

Interview with Lee Daniels

ISL-A-L-2011-053.01

Interview # 1: November 3, 2011

Interviewer: Mark DePue

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

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.

DePue: Today is Thursday, November 3, 2011. My name is Mark DePue, the Director of Oral History with the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library. Today I'm in Elmhurst, and I'm about ready to start my interview with former Speaker of the Illinois House, Lee Daniels. Good afternoon sir.

Daniels: How are you Mark?

DePue: Good.

Daniels: It's nice to have you in bright and sunny Elmhurst.

DePue: It is a bit of an overcast day; it rained all the way up.

Daniels: It's rainy, windy and you came all the way up from Springfield.

DePue: Well there you go, but you've made that trip plenty of times in reverse.

Daniels: Thirty-two years and still counting.

DePue: Well, I learned something else coming in, about Elmhurst, as I mentioned before we started, and that's that there are a lot of trains that go through town here.

Daniels: Ninety-seven a day. We are part of the transportation hub of the United States of America, one of the rail hubs, truck hubs, airport hubs and we are a major transportation hub to this country, which not a lot of people focus on. They know about our airport; they know about trains; they know about trucks, but we are a major transportation hub, right here in this area, for the whole country.

DePue: Are you talking about Elmhurst or Chicago in general?

Daniels: Well, Chicagoland is the recipient of that title.

DePue: Well let's go ahead and get started on your upbringing here. So, if you can tell me when and where you were born to start with.

Daniels: I was actually born in Lansing, Michigan, although I consider myself to be a lifetime resident of Elmhurst. The reason I take that title was I really didn't have much choice where I was born. (chuckles)

My dad was a student at Michigan State, was in Michigan State College, and he and my mother were residents there, my dad going to school. He worked part-time with the campus police force, and he was chief of the Michigan State Campus Police when he graduated. And during the course of time, I was born in Lansing, Michigan, while he was a student there.

I have a total of seven siblings, seven boys, one girl. I am the third child of my mother and father and was happy to move back to Elmhurst after he got out of school.

DePue: Did you tell me your birthday already?

Daniels: April 15, 1942.

DePue: So, you were born towards the beginning of the war.

Daniels: I was, and my dad was drafted in... I think it was '43. [He] joined the Navy and served in the Navy until '45, until the conclusion of the war, and then returned to Elmhurst, where I lived in a little home behind my grandparent's home. It was actually considered to be the caretakers' quarters, but we were happy to have it, because there was myself and three other of my siblings and my mother living in a two-room house. We didn't know the difference. We didn't have much, but we were like everybody else in the war. We were rationing all of our food products and gas and leather. Well, we didn't have a car, so it didn't much matter.

DePue: Oh, so while your dad was in the Navy, you guys moved back to Elmhurst.

Daniels: That's correct, right after he graduated. He had actually joined the FBI [Federal Bureau of Investigation] and he was moving to Detroit. He had

checked with the draft board and said, “You know, I have three kids and one on the way.” And he said, “If I join the FBI and move to Detroit, will I be drafted?” They said, “No sir, you won’t be.” Well, he moved to Detroit, and he was drafted immediately.

So he joined the Navy as a second lieutenant. My mother and my brother and sister, at that time, moved back to Elmhurst. My grandfather lived in Elmhurst and had a very nice home. Behind that were the caretaker’s quarters. It was literally a two-room home.

DePue: Was this your paternal grandfather?

Daniels: Yes.

DePue: Tell me your dad’s name and your grandfather’s name.

Daniels: My dad’s name is Albert L., or Bert, B-e-r-t, Daniels. My grandfather was Lee E. Daniels.

DePue: Do you know how the family ended up in the Elmhurst area to begin with?

Daniels: Well, my grandmother, Alice Daly was her maiden name, D-a-l-y, grew up in La Grange, and my grandfather, Lee E. Daniels, grew up in Chicago. They met and got married. My grandmother had always enjoyed Elmhurst as a suburb and decided to buy a home in Elmhurst, on Addison Street, and did so and invited my grandfather to join her. (both chuckle) If you knew my grandmother, you’d understand that. Of course, they moved to Elmhurst in 1929 and started our family here in Elmhurst.

My father was a student here in Elmhurst, went to York High School, where I went to high school, here in Elmhurst, and, of course, played football and basketball and baseball. He was quite an athlete in high school. He was six-one when he was a freshman, so he was a good sized young man. He played at York and then went on to Michigan State. He started football, but it didn’t suit him too well because, in those days, they didn’t have the faceguards. About the first day of practice, somebody smashed his nose all over his face, and so much for his football career.

So, he went on to major in police administration at Michigan State. As I said earlier, joined the Navy, got out of the Navy and then came back and went to law school at Chicago-Kent College of Law. He went to night school and worked as a claims adjuster during the day. So he started a practice of law in 1950, here in Elmhurst. My grandfather was the state’s attorney of DuPage County at the time. My grandfather was state’s attorney from 1940 until 1952.



Albert Lee Daniels, Lee Daniels' father, in his U.S. Navy uniform, in which he served during World War II, from 1942-1945.

At the time, they started a practice here in Elmhurst. He also worked at a practice in Chicago; so, he had two offices going.

I remember my father, who is now deceased, but I remember well, his work ethic was extremely engaging and very involved. He would work at one law office during the day and then come back here in Elmhurst and work here at night. Of course, that's after going to night law school and working his way through law school. So, we had the privilege of seeing him with a strong upbringing, and he had the same values for us. But, having said all that, you didn't see much of him. So, during my youth, my main influence was my mother at that time, because my father was either in the service or going to school or starting a law practice.

DePue: But still, typical of the 1950s, a large family.

Daniels: A very large family, eight kids. People always thought we were Catholic. In fact, we aren't. I think at one point, if I remember the story correctly, the Catholic church wanted to honor my mother and father as Catholic mom and dad of the year. They had to advise them that they weren't Catholic, so kind of respectfully, you know.

DePue: With your father and grandfather, does that mean you're a third generation lawyer?

Daniels: I would be a third generation lawyer; that's right.

DePue: So it was in the cards, right from the beginning for you?

Daniels: Well, I had a pretty good idea that I wanted to be a lawyer. I thought about other things. I don't have the

scientific acumen to be a doctor or necessarily a desire to be a doctor, although I admire the profession greatly. I thought about other activities, and to me the law presented a great deal, a great many opportunities. Whether it was being a trial lawyer or working on contracts or helping people, it just, to me, seemed to be the most noble career of all, because there's so many varieties and ways in which you can contribute to society. But it also afforded me an ability to learn more about government, which I always enjoyed.



Daniels' family portrait, circa 1959. In the front are Dave, Bob and Tom. In the center row are John, Rich, Pat with Lee and William in the back.

DePue: It sounds like your grandfather was involved with government. Was your father, as well?

Daniels: No. My father didn't want anything to do with it. He thought all of us in public life were goofy. (both laugh) He said, "Why would you want to always be away from your family? Why would you always want to be subject to ridicule, always being in the papers in a negative way?" He just didn't hold public life in much high value.

DePue: Did he see that because of what his father had experienced?

Daniels: Well, I mean, my grandfather was attorney general in 1940. He was elected in a spirited primary, here in DuPage County, served in that position until '52. Then in '52, he ran for Attorney General of the State of Illinois and lost the primary to Latham Castle. In '56, he then ran for the Illinois House and was elected three terms in the Illinois House. So, you know, my grandfather's career was a good career, but yet my father would witness the various activities that go on in politics and didn't care for it at all.

DePue: I'm assuming your grandfather was a Republican.

Daniels: Yes.

DePue: DuPage County at that time was solidly Republican?

Daniels: Then, now and forever will be. (chuckle)

DePue: At least that's your hope, huh?

Daniels: Well, I mean, it's kind of a counterbalance to Chicago. I think if Chicago ever became more independent or had a spirited Republican-Democrat, you might find the change here. One can argue that we've had more Democrat influence here. That may be true, because of the population growth, but I think, for the most part, DuPage County will probably remain Republican for a long time. I don't say that in a partisan way; there's reason for that.

We look at the school system; people are very proud of our school system here. Crime is low here, and we don't want to duplicate many of those



Lee Daniels's grandfather, Lee Earle Daniels, while he served as an Illinois State Representative for DuPage County in 1956 to 1962.

things. After all, at the end of the day, you have to look at the governing bodies to determine what you think about the government that they run.

DePue: You've talked quite a bit about your father. How about your mother?

Daniels: My mother was the mainstay of the family, as so many cases in the forties and fifties. I mean, they really held families together.

DePue: Her name?

Daniels: Evelyn. Evelyn May Bousfield is her maiden name. She was also a York student. My mom and dad met at York High School. Women had to be very strong in those days because, as I said, my father went off to war. Who's taking care of the family? My mother, who raised us and basically, when you think about, generally speaking, who raises you? It's your mother. Now your father has an influence, and I believe that the fatherly influence on a family is necessary. However, most interaction is with mothers.



Lee Daniels' mother, Evelyn May Bousfield, circa 1945.

I have five children, and I've got to tell you, I can't imagine taking sole responsibility for raising a family. Yet, women do it day in and day out, not to take away from men. I know today, in today's day and age, there's more men involved with raising families, but my mother was a major influence on framing and focusing the family. The one thing we knew, that it took a lot to get my mother mad, but when she got mad, run for the hills, because it was going to be scary.

DePue: Does that mean she was the disciplinarian of the family?

Daniels: Well, for many years, because my dad was gone.

DePue: I wonder if you can tell us a little bit about what Elmhurst was like. Today it's very much a suburb, a bedroom community. It's in DuPage County, but I believe it's right on the border of Cook County.

Daniels: That's correct.

DePue: So, tell us what it was like in the 1950s, and what growing up in Elmhurst was like then.

Daniels:

Well, people my age have all seen “Father Knows Best” and “Dr. Marcus Welby” [TV shows in the ‘50s, ‘60’s and ‘70s] and all the little shows that talked about family life in the ‘50s, and it was pretty good. You didn’t have the same amount of stress, the same amount of difficulties that you have today. One of the reasons is you didn’t have the same level of technology or information going back and forth that you have today or the same level of communication. As you know, if something happens in the world today, in a matter of seconds it’s all over the world. Well, it didn’t happen then. In the ‘50s, if there was a murder in a bordering town, you might not know about it for a week or so. Today, you’d know about it in a second, and there’d be a lot of news coverage on it.



Lee Daniels and his brother Bill play in the streets of Elmhurst, circa 1950.

So, Elmhurst was a great place to grow up. It was safe; it was conservative, and when I say conservative, I’m talking now in terms of family values and in terms of upbringing. It had a good work ethic. The town itself has a German heritage, and, of course, being a suburb of Chicago, we have the advantages of having Chicago as a neighbor, advantages such as employment and development of manufacturing base and so forth.

Now today, there’s been a shift, because it’s no longer just a bedroom community. For instance, right here in our town of Elmhurst, the two major institutions that help define this town are the hospital, which from where you’re sitting is only three blocks away, the former hospital. Eighty-five years, it was located in almost downtown Elmhurst and is one of the major employers of DuPage County.

The second institution that defines our town is Elmhurst College. Today it has an enrollment of close to 3,000 students, and, of course, is right by downtown Elmhurst. And so, these two institutions were our new hospital...Elmhurst Hospital’s opened up in the south part of town, a brand new spanking hospital we opened up in July, 2011, has distinguished itself as one of the most state-of-the-art hospitals in the country today.

All of these help define the kind of town we have, coupled with good schools, good people, conservative people, and I say that in a respectful sense, but also people that are committed to good family life and good upbringing and good quality government.

So, I consider it a privilege to have been brought up in this town, and many of the values that I share, hopefully good values, have all been a derivative of living in a town like Elmhurst.

DePue: When you were growing up, that was at the beginning of the time that interstate highways were being built. So, was the commute downtown on trains?

Daniels: The commute downtown was on trains. You could take the car, but it was slow. We didn't have what is today called the Eisenhower Expressway. In 1956, President Eisenhower created the toll road system in the United States, and, of course, that impacted a lot of east-west travel through here. As you know [Interstate] 294 borders the property lines of the city of Elmhurst and connects us to the east-west corridor, as well as O'Hare Field, and then the Eisenhower Expressway runs into Chicago from here.

DePue: Were there still some rural neighborhoods, still some farmland that was around the area?

Daniels: Oh yeah, we had an airport here; it was called Elmhurst Airport. In the '50s, small planes flew in and out of there, and Mitchell Field was O'Hare Field. And then the Mayor of Chicago, then Mayor Daley, the elder, decided to annex some property in Bensenville, in the suburbs of Cook County and created O'Hare Field. In that process, they ordered Elmhurst Airport to be closed.

The property was then sold to a developer who developed our industrial park, which is today our industrial park. That's in the north part of Elmhurst. Most people don't know about that, that one time was an airport.

DePue: Who was the "they" that told you you had to close your airport?

Daniels: The Federal Government, because it interfered with the international airport, O'Hare Field.

DePue: I suspect there was some grumbling about that.

Daniels: Oh, there was a lot of grumbling. I believe the first jet landed at O'Hare Field around 1956, commercial jet. I can remember my father talking—and before that there were military planes flying out of that. I can remember my father pointing up to the sky and saying, there's a bomber, there's this, there's—and he could identify the planes because, of course, he was in the Navy and had to identify many kinds of planes flying in the ocean, when he was in the Navy. So, he made a practice. But, I can remember the landing of the first jet. It was very noisy.

DePue: How much of the existence of O'Hare defines what Elmhurst is today?

Daniels: Well, I think there are certain things that do define it. I said the hospital, the college. I think our transportation network, because we're twenty minutes from O'Hare Field today. We're seventeen miles due west of Chicago. Now, in that seventeen miles, on the Eisenhower or Kennedy Expressway, it can take anywhere from twenty minutes to an hour and a half. So, obviously you want to opt for the twenty minutes.

Yesterday I had a meeting on a board that I serve on, in downtown Chicago. I timed it so that the meeting started at 1:30, but I got out of there by 3:30, because the rule is, if you get caught about quarter to four, you're stuck for close to an hour. So, these definitely define us, our ability to move products, move people and to serve our community. We become part of the Chicagoland community.

DePue: When we met earlier, you mentioned that this area was known as Searsville?

Daniels: Well, that was a nickname that was had because many of our residents worked at Sears, and they had a tendency to locate out here, ease of transportation, close to the airport. Not so much today, but in the '50s, they created a subdivision called Brynhaven, here in Elmhurst. An awful lot of Sears' employees moved there. Also, you may remember... You may be too young for this, but you may remember the Sears catalog. In the catalog, you could buy a home. It was called the Sears home.

DePue: Was there an advantage that you're in DuPage County and not in Cook County, that that would be one reason that people would come here?

Daniels: Tax structure would be one that would be an advantage. And, with all due respect, the level of crime is much lower in DuPage County, so that's an attraction to people. There are, generally speaking, better schools out here in this area. And we are close to the necessary services that you want to provide. You live in suburbia with basically tree-lined streets. I mean, we are one of the Tree Towns USA¹, and people, including myself, enjoy that aspect. And here in Elmhurst and surrounding communities, you can walk the streets at night and not worry about your safety.

I can't imagine being in a place where you have to worry about a gang warfare or problems of that nature, being shot or sending your kid off to school with the real risk that that child is going to be shot or some criminal activity is going to take place. Now, I'm not saying that this is a putdown of large cities, because I think any large city has similar problems, wherever it is. But it's a problem that we have to deal with better than we've done in the past. And I said "we," I didn't say "they."

¹ The Tree City USA program has been greening up cities and towns across America since 1976. It is a nationwide movement that provides the framework necessary for communities to manage and expand their public trees. (<https://www.arborday.org/programs/treecityusa/about.cfm>)

- DePue: You mentioned that the area was initially settled by Germans. What would be the demographics when you were growing up, of the Elmhurst area?
- Daniels: You're talking about, in terms of ethnicity?
- DePue: Yeah.
- Daniels: It was very much a German heritage. Elmhurst College, for instance, was a heavy German influence.
- DePue: Was that a Lutheran school?
- Daniels: It's a Lutheran school, but it's connected to the United Church of Christ now; it's affiliated with the UCC. It had a great heritage, a long-term heritage, and one that we're pretty proud of. But in terms of the influences, I think most of us didn't notice any necessary ethnicity, in terms of our upbringing. I think the strength of character reflected a lot, but, right now, today it's a mixture.
- DePue: You mentioned that the family was not Catholic.
- Daniels: Right.
- DePue: Was the family religious? Did mom get you to church?
- Daniels: She got us to church. I went to the congregational church; I was confirmed there. My youngest daughter is a fourth generation member of the United Church of Christ Congregational Church, right here in Elmhurst on Kenilworth. We're not the best attendees today, but I was, in fact, not only did I go to church every Sunday, but I also sang in the choir.
- DePue: (laughs) You roll your eyes.
- Daniels: Well, I'm not sure how good I was. (laughs)
- DePue: You also mentioned, when we first met, something about a local swimming hole. I wonder if that swimming hole is still around.
- Daniels: Oh no, it's long gone. That was Emery Manor. It was on the north side of town by Lake Street. When I grew up as a young boy, when my dad came back from the war, my grandfather had scraped up some money and bought a piece of property for him. My dad built a home on it, which wasn't far from my grandfather's home. That was right alongside a cornfield. If you went far enough into the cornfield, you saw a pond, which we called our swimming hole. Of course we owned it, right? That's what we thought, until the Caterpillar tractors started rowing and leveling the cornfield, creating the Emery Manor subdivision, which were two or three bedroom homes with no basement, on a concrete slab, that were built right after the war. [They] destroyed our swimming hole, destroyed our skating rink and made us very

mad. We took revenge on Caterpillar tractors by throwing mud balls at them. Didn't get very far.

DePue: Was politics ever a topic of discussion when you were growing up?

Daniels: Yeah, it was. As I said, my grandfather was state's attorney. When I was a young boy, he used to give us a quarter, and we'd walk precincts and pass out brochures, take them to the door and pass them out, because he was also a precinct committeeman and, at one point, was the chairman of the Addison Township Republican Committeemen. He would give us a little stipend, enough to go to the penny candy store. You know, we had unlimited energy, so we'd run door to door, passing out the brochures.

DePue: So you broke into this business rather early.

Daniels: About five, about age five, yeah. (chuckles)

DePue: Did you like doing that?

Daniels: Yeah, yeah. For one thing, we liked being able to go to the penny candy store. Those of us that are old enough remember penny candy on strips, little dots of sugar on a strip that you'd go and buy. You'd give a penny, and you'd get like two feet of it. Of course, then you would just eat the little dot, and, of course, all it was is pure sugar.

DePue: By the time you got to high school, did you get involved with some extracurricular activities?

Daniels: I did. I was a gymnast in high school, all through York and for a year, year and a half, at the University of Iowa. I played baseball early on, in my youth. I was on the little league team, the bronco team, the colt team, which are all divisions of baseball, in my earlier years. I dropped out of baseball because the ball started coming in too fast. I didn't like that. And I was a vocalist.

DePue: Are you singing again?

Daniels: I'm singing again; here I am again. I started singing in the fourth grade and started taking music lessons in fourth grade, from my aunt, who was a music teacher. I was then introduced to the Apollo Boys' Choir, which was located in Florida. My aunt had me audition for the director of the choir when they had a concert here in Elmhurst.



A young Lee Daniels in tuxedo in 1956, is all dressed up to be a soloist at a wedding.

He pointed to a lady that was with him, the director, and said, "You take voice lessons from her for a year. I want to see you in a year." Her name

was Bessie Ryan. She turned out to be my music teacher for quite a few years. Bessie Ryan had a huge impact on my life and my career in music and is somebody that I will remember my whole life, because she brought me a greater appreciation of music and voice.

So, I trained under her, and then a year later, the director came back in town. He asked me to audition again. I did, and he invited me to join the choir, which is a boys' choir, unchanged voices. And my mom and dad said, "No way. We're not going to send you off to Florida." They traveled the world, so it would have been quite an experience. I was pretty mad at the time. I don't know for sure why I was mad, but as I look back on it, of course, that was probably the right decision.

DePue: Did you think, at that time, that maybe there was a future in singing?

Daniels: I never took voice so seriously that I saw myself being a careerist in it. I always thought that I found personal pleasure in singing. So, I continued studying under Bessie Ryan until about my third year in high school.

Actually, as my voice started to change, I auditioned at University of Iowa for the music department, which you had to audition for. [I] was admitted to it and started practicing to find out; they wanted about four hours a day. That's not something that I was interested in doing, so I dropped that and haven't sung since, other than when you have too many beers. (both chuckle)

DePue: Well, in high school, it sounds like you're busy with the voice and singing and gymnastics.

Daniels: Right.

DePue: That's kind of two different groups.

Daniels: Well, my voice teacher always wanted me to drop out of sports. She was always worried about hurting my voice, because I won the state two years in a row in boys, unchanged voices. I guess, at one time, I was pretty good.

DePue: Which one would you have chosen, if you had to pick one?

Daniels: Well, I think the voice definitely had a permanent impact on me. I think, if I had to choose one or the other, I would have stuck with the singing. But I chose not to. I wanted to do both.

DePue: But obviously, you must have been pretty good in the gymnastics as well.

Daniels: I wasn't very good. My brother was an all American gymnast at Michigan State, but I wasn't very good.

DePue: Didn't you mention you got a scholarship at University of Iowa?

Daniels: No, no. What I mentioned is that I was a gymnast at the University of Iowa. No, I was not good enough to get a scholarship.

DePue: Did you have any jobs while you were in high school, as well?

Daniels: Yeah, I did. I pumped gas at the local gas station in the summer. The gas station, my junior and senior year in high school, I worked on Sundays and sometimes Saturdays. And then in the summer, I worked at Mount Emblem Cemetery, cutting grass—that was an interesting job (both chuckle)—and pumped gas.

DePue: Now you've already kind of... We've had a peek into this, but your aspirations for a career beyond high school. Was there any question that you'd be going to college?

Daniels: None, there was no question. In fact, all of us were expected to go to college. I really started defining my goals when I was in high school. I really kind of wanted to be a lawyer. I explored other thoughts, but nothing really interested me. I did okay in biology, but I don't know, the study of plants and all that stuff wasn't really that exciting to me, zoology and the like. So, I started defining the career of law, because I found it fascinating and challenging.

DePue: What did you find fascinating about law?

Daniels: I would say, most importantly, its diversity and the fact that there are so many different aspects of law, from trial work to contractual work to healthcare to all kinds of different activities that I found most fascinating about it.

My father and my grandfather were lawyers, which I'm sure impacted my decision as well. Every once in a while they'd talk about a case, without using names, because they were very careful not to divulge any confidentiality in any discussion that I heard.

DePue: Did your father do a lot of trial work?

Daniels: He did at one point, but towards the end, it was mainly office work and office law. He handled a lot of adoptions. In those days, doctors would call a lawyer and say, "I have a pregnant woman; she needs a lawyer to handle the adoption of her baby. Do you have anyone?" My dad had a very large adoption practice. He took great pride in it, kept his fees low, and became very well-known in the county as somebody that, if you wanted to adopt a child, you should talk to Bert Daniels. He did a real fine job in that.

In fact, recently, I was in Michigan, walking the street, and somebody came up, "Are you Lee Daniels?" I said, "Yes." "Your father handled my

adoption for my parents.” And this young lady told me that she was adopted by a couple that had gone to my father. It was kind of fun to hear that.

DePue: Yeah, that’s really neat.

Daniels: Yeah. But, you know, today it’s entirely different. Today it’s handled by a lot of agencies and so forth.

DePue: Did you grow up watching “Perry Mason?” [TV show in the ‘50s and ‘60s]

Daniels: Oh yeah, sure.

DePue: Did you fashion yourself as the next great trial lawyer out there?

Daniels: No. I’m not sure that I fashioned myself to be anything great.

DePue: Well, you’ve been very successful in Illinois politics, which we’re leading up to here. Where did you go to college?

Daniels: I went to the University of Iowa. I was a Hawkeye. I finished my required work in three years, 1960 to 1963. My fourth year, I was a student at John Marshall Law School. And, at that time, you could transfer back your thirty hours to complete your degree, because they were all elective hours. I transferred them back and got my degree from Iowa in 1965.

DePue: So why does a kid from Elmhurst, who apparently loves the town, go all the way to the University of Iowa for his school?

Daniels: Isn’t Elmhurst too close? You still want to feel some of that personal grown up responsibility and adulthood. Iowa was perfect, because it was only four and a half hours away, and in those days you could hitchhike. I could hitchhike back on the weekends and did on many occasions. I had a girlfriend back here in Elmhurst, and many times we’d hitchhike back or forth or even take the train on occasion.

Several of my friends decided to go to Iowa. A couple of them were gymnasts, so we went out there. We had a brand new gymnastics team, all new equipment, with a new coach. So we decided to go out there and help start the gymnastics team. Several of our York students followed us in years to come, and, as a matter of fact, contributed to some very good gymnastics at Iowa.

DePue: Did you like the community and the school?

Daniels: Yes, I liked the school. To a great extent it was similar in nature to Elmhurst, although it was in the middle of a cornfield. There was some adjustment, because I used to listen to the radio in the morning that would wake me up for

school. It was always WLS and Dick Biondi and some of the old DJs. They would be rapping in the morning.

The first morning at Iowa, it was the reports on the price for hogs and corn and beans. I thought, oh man, I'm not going to make it here. (chuckling) It took a little adjusting, but once you got going, it's a good school; it's a fun school, and they deliver a good educational product.

DePue: If I'm correct, it was 1960 to '63 that you were there?

Daniels: I was there 1960 to '63, transferred back thirty hours from John Marshall. So, in 1965, I got my degree, but I had already then finished a year and a half of law school.

DePue: That's interesting. I'm not sure... You got your bachelor's degree at the same time you were at law school?

Daniels: That's correct. They had an accelerated program.

DePue: And you were in a hurry?

Daniels: I was in a hurry, yeah.

DePue: I know also that this is the timeframe that there is a draft, that most kids are worrying about a draft. This is before the Vietnam buildup, but that's still got to be part of the equation, I would think.

Daniels: Well, it never was. I come from a family that served in the military. My brother, Rich, who works with me, here in the office, was in the military police. But I was at that age group where, if you were in college, you were deferred. Then they eliminated that. But if you were married, you were deferred, and I was married. Then they eliminated that. But if you had a child, you were deferred, and I had a child. And then they stopped the draft.

So I was always just at a point in my life where I was not part of the draft, because of my status. I never intentionally did that. It's just that's how it worked out. I wanted to be a lawyer. I knew I wanted to be a lawyer. I fell in love with a woman. I married the woman, and we had a baby. Not an unusual story in the '60s.

DePue: Well, especially in the early '60s, where they were looking for reasons to give the deferments out, because they couldn't afford to have everybody who was otherwise eligible in the military. Did you do ROTC [Reserve Officers' Training Corps] at Iowa?

Daniels: I did. At Iowa, that was a requirement. I was in the Billy Mitchell Honor Drill Team and actually met governors at the airport, sabers drawn. The governors

would walk under that, or distinguished dignitaries. We would be charged with meeting them at the airport in Iowa City.

But that was not a real involved thing. I didn't sign up for the full ROTC course. That was a requirement that I took. I kept on telling one of my friends, "You've got to take this course." "I'm not taking ROTC." "You've got to take this course, or you're not going to graduate." Sure enough, what happened? They eliminated the requirement. (both laugh) So, I had taken the course. I didn't mind it. You had to learn how to shine your shoes and put on a uniform.

DePue: When did you get married?

Daniels: Nineteen sixty-two, I married my first wife, Suzanne. She was my high school sweetheart.

DePue: What was her last name?

Daniels: Burke, B-u-r-k-e. She was a cute—or is, was, or I guess was, at the time, her age, a cute young girl, and we fell in love and decided to get married. We got married, and then we decided to have children, because we then associated with a lot of people at Iowa that had children.

We lost our first two babies. Our first son passed away, twenty-six hours after birth. We went to the doctor, and the doctor said there's no reason why you can't have a child. She got pregnant fairly quickly, and we lost our second child that was born. Thirty-six hours after birth, he died. The second child that passed away, I was then in law school.

Then we decided to have another try. The doctors assured us there was no reason why there shouldn't be a normal birth, a normal delivery. Our third child, Laurie, was born. Laurie suffered brain damage shortly after birth, but survived. Today Laurie is forty-seven, lives in Orland Park, in what's called a CILA, community integrated living arrangement, with three other adult women. She works



Cardinal George and Lee Daniels with his wife Pam and daughter Laurie at the dedication of the Lee A. Daniels Building at St. Coletta's of Illinois Administrative and Vocational Training Center in Tinley Park in June 2001.

five days a week, and I'm awful proud of her. She's mildly retarded and profoundly, physically handicapped. She's confined to a wheelchair. She does a great job. She's a great young girl, but it was very tough.

I was a freshman in law school and went through the loss of a second child, and then Laurie was born a year after that. In fact, she's going to celebrate her forty-seventh birthday November twenty-third. She's a great young girl. There's a picture of Laurie in the family picture there. She's sitting down.

DePue: A lot of pain for a young couple to deal with.

Daniels: Tremendous pain, and without a doubt, it contributed to our ultimate divorce. But, once again, I was so busy with school—and I worked during the day and went to night law school—that it really...A lot of the pain and suffering, I had set aside myself, because that's how you could deal with it. But, my wife had the then responsibility of raising our daughter.

DePue: When did the divorce come?

Daniels: Nineteen sixty-nine.

DePue: So, you had already graduated from law school.

Daniels: I graduated law school in 1967. We had another daughter, Rachel. Rachel is married and has three daughters and lives with her husband in Orlando, Florida. She's a great gal and does a great job as a mother and has raised three wonderful children.

DePue: What's her married name?

Daniels: Noonan, N-o-o-n-a-n.

DePue: Well, tell us a little bit about John Marshall Law School. I think that's where you said you ended up.

Daniels: I did. I was going to go to law school at Iowa and was accepted to law school at Iowa, on the accelerated program, and hadn't figured out how I was going to pay for it, because, as I said, I was one of eight kids. My parents were of comfortable means, but not of wealthy means. We always understood that they would cover college, but we had to cover graduate school.

So, I was working on perhaps getting a scholarship, or I would work... I worked at Iowa in a couple different jobs, after I got married. Selling clothes was one and working at McDonald's was another one. That one I really enjoyed, because I could feed all my friends—and I did. (both laugh)

But I was, at one point, on a side note, the highest elected official in the McDonald's system in the country, when I was speaker of the House, as a former crew member. They had my picture in almost every McDonald's in Illinois, as the speaker, but the highest elected official in the United States of America, at the time. Since then, there's been a United States senator that has been elected. So he took my title away from me.

DePue: With as many employees as they have, that seems almost inevitable.

Daniels: True, but it was kind of fun. So, consequently, I've been pretty close to McDonald's. John Marshall Law School. As I said, I was thinking about going to school at the University of Iowa. I had worked a summer here at Elmhurst at a department store, and the owner of the store knew that I was going to go to law school and called me and said, "Why don't you go to law school in Chicago?" And he said, "I'll give you a job, and you can work during the day, and when you get some real tough times, you can take some time off and go to night school and work for me during the day." Well, there answered the financial problem. I hadn't thought about that, in terms of coming back to Chicago.

So, I ended up taking that job and sold clothes during the day, went to night law school, and I lasted in that position for a half year, until my father said, "Why don't you come to the law firm and work as a law clerk during the day and go to law school at night?" Now, that sounded pretty darn attractive. I thought that, not only would it help me in law school, but I could be doing what I wanted to do ultimately and make sure that I wanted to make a career out of it. So, I left the department store and came here, in this location on the fourth floor, and worked for my father, starting in 1964 and worked for the law firm until I graduated in 1967, passed the bar and then, at that time, I joined the firm.

Many young lawyers will be paid a salary and then a percentage of the business they brought in. Well, because I had been working in Elmhurst and involved in Elmhurst, I was involved with the Chamber; I was president of the Elmhurst Young Republicans; I was doing all kinds of stuff. I knew a lot of people in Elmhurst, and my practice went so well that in six months they made me a partner.

DePue: Wow.

Daniels: Because it saved them money. (both laugh)

DePue: I wanted to ask you, though, my perception of going to law school, day law school, let alone night law school, is it's intense.

Daniels: It is intense. I would strongly recommend, if you were to come in to me as a young person in college and say, "I want to go to night law school," I would question why, and I would ask you what brings that about. I would really quiz

you on solid, firm reasons for having to do that because, if you can avoid it, I would avoid it.

First of all, the problem with night law school or night school generally, is you lose the camaraderie of what the educational experience, or part of it, is all about. So, I never had that relationship with my fellow law students, like you do when you go to the day school. You've seen movies and TV shows where the young, aspiring lawyers get together, have a beer and talk about cases and stuff like that. I could never do that, because I left work; I got in my car; I drove downtown to Chicago; I went to school; I got in my car; I came home; I studied until 3:00 or 4:00 in the morning, almost every day. Weekends were on the books and very little social life, no money and a huge amount of sacrifice for everybody around you.

Now, if it's the only way you can do it, which in my case was, then it works. But I would strongly suggest and urge somebody to try to avoid that if possible.

DePue: It sounds like, when you got back here and got back to Elmhurst, you mentioned in this discussion that you were the... I can't remember the specific title, but basically the head of the Young Republicans in Elmhurst.

Daniels: In Elmhurst, the president, yeah.

DePue: When you were back in Iowa, were you thinking at that time, politics is something I want to get involved in?

Daniels: Well, I was thinking about that. I was named after my grandfather, although our middle names are different. My dad never liked my grandfather's middle name, so he named me Lee Albert instead of Lee Earl. But, I was named after my grandfather, and so I had somewhat of a close affinity to my grandfather's career. In 1960, he ran for reelection and lost, and it was very painful. He lost; he was fairly ill, at the time. He had had a major operation, and he really didn't recover from that, but he lost a hard-fought campaign.

DePue: To a Democrat?

Daniels: No, to a Republican, in a primary, to a young Republican, twenty-nine years old.

DePue: Do you remember his name?

Daniels: Yeah, Lou Morgan.

DePue: Sure.

Daniels: And Lou Morgan ended up being elected to the House and served with distinction and ended up actually being the Majority Leader of the House,

until he lost in his election to a young, aspiring politician. (both chuckle) That sounds familiar.

So, that was a painful experience, and I didn't really quite know what I thought about politics. Of course, when I was in college, you know, that started the Vietnam era and the Bay of Pigs. I remember well, sitting in a bar, listening to John Kennedy, President Kennedy, talk about the Bay of Pigs and how we were on the brink of warfare with Russia and how he was staring down [Mikhail] Gorbachev, right? I remember well.

DePue: [Nikita] Khrushchev, you mean.

Daniels: I mean Khrushchev. I said Gorbachev; what am I thinking? Khrushchev. I remember very firmly that we would have enlisted, had the enlistment office been open, the recruiting office. (both laugh) Fortunately, it was at night, and we all came to our senses afterwards. We were typical, young college students in America, fight for America and our freedoms. We were ready to go fight, which, as you know, a lot of eighteen, nineteen year-olds were ready to do.

DePue: You're indestructible at that age.

Daniels: Of course, invincible. So, obviously, and as history tells you, Khrushchev backed off. Thank the good Lord. But history tells us we were on the brink of major warfare, very close.

So, it was really a questioning time. It was really a time where, not only as young people, you go through identity crisis to try to figure out who you are, where you fit, what's your place in the world, and why are you here, and what is it you're going to contribute? That's a natural thing. But then, you add to that something like the Bay of Pigs; you add to that, the continuation of war and the problems of international relations and growing technology and the stress of being successful, it becomes an increasingly stressful time.

DePue: Do you recall the Kennedy assassination?

Daniels: Very well. I was actually going to court with my dad. I was a law clerk at the time. I was in Wheaton [Illinois]. My dad and I were driving out to court, and he wanted to get a bite to eat. So, we stopped at the Cock Robin in Wheaton. The Cock Robin is like a McDonald's, only not as prominent, obviously. Standing in line, somebody started talking about the assassination of the president. We immediately went out to their car, got the car radio and listened to it. Of course, you didn't have cell phones then, nor were TVs plentiful at that time.

DePue: Someone who's interested—and it sounds like at that time you were interested in politics, as well as the law—does that shake you even more when the President of the United States gets assassinated?

Daniels: Oh, I don't think there's any question about it. I was fascinated by President Kennedy. Not only was he young but had a great vision and great thoughts for our country. History has shown us, he wasn't necessarily that effective of a president—actually Lyndon Johnson was more effective as a president, history tells us—but he [President Kennedy] was loved.

As a matter of fact, he came here to Elmhurst. I was in college, and he came to Elmhurst for a rally. Now, why would you come to Elmhurst, Illinois, the heartland of Republicanism? He filled the high school stadium and had a phenomenal reception, and the people were stunned. How could this Catholic Democrat, in the heart of Republicanism in the country today, have that kind of reception?

Well, he was a visionary; he was a leader; he was what people were looking for, much of what they're looking for today.

DePue: How would you describe your own political leanings at that time?

Daniels: Well, it was obviously more Republican but also questioning. I was not atypical. I was a typical college student, and I had the same questioning of values and life and vision and where do I fit; what am I doing; why am I here, and what's my role in life? So, that all fit within the thing. I think you have a tendency in college, because of the nature of college, to be a little more liberal than you may turn out to be later.

DePue: So, at that time, you wouldn't describe yourself as a conservative, necessarily?

Daniels: No, no, I wouldn't. In fact, there's some people today that wouldn't call me a conservative either, but that's all right. (chuckles) I would call myself more, without a doubt a Republican, but also questioning values and direction.

DePue: Well, that was the age, especially a few years beyond that timeframe, to do that.

Daniels: When I went to the University of Iowa, it was one of the more conservative campuses in the country. In 1968, during the height of the Vietnam War, it became one of the most liberal colleges in the country. It wasn't the school that I knew.

DePue: Well, we're jumping ahead just a little bit, but what were your thoughts about Vietnam? And what were your thoughts about what was going on in the country at the time?

Daniels: Well, there was great division in the country. I remember well that I could not figure out why people would mistreat our soldiers and people that served in the military. After all, some of them were there, not out of choice. Some were there because they were drafted. Some were there because it was a career that

they wanted to pursue. They didn't make the decision to put us into war, and there's a lot of factors that go into that.

Not to jump ahead, but to use an example, you could look at our war in Iraq and Afghanistan. You and I can question that and have every right to question that. But we don't have all the facts. We don't know what has gone into that ultimate decision, by our elected officials, or for that matter, our appointed chiefs of staff and so forth in our military, that took us in there. It could very well be that we would make the same decision or even a stronger decision, if we knew all the facts.

I could never understand why, during the course of the Vietnam War, we were persecuting the soldiers that fought for our freedom and were serving, as they had to serve, in the military, a commander in chief. We all know who the commander in chief is, and we all know the hierarchical structure of the military. And a young serviceman or woman—mostly men in those days—had no choice. Why would we mistreat them when they came home? And we did, and it was wrong. I felt very strongly about that. I lost some friends in the war, in Vietnam.

DePue: High school classmates?

Daniels: High school classmates, not particularly close friends, but that I knew in high school. One had just married his girlfriend, just before he was shipped overseas and came back in a body bag. It was a sad moment. He's on the wall, the traveling wall of Vietnam. Another was a fairly prominent athlete. He came back; he was never the same and ended up committing suicide.

Every one of us has an experience like that, and we have those experiences today. It's not pretty, but if we believe in our system of government, if we believe in democracy, we have to believe in the goodness of our purpose. And if it's not there, then it's incumbent upon us to do what we can in an orderly fashion to change it, within our system of laws.

I thought that we had those systems to change it. Why not change it that way, instead of persecuting the people that are doing their job?

DePue: Well, that sounds like that might be one of the reasons you were intrigued by the notion of public service and running for office.

Daniels: Well, it's a great theater, where you can make positive changes, and that was always my goal.

DePue: Well, let's get you out of law school. When did you graduate from law school?

Daniels: I graduated in 1967.

- DePue: And passed the bar the same year?
- Daniels: Passed the bar the same year, was sworn in, in November of 1967.
- DePue: And you've already mentioned you came back here and were made a partner.
- Daniels: Well, I never left here. I was made a partner six months after I started practicing. I hung my shingle the day I was sworn in to practice law.
- DePue: So that put us into 1968?
- Daniels: It put us into 1968, in this building on the fourth floor, I started my practice. In '67, '68, I made partner because, economically, it was better for the partnership to make me a partner and pay me a percentage, versus pay me the salary plus the percentage of my cases that I brought in. I was bringing in so much business that I was actually making more than I would make as a partner.
- DePue: What kind of practice did you have initially?
- Daniels: All kinds, general practice. I did some criminal work, divorce work, real estate work. You know, the nature of the practice in this area at that time was general.
- DePue: And that's the way you liked it?
- Daniels: I liked it. I liked the diversity every day.
- DePue: You get to this, in 1968, you're here in the suburbs of Chicago. There's a lot going on in the country in 1968.
- Daniels: I know. You know what was wrong with me? I never really traveled that much.
- DePue: Well, I didn't mean that.
- Daniels: I was a homebody. I guess I liked Elmhurst.
- DePue: But, you're not far away from April of 1968, I believe, when Martin Luther King is assassinated, and Chicago is in turmoil.
- Daniels: Absolute turmoil.
- DePue: What were you thinking at that time?
- Daniels: Well, what I thought was, can you believe this is happening in our country? When you're not exposed to certain factors, high crime, you don't have the same concern for that as you would if you had been exposed. What do I mean by that? Obviously, we don't want anyone to suffer from high crime, but it's

not as much of a concern. If you have a good school system, you're not overly concerned about good schools, because you have a good school system. So, I could never understand why people would commit any kind of crime, violate the law. It might be obvious, because I went to law school.

And so I was very disturbed by the assassination of Martin Luther King, very disturbed. I thought that our country was at a crossroads. I thought that there was that possibility that our country could be forever divided and never recover from it. Maybe I was questioning my faith; maybe I was questioning the direction of my government; maybe I was questioning people's basic goodness, and that's not all bad. That's okay because, I think, if you continually question the direction of our country and people's motives, that you can progress from that.

DePue: Do you think you were more upset by King's assassination or what happened immediately after the assassination?

