

Title Page & Abstract

An Interview with Tim Romani

Part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library
Illinois Statecraft-Gov. Thompson Oral History project

Interview # IST-A-L-2015-030

Tim Romani, who in 1984 to 1985 served as a traveling aid to Governor Jim Thompson of Illinois, was interviewed on the date listed below as part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library's *Illinois Statecraft-Gov. Jim Thompson* Oral History project.

Interview dates & location:

Date: August 24, 2015 Location: Telephonic interview with Tim Romani in Denver, Colorado

Interview Format: Digital audio

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

Transcription by: _____

Edited by: _____

Transcript
being processed

Total Pages: _____ Total Time: 1:53 / 1.88 hrs.

Accessioned into the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Archives on December 15, 2015.

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

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Abstract

Tim Romani, *Illinois Statecraft*, IST-A-L-2015-030

Biographical Information Overview of Interview: Tim Romani was born in October, 1962 in Champaign, Illinois, and grew up in Bloomington where his father worked at State Farm Insurance Company. He attended the University of Illinois with the goal of becoming a high school coach, but in 1984, when nearing graduation, he was approached by Joshua Grafton, who recommended that he apply for a position as Governor Jim Thompson's traveling aid. Romani applied and got the job, and spent over a year in that job.

Romani talks extensively about that experience, and emphasizes that the year with the Thompson administration dramatically changed the trajectory of his life. He rented an apartment in Chicago, and had a room in the Governor's Mansion for those times the governor was in Springfield. But Tim estimates that more than half of his time was spent on the road with the governor, to include a memorable two week trip to Hong Kong, China and Japan. He reflects on a couple of Thompson's most important accomplishments during his time as traveling aid, especially landing the Mitsubishi deal, which led to a new auto plant in Bloomington, and Governor Thompson's Build Illinois public works project. He discussed a meeting with the Governor and Jerry Reinsdorf in August, 1985. That meeting eventually led to the construction of the new White Sox Stadium, which eventually led to where he is today, as the founder, owner and CEO of ICON Venue Group. Romani also reflects on many of the key Thompson staff members he worked with, and shared his reflections on Thompson as a politician, boss, and now friend.

Subject Headings/Key Words: Governor Jim Thompson; duties of a traveling aid to Governor Thompson; 1985 decision by Mitsubishi to build a plant in Illinois; White Sox Stadium (Comisky Park deal); Joshua Grafton; Jim Reilly (Thompson COS); Ilana Rovner (Thompson Deputy Governor); Paula Wolff; Dave Gilbert (Press Secretary); Kirk Dillard (Legislative Liaison); Dr. Bob Mandeville (Budget Director); Gloria Evans (Personal Secretary); Jayne Thompson; Samantha Thompson; Jerry Reinsdorf; ICON Venue Group;

Note 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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