stay on because once she gets to be the mayor, I will be there for a matter of days and she will fire me. She will find some reason to fire me." So it went to Don Haider. He was a professor at Northwestern. Don and I were friends, so he called me and he said, "What do you think?" I said, "Don, I wouldn't work for her. You're too good." What I really wanted to say was, "You're too honest."

So he took the job. And he said, "Ed, the cream always rises to the top." I said, "Okay Don. God bless you." He didn't make it through one budget and he was fired. She fired him. There was a mistake in the budget—It was raising property taxes more than what was needed. And the budget office made the mistake—It had gone forward. She took the heat on it and everything. Well, she blamed the past administration. I know what she did.

Don Haider went to her and said, "You know, we really made this mistake. I have to say something. We have to correct it." She said, "No, you don't." He said, "I'm sorry. I can't." It was like twenty million dollars more in the property taxes or something of that nature, and he said, "No, I have to." So they parted (EB laughs). So he sent me a Christmas card and it said, "The cream doesn't necessarily go to the top (EB, DWV, and JMW laugh)." But anyway, that's a side issue. That has nothing to do with it.

JMW: Sure. I'll save my last question on legacy until Dave is done with his questions.

DWV: What about UIC? I've got simple questions—You know, the inside story about Soldier Field.

EB: A new book just came out on Soldier Field—I can't think of the fellow's name—Well anyway, I just bought it. It's John Cass's legman, so I knew there would be something in there about me. But anyway, he has me in there. But that's it. About Soldier Field—this goes back to Richard J. Daley. I was involved back then. That was our first proposal, and it was a great one. In fact, there's a mockup somewhere down in the bowels of city hall—of Soldier Field with a dome. It's similar to the dome in Pontiac, Michigan.

EB and JMW: It's the Silverdome.

EB: They would just pump air in, and they had these steel bands over it. It was a very interesting concept. It was Marshall Suloway, who was the head of public works at the time—He was involved. It was very interesting. Why it never went forward, I'm not really sure. At the time, I don't think people liked the idea of a domed stadium, where you didn't have natural grass. You'd have to have artificial turf. You were dealing with George Halas, Sr.—"Papa Bear." Papa was just like his grandson, Mike McCaskey—very frugal. There's another word, but I'll use the word frugal (DWV laughs). So it never went anywhere.

But I mean, there was always talk of what to do with Soldier Field. That's because we all know that Soldier Field, at the time, had the track and everything around it, so you weren't that close. Also, the way seats were laid out—It was more of a bowl. It went out, rather than up. So, it never went anywhere. Mayor Richard J. Daley always thought that the Bears should be at Soldier Field in the city. Then, they had dealt with at the time, Arlington Heights and other places.

So Mayor Daley's famous quote was, "Well, if they're going to go to Arlington Heights, let them be called the Arlington Bears. They shouldn't be called the Chicago Bears." Well anyway, there was talk and talk and talk—It never went anywhere. So, Richard M. Daley came in. The Bears were talking about that they needed a new stadium. They were saying that they were going to go to various places. It all started when Mike McCaskey had caught Mayor Daley at a holiday party for his cabinet at Como Inn—The mayor had just come into office in April.

So Mayor Daley pushed Mike McCaskey over to me and dealt for many years with trying to get them at Soldier Field. The McCaskey's always believed that the city and the state should pay for anything. And they are an asset. There's no question about it—They're an asset to the city and to the state. You know, when you see Monday Night Football, the camera pans up and you see the skyline. You have the commentators and announcers saying, "This is a great city. You can't beat this place," and on and on and on.

So, there is something to be said. So it was long, hard, and tough negotiations.

Finally, it fulfilled Mayor Richard J. Daley's desire to have them at Soldier Field permanently. They now have a thirty-year lease. Who knows what will happen in the future? But at least there's twenty-some years left. And there is money going to the park district every year, which was hard-fought, but we did it. But finally, Mrs. McCaskey got involved. She pushed her son aside and let Ted Phillips take over—That's really how it happened.

There's a side story. It doesn't need to be a part of Richard J. Daley. During the negotiations, it was really going nowhere—I mean with Mike McCaskey. He could never cross the finish line. You'd get him there and then he'd come up with something else. He wanted more—He always wanted more. So we said, "This is it. We have to have money for the park district. We have to have this." So then, they started talking to Gary, Indiana, which to me, was a joke. Everything was going very smooth actually in Gary, Indiana, until the story got out that they were going to raise personal income tax by half of a percent to take care of building the stadium.

Well, that was all that was needed. And they all laughed at me. I said, "Folks, don't worry about it. That's not going to work. That's not going to go over with Joe Six-pack in Gary, Indiana—I mean, raising his income tax to take care of the Bears." So they had their big meeting, and it was disaster. So that's how it all happened. So, after that happened, the McCaskey family—the brothers and sisters—called for a family meeting. They met in a hotel out in a suburban area. It was a Sunday morning—They brought in a priest, they had mass, then they met. And they all voted to get Michael knocked down. That's how we got Ted Phillips.