Daniels: No, I was upset by the assassination, first of all. I thought King was an effective leader for the people that he wanted to represent. I'm very careful not to say "his people." I'm talking about the people that he wanted to represent and the people that he spoke for. I had a number of very good friends that were black, at the University of Iowa. I'd never had a bad experience with a black person. All my experiences with somebody of color had been very good. At the same time, many of them had come from different backgrounds than I came from. But I think inherently people are good, and circumstances can prevent them from fulfilling some of their dreams and desires.

DePue: You get a little bit farther into 1968, and then you've got Bobby Kennedy's assassination, and then you've got the Democratic Convention, right here in Chicago.

Daniels: Yes, troubling times.

DePue: Did you understand what was going on in downtown Chicago at that convention center?

Daniels: I was troubled by that. I was troubled by young people that would cause the kind of revolt that was taking place and the actions. I mean throwing bags of feces into the faces of police officers, using profanities. That was not something that I completely understood. I didn't pretend to feel that I could relate to their strong feelings to cause that kind of revolt. Now, I'd known a few people that took part in those revolts, and I actually have an FBI file, as a result of it. I've asked them, and, well, most of the time they were just young. Some really didn't totally understand what the movement was all about.

I remember, at that time, I was a practicing lawyer. I had just taken my oath of office to be an attorney, to uphold the laws, the Constitution of the

United States and the State of Illinois. I believed in what I was doing, and I had trouble understanding that. Then, a young man called me that actually was a year behind me in high school and said, "I was just arrested in the Chicago riots." I said, "What were you arrested for?" He said, "I was taking pictures, and they wanted my pictures, and I refused. I said, 'You can pay me for them.'" He came in to see me, and he said, "I want you to represent me."

So the FBI called me, "I understand you're representing so and so." I said, "Yeah," and they said, "We want his photos." I said, "Well, we want you to pay for them. You can come here, give me a check for them, and I'll give you the photos." He says, "You don't seem to understand; he's been charged with disorderly conduct. Do you want him convicted or not?" I said, "Excuse me?" The next thing I know, they're at my office door, two agents. Now, if you're schooled in the law, you know when two agents show up at your office, that's serious stuff. (chuckles)

Well, in spite of the fact that in 1968 I had now been practicing for close to a year, thought myself to be a seasoned veteran, scared the daylights out of me, when they flashed their badge. (laughs) Efrem Zimbalist Jr.² I think was his name, (chuckles) FBI. I had never met an FBI guy before, and they were intimidating. I said, "What is it you want?" And he said, "We want the photos. You give us the photos; we drop the charges. You don't give us the photos; we're going to convict this guy of disorderly conduct." I said, "He didn't do anything." "Oh yes he did; he was part of that riot." I said, "No he wasn't; he was taking photos." "You didn't see him like we saw him." And I thought, this is not going well. I said, "When do you want the photos and how soon can we dismiss the case?" That was one of my experiences, and it shook me up a little bit, because I thought that, well, the government is not really pure in this whole thing. What's this all about?

DePue: Did you see the photos?

Daniels: I saw some of them, and what they were, they were photos of people rioting. The FBI wanted those so they could identify everyone in the crowd. There was about 400 of them.

DePue: Four hundred photos?

Daniels: Yeah, not all of them were developed, a lot of them on rolls.

DePue: Well, I didn't know I was going to stumble across a personal experience about that; that's fascinating. You also, I think at this time, were starting or continuing your political experiences?

² An American actor known for his starring role in the 1960's television series "The F.B.I." (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Efrem_Zimbalist_Jr.)

Daniels: Well, actually, prior to that time, I had started my political experience, because I was actually an elected precinct committeeman, I think around 1965, of York Township. I served as president of the Elmhurst Young Republicans in 1964. In 1966, initially, I was appointed to the York Township Board of Auditors, which is an elected position. In 1968, I ran for a four-year term, was elected, led the ballot, and served in the York Township Board of Auditors until 1972 and decided not to run again. In the electoral world, I ran, as you know, in 1974, for the Illinois House, was elected and started my career in the Illinois House in 1975.

DePue: The York Township Board of Auditors, tell us a little bit about what that job entailed.

Daniels: Township government, so it's a township position. Township government generally deals with public assistance, is their major goal, but also can deal with such things as the township roads, the maintenance of township property and the like. It's not real big, and it has a tendency to be more important the further you go in Illinois, down south. But here, it was general assistance, roads, the township roads, assessment. They assessed the property, so a York Township assessor would assess all the property in York Township, which began to be Oak Brook and some of the larger areas and part of the responsibility. The Board of Auditors audited the expenditures of the township, to make sure that they were properly being spent. We acted as auditors.

DePue: Was this a part-time position?

Daniels: Yes.

DePue: Was this a paid position?

Daniels: Yes. I can't remember the exact amount, but like \$125 a meeting. We met once a month.

DePue: Did you see this as just the way to get your foot in the door in politics?

Daniels: Yeah, I did. It's a good starting point. My predecessor was a guy by the name of Pate Philip, who had dropped out of the Township Board of Auditors to run for state representative.

DePue: Did you know him well at the time?

Daniels: Sure. He and his then wife were members of the Elmhurst Young Republicans.

DePue: I'm tempted to say something here. I'll go ahead and say it.

Daniels: Be careful; you're on tape. (chuckling)

- DePue: He strikes me as more mature. Was he quite a bit older than you at the time?
- Daniels: Yeah. When Pate ran for the Illinois House, I took his position. When he was elected, he left the Township Board. I took his position on the Township Board. When Pate ran for the Illinois Senate, because Jack Knuepfer retired, I ran for his position in the Illinois House.
- DePue: Okay, this is DuPage County. I have heard this said; I don't know if it would be true for this particular timeframe, but that DuPage County was the most—maybe first or second—the most solidly Republican county in the country?
- Daniels: It would be first or second. Orange County, California was always a rival. But yes, we were either one or two in the country. We've never made the same mistake twice, in electing a Democrat. (both laugh)
- DePue: So, if you want to get involved in politics, you clearly have to be a Republican in the first place. Obviously, it sounds like you were comfortable to do that. But how do you make a name for yourself in Republican circles, so that you are in position to get elected to some of these steppingstone positions?
- Daniels: It's a lot of work. It's coalition building; it's going to meetings; it's helping what I, at that time, called senior party members. I was a Young Republican. Senior party members were elected officials in the regular Republican organization.

I saw myself as a soldier in the system and going to meetings, becoming a precinct committeeman, working a precinct for the Republican Party, doing a good job—I ended up having one of the best precincts in the county—getting to know the public officials, getting them comfortable with you and you with them. I had a lot of friends that were in the senior party and a lot of friends in the Young Republicans.

But it's coalition building. It's the same principle that you do in business. If I want to open up an insurance agency, I'm not going to be able to walk into someone's house and say, "Hi, I'm Lee Daniels. Will you buy this insurance policy?" They're going to want to know who I am, what's my background, how much experience I have in delivering a good product?

It's the same in public life. They want to know who you are, what you stand for, what's your values, will you represent them, will you consider their viewpoint when you cast a vote, and how are you on spending? These are all things that people want to know, particularly in this area.

There's a tendency in this area for people to know their legislator a little bit better. Now, my experience is, the further you go south, the more you know your individual legislator. So, in Chicago, a lot of people have no idea who represents them. In the suburbs, a little bit more. In DuPage and the collar counties, a little bit more. You get down to southern Illinois, they know

who their legislator is, and he's a person of the community, and he's been around for a long time, or she.

DePue: Would your grandfather's experience in the state legislature and then the fact that he was defeated in that painful defeat you talk about, is that a plus or a minus, trying to get broken into Republican politics?

Daniels: Well, I mean, he left me a good name; no question about it. I would go to political events with him, and he'd take me along with him and say, "This is my grandson, Lee." As I told you, early on I would work precincts for him, for pay. Is that okay? (chuckles) My experiences with him kind of led me to be interested in a career in politics. But I knew, first and foremost, I wanted to be a lawyer.

DePue: That came first.

Daniels: Oh, yeah. Even though I was still involved in the political world, started my public career in '66, before I graduated from law school, I still, first and foremost, wanted to be a lawyer. They always say that, at the end of the day, when you're ready to get your degree, if they said, "Oh, there's one more thing. You've got to cut off your right arm," that most of us wouldn't hesitate, just to get that degree, because you work that hard for it. I mean, it becomes your whole life, and if you're in night school, it is your whole life.

DePue: Yeah, it totally consumes you, it sounds like.

Daniels: Totally.

DePue: (train passing by) We're getting into the height of the Vietnam War.

Daniels: Do you hear that train behind us?

DePue: Yeah, yeah.

Daniels: That's part of our transportation hub.

DePue: That's perfect sound effects for this interview, I think. Would you have considered yourself, at that time, a [Richard] Nixon style Republican?

Daniels: Well, I'm not sure I totally understand what you mean by that. Let's deal with definition. So, by Nixon style Republican, you're referring to...?

DePue: I guess more of a moderate Republican in many respects.

Daniels: I would sense that. This is generally a conservative area, but I would sense that people would call me... If you asked them, they would probably tell you I was more of a moderate Republican.

Now, if you talk to an inner city Democrat, they'd call me an arch conservative. There's a lot of legislation that I sponsored, early intervention, circuit breaker for senior citizens and help for the disability community—I've told you my background on that—that are generally not perceived as Republican causes, but the causes I believed in.

DePue: More socially moderate in your own views?

Daniels: Socially moderate, and fiscally, I would be more conservative.

DePue: You're just breaking into politics as... I don't want to say a career because you obviously were saying your career as a lawyer. What was your response to what happened with Nixon, with Watergate?

Daniels: I was aghast. My personal feelings were challenged a lot about government, the direction of government. I couldn't believe that anybody would be that stupid, particularly the President of the United States. I knew Nixon; I met Nixon. Now, I wasn't a friend of his; I wasn't even what you'd call an acquaintance. But I met him, and I campaigned for him. How could he do this? Why would he do this? What did he need to do to cause this whole thing, and why didn't he put a stop to it? After all, he was a very prominent attorney and very smart.

Nobody ever accused Dick Nixon of not being smart. How could he get caught up in that?

It kind of would shake your foundation of beliefs in the system. What it is that really gets people in trouble, it's the cover up, man. Very few of these things would go very far if they just stopped it. There were people that committed a wrong; there

Meet Lee Daniels.

Perhaps you've never shaken hands with him, never met him — maybe you've never even heard of him.

Lee Daniels has the background, potential and energy to become one of our most outstanding state representatives. And he has the desire.

Lee's grandfather was a state representative for Illinois years ago. When Lee worked with his grandfather as a boy, he decided that some day he would be a state representative.

So Lee began to acquire the kind of background needed to be effective in government.

Lee is determined to restore public confidence in the honesty of elected officials. He is outraged by news of kickbacks, graft, payoffs. "Elected officials have lost the confidence of many people in our community. It is the duty of those of us who want to restore credibility and accountability in public service to press for tighter legislation eliminating corruption," says Lee.

Lee Daniels studied law, graduated college in 1965, got his Juris Doctor degree in 1967 from John Marshall Law School, is a member of DuPage County & Illinois & American Bar Associations, and a member of Illinois and American Trial Lawyers Association. He's a practicing attorney and partner in the Elmhurst law firm of Daniels, Hancock and Daniels.

He's served on the YMCA Elm Club Board, Community Chest, Chamber of Commerce, York Township Board of Auditors, is on the Elmhurst College President's Council of Business Associates, is Special Assistant Attorney General for the State of Illinois in charge of the Equity Funding civil litigation. He's been active in Youth-in-Government, March of Dimes, YMCA "Indian Guides," and he's a member of Elmhurst Lodge 941, A.F. & A.M.



Campaign material for Lee Daniels during his first campaign for State Representative, circa 1974.

were people that committed a burglary. Stop it right there. I'm sorry, but you did wrong, and you've got to suffer the consequences.

Don't start covering things up, because, if you do, you're going to dig yourself a deeper hole. And ultimately you're going to get caught.

DePue: Did it ever cause you to think, maybe this isn't what I want to do?

Daniels: Well, I think at a variety of points you start thinking that, but that's okay; that's all part of the process. It makes a stronger person out of you, whether you stay or whether you leave.

DePue: Well, if I get my timeline right, this is the exact same time, now, you're thinking of taking that more significant step and actually running for the Illinois House.

Daniels: Well, there were a lot of interplay between that time. There was a sheriff's race that I looked at, a treasurer's race I looked at, and there were a variety of races. I was a young person at that time, thirty years old, out of law school, practicing law. I had a good career going and had a lot of opportunities. So, when Pate Philip moved up, Pate said, "You should run for the house." And I said, "Let's go."

Now, I had no real knowledge of everything that the Illinois House did. I can't tell you that, when I first ran in 1974, that I had a full—actually it was '73, I started running—that I had a full comprehension of everything that a legislator did. But I knew it was kind of exciting and challenging, and you could make a difference. I knew that you could stand up on the House floor and say what you wanted to say and believe what you believed in and articulate that. I was interested in that, because I thought I had something to contribute.

DePue: I would guess, though, going into it, you would realize the tough race to win would be to get through the primary.

Daniels: Right.

DePue: And get the Republican nod.

Daniels: That's correct.

DePue: Do you remember your opposition in that?

Daniels: Can you imagine such a thing? (both laugh) There were a number of people that talked about it, but at the end of the day, two people filed. Obviously, me, and a gentleman by the name of Carl Roth, R-o-t-h, who was the mayor of Villa Park, a neighboring community. Nice guy, good family, but Carl thought that he could win the race, because of his municipal experience.

Municipal experience does not necessarily convert to state experience. One of the things that, with a mayor, mayors run their towns. State representatives don't run government. They're part of a team, part of a system. There has to be a lot different campaign style. Mayors have a tendency to feel that everyone in their town is going to vote for them, when, in fact, they aren't. And they generally have a tendency not to work as hard on a campaign.

No one worked harder than I did. I walked door to door; I put together an organization, mainly of young people. We were excited; we were involved; we were committed. We even had a campaign song, and we even had slogans that we worked on. We had a ball, running this campaign. We ran a strong, hard campaign and took it to the people and convinced them that I was the person that could best serve them in the office, and won. Well, at that time, you elected three people.

DePue: I was going to say, we need to get into a description of cumulative voting.

Daniels: Yes. I love cumulative voting. Why do I love cumulative voting? History will tell you that cumulative voting best reflects the population of a district in its political and demographic views. So, while not everybody in Chicago is a Democrat, in a district you might elect two Democrats and one Republican, because of cumulative voting. It is possible to elect three Democrats, but generally speaking, the Republicans will bullet, cast three votes for one candidate, and you'll have two Democrats and one Republican in Chicago.

It's the reverse here. We elected two Republicans and one Democrat. For years, it was Pate Philip and Gene Hoffman, the Republicans, and Bill Redmond, the Democrat. Bill Redmond, the Democrat, served with my grandfather in the legislature and was very friendly with him. As a matter of fact, as I indicated, my grandfather was in ill health, during the end of his career, and Bill Redmond, a few times, would drive him to Springfield. Now, they were political opponents in a very defined sense, but they were friends other than that.

So cumulative voting meant that DuPage County in—let's talk about this district—would have two Republicans and one Democrat, and the views would reflect the views of the people of our district.

DePue: So the Democrat would be more of a moderate Democrat?

Daniels: Without a doubt; without a doubt. Pat Quinn, in his goofiness, and I think it was a mistake when we accepted not only the cutback amendment, but eliminated cumulative voting. We cut the size of the House from 177 to 118, and we cut the size of the Senate to fifty-nine, or two times the House, and we eliminated cumulative voting. In doing so, you eliminated that guarantee of

minority representation, so that ever since that amendment was passed in... What was it, 1981?

DePue: It went up to the ballot in 1980.

Daniels: Nineteen-eighty, effective 1981. Ever since that, we have had, in this area, one Republican as our legislator, and, of course, that was me. Now, I didn't object to that, being the one person, but I always thought that we were better off having cumulative voting, with minority representation. That meant that, in the heartland of Chicago, we frequently had Republicans that were reflecting the views of the city of Chicago in our Republican caucus.

Today we only have one legislator that has parts of Chicago in his district. That's Michael McAuliffe, and he doesn't represent all of Chicago, just a little part of Chicago and then, parts of the suburbs. So, if you take a mathematical study of cumulative voting, you will find that it guaranteed minority representation. It's a very sound way of electing people to office.

DePue: But isn't it a hard thing today to try to explain how it worked?

Daniels: It's easy to explain. I tell you; you have three votes. You can vote for one person; you can vote for two, one and a half each, or you can give each one a one vote.

DePue: Did it require that the campaigns had to do a little bit more educating to the voters out there?

Daniels: Yes. As a matter of fact, when I first ran, in the general election, with cumulative voting, I had made an agreement with Gene Hoffman that I would not bullet. What I mean by bullet is go around, "A vote for Lee counts for three." But I would say, "People should vote for Gene Hoffman and Lee Daniels." We campaigned together.

DePue: So there's actually you, Hoffman and Roth, all on that same Republican ticket?

Daniels: In the primary.

DePue: In the primary, right.

Daniels: Right. And you elect two, because that's what they chose to elect. Our Republican representative office people decided to put up two people for election, versus three. The Democrats decided to put up one, versus three, so that they guaranteed Bill Redmond's election. We only went for two, instead of three, because we felt we couldn't elect three. Does that make sense?

DePue: Um-hmm.

Daniels: Okay. So, in the general election, the candidates standing for office were Gene Hoffman, Lee Daniels and Bill Redmond.

DePue: There were three names, and three people would be elected, huh?

Daniels: Right, right.

DePue: See, I thought, most of the time, there were two Democrats and two Republicans.

Daniels: That could happen; that could happen, and it did happen. Ken Johnson was, at one point, with Bill Redmond, but Bill Redmond was hopping mad. He didn't want another person in there. (chuckles) So, in the primary, actually, I was running against Gene and Carl Roth, but my preference was Gene. I wanted to run with Gene as my running mate.

DePue: Because he was an incumbent?

Daniels: He was an incumbent, and he was known as an education expert. I saw great value in that.

DePue: How did you go about financing that first campaign?

Daniels: I had fundraisers. If I recall correctly, I spent around \$7,000, \$7,500 on the campaign. A lot of it was... You didn't have the photocopy machines like you have today.



Campaign material from 1974, featuring "Three Outstanding Candidates," James "Pate" Philip (campaigning for state senator), plus Lee Daniels and Gene Hoffman, campaigning as Republicans for state representative.

DePue: I'm sure \$7,500 sounded like a lot of money back then.

Daniels: People were surprised that I could raise money. Now today, \$400,000 in a primary is not unusual, not in this area but in other parts of the state. So, I won that campaign. I actually led the ballot, and Gene was nominated and Bill Redmond was nominated and went on to win the general election. In 1975, I took office, my first term in the Legislature.

DePue: This might be a good time to take a quick break here.

(pause in recording)

DePue: We took a quick break to get some coffee and to stretch our legs. And now, Mr. Speaker, I think what I'd like to do is to finish off for today and have you talk about that initial experience down in Springfield in the State Legislature.

Daniels: All I did was cast a vote for Speaker. (laughs) And I could laugh about it today, but I guarantee you, it was not a laughing matter at the time that it happened. Even though I was brought up in what you might call a political atmosphere and a political family, understanding the nature of politics through my grandfather, I still must confess that when I went to Springfield, I really didn't have a great concept of what the legislative process was all about. I think that I didn't have an appreciation for what goes on in the backroom. Now, I said I didn't have an appreciation. I believe that a lot of things that happen in the backroom are not necessarily bad. It's deal making.

Many people have said that the passage of laws are not pretty. It's like making sausage; it's not pretty, but when the job is done, it's fine. Deal making requires the ability of elected officials to be able to sit down and talk candidly, back and forth, without worrying about somebody misquoting them or reporting them in an improper manner, because they have an axe to grind or something else. They talk candidly and frankly.

So, when I went to Springfield, the first order of business... Prior to getting there, by the way, during the course of my campaign for the House, we knew that the Speaker was going to be a new one. The Republicans controlled the house at that time, in 1974, and of course, that was the Watergate year. I'm running under the cloud of Richard Nixon's Watergate problems and resignation.

There were only a few Republicans elected to office in the country, in their first effort. Henry Hyde was one, who was a House member and ran for Congress and was elected to Congress in that year. Pate Philip was elected to the Senate, and I was elected to the House. That was very unusual in the country, to have Republicans being elected, because we went from a majority in the Illinois House to a huge minority.

Remember, the Illinois House was 177 members. The result of the election of 1974 and beginning with the session in '75, had 103 Democrats and 74 Republicans, pretty significant. Prior to that, many Republicans were running around the state, that were house members, saying they were running for Speaker, one of whom was Dick Walsh, a highly regarded, highly respected house member. Frankly, during the time, I was being courted by him to support him for Speaker, because we were going to, of course, retain control of the house. Not only did we lose control of the house, Dick Walsh lost his election. So, he wasn't even going to be elected Minority Leader, because he was no longer a member of the House now.

So, we went down there as free agents. I worked with Gene Hoffman to try to figure out who we should support. We supported Dick Walsh's brother, Bill Walsh. Bill Walsh ran for the Republican nominee for Speaker and lost in a Republican caucus to Bud Washburn. Bud Washburn came out of Central Illinois. One of Bud Washburn's campaign managers was a guy, none other than George Ryan. Bud Washburn was elected by the Republican caucus to be the Republican candidate for Speaker of the House. That's the exact title you're running for, although we knew we weren't going to be Speaker; we were going to be Minority Leader.

All of us pledged that we would support Bud Washburn for Speaker of the House, until released by Bud Washburn. That's the rules that were passed. Nobody really focused on the rules, but, at the end of the day, we said, "Here are the rules; here's what they say; everybody for him, aye; opposed?" No one opposed him. And the rules said that we will support Bud Washburn for as long as he's running, until he were to release us, if that were to occur. So we're kind of bound by those rules. I didn't focus on them; neither did anyone else, for that matter.

So, we go to Springfield. Our candidate is Bud Washburn. The Democrats are having one terrible time trying to figure out who their candidate for Speaker is. An emerging candidate for Speaker was a fellow by the name of Clyde Choate, a war hero. As a matter of fact, if I recall correctly, Clyde Choate actually received the Medal of Honor.

DePue: He did.

Daniels: And was highly regarded and highly liked in central and southern Illinois. Some of his members, in the House, would have walked the hot sands for him, without a question. Clyde Choate convinced the Mayor of Chicago that he had enough votes to be elected Speaker on the first ballot. The fact of the matter is, he had thirty-six votes. So, the Democrats got into the time.

The Secretary of State convenes the General Assembly. The Secretary of State says the first order of business, after we're sworn in, is the election of the Speaker. Bud Washburn is nominated by the Republicans, and the Democrats nominate a series of candidates for Speaker. I don't recall all of them, but I do know some of them. Clyde Choate was one; Bill Redmond was another, Harold Katz, Bob Mann and a few others. If I recall correctly, somewhere around seven candidates—don't hold me to that exact number—were nominated by the Democrats for Speaker, and they started the voting.

Now mind you, the voting is oral, roll call ballot. One hundred and seventy-seven names are being called for vote. Every one of these guys and gals stood up and gave a speech. "I'm for so and so, because he's the greatest human being that's ever walked the face of the earth, and how could we exist without him?" And then his colleague would get up, "I'm for this person and

he's the greatest person." And sometimes these speeches would go on five or ten minutes.

DePue: I did want to ask a quick question here, not to interrupt you, but this is during the time that Dan Walker is governor. He's been governor for two years; he's had, as I understand, a terrible time with the Legislature, because he went in on this ticket. He was against Richard J. Daley, and Daley obviously had plenty of influence in the Legislature. So, I believe he tried to run his own slate of candidates in that same election that you won your first election, wasn't too terribly successful, but I also believe he had a person in mind. He did not want Clyde Choate?

Daniels: He did not want Clyde Choate. I can't remember the exact person he had in mind, but that would be true. And he certainly didn't want Gerry Shay, because Gerry Shay was Mayor Daley's floor leader. As a matter of fact, when I was interviewed by the *Tribune* for whether or not they would support me for election to the House, they asked me the question, "Would you ever vote for Gerry Shay for Speaker?" I had no idea who Gerry Shay was. And I said, "Who's he?" Well he's only the Majority Leader of the House. I said, "Oh, I can't see myself supporting a Democrat for Speaker."

So, we get into the excitement of the day, and, of course, we are, in my case, for the first time, we're electing a Speaker, and it's my first day there. I stand up and say, "Bud Washburn," and sit down, because that's our candidate. Lo and behold, I'm watching the Democrats, and they're having just a terrible time.

This goes on for eight days. This goes on eight and a half ballots a day, and they are painful. I'm sitting here, as a freshman legislator; all I want to do is get on with my job and learn about it. Did I know that seat selection was based upon seniority and draw from a bowl? Did I know that your office selection was based upon seniority and draw from a bowl, your name? Did I know the whole system of operation in Springfield? I had no clue. The net result of my vote was I was one of the last persons to get a seat on the House and the last person to get an office and the last person to be able to select a secretary. (chuckling) Big deal, I'm a freshman anyhow.

So, having said that, we get into this...and Gene Hoffman, my running mate and my friend. And, of course, at the thirty-sixth ballot, if I remember correctly, Clyde Choate...Actually, Clyde Choate, I said, had thirty-six votes. He had more than that, but he did not have the necessary votes to be elected Speaker. You had to have a majority of votes plus one. Clyde Choate could not muster enough votes, because of the dissention within the party, including with Governor Walker and then some of Choate's opponents, which basically were upstate.

Gerry Shay went to Choate and said, "You told the mayor you had enough votes to be elected on the first ballot. You don't have enough votes to be elected on the first ballot, and the mayor is looking at someone else." [Choate said,] "Don't do that; don't do that. I guarantee you, I'll be able to get the votes together."

So, at the thirty-sixth ballot, Mayor Daley switched his allegiance from Clyde Choate to none other than Bill Redmond. Bill Redmond then emerges as the leading candidate for Speaker, and they start the balloting again. Bill Redmond does not get enough votes to be elected Speaker, and it goes on and on and on.

DePue: Were there people who still had their allegiances with Choate?

Daniels: Oh, absolutely. They would have died for him, and I think the number is around eight, but enough members, with the other dissenting votes, to cause Bill Redmond not to have enough votes to be elected Speaker. This becomes a very painful process, because we're all basically Republicans, and every time they call a Republican they go, "Bud Washburn," or we may get mad and go, "You guys can't even organize your own house. Why don't you just elect Bud Washburn, and we can get on with our business." (DePue laughs) Of course, they all laughed.

What I didn't know was, during this whole time, in the back rooms they were trying to figure out how we get out of this mess. Well, of course, I wasn't included there. What did I know? And, of course, they were starting negotiation with the Democrats. What if we elected a Republican? What if Clyde Choate threw his support to Bud Washburn? What would we do on committee assignments, office assignments, bill, and the hearing of bills, and how would you divide the power? And then, the other was equally true; why don't Republicans give enough votes to elect Clyde Choate?

At about the seventy-sixth ballot, I walked over to Gene Hoffman's office. I said, "I can't take this anymore; this is BS." And Hoffman said, "I agree with you; this is miserable." Now, he had been there for like three terms, four terms. He said, "I agree with you; this is terrible."

I said, "You know Gene, I'm actually thinking about voting for Redmond." And Gene says, "You've got to be kidding?" I said, "No." I said, "I didn't come down here to be spending time trying to elect a Speaker of the House, when they have a qualified candidate, Bill Redmond, and they can't get their act together. Why don't we just help them?" He said, "That's interesting."

So the next day, both Gene and I went over and sat with Bill Redmond. And Bill said, "What can I do for you?" And I said to Bill Redmond, "I'm thinking about voting for you for Speaker." He looked me and

says, “Do you know what you’re doing?” I said, “I’m not sure.” He says “Maybe you better think about it.” What did I know? Did I ask for anything? No. Did I want anything from him? Only to be a good Speaker and to treat people fairly. Did I know about committee assignments, office assignments, secretary assignments? I had no idea.

I then went into Bud Washburn’s office and said, “Bud, I’m not going to sit here day in and day out and listen to this stuff. I’m telling you, when it comes to the ninety-sixth ballot, if this isn’t decided, I’m voting for Bill Redmond.” [Washburn said,] “Do you know what you’re doing? You’re breaking the rules. You said that you took an oath to go along with our rules.”

I said, “Yeah,” I said I’d go along with that, but I wasn’t giving anyone carte blanche to run my life or the life of the people that I represent. “I intend, thoroughly, to exercise my right to vote for the candidate of my choice. If you guys can’t get your act together, and if you can’t do what you need to do to work a deal with the Democrats to elect somebody, what’s wrong with Redmond?” He said, “Nothing.” I said, “Well, go make a deal. Do what you’ve got to do.”

DePue: A quick question, from your previous comment, though, it sounded like the Republican rank and file would have been more comfortable with Choate?

Daniels: A lot of down-staters. A lot of us had no clue. But Choate was a very popular guy. He was a backslapping kind of very popular, without a doubt a very distinguished service career, very popular downstate. Down-staters, outside of Chicago, had a tendency to like Choate.

And Bud Washburn and George Ryan probably—I don’t know this for a fact, but probably—would have been comfortable with Choate, whereas Bill Redmond was almost—and I don’t mean this in a derogatory sense—a back bencher. He was a quiet guy—after all, he was a model for Sun-Maid Raisins—and he was a wrestler and, at one point, you remember, challenged Jim Thompson to a basketball tournament and said he could beat Jim in basketball, and he did. He made more baskets than Jim Thompson.

So, Bill Redmond, in my opinion, was a safe choice, because he was not going to run roughshod over the Republicans, as Choate would have. “Why don’t you, Bud, make a deal and just get this over with?” “Well, we’re working on it.” So, now we’re about eighty ballots. I said, “I’m very serious by the way.” He said, “Well, don’t do anything yet.” I said, “I’m not doing anything. I told you when I’m going to do it. I’m going to do it on the ninety-sixth ballot.” And he said, “Well, just think about it.”

So, I went back and forth, back and forth. Finally, it came time, and I said Bud, “I’m doing it the next vote.” Well, there was a guy sitting next to me, all this time, by the name of Charlie Fleck, who later became a judge.

Charlie Fleck said to me, “I heard that you’re thinking about voting for Redmond in the next ballot.” I said, “Yeah.” He said, “You sure you want to do this?” I said, “No, but this is ridiculous, and it’s time to get on with our business and get this stuff going.”

DePue: Fleck is a Republican?

Daniels: Fleck is a Republican. He says, “Well, all right; I understand. You’ll be okay.” So, I believe it was a Thursday; they called my name; I stood up. By this time, everyone had an idea what I was going to do, and they said, “Who do you vote for?” And I said, “Mr. Speaker, it’s time that we got on with the people’s business. I vote for Bill Redmond.”

The place went up for grabs. You would have thought that I had pulled a gun and aimed it [at] every member of the House. The Democrats jumped up out of their chairs. Some standing on desks, called me every name in the book. The Secretary of State immediately adjourned the House, before they recognized my vote.

I’m standing there dumbfounded. I have no clue what really just happened, except for, in reality, they did not recognize my vote. They adjourned the House until the following week.

DePue: How could they not recognize your vote, when you just made your vote?

Daniels: Because they have to call it into the record. The Secretary of State has to say, “Daniels votes for Washburn; Daniels votes for Redmond.” They didn’t do that. They adjourned the house immediately.

Daniels was a freshman legislator in 1975, when the Illinois House went through ninety-three roll call votes before finally electing William Redmond, a Democrat from DuPage County, as its Speaker. Daniels not only tallied every vote, but broke with his fellow Republicans to vote for Redmond, in a move that finally broke the deadlock.

Well, I walk out of the chamber, and by that time, we were being covered by national news. National news had hit one of the Democrats. Not hit, but it covered one of the Democrats, Tommy Hanahan, who was from the suburbs of Chicago, a union worker, a carpenter by trade, who said, “That Daniels won’t pass gas around here. He’s through.”

Some of my own members... I remember one time, I was in the washroom, walking into the washroom, and one guy was in midstream, and he said, “Oh my God.” He stopped, zipped himself up and walked out of the place, and said, “I’m not taking a leak around you. (chuckles) You belong in the closet, with the brooms.” He told me what I could do with a broom too.

It was pretty rough. So, I was a little bit shell-shocked. Hoffman comes up to me and says, “We’d better get out of here.” We immediately got in our cars and drove home, car. I rode down with Hoffman and drove home to Elmhurst.

DePue: Drove home to Elmhurst.

Daniels: The land of Oz, the safe haven, the mother’s womb, the comfort of all, my town of Elmhurst. Stay away from all these bad people. (chuckling) I was getting calls from the state party chairman, Doc Adams. “You can’t do this; this is the wrong thing. You’re ruining your career.” The papers had quotes in from Democrats and Republicans that I don’t know what I’m doing, and this is the silliest thing.

However, I got over 400 telegrams and letters saying, “Right on. This is the right thing to do.” My constituency, because I came from this area and because so did Bill Redmond, supported me strongly in the efforts. So, in spite of the effort, calls from Bud Washburn, George Ryan, Doc Adams, the state party chairman, in spite of that I had huge support back home. And I said, “That’s it. I gave you all plenty of opportunity. I’m voting for Redmond.”

Go back to Springfield. They convened the House. “Daniels, how do you vote?”—because they hadn’t recorded it. I made my little speech and voted for Redmond, and, of course, there were boos and so forth. Charlie Fleck waved to the secretary. “Yes, Mr. Fleck, what is it?” [Fleck’s response] “I want to say something.” And he called me every name in the book, a snake in the grass, the lowest level of person in the world, and really a rotten individual, can’t be trusted and should be ridden out of Springfield on a rail, tarred and feather. He sits down, and I look at him. I said, “Charlie?” He said, “Don’t worry; it’s all talk.” Frankly, I wanted to shoot him. (both laugh) Welcome to state politics.

Well, as you might guess, they refused to settle the matter right away, because they wanted to show me. And Gene Hoffman followed. Gene Hoffman voted, and another legislator followed.

DePue: That same vote?

Daniels: The same vote; the same ballot. But there weren't enough to elect Redmond, just short of the required number of votes, eighty-nine.

DePue: Now, did Hoffman and this other Republican, who broke ranks, were they vilified, as well, or did they keep their attention on you?

Daniels: They pretty much heaped it on me; although, people did say to Hoffman, "You know better. You should have told him." Well, on the 103rd ballot, finally, there were enough crossover votes. They put together enough votes to elect Redmond Speaker of the House. But, I broke the ranks. I took the heat. I did what I thought was right, and to this day, I would have done it again. Although, I must confess, I had no idea of the consequences.

Now, what saved me in my career? I asked for nothing; I made no deal; I didn't cut any partisan deal; I didn't get a committee chairmanship or any special assignments; I didn't get a special office; I didn't get a special seat on the House floor. I took my hit and lived with it. Members saw that, and they knew that I was as green a freshman as anybody that went down there. I had no idea how the system worked.

Secondly, what also saved me was, at the very time I was telling them I'm going to vote for Redmond, they were trying to figure out how to get somebody to vote for Redmond, and I walk in the office and tell them. They had a party after I left, the very first time. This is perfect, a freshman legislator from Bill Redmond's district, that has no clue. How could we ask for anything more perfect? They orchestrated the whole response, to make it look like this was a bad thing. But, in essence, they liked it.

So, as you look at my career, and even though I was told by people that the career was over, there were certain factors that prohibited that from happening, such as not making a deal, clearly a friend of Bill Redmond's, and I said, "Bill Redmond was a friend of my grandfather and treated him kindly when he was ill, and you don't forget things like that." Clearly, [this was] not part of an overall scheme or deal to favor yourself individually.

DePue: This is, again, the second half of Dan Walker's one term as governor. And, as I recall, not much got accomplished, because he didn't have much sway over the Democrats in the legislature, let alone the Republicans.

Daniels: Oh, all we did was watch the Democrats chop him apart, in my first term. I was amused by that in the sense that, why does a guy let this happen to him or how does he let it happen to him? He's a very smart man, but he just... In the political world, he ran as an Independent; he thought he was an Independent, and he tried to run the state as an Independent. You can't do it. You've got to have some kind of system and support in the political world, in order to make the state work.

Pat Quinn is finding out the same thing. Pat Quinn has always run against government. Now he's trying to run government. He doesn't have the clue on the art of governance and what it takes to be a good governor for all of us.

DePue: In talking to some people in getting ready for this, I heard a story, and you can verify this or deny this one.

Daniels: It's not true. (laughs)

DePue: Something about a state police officer stopping you on the way back to Elmhurst.

Daniels: Gene Hoffman and I got in our car, after I cast that initial vote and they adjourned the house. Gene Hoffman said, "We'd better get out of here." I had driven down; it was my car. We're going through, just past Dwight, Illinois, going north. I know I was going around ninety miles an hour. I could hardly wait to get home...to the motherland.

Sure enough, out of the dark comes a police officer, pulls us over and says, "Let me see your license." I showed him my license, and he said, "Lee Daniels, Why do I know your name?" I said, "I don't know." He says, "No, no, I know your name for some reason." And I'm thinking, he probably thinks I'm a criminal or something. He said, "You're the guy that voted for Redmond. You'd better get out of here; they're after you." (both laughing) And [he] sent me on my way. He didn't want to delay me, because he knew they were after me.

DePue: Well, I think that's a good way to finish up this story, quite frankly. What committee assignments did you end up with?

Daniels: Motor vehicles, judiciary, one and two; the judiciary was civil judiciary and criminal judiciary; and motor vehicles; I think, one more. I can't remember the other one.

DePue: I think the Blue Book³ mentioned those three. I didn't see any other ones.

Daniels: Yeah, that might have been it at the time, because we had more members.



Lee Daniels' official photo from the 1975-1976 edition of the "Illinois Blue Book."

³ The "Illinois Blue Book" published by the Illinois Secretary of State, is a source for biographical information on elected officials, as well as general information about the state's government. (<http://www.library.illinois.edu/doc/researchtools/guides/state/illinois.html>)

DePue: Wouldn't the Judiciary Committee be one that you would have wanted in the first place?

Daniels: Yeah, it would have. Interesting enough, guess who the chairman of the Civil Judiciary Committee was? None other than Harold Washington, who I became friends with, and then, he's elected Mayor of Chicago. And guess who could call up Harold Washington and get an appointment?

Harold Washington, at the end, supported Bill Redmond. So, Bill Redmond made him chairman of the Judiciary Committee, in spite of the fact that Harold Washington and I shared the same birthday, April fifteenth, but he had gone to jail, because he failed to file his tax returns. (chuckles)

DePue: Another interesting twist on Illinois politics.

Daniels: Yeah.

DePue: I think this is probably a good place for us to break tonight, Mr. Speaker, but this is...especially this last session here. I was really looking forward to hearing this anyway, but it's been fun to hear this from your perspective.

Daniels: Well, it was an interesting time, and all I can say is, it probably took a freshman legislator from Bill Redmond's district to break that logjam in the way that it was done. And it was done in a pure way. There weren't any deals that were being cut, because you didn't need to cut the deals, because a freshman legislator, that didn't know what he was doing, decided that it was time to get it over with.

DePue: That's still quite a baptism in Springfield politics.

Daniels: It was a huge baptism in Springfield politics.

DePue: Okay, thank you very much.

Daniels: You're welcome.

(end of interview)

Interview with Lee Daniels

ISL-A-L-2011-053.02

Interview # 2: November 4, 2011

Interviewer: Mark DePue

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

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.

DePue: Today is Friday, November 4, 2011. My name is Mark DePue, the Director of Oral History with the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library, and I'm here in Elmhurst again, actually in the office of former Speaker, Lee Daniels. Good morning, Mr. Speaker.

Daniels: Good morning. It's a little better day than it was the other day.

DePue: Yeah, it was raining all day.

Daniels: It is. And the sun is actually shining in beautiful Elmhurst.

DePue: I think we'll probably still have an opportunity to hear a little bit of background music; i.e., the railroads in the background here.

Daniels: Yes, we contribute to the nation's economy. (chuckling)

DePue: I've been impressed by how many railroads go through this town. Yesterday we finished off with this fascinating story about your baptism, down in Springfield and the speaker selection process. That was quite an interesting story, and as you already talked about, you end up learning a lot about how the legislature works. But what I wanted to pick up now is if you can tell me a little bit more about your education and the process in which you learned how legislation is really crafted, down in Springfield.

Daniels: Well, I learned pretty quickly, because after casting the vote for Speaker Redmond, of course, the initial view of a lot of people was that I had to go in the backroom and cut a deal. I had not. And they expected, of course, that I would be named the chairman of a committee or some kind of benefits.

I did get a benefit, and the benefit was I had a lot of friends on the Democrat side that liked me. So, when I would handle some legislation for a particular cause, many times when the bill went up for a vote, I got a

substantial number of Democrat votes and then supplemented that with Republicans and was able to pass the bill.

I was, as I said earlier, very close to Gene Hoffman, former legislator, now unfortunately passed away. Gene Hoffman was in his, I believe, his fourth term when I joined the General Assembly, and Gene, of course, mentored me in terms of how to handle legislation and so forth. With a training in law, which I think helps you a lot when you go into government, I was aware of the basic structure of government. Building upon that, I was able to learn pretty quickly.

But I would add this. I served in the legislature for thirty-two years. Every day I learned something new in Springfield, every single day. The process is complicated; it's complex; it's involved, sometimes not pretty, but it's a process that works, and frankly, when you're able to understand what you're doing, it's a process that can be very helpful to people in their struggles in life or, for that matter, what government should be doing.

DePue: This might be a little bit of a peculiar question. You mentioned that there were several Democrats, after this brutal battle to select a Speaker, who liked you.

Daniels: Thank God somebody liked me. My wife still liked me. (laughing)

DePue: Was being liked and being respected, as a legislator, two different things?

Daniels: Oh, absolutely. I can tell you, moving forward in time, people liked Rod Blagojevich. He was a very likeable guy. He was outgoing; he was a gregarious person; he was engaging, and I think a lot smarter than he pretended to be. But they didn't respect him, because he didn't work. He never studied the process; he didn't stand for anything; he didn't help people get things done. And so, absolutely there's a difference.

DePue: I wonder if you could tell us a little bit about what the legislature was like in '75, when you first joined.

