

# Title Page & Abstract

An Interview with Sandra Martell

Part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library  
*Tumultuous 2020* Oral History project

Interview # T20-A-L-2022-26

Sandra Martell, Public Health Administrator Winnebago County Health Department, was interviewed on the date listed below as part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library's *Tumultuous 2020* Oral History project.

Interview dates & location:

Date: March 24, 2022

Rockford, Illinois

Interview Format: Digital audio

Interviewer: Philip Pogue, ALPLM Volunteer

Transcription by: \_\_\_\_\_

Edited by: \_\_\_\_\_

Total Pages: \_\_\_\_\_ Total Time: 55:40 / .93 hrs.

Interview being  
processed

Accessioned into the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Archives on August 3, 2022.

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

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# Abstract

Sandra Martell, *Tumultuous 2020*, T20-A-L-2022-26

**Biographical Information Overview of Interview:** Sandra Martell was born in Kendallville, Indiana, in 1959. She grew up in Northbrook, Illinois, and attended St. Norbert Grade School and Glenbrook North High School. In high school, Martell was active in student council, yearbook committee, and GAA, which includes archery, field hockey, swimming, and gymnastics. After graduating in 1977, she attended Marquette University for a year, intending to become a Biomedical engineer. After experiencing an outbreak of Russian flu and subsequent quarantine on campus, she realized she wanted to become a nurse. She transferred to Loyola University Chicago and earned a Bachelor of Science in Nursing in 1982. She completed a Master of Public Health Nursing from Loyola in 1993. In 2010 she earned a Doctorate in Nursing from University of Illinois Chicago. At the time of the interview Martell had worked for over twenty-five years in public health, including at the Cook County Health Department as a nurse, interim chief operating officer, director of integrated health support, and chief nursing officer. In 2014, Martell became the third Winnebago County Public Health Administrator.

Throughout the interview, Martell discusses the challenges the COVID-19 pandemic presented to Winnebago County. Martell highlights the unique geographic location of the Winnebago County Health Department, being on the northern border and neighboring Wisconsin. She provides an overview of the health department and its one hundred employees, the services they provide, and how the Winnebago County Health Department maintained those services through the pandemic. Throughout the pandemic they worked to establish contact tracing infrastructure, create testing and vaccination sites, retrain staff, and utilize Medical Reserves. Martell describes the challenges of navigating the pandemic mitigations and the public's response to them. She closes by detailing the personal impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on her life.

**Headings/Key Words:** Tumultuous 2020; Tumultuous 2020 oral history; Sandra Martell; Winnebago County Health Department; Winnebago County; public health; COVID-19 pandemic; pandemic; public health mitigations;

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