You see, with those brothers and sisters—She has nine children—On paper, every one of them are rich. You know, that team is worth what—eight hundred million, nine hundred million dollars? So you divide that, after taxes and everything. They're not going to get a hundred million dollars each, but you're going to get a very sizable amount. Well, a lot of the brothers and sisters are not on the Bears payroll. Some live in California, one lives in Colorado—They're all over the country, and they have normal, ordinary jobs.

In fact, when their kids were going through college, the spouses had to work. So you can imagine your spouse saying, "Wait a minute, you're worth a hundred million dollars. Why do I have to take a part-time job to get our kids through school?" When

Mrs. McCaskey passes on, that team, I believe, will be sold within a matter of a year or two. They're not into it. She cares about Papa George Halas. With the grandchildren, I don't think they do. Michael McCaskey cares because he's getting a very nice sum. I mean, he's the oldest—whatever his title is—the president of the club.

But the original thing of Soldier Field started under Richard J. Daley, and it was for a domed stadium. And we had thoughts of a domed stadium with a retractable roof with the Bears. It just didn't work financially for the Bears. We had the railroad tracks. It was going to come from both sides, so it would be a permanent cover over part of the two end zones. But the cost of that would have been prohibitive. It was mechanical. If you closed that dome, you would then have to have air conditioning, heating, and ventilation. Your whole thing changes, from an outside stadium to a closed stadium—That's the reason. A dome is a little more pricey.

JMW: So, from the talk of doming Soldier Field, dates back to roughly what year, with Richard J. Daley?

EB: Oh boy. I believe it was the late sixties, early seventies. Regarding the UIC site, which was our first choice—the site is located west of Halsted and south of Twelfth Street, which is Roosevelt Road. It's now nice townhouses and everything. But that was the area. And that would also take in what was—is called—South Water Market. Then we would relocate them to Ashland and Thirty-something, where part of it is there now—A lot of it is there. In fact, I think they all went there. Jim McDonough did the engineering work for us. You talk about the ramps coming off of the Eisenhower Expressway, and the ramps coming off of the Dan Ryan and the Kennedy Expressways. Then your railroad was right there—your Metra would be right there. So it was, I thought, a great plan. We talked about, and even worked out, some area to the west, with the housing and the CHA. So that was all part of the plan. I thought it was a pretty good plan. And it would have involved the Bears, UIC, and the U. of I., but there was such an outcry from the higher-ups in Champaign.

JMW: What was the complaint?

EB: They did not want inner city kids from Chicagoland going to UIC. They were great football stars and they wanted them to go to Champaign. They thought that this would be competition—This was President Stan Ikenberry.

JMW: Yes.

EB: I met with him and he said, "No, you can't. We don't want any part of it." They had letters. They had the Alumni Association worked up. It would have been great—It would have been a great asset to UIC. They would have had the Bears for ten games a year. There was the prestige that that would have brought—because of the Bears and the stadium we would have had—They would have had all of the equipment. You know, a college would just drool for it and go overboard. We also would have taken care of South Water Market. Now, I'm saying that that would have been great. With what's there—I'm not criticizing what's there today.

JMW: Right. We didn't think you were. Was there any thought of building a stadium for the Bears to play in and UIC not having a team? I'm wondering what Urbana's fear were. By building a stadium, was it just a foregone conclusion that UIC was going to get a team? Or was it just the thought that if they allowed the City of Chicago to build a stadium for the Bears there, then UIC would just push and push. "Hey, the stadium is here so we want a team." Was it was the fear of us getting a team?

EB: That's it. That's exactly right. As you all know, there is only one U. of I. (DWV and JMW laugh).

JMW: We've learned that in the last few years. Their chancellor, Richard Herman, made a big deal about their e-mail addresses. He wanted to do away with the "@uiuc.edu" and so now they read at "@uillinois.edu." Lately, we're all in favor of us not being part of the U. of I. with the admissions scandal down there (EB laughs).

EB: I have two children that went to the U. of I. It's great. I love the U. of I. Now I'm making trips over there anyway with the grandchildren. So I have no problem with them. UIC has a basketball program. But there was always the great fear that UIC would drain football talent and resources from the U. of I. if you had a team.

JMW: Yes. It seems to be the case—whether it be sports, academics, or anything for Chicago—I don't know about Springfield, but UIC would drain assets from Urbana—that is always the fear.

EB: Absolutely. Well, look at UIS—They only became a four-year school two years ago. They were a two-year school. Here they were, in the capitol city—Every state in this union has a full four-year, state school in the capitol city, except with the U. of I. Now they do.

DWV: I did not know that.

JMW: Right. So they came into the U. of I. system in 1995, and it took until 2007 to go four years?