Daniels: Well, it became very polarized, as evidenced by the speakership election. Governor Walker was the governor. Most legislators had no respect for him and didn't care for him. It was an interesting phenomenon to watch the Democrats actually plan ways in which they could bring him down. Of course, for the most part, the Republicans sat back and watched, such as budgetary items or any legislation that the governor wanted. He, without a doubt, was, as you know, a corporate lawyer, a very, very smart person, but rode in on a policy of change and was unable to completely comprehend how important it was to work with the leaders that were there for a while and understood the process.

So, there was a polarized system. And, of course, we had a huge difference of opinion as to how the process should work, in terms of the

election of a Speaker, which I've already talked about. Then, of course, at the end of the day, everyone does understand, you've got to get your work done. We had to balance the budget; we had to finish our basic work, and we went about doing just that.

I was able to establish a number of friendships, including Mayor Harold Washington, as I stated previously, who was the chairman of my judiciary committee that I was on. I was pleased with that relationship, because that carried me forth when he was elected mayor. I always had an opportunity to go in and see him.

So, I would say, a little bit dysfunctional in 1975. Democrats worked through it, and, of course, the ensuing election kind of solidified things a little bit more for them.

DePue: Some of the people I talked to about that time period in the legislature was a little bit nostalgic about the good old days, when it was much more collegial than it became in the '90s and two thousands.

Daniels: There's no question about that; it was much more collegial. You had a tendency... Of course, in my case, I had as many friends on the Democrat side as I did on the Republican side. When some of the animosity started to dissipate towards me, because of the vote by some of the people, I still maintained that close relationship with Democrats.

Of course, I was an average member. I didn't have to stand on the House floor, on a policy of the Republican Party and why we differ and why we're so much better than the Democrats. So, I wasn't out here to really be a hard charger on setting the policy of the Republicans in the House. That came later.

DePue: You mentioned Governor Walker, Dan Walker. Were there some rumors during the last half of his administration about some things going on in his private life?

Daniels: Oh yes. Both Pate [Philip] and I were recipients of support from a lady by the name of Roberta Nelson. She lived right here in Elmhurst, and Roberta Nelson worked for Ray Graham, Center for the Handicapped—it was called handicapped at that time—and she asked if we could introduce her to Governor Walker on behalf of Ray Graham. Both Pate and I said we'd be happy to. We did that, and they had a meeting. Then a few weeks later, she asked if we could set up another meeting, which we did. The governor and Roberta had a meeting, and then that was the last call we got to set up the meetings, because she handled them herself. A few years later, he ended up marrying Roberta Nelson from Elmhurst.

DePue: But was it a well-known secret?

Daniels: It started to become a rumor that was pretty obvious, because she ended up appearing in Springfield a lot. I don't know anything personal about it. I never talked to her about it, nor did I talk to the governor about it, obviously.

DePue: Where did you live when you were down in Springfield?

Daniels: Well, over my term, my tenure down there, I lived in several different places, but normally I would start with a hotel or a motel, and I'd bounce back and forth between the Hilton and the State House Inn.

DePue: Those were the "Republican" places?

Daniels: No, not necessarily. Those were the places that were convenient and easy to live in. I ended up, later on, living in a house and sharing it with Tom Ewing, who later became Congressman Tom Ewing. Tom and I were roommates for several years. Then I ended up moving into—when I became the minority leader—I ended up moving into my own place. I bought a condominium down there, which I ended up selling a few years later for the same thing I paid for it; so property values didn't go up. [I] moved over by Washington Park, because I liked to run in the morning—every morning, I'd run three miles—and stayed in that general area.

DePue: Was there much of a social life going on for the legislators when they were working on legislation?

Daniels: Yeah, particularly for the average member, because you finished your day; you finished your committees, and things were done. You'd arrange dinners, and you generally had dinners with your colleagues, on both sides of the aisle. Where are you going to meet tonight? Paradise Restaurant, which today is Ross Isaacs.⁴ Where are you going to meet? The Wheel—I can't remember the first name of that restaurant [Fritz's Wagon Wheel], down on MacArthur. And then, of course, when I first started down there, the Southern Air was just starting to get towards its legendary history. Now it's Chesapeake Bay, but then it was called the Southern Air, where a lot of legislators would go to dinner.

DePue: Was it a seafood house at that time?

Daniels: No. It was a regular restaurant and very popular, very well attended, and the bar was very busy.

DePue: You hear colorful stories, dating back to the '50s and the '60s, about the kinds of things that legislators did when they were down in Springfield.

Daniels: Yeah, they would eat good meals. (chuckles)

⁴ One of the eateries in a more than six-decade restaurant tradition at 1710 S. MacArthur Blvd. in Springfield, IL. (<http://www.sj-r.com/article/20140514/News/140519703>)

DePue: But I'm talking about the...

Daniels: (laughs) I know what you're talking about.

DePue: Was that toned down quite a bit, by the time you got there?

Daniels: You know, pretty much. It can always exist. Now remember, you have people that are away from their families. So, when they're away from their families for six months... People think it's an exciting life and full of wonderful times. It's not. It's hard work, particularly if you're in a leadership role, and it's one that, if you do it right, you're going to spend a lot of time at.

But, if you're an average member, you have a lot of time on your hands, while the leaders are doing the work and posturing things for your caucus. So, many times you would arrange these dinners, and the social life could be quite extensive, if that's what you wanted.

DePue: But that social life, I would imagine, bleeds right into figuring out the legislative issues, as well?

Daniels: Oh, absolutely. I can't tell you how many arrangements, call them deals, whatever you want to call [them] that we put together over a cocktail napkin or at a dinner or meeting with somebody. I know, in my later years, I used the dinners to get closer to my members. I would make sure, during the course of a session, that I had every member, at some point in time, had dinner with them.

DePue: Were you married, at the time, when you first went down to Springfield?

Daniels: Yes.

DePue: Was she living in Elmhurst; did she stay in Elmhurst?

Daniels: Yes. She was my second wife; Susan K. Spencer was her name. She's now deceased. We did not have any children, but I have two stepsons by her. We divorced when I was thirty-nine years old.

DePue: What was it like, trying to keep a practice going in Elmhurst, at the same time you've got this very busy legislative career, as well.

Daniels: It was difficult, and it required an incredible amount of work. I would generally, when we were in session, go down on Monday and come back on Thursday night. So, that meant, as far as my law practice—that's what's your referring to I assume.

DePue: Right.

Daniels: In terms of my law practice, I would have to work, lots of times, by telephone—and remember, in that early times, it was by hard lines—and deal with my clients, and then have my partners take care of the cases, while I was in Springfield. When I'd come back, I ended up working on weekends, similar to what I did in law school. It was difficult. Ultimately, it was to the advantage of my clients and to my career as a lawyer, to join a major Chicago law firm, which I did do.

DePue: What was the law firm?

Daniels: Katten Muchin and Zavis, K-a-t-t-e-n, Muchin, M-u-c-h-i-n and Zavis, Z-a-v-i-s. I joined them in 1983 as one of their partners. I was an equity partner going in, with them. I was practicing with my father.

I had practiced with my dad for seventeen years and said to my dad, "I'm having trouble handling my work." And he said, "Yeah, but I'm doing all your work, while you're in Springfield." My dad said something like, "Isn't it supposed to be the other way around? Aren't you supposed to be taking over the practice and doing my work?" I said, "Well, Dad, what are dads for?"

DePue: This is the guy who told you that he didn't want to have anything to do with politics.

Daniels: That's correct. And he's doing my legal work, while I'm in Springfield.

DePue: What were the initial issues and legislative efforts that you wanted to pursue that first session?

Daniels: What I wanted to do was to make a difference in terms of the quality of life for people. And, of course, lots of times you'd go to Springfield, and people would come to you. Lobbyists can be very, very helpful and very good by bringing major issues to your attention.

One of the things that I wanted to concentrate on, because of my experience with my children, was helping the disability community. And early on in my career, I started working in that, specialized living centers, which gave rise—and I worked with Speaker Redmond on that—to places where an organization that specialized in the physically and mentally challenged individuals could live, if they needed a residential setting.



Roberta Nelson, Lee Daniels, Pate Philip, and Governor Dan Walker at the signing of the Specialized Living Centers Act in the mid-1970s. Roberta later became Walker's second wife, shortly after he was defeated in his 1976 reelection bid.

We passed the first specialized living center legislation, and a matter of fact, working with Ray Graham, and put that into law in. I believe it was 1976, '77, in that area. [I'm] a little foggy on the exact date. But that's one of the areas that I wanted to focus on and did focus on for my whole legislative career.

DePue: That end of the first session, I understand you received an honor.

Daniels: I did. A rocky start, and as people found out, there were no deals cut. This was because I considered Bill Redmond to be an honorable man. I knew he would be fair, and, as I learned more about the legislative process, I became more aware that my decision was the right decision. It was the right thing to do for the right reasons. So, I was very happy and proud about that because, when you make a decision like that, that's so monumental, you want to have an assurance that you've done the right thing. And I did, and he was fair, where, I think, some of the other individuals on the Democrat side that were running for Speaker would have been very partisan. Bill Redmond, although he is/was at the time, a partisan, he still was fair to the minority party, which, of course, I served in.



Lee Daniels with Speaker of the House William A. Redmond (second from left) and Gene Hoffman in the mid-1970s.

So, at the end of my first term, they had a document that would circulate—that one of the lobbyists circulated, a political reporter—where they would do a survey on who was the best freshman legislator in the house. And I was afforded that award.

DePue: Were you surprised by that?

Daniels: Yes, I was. (chuckles)

DePue: Considering where you had started?

Daniels: Yes. To say I was pleased would be underestimating the response.

DePue: One of the issues that our oral history program is looking into more—I don't know that it's necessarily one of the high priorities for you—but the ERA [Equal Rights Amendment] fight. It started before you got there, and there was a fight every single year until 1982. I wonder if, when you first got to the legislature, where a lot of the people had already pretty much solidified where they're at on the issue, your thoughts on ERA going in.

Daniels: Sure. I was very strong on favoring the Equal Rights Amendment, but on the other hand, I was also strong on the pro-life movement, which some people [ask], “How can you be both?” I said, “Well, I can respect women and their rights and also respect, at the same time, the sanctity of life.

Elmhurst, at that time, was about 56% Catholic, and so there was somewhat of a heavy Catholic influence in town. I had served on a committee called the Night of Jewels Committee, which helped raise money for the Catholic Church, even though I’m not Catholic.

DePue: Knight as in K-n?

Daniels: Night, N-i-g-h-t, like the night setting, Night of Jewels, which would help fund the Immaculate Conception High School. I had a lot of friends that were in the Catholic Church, and with my own experience with my children, I really strongly believed in the sanctity of life, at the moment of conception. So, at the very start of my career—and I never changed—I was pro-life and pro-ERA.

People would come into my office and say, “You can’t be both.” I said, “I can be both.” I said, “I can respect women; I can respect their right to exceed and excel in business, without having to go on the pro-choice route.”

But I do remember that fight. I wasn’t visited very much, because I didn’t vacillate on the subject. I never told anybody I would change. I was going to vote for the Equal Rights Amendment. I was lobbied to change my position, and I said I wouldn’t. So, they really didn’t bother me much, either side. They counted on my vote, and they counted that I would be against their position if they were against the ERA.

But what a fascinating story. I’m sure people like Susan Catania and others can tell you a long, long history on the ERA battle.

DePue: Was Susan one of the sponsors in the House?

Daniels: A very, very active Republican woman from Chicago. That’s an example of the multimember districts. Susan was very active in ERA, and she worked extremely hard on the movement. She would know all of the ins and outs on it. But, I remember we were coming up for a vote, where we thought we had the votes to pass it, and all of a sudden, there was a fire alarm, and we had to clear the Capitol. There was a bomb scare. We had to clear the Capitol. When they came back, there were a couple legislators that were pro-ERA, missing; they took a walk. So it never got the necessary votes.

And, of course, George Ryan was anti-ERA, one of the strong opponents. I remember when midnight rolled around the last day, the supporters of the ERA, primarily women, went up in front and sang, “We Shall Overcome.” It was quite a moment.

- DePue: Was that the 1982 battle?
- Daniels: Yeah, um-hmm.
- DePue: The clock was running down on ERA at that time.
- Daniels: It was running down.
- DePue: Were you surprised that Illinois, of all states, ended up being one of the main battleground states?
- Daniels: Yeah, I kind of was. I thought Illinois would be a little bit more moderate in terms of their view on ERA. I think today they would be.
- DePue: Did you get a chance to know or meet Phyllis Schlafly?
- Daniels: Oh yeah, yes. Phyllis was not real fond of me, because of my position; although, she was not totally angry with me, because I was pro-life.
- DePue: What was your impression of her?
- Daniels: She was dedicated; she was strong, a strong-willed woman, definitely knew her subject matter, definitely had a viewpoint that she had studied very carefully and was articulate in her position.
- DePue: Do you think the ERA would have passed in Illinois, had it not been for Phyllis Schlafly and Stop ERA?
- Daniels: Without a doubt, she was a major influence on it not passing. I can speculate that it probably would have stood a better chance of passing, if she was not so articulate and so capable, on the other end.
- DePue: Let's go back to your position on abortion. A couple years before you got to the Illinois Legislature, the U.S. Supreme Court kind of took it away from legislators, when they came down with their decision on *Roe v. Wade*. Did you think that was the right approach to resolving that issue?
- Daniels: Well, I think the right approach to resolving the issue would have been to let the states make a decision. In terms of comparative government, states make different decisions for different reasons. I would have favored a state-by-state response to that.

I took a position that I would vote for a constitutional amendment, protecting the sanctity of life, which meant that I would have voted for an amendment to overrule *Roe v. Wade*. I always thought it would be very difficult to get done, as proved to be the case, and I don't think it will ever be changed.

I think that, for the most part, we have strong-willed people that believe in one side or the other, but there's so many other problems that we need to deal with today, not to diminish the movement on either side, but we need to be focusing more on the quality of life and job creation and our economy and spending and so forth that we need to focus more of our time on today.

DePue: Having spent most of your life in politics, as we go through this, I'm going to ask you your reflections on the various election cycles that we go through.

Daniels: Sure.

DePue: So, we're up to 1976, and now Walker is running for reelection.

Daniels: Right.

DePue: I wonder if you can kind of lay out that particular gubernatorial election.

Daniels: Well, to the degree that I remember, Michael Howlett, running against him, and, of course, we had the crime fighter, Jim Thompson, as our candidate. I, of course, met Jim early on. He came out to DuPage County, vote rich, Republican DuPage County.

DePue: Was Michael Howlett the Daley candidate?

Daniels: Yes. And he was not only the Daley candidate, he was very popular. Frankly, a lot of people took odds at the very beginning that Michael Howlett would walk into the governorship, and that, even though Jim Thompson had some ability, they thought that, well, he prosecuted Bill Scott; he laid some of the groundwork for other individuals and Otto Kerner, that ended Otto Kerner. Therefore, he's not going to be very well liked, and people aren't going to support him.

Well, they had no idea that Jim Thompson would end up being one of the best campaigners we'd ever seen. After I met Jim Thompson, right off the bat, I knew this guy has a lot of ability and is going to go far in government. And, as we know, history tells us he won that election fairly handily.

Of course, Michael Howlett beat Dan Walker in the primary, became the Democrat candidate against Jim Thompson.

DePue: Which says quite a bit in his own right.

Daniels: It does. Well, you know, Dan Walker never built a coalition, and government is about building coalitions. You can't function in the legislative process or in government, unless you build support coalitions. They can change over time. They can be a coalition on education; it can be a coalition on tort reform; it can be a coalition on probate, but unless you build those coalitions, people

you can work with, talk to and make deals with, you can't get government to function. Some criticize our current structure today because it's so polarized.

DePue: Now, you mentioned that Thompson won handily. My number here says 65%. That's a landslide in anybody's book.

Daniels: There's not a person alive that wouldn't take that election. (both laugh) In fact, they would take 59%.

DePue: Absolutely. How about your own reelection bid? This is the first time you're running for reelection.

Daniels: Right. No primary opposition, and I can't even remember who ran against me in the general election. I know Bill Redmond was on the ballot, but I don't know if he had another person running.

DePue: Was Gene Hoffman still on the same ballot?

Daniels: Oh yes; oh yes. Gene Hoffman was until... I think 1988 or something like that.

DePue: I'm not sure of the timeframe here for Thompson's initiative on Class X legislation.

Daniels: I'm not sure either. I think it might have been like 1979, somewhere in that area.

DePue: Well, let's back up a little bit, because I know there is death penalty legislation in 1977.

Daniels: Right. The Supreme Court had ruled the death penalty to be unconstitutional and then ruled later on that, if it had certain standards in there, it could be constitutional.



Inside panels of a 1982 Lee Daniels State Representative re-election campaign brochure.

DePue: You're talking about the U.S. Supreme Court.

Daniels: The U.S. Supreme Court, yes I am. And, of course, Illinois's death penalty statute was part of the ruling of unconstitutional standing. So, we had to either not do anything, in which case we wouldn't have a death penalty, or we would have to restructure the death penalty.

I worked with a legislator from Chicago, who was named Romie Palmer, who now, I believe, is still a judge in Cook County. I think he's still a judge; he may be retired. He and I sponsored legislation to restore the death penalty. As you know, I was a lawyer. I believed in the criminal justice system; I believed that the prosecutors had the ability to make educated and appropriate decisions on whether or not to seek the death penalty. I came from a law enforcement family. My father was chief of police of the Michigan State campus police force. My grandfather was state's attorney, and I was a lawyer and a legislator.

I believed very, very strongly that we should have the ultimate punishment for a heinous crime. And we set certain standards and met the Supreme Court conditions and ultimately passed that into law. I spent a lot of time lecturing, debating and putting that together on the House floor.

DePue: So, you were one of the sponsors of the legislation?

Daniels: I was, yeah. I was one of the chief sponsors.

DePue: Well, this is still pretty early in your legislative career. That's a significant piece of legislation that's going to get a lot of attention.

Daniels: Right.

DePue: How did you get to that position?

Daniels: Well, at the end of my first term, as I told you, I was fortunate enough to be named best freshman legislator. I had built a good amount of respect, because I worked hard; I kept my nose to the grindstone, and I helped build coalitions in helping other people and learned the process.

So, when this bill came up, I was on the Judiciary Committee. Initially, I had a bill drafted by the Legislative Reference Bureau, and I decided to work with the Democrats, work together to get this done.

DePue: Was that one of the issues where you could find Democrats and Republicans on the same side of the issue?

Daniels: Oh, absolutely. Of course, you had some opponents to it. Most Republicans were for it. So, working with my colleagues on the Republican side, I had a lot of support on that.

DePue: Did you have some who were very critical of you, who said there's some hypocrisy, because you're so strongly pro-life and also for the death penalty?

Daniels: That was said a few times, but it wasn't that pervasive. And it does sound a little bit inconsistent. But, in one case you have no choice; you're born, or your life is terminated by an abortion. In the other case, there is the choice. The choice is, if you're going to commit a heinous crime, you are going to be subject to the ultimate punishment that society has a right to level.

DePue: Oftentimes political scientists would divide up politicians into three kind of categories, your position on social issues, your position on fiscal issues and your positions on crime and punishment issues. How would you identify yourself in those three?

Daniels: Well, probably, socially more moderate, fiscally conservative, and on crime and punishment, initially, I was extremely conservative or strong in favor of appropriate crime and punishment, hence, the sponsor of the death penalty, the three-time loser bill—which is a habitual criminal offender convicted of three felonies, and you're going to go to prison for life—and one of the sponsors of Class X.

DePue: Well, we're in the neighborhood, then, let's talk about the last two that you mentioned and the legislative battles for those two. The three strikes out, let's start with that one.

Daniels: Well, of course, crime had been picking up in Chicago, and people were more and more concerned about their safety. We wanted to crack down on crime. A lot of times, a lot of legislators will talk about cracking down on crime and punishment. So, picking up the support for the Three-time Loser bill [also called the Three Strikes bill] wasn't that difficult. Remember, these are three felonies. So, that's like a burglary with a weapon, manslaughter, murder, rape. Three felony convictions, and you're facing life imprisonment. So, putting together the necessary support for that was not that difficult. But writing the language that would meet the constitutional muster was really the critical part of it.

DePue: And the last one, the Class X legislation.

Daniels: Well, that was pretty much instituted by Jim Thompson. I was one of the co-sponsors of that legislation, because I believed in cracking down on the more heinous crimes.

DePue: Had he or his legislative aides approached you on that?

Daniels: Oh, yeah. The governor was very active in that legislation. He came from a criminal justice background, as you know, so he was very, very firm about his belief on that. But most of that legislation was written by his staff.

DePue: Was that typical, that the governor's office would draft the legislation?

Daniels: Oh sure. The chief legislator in the state, many times, is the governor. Now he can't pass legislation, but he can lobby for legislation. So many times, depending upon the state, depending upon the political culture, depending upon what kind of leader he or she may be, many times you'll find the chief legislative leader is the governor of the state.

DePue: Tell us about some of the specifics in that piece of legislation.

Daniels: Class X?

DePue: Yeah.

Daniels: Increased prison time. Class X legislation called for a maximum of life in prison, if you were convicted of a Class X crime. Murder, rape, robbery with a gun, can all be classified as Class X, a tough piece of legislation.

DePue: Was that a close vote?

Daniels: It was debated at length. In my recollection, it was not a particularly close vote, because the very popular governor at that time, Jim Thompson, was sponsoring it, was campaigning on it and wanted to pass it. My recollection was that it was not a particularly close vote.

DePue: Did the legislature (1) have an understanding of what that would do to the prison population in Illinois, and (2) understand that they're going to have to do something to address that part of it?

Daniels: They did. But the importance of the punishment in the criminal justice system outweighed the factor that you'd increase the prison population, as frequently is the case.

DePue: I think you mentioned that was in 1979. That sounds right to me. We can make sure that's the case when we take a look at the transcripts. [Research appears to indicate that this law was implemented in 1978]

Let's fall back to the '78 election. Why is it that the governor is running again in 1978, after just winning in '76?

Daniels: You had the changeover in the Constitution, and he ended up having only a two-year term. That's my recollection. So then, he had to run for a four-year term.

DePue: Was that so that the governor of Illinois wouldn't have to compete with the presidential election?

- Daniels: Thank you. We went to the off-year election. Going to off-year election means a non-presidential year election, so that the issues that we're dealing with do not get confused with the national issues. Most states in this country have the elections for the governor in the off-year time. It's thirty-eight, I believe.
- DePue: One of the issues, I think this was a referendum on that particular ballot, as well as...what was it called, the Thompson referendum? The Thompson Proposition, which was kind of picking up with Proposition 13, out in California, an anti-tax thing. Do you recall that on the ballot?
- Daniels: Say that again, I'm sorry.
- DePue: The Thompson Proposition, which was mirroring Proposition 13. Let's see...“attempting to capitalize on the nationwide popularity of California's Proposition 13...”
- Daniels: Lowering taxes, property taxes.
- DePue: “...lowering taxes or putting a cap on how much you could raise the taxes.”
- Daniels: Thompson, and later, more successfully, Jim Edgar, campaigned on capping property taxes. One of the problems that you faced in that movement is that, if you cap property taxes, you're limiting the amount of money that a school district can have for their schools. So, that was always a concern in that. But every governor, generally speaking, would be in favor of keeping property taxes low. But they're competing, of course, with the school system, which is a problem that you'd face.
- DePue: Well, it's no secret here that Thompson won another easy campaign against Michael Bakalis, won by a 60% margin, still very healthy.
- Daniels: Anybody would take it.
- DePue: And as part of that campaign, I think he promised that he would veto any attempt to raise legislators' pay.
- Daniels: (laughs) Can you imagine such a thing? Well, of course, did he say anything about his? (both laughing) I have a high degree of respect for Jim Thompson, a very high degree of respect, as I do for other governors. Thompson was extremely bright, articulate and smart, and he was kind of a visionary. So, he knew that the movement in legislative pay was one that was a populous movement, and he tied right into it.
- DePue: Movement against a pay raise.
- Daniels: Yes.
- DePue: What was the urge to get it increased?

- Daniels: The urge to get the pay of legislators increased? We were too low, and we were looking for better salaries.
- DePue: Was that a factor of the legislature, over time, becoming much more of a professional body, versus the old school, where it was citizen politicians?
- Daniels: In Illinois, at that time, 1978, I believe, was the time...
- DePue: Right.
- Daniels: ...we were starting to move more towards a professional legislative body. Had not made the movement totally yet, but the time commitment was more and more involved, as the issues became more and more detailed. So, with professionalism, with more "full-time legislators," even though we're not a full-time legislative body, the urge to have a reasonable wage was one that many people felt was necessary.
- DePue: I know in the old days, you would meet every other year. When did that practice stop?
- Daniels: Before I got there.
- DePue: Late '60s was it?
- Daniels: Yeah. And you also could collect your salary all at one time. So, you could take your two-year salary by one check, in advance. That was the case when I first started, but we passed a law changing that.
- DePue: So, is that part of the explanation then? I think you've already laid this out pretty well, but to get higher pay for the legislators, if that's really their only career?
- Daniels: Well, it wasn't so much of that's the only career, as it was the amount of time you were spending there. So, whether or not it was their only career was not as important as the fact that we were spending a significant amount of time in Springfield, and the session went until July first. Many times, in the months of May and June, you were there full-time and sometimes twenty-four seven. (train whistle in the background) And here's our railroad saying, "Hello!"
- DePue: But it becomes an issue, obviously, in the '78 campaign, where Thompson is making these promises that he will veto any legislation to raise your pay.
- Daniels: Right.
- DePue: Well, what happened after the election; do you recall?
- Daniels: I don't, but I think you can refresh my memory, and I can comment on it.

- DePue: I know you're going to have a lot of comment on it. As I understand, immediately afterwards—you know, what's the governor to do after being reelected? He goes on vacation, and I think he went to vacation in Florida—the legislature came in and had a vote to raise your pay. Thompson immediately vetoed it. But, because he immediately vetoed it, it gives you guys in the state legislature, the opportunity to—
- Daniels: That's why we're still there.
- DePue: ...veto.
- Daniels: To override the veto.
- DePue: To override the veto.
- Daniels: Why we're still there, and I think it was overridden, if I recall correctly.
- DePue: Correct.
- Daniels: And then people got very angry.
- DePue: Well, yeah, that's kind of a kind word to say, from what I understand.
- Daniels: Pat Quinn, I think, had the tea bag movement, didn't he?
- DePue: Yes.
- Daniels: If I recall correctly. And Pat Quinn, that's one of the first efforts that he started to reduce the size of the legislature.
- DePue: Yeah, that's basically the origin of the Cutback Amendment, which is where this is all leading. Why don't you walk us through the rest of that Cutback Amendment fight?
- Daniels: Well, Pat Quinn, the populist that he is, and is pretty good on seizing on a popular issue in taking the side that he was, started this movement, the tea bag movement, so to speak. In fact, we got a lot of tea bags in the mail. His position was that the legislature was too big, too unwieldy, and by the way, having three people from one district is unnecessary. You should only have one legislator per district and eliminate cumulative voting. Huge mistake. History tells us it's a huge mistake. I thought at the time, it was a huge mistake and argued against eliminating cumulative voting and argued against Quinn's position.

It so happens, as time went on, I benefited from the Cutback Amendment, because I became the Republican Leader of the House in 1982, '83. And because we had fewer members, single member districts, a lot of the

influence of the leaders became more compact, confined and important in terms of determining the policy of the caucus.

Staffs grew, because we had fewer legislators doing the work. And you would say, well why would they grow, because you'd think they would shrink? No, the staff, the professional staff, had to grow to pick up some of the workload that we were facing, because of the more complex issues.

So, the mistake, I think, in the cutback, is we lost our minority representation. This district right here, where you're sitting right now, is an example of that. We would never have elected a Bill Redmond, and consequently, a Bill Redmond would never have become the first Speaker of the House from DuPage County, even though he was a Democrat. We would have never had the benefit of his expertise.

We would never have had representatives from Chicago, at any time. Art Telcser, who was the majority leader of the House, a Republican, Pete Peters, a Republican, all of them from Chicago that distinguished themselves in their career. And, having said that, we lose the minority representation in Chicago and, of course, the outlying suburbs.

DePue: Was this an issue that you could divide Republican versus Democrat?

Daniels: Oh no, no. I would say that most members of the House were probably opposed to the Cutback Amendment. Certainly a lot of members of the House were against losing the multimember districts.

Now, some hardcore political operatives said this is an opportunity for Chicago to be solidly Democrat, and boy it's happened. You have approximately thirty-six legislators from Chicago, and only one of them has Republican ties. So, this kind of started to create the polarization of some of the party structure.

DePue: And you and other opponents to the Cutback Amendment anticipated that?

Daniels: Yes. It was pretty obvious that, not only would DuPage County lose its minority representation, Democrats, but Cook County would lose its minority representation. Susan Catania, whose name I mentioned before, was a minority district member, Republican, in Chicago. You get in our caucuses early on, and you'd have Republicans arguing for Chicago legislation and why it was good for the people of Chicago and helpful to the state. You don't have that today, because there's no one in our caucus today that's in there arguing for the benefit of Chicago.

DePue: And vice versa in the Democratic caucus.

Daniels: For some of the suburbs.

- DePue: Was this an issue that ever came to a vote in the legislature?
- Daniels: No. Well, the constitutional amendment was created by Pat Quinn's efforts, because it was amending the structure of the legislature and, therefore, did not need legislative action.
- DePue: So, who at that time, was Pat Quinn?
- Daniels: He, at that time, I'm not sure exactly who he was.
- DePue: He was not part of the legislature.
- Daniels: No, no, absolutely was not, nor was he a state official. He was out of Chicago. Do you remember?
- DePue: I know he wasn't a legislator; that's as much as I know.
- Daniels: No, he was not in the legislature. He rode that horse, and he rode the creation of CUB, Citizens Utility Board legislation, another populous movement on cutting utility rates. I'm not sure it has, but CUB still exists today. That was another one of his efforts. He was a Chicago activist, but I don't remember his first political—
- DePue: Was this really his breaking in to the public consciousness?
- Daniels: The Cutback Amendment was. Now, as I said early on, I think it was a huge mistake. I did then, and I do today.
- DePue: Well, I have to admit that, talking to a lot of politicians, I haven't found anybody, really, who thinks it was a good thing.
- Daniels: Well, because, if you believe in our system of government and if you believe in the structure of democracy, you also believe in minority representation. It's unfortunate that we lost... Glenn Schneider was another Democrat from DuPage County; he was from Naperville. Glenn Schneider would have never been elected to the legislature. He distinguished himself in education. He was the education leader on the Democrat side, and Gene Hoffman was the education leader on the Republican side, both from DuPage County, one Democrat, one Republican.
- DePue: In these early years, the time before you become minority whip, let's say, was there other...
- Daniels: The majority whip.
- DePue: Excuse me, the majority whip.
- Daniels: Yes, that's an important distinction. (both laughing)

- DePue: Very important. Were there any other issues that you were really championing?
- Daniels: As I said, dealing with the disability community, the specialized living centers and other issues of that nature, were issues that I—throughout my whole legislature career—that I focused on.
- DePue: I know that in one case, 1981, you sponsored a bill about child car seats.
- Daniels: Right. And that's what started the child car seats. John Cullerton and I sponsored that legislation. And, of course, as you know, John Cullerton today is the president of the [Illinois] Senate. That was one of the first pieces of legislation in the country to place a child under five in a car seat.
- DePue: Where was the opposition to that or was there any?
- Daniels: Freedom. Why would you force us to place a child in a car seat? And during the course of the educational process, we showed them how, in an accident, a child becomes a bullet going through a windshield, when there's a quick stop or a crash. That's what started convincing people. But, even then, there were people that said, "It's not government's role to be telling us we have to wear seat belts," —which later on we did—"telling us that we have certain restraints that we can't get along without, and government should not be doing that." A lot of times southern Illinois legislators were opposed to that.
- DePue: I know there were plenty of southern Illinois Democrats, but was this also...My guess is there were plenty of Republicans who opposed it, as well.
- Daniels: Yes, yes. If I recall correctly, there was a narrow vote on passage. But it passed and became law. And aren't we lucky?
- DePue: Did you get any better or different committee assignments after the first couple years?
- Daniels: I stayed mostly on the Judiciary Committee. I never got involved, as a regular member, in the appropriation process. Most of the time, I was focusing on legislation dealing with laws, civil and criminal.
- DePue: This takes us back to your first term. I just wanted to have you touch on your relationship with James Washburn.
- Daniels: Bud Washburn, as I said earlier, when I went down there, Dick Walsh was the odds-on favorite to be elected Speaker, as a Republican. Something happened on the way to the election, called Watergate, and the Republicans suffered a huge loss in that election of '74, including the loss of Dick Walsh to the House. So our favorite, and the person that I had committed to, was no longer a candidate.

Well, Dick had a brother named Bill, who was also in the legislature, and I liked both of them. Bill decided he was going to run for Speaker or... Technically, you're running for Speaker, but when you don't have the majority, you're running for minority leader. You have a caucus before the formal election, and then that caucus, the Republicans select their candidate, and the Democrats select their candidate.

We selected Bud Washburn. I supported Bill Walsh, so I had a little rocky start to begin with there, as well. But, when Bud Washburn became our candidate for Speaker, of course, I threw my support to him, and hence, getting in the Redmond election of Speaker. That kind of tells you a story there.

DePue: But were you able to reestablish a good rapport with him, after this whole—

Daniels: It was always a little rocky, at times. But I became a very active individual legislator on legislation and resulting in—

DePue: I know the next time around, the '77 selection of the minority leader, George Ryan got it. Can you walk us through that sequence and where you were at with George Ryan?

Daniels: Well, George Ryan really was running Bud Washburn. (both laugh) Bud Washburn, I always felt, was more of a reluctant leader. Bud Washburn, a nice man, very nice man, I have nothing negative to say about Bud Washburn, but he was not the leader that George Ryan was or some other people. George had a group of people around him that became very, very active and very powerful within the Republican caucus, Arty Telcser, Pete Peters, people like that.

DePue: Lee Daniels?

Daniels: I was not in that group, initially. Of course, George became our candidate and was elected minority leader and served in that position, until he was elected lieutenant governor.

DePue: In '78 then, were you happy to support Ryan?

Daniels: Yes.

DePue: Was Washburn still in the system?

Daniels: I don't think so. I think he stepped down at that point. I don't think he liked the position at all. I think he preferred to be a regular member.

DePue: So there wasn't a nasty fight when Ryan became minority leader?

Daniels: No.

- DePue: Let's get to the 1980 election then, and let's start with the national level election. Now, what we haven't really discussed, up to this point, the very ugly economic situation the country was in at that time. I'm sure that Illinois was going through some pretty rough economic times, as well.
- Daniels: Jimmy Carter.
- DePue: Jimmy Carter. Do you recall in the Republican presidential primary, who did you support?
- Daniels: Let's see, Jimmy Carter's opponent.
- DePue: Reagan's opponent in the primary would have been George Bush Sr.
- Daniels: Bush. I would have supported Reagan.
- DePue: In the primary.
- Daniels: Yeah.
- DePue: But, up to this point, you've been describing yourself as something of a Republican moderate, and Reagan is clearly a different kind of Republican at the time.
- Daniels: He was our father; he was going to take care of us. (DePue chuckles) He was going to make sure that everything was okay. It was a morning in America, remember, the sunrise over the farm? Ronald Reagan made us feel good. Ronald Reagan gave us hope. Ronald Reagan would lead us out of these problems, and George Bush was not that inspirational.
- DePue: Well, of course, Reagan wins the election. There was a lot of question on whether or not he's a conservative—as conservative as Reagan was at the time and was portrayed at the time—that he'd be able to do it. And, of course, he swamped Carter.
- Daniels: Yes, as you weren't too surprised with. Carter had strong leadership from Elmhurst, Illinois.
- DePue: Really?
- Daniels: A guy by the name of Reverend James Wall was from Elmhurst, Illinois and a top, top advisor to Jimmy Carter.
- DePue: I wasn't aware of that.
- Daniels: His wife actually was elected to the DuPage County Board as a Democrat, during the Watergate election. But we didn't make those same mistakes twice.

DePue: So 1980 ends up being a big Republican year, and there're implications for the Illinois Legislature, as well.

Daniels: Right, right. George Ryan actually was elected. Well, the Republicans won control of the House. I don't remember the exact numbers, but enough that, at the end of the day, George Ryan was elected Speaker of the House, and Bill Redmond, who was the Speaker of the House, then ran for minority leader on the Democrat side, only to be beaten by one of his top aides, Michael Madigan.

DePue: Which fight was uglier then, the Democrat side?

Daniels: Well, I wasn't too attuned to all the ins and outs on the Democrat side, but there was no question about the fact that Bill Redmond wanted to continue on as the Democrat leader. But, at the end of the day, people understood they needed a stronger leader. Bill Redmond was a fair man and was not particularly a strong, hardcore leader, where Mike Madigan was known to be more assertive in his political persuasion.

DePue: Let's get the other side of the legislature. What happened in your case?

Daniels: Well, I ended up supporting George Ryan, as I said, and happy to see him elected Speaker of the House. Shortly before going down to be sworn in to my fourth term, I got divorced. So I was pretty disengaged at that point, from the process. I did not particularly want the divorce, so I was fairly upset. I remember getting on a plane and flying down to Springfield.

We had our caucus to select our leader, and that was George Ryan. After he was selected as our candidate for Speaker, he called me to his office, and he said, "I want to make you one of my leaders." And I said, "Why?" (both chuckle) And he said, "Because I think you do a good job, and I think you should be the majority whip." And I said, "Well, I was thinking more of a deputy leader or something like that." I really didn't care too much. And he said, "Well you don't sound too excited." I said, "George, I just got divorced. I really don't care. You do what you want to do." And I left his office.

The next day, he called me back. He said, "Look, I'm going to appoint you majority whip. Will you accept that appointment?" I said, "If that's what you want, I will."

DePue: Is that the third ranking Republican?

Daniels: It's really the lower level of the leadership team. You had the majority leader, who was Arty Telcser, Pete Peter, deputy majority leader, and then you had, beyond that, I think, like five or six down the road is the majority whip. Of course, they're charged with lining up votes. George thought I could do that, and I could.

DePue: Were there any other aspects to the job? Was it primarily what happens when you're taking votes?

Daniels: It's reflecting the position of the leader to the members. It requires you to have a good relationship with the members. So, I had to interact with the members a lot.

DePue: With the Republican members?

Daniels: Yes, yes. That's when I started becoming more partisan, because you had to, because you're now articulating the Republican views. So, if the leadership, run by the Speaker, decides to take a position on a piece of legislation, even if you might personally disagree with it, you're bound to that leadership position that was voted on in the leadership meetings, to take that to the members.

DePue: Did you have any reservations because of that?

Daniels: Not because of that. I had reservations at times on some of our positions, but I stated that in the leadership caucus. George Ryan, every morning, he would have a leadership meeting around his table. We'd all come in; we'd discuss the legislation, take our position. George would make the final decision, and then we'd go out and implement it.

DePue: I'm a little bit off in here. I was going to ask you about Jim Edgar, as a legislative liaison. But this would have been in the timeframe that he had just moved to the Secretary of State's office. But, do you recall the relationship you had with him in the previous years, as the legislative liaison?

Daniels: Respectful. He had run for the House and lost his election in the House. He was, of course, working in the legislative process, so we knew who he was, and it was a respectful relationship.

DePue: How about on the Senate side? I'm sure, because you've got James Pate Philip from this district, that you've known him for a long time, up to that point in time. Is this about the timeframe that he's emerging as the Senate leader, as well?

Daniels: Yes. Bill Harris had been the Senate Republican Leader, and he decided to step down, and Pate Philip was elected as the Republican leader in the Senate. They still control... The Democrats controlled the Senate. I'm trying to think if it was... Cecil Partee was, when I first joined, and then it became Phil Rock.

DePue: Phil Rock at this time, yes. So, even though it's a good Republican year, it's not enough to swing the Senate over to the Republican side.

Daniels: Right.

DePue: I don't know that you've told us or painted a picture of who James Pate Philip is. Can you do that for us?

Daniels: (chuckles) John Wayne. You don't need to say anything more. (laughs) Straight talking, sometimes a little bullish. You can be intimidated. He's a tall guy; he would talk right to your face, very strong views on certain matters. Regardless of the issue, he had a strong view. He was a strong leader. Towards the end, he worked a lot closer with his members than he did previously, and I don't mean that in a negative sense. Towards the end, when he was president of the Senate, it's much harder to line up the votes, than when you're a minority leader. He ran a very strong caucus.

He and I kind of started in politics together. He always viewed me as his son, stepson, if you want to say that. So, when we would have a disagreement, it bothered him a lot, because he always felt that I should pretty much, at the end of the day, do what he says.

And, of course, when I was Speaker, it's a separate part of our legislative process. I had twice the members he had, and so, I had in that sense, twice the responsibility or, in some cases, twice the problems. And, of course, managing a larger group is a lot harder than managing a smaller group. So, sometimes our positions conflicted, and it did cause friction. Particularly towards the end, we had a lot of friction. However, at the end of the day, we always came together.

DePue: I wanted to focus primarily on those early days. You mentioned he could be intimidating. Did he have a little bit of the LBJ [President Lyndon Baines Johnson] in him in that respect?

Daniels: Oh yeah. He was a student of the process. He was the county chairman of the DuPage County Republicans, which, as we talked about earlier, was one of the strongest Republican organizations in the country. You could always count on the Republican vote in DuPage County.

DePue: He also had the reputation of saying things that could get him into hot water. He was colorful in that respect.

Daniels: Yeah, very colorful. He would make some comments that make you cringe.

DePue: Made you cringe.

Daniels: Made everybody cringe, not just me.

DePue: But apparently, he managed to get away with it?

Daniels: Well, partially because that was Pate. Now, if I had made a comment of that nature, I would have been headline *Tribune* or something, because they didn't expect that from me. But with Pate, he was always strong in his views, always

strong about certain issues, and would say some things that, if I said them, people would be aghast. But Pate, towards his career, they'd say. "Well that's Pate." You sure know where he stands.

DePue: Well, we probably ought to have a couple of anecdotes, the kind of things that would get him into trouble that he said.

Daniels: Some of things, I'm not sure I want to repeat. (both laugh) He was very much opposed to the gay community, which we call LGBT [lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender] today. He had trouble associating with minority populations, and in frequent cases, he would be not as compassionate as you would like him to be.

