

Title Page & Abstract

An Interview with Leonard Jackson

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

Interview # ISE-A-L-2024-001

Leonard Jackson, a security guard at the Illinois State Capitol during the height of the ERA fight in 1982, was interviewed on the date listed below as part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library's *Illinois Statecraft – ERA Fight in Illinois Oral History project*.

Interview dates & location:

Date: Jan 19, 2024 Location: ALPL Presidential Library, Springfield, IL

Interview Format: Digital audio

Interviewer: Mark R. DePue, ALPLM volunteer

Transcription by: _____

Edited by: _____

Indexed by: _____

Total Pages: _____ Total Time: 0:29 / 0.48 hrs

Transcript being
processed

Session 1: Memories of ERA fight while serving as Capitol security guard

Accessioned into the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Archives on (date).

The interview(s) is/are archived at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library in
Springfield, Illinois.

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Abstract

Leonard Jackson, *IL Statecraft-ERA*, ISE-A-L-2024-00?

Biographical Information/Overview of Interview: Leonard ‘Len’ Jackson was born on April 12, 1947, in Springfield, Illinois, and grew up in Girard, graduating from Girard High School in 1965. Following graduation, he enlisted in the U.S. Air Force and served for four years; he was stationed in Taiwan from 1967 to 1968. Following that, Len worked as a field representative for the National Car Rental Company for eight years. In early 1982 he began working as a Secretary of State Security guard, and was stationed in May at the State Capitol. (The Illinois Secretary of State is responsible for the state Capitol.) The Secretary of State Police also had a presence in the Capitol. The Security guards were unarmed, while the Secretary of State Police were armed.

While working on that detail Jackson was present during the height of the protests and demonstrations at the state Capitol during the very heated Equal Rights Amendment fight, which culminated at the end of June, 1982. Jackson’s most memorable incident was when he helped carry out several women in the Grass Roots Group of Second Class Citizens who had chained themselves to a railing outside the Senate chamber. They first chained themselves on June 3 and were not removed until the night of June 6 and 7, with the guards taking them to the basement before carrying them out to waiting police vans.

Subject Headings/Key Words: Equal Rights Amendment; Girard, Illinois; Illinois state Capitol; Grass Roots Group of Second Class Citizens; Phyllis Schlafly; Secretary of State Security, Secretary of State Police; Sonia Johnson; hunger strikers (fasters)

Notes to the Reader: Readers of the oral history memoir should bear in mind that this is a transcript of the spoken word, and that the interviewer, interviewee and editor sought to preserve the informal, conversational style that is inherent in such historical sources. The Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library is not responsible for the factual accuracy of the memoir, nor for the views expressed therein. We leave these for the reader to judge.

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