EB: Yes. They were always a stepchild—UIS always was.

JMW: UIC is the stepchild. UIS was just sort of the backwater—no one even wanted them (JMW laughs).

EB: Yes. We had to have it because it was in the capitol city.

JMW: Right. It was so the politicians could have a U. of I. degree for their master's program.

EB: Yes. But now, they've invested some nice money here. They've got some really nice dorms.

JMW: Like the Illinois Issues magazine—It's a very solid publican for state politics.

EB: Right. NPR is out of there. They used to have Public Television, but they lost that. I've enjoyed it. They've got a great auditorium and great plays. They play in the NCAA Division II athletics.

JMW: UIC actually played UIS last year here in Springfield. And then, UIS will play a home game at the Pavilion.

EB: They just got a beautiful new gym. It was donated, in part, by the owners of Family Video—that is the Hoogland family, who also donated money for downtown, including the Hoogland Center for the Arts. So he's given millions to the community. He's made a lot of money, but he's given back to the community.

JMW: So the nixing of the stadium, at least to the south of UIC—that was pretty much Ikenberry and central administration at Urbana?

EB: Yes. Well, they laid a lot of it on the Alumni Association.

JMW: Okay. Were there any other places from the city perspective, as to where to possibly place this thing if not at UIC?

EB: After we were totally rejected by the U. of I. (JMW laughs)—I mean, there was no wiggle room there at all (JMW laughs). Normally, somebody would say, "Well, we'll work on it. We'll do whatever." No.

JMW: There was not even any of that (DWV and JMW laugh)?

EB: No. I mean, it was pretty flat no.

JMW: Okay. It was not going to be bottled up in some committee to be forgotten. It was just, "No Thanks. Have a nice day?"

EB: Correct! So then, the other site that we were considering was north and a little west of White Sox Park, U.S. Cellular Field (DWV laughs). It's where their parking lots are. It would have also had Metra—They would have put a station there. And then, you had the "L." We would have probably run into some opposition from the neighborhood. That's because we would have taken what was called Armour Square. They park right there, if you go to a White Sox game. But there was also land to the south, with nothing on it. That would have been parking. And then, we also talked about double- and triple-decking parking lots—parking garages. That was our second choice. It was pretty viable. The Bears didn't like that idea.

JMW: How did the Bears feel about UIC?

EB: They liked it.

JMW: They did?

EB: Yes. Well, they were also looking at it like they could have gotten some of that land from UIC. They maybe could have gotten some help from the U. of I. The real opposition we had with Thirty-Fifth and Shields area was from two sides—The Bears didn't like to share anything with the White Sox; the White Sox didn't want to share anything with the Bears, which was Jerry Reinsdorf's domain. You see, White Sox Park is really technically owned by the State of Illinois—It's the Illinois Sports Authority. And that's what we tapped for Soldier Field.

Well, if we would have tapped their money, Mr. Reinsdorf would not have appreciated that, and having the stadium there to share. But we did wind up negotiating here with the State of Illinois. And we did, because there was a surplus. When White Sox Park was formed under the Illinois Sports Authority, it was funded with a hotel tax. There was very little money from the White Sox. Well, it was because there was Governor

Thompson at the time. Everybody thought, "Oh, the White Sox are going to St. Petersburg, Florida. Oh heavens!" So it was a very nice deal for the White Sox.

The White Sox don't have to pay unless they reach a certain number of attendance. They paid a few years ago when they won the World Series, but up to that point, they paid very little. But what was happening—the boom years of the nineties and early on in the year 2000, before 9/11—the hotel rates were very high. And there was a very large surplus. Then, the White Sox decided that they would build a conference room.

It was due to the fact that technically they were supposed to rebate money back to the state, which they never did. So, we got the law changed to allow the Illinois Sports Authority to have a second stadium. It's very specific—The original bill was for White Sox Park, period, so we got the law changed for a second stadium. We had to make some concessions to the White Sox—that's when they started doing the remodeling of White Sox Park—which was fine.

JMW: It needed to be done. But it was interested as to how it got funded.

EB: Yes. It got funded (EB pretends to hold a gun to his head while EB, DWV, and JMW laugh). That's because we needed Reinsdorf's signature, honestly. The day that we announced the new Soldier Field we did not have the signed document from this person. We had to send somebody out there in a cab and bring it back, and it arrived during the press conference.

JMW: You were cutting it close (JMW laughs).

EB: But that's how it got done. Now, there is so much money set aside every year for capital improvement for Soldier Field, and money for White Sox Park. Also, the Bears have to pay six million dollars a year with an escalator. I don't know what the payment is today—There was a cost of living increase, or there was a minimum of three percent every year. It's working out.

JMW: So with the new agreement that you got Reinsdorf to sign off on, did that just expand it to White Sox Park and Soldier Field? Or did that leave wiggle room later on for other venues?

EB: No.

JMW: So it's specific?