DePue: How about his views towards Chicago?

Daniels: Oh, strongly opposed to Chicago. In fact, one time, Mayor Daley, the elder, I think, was ready to send out a hit squad on him, because Pate put out a brochure of a spider with tentacles, and the spider was Mayor Daley, with tentacles reaching into DuPage and Kane and around the area, that he's trying to take control of our life, and stop this nasty spider from taking control of your life. It was a pretty strong piece. But, he would frequently have anti-Chicago comments coming out.

DePue: I'm sure we're going to take this issue of Pate Philip and your role, especially in the 1990s, when a lot of this ended up being the discussions about tax swap (train passing by) and things like that, during the Edgar Administration. So, we'll go back on some other things here.

Daniels: You know, just on Pate, we had our disagreements, but he was very helpful to me in my career. There's no ifs, ands, buts about it. I enjoyed his support and sought his support. But we were both fairly strong people in our own way, and I'm not going to push him around, and he wasn't going to push me around. At the end of the day, we did have our disagreements, but we did always come back together to do what was right.

DePue: The next subject is an inside politics subject, and that's redistricting. Of course, with 1980, it's a census year, so how did the census and how did the redistricting work out for the Republicans?

Daniels: It worked out very well. But at that time the computers were not as sophisticated as they are today. So a lot of times you were drawing districts with a pencil, and then you were going and backing the materials up. You'd draw a district that would go, and you would take a map, a big map, you'd blow up a map, and then you'd cover by the streets and draw the district that way, and then put the numbers on it to figure out if you have enough people in there and whether or not it meets potential constitutional challenge.

DePue: And this is the Illinois State Constitution.

- Daniels: Right. Well, it could also be the Federal Constitution, because you can't violate equal protection.
- DePue: Well, I know that the Illinois State Constitution, which was 1970 when that passed, had a provision in there that if there was some kind of a deadlock, there would be a drawing out of a hat, so to speak—
- Daniels: Right.
- DePue: ...to see if the Republicans or the Democrats would then essentially control the redistricting process.
- Daniels: Which history will tell you, we lost both times on the draw. (chuckling)
- DePue: Well, and I think when they crafted the constitution in 1970, they said, "Well, they're never going to be foolish enough—"
- Daniels: They're never going to do that, right. That's exactly right. This is such an onerous thing that they'll never go to that way. Well, in essence that's exactly what they do do.
- DePue: How did it work out in 1980, then?
- Daniels: It worked out in favor of the Republicans.
- DePue: You won the draw?
- Daniels: Yes. The map was drawn that basically helped the Republicans. We won that, if I recall correctly, going back to 1980. It was actually '81 when the draw occurred, right? Because '80 census, '81.
- DePue: It takes a while for the census to work through the process. I think it was also 1981 that you were considering a different kind of political move.
- Daniels: Retirement? (laughs)
- DePue: No, no. You know what I'm talking about.
- Daniels: I do. At that time, Jim Thompson had appointed Ty Fahner as the attorney general, because there was a vacancy in that spot. I had nothing personal against Ty Fahner, but not many people knew him. He obviously turned out to be an outstanding lawyer, because he ran one of the biggest law firms in the country, Mayer Brown, which has relationships everywhere. I had a high degree of respect for him.

But I was contemplating running for attorney general. I was encouraged by a number of people. I was able to raise a good deal of money, right off the bat, and I was traveling the state. During the course of that

travels, I, of course, ran into Ty Fahner a lot. We'd end up at the same events together, and we always treated each other respectfully. I didn't have anything bad to say about Ty Fahner; I just thought I would do a better job.

A little side story, that's when I met my wife. I met her in Rock Falls at a Congressman Tom Railsback golf outing. I was going through the line; people were coming through the line, greeting the "dignitaries," and my wife Pam, my future wife Pam, came through. It was her first political event since the death of her husband. Her husband was a judge in Whiteside County and was at a judicial conference in Chicago and died of a heart infection. She lived in Morrison, Illinois, out by the Mississippi.

DePue: What was her last name at the time?

Daniels: Her married name was Renkes, R-e-n-k-e-s.

DePue: R-e-n?

Daniels: Yes, k-e-s, Pamela Renkes. Her maiden name was Mescha, M-e-s-c-h-a. She was coming through the line, and I introduced myself. She said, "I'm Pam," and I said something like, "Are you married?" And she said, "No," but I didn't hear it. No, she said something like, "No, my husband passed away," and I didn't hear that. There was a lot of noise in the background. I said, "Well, what does he do?" She said, "Well, he was a judge," and I said, "Well how does he like being a judge?" Pregnant pause, everybody is, "Didn't you hear what she said? He passed away." "Oh, I'm so sorry."

So, I had my staff get her name, so I could send her a note, apologizing. Of course, I called her on the phone later on and asked her if she would like to meet for a cup of coffee.

DePue: Well, obviously, right from the beginning, you don't ask everybody right away, "Are you married?"

Daniels: I don't think I actually said, "Are you married?" I said, "Do you have children?" or something like that. I don't know. Anyhow, she was a very attractive young woman, and she was there at a political event, which interested me, because I was looking for political support. She was a precinct committeeman, and she had ended up running her husband's campaign for state's attorney and for judge.

DePue: Would it be fair to say, at that time, you're still hurting a little bit from the divorce?

Daniels: Oh, I was hurting, yeah, yeah, because it just was a bad experience.

DePue: Back to the attorney general's race.

Daniels: Yeah. So, not long after that, I'm down in southern Illinois, down in Williamson County, and Ty Fahner is down there and still campaigning throughout the state. I get a message that Governor Thompson would like to see me. And so we set up a meeting.

I went in to see him, and I said, "What can I do for you?" He said, "Well, I don't want you running against my appointment, Ty Fahner." I said, "Governor, I understand. I don't mean to be disrespectful to you or Ty. I just think I can do a better job, and I think I can win this." And he said, "Well, that's a matter of opinion, obviously, but I really have something else in mind for you." I said, "What might that be?"

He said, "I really think you should take George Ryan's spot in the House." I said, "You mean as minority leader?" He said, "Yeah, you really... You're a good legislator. You can handle my legislation in the House, and I could really use you there." I said, "Well, if I were to stop running for attorney general, do I have your support for Republican leader?" He said, "Absolutely, I'll give you my support."

So I thought it over, and, frankly, I knew that it was going to get tougher and tougher to raise money and ultimately made the decision that I would drop out of the attorney general's race, endorse Ty Fahner and accept the governor's suggestion. Now, it is a suggestion, because the governor doesn't have a vote in the Republican caucus for minority leader.

DePue: And George Ryan is not going away, is he?

Daniels: George Ryan was running for lieutenant governor.

DePue: So, to back it up, I know that Ryan wanted to be secretary of state—

Daniels: Absolutely.

DePue: ...when Thompson appointed Jim Edgar—

Daniels: Right.

DePue: ...because he had the opportunity.

Daniels: Absolutely.

DePue: So, the carrot to throw to Ryan was the...?

Daniels: Lieutenant governor, and George Ryan is running for lieutenant governor. Jim Thompson is running for governor, and I drop out of the attorney general's race and decide to run for minority leader of the House, assuming that Thompson, Ryan are going to be elected. Well, regardless, George Ryan would have been out of the House, because he wasn't running for reelection.

Governor Thompson won the election; George Ryan became lieutenant governor, and I had George Ryan's support and Jim Thompson's support, but it wasn't enough. There were about seven people that wanted to be the Republican leader, and it was pretty spirited at the start. From Tom Ewing to Jack Davis to myself to Jim Riley, we were all potential candidates for Republican leader.

One key swing group were the women. It was important to get the seven—I think it was seven votes. Don't hold me to the number—but the votes of the women, which would be a block, which could help you make the next step. That required several meetings that took place. I did have those meetings and did ultimately get the support of the women legislators for Republican leader.

Tom Ewing ended up dropping out and supporting me, which brought a few more votes. The last person that ran against me was Jack Davis, and he ultimately dropped out, when he knew I had enough votes.

My campaign was being managed by none other than Gene Hoffman, with the support of a guy by the name of Sam Vinson from Clinton, Illinois. Sam was schooled in the legislative process, actually worked for Thompson and became a legislator. So, he knew the process, and he was pretty skilled legislatively in putting coalitions together.

DePue: Vincent with a t?

Daniels: V-i-n-s-o-n. Sam is a lawyer and today is with a Chicago law firm and very successful. In fact, Sam was the lead lawyer on the recent capital bill challenging the Quinn bill for the liquor tax and video gaming and argued the case in the Supreme Court. Today, Sam is still one of my close personal friends.

DePue: Did it help, coming from DuPage County, a collar county, core of collar county Republicans? Is that one of the issues that really can push you over the top on it?

Daniels: Oh absolutely, because, if anyone wants to run for statewide office, they have to come through DuPage County. Not only that, I had the support of Pate Philip. Again, as I mentioned, Pate was very helpful in my career. Pate was making some calls; George Ryan made some calls; Governor Thompson let it be known that I was acceptable. (both laughing)

DePue: Thompson can be convincing, I would guess.

Daniels: To some people, it was a little bit of pushback, because they didn't want Thompson naming who the leader would be in the House, because then, are we supposed to adopt all of his viewpoints, which they later found out that I didn't adopt all of his viewpoints.

DePue: I want to kind of take a step back and get your perception of the Democrats, especially when Richard J. Daley was in control. The process was that the slate makers met in one of those dark rooms, smoke-filled rooms, and he's kind of controlling who ends up being the candidate for all of these major, not just Chicago elections, but statewide elections, as well. I understand, at least, that the Republicans kind of had their own version of the slate makers. Is that a misnomer?

Daniels: No, it's not a misnomer. It's not as strong as the Chicago forum, which, of course, is still pervasive today in Chicago, not always as strong as it has been in the past. You would have, many times, the Republican "leaders." That's the constitutional officers, the state party chair, the Republican leader in the House and in the Senate, and they would get together and start talking about who some of the candidates ought to be and some of the favorite candidates. They would have a pretty broad spectrum of, not only who was a capable candidate, who can raise the money, which was also very important, and who can articulate the positions. So, yeah, you'd have some form of slate making but not as formal as the Democrats.

DePue: I would assume, though, that the slate making isn't necessarily at play when it comes to positions like the minority leader or majority leader.

Daniels: No, because the members of the House and Senate guard very carefully their vote for who their leader is.

DePue: Once you're selected as the leader in the House, the Republican leader, is it difficult to get beyond some of the resentments, since there are so many other candidates?

Daniels: In my case, I was able to do that by appointing some of my opponents to the leadership position. Jack Davis became part of my leadership; Jim Riley became part of my leadership; Tom Ewing became part of my leadership, and, of course, Gene Hoffman, Penny Pullen. I actually have pictures of my first leadership.

DePue: So this is 1983. Are we about at the time where we need to take...?

Daniels: Can we pause that for a second?

DePue: Okay.

(pause in recording)

DePue: I'm going to go ahead and start this again but only to conclude today's session. We just decided that we're at the point of time, since the Speaker has a meeting at 11:30, we're going to call it a day and pick this up in the next session.

(end of interview)

Interview with Lee Daniels

ISL-A_L-2011-053.03

Interview # 3: February 8, 2012

Interviewer: Mark DePue

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

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.

DePue: Today is Wednesday, February 8, 2012. My name is Mark DePue, the Director of Oral History at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library. Today I'm in Elmhurst, Illinois, for my third session with former Speaker Lee Daniels. Good afternoon.

Daniels: How are you today?

DePue: Good.

Daniels: It's a nice, bright and sunny day.

DePue: It's a nice day for February.

Daniels: That's right.

DePue: It's a good day to talk about Illinois politics.

Daniels: It's always a good day to talk about Illinois politics.

DePue: Well, it's always an interesting subject, isn't it?

Daniels: Yeah, it is.

DePue: The last time we finished off with your appointment as the minority leader in the House, the Republican minority leader. This is one of the first elections, maybe the first, after, let's see, a couple of different events, the Cutback Amendment and then the reapportionment that would happen at the beginning of the 1980s.

Daniels: Right.

DePue: I read someplace—and let me know if this sounds familiar—that, before the Cutback Amendment, the Republicans had a majority in the house?

Daniels: That's correct.

DePue: Ninety-one to eighty-six, so it was fairly close, but a majority. And afterwards, after the Cutback Amendment and this reapportionment, you were minority leader, as the Republican leader, and forty-eight to seventy Democrats.

Daniels: We had a very, very troubling election in that year and lost a number of seats and consequently lost just an incredible number of members. I remember it well, because I was truly elected the leader of the minority, and it was kind of a shock to a lot of the older members, who had served in the majority in several instances.

We came about that election with some hope, but, because of redistricting and because of the Cutback Amendment, it was more prevalent than before, how strong Chicago would always be in the elections in the House, particularly, in Illinois, because, generally speaking, they have about thirty-six districts in Chicago alone, out of 118, and almost all of those have historically always been Democrat.

So, you start with thirty-six to nothing. [That] is the score when you open your game, if I could call it that. And then you have to build your support for the Republicans downstate or in the collar counties.

So, when the election results came in, we found out how much we had lost and recovered from the shock of the moment. I had the good fortune, of course, of being elected by my caucus as the minority leader, the bad fortune of losing the speakership election, of course, to my opponent at that time, Speaker Mike Madigan. You know, unique problems were presented then. How do we address this issue of new membership, fewer members?

The Democrats were excited to take over control of the House again. George Ryan had been elected lieutenant governor; Mike Madigan was elevated to speaker and started his long career at that point as speaker of the house, and I was faced with firing close to twenty secretaries, because we no longer had members to match up with them.

So, one of the first things I had to do was sit down and go through every secretarial appointment and every secretary and the qualifications. I selected, as my administrative assistant, Denise Pierce. She now is Denise Pierce Reed, who, over the years, became one of my strongest and most reliable assistants, because she literally ran the details of the House Republican organization, that is hiring and firing of secretaries, keeping track of records and things like that. Well, Denise and I had to sit down and start putting together this recommendation.

Then, of course, I had to select my new leadership team and then go through with them and make recommendations on how to proceed. It was a pretty tough role, combined with the fact, now I had to put together the agenda for the Republicans in the House, for the first time. So, challenging times.

DePue: Which would you credit as the bigger reason for the big difference, the big drop in the Republican membership? Was it the Cutback Amendment? Was it the reapportionment?

Daniels: Well, I don't think there's any question that both contributed to it, but the Cutback Amendment was a dramatic change, because we no longer had a member of the Republican Party in Chicago. We ended up with, I think, one Chicago Republican legislator; the rest were Democrats. I think that's an unfortunate scenario because, in the Republican caucus, you don't have Republican legislators sitting there arguing for Chicago benefits. So, it pits parts of the state against each other.

DePue: I want to ask you a couple inside baseball kind of questions. You just mentioned the word *caucus*. The Illinois Legislature historically, at least in my memory, has been organized around the four caucuses.

Daniels: Correct.

DePue: What does it mean then, to be the leader of one of those four caucuses? How does that flesh out staff-wise, for example?

Daniels: Well, the leader of the caucus, and in my case in the Republican House, I would be in charge of hiring all secretarial and staff members that support the caucus or support the Republican members. That includes secretarial assistants; that includes research assistants; that includes press people; that includes anybody that would work for the House Republicans would be under my auspices to hire. That includes staffing for various legislators and assigning that staff to the various legislators. So, if you're a member of the Republican caucus, I would furnish your secretarial assistant. Now, you could come in and ask me to hire somebody. And if they're qualified, I would be receptive to that.

DePue: Each one gets one?

- Daniels: Towards the end, that's exactly what happened. But many times at the beginning, we shared secretaries, two legislators, one secretary.
- DePue: How about for the legislators who are not in Springfield, who lived in Chicago or the suburbs area? Were they allowed to have somebody in their district?
- Daniels: Well, they would have their in-district office, but they had to utilize their in-district allotment. Each legislator has an amount of money to run his or her district office. I'm not sure what it is today, but it's like \$60,000 today, and in today's dollars that converts to the dollars that were back in 1981.
- DePue: So, not that much.
- Daniels: No, it's not that much when you talk about paying rent, electricity, common areas, supplies, typewriters—well, computers, excuse me, I'm aging myself—computers and your total assistant.
- DePue: And then you want to have that assistant be somebody who is responsive to the constituents?
- Daniels: Oh, absolutely. That person is your frontline of assistance. That's the one that answers the phone, that makes sure that questions are answered, makes sure that the casework is handled. Towards the end of my career, we were handling 3,000 pieces of casework a year, just out of my office.
- DePue: As the caucus leader, as one of the four caucus leaders in the legislature, how much of a staff did you personally control?
- Daniels: Well, one could argue that I controlled all of the staff, which ranged to 120 and maybe to 150 at the highest point. My personal staff... Because my legislative office was not just for my district, it was the Northern Illinois legislative office, which served, in the collar counties, all of the legislators and helped them with their district office, as well as my own. And then we had a Chicago office in the State of Illinois Building, and then we had the Springfield office.
- DePue: Can you run through some of the specific positions that would have been in your staff that were under your direct control?
- Daniels: Well, on the staff level, you had the chief of staff, obviously, and I had a deputy chief of staff—once, I had two deputy chiefs of staff, but a deputy chief of staff; a research director, that would be the person that handled all of the policy aspect and the research—not the policy, but the research aspects—policy director, that's the person that helped me establish our future vision policy, such as the educational policy, such as the RTA [Regional Transportation Authority] reform that we sponsored and several other pieces.

DePue: Were most of those people that you started with people you inherited from Ryan?

Daniels: Most of them would have been, yes. My chief of staff at that time was Zale Glauberman, a highly regarded individual.

DePue: Eric?

Daniels: Zale, Zale Glauberman. Zale, a highly regarded person, very steeped in knowledge in the legislative process and worked for George Ryan.

DePue: Where did most of those people come from? Do they just kind of gravitate to the legislature, looking for those kind of positions?

Daniels: Obviously, Springfield is a big supplier of assistants, such as secretaries and various positions, but for the most part, it's college graduates or people that want to serve in state government. We had incredible numbers of hires of college graduates. Laura Anderson, who became my chief of staff, towards the end of my career, started in my office right out of Western Illinois University and started working for my office and grew from a policy analyst, which is one of the entry level positions, to the chief of staff.

DePue: Is there an internship program that people can start with?

Daniels: There is; we do have. For instance, many times we had college professors. Here in Elmhurst, Andrew Prinz was a professor at Elmhurst College, would call me up and say, "I have an outstanding student that I think you ought to look at for an intern position."

One of those students ended up to be the clerk of the House, by the name of Terry McClelland, who was the clerk of the House when I was speaker. So, I had tremendous resources, whether it be from Northwestern or Elmhurst College or the University of Illinois, we had internships and graduates that would come to our office.

DePue: Are there specific rules that are written by the legislature that apply to the four caucus leaders and their staffs?

Daniels: Well, there are rules. You're not allowed to do political work on state time, which we watch very carefully, as you know. You're not allowed to... Well, those are the basic rules, and things flow from there. (train passing by) Having said that, it's mainly a job for people at entry level that are interested in state government and want to move forward in state government. We became an entry level position.

In other words, if somebody wanted to work for state government, many times they went to the House. And then, from there, the governor, depending upon who he was, would hire from there. My staff was always one

that they hired a lot of people from, had a lot of turnover because then the governor would see how John Jones—that's just a fictitious name—was progressing, and then he'd go and offer him a higher job, higher pay and more opportunity.

DePue: More than the senatorial side, do you think?

Daniels: Without a doubt. First of all, our staff was larger to begin with, but we were a major entry level office.

DePue: The next couple of questions then, deal with some of the things that wouldn't necessarily be specific legislative or protocol kinds of things, but were part of what these caucus leaders were expected to do. As the leader of the party, one of those things is selecting candidates to run in future elections and to raise funds. Can you tell us a little bit about how that worked?

Daniels: All of the above. (chuckles) You're really, in a sense, a jack of all trades. You're expected to, of course, sustain your caucus. You're expected to be the leader of the caucus and protect the members, which we had incumbency protection programs. What do I mean by that? I mean how to set up a district office, how to run a district office, some of the hires you're looking for, how to structure your forms, how to respond to somebody that is interested in casework. So, we had seminars in casework. You're also expected to support that district member during election times. So, you become an advisor in that sense and raise a ton of money, as much as you can raise.

DePue: And that's oftentimes what Mike Madigan is credited for doing so well. And then he can dole it out to those members who need some help, and they're beholden to him, because they do that. Is that a fair assessment of how it works?

Daniels: It's a fair assessment. Membership, they want to support their leader. That's a natural thing, and they want their leader to excel because, when the leader excels, so do they. Now, with the Cutback Amendment, the four leaders became more powerful in their positions. Prior to that, you had multimember districts. You had some Republican legislators in Democrat districts, some Democrat legislators in Republican districts, like right here in Elmhurst. Bill Redmond, who became speaker of the Illinois House, as you know, and we talked about earlier, was a Democrat from DuPage County, lived in Bensenville. He and I were on the same ticket, Gene Hoffman, Republican; me, Republican; and Bill Redmond, Democrat.

Bill Redmond became the speaker of the House for six years, and that was as a result of the minority representation that was allowed under cumulative voting. The Cutback Amendment destroyed that, and what happened is the leaders became very, very influential and very powerful

within the caucuses, because you were expected to do more for your membership, and we did.

The position of leader is an incredibly difficult one. You set the policies; you set the vision; you set the drive and the compassion, and you set the standards at election time. You have a major voice in the party, because you have a major number of people in your caucus that are spread throughout the state of Illinois, which then become party members to structure, in my case, the Republican Party of Illinois.

DePue: You've already expressed your views about the Cutback Amendment, that that wasn't a good thing in terms of how it worked out.

Daniels: No. And history tells us that.

DePue: And you just talked about how that caused the four leaders to be even more powerful.

Daniels: That's correct.

DePue: And yet, you are one of those leaders.

Daniels: That's correct. I worked within the system.

DePue: I understand that. How would you want to reform the system, several years removed from it?

Daniels: Well, I think the cumulative voting was an excellent way. We had one of the—when you did historical studies of the electioneering and voting for legislators in Illinois during cumulative voting, the percentage of members elected was reflective of the percentage of party membership within the individual district. A Democrat district generally elected two Democrats and one Republican. But each district, throughout the state of Illinois, had a minority representative in that district, which then would go to their respective caucus and argue on behalf of their district. This was a good thing.

Chicago had many Republican legislators, down in Springfield that would argue for the benefit of the city of Chicago. This is a good thing. Today, the tendency is Chicago versus the rest of the state. It's not that that's particularly something new; it's just that you don't have Republican legislators representing the city.

DePue: Here's another critique that you oftentimes hear about the way Illinois politics works in the legislative level, and it goes back to the issue of how powerful those four leaders are, "the four tops." I'm sure you've heard that about a million times.

Daniels: That, and a number of other descriptive adjectives. (both laugh)



The Illinois legislature's "Four Tops," House Speaker Mike Madigan, Senate Minority Leader James "Pate" Philip, Senate President Phil Rock, and House Minority Leader Lee Daniels pose for a photo in the mid-1980s.

DePue: That when it gets down to crunch time and negotiating with budgets or negotiating with other important pieces of legislation, it always ends

up being maybe five people who get together, the four caucus leaders and the governor. Is that also a factor of the Cutback Amendment that it's been more that way?

Daniels: Well, I would say probably so. The summit meetings started under Thompson, and that was when they called the four leaders in, and we started the summit meetings. If my recollection serves me properly, it was over the RTA reform in the early '80s. However, it's not completely accurate, in the sense that, when we had these meetings that people refer to, there's no question the four leaders and the governor were in those meetings, but so were the governor's budget staff, so was each individual leader's budget experts, and many times your legislative budget chairman would be part of those meetings, or that would be a subcommittee of those meetings.

So, it's not as if the four leaders walked in and sat down with the governor and said, "Well, here's the budget. Can we agree on this?" You may have done that in the final analysis. In other words, when you had to move X number of dollars to balance the budget, it would be left to the four leaders and the governor, who would go back to their staffs and their members to get approval. But everything ends up being responsible to your members. And if you aren't responsible to your members, you're not going to survive.

DePue: A little bit more of this inside baseball stuff.

Daniels: Why not? (chuckles)

DePue: Well, it's the kind of stuff I'm always fascinated by.

Daniels: I know you are. I could tell by the look on your face.

DePue: Can you tell us what the legislative cycle was at the time you took the minority leadership position, the legislative year, how it worked.

Daniels: Well, at the time we took it, we generally started session in January. We worked up maybe a few days each week in January, towards the end of January, then increased to three days in February, then many times went to three/four days in March, and then four days and more, in certain cases, in April. May, towards the end of May, became more full-time, and June was full-time until hypothetical adjournment on the first of July.

DePue: Hypothetical adjournment?

Daniels: Right.

DePue: At what point in time did the supermajority come into play?

Daniels: At that time, in the early '80s, it was on midnight, the first of July or the thirtieth of July.

DePue: And supermajority was what?

Daniels: Three-fifths.

DePue: Three-fifths, 60%. During those first few years, did you have to resort to going beyond the first of July and a supermajority?

Daniels: Oh, we were experts at it, because, you've got to remember, during the normal session the majority vote rules. Today, it's sixty votes. But then, what was it? Eighty-nine votes at the start, when I first started, but then in the cutback, it became sixty votes. Sixty votes rules. Some people would make jest and say you could suspend the constitution with sixty votes. That's not totally true, but, hypothetically, you could argue that.

So, majority rules was the standard, and during the course of a session, we would lose every meaningful vote that the speaker wanted to support. His members were going to support him, and we would lose on a straight vote. So, the only way we could get into an extraordinary majority, where they had to pay attention to us, was to go beyond the deadline date, which would infuriate the speaker, Mike Madigan, and Phil Rock in the early days and Pate Philip, because then the House Republicans really became a part of the process. And, of course, generally speaking, in the world of hardcore politics, you don't want the minority ruling anything.

DePue: I'm looking at the spread here. At first it was forty-eight Republicans, seventy Democrats. So, in essence, they had a supermajority, even if they got to that point.

Daniels: They only needed—well yeah. That's right; they did. It was tough.

DePue: How much of the work was done in committees, versus on the whole body?

Daniels: It's changed over the years, and I see signs of it changing back today, which I'm happy to say. But there was more work done in committees initially.

Then, towards the Cutback Amendment and as we started solidifying the caucuses, the leaders and the leadership team would determine a lot of positions on legislation and pass that down to the committees. Less and less work was done in actual committees.

Now, moving forward to today, we've seen signs that now the committees are being strengthened, and that's to Speaker Madigan's credit. I think that the membership has started to speak up and say they want to be more involved in appropriations and other matters. I think that's healthy. I think that's good.

DePue: You mentioned earlier that Thompson was the one that really had this innovation of the summit meetings. Was that not going on as much before that time?

Daniels: Not as much, no. You'd have individual meetings, and many times the governors would meet with them. But remember now, when I entered the legislature, Dan Walker was governor. The Democrats disliked him more than Republicans disliked him. There was hardly any communication there. So, you didn't have a lot of meetings with the various leaders, until the very end.

DePue: And one final question in this line here. I wondered if you could, at the time of the early '80s, give us a snapshot view of the political demographics of the state.

Daniels: In the early '80s. Well, I think it was more competitive than today. I don't remember the exact name of all the constitutional officers, but it is more divided, in terms that the state was more a switch state, you could say, Republican, Democrat.

Today, of course, there's no getting away from it. We are a Democrat state in every sense of the word. Even the President comes from Illinois, and, of course, prior to this last election, all constitutional officers came from the Democrat Party and from the city of Chicago. Now, to Dan Rutherford's credit, he's one of the first down-staters in a while to be elected to statewide office.

So, I would say, after the shock of the loss of several members in the cutback years, the Republicans started settling in and knowing we had a large road to climb and started on that climb.

DePue: Would it be fair to say, demographically, that the city of Chicago was solidly Democrat.

Daniels: Absolutely.

DePue: That the collar counties were heavily leaning towards Republican.

Daniels: I would say solidly Republican.

DePue: And then, the rest of the state.

Daniels: Well, the rest of the state, a lot of it was Republican downstate; a lot of it was Republican.

DePue: I know some of those southern Illinois areas were traditionally Democrat; were they not?

Daniels: Oh sure, some were. That's right, but if you take downstate Illinois, it leaned more Republican. Because, remember, you had a huge delegation of all Democrats coming from Chicago. To have any kind of competition, the rest of the state had to lean more Republican.

DePue: Were the Democrats from the southern part of the state—let's say below I-80 or even below I-70—of a different flavor than Democrats in the city?

Daniels: Many times they talked, acted and wanted to vote like Republicans. [They are] very much in favor of the Second Amendment, for instance. Many were pro-life—this is in the '80s—very conservative. You found that many of the Democrat members of the house, down in southern Illinois, were as conservative as many of your suburban Republicans.

DePue: Were you able to find ways to work with them, to have them break from the caucus?

Daniels: It was difficult because, along with the more powerful position of the leaders, also became more individualized control over the members, as well. That's by staffing, by campaign contributions, by assistance to the members at election time and working with the party and things like that.

DePue: Well, a lot of the rest of the time here, we're going to be talking about specific budget fights or pieces of legislation, and, I don't know, you're only what, thirty-some, forty years removed from some of these things.

Daniels: I'll do my best.

DePue: So, your memory hopefully is much better than mine, but I think you might remember one of your first battles, once you got into the minority leadership position, because it was in 1983 that Thompson proposes an income tax increase of something like \$1.6 billion, even though you kind of run against that theme.

Daniels: Yeah, it was a big one. From the get-go, the House Republicans opposed that and worked very, very hard to make sure our members were in opposition to it. Now, of course, I have an extremely high regard for Governor Thompson. I think he historically has been one of the best governors the state has had, to my knowledge. I think he met the times. But many times we would say to Governor Thompson, "You know, you live in Chicago; you come from Chicago; you grew up in Chicago. You were the U.S. attorney for northern Illinois; you're allegiance has been to Chicago." Well, of course, he would take exception to that, and it's fair. I mean, that's not totally accurate. But when the income tax increase came out, the Republican House members were very opposed to it.

DePue: Just from a philosophical, small government standpoint?

Daniels: Well, a combination of that, and we didn't feel we needed it. We shouldn't increase spending in the state.

DePue: Why was he proposing... That's a significant increase at the time, \$1.6 billion.

Daniels: Well, Jim Thompson was a spender. I can also say, Jim Thompson was a builder. You can put whatever context you want on that. All governors want to have a solid budget to operate from. All governors want to have some say over the infrastructure and capital programs within the state. All governors want to make sure that, at the end of the day, they're able to hand out new programs, build new successes and to point to that during the course of their career.

One of the reasons, jumping forward, that Jim Edgar has been so highly regarded is he resisted much of that. Jim Edgar was able to say, "No." As a matter of fact, many times we'd call him "Dr. No." We'd start a conversation, "I know what you're going to say before we ask this, but here's what we have..." "No." "Governor, can you learn how to say yes?" "Not in this climate." So, Jim Edgar was **very** disciplined, deserves a great deal of credit for the times that he led the state through.

Jim Thompson was a builder. Jim Thompson understood the nature of governance and how to address the people's needs. The income tax increase built into that.

DePue: This particular battle in 1983, as I understand, not taking away your comment about being a builder, but this is, I think, about three years before his big initiative called, "Build Illinois."

Daniels: Right.

DePue: So, what was causing his concern about raising more money? Was it things like Medicaid and welfare increases?

Daniels: I think it was basically governmental cost increases and the services that people were asking for. Those were the beginning of cradle to grave concerns, which we're now, more than ever, paying for today, with the expansion of Medicaid, which is, in today's terms, one of the most difficult issues to deal with, in terms of government financing. And that was the start of that, and the Governor wanted to increase taxes in order to cover these new costs and have some new programs.

DePue: Nineteen eighty-three is part of the explanation. The United States, at the national level, is coming out of a pretty deep recession.

Daniels: Historically, Illinois was late going into a recession, but also late coming out of a recession. Illinois was experiencing much the same, and the last thing we wanted to do is increase spending to kind of set back some job growth and things of that nature.

DePue: Was your proposal, then, something of a temporary tax increase?

Daniels: Well, that came later on. Our proposal was "No." (both chuckle)

DePue: When the negotiations started.

Daniels: Governor Thompson is a very articulate and convincing person, and he would meet regularly with the four leaders. But, I would say Senator Philip signed on a lot quicker than...Senator Philip was very close to Governor Thompson and, to this day, [they] have a very good relationship and a high regard for each other. His caucus was agreeable much before that.

Now, with all due respect to Mike Madigan, Mike Madigan is for any kind of tax increase. Just tell him how you pay for it. If you ask Mike, "Are you for a new capital bill today?" he'd say, "Sure, how do I pay for it?" In other words, Democrats generally spend money. Republicans generally are against spending and new programs, again, a generalization.

Senator Rock, who I have and had a very high regard for, was generally in favor of increased spending on government projects. So the House Republicans were kind of the sole force out there, and, of course, a lot of attention came down on me. I'm the new leader in the House, and how can I not listen to what the governor says in my own party? Very simple, we thought he was wrong. I think history tells us that, the end of the day, we crafted a program that really was quite effective.

DePue: How were you able to slow this process down? If the Governor wants to spend more money, and I'm assuming that he can get Madigan and most of the Democrats to go along with him, then they've got the majority they need in the House, don't they?

Daniels: Yeah, but they were not willing to put their own votes on it. They wanted Republicans to be part of the process, and I understand that.

DePue: In other words, the Democratic caucus would direct their peoples to vote against it, even though, in their heart of hearts, they wanted to have it pass?

Daniels: Well, generally the caucus wouldn't go in and say, "Please call this bill. We can't wait to vote on a new tax increase." Generally, the leader would articulate the position, and then, from there, build support for it. Madigan's position and, of course, the others were that they wanted everybody to be part of the solution, which meant that you diffuse some of the voting patterns.

So, at the end of the day... I had—by the way, I might say some wonderful, very, very competent legislative members that were very schooled, one of whom was Jim Riley, who, as you know, today serves as the head of the Convention Bureau in Chicago and throughout times, the head of McCormick Place and others, has served in top positions, including chief of staff, over the years, to the governor, and a very, very skilled person. I put together a team that helped build our approach, because the governor said, "Well, if you're not for this, what are you for?" And I said, "Well, give me a week or two, and I'll come up with something that we can support.

DePue: So, in a situation like this, would the expectation be that the governor, a Republican, wants to see a budget passed that's going to be a substantial increase in taxes and that he expected both you and Pate Philip to present that same position or your position in the legislature?

Daniels: That's fair to say.

DePue: So Madigan could sit back and wait for you guys to—

Daniels: That's also fair to say. (both chuckle) Generally speaking, again this is one of these generalities that history has proven true over the years. But then, you can pick a specific example of a different opinion. But generally speaking, the Democrats that run the House or Senate would prefer to have a Republican governor.

DePue: Because?

Daniels: They can spread the blame. They know you have to govern. When you're governor, it's much different than being the speaker of the House or the president of the Senate. You have to govern and actually run the state and not let the state fall behind.

One of the problems we've had in the past few years is the people in that position don't know how to govern, and one of them unfortunately is in jail. One is in jail; one's on his way to jail, and another one doesn't understand the true art of governance and doesn't have a very high regard by his own membership. We've suffered as a result of that.

Jim Thompson, Jim Edgar, George Ryan all understood the art of governance. Rod Blagojevich we know about, and, of course, we know the trouble we have today with our current governor.

DePue: I want to say that in my interviews with Governor Edgar, he was very clear in saying exactly that thing, that it was better usually to have a divided government.

Daniels: I felt that way, and, of course, I was elected speaker under a complete Republican control; we controlled every office. It was an interesting dynamic because it made it even more difficult, I think, to govern. You would think oh, well, you're all Republicans. Well, that doesn't mean we all are like little mushrooms that line up with each other in the dark. We all had individual commitments, and we all had different members.

Remember, I had generally twice the membership that the Senate had, so my membership was much more diverse, much more difficult to govern and much more difficult at times to work with. I had to run up to twenty-one to twenty-five campaigns every election cycle. The Senate leaders maybe had three. I had to raise money to compete with Mike Madigan. The Senate leaders generally only had to raise enough money to cover three or four races.

DePue: You're saying the number of races. The number of races where it was close enough to matter?

Daniels: Right, contested races that we targeted or focused on.

DePue: Was your caucus generally more conservative than either Governor Thompson or Edgar?

Daniels: I would say more conservative than Thompson and, for the most part, about... maybe a little more conservative than Jim Edgar.

DePue: How about the senate Republicans?

Daniels: Well, as it relates to Thompson, they walked almost lockstep with him. I used to joke about Pate, who is a good friend of mine, and my running mate, by the way, my senator. I used to say, "Pate, can you ever say no to Governor Thompson?" I said, "What's with you two guys?" I said, "You come out and say terrible things, and then the next thing I know you're sponsoring the bill that he wants." Gross receipts, tax and oil, when Thompson proposed that,

Pate said, “Not on your life, terrible, the most ridiculous bill ever.” And he ends up sponsoring it. A tax increase on liquor, Pate ends up the sponsor.

DePue: Those are some of them.

Daniels: (laughing) Now, you may get a disagreement from somebody else, but I’m telling you, that’s the truth.

DePue: Well, I’ll have, hopefully, an interview to interview Senator Philip here too.

Daniels: And you’re going to say Lee Daniels said...

DePue: Well, I might say that; who knows?

Daniels: Who knows?

DePue: I did want to quote you for this particular important battle that you had over the 1983 budget. Here was one of the quotes that you had, “I developed a temporary tax program that worked because the purpose of the temporary tax concept was, when you have one-time debt and you’re in a recession and you’re moving out, you can pay off the bills, improve cash flow, allow the government to recover and then terminate the tax.”

Daniels: Exactly right. You avoid the cliff. What we did was we knew we were coming out of recession; we knew we needed money to balance our budget. By having a temporary tax, you infuse the revenues with enough money to come out of it, and then, as the recession continues to recover, you drop off that tax. It’s a sound economic principle. But, many times people say they’ll do it, and they don’t. We said we’d do it, and we did it; we terminated that tax.

DePue: Well, sometimes you don’t. You could certainly be referring to the 1989 tax increase, and certainly, we’re going to face the same thing in what, about a year from now, with this—

Daniels: Where do you think those ideas came from? The idea of the temporary tax came from our 1983 program, and they’ve been using that ever since. But people are a little cynical because they haven’t always terminated it.

We could see an end; we actually calculated the end of the recession and how the state of Illinois would recover and why we could terminate it. Today people are cynical, because they can’t figure out how we’re going to ever manage without the money that the taxes brought in.

DePue: Is part of that because, as soon as they get the income tax increase, they spend it on other things?

Daniels: Absolutely. You couldn’t put it better than you just put it. Look at what was proposed by the governor’s State of the State Message just the other day,

February, 2012, where Governor Quinn wants to spend several billions of dollars more in Medicaid spending and aid to families. Now, is it something we'd like to do? Sure. Can we afford it? No. Why do you think we didn't pass universal health insurance years ago in the state? Because, when it first came out, Cardinal Bernardin's proposal, it would cost the state \$56 billion to implement the program. Is it noble? Yes. Can we afford it? No.

DePue: Still on 1983, then.

Daniels: Oh, you're going back to that. You're not going to accept my jumping to 2012. (both laugh)

DePue: No, no—well that's what we want, but, I guess, I'm the guy who has to impose some kind of a chronological order. At least that's my approach I like.

Daniels: You're the master of ceremonies.

DePue: July 1, 1983, gas tax passes. Was that a temporary or a permanent increase?

Daniels: No, that was a permanent increase. That was an increase on the gas tax, so we could have an effective road program.

DePue: I think, the next day, income tax increase. That's the temporary part of it.

Daniels: Right. And that was an example of bipartisan working together. Once the program was developed, we actually wrote a white paper on it, a booklet on the temporary tax. You may be able to find it in a library or so forth. The temporary tax, we set out in a whole program, explained where we were, how we could then terminate it in the future years and move forward.

When that was finally agreed to by the four leaders, Speaker Madigan and I agreed to a vote assistance, in other words, how many votes would I put up and how many would he put up.

DePue: Can you go into that a little bit more, because this is not an anomaly in Illinois politics.

Daniels: Well, now we have an agreement, and the agreement is we will increase the income tax on a temporary basis. And then you talk about how we're going to pass this. You need sixty votes to pass it. Don't hold me to this number because I don't remember the exact percentage, but I have, say 40% or 36% of the membership. So, I put up 36% of the vote. Madigan has the balance of the membership, so he puts up the balance of the vote. And that's how you'd work an agreed bill process.

DePue: And the people that both sides find to vote for a particular bill.

Daniels: Safe.

DePue: Safe. It's not necessarily how they personally feel about the bill; it's whether or not they're in a safe district?

Daniels: Well, you always have to use convincing approaches to have a legislator vote for something. You can't just walk in there and say, "Mark, vote for this," because Mark's going to say, "Wait a second. I'm an elected member of the House; I represent 110,000 people, why?"

"Well, Mark, first of all, look how your district is going to benefit by this. You live here; here's how much the school aid formula is going to go up; here's how much we can do in road construction; here's what we can do here and here and here and here, and it's a good thing. And besides that, you're safe."

"What do you mean by that?" "What I mean by that is, you tend to your district; they know you; you can explain this vote, and people will understand it, versus John Jones down the street"—again a fictitious name. "John Jones, down the street, is in a targeted district, and he's going to have a hell of an election, and we don't want him voting for any kind of tax increase. So, do your caucus members a favor."

DePue: Were there some issues where it was much more difficult to convince people?

Daniels: Sure, tort reform.

DePue: Tort reform?

Daniels: Tort reform in 1995, it passed with all Republican votes, and it took every Republican to support it and pass it. Not one Democrat supported it. There were some plaintiffs' lawyers in our caucus that didn't want to vote for tort reform. It took some very direct meetings and some strong support.

DePue: See, I would think that some of the tax increases could be just as toxic to the Republican members.

Daniels: Well, it could be, but we didn't pass tax increases with all Republican votes. Unlike the Democrats in 2011, passed it with all Democrat votes. We never did that, nor would we do that, because you would never be able to generate all Republican votes for a tax increase.

DePue: Okay.

