

Title Page & Abstract

An Interview with Dusty Rhodes

Part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library
Illinois Public School Funding Oral History project

Interview # EF-A-L-2019-076

Dusty Rhodes, a reporter for WUIS, Springfield's NPR affiliate, was interviewed on the date listed below as part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library's *Illinois Public School Funding* Oral History project.

Interview dates & location:

Date: Oct 17, 2019 Location: Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library, Springfield, IL

Interview Format: Digital audio

Interviewer: Philip Pogue, ALPL volunteer

Transcription by: _____

Edited by: _____

Total Pages: _____ Total Time: 1:23 / 1.38 hrs.

Accessioned into the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Archives on July 6, 2021.

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

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Interview being
processed

Abstract

Dusty Rhodes, *Education is Key – Funding*, EF-A-L-2019-076

Biographical Information/Overview of Interview: Dusty Rhodes was born in Texas in 1961. She grew up in eastern Texas and attended three different high schools due to her parents' job changes, including Carthage, Houston Performing Arts, and LaMarque High Schools. She then attended Southern Methodist University (SMU), majoring in music education. She later changed her major to public relations and journalism and worked with the school newspaper. Following graduation in 1984 she worked for the Dallas *Observer* and the Dallas *Morning News*. She then took a position in Anchorage (Alaska) working for the *Daley News* before returning to Texas for work. When a position opened with the Illinois Times newspaper, she moved to Springfield, Illinois. In 2014 Dusty was hired by NPR's (National Public Radio) Springfield affiliate, WUIS, where she continued to work at the time of the interview.

Rhodes discusses the changes to Illinois's school funding formula from 2017-2019. She gives a local journalist's view of an issue that has long plagued Illinois politics. Her interview includes stories regarding the roles of Sen. Andy Manar, Sen. Jason Barickman, Rep. Will Davis, Rep. Robert Pritchard, and Sec. Beth Purvis, each of whom played important roles in revising the state's funding model. Rhodes also reviews the Governor's School Funding Task Force which made recommendations that eventually led to a new funding model, the Evidence Based Funding formula. Other discussion items include articles on teacher shortages, school consolidation, school attendance changes, property tax relief and teacher pensions. Dusty also gave her insights on private school tax credits/scholarships, and on a recent school funding lawsuit from downstate school districts. She further reviewed a successful local referendum held in Taylorville on whether to raise the education tax rate and the passage of a Sangamon County Sales Tax for School Facilities.

Subject Headings/Key Words: Governor's Task Force on School Funding; journalism training in Texas; Illinois's Evidence Based Funding formula; Taylorville and Sangamon County School Facilities /Sales Tax referenda; Illinois legislative debate on school funding, 2017-2019; changes in journalism today

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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