EB: Yes, very! That's because there was talk of a soccer field.

JMW: That's why they play in Bridgeview now.

EB: That's right. That's exactly right. Then, we had talked about it—I was dealing with the Chicago Fire at the time—They then wanted to go outside of White Sox Park and Soldier Field, and Reinsdorf wouldn't have anything to do with it. You see, the more you drain away from The Illinois Sports Authority, that's less for capital improvements at White Sox Park.

JMW: So he was going to guard it with his life?

EB: Well then, the pressure would be to change the agreement and that—and he'd have to pay more. I mean, he sees what would happen. It's pretty clear.

DWV: That would have looked pretty good though, from the expressway, to see Soldier Field right off of the UIC campus setting. That would have looked nice (DWV laughs), with the campus right there.

JMW: It's interesting. I finally figured probably the best reason as to why UIC cut their football team—I had always come to the conclusion that it was the highest and most expensive sport to maintain, with scholarships and equipment. But we weren't allowed to have scholarships at Circle Campus. Football folded in 1973. Well, the head coach said—

not the last head coach, but the one just previous to that—He said that the reason he quit was that he was having breakfast with a young state legislator in a diner in Riverside. The guy was like, "Hey coach, did you know that they have scholarships in all of these directional schools—Northern, Eastern, and Western?" and he was like, "Yes." And he said, "Do you guys?" and he was like, "No." So he said, "If you get a letter from your chancellor, I'll be happy to go and plead your case in the state house." So he approached the chancellor, Norman Parker, who had been a good friend of athletics. He had the football team to his house the previous few summers for barbecues. This was like 1970 or 1971, and Parker retired within a year.

But anyway, he said he couldn't do it because, citing the reason, "I'm going to retire in a year." And basically, he was like, "If I do this, I may lose my retirement. They may fire me"—that sort of thing. You just didn't go there (JMW laughs). And actually, in the end, the coach said that the thing he most regretted was not having gone to the mayor, Richard J. Daley, and tried to plead his case to him.

EB: I never heard of anything. They kept it pretty much internal.

DWV: When they talked about doming Soldier Field, was there any talk with the Circle Campus then? That's because UIC played at Soldier Field during that time.

JMW: Yes. UIC played at Soldier Field, but we cut football in 1973.

EB: I did not hear of anything.

DWV: The mayor said several times that he wanted UIC to have football.

JMW: And that was what was odd. Football ended in 1973. The coaches and staff had their hands tied—They couldn't go to city hall because there was pretty much a gag order from Urbana saying, "No. You're done," whereas, the student athletes went to city hall and pleaded their case in October of 1973. The mayor couldn't really seem to help. But then, ironically, at the tenth anniversary in 1975, in his speech at UIC, he actually made

the comment of, "I thought by now we would have had one of the best football teams in the conference." And it was like, "Well, no we don't (DWV laughs)." But it was unfortunate.

EB: Have you had any interviews with Marshall Suloway?

JMW: Yes.

EB: Did you ask?

DWV and JMW: We're meeting with him in two weeks.

DWV: I haven't met him.

EB: Yes. You ought to ask him about him about Soldier Field and the planned doming of it. I know he was involved. I was not that deeply involved.

JMW: Yes. I would assume that, until it got to the finance end.

EB: Yes. But on Soldier Field, I was involved in that (DWV and JMW laugh).

JMW: Right. With the UIC location, or the Thirty-Fifth and Shields location, when did that start to develop? That's because we at UIC were reading it in the paper in about 1994. But when, from the city end, did you start—When were you asked to sort of step in and investigate the stuff?

EB: Oh, we started right around 1990.

JMW: Okay. So this was like five years.

EB: Oh yes (DWV and JMW laugh). Oh, this went on and on and on.

JMW: This was McCaskey always coming up with another one. So you left city government when? 1996?

EB: No, I left in 1993. But I stayed on for this project. Then I left in 1996. I resigned in 1993. Rich asked me to stay on to finish Soldier Field, and then other projects, so I was a consultant for the city until 1996.

JMW: And you had actually left…

EB: I was physically in city hall—not in the budget director's office anymore, but I was part of the mayor's office—until I left in 1996.

JMW: Right. And that started when? In 1989, when Richard M. Daley was elected?

EB: Yes.

JMW: Okay. So basically you sat the Byrne, Washington, and Sawyer administrations out?

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EB: Yes.

JMW: Okay. UIC was buying up, really from the late seventies until 2000, that land south of Roosevelt Road—little by little, parcel by parcel. Do you have any comments on when it began happening? Was there any hint that this was a good thing or a bad thing? I mean, eventually it seemed like the city was happy to let them redevelop it, and then, the fact that they did. It's because it became so blighted. I mean, other than the football field—with that aside—was there ever any comment or thought that you could give as far as that goes? Was there any direction from the city that, "Hey, this might be a way you could go with redeveloping?"