Daniels: Now, I might be able to generate thirty votes, but not all.

DePue: The rest of the package, from 1983, for the tax increase, as I understand it, was an increase on liquor and gasoline—we talked about gas already—and highway user taxes.

- Daniels: And, I think, a penny sales tax increase.
- DePue: All of those things would be permanent?
- Daniels: Yes.
- DePue: Only the income tax was temporary?
- Daniels: Yes, yes.
- DePue: Well that's quite a way to start your term as leader of the minority party.
- Daniels: Let's just say it was a major experience, and it set the stage for learning right off the bat and being able to govern in a sense that protected my membership, because the temporary income tax increase did protect my membership.
- DePue: We were talking about the legislative cycle. I don't know that we talked very much about the veto session. How did the veto session work?
- Daniels: Well, anything in a veto session, to become effective immediately, requires an extraordinary majority, to be effective immediately. The veto session generally is for issues that were unresolved in the regular session, in the sense that the governor has amendatorily vetoed them or vetoed the bill that went to him. Then the membership can determine whether or not to override the veto or accept or reject the amendatory veto. That's generally what the veto session is about. There are times when they'll pick up important issues to deal with that came up during the summer and in the early fall.
- DePue: You alluded to a couple of things that are different from the U.S. Constitution. The amendatory veto, and maybe not mentioned specifically, but a line item veto, as well. Does the governor have both of those?
- Daniels: Yes. Most governors have an amendatory veto and line item veto power, as does Illinois. What they mean by that is he can take a budgetary appropriation bill and line item veto out portions of that. An amendatory veto, in a substantive bill, he can change some of the language within the bill.

An example of that, if you are a lover of the chief at the University of Illinois. When I was Speaker, we passed a law as a response to the opposition to the chief that basically said the chief shall be the symbol—distinguished from mascot—of the University of Illinois. And it passed the house, passed the senate and went to the governor. Governor Edgar, in one of his rare, inappropriate actions, amendatorily vetoed the bill and inserted the word *may* be the symbol of the University of Illinois, and by doing that, did not resolve the controversy. The House and Senate ultimately accepted his wording, just to get it done. The trustees, then, were pressured to say the law allows you to terminate the chief; therefore, you should. If Governor Edgar had signed the

bill, as sent to him, we'd still have the chief as the symbol of the University of Illinois, not the mascot, the symbol.

DePue: It's interesting because one of his aids was the former mascot at the University of Illinois.

Daniels: Yes, Mr. Livingston.

DePue: Tom Livingston. Now I've forgotten what question I wanted to ask in that respect. So the line item veto versus the amendatory veto, I have heard criticisms about Governor Thompson's abuse of the amendatory veto, that the constitution—

Daniels: You mean just rewrite the bill so it's entirely different than it was?

DePue: The Constitutional Convention put it in with the mind that, okay, we're just going to tweak when there's a language problem and not actually make substantive changes to the bill.

Daniels: Right. I can't think of a specific instance, but I do remember that criticism. I can say that Speaker Madigan has taken the position that he, as the presiding officer of the House—and also, obviously, the Senate presiding officer, would have the same authority—can determine whether or not the amendatory veto is within the confines of the constitutional authority granted to him, and, at times, has ruled it to be out of sync with the constitution.

DePue: I'm jumping ahead myself now, but this is an example where he and Governor Blagojevich were bumping heads constantly?

Daniels: That's one example of many. (both chuckle)

DePue: Back to the '83 veto session. I think it was in that session that the legislature dealt with the Regional Transit Authority.

Daniels: The RTA.

DePue: The RTA.

Daniels: I believe that's correct, but on that subject matter, that was the start of what was called the summit meetings, that Governor Thompson requested the four leaders to join him in the mansion and to discuss a resolution of the RTA and to create a summit style meeting. It was a formal process. In fact, actually, I think, Joan Parker actually wrote a book on the summit meeting at that time.

DePue: Can you lay out the various sides on that, what the issues were all about?

Daniels: Well, the issue was about making sure that the suburbs had adequate representation in the operation of the Regional Transportation Authority. And,

of course, Chicago wanted to take total control over it. And the suburbs have a huge stake in it, because most of the people that ride it come from the suburbs.

DePue: Did it even exist before that time?

Daniels: Not in that format, no, no.

DePue: So, there was a Chicago Transit Authority [CTA] that extended out to the suburbs, to a certain extent?

Daniels: Well, to Oak Park, not as far as it does today obviously. And there was a bus system, and there was a rail system, and, of course, then they had the CTA. Obviously, the Northwestern Railroad has been running for years, and, obviously, the bus system had been running. So, what happened was Thompson wanted to resolve all these issues and figure out a way to do that.

Once again, I was able to call on some very skilled people in my caucus to help draft this legislation. We came up with the RTA concept, that is, with the Metra system for rail, the Pace system for bus, and the CTA system. The CTA, obviously, basically has the mayor appointing, and I don't know how many appointments from the governor, but some. Metra has appointment by Cook County commissioners, and Pace is by Cook County commissioners and collar counties. So, you divided it up. At the end of the day, Chicago had a huge stake in it, as did the suburbs. (coughing) Excuse me.

So, what we found, in crafting this agreement—RTA reform, we called it—another white paper which, again, is somewhere floating around. It's a booklet about that thick on RTA reform. What we found was that, by doing this, we could then bring in the various caucuses to support the reform legislation. This was a result of the summit meeting that took place.

DePue: Wasn't this something that both Democrats in the city of Chicago and Republicans in the collar counties would naturally support?

Daniels: The end result, but not at the beginning, because the question becomes, who makes the appointments? The governor would have some appointments, and what happens if the governor is a Democrat? Will you have all Democrats? No. We wanted to make sure that you had Republican and Democrat support for the makeup and structure of the organization.

DePue: Was that a matter of doling out the patronage or the power or both?

Daniels: More about how it's operated and who has the influence in the operation of it. It's not a party matter, per se, but it is making sure that there is suburban representation.

DePue: That's a lot for one legislative year; isn't it?

Daniels: Yeah, I was pretty tired. (chuckling) No, actually, fortunately, I was young enough to be able to handle it. It was an experience. But I was up to it.

DePue: Nineteen eighty-four, was that as busy a legislative year for you?

Daniels: I don't recall it being as busy as that, as productive as that, but, obviously, issues came up.

DePue: Going through the box of pens that you had, of signing all the various pieces of legislation, the one that I did find for 1984 was the Water Commission for DuPage County. I don't know if that rings a bell for you or not.

Daniels: It sure does. (chuckling) It became apparent that, particularly DuPage County because of its growth and because of its size, the largest suburban county, was down the road going to dry up. Its wells were going to dry up. We were going to have a serious water shortage. Well, a mere fifteen miles away is the wonderful great lake called Lake Michigan, a freshwater.

Three mayors, from Elmhurst, Villa Park and Lombard had created the Tree Town Water Commission. The sole purpose of that was to bring Lake Michigan water into DuPage County and to service Elmhurst, Villa Park and Lombard. But they also had visions of the three municipalities controlling the water for all of DuPage County. It's like the old range wars; who controls the water controls the power. It was quickly established that, to really make this work, you had to have a countywide commission so that all municipalities had a part and ability to be part of the distribution of water, because then you get into the charge of the water.

Well, when we started figuring this out, we started putting plans together to draft this countywide commission. It received tremendous opposition from the Tree Town Water Commission, because they felt they owned the issue. They had already made a decision on who were going to be the lawyers, who were going to be the engineers, who was going to operate it and how they were going to distribute it and how much they were going to charge and how they could make a ton of money for municipalities. Frankly, several of us thought it was wrong.

So, we put an amendment on a bill, creating the DuPage County Water Commission. Several members would be appointed by the municipalities, and several members would be appointed by the chairman of the county board. It passed the House and Senate and created the DuPage County Water Commission, which was signed by the governor.

To this day, some of the individuals that are involved in it are still mad about that legislation, because it took it away from the three municipalities that had started the process. But, look how it's worked. Not only do we distribute water throughout DuPage County, we have fresh water for the rest of history. But there's been a fair appropriation in terms of the cost, the

division of the cost of the system. It costs \$400 million to bring the water in from Chicago, piping and so forth.

DePue: Who was paying the bills here?

Daniels: Well, it would be the taxpayers of DuPage County.

DePue: Okay, just DuPage County.

Daniels: And the assessment against the water itself. It was brought in under budget, on time and not a single person went to jail. And I distinguish that because imagine doing that very same thing in Chicago. (laughing) It definitely would not have been on budget, definitely would have been delayed, and the rest is for you to figure out.

I'm pretty proud of that, because the chairman of the Water Commission was a fellow by the name of Joel Herter. He was the first chairman and supervised all of this and had great selection of the executive director and did a wonderful job of bringing that in.

DePue: Did that serve to accelerate the growth in the western suburbs?

Daniels: Oh, I think it added a great deal of quality of life to the suburban areas, because there's no question our wells were starting to dry up.

DePue: Well, that gets us to the reelection year, unless you've got anything else for the legislative year. The reelection year of 1984 is an off-year election, as far as governor is concerned, but now you've got to elect a lot of people in your caucus. This is your first real go around in that role.

Daniels: Yeah it is, right.

DePue: Do you remember anything distinctive about that one, a learning curve on it?

Daniels: Well, it would have been a tremendous learning curve, because we basically had twenty-some campaigns you had to run, and you had to finance them and you had to raise the money for it. So, we created two separate organizations; one was our political organization, and the other was our legislative organization and the two shall never meet. It's a very important component there. We always made sure... We were very, very careful in making sure that the two were separated. Some people would leave staff and go on a political staff and were paid for out of the campaigns.

Well, in order to have assistance, you have to raise money to pay for that. That was one of my jobs, to supervise that and to encourage members to help raise the money to pay for these campaigns. Then, of course, each individual candidate has his or her own responsibility too.

DePue: At the national level, this is a presidential election year, and you've got Ronald Reagan and Walter Mondale from Minnesota, running in the Democratic ticket. It's a landslide for Ronald Reagan. So was there a coattail effect, as far as you remember?

Daniels: Well, there was some; I can't remember. What were the numbers that it came up; do you recall?

DePue: I don't have the '84 election.

Daniels: I know we did fairly well. It definitely helped us. The real coattails are by studying the public attitude towards the congressional delegation in the House. So, if there's a strong feeling about Republican representatives in Congress, it helps those in the Illinois House. It's an interesting dynamic that we studied very carefully.

If you look at 1995, the Republicans in the House, under Newt Gingrich at that time, had a very high regard. And there was a very low regard for Democrats. The landslide that occurred in 1994 or '95 was a direct result of a high public opinion of Republicans' ability to govern. We benefit from that. We would have benefited from Ronald Reagan, no question about it.

DePue: But not to the same extent that you're going to benefit in 1994, when you became the Speaker.

Daniels: Well, we were much more seasoned by then. (both chuckle)

DePue: Well, I guess the next question here... I don't know when this would have happened, but I did want to take a brief diversion here and ask you about getting remarried. Was that about that timeframe?

Daniels: No it'd be... myself?

DePue: Yeah.

Daniels: I got remarried in 1981. That's when George Ryan came to me and said that he was going to make me the majority whip, and I said to my wife, "You're a lucky charm."

DePue: Let's get to 1985, 1986. Would it be fair to say that the year after an election is always a busy year, legislatively?

Daniels: Yes, that's the most productive time and the time that people are feeling much more comfortable about tackling tougher issues. The session that we just entered in now, February of 2012, as you know, an election is around the corner, and members will be looking at their votes on how it's going to play out in November, at election time. So, less has a tendency to be done. For the

most part, you'll never get a tax increase done in the election year. Why do you think they increased taxes last year?

DePue: I believe that one of the major issues in the 1985 legislative year was the Department of Public Aid and their particular budget. It was said, that year, that you were holding their budget hostage.

Daniels: (laughing) Me? And you're gesturing, yeah. I'm in the minority; how could I do that? I know how I could do it, and we were able to do it once, but they made sure it could never happen again. At that time, when you picked up sponsorship of bills, you had the complete control on what happened with that bill, whether it was call for passage, tabled or moved for passage. I sponsored many of the administration's appropriation bills, because the governor was Thompson, and I was the Republican leader of the House. So Lee Daniels was the sponsor of most of the appropriation issues. Remember now, of course, the House is Democrat.

So, Jim Thompson's that year "Build Illinois" was a major program of his. And, like I said earlier in our conversation, all governors want to be able to have solid revenue and budgets and be able to cut ribbons on new projects. Jim Thompson was no exception. If I were governor, I'd be the same way. But that's not my job. My job is to do everything I can to protect the budget and to protect my members and to protect the districts we represent.

So, Governor Thompson, with great fanfare, introduced Build Illinois. And people said, "Well, where are you?" I said, "Well, I'm not sure I like this." Why didn't I like it? Because we found out that he had some "understandings," if I might quote, unquote, with the Democrat leaders, to put about two-thirds of the money into Cook County and the city of Chicago, leaving about—don't hold me to the exact numbers—about a third of what's remaining, left in the rest of the state, which would mean most of my districts would get a very little percentage of that.

My position was the governor was, you want our votes; divide it equally. The Democrats get half; the Republicans get half. What do I mean by that? Their districts, their areas. The collar counties get its fair share, based upon population; downstate gets its fair share, and so does Chicago. You take the percentage of population. "Well, that's not for you to decide" was the



Lee Daniels, speaking on the floor of the Illinois House of Representatives, from an article in the April 1986 Illinois Issues magazine.

answer. I said, "Well, if you want my votes, it's for me to decide." And so back and forth meetings, back and forth on Build Illinois. And, where I understood where the governor was coming, it was not consistent with our caucuses drive, because we determined early on that we weren't going to support it if we didn't get a fair share.

DePue: "It" being Build Illinois or public aid?

Daniels: Build Illinois. No, no, public aid had nothing to do with this at that point.

DePue: Okay.

Daniels: Build Illinois and the projects, the capital projects, the road projects, the bridge improvements and the improvements to the University of Illinois, the maintenance of state buildings, all these things play into that, which we knew were needed, but we took a very firm position. Again, could they have passed it without us? Sure, they had enough votes to pass it without us, but they didn't want to pass it without us. They needed Republican votes to be on it, and no one from the House, on the Republican side, would support it unless we had an understanding that the distribution and allocation of the funds.

Where does public aid come in? It so happens that I'm the sponsor of the public aid budget. It's now the end of June, and the public aid budget has not been called for passage yet. That's mainly because we hadn't worked out all the details. One of my members, my floor leader at the time, Sam Vinson, who was the assistant minority leader of the House, came to me and said, "You know, I have an idea." And I said, "What's that?" And he said, "Don't call the public aid budget. Let us go into overtime. You're the only one that can call it. If we go into overtime, then you just hold that budget until we have our Build Illinois deal." I said, "Are you sure?" And he said, "It'll work."

Well, it worked, but I took all kinds of unbelievable pressure and hits every day and hate mail and all that other stuff, because what I did was held the public aid budget. We went into extraordinary majority session, which I've explained before, the first of July at midnight. Now, it took an extraordinary vote to pass a bill, which means, now on all legislation, they need Republican votes to pass and become effective immediately, including Build Illinois. (train passes by) They no longer can pass it by themselves, and the public aid budget is unfunded.

I get a visit from the governor's office, the director of human services, by the name of Greg Coler, who is a very, very good friend of mine. "Lee, if you don't call the public aid budget, 17,000 people are not going to get any checks next week." I said, "I understand." The next day he comes in, "Lee, if you don't call the public aid budget, 80,000 people aren't going to get their checks." "I understand." The next day he comes in, "Lee, if you..." And I finally said, "Greg, you don't seem to understand. The issues are big; that's

important. I don't mean to be insensitive, but I've got to tell you that this is tied together with the governor's Build Illinois program, and he intends to move forward to that. We can resolve this whole issue together."

Well, at that point, I had many editorials being written against me, that I was insensitive and uncaring and so forth and so forth. That's when I stopped reading the papers. I banned them from my office and wouldn't talk to reporters. I held the public aid budget until, finally, the governor came to my office and says, "All right; what do you want?" We worked out Build Illinois; we worked out all the other things, and we worked out the public aid. At the end of the day, everything was passed.

Now, what I didn't comment on was, towards the end of session, just before midnight, the governor had called, through Mike Madigan, the substantive part of Build Illinois. There's two parts: substantive, which is the legal language, and appropriations, which appropriates the funds. You have to pass both. You can't pass one without the other, because it won't work. You can't have a substantive law that's unfunded. So, he calls the substantive bill.

We had determined in caucus we were going to vote for it, because we weren't against the idea. It passed, and Thompson had a huge gathering outside the House chambers, with the press all around. "Congratulations, Mr. Governor, I know you worked hard on this. The Republicans in the House finally agreed with you." Thompson says, "Yes, this is a wonderful thing." And a man came up and tapped him on the shoulder and said, "Governor, they just called the appropriation bill; it just went down." "What do you mean?" "All House Republicans voted against it."

Well, as you can imagine, the governor came storming back into chambers, right up to my desk and looked at me, and he says, "What have you done?" I said, "I told you we weren't for your bill until you worked out the allocation, and you haven't worked it out." Well, as you can imagine, it was at that point that, fortunately, we can't have weaponry carried on your body, (both chuckle) and certainly not in the House, because that caused some real strain with the governor at that point and the other caucus leaders, because we had determined that we weren't going to support it. We supported the concept, but we did not support the allocation. So, we didn't support the appropriation, and it didn't pass. That then led to the overtime session, because it was right at midnight when that was coming up. That then led to holding the public aid budget until we agreed on that Build Illinois.

DePue: Had the rest of the budget been passed by that time?

Daniels: Yes.

DePue: Was this an example of your caucus being really firm on this, and you were just reflecting their views, or was this—

Daniels: I had to lead. I had to make recommendations to the caucus, but it took caucus approval. If they didn't approve it, you're only as strong as you have the support of your caucus. It's like any mayor in any municipality in Illinois. A mayor is only as strong as his council support and the people's support.

Mayor Daley is technically a weak mayor, in terms of legal jargon, but the council gave him great authority, great approval, which made him an extremely strong mayor. I was no different. My membership, I had to convince them; I had to be proactive; I had to be visionary, and I had to work with them.

DePue: But it sounds like, at the end of the day, you and the rest of the caucus were of like mind on this one.

Daniels: Very much so, as we were in most cases.

DePue: Another piece of legislation, I think, that year, June sixth, a medical malpractice bill passes the House.

Daniels: Yes. It was kind of much weaker than I had hoped for, but yes, a bill did pass.

DePue: Something to—

Daniels: Well, Republicans generally were for it. It was convincing the Democrats to support it. Obviously, tort reform was becoming a big issue, because of the cost of medical malpractice insurance. It still is an issue.

DePue: In the veto session that year, as I understand, there's quite a bit that looked like it was taken up. McCormick Place—

Daniels: McCormick Place⁵ reform was on the agenda, because there was a huge amount of overspending, a huge amount of problems, and we wanted to reform McCormick Place, which we ended up doing. That became a battle, and I think, if I recall correctly, Governor Ogilvie was assigned to run the restructuring of McCormick Place and to put it back in form. But it was a major piece of legislation that we passed.

DePue: Governor Ogilvie?

Daniels: Yes, if I recall correctly, or maybe it was—

DePue: So, we're going back a decade or more.

Daniels: Yeah. Well, he wasn't governor then.

⁵ **McCormick Place** is the largest convention center in North America. It consists of four interconnected buildings sited on and near the shore of Lake Michigan, about 2.5 mi south of downtown Chicago, Illinois. (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/McCormick_Place)

DePue: Oh, okay.

Daniels: He was appointed then to maintain the supervision of the reformation.

DePue: How about farm aid? This is at a time when farmers are really struggling. They'd gotten over-leveraged and had a lot of debt problems.

Daniels: Yes, and, of course, to the northern legislators, this was not as important as it was to the central Illinois and southern Illinois legislators, primarily central Illinois legislators. And we would respond to that, because it became a huge issue of the times.

DePue: And the cigarette tax, so another increase?

Daniels: Another increase. You'll find, historically, more tax increases than anybody cares to admit or talk to, but we had to finance government. It's an interesting dynamics because, where you try to reduce the reliance on cigarettes, you increase the taxes, because you want to bring in additional funds, which means you really want people to continue to smoke. (both chuckle) Cigarettes, I can't imagine. Fortunately, today, I'm not a smoker; I was. But fortunately, I can't imagine the cost of cigarettes. It's like \$2 a cigarette. I'd rather have a shot of scotch or something like that. (chuckles)

DePue: But, it's easier to push through a sin tax.

Daniels: Much easier to push through a sin tax. Very few people hold it against you, except for Philip Morris and R.J. Reynolds and others.

DePue: How about the alcohol lobby, is that a tough one to get through?

Daniels: Very, very tough, because Phil Rock was very close to the alcohol, liquor lobby, and [it was] very tough to get increases in the liquor tax.

DePue: Well, Mr. Speaker, you've been talking quite a bit about Governor Thompson. I want to take a little bit more time to have you flesh some of that out a little bit. Let's start with this one.

Daniels: Can we take a break?

DePue: We may, yes.

(pause in recording)

Daniels: Yes sir, I'm ready.

DePue: We took a little bit of a break here. But as we left off, I wanted to ask you some questions, Mr. Speaker, about Governor Thompson, your impressions of

him as a person, as a politician. So, let's start with Governor Thompson as a campaigner.

Daniels: One of the best. He had a feel for people. He read people quickly, analyzed them, was able to respond to them and read their needs and concerns. If I were to say to somebody who wants to run for governor, give them advice, I'd say try to pattern yourself after Governor Thompson; he's one of the best.



Photo of Lee Daniels and Governor Jim Thompson, autographed by the governor, circa 1980s.

DePue: But wouldn't that—how do I phrase this? In many respects, he appeared to do campaigning over the top.

Daniels: You mean like sliding down a slide at the State Fair?

DePue: His dress and his demeanor.

Daniels: Drinking out of a plunger? (chuckling)

DePue: Yes, those kinds of things.

Daniels: People love it. President Obama, singing a song. His numbers probably increased substantially after he sang that little part of that song. They love to feel that people in power, or running things, are one of their own. Thompson would walk into a bar and have a shot and a beer.

DePue: Now, the contrast is the next governor, Governor Jim Edgar.

Daniels: Very straight, very solemn, very sincere.

DePue: Could it have worked for him to try to model his campaign style after Thompson's?

Daniels: No, no. You have to be true to yourself, and you can't remake a person to be something that they aren't. You know, Richard Nixon; you couldn't make Richard Nixon warm and fuzzy. At the time he was elected president, people wanted a serious, smart, intelligent individual. Maybe a little ruthless, maybe they understood that, but they knew that the art of governance is not always something that is congenial in its fashion.

DePue: Do you have any stories, any anecdotes about Jim Thompson on the stump?

Daniels: Oh sure, yeah, I have a lot. I remember when he wanted to pass his income tax increase. He knew where I lived in Springfield, right by Washington Park, which was a very big park and a lot of people ran and walked in the park in the morning. I did every morning; I ran every morning before session.

At 6:00 in the morning, there was this bang on my door, and I look out the—it was a two-story home I lived in—looked out the window of the second floor, and there’s Jim Thompson, standing in workout clothes, holding a coffee pot. “Wake up!” And I lift the window, and I said, “What are you doing?” He says, “Get down here; wake up. You’re going to have a cup of coffee with me, and we’re going to settle this thing on this temporary tax increase that you’re talking about.”

So, I got dressed, put on my gym shoes, got dressed. He had coffee; we had a cup of coffee, and he says, “We’re going to take a walk in the park.” Now, walking in the park with the governor? Yes. Security and, of course, everybody wants to say hello, right? But, in the process, he was working out a way in which we could help resolve the temporary tax. And it would work, except for he needed to have some permanent revenue to go along with it, to carry through. How did we do that? A penny on the sales tax.

Now, I knew this all along, that that’s one of the things I would say okay too. And so, he said, “All right, you’ve got this fancy idea; how do we make it work?” And I said, “Well, we put the temporary tax on, and then, when the recession is better, we can drop it off in eighteen months.” He said, “That’s not going to sustain us. We still need some more revenue.” And I knew that. He turned to me, and he says, “What do you do?” And I said, “Put a penny on the sales tax.” He said, “You’d accept that?” I said, “Yeah.” He said, “Well how do we do that?” And I said, “Why don’t you go see Pate and have him suggest it.” Which he did.

So, we’re in the meeting, and Thompson says, “How are we going to resolve this?” I said, “You know, governor; you know our position; that’s it.” And the governor turns to Pate and says, “Pate, what do you think we should do?” Pate says, “Well, we’ve been thinking about this, and I talked to my members—he used to call them gorillas—and,” he said, “frankly, I think we ought to put a penny on the sales tax.” Everybody looked around, and I says, “That might work.” End of story.

DePue: But the whole thing started at this meeting in Washington Park, early in the morning.

Daniels: The resolution started, not the whole thing. We were towards the end. We needed to find that additional bit of revenue, and we did that by depending on the sales tax.

DePue: I've also heard some stories about Thompson's willingness to actually go into the legislature, go down to the floor, the proverbial, put his feet up on somebody's desk and—

Daniels: Oh yeah, he was very engaging and very forceful. I mean tall, smart, good looking, young and he knew how to handle people. After all, legislators are just like anyone else. There's some people in there that are salt to the earth, and there are some people that, frankly, I wouldn't want to have any coffee with, but fortunately, they're in the extreme minority. But Thompson was very good at that.

I'll never forget the time when the White Sox wanted to move to Florida. Now, for the White Sox, it made tremendous sense because, if you take a compass and you put a spot on, then, Comiskey Park and run it in a circle, 360 degrees, where is most of your membership? It's in the lake, geographically. If you take that very same compass and put it in Tampa, Florida, most of your membership is, of course, on land, where it was located and available. Plus, [Jerry] Reinsdorf negotiated statewide cable rights. That's why Reinsdorf was basically in favor of going to Florida.

But, he had promised Jim Thompson, if he built him a new stadium, he'd stay in Illinois, a promise that Reinsdorf ended up eating at the end, because Reinsdorf is an honorable man and keeps his word. The first vote that went up to build a new park in Chicago, lost, and the time expired on the clock. Everyone could look at the clock and see it was past midnight. Now, it wasn't just a simple majority, it was an extraordinary majority.

Well, two minutes later, they called the bill again. Thompson comes to the floor. He needs one vote. He comes up to me, and he says, "Lee, I need your vote." I said, "You're not going to get it." My law firm represented the White Sox, and I had a huge conflict. There's no way I'm going to create myself some legal problems by voting for the stadium, and I told him—



Lee Daniels "at bat" with White Sox player "Psycho" Steve Lyons and Lieutenant Governor George Ryan at U.S. Cellular Field [formerly Comiskey Park] in the late 1980s.

DePue: Were you abstaining from that vote?

Daniels: Yeah I did, I did; I abstained from that vote. And I told Thompson, I said, "There's no way I can vote for it. Jerry Reinsdorf is a personal friend of mine, besides."

Right across from me was a guy by the name of Jim Stange. Jim Stange was voting no. Well, as you recall, Alan Dixon had been elected [to the] U.S. Senate. There was an opening in the secretary of state's office, and Thompson had not appointed that opening yet. So, Thompson said to Stange, "Jim, I need your vote; what will it take?" Stange looked up at Thompson and said, "I want to be the next secretary of state." Thompson says, "Why not?" With that, Stange reached up and voted yes, changed his vote. The bill passes. The speaker then says, this bill, having received a constitutional majority, at 11:59 p.m., on such and such a date, is hereby declared passed.

Now, important on two things. One, it was after midnight. Court challenge saying that the bill passed, and they pulled the records. Today, your debates are time-stamped, and the timestamp showed that it was three minutes after midnight, so it took an extraordinary majority. But the court ruled that the speaker's pronunciation of the time is the controlling factor and, therefore, the bill passed. Isn't that great?

DePue: (laughing) And the Speaker at that time was...?

Daniels: Mike Madigan. And so—

DePue: But the rest of the story, as we know, that Stange didn't become the—

Daniels: Well, Stange walks out of the chambers, and the press says, "Why did you vote for that bill? You changed your vote." "I'm going to be the next secretary of state," he says.

They then run right over to Jim Thompson and said, "Did you promise that you'd make him the next secretary of state if he voted for the bill?" "No. He told me he wanted to be the next secretary of state, and I said, 'Why not?' That's all I said. I didn't promise anything." (chuckles) The art of negotiation and specificity.

DePue: Well, he obviously didn't gain any great friendship with Jim Stange in the process, I would think.

Daniels: Stange lost his next election.

DePue: So does that mean Thompson was careful in who he was selecting to sway the vote?

Daniels: Well, that means that Thompson had a pretty good handle on how he could get votes. Where you and I would have said, “Are you kidding? What are you nuts?” Thompson said, “Why not?” It was brilliant, but that’s Jim Thompson.

[He] has one of the finest minds around. And I once said to Thompson, I said, “You know, you’re the only guy I know that could jump out of the Hancock Center, land on his feet and walk away.” He liked that.

DePue: Governor Thompson is clearly the leader of the Republican Party in the state, but he wasn’t necessarily the behind the scenes leader. Who was the party leader during these years in the 1980s?

Daniels: I’m trying to recall. I think it was Doc Adams.

DePue: Is that the central committeeman; is that the name?

Daniels: Yeah, the state chairman of the Republican Party, Doc Adams. I think, followed by Al Jordan, if I’m not mistaken, and then Harold Byron Smith.

DePue: Doc Adams, what was his—

Daniels: He was in Springfield.

DePue: What was his given name, do you know?

Daniels: No. [editor’s note: Adams’ first name was Don]

DePue: What was the second name you gave me?

Daniels: Al Jordan.

DePue: What was your relationship with them?

Daniels: It was good. Doc Adams was the chairman when I voted for Bill Redmond for Speaker, and it was a little strained, because he was one of the ones that called.

DePue: Was that one of the relationships, though, that you had to be careful to cultivate, over time?

Daniels: Well, traditionally the chairman of the Republican Party has not been that strong.

DePue: Not like the Democratic counterpart?

Daniels: Well, Mike Madigan’s strength lies in being Speaker of the House, not necessarily chairman of the party. That’s his supplemental power.

DePue: But, he’s wearing both those hats.

- Daniels: He wears both. Wearing both is very critical. I mean, it's very powerful, both positions. But, if you had to pick one over the other, you'd pick the power of the Speaker.
- DePue: The relationship then is, the party leader had a bigger role in raising the funds?
- Daniels: No. We always raised our own funds.
- DePue: What was the role of the party leader then?
- Daniels: Well, to organize the party, to handle things with Washington, to handle many of the delegate selection for the presidential elections and party policy, but frequently they would bow to the respective leaders. The governor is the titular head of the party to the four leaders or respective, two leaders of the caucus would have influence.
- DePue: Does that mean that, in your case, you would be the one who would both be raising funds and trying to find good candidates to run in some of these contested districts?
- Daniels: Oh, absolutely.
- DePue: Much more so than the chairman of the party.
- Daniels: Oh, much more so. The same thing for the Democrats in the House and the Senate, and the same thing for the Republicans in the House and Senate.
- DePue: I wanted to read a quote. I'm jumping around a little bit, but I want to read a quote that Jim Thompson had. This dates back to 1977. His view of the art of negotiation, if you will. "There will be no tactics of confrontation, no politics of division." Does that sound consistent with the man that you remember?
- Daniels: Well, it sounds consistent with what he would say publicly.
- DePue: (brief pause) No elaboration on that?
- Daniels: Well, wouldn't we all say that publicly? Doesn't [Mitt] Romney say it now, [President Barack] Obama say it now? We all know there's a difference. The art of governance requires strong views and progressive views. Without that, without either one of those, you don't get anything done. You can't be wishy-washy in presenting a program.

When the governor presents Build Illinois, which he believes strongly in, he sets out a program, and he starts to sell it. When we're opposed to that, we oppose it and start to sell our reasons, and there's a division that is created there. It's not always comfortable, and sometimes the conversations are

something you would never want to be public, because they get fairly brutal. That's the nature of governance.

DePue: The other relationship that would have been especially important to you for most of the time you were in the legislature would have been Mike Madigan, the speaker of the House. How would you characterize that relationship?

Daniels: Strained at times, very good to start off with, because we were in a huge minority. And so, I wanted to work with him. I knew him, of course. He was assistant to Bill Redmond, and I liked Mike. I've always liked Mike, and I've always respected Mike.

There were times that we would have shot each other, if we'd had guns, because we were fierce competitors. In a sense, we were fighting for our individual and collective beliefs, and we were representing, not only our own beliefs, but our caucuses' beliefs and our party's beliefs. You do your best to stay consistent on that.

I'm one that believes that consistency is very important in governance. You don't have to always toe the line on things like tax increases and things like that, but you have to, at least, explain what you're doing and why, without locking yourself into a position, because, if you lock yourself into a position, then you are really hamstringing your ability to govern.

So, Mike never, or rarely, makes the same mistake twice. He learns from his experience. He's very disciplined, very focused, very knowledgeable on the retention of power, and that's one of his strongest points. Certainly, he's been better at it than I was. But, of course, I didn't start with a score of thirty-six to nothing.

DePue: (chuckles) You're referring back to the Cutback Amendment.

Daniels: Absolutely. He starts with a solid thirty-five/thirty-six votes.

DePue: Did he have an advantage of being both the party chair for the state and the speaker?

Daniels: Well, it helps, because then he's able to dictate party policy, as well. I say dictate respectfully. I don't mean that to be in a negative sense, because it's impossible to totally dictate.

People allow you to govern, and in the end of the day, they give you power. It's very, very difficult to take power. People frequently, willingly give it. Just study the course of history, and you can see that proven out.

DePue: One of the things he's often credited for is that he is a superb vote counter. Would you agree with that?

Daniels: Yeah.

DePue: He knows where his caucus is on any issue.

Daniels: Yes, and so did I. We never, either one of us, ever misrepresented our votes. When we arranged an understanding, an agreement, we always, without fail, had our votes there, which means that when I went into a meeting with Speaker Madigan and said that we can accept this part of the deal, if there's A, B, and C, and he says "Okay," and then he says, "How many votes do you have on it?" and I tell him I have thirty-six votes, or whatever the number is, twenty-eight votes or whatever, I always delivered the number that we agreed upon, and so did he.

Now, that gives you strength, because you walk in with the governor; you cut a deal with the other leaders. They know that you're going to deliver on that deal.

DePue: So, that's the essential element of trust between the two opposing party leaders?

Daniels: Yeah, sure, sure. I have to know that he's going to deliver on what he agrees to, and he has to know that I'm going to deliver. He'll tell you that, by the way, that I always was able to keep my word.

DePue: Well, I hope to have a chance to interview him some time. We're speaking only—

Daniels: You should have been at the college.

DePue: ...a couple weeks ago. Why don't you tell us what happened a couple of weeks ago here. You've been out of the House now for what?

Daniels: Since 2007.

DePue: So, five plus years.

Daniels: Yeah, yeah. You'll always miss parts of it, because I spent my adult life representing the people of this area and was very grateful to have a wonderful career. I'm blessed for that, and I'm grateful to the people that sent me to Springfield. But, in the course of dealing, for thirty-two years, with Mike Madigan we had a very excellent relationship at times and very strained at other times, but consistently, a mutual respect for each other.

So, I had not gone back to Springfield for three and a half years, on purpose, because I wanted to make sure that the new leader was able to solidify his position. Besides that, I'm not in government any more. So, when I finally returned as a representative of Elmhurst College, I scheduled a meeting with Mike, with Speaker Madigan.

During the course of the meeting, I pointed out to him that I sponsored governmental forums at Elmhurst College, and I'd like him to be the speaker. And he said, "Tell me about it." I explained it to him that it was in the morning, that there would be two speakers; he'd be the keynote speaker, and he needed to address the group for forty-five minutes to an hour, take Q&A for about a half an hour, and then be available for a press conference. He got up; he walked to his desk, picked up his schedule, flipped some pages, says, "I can do it." Agreed to it.

DePue: Well, that's significant, because he's otherwise notoriously tight lipped about these things.

Daniels: Totally, totally. But he knew... Well, first of all, we have that respect for each other, that he knew that this forum was going to be run properly, respectfully, and that it wasn't any kind of a subterfuge. He's coming into DuPage County, arguably the heart of Republicanism in the state of Illinois, very unusual to begin with; giving an address, very unusual. I can't remember when he last spent that amount of time, and then opening it up to a press conference, very unusual, unless he's in session. But, he knew that it would be an appropriate forum. He did an excellent job.

DePue: And he got a ton of press coverage.

Daniels: Absolutely. Every word he issued was analyzed and reanalyzed. I think Doug Finke of the *Springfield Journal* wrote the most interesting article, which says that Madigan "graced us with his presence" and then talked about some of the quotes. I don't know if you read that article.

DePue: Yeah.

Daniels: But, as I said earlier, we were in the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, referred to on the AP stories, and these are just some of the covers there. He assessed three decades of Illinois governors, which I thought was most interesting. It was an interesting time, a good time.

DePue: Was that something you personally liked to do, is to give public presentations, speeches, press conferences?

Daniels: That's one of the things I do at the college. I am a distinguished fellow, a vote by the faculty, and I teach government, and I'm a consultant to the president, in government and community affairs, and I'm in charge of the annual governmental forum.

DePue: But, this is a question pertaining to your time as minority leader in those two years you were speaker, part of the public face of the Republican Party in the state. Or were you more comfortable with being behind the scenes like Madigan has traditionally been?

Daniels: I've never been shy about the press. I've always been pretty forthright, in terms of that.

DePue: Well, the next two players I want to talk about are your senate counterparts. Let's start with your Republican counterpart, James Pate Philip. Would you agree, a different personality?

Daniels: Oh, much different than me. He had a tendency to shoot from the hip. He would frequently express his individual views on things, which were not necessarily consistent with my views, which is okay. He was more of a John Wayne person; you could use that analogy.

DePue: I know he admires John Wayne deeply, but also mirrored that personality or those characteristics?

Daniels: Yeah, he did, very strong, very forceful, sometimes a bully, a very powerful chairman of the DuPage County Republican Party, which, as you know, is the strongest Republican county in the state. I supported him on that position as a committeeman. I voted for him when he was first elected and supported him during the course of his career.

We had an on again, off again relationship, probably caused by...I think he viewed me more like a son than like a counterpart, and when we would have a disagreement, he would become very irritated because, I think, he felt that I should pay more attention to his view.

DePue: When you would have meetings that involved the four tops, would you and he normally try to get together beforehand, going in?

Daniels: At times we would, but at times we had different views.

Remember, I had twice the membership, so I had twice the personalities; I had twice the division; I had twice the diversity; I had twice the campaigns that I had to run, twice, five times the campaigns that I had to run versus his. So, it created some natural division between the House and the Senate. That's not unusual; you see that in Washington today. John Boehner and Mitch McConnell. You can see there's a difference there.

But again, senators have a tendency to see themselves a little higher level than the House members, if I can say that. They have a tendency to look a little down on the House members, where we have a tendency to want to smack them around a little bit. (chuckling) I say that respectfully.

DePue: But isn't it interesting that, both at the federal and at the state level, the Speaker of the House is generally the...The four leaders are usually considered to be the most powerful.

Daniels: It's because of the membership. First of all, the Senate represents the state, whereas the House members are representing districts and the people of those districts. So, where John Boehner is a Speaker of a House, consisting of 435 members, the diversity is incredible and much more consistent with the public at large.

DePue: That leaves us with Phil Rock, and maybe start with Phil Rock and Mike Madigan, if you can reflect on that relationship.

Daniels: Well, Phil, very outgoing, Irish, could toss down a beer and a scotch and handle himself very well, very outgoing. He would frequently... He'd go out with his friends sometimes and sing, and he was a decent singer. "Oh Danny Boy" was one of his favorite songs. (DePue chuckles) Just a wonderful man, Oak Park, and hard not to respect him in every part. He's a good person, and I liked him a lot and, for the most part, was a fair person.

Now, when we got down to hardcore issues, like redistricting and things like that, I always thought he was unfair. But that's a different story. Very, very highly regarded by people in general, as is today. I regarded him very highly, as I do today.

DePue: The relationship between Madigan and Rock?

Daniels: Sometimes strained, a natural relationship, speaker, president, just like Pate and myself. [It's] easier to govern the Senate, because you have less members, and the issues are not as difficult; the campaigns are not as difficult.

So, there were times that the relationship was strained, but we all understand the basic rules, and, that is, Pate and I could fight like cats and dogs, but at the end of the day, we knew we had to come together, and we did.

DePue: The fights between Madigan and Rock would be more subtle in nature?

Daniels: I think so. Pate would say some incredibly terrible things at times. (chuckles)

DePue: So, that has a lot more to do with Philips' personality than anything else.

Daniels: Let's just say that somebody can write a book on Philips' comments, over the years and may do it someday. Not me.

DePue: Well, plenty of them have made the press in the first place.

Daniels: You've read them.

DePue: There's one other person I wanted to ask you about, or a title, because it's always been a source of political power in the State of Illinois. That's the mayor of Chicago. Now, obviously, the timeframe we're talking about is beyond the time when Richard J. Daley was sitting in that office, but that's not

to say that the mayor of Chicago was somebody who could be ignored. Let's start with the first one, you probably dealt with quite a bit, Jane Byrne, '79 to '83.

Daniels: Well, I didn't deal with her very much. She dealt more with, then... Mayor Byrne dealt with Bill Redmond, mainly. She was a difficult personality to work with, as mayor of Chicago. She was not an establishment person, and she frequently would be at odds with Speaker Madigan. It's not something I would necessarily talk, but I remember when Bill Redmond was Speaker, and Jane Byrne wanted a bill passed, and the bill didn't pass, and the session was adjourned, Jane Byrne said of Mike Madigan, "Well, his hands are hot from sitting on them."

I got a call from Bill Redmond, who said, "You know, would you do me a favor?" and I said, "Sure." He said, "Would you tell the press what you saw in Mike Madigan on this bill?" And I said, "Sure." I said, "I've read the article and listened to the comments by Mayor Byrne that Mike Madigan's hands were hot from sitting on them, not doing anything." I said, "Anything could be further from the truth," because I was on the floor. I saw him fighting for his cause. We just happened to have a better position on it. It didn't lose for any lack of effort on his part, I can tell you that.

