

# Title Page & Abstract

An Interview with Mike Lawrence  
Part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library  
*Jim Edgar Illinois Statecraft* Oral History project

Interview # ISG-A-L-2009-005

Mike Lawrence, a journalist, and since 1987 Jim Edgar's press secretary and closest advisor, was interviewed on the date listed below as part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library's *Jim Edgar Illinois Statecraft* Oral History project.

Interview dates & location:

Dates: March 4, 2009; April 1, 2009; July 2, 2009; July 3, 2009

Location: Lawrence residence, Carbondale, IL

Interview Format: Digital audio

Interviewer: Mark R. DePue, ALPLM volunteer

Transcription by: Tape Transcription Center

Edited by: Ryan Thoroman

Total Pages: 202 Total Times: 2:07 + 2:52 + 2:55 + 2:27 + 3:15 + 2:15 / 2.12 + 2.87  
+ 2.92 + 2.45 + 3.25 + 2.2 = 15 hrs 49 min / 15.81 hrs

Session 1: Early life and career as journalist with *Quad City Times*

Session 2: Career as journalist and political observations through 1987

Session 3: Jim Edgar's Secretary of State years and election campaign of 1990

Session 4: Edgar's first gubernatorial administration

Session 5: Edgar's second gubernatorial administration

Session 6: Edgar's decision to retire, and reflections on journalism and politics

Accessioned into the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Archives on 02/01/2010.

The interviews are archived at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library in  
Springfield, Illinois.

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## Abstract

## Mike Lawrence, *Illinois Statecraft*, ISG-A-L-2009-005

**Biographical Information Overview of Interview:** Mike Lawrence was born on August 17, 1942 in Chicago, Illinois, and grew up in Galesburg. Mike developed a love of sports at an early age, and when he was eleven began his journalistic career but publishing his own newspaper, and distributing it in the neighborhood. He had his first by-line in the Galesburg *Register-Mail* at the age of 14, and continued with the paper through his college years at Knox College, in Galesburg, and afterward. In 1966 he moved to Davenport, Iowa and worked on the Davenport *Times* (later the Quad City *Times-Democrat*) until 1986, quickly moving up the journalistic ladder, splitting his time between the Quad Cities and Springfield, Illinois, where he headed the newspaper's statehouse bureau.

In 1987 Lawrence joined then Secretary of State Jim Edgar as his Press Secretary, and over the years became Edgar's most trusted advisor while continuing as Press Secretary, then while Edgar was governor from 1991 through 1997, when Lawrence stepped down. He spoke at length about Edgar's decision to run for governor in 1990 and the 1990 election campaign. He also discussed the crucial budgetary battles with the legislature during Edgar's first few years in office, and the protracted debate over educational reform, primarily in Edgar's second administration. He stepped down in 1997 and went to work for Southern Illinois University's Paul Simon Public Policy Institute. The interview concluded with Lawrence's reflections on Illinois' current political situation, and his thoughts on contemporary journalism in the U.S.

**Subject Headings/Key Words:** struggles with cleft palate; life as a political journalist in central Illinois; Galesburg *Register-Mail*; Knox College; Quad City *Times-Democrat*; Governor Jim Edgar; Paul Simon; William Stratton; Richard Ogilvie; W. Russell Arrington; Dan Walker; George Ryan; Governor Jim Thompson; Neil Hartigan; Dawn Clark-Netsch; James 'Pate' Philip; Phil Rock; Mike Madigan; Lee Daniels; Brenda Edgar; Rod Blagojevich; Southern Illinois University's Paul Simon Public Policy Institute

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