EB: No, I was not involved in that. That would have been more of Lou Hill. He was the planning guy. He was deeply involved. I was not, other than the stadium.

JMW: Are there any more UIC questions?

DWV: No.

JMW: I want to end with legacy, but before that, let's talk about the proposed "Crosstown Expressway." Why didn't the Crosstown get built?

EB: The reason that we don't have a cross-town today is because of Jane Byrne, pure and simple. We had an agreement with the state of Illinois and with Governor Thompson. We had an Illinois delegation with Congressman Kluczynski, I believe, who was in that area on the southwest side. When Jane Byrne got into the election, she campaigned that they would never take any houses for the road. We had everything lined up. I was deeply involved with that.

We worked out a very good deal with the City of Chicago and with the State of Illinois. We had the federal funds and the state funds. Also, we would have wound up with the city and county funds—That would have happened. The number of homes were less than forty. There were some businesses—small ones, like the McDonald's type of businesses down Cicero. You go down Cicero today and you'll see all of the vacant land. It is atrocious. You would have had the Crosstown Expressway.

So we had an agreement with the state and the feds, but we didn't have the city and the county. But that would have been no problem. Jane campaigned against it. She came in—She said, "No cross-town." She sent her chief of staff—His name was Brady—She sent him down to Springfield to negotiate what was going to happen with the federal dollars. Mr. Brady didn't know what he was doing. They had him in a conference room.

I know some of the participants from the other side of the table, and they still tell these stories and laugh. They fed him pizza and beer. I should probably not be saying these things. But anyway, he negotiated, and the city of Chicago got thirty, forty, fifty

buses—whatever they got out of it. It was buses. Back then it was one-point-something billion dollars. I mean, if you brought that to today's dollars, it was huge!

The State got (EB laughs) hundreds of millions of dollars for bridgework and roadwork for downstate and collar counties. Jane went out and gave this big press conference and said that she got so many buses. "You see? By not doing this cross-town, look at what I got for you—the citizens of Chicago."

DWV: Oh, it changed the landscape of Chicago.

EB: It did.

JMW: Yes, and all of the industries moved out to the ninety-four corridor.

EB: That's right. We went out and we took pictures showing the traffic backups—everything on Cicero—that bridge going over by Ford City and that whole area. I was involved. I could show you—I've got a picture of myself, Mayor Bilandic, and Jim Thompson. We're looking at a model of the Crosstown.

JMW: Oh, that would be great.

DWV: I'm just thinking this through. Who has actually written a history of the Crosstown?

JMW: Yes, that would be interesting. You see, we always think that this would be a good book or paper idea.

EB: It really would. I mean, it was atrocious. It really was. You know, Chicago got thirty, forty, fifty buses—whatever it was that she got (JMW laughs). It didn't matter. I mean, it was pathetic. Then she went like this (EB pats himself on the back). You know, that was the sad part about it.

DWV: Yes. You see, I've looked at it from what it did to the landscape or losing it.

EB: You drive out there today—It's still nothing.

JMW: Right. It's Cicero or Chicago Motor Speedway, which even that is now closed.

EB: I mean, there's nothing.

JMW: What a travesty. I mean, serious road rage. The Crosstown would have kept all the truck traffic out of downtown.

EB: You know what this is? [Pointing at a photo].

JMW: That is the flood in 1991?

EB: Yes.

JMW: That was the Great Chicago Flood. What was that—April 1991?

EB: It was the opening day for the White Sox (JMW laughs). That's how I know it.

JMW: Yes.

DWV: Just in talking with you, this whole cross-town is peeking our interest. I see that coming back onto the radar screen with the Olympics.

EB: Well obviously, there is a great need for that. There always has been (EB is showing pictures to DWV and JMW). This was Mike Bilandic's marriage to Heather.

JMW: Bilandic was Eleventh Ward, right?

EB: Yes. This is a slide (showing a picture). I feel like Dolly Parton (EB and DWV laugh).

JMW: Where was that at?

EB: This was outside the mayor's office. She was going in to visit (EB and DWV laugh).

JMW: I'm going to assume that the mayor was not a big fan of country music.

EB: Well, Richard M. Daley is somewhat, yes. Have you ever seen Rich with his cowboy hat? For a long time he used to wear a cowboy hat and boots. Well, going back to Richard J. Daley—this has to do with the U.S. Conference of Mayors, of which he was the president for a few years. We used to go to the conventions with him. He would take his chief of staff, his secretary, myself, Tom Donovan, and sometimes Fire Commissioner Quinn. We'd go to San Francisco, Milwaukee, and various places. Then one year, it was in Boston. That was the best of all. When we got off of the plane, you would have thought that we were part of president's entourage—We were greeted.