DePue: The next one would be Harold Washington, 1983 to 1987. Obviously, that ended tragically, with his sudden death.

Daniels: I had a great relationship with Harold. When I was a freshman legislator and voted for Bill Redmond, Bill Redmond made Harold Washington the chairman of the judiciary committee. I was on the judiciary committee. Because Harold Washington supported Bill Redmond, Harold Washington liked me, because I helped support Bill Redmond. So, I always was treated very nice in committee and afterwards.

Lo and behold, Bernie Epton, Harold Washington, the mayor of Chicago. Of course, Bernie Epton was one of the former leaders of the House, now running for mayor of Chicago, strongly supported by George Ryan. Epton loses. Harold Washington becomes the mayor of Chicago. I call him up and say, "Can we meet and talk about issues?" "Sure, come on in." It was like an old friend coming into city hall.

The thing I remember most is him saying to me, "Lee, don't take my airport," because we always fought O'Hare Field, because it encroached the air in DuPage County. Few people know that a third of the airport is in DuPage County. That was property condemned by the city of Chicago, within our county, to put the airport in. And, of recent vintage, they destroyed half or more of Bensenville, for new runways. So, it's been a source of problems since I represented that area.

DePue: And otherwise, O'Hare is a great cash cow for Chicago?

Daniels: Oh, absolutely, and, of course, the state would love to have the revenue, also patronage. There's **huge** patronage at O'Hare Field. Of course, there is no such thing as patronage, I know.

DePue: (chuckling) Not in Illinois, certainly.

Daniels: So, I called up the mayor in April of the year he died and had lunch with him shortly before he died. We talked on several issues. I liked Harold Washington.

DePue: Eugene Sawyer had a short tour, '87 to '89.

Daniels: Yeah, not real effective. He was a caretaker.

DePue: So, let's get to Richard M. Daley.

Daniels: Yes. I had an interesting relationship, if that's what you're asking—

DePue: Yes.

Daniels: ...with Richard Daley. My daughter, Laurie, my eldest daughter, suffered brain damage shortly after birth and is confined to a wheelchair and is multiply physically and mentally disadvantaged. Laurie was in the hospital at Children's Memorial Hospital, undergoing major surgery for a hip reduction and some other surgical procedures, at the same time that the Daley's son, Kevin, was in the hospital and ultimately died, as you know, their young son. At that time, we kind of got to know each other.

He was then state's attorney. I handled some of his legislation in Springfield when he was state's attorney. When he became mayor, we had a decent relationship, until we got to O'Hare Field. And then it wasn't just, "Lee, don't take my airport." It was more like "Lee, you take my airport, and I'm going to cut your legs off." Not literally, he didn't say that, but that's the impression you got. And we started having a falling out at that point.

And then I fought him and the Chicago Democrats consistently on the airport, at which point we almost had a piece of legislation that passed, which would have given control of the airport to an authority, including O'Hare Field, Midway and Meigs. It would have been a statewide authority, an authority in northern Illinois, similar to the RTA, appointed by the governor and the mayor. It would have been a huge, huge part of the bill.

DePue: Was a third major airport for the Chicago area also part of that mix?

- Daniels: Yes, that would have been Lake Calumet, yes. That failed by just a short margin. In fact, Pate Philip came out against it, which I thought was shortsighted on his part. Edgar and I were both in favor of it.
- DePue: Well, a lot has happened airport-wise. There never was that third airport, and then Meigs disappeared.
- Daniels: Yeah, yeah. And it's unfortunate because, if you'd do Peotone now and tie it in by high speed rail, you could have a really effective multi-airport community, which would really serve the people. You could put a lot of the cargo equipment out at Peotone, if that was a way of doing it, build up your inner mobile system, and really have a very, very 21st century movement of products and goods and people.
- DePue: That's quite a bit down the road. I wanted to go back now to...I ask you this, here, Mr. Speaker, 1986. I'd like to finish off today with a discussion about 1986. It's as much about the governor's race as anything. But, it's up to you if you want to postpone it until tomorrow morning.
- Daniels: Let's finish it.
- DePue: The spring session...Again, it's an election year, so it probably wasn't nearly as busy as 1985, which there was a lot covered in that particular year. But you still, I think, have a lot more discussion about Build Illinois in '86, or is that pretty much resolved, in your mind?
- Daniels: In my mind, it was pretty much resolved. We had discussions and implementation and the actual programs and products and how we would implement. If I recall correctly, my memory serves me right, Jim Thompson appointed his then lieutenant governor, George Ryan, to handle the review of the projects that would come in, as a result of Build Illinois.
- For instance, every legislator had a wish list. Which ones were the best ones for the state to accomplish the goals that you want to accomplish? I think George Ryan was in charge of recommending to Jim Thompson in that procedure.
- DePue: Do you recall when the Thompson Center would have been part of the mix, when that was discussed?
- Daniels: I don't, but I would assume it's around that time.
- DePue: Any memories about—
- Daniels: (laughing) You mean the spaceship that accidentally landed in the city, that makes ice cubes, air conditioning, and never heated or cooled properly? You mean that one? You mean the one, when we first looked at it, we said somebody's going to try to jump with a target down in the middle, and, of

course, they have. That one? You mean the one that you walk around with your back to the wall, afraid you're going to fall over the side, or when you walk down the steps that have no back to them, and it scares the daylights out of you? That one?

DePue: But, that is the building that, architecturally, is most connected with Jim Thompson.

Daniels: Helmut Jahn.

DePue: Pardon me?

Daniels: Helmut Jahn designed it. Oh yeah, the Thompson Building. One of the jokes going around is the reason it's named for the Thompson—or better yet, do you know why it's named the Thompson Building?

DePue: Um-hmm.

Daniels: No one else would take the name. (both laugh)

DePue: So there's a whole set of jokes that go along with the building?

Daniels: Yes. Would I have built a different building? Absolutely. Would 90% of the public? Absolutely. But that was Jim Thompson.

DePue: That was his concept, his blessing on that one?

Daniels: Yeah, but it also represented his type of thinking, visionary, progressive and really quite...quite exciting.

DePue: Can you recall any other legislative initiatives, major ones, that were taken up that year?

Daniels: Not offhand. Do you have a remembrance of any of that?

DePue: I don't have anything else.

Daniels: I'm sure there's a whole ton because, one thing about Illinois, it doesn't lack from action.

DePue: You've always got the annual budget battles.

Daniels: That's always a battle, and it's something that people take very seriously. Obviously, your priorities are healthcare, education, criminal justice and these things, but appropriation-wise, education, healthcare and human services **always** take precedent.

DePue: Nineteen eighty-six was another one of those political years in Illinois, where things became a little bizarre, shall we say. It started off with the gubernatorial

primary on the Democratic side. I think the Democrat Party was very surprised when Adlai Stevenson III was the clear winner in the gubernatorial ticket in the primary, but they were surprised by two [Lyndon] LaRouche candidates. I think it was secretary of state and lieutenant governor. And these two LaRouche candidates suddenly emerged as the Democratic winners of their primaries.

Daniels: Right, right.

DePue: I'll let you pick it up from there and your memories about all of that.

Daniels: Well, I don't remember the exact name. Those are things you try to put in the back of your mind. (chuckling)

DePue: Mark Fairchild was the lieutenant governor winner, and Janice Hart won for secretary of state. So Fairchild, Hart, those are good, all-American names.

Daniels: And, of course, if I'm running for secretary of state, I've just been handed a wonderful present. I think our candidate was Jim Edgar.

DePue: Jim Edgar.

Daniels: Jim Edgar had not always been successful in his political career; he lost his first race for state representative. But he was clearly our favorite for secretary of state. And what greater present that you could have than a candidate the Democrat Party is not going to support? They didn't view Jim Edgar as a particular threat. So, that was a great thing for Jim Edgar. And was it Dave O'Neal? Who was our lieutenant governor? Oh, Jim...George Ryan.

DePue: George Ryan, yeah.

Daniels: And so, obviously, they ran it as a team. Can you imagine running with a team with somebody you don't like? Anyhow, having said that, that was a great opportunity for us in '86. But Adlai Stevenson, at that point—was that the 5,275 votes?

DePue: The '82 election was very close.

Daniels: That was the one, with Stevenson and Thompson?

DePue: Yeah, and this went down to the courts.

Daniels: Yeah, and the Supreme Court, and, in fact, Justice Simon actually wrote the opinion of the Supreme Court. [In] '86, he won fairly handily. The Democrat Party was somewhat dysfunctional at that time.

DePue: Well, Stevenson ended up, as I know, you'll recall, saying, "I can't possibly run as a Democrat now." So, he changed his party affiliation, temporarily, to

the Solidarity Party. (Daniels chuckles) I don't know if that was modeled after what was going on in Poland at the time. Here was his quote, and I'll read this to you and get your reaction. "I am exploring every legal remedy to purge these extremists from the Democratic ticket, but one thing I want to make absolutely clear, I will never serve on a ticket with candidates who espouse the hate-filled folly of Lyndon LaRouche and the U.S. Labor Party."

Daniels: Well, and he meant it, and he kept his word, and he didn't. (chuckles)

DePue: How was Stevenson, as a candidate, on the stump?

Daniels: Oh, he was very dry; he was very boring, against Jim Thompson, Mr. Outgoing, Mr. Brilliance, Mr. Personality. Thompson loved campaigning; he likes people. You can tell that. He has an annual Christmas party at the Drake, and we still pay homage to him and still go in and kiss his ring. I admire him greatly. (train passing by)

DePue: But there are a lot of people, as I understand, going into that '86 election, who thought that Thompson was vulnerable. He'd been governor for a long time already.

Daniels: Well, I think that would be a fair assessment, prior to the primary. When the LaRouches came out and Stevenson makes a comment like that, what do you think people say? "We're going to help you keep your word, so you don't have to serve with these guys. We just won't elect you." And we saw it as our duty. (DePue chuckles)

DePue: The general election then, Thompson gets 52.7% of the vote; Stevenson gets 40%; Fairchild gets 6.6%, and I'm surprised even by getting that much.

Daniels: That much, right. And Jim Edgar's on his way.

DePue: And Jim Edgar wins handily, as well.

Daniels: Right, right.

DePue: Did Thompson, you think, feel like he had a mandate, coming out of that election?

Daniels: Oh, I don't know. That wasn't a huge election result. But, as you pointed out, it's somewhat a result of '82 being so close. So, Thompson, at that point, people knew him as a spender, and there was an element of the Republican Party that didn't like all spending. They wanted to cut the spending, which is not foreign to our party.

DePue: How did you fare, coming out of that election, not just you personally, but the caucus?

Daniels: I think we did okay; I don't remember. Do you have the number breakdown?

DePue: No, I don't. I should have it, but I don't.

Daniels: And I should have it too, but, if I recall correctly, our numbers were getting closer and better, certainly better than we started out in '83.

DePue: Well, I think that's probably a pretty good place to finish for today, if you don't mind, and then we'll pick this up tomorrow morning.

Daniels: I don't mind at all. That's fine. Thank you.

DePue: Thank you.

(end of interview)

Interview with Lee Daniels

ISL-A-L-2011-053.04

Interview # 4: February 9, 2012

Interviewer: Mark DePue

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

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.

DePue: Today is Thursday, February 9, 2012. My name is Mark DePue, the Director of Oral History, and today I'm in Elmhurst again, for my fourth session with former Speaker Lee Daniels. Good morning, sir.

Daniels: Good morning. How are you today?

DePue: Good.

Daniels: Early morning, bright and sunny.

DePue: It is bright and sunny.

Daniels: Another beautiful day.

DePue: A lot of frost on the window.

Daniels: You know, Elmhurst is the center of the earth. If you stick a stake in Elmhurst, it will be the center of the earth.

DePue: But Madigan's people thought it was Chicago.

Daniels: Well, that's what we let them think. (chuckles)

DePue: Which is about a lot of what we'll be talking about today, because yesterday we got up through 1986. I wanted to start off with the legislative year for 1987, then go in to the elections of '88.

So, 1987, the spring session, you've just had an election. February tenth, I understand, again, from going through the pens that you had for signing specific pieces of legislation, the Comprehensive Health Insurance Bill passes. Does that ring a bell for you?

Daniels: Yes, that's called "CHIP." The Comprehensive Health Insurance Plan was meant to be available for people that could not, or were unable to get health insurance. It's a state-sponsored program. Normally, it would cover somebody with some kind of pre-existing condition or some difficult medical condition, and they, therefore, did not qualify for regular insurance. It can be expensive, but it is insurance, and it's a state plan that we put in force to cover somebody with mental or physical challenges or some pre-existing condition.

DePue: So, this is a far cry from all of the health insurance debates that we got into in the 1990s and recently have had, as well, in the last few years. Is this a much scaled down version of that?

Daniels: Well, it would be. It's certainly not universal health insurance, but it is meant to cover somebody with more dire health problems, so that they were able to qualify for some form of insurance. It was a step forward, and it was meant, and is meant, to be available without busting the state's bankroll, which, of course, is what we're faced now.

DePue: I know that, in your case, this had some personal meaning for you, because of your daughter's situation.

Daniels: Yeah. My daughter, fortunately, was covered by insurance. I was able to provide for her during the time she was under my direct care. So, what I did was... [I] had received many, many comments from people throughout

Illinois, and in other states as well, about some of the difficulties of raising a child with a mental or physical challenge or, for that matter, taking care of an adult, a loved one, who then suffered a stroke or a heart attack or some dementia or problems like that.

So, that was one piece in many pieces that I worked on during my career for those people that, through no fault of their own, are challenged with either physical or mental challenges.

DePue: Did your own personal circumstances make this a much more meaningful piece of legislation for you?

Daniels: Well, no question about that. My daughter, Laurie, was born, shortly after birth, with a form of brain damage, which affected her motor ability and her mental ability. She's confined to a wheelchair. When I first sought assistance from the state, there wasn't any program for somebody who was multiply handicapped.

I ended up sending her out of state to a wonderful facility in Peapack, New Jersey, called the Matheny School for Crippled Children. In those days, they used those terms. Laurie was a full-time resident there and received wonderful care until she was approximately thirteen years old and then came back to Illinois, to the Elim Christian School, founded by Mr. John Kamp, which created one of the first in the state programs for somebody with multiple handicaps. It was a residential program, and she was, as I said, confined to a wheelchair.

Of course, she stayed at Elim Christian School for many years and then went into their adult care facility called Bethshan, which is a community living facility, called a "CILA," community integrated living arrangement. She lives with three other adult women in Orland Park and works five days a week. And she is a taxpaying citizen, to the credit of some of the programs which we were able to implement in Illinois.

DePue: This might be a good example for you to talk a little bit about how a piece of legislation like that—this is no small feat, to get that written and developed—how much you had direct involvement in that and how that process works in the House.

Daniels: Well, I had very direct involvement in it. I started in 1975, working with then speaker, Bill Redmond, to talk about specialized living centers, which were a movement away from institutionalizing a loved one in a major state institution, which frequently has very, very severe afflictions for people with mental or physical disabilities. The state institutions, of course, in some cases people were almost in a vegetative state, and it's not a one-fits-all facility.

So, in 1975, because of my experiences with my daughter, I worked on a program called specialized living centers, which were facilities set up

throughout the state—one pilot program here in DuPage County—to move people out of the state institutions, into a more community setting.

To make a long story short, this evolved eventually into the CILA program, community integrated living arrangements, which are facilities of up to eight adult people, living within a community setting. The goal is to have a facility for them which is like a home in a residential area. You cannot tell the difference when you drive down the street. But, of course, they receive full medical staffing, full assistance, full programs and a whole policy of living arrangements, to try to assist somebody in need to become as independent as possible.

Much of this legislation that I sponsored over the years, including legislation for home support, where people wanted to keep their loved one at home, but just could not financially afford what goes along with that. For instance, a lot of people don't think about the fact that, if you're confined to a wheelchair, most doors are not wide enough to get through. So, in some case, you need to widen a door in a home. Trying to bathe somebody who cannot walk requires heavy lifting. If you get a tub that has a removable side and a transfer facility, you can manage to bathe them in a tub, in a facility. For something in the area of \$5,000, you can keep a loved one at home. That saves the state upwards—if they're in a state institution—of \$120,000-plus a year. If they're in a CILA program, about \$60,000 a year.

So, the goal is to, when somebody can keep their loved one at home, to assist them and doing it by a home support program, which I passed as a result of studying a law that was passed in Colorado. This has, of course, then gone throughout the country.

So, home support, CILA programs, moving people out of state institutions, has all been a long movement that's still, to this day, continuing. As a matter of fact, our governor has announced he wants to close some state facilities and create more CILA programs, a wonderful idea, but you have to fund it. And what I mean by that is, if you close a facility, you have to cut the expenses and utilize those dollars for the CILA programs, not transfer those dollars to other operational expenses.

So, without getting into too much detail, I learned a great deal from my daughter, Laurie. She taught me about the needs of people with special needs that, through no fault of their own, and with a little assistance from state government, can become taxpaying, productive and meaningful citizens in the future.

DePue: I would think that the home support program would also be beneficial in that the person who's at home is probably much happier than if they were in some kind of an institution. Is that generally the case?

Daniels: Oh, there's no question about it; they're around their loved ones, no question. To put somebody in a state institution is not only a very difficult decision by the parents, but it's also very difficult for the individual that's in a state institution. And I'm not taking away from state workers. Some of these people are the most dedicated people that you're ever going to meet. It's just that, if you're able to integrate to the extent possible, an individual into a community, you're going to have them have a much more productive life, which not only is beneficial to them, their loved ones, but also to the state, at a reduced cost.

DePue: Let's go back to the actual crafting of the legislation then. In Illinois, at that time, was this something that would have been done at the committee level?

Daniels: It would have been done at the committee level, but more at the legislative level, for instance, legislators that have like minds. We have several heroes over the years that have been very attentive to it. Phil Rock was always very sensitive to it. Speaker Madigan never turned his back on requests that I made of him to assist in those programs, which I'm grateful for. And all the governors were very, very responsive to this need.

DePue: Does that mean that your staff members sit down and help craft this, looking at other examples around the country?

Daniels: Yes. No question about it, staff was invaluable. There are a number of heroes on all the staffs that worked on this and studied other states. When I was in Colorado, through the National Conference of State Legislators, and visited some of their home support programs and their living arrangements for people with mental or physical challenges, I took that experience back to Illinois, talked to the staff, and they started researching that and working with Colorado legislators and staff and the NCSL. So, it's a great resource that we worked on.

DePue: So, your role as the minority leader was something of a facilitator, to bring the resources, to bring the people together to do that?

Daniels: Well, in some cases, I created the program by finding out from other states. In some cases, I sat down with my staff and asked them to research, which they did, and in some cases, we worked in a bipartisan... Well, all cases, it became a bipartisan effort, because the need and the goal was strong. We always got into a question of how do we afford it, and we were very sensitive to that.

But, as you see today, the movement is away from state institutions. The pushback is that the unions do not want to lose their union membership in the state institutions, and they resist that effort. It's unfortunate, because the cost of a state institution for an individual is in the area of \$120,000-plus a year. The cost of somebody living in a CILA is in the range of \$60,000 a year, so about half, which means you can serve double the population for the same cost.

DePue: You just mentioned the National Conference of State Legislators. Can you tell us a little bit more about that and what your position was in the organization?

Daniels: Well, a great organization. To put it in a nutshell, it represents the states to the federal government. As you know, during the course of history we've had great movements of states' rights. Ronald Reagan was, of course, one of the biggest presidents in favor of moving federal responsibility and federal claims down to the state level to allow the states to make their choices, a debate that's going on today in healthcare, as we all know.

So, the purpose of the National Conference of State Legislators was and is, to represent the states' interests to the federal government, and, of course, to interact among states to learn from experience in other states. As I just mentioned, a prime example was the home support system, which we learned from Colorado.

The stalking bill. We passed one of the first stalking bills in the country. It started here in Elmhurst as a result of a murder of a young lady and her then boyfriend by an ex-boyfriend, just a few blocks from where we're sitting. He walked up to them. His girlfriend had broken off the relationship. He stalked them and then found them in a driveway and killed them both. That was a prime example of stalking, and the police, at that point, didn't have much ability to go after somebody with this kind of crime.

We passed a law in Illinois, and I worked with Senator John Cullerton to pass that law. That became a model for the state and for the states throughout the country. Now every state has a stalking law.

An example of how the National Conference of State Legislators can work, not only interacting with each other on laws that they experiment with and find valuable, but also on a federal level, making sure that the federal government doesn't pass down to the state, unfunded mandates. I know we both laugh; it happens all the time.

The most recent example, of course, is what we call "Obamacare," where there's substantial costs to the states. And, of course, people that believe in states' rights maintain that the individual states ought to have the authority to determine how they handle healthcare for the residents of their states, and not throughout the whole country, on one menu fits all.

So, the national conference, of course, is concerned about transportation; it's concerned about economics; it's concerned about taxation, and it's concerned of such things that are rather mundane to the individual person, but important to a state, like the ability to tax on gas.

For years, prior to President first Bush, the federal government basically didn't get too involved in federal gas taxes and allowed the states,

for the most part, to modify their gas tax to meet their revenue needs for the transportation programs.

As we all know, President H.W. Bush made a pledge of no new taxes, very strongly, very vocally, at the convention, with huge response and applause. History tells us, of course, that he didn't keep that pledge, and one of the ways he didn't keep it was he supported and ushered through the Congress, an increase in the federal gas tax, which, of course, impacted the states, because we then did not have as much ability to move our gas tax in the future.

As the vice president then, incoming president of the National Conference of State Legislators, I was assigned the role of going to the White House, sitting with the president in the Oval Office, and discussing with him, the federal role and the state role. We laid out our concerns, our cause, and we basically said to him that this was wrong, that it hurt the states; it impacted our ability to deal with our transportation needs, and we think the federal government should not do that. And then I added, "After all, Mr. President, you did say there would be no new taxes." This endeared me greatly to the president. He remembered that later on, when talking to one of my friends. And, of course, history tells us that he lost the election. Now that wasn't the only reason, but that contributed to [it], the no new tax pledge that he violated.

Now, having said all that, the importance of that is that the states are very active in the federal level, because what they do does impact us and our ability to govern and meet our constitutional responsibilities to our citizens. I had the good fortune of becoming the president of the national conference. It is a bipartisan conference.

DePue: What year; do you remember?

Daniels: Nineteen ninety, ninety-one. In that role, I traveled throughout the country and, of course, overseas on occasion, to represent the states, as it applied to the federalism concept and federal government. [I] even went to Brazil, where they were drafting a



Minority Leader Daniels met with Vice President Dan Quayle in 1990, during a reception at the National Conference of State Legislators.

new constitution, and a committee of the Brazilian consul asked for my opinion on what should go into a constitution. Of course, I modeled that after the U.S. Constitution. I went to the capital of Brazil, Brasilia, and had some interesting meetings with some of the chairmen of some of the countries.

DePue: Was that a position that you sought?

Daniels: Yes, sponsored by Senator Phil Rock, because, at that time, the NCSL, as it's called, was controlled mainly by Democrats, because most of the legislators were Democrats; therefore, most of the presiding officers that were members of the NCSL were Democrats. In order to get elected to that position, I needed support from Democrats, and Phil Rock was my sponsor. My campaign manager for the position was senator, soon to become governor, John Engler of Michigan, who today is the head of the Business Roundtable in Washington, D.C.

DePue: Well, this is probably an appropriate time to ask you about what your long-term career goals were. A lot of people in the positions that you had... You obviously don't get to be minority leader or speaker of the House, without having a fair amount of ambition. Did you have ambitions beyond this position?

Daniels: Not really, but by the nature of the position, you're always in the mix of talk. There was some talk of running for attorney general. I actually started campaigning for attorney general. This is before I ran for Republican leader of the House. The then attorney general had been appointed by Governor Jim Thompson, Ty Fahner. Ty Fahner, he was unfortunately faced with a crisis, right off the bat, called the Tylenol crisis. So, we called him "Tylenol Ty." Ty had some difficulties.

By the way let me say this. Ty Fahner is, without a doubt, one of the more brilliant lawyers in Illinois and perhaps in the country. He was the head of Mayer Brown, which is a very prominent law firm, not at that time, but had become the head later on, and highly regarded. I have the highest respect and regards for him and thank him for his service. But, unfortunately, he was not a very good campaigner, and he lost the election for attorney general.

I withdrew from the primary, at the request of Governor Thompson, who convinced me, in his fashion, that my real positive role would be representing him in the state legislature. Well, what he really meant was representing my members as their leader. I ran for that position, dropped out of the attorney general's race, and then was, as we know, elected as the Republican leader.

DePue: And after that, you never seriously considered a run for any of the constitutional offices?

Daniels: Off and on, but it was never really a serious plan that was put into operation. There was some talk about secretary of state, some talk later on about attorney general, some talk about U.S. Senate, some talk about Congress.

Of course, my Congressman was Henry Hyde, one of the best in the country. He became an extremely close friend of mine. As a matter of fact, when I first decided to run for office in 1974, I sought an audience with then majority leader, Henry Hyde, of the House, and asked for advice on how to conduct my campaign. He spent three and a half hours with me. I took copious notes on my legal pad, as lawyers do, and followed his whole advice in running my first campaign, which, of course, I won.

DePue: Was he in the Illinois Legislature at the time?

Daniels: Yes, at that time. He was then running for Congress. So 1974, as we all know, was the Watergate year. Nineteen seventy-four was the year that the Republicans suffered huge losses throughout the country, including Illinois. We were in the majority in the house. We ended up in the vast minority, 104 Democrats and 73 Republicans. And that's, of course, as we've talked about earlier, when the Democrats could not decide on their speaker, and I, in my greenhorn way, ended up being part of that.

DePue: You made your mark that year.

Daniels: I did, good or bad, but I think good.

DePue: Well, that was a very interesting digression from what we have been talking about here, and again, aspiration is always part of the mix.

Daniels: Just to summarize and kind of close out that chapter, which I know you're interested in doing and moving on. When you are in a leadership position, there are always people that will tout you for a higher position. One of the things that happens, when you are the respective leader of the caucus, is you cast just incredible numbers of votes. So, it is very difficult to run from this position of speaker or Republican leader, as the case may be, or Democrat leader, for another office, because you may have twenty, thirty thousand votes, some of which you'd never do the same way again, and some of which you were happy to do at the time, but in hindsight, it didn't work out, and some of which are tax increases, which are always hard to defend. You were able to do it at the time, but when they accumulate all those, they say this person is a real tax and spender.

Well, let's not forget, the primary role of people elected to office is to govern, and the art of governance, as we all know, is not necessarily a pretty thing that you look at, as we've always compared it to making sausage, good tasting, nice result, but certainly not pretty when doing the process. So be it with the art of governance.

But you have to have strong people, with vision, commitment, with integrity, that then make sure that they explain the programs, the direction and why this is essential for the public, and then have the intestinal fortitude to cast the difficult votes. This does not always bode well for moving up on the ladder into the executive branch. . . three branches of government, judicial, legislative and executive. One of the reasons many legislators become judges is because that's not a difficult transition. So, enough said on that.

DePue: Let's go to what just happened here with. . . You talked yesterday about Speaker Madigan coming up. And it was quite a coup for you and Elmhurst College to have him speak at Elmhurst College. Well, one of the comments he makes suggests that you, Lee Daniels, ought to run for governor. What are we to make of that comment? (Daniels chuckles)

Daniels: Well, it caught a lot of us by surprise. If I had been quick in thinking of a response, I would have said, "Sure, if you run the campaign." (both laugh) And he might have said, "You're on." Afterwards, I thanked him for that comment, and he said, "I meant it." He said, "You have the experience; you have the ability; you have the reputation; you'd be a good governor."

I said, "Not in my future." I said, "My future is with the college and government and community relationships. I've had my tours of duty. I was delighted and honored to serve in that capacity, but it's not something that is on my plate, at any level."

DePue: Well, that's a very recent memory. Let's delve back into some deeper memories, again 1987, the spring session. At the end of the session, July twenty-second, welfare reform, House Bill 2853 passes. Do you recall anything about that?

Daniels: Sure. Throughout the country we were witnessing fraud and abuse in the welfare system. We had what we called "welfare queens," and we had, apparently, families that were subsidizing and existing on welfare support. Everybody that was involved in that movement believed strongly that you should assist somebody in need, in legitimate need, but not to build a career of receiving welfare. This was meant to put people to work, meant to give them opportunities, and meant to get them off of the welfare rolls.

So, we passed some meaningful reforms. That was mainly a bipartisan effort, at the end of the day. It had to be to pass, and was part of the welfare movement that we saw in the country and another example of working with other states.

DePue: But, July twenty-second would suggest that you were well into the supermajority session.

Daniels: Oh, well into it, because wasn't that the year of property tax caps?

DePue: I think the next year is the main battle, but Thompson did recommend a \$1.6 billion income tax increase; I think that was it. That was the year that Mike Madigan basically nixed the proposal, so it wasn't going to go anywhere in the legislature. Of course, when we get into '89, this whole issue is going to rear its head again. But, do you remember any of the specifics from the '87, '88?

Daniels: Not offhand. I do remember the extended sessions, and I should make the observation that, for the most part, Mike Madigan is more conservative than many of his colleagues.

DePue: Fiscally.

Daniels: Fiscally, yes. On the other hand, one could make the argument that he's not, because he has supported, as recently as the last tax increase in 2011. However, as I said, that's always dealing with the art of governance, and it always deals with comparing. Whenever you look at an income tax increase, which is the most difficult to pass, you always relate that to surrounding states and like states.

That's where the national conference will come in to help. That's where working with other states comes into assistance, because, in Illinois alone, you look at Illinois and you say, "Well, you have a 5% income tax." Yeah, we do. Some people point out it's temporary. I don't know how they do that, but that's for the future. And they say, "Well, look at Indiana; it's 3.1%." They're right, except for every county in Indiana can add another 3.1% to their income tax, up to 3.1%. And every county, save one, in Indiana, has an add-on to their income tax, which makes theirs higher than Illinois. But, if you just take the fact of income tax alone, then Indiana is lower than Illinois' flat tax. But, because Illinois is a flat tax, it's 5% across the board, that's what you go. Iowa is higher; Wisconsin's higher; Indiana's higher.

These are facts that you need to get out and understand. When you pass a tax increase too quickly, you're unable to make that case. That's when you get the most pushback. The Democrats passed it with all democratic votes in 2011. They did in the past as well, and there's substantial pushback. But, that's why they did it early on in their process and tried to wait a couple years to show why it was necessary.

DePue: Before the next election cycle, so they can distance themselves.

Daniels: Right. They wouldn't do it this year.

DePue: Well, it's interesting because, just in the news last night, of course, I'm sure you're aware of this, Caterpillar made an announcement about a new factory and decided they're not going to be building it in Illinois because... One of the reasons that was stated was the unfavorable tax climate here.

Daniels: And there are many factors that contribute to that, regulatory authority, environmental rules, work rules, other rules, taxation, corporate structures, tort reform. All these go in to determine whether or not a state is business friendly. Unfortunately, Illinois is, in fact, renowned to be one of the most renowned states in the country to be anti-business, so to speak.

Caterpillar's announcement is devastating in the sense that, I believe—time will tell—but, I believe, unless the legislature takes some very strong action, that we will have many, many other companies doing the same thing, and we will lose the workforce in Illinois.

How do we correct that? We reform our structure; we reform our Medicaid program; we reform our pensions, and we look at every regulatory authority to make business easier in the state of Illinois.

DePue: Much of what I do want to talk about today, because we're talking about the late part of the 1980s and the early 1990s, deals with state income tax. So let's just, on a philosophical level, start by discussing corporate income tax versus personal income tax.

Historically, in Illinois, the corporate rate has always been higher, and you talked about the personal income tax has always been a flat tax. Can you tell us how we got to those positions?

Daniels: Well, that's constitutional. The 1970 constitution set forth the flat tax concept and the disparity between personal and corporate taxes, and we have to follow the Illinois Constitution in that regard, so the corporate tax will always be higher than the business tax.

DePue: That's in the Illinois State Constitution.

Daniels: In the Illinois State Constitution, as it is in most other state constitutions, on their tax structure. Illinois, of course, if they increase the personal income tax, of necessity, they have to increase the corporate income tax.

As I said earlier, we can make a case that our taxation structure, in that regard, is not anywhere worse than other states, or in some cases better than our surrounding states, such as I just mentioned, Indiana, Wisconsin and Iowa. The trouble is that when you take all of Illinois' problems together, pension, debt, unpaid bills, \$8.5 billion, you then are building up this anti-business climate where people, a) don't want to retire; we're known as one of the worst states to retire.

Why? Let me tell you in a positive way, we don't tax retirement income. Your pension, when you collect that, when you get to be older, will not be taxed by the state. Most states tax pensions. That's a positive thing. So, why are we known as an anti-retirement state? Because of the state debt,

because of our liabilities on pensions. And this is a state that, if you do a study, people say don't retire in Illinois; go to another state, like Texas.

So, Caterpillar's announcement was devastating, in my opinion, to the impression that we're trying to work our way out of the recession, this great recession, which just doesn't seem to want to go away. The 2008 [recession] hit everybody, hit us at home. There's not a person that's alive today in Illinois that doesn't have a loved one that's either searching for a job or wants to increase his opportunities at a job. The municipalities, the colleges, the units of government, we're all suffering from the same thing; this recession just won't go away, as other recessions have.

Hence, people are saying, it's not only called the great recession, but borderlines the great depression. As you know, people say, if you have a job, it's a recession, but your neighbor that doesn't have a job, it's a depression. How many people have lost their homes? How many people have homes underwater?

So, these are all factors that, I believe, that government officials need to deal with and face. Illinois has lagged behind in that, and I think it's a loss of vision, a loss of direction, and I think it's unfortunate.

DePue: You mentioned that decisions like Caterpillar just made, it's not just tax rates. But, in terms of that part of the equation, the tax rates, is it more about the corporate tax rate than it is for personal tax rates, as far as Caterpillar would be concerned?

Daniels: I would say that's probably true. As I said, you can argue that our personal income tax rate is not so bad, but it's an accumulation of all the other items, because how are you going to come out of this pension debt, arguably billions of dollars in pension debt? How are you going to pay your unpaid bills, upwards of \$9 billion, today? How are you going to solve your Medicaid funding problem? Fifteen billion a year we spend on Medicaid in this state. It's higher than we spend on education.

All these problems need to be dealt with, which requires a strong leader, i.e., Jim Thompson; Jim Edgar; yes, George Ryan, not what we're being faced with of recent vintage. It requires a strong commitment by the legislative leaders. It requires strong commitment by legislators themselves, willing to make tough decisions that we elect them to office to make.

DePue: That could very well result in their loss at the next ballot box.

Daniels: [Former governor, Richard] Ogilvie lost; Scott Walker of Wisconsin may lose. Whether you like what Scott Walker has done or not, he did push some reforms that helped balance the Wisconsin budget, and it was a tough thing that he did. Indiana just passed a right to work law in Indiana, in order to help balance its budget and make it more business friendly.

Now, Illinois will never, in its current climate, pass a right to work bill, because we are heavily dependent upon unionized workers. I don't want to get into that argument, but I do want to say, we do need to be paying more attention to job creation and business opportunities.

DePue: Well, I'll take another opportunity here and talk a little bit about Mike Madigan. He has a reputation; he's been around forever, and you know better than I do on that—

Daniels: Forty years.

DePue: ...he has a reputation of always being superb in his ability to get his members reelected and to make sure that he's got a solid majority in the House. Some have said that that's much more important to him than solving these fiscal problems that you've been talking about here. Would you agree with that?

Daniels: Not totally, but that is his reputation; there's no question about it. Mike Madigan has incredible ability and focus and discipline, and, of course, is the best power player in the game of politics. There's no question about that. Everyone else pales in comparison to him. And he's shown that, in his forty years of leadership in the Illinois House, and his, prior to that, being a member of the Constitutional Convention in 1970. So, he's steeped in background, steeped in ability.

One of the criticisms that is leveled against Mike is that he doesn't utilize this to help solve the problems in a responsible and efficient manner. I believe that, if Mike Madigan led the effort, he could help resolve the pension problems; he could help resolve the Medicaid problems; he could help resolve the business climate. He could meet with business leaders and say, "What do you need to stay in our state?"

AON is moving its headquarters to London. What's that all about? AON Insurance and the leadership in AON is at the state level frequently, asking for assistance, whether it's for Northwestern, for a research park, whether it's for the Chicago Bears or whether it's for a corporate structure. What's with them moving to London? Why not work within Illinois to get the changes made that you need to stay here?

Caterpillar building a new thing. I know Doug Oberhelman, great chairman, a great guy, great visionary, obviously a skilled person in leadership. Doug, we need your assistance to put this state back on the right track and to encourage businesses to stay here in the state.

I had a lunch about four months ago with a very top, prominent leader in Chicago, known statewide. I will not mention his name. He said to me, "Lee, we're in real trouble." "What do you mean by that?" I said. He said, "This state is going to lose its major companies, and it's going down the drain, unless something is dramatically done." You have corporate leaders in the

civic federation, corporate leaders in the commercial club, corporate leaders throughout this state, begging us to deal with and resolve these problems. This is a charge to our current leadership, whether it's Mike Madigan or John Cullerton or the other leaders in the House. It's a charge to them, to take control over this very bad situation before it gets totally out of hand, and it's close.

DePue: Again, just taking some pages right out of recent newspapers, they did decide they needed to do something when it came to Chicago Board of Trade or the CME Group.

Daniels: Right, and Sears.

DePue: And Sears.

Daniels: I'm not going to be critical of that, because there are incentives that every state offers. Sears has got its financial problems, but its employees live in Illinois, and we need to make these corrections. I don't want to get too much in a soapbox, we've heard much of this before. The fact of the matter is, the question you asked, I believe Mike Madigan has the ability to make these changes. I hope he does and, to the degree I can help, I would.

DePue: Well, thank you for allowing me the diversion here; it was fascinating. Let's go back to 1987. In that year, Thompson didn't get the tax increases he was looking for, so he turns around and cuts spending by 4% and vetoes—when he does get the bill from the legislature—\$363 million to help balance the budget. So, there's always a tension there. The fall veto session, he vetoes another \$62.5 million in school spending. I don't know if you recall this particular fight or not, but Madigan wants to override that part of the veto.

Daniels: I recall parts of that, and I know he was at odds with the governor. He thought this was the way to go, but Governor Thompson was building his case for a future tax increase.

DePue: Is that part of the reason Phil Rock ends up supporting Thompson?

Daniels: Well, Phil Rock was always very close to Thompson. Phil Rock was a great public servant in the sense that he could work both sides of the aisle. He's a very reasonable man, a very bright man, and very likeable. He frequently was a guy that could work various sides of the aisle. As I said, I have a high regard for him, and I would listen carefully when he spoke. Then, unfortunately, at election time, we're always at odds with each other, but that's a different role that you're filling.

DePue: Where were you personally on the issue of the \$62.5 million in spending cuts, the other cuts that Thompson had made that year? Were you supportive of what he was doing in that respect?

Daniels: If I recall correctly, I wasn't necessarily supportive of it, but I didn't come out against it.

DePue: Where was the state, at that point in time, with pension payments?

Daniels: Well, we were working up to the problem, which we tried to resolve in 1995, and we were starting to fall back on pension payments. However, at that time, the crisis was not as bad as it moved into. We knew that we were making more and more donations to the pension system, but let me just add, quickly if I can, on pension debt. This concept, you need to finance your pension liabilities by 90% of the accrued liability, is ridiculous. There's no need to do that. All you need to do is to make certain that you're able to make payments of the system as they become due in the future. Therefore, you can arguably only fund it at [a] 70% level, which saves, of course, billions of dollars in terms of pension liability and payment liability.

The law that was passed, if I can move forward to 1994/'95, was a law that basically set, within forty years, funding the pensions by a total of 90%. Unnecessary, because even your accrued liabilities will not reach that level. So, if I'm making myself clear, all you have to do is guarantee those payments in the future. They don't have to be at 100% level, because you still have money coming in.

DePue: Glad you took the opportunity to discuss this now. I guess one of the questions I have was, we don't get to the problems that we faced in '94 and '95 unless the regular pension payments haven't been paid in the previous years?

Daniels: Correct, and that's what happened. You know, they would raid the pension system and say, we can reduce their level, their accrued liability level, and not make the payments into that. I think, if I'm not mistaken, the General Assembly retirement system is funded at 17%. But we're going to still make the payments; it's not that much. The real challenge to us is the teachers' retirement system. That's the real tough challenge.

DePue: Do you recall when the practice started, that the state didn't pay the necessary funds into the pension system?

Daniels: Well, I think it started in the '80s. I don't recall the exact date, but I know that there was discussion in the budget meetings with the budgeters, as we call them, on how we can balance the budget.

DePue: And that was one way of doing it?

Daniels: Oh sure. It's just like extending the payment of a debt. If you owe provider A \$10, and by not paying him in thirty days, but paying him in sixty days, you allow an accumulation of funds that can help balance your budget, by moving the payment cycle, as we called it.

Unfortunately, today the payment cycle is like out to six to nine months, and our non-for-profit organizations are not able to finance their operations. So, they have to borrow money from the banks. To put it mildly or strongly, the state is financing its lack of financial discipline on the backs of the providers of human services by delaying the payments to them, making them go to the banks and borrow money and pay interest. And the state then pays their bills late. Hull House just went broke and closed. That's an example of what I'm talking about. It's unfortunate.

DePue: And it's just this kind of discussion of how you balance the budget by not really balancing the budget that—

Daniels: Defer the debt.

DePue: Doesn't that cause the cynicism that the general public has about the legislature?

Daniels: No question, no question. But, in the early days, when you move it from thirty to sixty, it's not as bad as it is today, where you're out to six, nine months or longer. Some providers haven't been paid for 180 or more days.

DePue: The same analysis could be said about not paying as much as you need to into the pension funds?

Daniels: Well, it could be; but, again, it's not as strong, because that liability is way out in the future. So, you put an actuarial study into that system and you say, how much money do you need to pay your pension debt this year, next year, the following years? And then you determine what level you can fund the system in order to meet that debt. So, it's an out-year problem. I don't know the exact year now; they say, if we don't put enough money in, the system will not have enough money to pay its debt in 2022 or something like that.

DePue: Again, putting a timeline on this, we're talking now, 1987/'88. Aren't these really good economic years for the United States in general?

Daniels: As I recall.

