

# Title Page & Abstract

An Interview with Ron Warfield

Part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library  
*Education is Key - Public School Funding* Oral History project

Interview #EF-A-L-2019-054

Ron Warfield, the chief coordinator for the Changing How Illinois Education is Funded (CHIEF) proposal, was interviewed on the date listed below as part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library's *Education is Key—Public School Funding* Oral History project.

Date: Aug. 13, 2019 Location: Gibson City, IL

Interview Format: Digital audio

Interviewer: Philip Pogue/ALPL volunteer

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

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

Total Pages: \_\_\_\_\_ Total Time: 1:35 / 1.58 hrs

Interview being  
processed

Accessioned into the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Archives on January 29, 2020.

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

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## Abstract

### Ron Warfield, *Education is Key-Funding*, EF-A-L-2019-054

**Biographical Information Overview:** Ron Warfield was born in Bloomington, Illinois in - October 1943. He grew up on a family farm outside of Gibson City, Illinois, graduating from Gibson City High School in 1961. Ron graduated from the University of Illinois, earning a BA degree in 1965 and an MA degree in Agriculture Economics in 1967. Ron also served in South Korea with the U.S. Army in the Air Defense branch. Ron's experiences in Nepal helped him learn more about subsistence farming, which led to employment at Central Soya (soybean miller and processor) in Ft. Wayne, Indiana in 1969. Working there for four years, Ron served as Director of Economic Research. In 1973, he returned to the family farm, working on 1,800 acres and raising 1,000 cattle. Ron also taught agribusiness leadership and policy at the University of Illinois, served as president of the IAA Foundation, the Agricultural Service Company, and was involved with AgriVisor Services. In addition, Ron was an American Farm Bureau board member and was active in national and state agricultural policies related to farm bills. Warfield has served on many commissions and committees, including the Ikenberry School Funding Commission and the Governor's Commission on Property Tax Reform. As President of the Illinois Farm Bureau for ten years (1993-2003), Ron was the chief coordinator for the Changing How Illinois Education is Funded (CHIEF) proposal. Ron was also a director for the Bank of Gibson City, President of the Gibson City School Board, and Chairman of the USDA National Agricultural Research Extension Education and Economic Advisory Board.

In this interview, Warfield covers a twenty-five year period, 1978-2003, discussing the impact of Illinois public school funding shortfalls and efforts at funding reform. In particular, he reviews the challenges facing a rural school district during a downturn in local property wealth and inadequate state funding and efforts to make major school funding reform through CHIEF. He also reviews the unsuccessful effort to amend Article X of the Illinois State Constitution, and the Ikenberry School Funding Commission. Warfield also talks about the challenges Illinois farm owners faced from high property taxes and the changes made via a new Farmland Assessment Law.

**Subject Headings/Key Words:** Gibson City Schools; school boards; CHIEF (Changing How Illinois Education Is Funded); property tax; 1996 Ikenberry Commission Funding Commission; Farmland Assessment Revisions; Illinois Farm Bureau; Illinois State Constitution-Article X

**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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