Each little group had convertible Oldsmobiles, Buicks, or whatever they were with a detective from the City of Boston. They took us all over. He was so well respected by his fellow mayors. You could just see it. I mean, it was unbelievable. Well, one night Mayor White, who was the mayor of Boston, had a dinner for the mayor out at Jimmy's on Pier Seventeen, Pier Sixteen, or whatever number it was. So we all went there, and we were going through the red lights and the whole thing. So we got there—There was Mayor and Mrs. Daley, Tom Donovan and his wife, Judy and I, Ken Sain and his wife, and Jane Byrne. Jane Byrne was there with her daughter.

Well, none of the other people from Boston had arrived. So we were sitting at this real long table, and there was another table over on the side. And normally, you don't go and sit with the mayor—that's because we knew that there were other people coming—so we sat over there. Mrs. Daley waved for Judy and herself to go there and sit at that table. Well, Jane Byrne was furious. So, this table had the most interesting talk. The conversation was unbelievable. There was ex-Speaker of the House of Representatives

John McCormack, there was Tip O'Neill, there was Cardinal Cushing, there was Kenny O'Donnell.

JMW: Okay. He saved us from Cuba, or so the movie “Thirteen Days” would have us believe.

EB: Yes. There was Theodore White—I mean, this was a table. As people started coming in, I got my clue and I left. Judy was ready to leave—Mayor Daley said, "Stay. Stay." He called most of the women "dear." He said, "Don't stay there, dear." Judy stayed. Well, I’ll tell you—with the conversation, you could hear it—they talked about when they had gone to White Sox Park. At that time, it was Comisky Park. They went with JKF, and they were telling stories. I mean, I’ll tell you—it was a beautiful, old Irish night. You really got to see the man with the chuckling, the laughter, and everything. It was great. It was one great night.

Then, one other year, we went out to San Francisco. I think Mayor Alioto was his name—It was the same treatment. I mean, everywhere, “The mayor this and that.” It's funny how, with the mayor, we'd normally have a little cocktail party or something and he'd be there. This was a Saturday night, and of us being Catholic he said, "Boy, you've got to go and see this cathedral. It's really great. They have crystals all over." It was a beautiful church. It was really well done. And he said, "In fact, they have masses tomorrow at this, this, and this time." It was like, "Don't forget, folks: Tomorrow is church (EB laughs)." It was really very subtle (EB laughs). So we all obviously went to church the next day.

DWV: This is a great story (DWV laughs).

EB: He had gone to church on Saturday night, but he wanted to make sure that we all knew they had an eight and nine o'clock mass.

JMW: Right. You had options.

EB: Yes. There's another good story. We were there in San Francisco, and we had gone to a place—I think it was called Ernie's. It was a famous Italian restaurant at the time. So, we weren't on the first floor—We were down in the wine cellar. I was sitting next to Commissioner Quinn. Commissioner Quinn was so nervous because there was only one exit (JMW laughs). He just could not understand why we were down in this basement. He kept walking around and looking (EB laughs), and he said, "Ed, don't ever go to a place like this (EB, DWV, and JMW laughs)." But his concern was for the mayor. I mean, those two were great. He was the old fire commissioner. He was a great at the U.S. Conference of Mayors. Other mayors would just flock to Mayor Daley. They would come over and ask questions—he would recommend solutions. They knew him. I mean, they really loved him.

JMW: Tom Donovan had talked about what a treat it was to see the mayor treated like that.

EB: It really was.

JMW: There were stories he shared. I don't even know who the New York mayor was the year it was held in San Francisco—He related how folks were gathered around the New York mayor, until Richard J. Daley showed up. Then everyone flocked to him. He was willing to mentor these younger mayors. They would bring problems to him—They'd say, "I've got this going on. Any advice?" And it was how he was very down to earth.

EB: He was so well respected with fellow mayors. That says a lot. It really does, because they know the problems. You'd go to those conventions—He'd walk into a room and everyone would come to him.

JMW: He would kind of hold court.

EB: Yes, it was really great. It was a great experience.

JMW: I'm really intrigued now with the Crosstown Expressway (DWV and JMW laugh). On the federal end, who was strategic in getting this funding approved within, I'm assuming, the Illinois delegation?

EB: Within the Illinois delegation, I believe his name was Kluczynski.

JMW: They named a federal building after him.

EB: Yes. He was a congressman from the southwest side. His district incorporated a big piece of the Crosstown—It was down Archer, Cicero, and all of that. It's where Lipinski is now. Kluczynski was the chairman of the committee that did all of the roads and things—I can't think of the name of the committee. But anyway, he was the chairman. He wanted to, obviously, please Richard J. Daley. The Crosstown planning was worked on for many years under Richard J. Daley. Milton Pikarsky—I don't know if he's alive anymore—He was the commissioner of public works before Marshall Suloway. They worked on that for years. They had studies. They had it all worked out—they really did. I know they were spending a lot on it (EB laughs) because I was the budget director.

JMW: You were seeing it.

