

Title Page & Abstract

An Interview with Maria Dunstan

Part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library
Illinois Statecraft – Pension Crisis in Illinois Oral History project

Interview # ISC-A-L-2016-017

Maria Dunstan, a retiree from the Macomb School District and Western Illinois University, was interviewed on the date listed below as part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library's *Illinois Statecraft – Pension Crisis in Illinois* Oral History project.

Interview dates & location:

March 7, 2016 Location: Macomb, Illinois

Interview Format: Digital audio

Interviewer: Philip Pogue, ALPL volunteer

Transcription by: _____

Edited by: _____

Total Pages: _____ Total Time: 0:56 / 0.93 hrs.

Transcript
being processed

Accessioned into the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Archives on April 26, 2016.

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

© 2016 Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library

Abstract

Maria Dunstan, *Illinois Statecraft*, ISC-A-L-2016-017

Biographical Information Overview of Interview: Maria Dunstan was born in Grand Rapids, Minnesota in 1946, and graduated from Grand Rapids High School in 1964. Maria earned a BS degree in Elementary Education from the University of South Dakota in 1968. She later earned a MA degree in guidance counseling, also from there. Maria began her teaching career at Sioux City, South Dakota and then returned to teach in Grand Rapids. She then moved to Macomb, Illinois, where she taught at the University Lab School, which was part of the Macomb School District. For ten years Maria was a Macomb High School guidance counselor, and also served as president of the local teacher's union. While in Macomb, Maria earned an Ed.S. (Education Specialist) degree from Western Illinois University. This led to a principalship at Edison Elementary School (Grades 4-6). Following that assignment, Maria became Assistant Superintendent for the Macomb School District, focusing on curriculum issues. After thirty-two years in education, Maria retired from the school district and then took a field supervision position at Western Illinois University in the area of special education. Maria held this position for five years, retiring in 2014.

Dunstan discusses in detail the challenges educators face as they think about their retirement. This includes the irrevocable notice of retirement that happens years in advance, about the pension dollars available, life after retiring, insurance coverage, and the possibility of pursuing a new occupation. She also covers the pension language found in local school district contracts regarding end of year salaries and use of sick leave in counting retirement years. The interview also covers how Illinois' several early retirement plans, Tier 2 employees, tax caps, levy restrictions and pension holidays have impacted school districts. Dunstan addressed the changes to the pension system wrought by Senate Bill 1 (Dec, 2013), and the efforts to overturn the legislation, ending with the Illinois Supreme Court's decision to overturn it in 2015. Finally, she covers how employees and retirees have dealt with being in two different retirement systems.

Subject Headings/Key Words: Illinois Teachers Retirement Service; State University Retirement System; Senate Bill 1 of 2013; Tier 2 employee pension plan; pension holidays for Illinois public sector employees; teacher retirement planning

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.

COPYRIGHT

The following material can be used for educational and other non-commercial purposes without the written permission of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library. "Fair use" criteria of Section 107 of the Copyright Act of 1976 must be followed. These materials are not to be deposited in other repositories, nor used for resale or commercial purposes without the authorization from the Audio-Visual Curator at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library, 112 N. 6th Street, Springfield, Illinois 62701. Telephone (217) 785-7955