DePue: So, if you can't make pension payments in a really good year—

Daniels: Well, to keep our tax structure low is the idea. And yes, if you look out into the future, that's true. But in many times, you're faced with the reality of what's the general public mood today, and that's certainly not to increase taxes. We should have dealt with pension reform then.

DePue: November eighteenth, in the veto session, a flood control bill gets passed in the House. Do you recall that one?

Daniels: Eighty-seven?

DePue: Eighty-seven, yeah.

Daniels: The flood of '87, remember that? Northern Illinois basically was underwater. My house was flooded. Water was flowing into my basement of my house from the street. [It] never happened before in the history of Elmhurst that anyone could remember, for instance. The flood of '87, which at one point Elmhurst was an island; we were completely engulfed by water, and you couldn't get in or out of Elmhurst. Two ninety-four was the eastern boundary, and eighty-three was the western boundary. Everything in between was completely flooded.

So, I called then chairman of the county board, Jack Knuepfer—Congressman Hyde and I were sharing offices—and Senator Philip and talked about creating a federal, state, municipal—I talked to then mayor of Elmhurst—and county level flood control plan, which ultimately passed.

But it was a result of the floods of '87 in this area, to have flood management control passed in DuPage County, which ultimately resulted in the county buying the quarry, which is just a mile from here, which during a heavy rainstorm of a hundred year rain, we drained part of Salt Creek, which is a river, into the quarry. (train passing by) Literally, it's like a bathtub; you open the drain, and it flows into the quarry. It fills up the quarry and takes the pressure off of the homes. It worked as recently as last year, when we had major rainstorms. It's like Niagara Falls, if you look in the quarry, seeing the water come in. So, the Flood Management Bill was a result of the flood of '87. Another example of state, federal, county, local governments working together.

DePue: I want to take a short diversion. We've talked about this quite a bit already, but any more reflections on working with, not just Governor Thompson, but some of his people. And I believe, at this time, was Jim Riley, his chief of staff?

Daniels: I think so. You've heard me comment earlier, I think yesterday, on my high regard for Jim Riley. He's extremely bright, very, very knowledgeable, able to work the system to get results. [He] held a number of positions, but this time became Jim Thompson's chief of staff. I thought it was a great selection by the governor. Jim Riley was able to talk to the caucuses. Of course, he was a product of the legislature. He was one of my legislative members, and, as I said earlier, helped draft the Temporary Tax Bill.

DePue: In the classic role of American politics, the chief of staff oftentimes, at least has the perception of being the enforcer, the guy that makes things happen, the guy that controls access to the boss.

Daniels: He is a strong person, Jim Riley. You're not a weak, no person to serve in that position. You have to be strong.

DePue: How about Gene Reineke? He was, at least for a time, director of personnel, which again, in the public parlance, would be called the patronage chief.

Daniels: Well, that's right, but we didn't use those terms, obviously. (both laugh) Gene was a very affable guy, very strong in his beliefs and knew the system. I worked with him regularly. Many times, as I said earlier, they would hire staff from our staff for the governor's office. Sometimes that irritated me tremendously, because I lost some mighty good people. But, we were more of an entry level position, to work up into other state positions.

DePue: A lot of the patronage role is dealing with the various county Republican chairs, as they were seeking to get positions and things like that. It's toward the end of his administration that there's a case working through the court system that ends up being called the Rutan decision. Any thoughts on that?

Daniels: Well, I didn't do a lot of placement of people in government positions, and there was a reason for that. My senator was the county chairman of DuPage County, and the county chairman of DuPage County controlled all of the "job performances" of people within the county. And I was told, under no uncertain terms, that I would work through the county chairman.

DePue: In other words, James Pate Philip?

Daniels: That would be correct. So, I didn't do much of that. And, by the way, it wasn't that I was upset by it. If somebody wanted a job, I told them to call Pate Philip.

DePue: The result of the Rutan decision was that there was a significant decrease in the number of positions that the governor, the secretary of state, others, could now appoint that were based on more political than merit positions coming out of that, a huge percentage drop in the number of people.

Daniels: Yeah, but it wasn't so bad. Most of the positions, anyhow, were based upon merit. When I hired somebody on my staff—and by the way, let me just say, most of the time I didn't hire them—it was either my assistant, Denise Reed, who handled the secretaries and personnel for the office, or my chief of staff. So very, very rarely would anyone come directly to me and ask for a job. The college graduates would apply through the chief of staff for research positions. I was happy to let somebody else handle that.

DePue: That makes sense to me.

Daniels: Yeah. Occasionally, a friend would call and say, "My son just graduated from college. Could you find him a job?" I would either send them to James Pate Philip, county chairman, or, if we had an opening in our Chicago office, even perhaps give them a job. But they worked.

- DePue: How about Thompson's legislative liaisons at the time? Do you recall who that was?
- Daniels: I think Pam McDonough was one. Some of them don't come to mind right off the bat...Kirk Dillard. I should remember that. They were in charge of representing the governor to the legislature and interacted quite frequently with them. Obviously, they would always pay a little bit more attention to the majority leader, for obvious reasons. (chuckles)
- DePue: That gets us up to the 1988 election. It's a presidential election year. George H.W. Bush is running against Michael Dukakis. Bush wins fairly handily, 50.7% versus Dukakis' 48.6%. So, it's close but fairly comfortable. How about the statewide, as far as the legislature was concerned?
- Daniels: I think it was fairly competitive. I can't remember the exact numbers. Do you have them there?
- DePue: The House afterwards, as I understand, was sixty-seven Democrats and fifty-one Republicans.
- Daniels: Yeah, we had a loss that year, if I recall. Do you know what it was previous, in '86?
- DePue: No, I don't know the numbers before that. I know the next election cycle is going to be even worse for you.
- Daniels: Yeah. I think it was one of our tough years. Redistricting hit us hard at that time, in '88.
- DePue: But wouldn't that have hit in '84?
- Daniels: It did; but remember, you're building constituency within a various district, and the movement of people in Illinois, where they're out of Chicago they don't necessarily, when they move into DuPage, automatically become a Republican. They may have grown up in the city, on the south side, where politics is everything, and come out to Naperville or to another surrounding district and still retain many of their beliefs.
- We, of course, tried to convince them that it's a new form of governance out here. You don't have all the patronage, and you don't have all the strong-willed enforcement. You're able to make your own decisions. (speaking softly) It's a better quality of life. So, the movement of people into the legislative districts was pretty difficult.
- DePue: So, what you're suggesting is, Chicago is still this incredibly strong bastion for Democrats, but DuPage County, which was always this incredible bastion for Republicans, is gradually becoming less the case?

Daniels: Gradually, it wasn't totally at that time. Still strong Republican, still the strongest. But yes, we had some setbacks in '88 and in '90, as I recall.

DePue: That gets us into 1989, and at least, from my understanding, the big discussion that year was about income tax. Thompson is going to be taking it up again, and the whole debate worked quite differently this year, in terms of a temporary income tax surcharge.

Well, let me be specific here. The proposal was to raise personal income tax from 2.5% to 3%, to raise corporate income tax from 4% to 4.8%, just as you had talked about earlier. And, as I understand, half of that increase would be to the state and half to education and local communities.

Daniels: There was discussion at that level, right. They played off the temporary tax increase that I talked about earlier, which now everyone is doing. Whenever they increase the income tax, they say, "We'll make it temporary, until we recover from this recession, and then we'll drop it off."

Well, unfortunately, it's become more of a standard that people have said that and not really meant it, because the real program that you follow, if you follow exactly what we did earlier, on the temporary tax, you create a plan in which you do, in fact, drop it off

DePue: In other words, you can't find more projects to be spending this extra money on.

Daniels: Absolutely. Of course, Jim Thompson was successful in passing a "temporary tax." That ultimately became an issue in Governor Edgar's election, as to whether or not you were going to continue that temporary tax in the future year. And, of course, Governor Edgar campaigned on the fact that he was going to continue it in force and not drop it off.

DePue: I want to save that part of the discussion until later.

Daniels: Sure.

DePue: Let's focus on the initial discussion in '89. Why was '89 different than '88, when Speaker Madigan comes out and says, "No, we're not going to do this."?

Daniels: Well, I can't tell you the speaker's motives behind it, but there were economic problems that we became more aware of, as the time went by. And, of course, House Republicans initially were opposed to that.

DePue: Well, one of the things I saw in some newspaper articles was that Mayor Daley, who I think was new in his position at the time, Richard M. Daley—

Daniels: Yeah, that sounds right.

DePue: ...needed the extra money that would come with the increase that was earmarked towards communities.

Daniels: You mean Mayor Daley would work with Governor Thompson? (both chuckle) They were very close, and Governor Thompson was very responsive to the mayor, as I suppose, if I were governor of the State of Illinois, I would be too. If I was governor today, I'd be responsive to Mayor Emanuel. He's got a big city; it's an economic engine, and you have to do it.

But, of course, my role was a different role. I represented people within the districts, and, as a House member, I represented districts within Illinois. That did not always fall in sync with what the governor's view of governing was. We fought some of that, but Thompson, yes, did work with Mayor Daley.

Remember what I said earlier, every executive wants to have a stable budget so he can govern in an appropriate way in his vision and cut ribbons for new projects, every governor.

DePue: You just talked about the Chicago dynamic. It's also interesting. Ripping another headline out of recent newspapers is this movement from a downstate legislator to say, "Let's just make Chicago a separate state. We'd be so much better off." And, of course, then you hear the counters of Chicago say, "You people have no idea how much value Chicago brings to the whole mix." Chicago is kind of the eight hundred pound gorilla in a lot of these discussions we've been talking about. Your particular view about that relationship between Chicago and the suburbs, Chicago and the rest of the state.

Daniels: I love Chicago; it's a great, great city. They have their problems that every large city does. But, for the most part, Chicago is a world leader in many areas. Let's not forget that we are the hub of transportation in rail, plane and train. And let's not forget that we are, in fact, an economic engine. This is why—without going back to our previous discussion—this is why it's so critical we resolve these business problems that exist today in not only perception but in reality, as well.

So, I always was responsive to Chicago. Now, that doesn't mean that I agreed with them at all times. I always argued on the fact of balance and fairness, and it was important to make sure that we were balanced in our treatment of the various parts of the state.

Governor Thompson, at times I used to rib him, and I'd say, "Are you the governor of Illinois or the governor of Chicago?" Of course, he's the governor of Illinois; I understand that, but there was a purpose for saying that to him at various times.

I think that, as we moved forward, one of the problems I have is that the political structure downstate is not competitive with the political structure

in Chicago today. There's too much influence with the Chicago way of doing things, and I'd like to see more balance in the suburbs and downstate.

DePue: The political structure, meaning some of the senior positions, the constitutional officers, the leadership in the House and the Senate?

Daniels: Yes, yes. We all know that the structure of Chicago is steeped in strong political involvement on the Democrat side, and the Republican side is almost nonexistent. So, I always saw part of my role as making sure that we were a responsive counterbalance to that.

DePue: I'm thinking of a couple of names in the 1960s, at least, of strong, southern Illinois Democrats, Paul Powell being the lead, but Clyde Choate was another one, correct?

Daniels: Yeah and Charlie Carpentier.

DePue: Those kind of people aren't around anymore?

Daniels: Well, you don't see them coming out. Now, hopefully, Dan Rutherford, who is our state treasurer today, will be a new force in rebuilding some of the counterbalances that we need to have. The people you mentioned were extremely strong leaders.

DePue: What I was reading about this 1989 fight was that you were pretty much cut out of the whole discussion.

Daniels: Yes, they got mad at me. (chuckles) There were times that—

DePue: They being Thompson's people?

Daniels: Well, Thompson was a little angry at times, and Mike Madigan got a little angry at times, and Pate Philip got angry.

DePue: Even Pate Philip?

Daniels: Oh, primarily Pate Philip. I told you that he looked at me more like a son. I should follow his lead and not be in the lead.

DePue: So, he was more in line with what Thompson wanted to do?

Daniels: Oh yes, always.

DePue: And your position was strongly against the increase?

Daniels: I would say strongly against a general tax increase and then strongly against the form of the temporary tax that they proposed. And most my membership was.

DePue: The form.

Daniels: The temporary tax, without a guarantee that they were going to drop off, because, I think everybody knew there's no way they could decrease the temporary tax, based upon their structure. Once you put that tax in operation, it was going to become permanent.

DePue: But it did sunset in July of '91?

Daniels: Ninety-one and then was renewed.

DePue: Yeah, that's why I say, that's when the sunset was supposed to have occurred.

Daniels: Right, right.

DePue: Here's a quote that was attributed to you. I got this from the *Illinois Times*; it was written in 1991. "It" being the increase. "It really was even labeled *Operation Cobra*, and really truly is one of the dark days of Illinois politics."

Daniels: Well, wasn't that when Mike Madigan came in with the tax increase?

DePue: Yes. He was the one who backed it.

Daniels: Didn't he say he had an epiphany in Effingham? Well, I think that was the tax increase. I'm not positive on it, but he came in... The doors of the chamber opened up. They wheeled in a huge tax increase, and they passed it, with all Democrat votes.

DePue: Because they could.

Daniels: Because they could.

DePue: And the Republican caucus?

Daniels: Oh, we went crazy. We went crazy.

DePue: Did all of the Republican caucus oppose it?

Daniels: As I recall, they did. There was one tax increase where not everybody did, but, as I recall, they did.

DePue: Part of the pressure that was building at the time on the budget was what was going on in DCFS, Department of Children and Family Services. The caseload for those DCFS caseworkers kept growing and growing. And it was about this time there was an ACLU [American Civil Liberties Union] lawsuit against some of the abuses about neglected children.

And here's just the kind of thing you talked before, with your daughter and the importance of mental health. I would think it is also something that

you would be very sensitive to. Can you talk about that pressure on the budget and your concerns in that respect?

Daniels: Well, the Department of Children and Family Services was increasing caseload, based upon some of the economic problems that families were facing. The caseworkers were being assigned more and more jobs, and they just couldn't handle them. I don't think the average public had any concept of what a DCFS caseworker was doing.

It was an incredible workload, very, very depressing when you'd have to remove a child from a home. The child is crying; the parents are crying; the mother is crying; the father is crying, a single family home, poor living arrangements. They [DCFS] just didn't have the resources at the time. I know that there was huge pushback against the state, as to whether or not we were meeting our constitutional—both federal and state—responsibility. That was one of the issues that we had to deal with at the time, in terms of funding and reform.

DePue: So, this is where a lot of the pressure is coming in at the state budget level. You've got Medicaid increases; you've got welfare increases. You've got—

Daniels: At all levels. At all levels. And people are, at that point, starting the cradle to the grave and more government services and, of course, the legislature...

Remember, this has 177 total people, House and Senate, in the legislature at this time. Every one of them has an idea of how to improve government. Every one of them has an idea on new spending programs. Every one of them wants to make life better for their constituency.

It costs money. And the role of a good governor and a good member of leadership is [being] able to refine those programs and to do what's responsible, not only economically, but also responsible for the citizens.

DePue: Well, anyway, the end result for 1989, it's a bad year as far as your caucus is concerned.

Daniels: Yes.

DePue: Here is a quote from a *Chicago Tribune* perspective article, and I guess this is more of an editorial quote than it is... It's not from the front page; it's from the editorial page. You were labeled in this article as irrelevant.

Daniels: Irrelevant.

DePue: And a counterproductive part of the process in Springfield.

Daniels: There were times that that would happen, because you cannot be a strong leader and always be relevant. You can't be a strong leader and always have

the lead position. There are times that you're going to suffer setbacks, and there are times you're going to have difficulties.

Remember, day in and day out, I was trying to plan what our caucus basically wanted to stand for and how we wanted to present ourselves to the Illinois public. Apparently, it went pretty well in my district, since I never lost an election, never was even close to losing an election.

But, for the caucus, we had our own difficult times. Of course, the more that outsiders attack you, the more that you'll get dissention within the caucus.

DePue: Timothy Johnson was one of the members of your caucus?

Daniels: Yeah.

DePue: Here's a quote that he had in your defense, "Representative Daniels has demonstrated repeatedly his role as an integral part of the process, single handedly formulating the 1983 temporary tax program, implementing major compromise between labor and management in crucial business areas, undertaking successful and broad initiatives in mental health and, amazingly, keeping Republican principles alive and well in a hostile, Democratic legislative environment."

Daniels: I could say this about Tim Johnson. Today he's a sitting congressman. Isn't he a wise man? (chuckling)

DePue: Those kind of comments have to buoy your spirits a little bit, after kind of getting beat up otherwise.

Daniels: Well, it's tough to lead. There are times that I felt like the world was against me. And, of course, one of the things you stop doing is reading papers, because you know that there's going to be an editorial that says you're some kind of a creep that's crawled out from under a rock just to peek out and then put your face back in under the rock. And, of course, you could care less about anybody, and you intentionally try to destroy everything. Whether it's Mike Madigan, Pate Philip, Phil Rock or Lee Daniels, we all suffer at various times the same thing.

As Mike Madigan told me a couple of years ago, when I talked to him, he said, "Well, they're writing nice things about me again," being very sarcastic, of course. And I said, "Well, Mike, they're not writing about me, so, sorry about that."

DePue: Either good or bad.

Daniels: Yeah.

DePue: Well, here's the thing that struck me. I saw a comment also, that in 1989 you ran a triathlon?

Daniels: Yes.

DePue: So, you're the minority leader in the Illinois House; you're a leader in this National Conference of State Legislators, which I'm sure took a lot of your time.

Daniels: Yes.

DePue: You've got all the demands that go along with being minority leader. You've got your own district to deal with. You're still a member, or you were a member at that time, of Katten, Muchin and Zarvis.

Daniels: Katten, Muchin and Zavis, Z-a-v-i-s.

DePue: And you've still got time to run a triathlon?

Daniels: Well, I do it in the morning, got up early, trained two sports a day. How do you think I kept my sanity? Look at Rahm Emanuel; he works out every day. Mike Madigan works out every day. When you're at this level, you have to have some kind of relief. I'm a high maintainer and maybe high maintenance guy, I don't know; you'll have to ask my wife that, but I ran three triathlons in my career. Unfortunately, I'm not doing it today, which maybe I should cut off this interview and go out and exercise. (chuckles)

But yeah, the triathlons were a release, and staying in shape was very, very important to put in the hours we put in. It was a twenty-four seven program. This was not a program that you just went to the office from 9:00 to 5:00 and went home and enjoyed a meal.

Remember how tough it is to be a state legislator. We're away from our families a minimum of six months a year, physically away in another community. Our wives are back home raising our families. They have to be strong and independent, and if they aren't, it's going to be nothing but trouble. You either end your career or you end a marriage. Many marriages fail for people in public life, and it's an unrealistic expectation of what we place on our leaders today.

Think about people who are running for president. Do you think they have any downtime? Do you think they have any time just to sit around and laugh and chuckle or go to a movie? It's a twenty-four seven, the same way it is for the respective leaders in a caucus. This is a permanent, full-time job that can eat you alive if you let it. One of the ways you deal with it is by keeping yourself in shape, exercising a lot. I did it through the triathlons, and, afterwards, I ran three miles every morning before I went to work.

DePue: Who was managing your schedule?

Daniels: Well, my assistant, Denise Pierce, now Reed, in Springfield. By the way, today she's the deputy circuit court clerk of Sangamon County. She's a wonderful person, very skilled. She handled the Springfield schedule, and here in the district was handled by my district head.

DePue: I'm sure that everybody needed your ear. They needed to talk to you about something. What were your instructions to her in terms of her role of being the gatekeeper?

Daniels: Take care of the staff. Make sure that all the secretaries are properly vetted, and understand their role, and do their work. Make sure that all the programs are efficiently being run, and work with the chief of staff, in terms of implementing those programs. The chief of staff worked directly with me on issues of management of the caucus and policy issues.

DePue: So, was the chief of staff the gatekeeper for you?

Daniels: No, appointment-wise, Denise was my administrative assistant. Now, the chief of staff could come in any time he or she wanted, and they could come in and sit down with me and then bring people in, which they frequently did.

DePue: Did she have quite a bit of control over determining who was going to be able to get to see you and when?

Daniels: Well, yeah. I mean, if we obviously had somebody that was not consistent with our philosophy, that was only going to argue, it was difficult to bring the person in, but I would see multiple people every day. My waiting room was always loaded.

DePue: So, to a certain extent, to a large extent, you don't have much control over your own schedule, once you get to the office?

Daniels: Well, one would like to think they do have control, but that's not the case. (chuckles) You have people that need to see you, and you want to see them, including the members. The members always took priority.

DePue: By, I think it was August of 1989, Jim Thompson makes an announcement that he's not going to be running for reelection. Does that mean that, in large part, 1990, legislatively, is pretty much a wash?

Daniels: Well, that would traditionally be the case, because you'd have a change in administration. We all had a pretty good idea who was going to be running that year, and we Republicans, of course, would not want to get too involved, and the Democrats want to maintain their lead on who they wanted to select.

DePue: Well, this is leading into what I'd like to talk about next, and that's the 1990 election cycle, and specifically, to start with, a focus on the governorship, because it's a toe-to-toe struggle between the two candidates. You've got Jim Edgar on the Republican side, who was the secretary of state at the time, and Neil Hartigan—

Daniels: Right.

DePue: ...who had been serving as the attorney general for the state for, I think, eight years.

Daniels: And well liked, well regarded by both sides of the aisle.

DePue: Any reflections on that particular election cycle, because the issue that comes into play is what we just have been talking about, the extension of the temporary surcharge?

Daniels: Right. I didn't agree with Jim Edgar's position that it needed to be extended. I thought it was a mistake, but, of course, I'm not the governor or the governor to be. The governor has a different view on these things than a legislative leader may have.

However, I did support Jim Edgar, because I thought he was a strong person, and he did a good job in the secretary of state's office.

DePue: How vocal could you be about the opposition you had to the extension?

Daniels: Well, somewhat muted.

DePue: He knew of your opposition, obviously.

Daniels: He did personally, right.

DePue: Did you talk to him about it?

Daniels: Yeah, I told him I thought he made a mistake. Jim Edgar is a very solid person, and he has his views, and he is strong in his views. He said, "Well, I don't agree with you. This is something I need to do."

DePue: This was a toe-to-toe battle from the start, and there were times, right up to the actual date of the election itself, that Jim Edgar didn't think he was going to be successful. It was a very close race.

Daniels: It was a very close race, and Neil Hartigan ran a good campaign. He had a bumblebee in the garden that circulated on TV; it was a great ad. And he talked about taxes and so forth. It was close, because Jim Edgar's position was not normally consistent with the Republican position of anti-taxes. Historically, you would tell somebody, if they want to be for something, just

say you haven't decided yet, or don't be for an extension, or don't be for a tax increase.

DePue: So the tables are turned. Here is the Republican candidate who is arguing for a tax increase; the Democrat is arguing, opposed to it.

Daniels: Right.

DePue: How does that play out in legislative campaigns for you?

Daniels: Tough, tough, because we, in our legislative arena, we have to maintain somewhat the party structure. You'd go campaigning, and you'd say, "Well, your governor is for a tax increase. We're not for that." I'd tell my members, "Kind of go easy on this. If you are committed to having to support this, don't go around advertising it in your district, because it's not something that's going to go over very well." If I recall 1990, we didn't have a very good year.

DePue: Is this the kind of thing that Edgar has to know, that he's fighting for this, that it's going to have to go to the legislature and that he's going to need lots of Democrats to support him on the increase?

Daniels: Sure, sure, sure.

DePue: The election results for Edgar, and it was... I think, like 2:00 in the morning that they finally determined who the winner was. So, it wasn't quite 1982, but it was awfully close, Edgar, 50.75%, Hartigan, 48.17%.

Daniels: Close.

DePue: Close. The legislative elections... You had mentioned before that it was a bad year for you, the loss of five seats. So, now it's seventy-two Democrats and forty-six Republicans.

Daniels: I'd been there before.

DePue: A supermajority.

Daniels: Yeah.

DePue: Even when they get to the supermajority session, they still control the shots?

Daniels: Well, they would if they want to, if they want to deal with that, which means that, in a technical sense, he doesn't even have to talk to us... about anything. And we weren't real communicative in those days. (chuckles) Those were more the difficult days between Lee Daniels and Mike Madigan.

DePue: I thought you meant with Edgar.

Daniels: No, Edgar included me in a lot of discussions, but it still was difficult.

DePue: So, tensions between the two, because Madigan figures he doesn't need you at all?

Daniels: That would be right.

DePue: Well, at this point—now this is another thing I would think would be difficult for you—I understand you were challenged for the leadership position.

Daniels: Can you believe it? (chuckling)

DePue: Who were the people that were challenging you?

Daniels: Well, Tom McCracken was the leader of the forces against me, and Jack Kubik was one of his lieutenants—he was a member of the House—and a few other people. It was one of those things that you don't particularly enjoy, because some of your caucus members are saying maybe you're not doing the best job.

Well, remember now, we were always in the minority position. That's where we're coming from, so we have to speak louder, stronger, and we have to make sure that we aren't irrelevant. Even though some people may suggest that, the facts prove differently over the years. We were very relevant in every legislative session. Just look at the record of our caucus and what we drafted and what we did.

Tom McCracken had visions of grandeur and what he wanted to do personally. He wanted to challenge me and, in fact, did challenge me. But the result was obvious; he lost.

DePue: What was the nature of his challenge? What was his complaint against your leadership?

Daniels: That we weren't effective enough. I know there's some quotes out there, which I don't recall. It's one of those things, you don't read the paper; you deal with facts.

DePue: Effective in the election cycle or in the legislative process?

Daniels: Both the election cycle and the legislative process.

DePue: So the election cycle gets to the issue of, are you raising enough money for these campaigns, and are you effective, running a good campaign, by funneling the money to the appropriate areas?

Daniels: Well, he would have said that, yes. But we had a committee that did that, called the House Republican Campaign Committee. Yes, I was the chairman of the committee, but I didn't single handedly make those decisions. The committee made those decisions. We would have meetings in which we would

set... We'd have meetings in Chicago, meetings elsewhere, Oak Brook Hill's hotel, and we'd sit down and strategize on those campaigns.

DePue: Where would the money be coming from, from these campaigns?

Daniels: We would raise money by having fundraisers. We'd have—

DePue: Corporate money or individuals?

Daniels: You could take any kind of money at that time, corporate and individuals.

DePue: So, the dynamics of fundraising for an election campaign... If you're a corporate leader or if you're somebody who wants to influence the legislative process and you've got essentially, let's just say—and this is probably not the way it worked—you've got two choices. I can give to Mike Madigan; I can give to Lee Daniels. Which one is going to be more effective to influence my case, if I'm a corporate leader?

Daniels: Obviously, the majority leader has more influence. And Mike Madigan's influence was well-known at the time. Obviously, he'd have an easier time raising it, money from unions, from the IEA [Illinois Education Association], the IFT [Illinois Federation of Teachers], the AFL-CIO [American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations], AFSCME [American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees] and the like, and did raise substantial money, where, basically, in those cases, we didn't raise much. We got it from business communities and our business contacts. We did that by having events throughout the State of Illinois.

Tom McCracken thought that we should be raising more money, and, of course, he raised very little to begin with, at any time. It's easier to take a shot than to be in the position, because I have to maintain what I've done, where I've been and how I've handled things. He's coming at it from the standpoint of what he thinks should be done. So, it's easy to say that, until you are in the governance structure. It became clear that I was the better leader.

DePue: Did you come out of that challenge, do you think, stronger?

Daniels: Well, I would think so. I would say that, at the time, we were going into redistricting. We were experiencing a makeup of redistricting that hopefully would do better than we did in the past and lay the groundwork for a future election.

DePue: Now, you've got a new governor. You've just been challenged in your leadership and been successful to defer that, but you're a significant minority going into this new legislative session.

The other thing that had changed by this time, the discussions in '88, '89 about the surcharge, was in relatively good economic times. That's not the

case now for 1991, and the first thing that Edgar discovers is there's a huge budget deficit. Did you see that coming yourself?

Daniels: We saw the deficit there, and we understood that. We knew that you had to cut spending, was our approach to it. The governor had already campaigned on the fact he was going to extend the temporary tax. We were opposed to that, and the final vote was mainly Democrats, with a smattering of Republicans. Some Republicans were extremely close to Governor Edgar, like Tom Ryder and the others. And, if I recall correctly, and I'm not positive about it, but, I think there were five Republican votes on it, somewhere in that nature.

DePue: Well, I want to spend quite a bit of time. I don't know how detailed your memory is from one budget battle to the next, but I would think—

Daniels: It's a little fuzzy at times. (chuckles)

DePue: Yeah, I mean they all have to kind of blur together, but, if there's any one that I would think you might remember more clearly, it would be this one, because you've got a new governor; you've got a huge budget deficit, and the dynamics of the summit meetings, the four tops meeting with the governor, have to work a little bit differently, because it's Edgar, and it's not Thompson.

Daniels: Right.

DePue: I can't even read from that. I was going to bring a piece of paper in, in talking about the positions of the five various leaders about how you saw the debate about the extension of the surtax. Your position on that, as you already stated, was to oppose it.

Daniels: Right.

DePue: But, if it looks like it's going to pass, what did you want to see happen with that money?

Daniels: Well, I wanted to see spending cut. I wanted to see essential programs funded, and, of course, I would lean towards human services, because that's an area where people, through no fault of their own, need state government's assistance.

Edgar, throughout his career, was very careful on spending programs and instituting new programs. I must say, in the net results, I was pleased with the result of his governance. He did very responsibly handle a lot of our state spending. But our position would have been against the tax increase and for additional spending cuts.

DePue: The breakdown of the surcharge, though, was that some of it was supposed to be earmarked towards education.

Daniels: Education, right.

DePue: Some of it was supposed to be funneled back to the communities themselves.

Daniels: I think that's the time we increased the distributive share of the communities, when they extended that, which, of course, is kind of hamstringing us a little bit today in our budget cycle. But, yes, that was the comment. Vote for the increase to increase education funds. That's always the comment.

DePue: And the budget was significantly cut. Edgar is talking about huge reductions of across the board state cuts, which is going to result in layoffs at the state level. It's going to result in reductions in a lot of the state services that you've got, as well.

But, there is a passage of the budget, \$27.6 billion budget. The budget included a permanent extension of one half of the income tax surcharge of 1989 to provide state aid for education. The other half, extended for two years, not permanent. That included property tax for the collar counties, as well. So that's always going to be part of the mix. I know, for both you and Pate Philip. It's a very important issue, in terms of, if we're going to do this, let's get some relief from property tax.

Daniels: That's the catch, yes.

DePue: Can you talk about that?

Daniels: Well, didn't that go into extra session?

DePue: It went into extra session.

Daniels: Yeah, end of July, the end of July, if I recall correctly.

DePue: It was the first time in anybody's memory that a state payroll was missed, in the process.

Daniels: Right, right. That was over the issue of property tax caps, because Senator Rock was very opposed to it, as was Mike Madigan, and, of course, they were the majority in the House and Senate. We refused to go along with any budget items until we get a guarantee of property tax relief. That Property Tax Cap Bill was signed ultimately by Governor Edgar. [It] was a huge victory for our caucus and one that we were very, very proud of.

DePue: I want to read quite a bit from an article that Thomas Hardy wrote.

Daniels: (laughs)

DePue: From the *Chicago Tribune*. You're laughing, not necessarily a friend of Lee Daniels?

Daniels: Well, at that time. Today he is. He works at the University of Illinois, and we have a very good relationship. But remember, he's a journalist, and they don't always agree with your position.

DePue: Here's his reflections on that particular budget battle. Much of this is going to be...I want to get your reflections on how Jim Edgar was different than Jim Thompson and the dynamics of these summit meetings.

Daniels: Sure.

DePue: Here's what Thomas Harding wrote, "In recent years, Madigan had worked—and sometimes he didn't have to labor hard—to make Daniels look ridiculously ineffective, using the out-manned GOP caucus and its hapless leader as foils to show that the speaker was the most powerful man in the General Assembly.

"In 1989, however, Madigan shared credit with the Elmhurst Republican for striking a compromise that ended the overtime ordeal. There is little doubt that the big winners in the session were Daniels and DuPage County's other GOP legislative leader, Senator James Pate Philip. Oh what a difference a governor makes."

Were those summit meetings quite different with Edgar versus Thompson?

Daniels: Not necessarily; it was just different times. Thompson was more of a spender. He had more visionary ideas than Edgar. Edgar came in with a very, very difficult budget, and he made some extremely difficult decisions. Instead of going to the board and saying, "I'm going to increase taxes across the board" and come in with a mega tax increase, he instead took the responsible position of looking at each and every item. We spent a lot of time going through the budget under Jim Edgar. And there were a lot of arguments on all sides of the aisle.

So, I would say, first of all, that's a journalist's view. I'm not going to accept the negative or the positive. I know of private conversations that you have, and yes, there were times that Mike Madigan wanted to shoot me. I wanted to shoot him too at times. And certainly, the same with Senator Rock and Senator Philip. I mean, the nature of the leadership position is not always to go around being everyone's friend and smiling. Sometimes you've got to be real tough, and you've got to really force your ideas. And you're going to suffer the consequences, even though you may win on an issue.

So, when you deal with a governor, you have to understand the different dynamics of that person. Jim Thompson, Jim Edgar, George Ryan, all were good governors. All understood the art of governance; all understood the nature of governance; all understood the toughness of governance; all understood that you have to make tough decisions, and some of them are life

and death decisions. Some of them are people's very existence and how you assist them. Edgar was much stronger in maintaining the budget control than the other governors were.

DePue: Edgar also was not the kind of person who would, as I understand, go to the floor of the House or the Senate in person or deal directly with the people.

Daniels: Generally, that's right.

DePue: Here's one of the quotes that you had. I think this is from the same article. Your quote about Jim Edgar, "I'm not concerned that Jim Edgar will enter into agreements that require legislative action that I don't know about."

Daniels: Right.

DePue: Does that suggest that you were concerned sometimes that Thompson would do that?

Daniels: Sometimes. (laughs) Build Illinois was a perfect example of that. He cut the deal with the Democrats before we even found out about it. And the deal with the Democrats...and most of the money was being spent in Chicago. Now, I wasn't against money being spent in Chicago. I just wanted a proportionate share in the rest of the state. That was what the primary fight was over.

Jim Thompson was very skilled and very capable, so was Jim Edgar. But Jim Edgar made sure that he advised me of where he was going, and I had had my say in it, and then he'd make a decision. What more can you ask for?

DePue: Again, going back to this press conference and speech that Mike Madigan just made, and he was evaluating the various governors. He liked Thompson, because Thompson would be willing to work with you.

Daniels: Right.

DePue: He didn't have as high regard for Jim Edgar, because Jim Edgar was more of a hardnosed negotiator. And it's this year in particular, I think he's got to be looking at.

Daniels: Well, there's no question about it. Jim Edgar didn't have the funds that Thompson enjoyed over the years. He had a tough budget; he had to make tough decisions.

By the way, I want to emphasize that, where I had Mike Madigan, Speaker Madigan, at the fifth annual Governmental Forum at Elmhurst College, last year it was Jim Edgar.

- DePue: Well, I had extensive conversations with Governor Edgar, and he certainly remembers this and fondly remembers this particular year, because he figured he won that year.
- Daniels: He did.
- DePue: He won that year.
- Daniels: Uh huh.
- DePue: Let's take a little bit of time, then, to talk about some of the key players on Edgar's team. Did you work much with his budget director, Joan Walters?
- Daniels: Not a great deal. She was not real outgoing, in terms of our caucus. I respected her ability, because she's obviously very competent, but she worked more directly with the governor's office and wasn't real communicative with us.
- DePue: How about the legislative liaisons, at least the first couple of years, Steve Selcke and Mark Bozell.
- Daniels: Absolutely. Steve Selcke, a very, very qualified guy and, at one point, was on my staff, another example of them raiding my staff (chuckles) but really a capable guy. I worked with both of them very well.
- DePue: Kirk Dillard was his chief of staff.
- Daniels: Right. Did a good job. [He] knew government, grew up through the ranks, through Thompson, obviously close to Edgar, and, as we all know, as history tells us, almost became our governor. At that time, he was, of course, the chief of staff, and I thought he handled it very well. I worked very closely with him.
- DePue: We talked about Jim Riley as chief of staff, and I painted this picture of the classic chief of staff being the tough taskmaster, the disciplinarian on the staff. Did Kirk Dillard have the same kind of personality?
- Daniels: No, a little different personality, more congenial. Not to take away from Dillard, but very few people are brighter than Jim Riley. I don't mean that to be a negative on Dillard; he's a very bright man. But Jim Riley was exceptional. But Dillard was more outgoing, more personable, more consensus building.
- DePue: In a couple of these, I want to read a quote from doing interviews with them. "Lee Daniels, very helpful. He and Governor Edgar got along, I think, very well. Lee knew the budget well, and Lee's the House minority leader, and he's trying to get whatever leverage he can for the House Republicans, over Speaker Madigan." And we already talked about how difficult that's going to be with your minority position, very much in the minority.

Daniels: Right.

DePue: Mike Lawrence, your reflections on Mike Lawrence, press secretary, but much more than the press secretary, because he was oftentimes described as Jim Edgar's conscience in many respects.

Daniels: Well, that's right; he was very close to Jim Edgar. I didn't necessarily get along real well with Mike Lawrence. I didn't necessarily agree with the positions that he, of course, was articulating on behalf of the governor. He was very close to Jim Edgar. You knew that, when you talked to Mike Lawrence, you were, in a way, talking to Jim Edgar. But he did a good job for Edgar.

DePue: Well, here's his comments. "With Pate, you knew where you stood at any given moment. He might change his mind on something, but, at that moment, you knew what he was saying was what he meant and where he stood at the time. Lee was a little more mysterious, in terms of where he might end up on something."

Daniels: (chuckles) Interesting. We were in the minority, and we had to be somewhat mysterious at times and had to be, as I said—I don't want to keep on repeating the same thing—but [we] had to be very strong in our positions.

DePue: Well, the next person I had here was Janice Cellini, who was his patronage chief, but we've already talked about the relationship you had with patronage.

Daniels: I didn't deal too much with Janice either. [She's] a nice lady, skilled, knew a lot of people, but the patronage was handled by Pate Philip.

DePue: Anybody else that you remember having, in terms of Edgar's initial leadership team?

Daniels: I worked, as I said earlier, with Kirk Dillard, quite frequently. I had a good relationship with Jim Edgar, even though I didn't agree with his initial start. We grew closer and closer together as time went by.

DePue: So, those were the primary relationships that you had.

Well, that gets us up to the point in time of 1992, the spring session. Here you've got the same problem, that Edgar goes in; he does some major heavy lifting to get a budget, a reduction in a lot of the staffing. He gets the extension of the income tax surcharge, just like he wants. Then he walks into the spring session, and says, "Oh my God, we missed the mark. The economy is even worse than we thought. We've got to cut even more seriously."

Before we get to that, I guess I want to... I'm not as well organized here as I wanted to be. I wanted to ask you about the March town hall meetings that you typically had. This is going to be an important one, in this

particular year, because you've got some tough decisions to make. The town hall meetings, that's something you did every year.

Daniels: Yes.

DePue: The dynamics of doing those, why you did those in the first place.

Daniels: Well, I did that to communicate with my constituency. Early on, I had many, many town hall meetings and continued throughout my career, so that constituents could come in and ask me direct questions, based upon the state or what my feelings were on issues. I thought it was a good way to communicate with my constituents, direct on.

DePue: Your quote is, with this. "My charge, first and foremost, are the communities I represent, and then, as the state Republican leader of the House, to have a state perspective." Now that's something that you say at a town hall meeting?

Daniels: Yes.

DePue: Do you agree with that statement?

Daniels: Absolutely. I'm sent to the legislature to represent, in that case, nine districts, nine communities and their interests. That's why the state is divided into 118 House districts and only 59 Senate districts. The senator's job is more representing the state to the people. My job is representing the people to the state.

DePue: But you're also the minority leader.

Daniels: Yeah, that's right.

DePue: And you've got that state perspective. Isn't it natural then, once you get in the role of minority leader, to have a state perspective and not the district?

Daniels: You can have a state perspective. It's not necessarily inconsistent with your district, but, if there are times that you have to take a statewide perspective, you need to explain that to your constituency, as to why. I always did; I always let them know. I did surveys; I did communication.

As I said, we were doing 3,000 pieces of casework a year in my office. No legislative office in the State of Illinois came anywhere near my office in terms of casework.

DePue: Casework, meaning for particular constituents.

Daniels: Constituents call and have a problem with state government, whether it's in the educational arena, whether they have a child that needs state assistance or whether or not they need a license plate. We were there to serve our

constituents and had a very open office in Addison, Illinois for a time, in Elmhurst, back and forth.

By having these town meetings, by doing surveys, by communicating with my constituency and seeing them in the office, that's one of the reasons I never had any real serious opposition and always won my elections handily. (train passing) The last election I ran, I won every precinct, every precinct.

DePue: Which has got to be very satisfying.

Daniels: Very satisfying, but I worked very hard at it, and I was very grateful to the people that voted me into office.

DePue: What were the particular concerns of your district, the things that really motivated the district members?

Daniels: It changed. One would say education is a strong support, taxation, property taxes, crime and justice, not as big here, because we didn't have the same degree of problems.

Today things have changed. When I first took office, we were strongly pro-life in this district, strongly pro-life, 56% Catholic. You could argue today, that we're probably more pro-choice. So, there's been a change in some people's views. Strong gun advocates, the Second Amendment, today there's more feelings towards gun control. So, districts change, and you have to be responsible to that, unless it's a philosophical point that you believe in. Then you tell people where you are and let them make the decision.

DePue: Well, the two that you just mentioned, gun control one, certainly abortion, that whole issue, that's very philosophical.

Daniels: Yes it is; yes it is.

DePue: Your position on both of those?

Daniels: Well, I was an advocate of the Second Amendment, and I was very strongly pro-life.

DePue: The issues that I saw in the March town hall meeting for 1992, you mentioned a couple already. Property tax relief, what's the fundamental issue in property tax?

Daniels: Well, property tax, of course, mainly supports the educational structure of a community. And the pressures on property tax, of course, would increase, based upon the educational structure's need for dollars. They would do "balloon budgeting," so to speak. They would maximize, put the maximum amount of increase in operation, and then hope that the taxes met that maximum levy.