EB: Yes, we were seeing the expenditures. Richard J. Daley and Richard M. Daley both understood the Crosstown Expressway's importance. Now today it'd be impossible probably, cost-wise.

JMW: Yes. What a shame.

EB: Yes it is. It was there. It really was there. Well, you can see—we signed off, the state signed off. We left that photo op and went in (EB showing a picture of himself, Mayor Michael Bilandic, and Governor James R. Thompson in front of a model of the Crosstown Expressway). Yes.

DWV: Yes. There's a good story there.

EB: Yes. Then she (Jane Byrne) came in. It was the same way with the Chicago Public Library. Well, it turned out to be a beautiful building where they're at. It could have been right downtown. We had it all worked out—where the cultural center is. There's that alley behind it—Garland Court, or whatever it is. You have the cultural center and the alley. Is that where they have the high-rise? But anyway, the library was going to be on Wabash, where the Lane Bryant store used to be. Then it would be connected to the cultural center. At the time, it wasn't the cultural center. That was the library—The cultural center was the Chicago Public Library at Michigan and Randolph. This was if we were ever going to tie into it. And boy, she just chopped it. It's because there was the Black Hawk Restaurant. It was there. That was one of Jane's favorite places—her husband loved it.

JMW: Are we ready to move to legacy?

DWV: Yes.

JMW: All right. Did you folks get together as a group from time-to-time, as you left government? I mean, have you stayed close with your peers? With Tom Donovan, I know you worked with him at the Chicago Board of Trade. Do you guys ever get together and tell war stories?

EB: No we haven't. It's sad to say that there aren't that many of us left. You know, Jim McDonough I see. I see Jim at least once or twice a year. I see Tom Donovan. The only other one is Dr. Charles Pounian—I've gone to events with his children, and his wife's funeral. I hear from Marshall Suloway. Marshall will get a letter from me asking for money for citrus. Tom will get one of my letters. Well, what we do is they say, "Send a donation," which is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit. Then we give the oranges and grapefruit to needy people through the Salvation Army. So, I'm the biggest seller. That blue vase up there is my trophy. Every year I win it (EB laughs). But anyway, it was good to have your friends in Chicago.

JMW: Do you ever have them down here?

EB: Oh yes. Tim Degnan has been here. Tom hasn't. But those were the people that used to work with me in the budget office and have been down. You know, it's sad—a lot of the department heads are no longer with us. It's really a shame. I said earlier that Mayor Daley always wanted his department heads to know each other, and to know each other socially. And we had a group—there was Dr. Punian, Ed King from the health department, Tom Donovan, myself, Ken Sain, Bill Quinlin of the corporation counsel, and I'm trying to think of the other guy. But anyway, once a month we'd have dinner at our houses, and we would rotate. So we got to know people. And that was the mayor—That was his idea. He said, "You know, you folks only deal with each other in business. You should know each other socially. You should know each other's spouses." It was fun. That's how got to know each other. But that was strictly Richard J. Daley.

JMW: So by the Bilandic Administration was that practice over with?

EB: Yes it was. And we had a lot of good friendships from that. I'm sad to say that some of those people are no longer here.

JMW: You personally, you've got all of these people—Giles, Royko, and everyone else, with different biographies. But what would you like people to know about Richard J. Daley that maybe you haven't seen come through?

EB: Well, I think it's come out that he truly loved the city. He was a mayor that people will say that he was a “Boss” or whatever. Whatever he did, he did for his beloved city. He fought to be the head of the Democratic Party, to help the city. Did he help to get judges elected? Sure he did. But they also helped the city. Did he get representatives, senators, and congressmen? Yes. But as we said, then they helped him to try and get funds for the Crosstown and for the university—UIC. You know, he couldn't have done

those things without having some influence over these people. When you say the word "Boss," yes, he was a "Boss."

JMW: That's what Jim McDonough said. It was like, "Yes. Duh! Get over it."

EB: Yes, he was. You know, I got interviewed by Time Magazine, and they asked about Richard M. and Richard J. Daley. I said, "Well, you know, the times are entirely different. With television in the fifties—it was there, but it was new. But he knew how to speak right to the people. If you want to say something about "Boss," you could also say that he was a benevolent dictator. And there's nothing wrong with that. That's because with everything he did, he wasn't doing it for his own personal gain—he was doing it for the city of Chicago, which he loved." People can say this or that. No. I'm sorry.

DWV: With politics, I agree one hundred percent. I've felt that way for a long time. I kind of come from a little different perspective—I grew up in Iowa watching Chicago politics, and I always admired Mayor Daley from afar. I thought, too, that the term "Boss" was something that's been abused. I think we look at politics in terms of personal gain, and Daley—from anything that I've ever seen, it just was not there.

EB: It's not there.

DWV: Right.

