

Title Page & Abstract

An Interview with Felicia Norwood

Part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library
Illinois Statecraft Oral History project

Interview # ISG-A-L-2011-031

Felicia Norwood, an executive assistant for Edgar on Human Services issues from 1991 to 1994, was interviewed on the date listed below as part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library's *Illinois Statecraft-Jim Edgar* Oral History project.

Interview dates & location:

Date: July 11, 2011 Location: Norwood's business office at Aetna in Chicago, IL

Interview Format: Digital audio

Interviewer: Mark R. DePue, Director of Oral History, ALPL

Transcription by: _____

Edited by: _____

Total Pages: _____ Total Time: 3:14 / 3.23 hrs

Interview being
processed

Accessioned into the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Archives on November 19th, 2011

The interview is archived at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library in Springfield, Illinois.

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Abstract

Felicia Norwood, *Illinois Statecraft*, ISG-A-L-2011-031

Biographical Information Overview of Interview: Felicia Norwood was born on Christmas day, 1959 in Camilla, Georgia. She excelled in school, and became the secretary of her church congregation at a very young age. One of five sisters in a struggling African-American family, Felicia was determined to get to college, with her goal set on a law degree. Following high school she attended Valdosta State College, graduating in 1981. She then received a scholarship from the University of Wisconsin, and finished its program in Political Science in one year. She soon became a Dunn Fellow (an internship program for Illinois government) in Springfield, Illinois, and after that year, spent the next three years working with Paula Wolff, Gov. Jim Thompson's Director of Policy and Planning. From 1986 through 1989 she attended Yale Law School, and then took a position with the Chicago Law Firm of Hopkins and Sutter.

In late 1990 Norwood was contacted by the incoming Governor Edgar administration, asking her to serve as an executive assistant for Edgar on Human Services issues. This gave Norwood oversight over roughly half of the state's budget, and included the Departments of Public Aid, public health, mental health, aging, rehabilitation services, and the Department of Child and Family Services. She recalled the struggles to balance the budget early in Edgar's administration, of meeting with numerous citizen advocacy groups during that time, and of the protests the inevitable budget cuts engendered. After Edgar's first administration, Norwood left the administration for private industry, soon joining Aetna. At the time of the interview she served as the President of the Mid-America region for Aetna.

Subject Headings/Key Words: Jim Edgar administration; executive assistant for Gov. Edgar in Human Services; Illinois state budget cuts in 1991-92; Paula Wolff; Gov. Jim Thompson; Gov. Edgar and Earnfare (welfare reform); Department of Child and Family Services; Mike Lawrence; Joan Walters; Camilla, Georgia; Valdosta State College; Yale Law School; Joseph Wallace case (hung by his mother);

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