EB: I mean, it's truly not there. I mean, that man truly loved the city, even if it meant twisting some arms with the legislators or governors. It was just like the fight for the RTA. He knew that the RTA (Regional Transit Authority) was needed for the city and the metropolitan area. And Governor Ogilvie was the governor at the time. Those two men knew that that was the right thing to do. Was it popular? Not really. I mean, there was concern about taxes, sales tax, and gas tax. Did I tell that story? Maybe I didn't.

JMW: No, but please do.

EB: I used to help tabulate the votes on election night. Well, it was the election night of the RTA vote in 1974—and it was I don't know how many counties, whatever the area was for the RTA (Cook, DuPage, Kane, Lake, McHenry, and Will Counties)—so we were tabulating the votes. The votes from Cook County were coming in pretty good, and a couple of the close-in areas of the city, they were coming in very well. We didn't get any votes from Lake County, and very little from DuPage County. I went to the mayor and showed him, and he said, "There's something wrong here. This is not right." He told the secretary, "Get me the governor." He got Governor Ogilvie on the phone. He said, "Governor, here's where we're getting our results. We're not getting anything from Lake County and part of DuPage County." The governor said, "No, that's not right, either. There's something up. They're going to wait to see what they need to kill this. Don't worry, mayor." The mayor turned to us and he said, "He's sending the state troopers." State troopers went out to the polling areas—not to individual ones, but where the centers were. They took the ballots. And the governor also arranged for the presidents of a couple of banks to hold them—They took the ballots and brought them to a bank and kept them overnight until they could be tabulated. The RTA passed by a slight margin.

JMW: Wow. That's interesting. We hadn't heard that story.

DWV: That's very interesting.

EB: That's a true story. I mean, it was. But he was able to call the governor. He didn't question the mayor—He took the mayor's word. And that was always another thing: Your word was gospel. That was something I learned very well. I learned that from Richard J. Daley, and then going to the Chicago Board of Trade. "Your word is your word. You make a transaction—That's your word." I mean, there's no backing away from it.

DWV: Was it hard to get his word? I'm saying that because in some of the eulogies to Senator Edward Kennedy, they said that—They said his word, no matter what—It was hard to get his word. But once you had it…

EB: Well, he would study it and look into it. But once you had it, it was gold. There was no backing down with him. Here's a good example—I won't use names because these people are still alive. When we were doing Illinois First, under Governor Ryan, I was the vice chairman of the committee. I was Richard M. Daley's appointee on this. So, we worked. We did different things—we went around, we toured the whole state. So when it was all said and done, Chicago roughly represents twenty-three to twenty-four percent, at the time, of the population. And that was normally how divvied up the money.

So when it was all said and done, the City of Chicago got thirty-one percent. We had some influence and we got different projects. One of the projects was for the CTA. The person running the CTA at the time—I won't name names—He came down and he thought that they should get more. So he worked and they got, really, more than basically what they were asking for. But while he was at it, he thought, "Well, we'll get more." So they basically told him to get out of the meeting. They would only deal with me.

They said to me, "Your word is good. His isn't." I said, "Okay." So we worked out the deal. I called the mayor—this was Richard M. Daley at the time—and I said, "This is what we worked out." And he said, "Is it a good deal?" I said, "It's a very good deal. It's more, really, than what we had gone into the room with." So he said, "Fine." So months later, after the governor has signed everything, this person was now trying to undo the deal. It got to me. They called me and said, "Hey, wait a minute."

So I went into see the mayor. I said, "Your word is on the line. My word is on the line. We had a handshake agreement on this. They followed through on everything we agreed to. This other person is going to make you look extremely bad, and as well as me. I won't be able to do that anymore in the state house." Well, he called that person over—It was the last that we ever heard of him. But I mean, he knew that your world was your word, if you had a handshake.

That's where Mayor Daley has gone a little crosswise with Edgar. That's because he had an agreement with them about gaming, and then, out of nowhere, he didn't say anything. He said no. What he should have done was gone back to the mayor and said, "I know you and I agreed on something, but I've had second thoughts." What it was was the polling—The polling numbers went against it.

You know, he governed by polls—He governed by polling. I liked Governor Edgar, but he did another thing with the mayor, which I won't talk about. The mayor always felt that if you had a handshake, you had a deal. He learned that from his father, and he learned that from being down here in Springfield. But anyway, I don't know what else to say.

DWV: I have just one more: What was his big mistake? If you don't have one, that's fine (DWV laughs).

JMW: Yes. We've asked if he had any strengths and weaknesses. But can you point to any one thing?

DWV: Maybe one that he realized, too.

EB: I don't know if you'd call it a mistake. I think that his trust and loyalty in people around him sometimes didn't serve him well. You know, there were a few people that got indicted and ran into problems—They were trusted and loyal. I don't know if you'd call that a mistake. You know, as a major mistake, I don't know.

DWV: That's fair enough (DWV laughs).

JMW: Then we shall conclude the interview.

EB: Thank you both.

DWV: We appreciate it. Thank you very much for your hospitality and your insight.

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