We wanted to bring some control over that; hence, the 1991 property tax cap legislation, no more than the cost of living or 5%, whichever is less. By doing that, we tried to hold down our property tax increases and have been successful in certain ways.

DePue: Why was this so much more of an issue for the collar counties than Chicago or the downstate?

Daniels: Because, traditionally, we had a higher property tax rate for residential facilities than they did in Chicago. They have a different tax structure in Cook County than they do in the outlying counties.



"Pate" Philip and Lee Daniels watch as Governor Edgar signs a law increasing the state income tax while simultaneously imposing property tax limitations in collar counties. The signing took place in 1991 in Lombard, IL. The photo appeared in the August 16, 1992 edition of the Chicago Tribune Magazine.

DePue: You had a lot of people from Chicago are moving to the collar counties to get into better school districts, for example?

Daniels: Yes, yes. And we passed referendums, wherein Chicago, you don't have the same structure. You know they're not spending the same degree of dollars on education that we are out in this area.

DePue: Another one was noise abatement, O'Hare Airport, the third airport, that whole issue.

Daniels: I remember the first jet landing at O'Hare—I think it was 1952—and the noise that it created as it landed. I remember increased jet noise. I remember times when you could not sit outside, because every twenty seconds there was a plane flying overhead, and it destroyed your quality of life. I thought it was wrong. I understood fully the need for modern transportation, but I thought that they should implement, at O'Hare, landing and takeoff procedures that were in operation to other airports.

For instance, a steep climb on takeoff will, of course, create noise in the immediate takeoff but have less of a spread pattern throughout the area

and get higher quicker, without a slow ascension, which, of course, causes a spread of more noise. A steep landing, still within safety standards, creates less noise than a landing. They didn't practice that at O'Hare. Why? Because it takes more gas or diesel fuel to have a steep taking or a steep landing.

Things like that, which were easy to resolve, we couldn't get any cooperation from O'Hare Field. Noise was very, very important in the landing patterns. So, if you lived in a landing pattern, as Elmhurst does, it was a very big issue—Bensenville, Elmhurst, Villa Park, Lombard—big issue that we dealt with. It put me at odds many times with the Chicago administration, as I've said earlier, and with the Democrats. We were constantly trying to resolve that.

DePue: So, the nature of the discussions concerning noise abatement was another runway for O'Hare versus a third airport?

Daniels: That would be part of the discussion, but also moving to higher stagecraft aircraft with less noise. Today, you have airplanes that make less noise than they did in the '70s, '80s and '90s. That's helpful; you have different landing patterns, but you have an expansion of the airport, which we think we should pay more attention to Peotone and today's standards. But that's a huge issue for our area.

DePue: Well, part of it even included talk about money for noise abatement projects, not a small amount of money, something like \$200 million plus.

Daniels: Well sure, because, in the noise impacted areas, you had to stop teaching. Teachers couldn't teach in a classroom. When the planes flew overhead, they were so low and so noisy that you interrupted the ability to talk. So, we had a federal lawsuit pending.

Ultimately, I helped solve that federal lawsuit, which caused for insulation of schools; air conditioning, so you didn't have to have windows open in the springtime and, therefore, more noise, and some noise abatement in homes and so forth. And the program ultimately passed, which we were happy with.

DePue: Do you recall when that passed?

Daniels: No, I don't; but it was in the nineties.

DePue: And that gave the school districts and some other institutions the money to do the noise abatement necessary?

Daniels: Yes, and air condition their facilities. For instance, every grade school in Elmhurst is air conditioned. It's not so much just a matter of comfort, although that's a factor, it's a matter of noise abatement, so you don't have to

stop teaching every twenty seconds. I'm being a little extreme. It would be every two minutes is more like it.

DePue: But an incredible disruption when you're trying to teach.

Daniels: An incredible disruption.

DePue: How about the whole equation of that third airport?

Daniels: That's something that you and I could talk about for three years, because it involved many, many meetings; it involved many strategies. Governor Edgar led the strategies in trying to negotiate a third airport, in this case, Lake Calumet and a regional structure that would help the governance of the airport and, at the same time, still protect Chicago's revenue structure.

But the governance would deal with such issues as landing acceleration, landing patterns, landing facilities, noise abatement and the like. We came extremely close to passing something that would have been monumental reform and helped the suburbs a lot, but it fell short in the Senate, because the then Senate leader didn't agree with the governor.

DePue: Does that mean that Mayor Daley was generally opposed to a third airport?

Daniels: Generally, he was opposed to **anything** that impacted the revenue structure of O'Hare Field.

DePue: Because that third airport would inevitably be outside the boundaries of Chicago.

Daniels: Right, right. And, at one point, he was even offered the third airport. We'd build it, and he would run it. He still didn't want anything to do with it.

DePue: But he would have been in favor of another runway for O'Hare?

Daniels: Oh, twenty, as many as you could put in there.

DePue: Which I'm thinking that you've got another runway, it now has aircraft taking off near new neighborhoods that previously weren't affected.

Daniels: Arlington Heights, less on Elmhurst, more on Arlington Heights, new runways being constructed as we speak. Half...not half, but 30% of Bensenville has been taken over by the airport, homes actually torn down, cemeteries moved, for the airport.

DePue: Cemeteries moved?

Daniels: Oh yeah.

DePue: Chicago casino, that's also very much part of the mix. And this is about a timeframe when casinos were being built and opened in various areas.

Daniels: Right. If Chicago can get its act together, it would have a casino. But Mayor Daley never really wanted one, because he didn't know how he could control it, and he didn't want the state coming in and running a casino in the City of Chicago. But he couldn't figure out how to keep the mob influence out of it. So, to put a story together, which is very concise, if Chicago gets its act together and how it wants a casino, where it wants a casino, they'll get it. The legislature is controlled by Democrats and so are most of the constitutional offices.

DePue: Your personal philosophical views about casinos.

Daniels: I would have been generally opposed. I voted for one; [I] kind of wish I hadn't. That was a result of an agreement that was reached by the four caucuses and the leader and the governor. That included the casino at Rosemont. In hindsight, that was a vote that I would do differently today.

DePue: But when reading some of this material, some of the articles, I got the sense that you were kind of resigned; okay, we've got casinos. I don't get it, why Mayor Daley doesn't support a casino for the city.

Daniels: Well, that would be true for his own revenue structure. I mean, at the end of the day, if you have it, then you've got to make it work. I was opposed to the creation of casinos. I think that effort was led by Phil Rock, at the time. It passed the Senate, passed the House, without our votes. The interesting thing is, it passed with mainly Democrat votes.

DePue: Well, I think we're about at the point in time where we need to get you to your next appointment here.

Daniels: Right.

DePue: This has been a great discussion. I really appreciate your cooperation and bearing with me today. We've got 1992 next time, both the spring and towards the fall, and we get to talk about reapportionment.

Daniels: Yeah, in 1992, and we're in 2012, so we're still twenty years in the past.

DePue: We might need a couple more sessions, if you'd bear with me on that. But thank you very much. Anything else for a conclusion for today?

Daniels: No. I think we talked enough.

DePue: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

(end of interview)

Interview with Lee Daniels

ISL-A-L-2011-053.05

Interview # 5: March 7, 2012

Interviewer: Mark DePue

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

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.

DePue: Today is Wednesday, March 8, 2012. My name is Mark DePue, Director of Oral History at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library.

Daniels: March seventh.

DePue: March seventh. Well, we have some disagreement.

Daniels: Well, it's what my watch says.

DePue: Okay, mine says the eighth.

Daniels: No kidding?

DePue: I'm with the former speaker.

Daniels: Now listen, you've got to get this right. It's Wednesday, March seventh.

DePue: Okay, there it is; it's Wednesday, March seventh.

Daniels: At 2:06 in the afternoon.

DePue: We are in Elmhurst, Illinois, and I'm pretty sure this is our fifth session, Mr. Speaker.

Daniels: Joyous moments, all of them.

DePue: Yeah, we have a lot to talk about. So far it's been a fascinating discussion, and the next couple, three years that we're going to go through are pretty important years in terms of your leadership in the minority and then moving into the majority and into the speaker position itself.

But we're in 1992, where we left off last time, and we were talking about the spring session. I wanted to start with this one, and I suspect you'll remember this, April thirteenth, the Chicago Loop floods.

Daniels: Yeah.

DePue: And here you are, in the midst of **another** very contentious budget battle. In 1991, the discussion about the '92 budget was brutal. In January of '92, the governor had to come back and look for more cuts, and that was very painful. A couple three months later, you've got some very contentious budget discussions, and suddenly you've got the Chicago Loop floods. I'll turn it over to you.

Daniels: Well, who would have guessed? I mean, who would have even thought that the Loop could flood, because basements of buildings were flooded, and these were the high rises. Documents were destroyed and so forth. And interesting enough, the dredging company that took most of the blame for it was an Oak Brook company, Chicago Dredging, located in Oak Brook, Illinois, which is, of course, part of DuPage County.

Those were times that they obviously sought state help, and Governor Edgar was interested in doing that, but it created some financial problems for us, as well.

DePue: Was that something that finally did come to pass, where the state helped to literally bail out Chicago?

Daniels: I think literally they do. I don't recall the circumstances of the exact program, but it was certainly on our minds and discussion.

DePue: We talked quite a bit last time about the whole issue of a third airport, down at Lake Calumet, maybe, at that time. Do you recall the impact that the flood had on that particular discussion? Did that make it more difficult or less likely to occur?

Daniels: I'm not... Specifically, maybe you can give me some reminders there from your research. I know Lake Calumet was an issue that was discussed quite frequently. It was an issue that was big to the suburbs, because the creation of a third airport would take some of the pressure off of O'Hare Field, and we were interested in doing that, as is moving forward to today. Peotone is an

issue that still continues today, but Lake Calumet was an issue that was pushed heavily by people, for the creation of a third airport.

DePue: I really don't have any specifics, other than to say that the price tag that was being kicked around at that time was something in the neighborhood of \$10.8 billion.

Daniels: Well, it would have been expensive, because building runways and condemning the property and landfills and things like that would have been expensive to maintain.

It's important to remember that, at his time, Meigs Field was still open. So, we talk about a third airport; you're almost, at that point, talking about a fourth, because Meigs was a feeder airport in the sense that it took the pressure off of some of the larger airports, Midway and O'Hare, for commuter planes. People that worked in Chicago would fly in. Mainly state employees would fly in, land at Meigs, work during the day, then go back and catch a state plane back to Springfield.

The thought was that O'Hare Field was basically landlocked by surrounding communities, and, by building a new airport, you could move freight over there, such as UPS [United Parcel Service] or FedEx [Federal Express], and you could have some passenger facilities tied in with...Midway would be a bonus for everybody.

On the map for quite a while, and, of course, as I said, moving forward, the resolution ultimately was Peotone. But quite a fight.

DePue: The '93 budget discussions that were going on in the spring of 1992, April, but I don't need to tell you, it really starts heating up, May and June timeframe.

Daniels: Right.

DePue: The budget address, which I believe is in April, basically kicks the whole discussions off, Edgar recommends another \$350 million in cuts, and that's for the fiscal year 1992, plus borrowing of \$500 million. I would guess, that that refers to the next fiscal year.

Let me just put some specifics out here. January of 1993...I might have been off by a year here, but anyway, that's the timeframe. Unemployment was 7.3%; inflation was 2.6%; mortgage interest rates were 7.5%, which is down significantly from ten years before, but, looking at where we're at today, is very high.

Daniels: It didn't speak well for the economic times, obviously. And turning to increasing revenue was not an option, in our opinion. In order to solve this,

the only thing you could do is cut governmental spending, which is what Edgar proposed.

Now, I remember Governor Edgar in those days was very attentive to every item of the state budget and was the right man at the right time to deal with a very difficult issue. In fact, you could say, even today he would be the right man at the right time, because of our spending problem. But he recognized that it was the spending that was causing the troubles. That's why he proposed the cuts. And, without increasing revenues, the only other way you could pay bills was to borrow the money, and then pay the bills, and then pay off the debt structure that you had for the borrowed money.

DePue: As a fiscal policy, what was your view on the idea of borrowing?

Daniels: Well, I didn't like it, because it was creation of a debt. I was hoping that the economy would recover, which history tells us it did, and we could utilize that money for that.

DePue: A year later, the dynamics are going to be completely different.

Daniels: Completely different. We keep on hoping that, today.

DePue: Well, we don't want to get into that discussion. (laughing)

Daniels: I know; I know.

DePue: We could probably go for a long time on that.

Daniels: Too long.

DePue: Edgar did call for another 12% cut for most agencies. But, as I recall, he wasn't doing across the board, level cuts?

Daniels: No, no. There were many, many discussions that were held with the governor, with the other leaders and separately with the governor. I know that I met with him and, several times, talked about the disability community and expressed to him that you just can't cut them anymore, because these are people that, through no fault of their own, are reliant upon government services to exist and for their very substance and ability to participate in our country's greatness. Some people wouldn't have any food; some people wouldn't have any clothing; some people wouldn't have any services, and somebody suffering from a disability, such as a brain injury, struggles just to put their clothing on.

So, what I encouraged the governor was to be very careful how he approached cutting spending for those people truly in need. And I say, truly in need, not a handout to somebody, but they need governmental assistance in order to exist in our society.

DePue: I would guess that another one of those areas, he wanted to increase spending in, education, which is pretty much always something that you hear from the governors.

Daniels: You do. Every politician talks about putting more money into education. It is, in our constitution, part of our requirement, to meet the responsibility to educate somebody to their highest ability.

The problem with that is, education understands that every year they're going to get more money. And, instead of education, statewide, budgeting to keep expenses low, they budget, based upon how expenses will be coming in, and many times did what we call *balloon budgeting*. They would levy to their maximum, hoping that there would be an increase in real estate values. Then they would get an increase in property taxes, and then fight with Springfield to get an increase in the state's contribution to education.

In other words, every year, education would get more money, and it's been that way forever. And it's probably time that you take a careful look at that, and ask the education community to start being as responsible as some other governmental units are, in terms of their spending program.

DePue: Well, education is something we're going to talk about a lot once we get up to calendar year 1995. I know there's an issue before that time, as well, so, we'll hold off on a detailed discussion until then.

DCFS [Department of Children and Family Services] was also one that Edgar was pushing for an increase.

Daniels: Yes. And, of course, children and their dependency on state assistance and caseworkers and overall. I think, Jess McDonald was the director of DCFS at the time, a very well-known individual, very well-meaning and had a good relationship with the General Assembly. The question was, can you really cut spending in that area, without sacrificing some assistance to people that needed our help? Edgar was wanting to maintain at least a base level of support.

DePue: But certainly there were more layoffs at the state government level. That's one of the reasons Illinois now has one of the lowest percentage, if not the lowest, per capita.

Daniels: That's one of the things you have to do. You have to cut state workers, and yes, that's what happened.

DePue: Here's one I do want you to reflect on a little bit, the whole discussion about that surcharge increase that Edgar ran for in 1990. He was elected, saying we are going to retain that surcharge increase. A portion of that increase was meant to go back to local government, and, I think, it was this year that there

was a discussion that we just can't do that. We don't have the money. We need to maintain the state's programs. We don't have the money to do that. And that meant a \$237 million payout to the local governments that, if the state retained that, and something like \$22.5 million for DuPage County or the collar counties' areas?

Daniels: Well, this is a discussion that, in tough times, always has to take place, in terms of what the government sends back to local governments, based upon a distributive share. As you know, even in today's environment, that's being discussed, in terms of cutting back, and it was discussed at that time. It brings a lot of heat, by the way. (chuckles)

DePue: Well, yeah, that's why I wanted to ask your opinion. I think this is your quote, "The governor is of the opinion that we do not have the \$237 million to distribute to the municipalities and that we need that for the state to conduct our necessary services. Even though we are engaged in cost cutting and the reduction of employees and other measures to save money, he still needs those additional dollars. I will support the intention of the governor to balance the budget."

Daniels: Well, did I support Governor Edgar in his initiatives? The answer is yes. I believe that he was in the right direction, but I could tell you, every leader, every legislator had a tremendous amount of pressure from home. Every municipality, every unit of government that benefited in the distributive formula was talking to us and fighting losing that distributive formula. The fact of the matter is you have to cut back on some of it, maybe not all of it.

DePue: Were you worried about your own political future?

Daniels: I had the benefit of having an extremely good relationship in my district. You always have to balance your individual judgment with what the district itself believes in. But I had the good fortune of having an electorate that I was able to communicate with and make sure they understood where I was going and why I was doing some things.

So, it wasn't a concern for my individual election and my individual relationship within districts. But it was a concern for how my members would view that. Remember, as the Republican leader of the House, I represent not just my own district, but every other district in the state of Illinois. Also, my primary responsibility is not only to set the Republican agenda, but also to maintain a position that allows my members to be reelected to their office, as well.

So, where gun control might be an issue that's popular in Chicago, gun control is very negative in southern Illinois. So, when you take a position on gun control, you have to balance that off with what your southern members and central Illinois members view. I use that as an example.

So, you just cannot operate on a free basis. You have to consistently factor in what is your ultimate responsibility. First to your district, that's who elects you; that's who sends you to Springfield, and, as a House member, district representation is the most important, unlike a Senate member, who is more concerned with state issues and a larger district. That's why they call themselves *the lords*. We have other words for them, but that's what they call themselves. House members are representing the populous, and our second obligation, on my part, was to my members and then, individually, to their districts.

DePue: You've got a Republican governor recommending this.

Daniels: Right.

DePue: He's got the support of the minority leader in the House, but how do the rank and file members, Republican and Democrat, line up on this issue?

Daniels: Well, they wouldn't. Most of my members would have trouble with it.

DePue: Did most of them end up voicing strong opposition to it?

Daniels: In our caucuses, it would be pretty hot caucus discussions about issues and the budget. This would be one that would cause them some concern.

DePue: How about the Democrats?

Daniels: Well, not as heavily, would be my opinion, but, they're going to posture themselves in a way that would be laying out groundwork that's not necessarily the same as Edgar's, I would think.

DePue: I would think, though, that the representatives from Chicago certainly—and Rockford and the Quad Cities and East St. Louis—would have a stake in this, as well.

Daniels: Well, they would have a stake in it. And they would, again, on a political basis, they would, as a knee-jerk reaction, be against the position that the governor is taking, for a populous position.

DePue: Once the Democrats get the budget, Madigan—he can get the democratic support, because he still controls the House—cuts another \$350 million from Edgar's 1993 budget. You're shaking your head.

Daniels: Well, sound familiar? What's happening today? The fact of the matter is, it's point, counterpoint. Governor Edgar would cut the budget by X millions of dollars. Mike Madigan would come in with a deeper cut and say, "You want to cut? We'll show you how to cut."

One of the things I said to Mike Madigan, privately was, “You know, you’re trying to out-cut Republicans; it’s not going to work. They’ll continue to cut and continue to reduce the size of government, where your members are going to go crazy,” because, as Mike Madigan knows—and this is a sweeping generalization—Republicans go to Springfield to talk about good government and to talk about maintaining a conservative government and keeping our cost of government down.

Democrats go to Springfield to spend money and create new programs. Again, that’s a sweeping generalization, and that’s as true as history tells us, whether it’s on a federal level or a state level. So, Mike Madigan proposing additional cuts does not sit well with his membership in large. So, we’re pretty sure that, at the end of the day, he’s going to come around to a higher level of spending than what he’s articulating publicly.

DePue: So, is this, do you think, at the time, strictly a political ploy that he was representing?

Daniels: Oh sure, sure.

DePue: But he does have a reputation—and tell me if I’m wrong here—Madigan has the reputation of being a fiscal hawk.

Daniels: Well, he is knowledgeable about the budget; there’s no question about that. He spends time on it. He himself is not a big spender, but keep in mind who he represents. One of the ways he stays in power is by representing his diverse caucus. His caucus is as diverse as my caucus.

DePue: If not more diverse.

Daniels: Perhaps.

DePue: One of the issues that always comes up, and I think it certainly came up strongly in that year, was the whole issue of property tax. Now, I believe, in that first year, Edgar was successful to get some property tax relief for DuPage County, for the collar counties?

Daniels: The collar counties, yes.

DePue: And there was talk, in this particular budget fight, to extend that throughout the entire state.

Daniels: Correct.

DePue: I don’t know if I’ve given you enough opportunity to flush out the dynamic of property tax and why that was so important. Maybe the question can be, why, historically, property tax for the collar counties was double digit, year after year after year?

Daniels: Well, they did the balloon budgeting that you and I talked about earlier in this session. What happened was school districts would do their maximum levy, to the maximum extent. Then, as property values rose, they would have a substantial increase from one tax year to another and receive an additional sum of money at a higher level, [Rather] than really looking at it in a responsible fashion and saying, "We don't need to levy for this much money. We should keep it lower." They were doing maximum levying and balloon levying. And our residents were being very upset by the size of increase in property tax bills from year to year to year to year.

So, our theory was, let's keep it at a responsible level. Let's keep it at a percentage or the cost of living, which is ever lower—and remember, at this time, the cost of living was going up, whether it was 3% or 4%, whatever is lower, 5% of the cost of living. We implemented that, after a major fight for the collar counties, and then the rest of the state wanted the same thing, because they were also starting to experience increased property values, increased taxes.

DePue: To the same extent as...?

Daniels: Not as much, because we had higher growth. Remember, DuPage County was one of the highest growth counties in the country, at that time. Now you find Lake, Will, Kane having a higher level of growth, because we're becoming more landlocked in DuPage. But, at that time we were one of the highest growth areas in the country. As a result, additional tax money was coming in.

It was our determination that it was irresponsible to do the kind of levying that the school districts were doing. So, when we passed that, it was based upon our experience and input from our constituents.

DePue: Which means they passed that for the first year or for the second year?

Daniels: For the first year. And then when we got into the battle about making it statewide... We wanted to do it in Cook County as well. But, initially, Cook County was... Cook County is on a different tax structure than the rest of the state. They classify real estate and real estate housing and industrial and so forth is classified at a different level than in DuPage County or the rest of the state of Illinois.

So, the initial proposal, the one that passed, excluded Cook from the property tax relief. It required a tremendous battle and took us into July. We were being resisted at all levels by the Democrat leaders, Mike Madigan and Phil Rock. Finally, with the assistance of the governor, we were able to succeed. I can't remember exactly what day in July, but it was pretty late.

DePue: But not as late as the previous year. You didn't miss a payroll at least.

Daniels: No. (chuckles)

DePue: But any time you go past July then—

Daniels: Hypothetically. The issue is to get the job done, and whether you lose a whole month's pay or not is not the real issue. The real issue is to do it right and get it done right.

DePue: Was that the main issue that involved the discussions down on the budget?

Daniels: Primarily.

DePue: This question applies not just to 1992, but to 1991, as well and, I think, especially those two years, when the budgets were being cut. There was an awful lot of protest going on in Springfield. All kinds of interest groups were coming into Springfield and protesting and trying to make their voices heard in the legislature. What's the impact that had on legislators like yourself and your members?

Daniels: I think it depends upon the issue. I remember one of the most successful protests was by 4,000-plus doctors, who came to Springfield one day and stood out in front of the capitol by the Lincoln statue and protested the lack of tort reform in Illinois, or medical malpractice reform, we can say. That was a pretty effective time, because knowing that there were professionals and doctors standing out there on the lawn and then going to individual legislators' offices, it was a pretty effective protest.

But you do have firemen, policemen, state employees, League of Women Voters, nurses, lawyers, and you have every kind of interest group you can imagine, at various times protesting. You become aware of their issues, and you treat them respectfully. But, in the end of the day, the protest itself does not have that much impact on it. They do bring issues—I'm not suggesting that they don't do that—because they do highlight the issue they're concerned about, and that can be very effective.

DePue: Was there any resentment sometimes that this is eating up valuable time?

Daniels: No. It was democracy in action. It's great. People have asked me about it. I said, "Go to Springfield; you make your voices heard."

DePue: Sometimes was it counterproductive?

Daniels: I think you could say, depending upon the mood of the crowd. If it turned ugly it would be counterproductive. But for the most part, in all my years there, that was pretty rare. I mean, you did get in an argument with somebody who didn't agree with your position. But most of the protestors—if you can call them that—were sound in their approach and their ability to communicate with the legislators, because you don't want to be counterproductive.

DePue: Another one of the initiatives that I think was being worked that year, and it was...Let's call it Edgar's welfare reform initiative, which, I think, you called EarnFare, which was to encourage people to get back into the workforce and find ways to get them back in the workforce.

Daniels: Right. To take able-bodied men off of the state payroll, so to speak, and to eliminate the queens of welfare. It was an effort, which was, at that time, a national effort, as well.

So, it wasn't just Illinois limited, but nationally they were trying to reform welfare, the idea being that nobody should be on welfare that's an able-bodied person. If you're able to work, you should get a job. At that time, the jobs were more plentiful than they may be today.

But it was a monumental reform movement that he [Governor Edgar] articulated and presented. And frankly, I think he showed that it did work and did, in the future years, work.

DePue: How much was he an innovator in this field? You mentioned that was done in other areas as well. The question is, was he one of the first, the first?

Daniels: He was one of the first, and, if I recall correctly, I think he was one of the first to get it done statewide.

DePue: Wisconsin was always the model that was presented as the way we should do things. Was this not even before Wisconsin making its reform?

Daniels: I'm not sure about that; I don't remember, but I know that he was one of the first implementers of this kind of reform, which was good.

DePue: One of the things that was done...You mentioned budget cuts, but there was at least one tax increase, and I know Governor Edgar found this one hard to do, but he felt like he had to do it. That was to increase the bed tax in hospitals and nursing homes.

Daniels: Yes.

DePue: And the rationale for doing that was, if we do this, it will raise some rates for people who are patrons of these places, but we'll get a bigger payback from the federal government.

Daniels: Well...repeat your question again for me, will you please. I'm sorry.

DePue: One of the things that the governor felt that he had to do was to find some more revenue, and one way to do that was to increase the bed tax for hospitals—

Daniels: And nursing homes, right. And ultimately that was done. It did bring in some additional revenue, but it wasn't without some strenuous opposition at the time, nursing home opposition and the like.

But again, it's all in the Edgar philosophy on the management of government. You have to find some additional funds to support the necessary programs in government, to support people that need your help. It was not a time that you wanted a general revenue increase, but it was a time that you had to examine every aspect of funding. Increasing bed tax was one of the ways of getting more assistance, because the federal government would match that.

DePue: I know, in talking to Governor Edgar about this particular budget year, he felt like—I think I mentioned this before—he felt like he won the battle in 1991. He felt like he didn't win this particular budget fight.

Daniels: Do you recall why he felt that way in '92?

DePue: Well, that Madigan and the House Democrats had a much stronger influence over the outcome, and he had to compromise with them more than he perhaps wanted to.

Daniels: Well, you see, this would be an example of Madigan learning. Madigan rarely makes the same mistake twice, if you accept the premise that Edgar won '91. But, if you accept his words, Edgar's words, that he didn't win in '92, it was because Madigan strategized how to make sure that '91 didn't happen to him, Madigan, in '92.

That's one of the, what we would call "the geniuses," of Mike Madigan, to be fair about it. He never made the same mistake twice. He would spend all kinds of time figuring out how to manage the opposition, as you might call it, and making sure that they're in the forefront. They were at the time, of course, in the majority, so they did have that ability to sustain that fight.

I would not necessarily have characterized Jim Edgar as losing that battle, because you can't get anything done without the governor. So, ultimately he has to sign off on it. But, to say that Madigan had more input in '92 than he did in '91 would be accurate.

DePue: We're going to go back a little bit, I think it was April of 1992. I wanted to ask you about your sponsorship of a bill that would make stalking a felony.

Daniels: Right. The chief of police of the city of Elmhurst came into my office, who, by the way, is a Senator in Springfield today, John Millner, who was then the chief of police of Elmhurst, Illinois. A young lady had broken off her relationship with her then boyfriend and started dating another young man, and her ex-boyfriend started to stalk her, calling on the phone and making all

kinds of suggestive remarks about getting back together again and making remarks that nobody will ever have her if he can't have her. It was reported to the police, but there was very little they could do about it because they didn't have any evidence of that.

Well, a mere few blocks from this office, and from the Elmhurst police station, the ex-boyfriend met his former girlfriend and her new boyfriend in the driveway of her parents' home and shot and killed them, and then ended up taking his own life afterwards. It was a classic example of stalking, but very little proof available. And, by the way, what could you do if you did have that? Were they threats, intimidation, and what kind of law would apply to it?

DePue: You mean before that time, it wasn't really a crime?

Daniels: It wasn't a really a crime. You could make it a crime, if you could prove that somebody threatened battery. But to say, "You should come back to me; you should be my girlfriend again; you shouldn't be breaking up with me; if I can't have you, no one else will have you." How do you interpret those things, and what law do you fall under? Very, very difficult to prosecute, and no real law was classified in it.

Chief Millner suggested that we needed to address that issue and really needed to talk about a stalking law or anti-stalking. What happens if somebody puts something in writing, is making phone calls, is threatening that person, is following the person and really making life miserable, and talking about getting back together again, or a classic example of what we would call stalking?

I filed a bill in Springfield, and it became one of the first bills in the country, moving forward, to pass and be signed into law. It's one that I was very proud of because, as we now know, there are several instances of that, which at least give some remedy.

Does it solve all the problems? No. You still cannot walk up to somebody and say, "You're threatening this person. Either stop it or we're going to throw you in jail." You still have to have proof. But we afforded an opportunity, if the proof is there, that would make it a felony and to provide some protection to young people that were suffering from it.

DePue: Were you one of the first?

Daniels: We were one of the first states, and John Cullerton, today the Senate president, was the sponsor in the Senate.

DePue: So, it doesn't hurt to have a bill like that, with leadership from both parties.

Daniels: Oh, no. And, of course, at the time, remember, we were in the minority. So you wanted to have a majority participation.

DePue: If I remember correctly, the Republicans in that year had the majority in the Senate?

Daniels: In the Senate.

DePue: But not the House.

Daniels: But not the House.

DePue: I don't know if you recall this next bill, but the Homestead Exemption Bill passes on August ninth of that year.

Daniels: Well, again a property tax issue. The valuation of your property and giving you an exemption, based upon your ownership of the property, would have been addressing that. I didn't remember exactly what time it passed, but that's an interesting date, August.

DePue: Yeah, when the rest of the heavy work is done by that time.

Daniels: I think we were pretty tired. (both laugh)

DePue: Well, that gets us into September. From what I can tell, it's September of 1992—I don't know if the specific date is all that important—that the reapportionment issue got to a logjam. And, as had happened the last couple reapportionment fights, it ends up with a drawing out of a bowl.

Daniels: Right.

DePue: The theory is that there's some kind of a hat, but that year it was a crystal bowl from which the name was pulled. And it results in the Republicans being able to control the redistricting map.

Daniels: Right, and a replica of the bowl is in the office next to this, as you've seen. George Ryan pulled the name out, and I believe that the individual that he pulled out was Al Jordan, who was then chairman of the Republican Party. So, where the commission was made up with equal membership of House and Senate, the Republican member created a majority for Republicans.

But the issue was not as clear as it could be because we had a Democrat attorney general, Roland Burris. And, although at that time we had a Republican Senate, we had a Democrat House, and we had a Republican governor. So, as you know, in order for a bill to become law, it requires passage of both houses of the legislature and signature by the governor.



A September 5, 1991 House Floor Pass, commemorating the Illinois Legislative Commission Drawing that led to 1) the Republicans controlling redistricting in that year and 2) Daniels' becoming Speaker of the House in 1995, following the Republican winning the majority in the 1994 elections.

What happened in that year was, with the drawing of the tie breaking member, we then controlled

the redistricting process for the first time in years. And, by the way, [we] haven't controlled it since, jumping forward.

It is an unfortunate way of dealing with flipping of a coin or drawing from a hat or drawing, in this case, from a bowl, that you determine how you make up the new legislative districts in Illinois. It's not a pure way; it is an **extremely** political way. I've drawn legislative maps in the thirty-plus years I was in Springfield, and I've seen the good, and I've seen the bad. The good, if you have good intentions.

The good, if you draw a district that's contiguous and compact. In other words, you don't destroy communities; you don't divide them into a number of districts. The bad is, if you do destroy communities; you do put communities that are not of the same general interest, as adjoining communities, and you then go out to intentionally disenfranchise voters from one district to another or to defeat sitting legislators.

As history tells you, that redistricting process was very, very involved. We ended up in federal court. We actually had a three judge panel ruling, supporting the maps that we drew, the Republicans drew. And Republicans, for the first time in years, controlled the makeup of the State of Illinois in districting.

DePue: Talking to political wonks, if you will, they'll tell you that there are few things that make the general public yawn more than these redistricting battles. And there's nothing that gets political insiders energized more than these redistricting battles, because they figure that's a whole ball game.

Daniels: That's a fair comment. It is [an] extremely sophisticated, difficult, and in some cases scientific, approach to setting out legislative boundaries. Remember, in Illinois you have 118 House districts, so you're dividing the state into 118 different districts.

Now, do you take a district like a portion of DuPage County and run it into Cook County and Chicago? If you do, there's a good chance that will be a Democrat district. Or do you keep a district strictly within DuPage County, which, in that case, probably would be a Republican district? Or do you take a spoke out of DuPage strong base and run a little bit of a spoke into Cook, take a little bit of Democrat district and still maintain a Republican district, or the vice versa? These are all ways that you could do it.

Is it a yawn? You bet it is. And is it difficult; is it involved and sometimes boring? Yes, but it's the height of political operations within the country. An example, if I can talk about where we are today. Can I do that?

DePue: Absolutely.

Daniels: Well, Nancy Pelosi wants to be the next Speaker of the House. Here we are in the year 2012. So, in the redistricting of 2011, the Democrats are redistricting the congressional districts, with an effort to try to beat five of the incumbent Republican Congressmen.

DePue: In Illinois?

Daniels: In Illinois. Nancy Pelosi has publicly said, if they can win five seats in Illinois from Republicans, that she believes she can be reelected Speaker of the House. So, Illinois has become a battleground for the 2012 elections of Congress in the hopes that the Democrats, on their view, will pick up five seats. They redistricted Illinois in such a way that it gives them an opportunity.

Example, we sit today in Elmhurst, Illinois. This was a district represented by the famous Henry Hyde and recently Peter Roskam, the fourth most powerful person in Washington. Our new Congressman will be Mike Quigley, who lives over by the lakeshore in Chicago. And they've run a runner out from Chicago, the lakeshore, right along the lake, through Wrigley Field, through O'Hare Field, into Elmhurst, taking a piece of Elmhurst, running it through a portion of Oak Brook and a portion of Hindsdale, grabbing Judy Biggert's house, and then running it back to Chicago, to the lakeshore, or a big "L." It is a heavily Democrat district, which, of course, for

the first time in our city's history, we will be in a district represented primarily by Chicago.

DePue: What was the name again?

Daniels: Congressman Quigley, Q-u-i-g-l-e-y. A nice guy, but Congressman Quigley is a hardcore Democrat. Now, I would submit that some of the cultural differences and the community differences are a lot different in Elmhurst, Illinois than they are on the lakeshore or Wrigley Field or O'Hare Field.

DePue: What do you think the chances are of the inevitable Republican court suit?

Daniels: They're going to lose.

DePue: And do Republicans play the game markedly different than Democrats do when they can call the shots?

Daniels: Well, again, it depends upon the political dynamics. Do the Republicans control the Supreme Court of Illinois? No. Is there a Democrat attorney general? Yes. Is there a Democrat governor? Yes. So, let's say the Republicans control redistricting. They still have to get through the attorney general and the Supreme Court of Illinois and, ultimately, a three judge federal panel.

So, the answer is, in the current makeup today, even if Republicans drew the new districts, they would have done it differently.

DePue: At the national level, the 2010 election was a very good year for Republicans, not just that they regained control of the U.S. Congress, at least the U.S. House, but that they also gained a lot of governorships across the country.

Daniels: Yes, yes.

DePue: That was one of the explanations of why that was very important for the Republicans, that a lot of those governors could have a much bigger role in playing with the redistricting in their states.

Daniels: Yes, that would be true, and the makeup of the general assemblies in the various states. But, as I said, it's interesting to note how Illinois plays into the national scene on the Democrats' efforts in the year 2012, to reelect Nancy Pelosi as Speaker of the House. So, if they don't win five seats in Illinois, it sets back some of their strategies.

DePue: And the game is played the same when it's applied, not to U.S. congressional districts, but to state legislative districts?

Daniels: It's pretty much the same. You know, on the congressional districts, you really go into federal court, right off the bat. But in the State House and

Senate, you start with the attorney general of Illinois, who has to review it, determine which side he or she wants to be on, and then, what position does the governor take, and then the Illinois Supreme Court?

The Illinois Supreme Court today has a majority of Democrats on it. So, they would have an advantage with House and Senate districts locally, within Illinois, to sustain their position. So, even if Republicans controlled the map and the drawing of the map, they would have to be careful to make sure it passed muster within Illinois.

DePue: If you're talking about state legislative districts and senatorial districts, is this an issue that can even be taken up to the U.S. Supreme Court, or is it strictly a state issue?

Daniels: No, it can be, if it violates the Federal Constitution. If it's strictly an Illinois issue, that would be one thing, but if it violates the Federal Constitution, it can be taken to the U.S. Supreme Court. Generally, the state legislative districts do not get up to the Supreme Court of the United States, but congressional districts can.

DePue: Well, let's get down to the specifics.

Daniels: Does it get boring? (both chuckle)

DePue: It's never boring to me; I'm fascinated by the discussion. But 1992, what was your role in helping to redraw that map? You had as big a stake as anybody.

Daniels: Oh well, I can tell you that there was a meeting, and we, of course, were very excited about the fact that, for the first time in years, we were controlling the redistricting process. I was in a meeting with Phil Rock, Mike Madigan, Pate Philip, Lee Daniels, and then Attorney General Roland Burris, where Roland Burris said to Pate Philip, the president of the Illinois Senate—and I was the Republican leader, minority leader of the House—said to Pate Philip, while I was there, "If you will agree to a Republican district for the Senate and a Democrat House district drawing, we can solve this."

So, all Pate had to do is say, "Let's do it." To his credit, he said, "No, I won't agree with that. We believe that the true representation of Illinois would make up a Republican House and a Republican Senate, and I'm not going to turn my back on Lee Daniels or the Republicans in the House," to his credit.

DePue: Who actually was drawing the maps?

Daniels: Well, it would be our staffs, since we controlled the map drawing at that point. It would be the Senate and the House Republican staffs. It was very much involved with the Senate Republicans, and we were working with them.

DePue: Who on your staff, particularly?

Daniels: Mike Tristano.

DePue: And that was your chief of staff at the time?

Daniels: Yeah.

DePue: Are there sophisticated computer models that are used for this stuff?

Daniels: Oh, heavens.

DePue: Exactly how does this work?

Daniels: Well, as sophisticated as you could get at the time. They're more sophisticated today, because it's twenty years later, but as sophisticated at the time as you could get. We had the best computers that money could buy or that science had made, to identify the makeup of a particular district, households and the like. It was so sophisticated that I could take your house, where you live, and make it into a Democrat or a Republican district.

DePue: The old joke is they could split the bed, if they needed to.

Daniels: If they needed to, we'd do it.

DePue: What was the goal that you had as the minority leader?

Daniels: To give us a fair opportunity, with a fair map. I knew that I wasn't going to get a map that said, it's a lay down; it's all yours; you absolutely are going to be the next speaker of the House and understood that Pate Philip was the president of the Senate, and he was going to have a major input in the map itself.

We were grateful to him [Pate Philip] that he didn't accept Roland Burris' offer of making him the president and keeping Madigan as the speaker. We were grateful for that. (coughing) Excuse me.

All I wanted was a fair opportunity to have an opportunity to win the majority, knowing that whatever map I was going to end up with was going to be competitive, was not going to be automatic.

DePue: Back in 1990, I believe, you have a serious challenge for your minority leadership. You can correct me if I'm wrong here, but the big issue was you weren't successful in getting new Republicans elected.

Daniels: Well, that's what Tom McCracken said, but it turned out not to be a big opposition. He had only a handful of votes for him in the election for the Republican leader, and I had a substantial number of votes. So, where he made a lot of noise, at the end of the day, he wasn't very effective in the opposition.

DePue: But did you understand that, if you're going to be judged as a successful minority leader, that's what you have to be able to do?

Daniels: Well, I think you have to be able to elect people to office. We were operating under some very difficult maps, a very difficult economy, very difficult times. And I maintained that I had one of the top political strategists in the United States of America as my opposition. My opposition was Mike Madigan.

And remember this, in a general sweeping generalization, again, in the start of an election, in the general election, Mike Madigan starts with thirty-six members; I start with zero, and that's the city of Chicago. So the score, before you even start counting how many seats I have, is thirty-six to zero.

I have to make that all up in central and downstate Illinois, collar counties. That's where my membership comes from, because we don't have any members from Chicago. Actually, we have a half a member of Chicago, a half district in Chicago and half in suburban Cook. But, when you start with that against you and you start with somebody as skilled as Mike Madigan—and he is—it's a very difficult row to hoe.

Now, Phil Rock, who I have the highest regard for, was not the same political strategist as Mike Madigan. As I would say to Pate Philip, "I wish I had your opposition, and, by the way, you only have to run three to five races a year, where I have to run twenty to thirty races every single year. And by the way, we raise approximately the same amount of money. I always raise more money, but I have more districts I have to cover." So, where sometimes the criticism is legitimate, sometimes it's not.

There's no question about the fact that I had my successes and I had my failures over my career. I'm willing to accept that. All I could tell you is that we never stopped trying, and we were always in the fight. Whether I won or whether I lost, I was fighting the good fight and fighting at the time.

That's what my members understood, when one of my members, unfortunately, decided to make a big heyday and try to upset my apple cart. And by the way, this is the same guy that ended up suing his father, who was his law partner, in the future years, so it tells you a little bit there. I couldn't resist that.

DePue: September of '92, somewhere in there, is the date that the Republican's name was drawn out of the bowl.

Daniels: Right.

DePue: So, does that mean that the maps for the fall '92 elections are still the old maps?

Daniels: No.

DePue: The new redistricting doesn't occur until '94, then?

Daniels: The new redistricting, no. The new redistricting would have started in the election '92. That's when Pate Philip became president of the Senate. Actually, your election of November '92 was the first election under the new map. Pate Philip became president of the Senate. I picked up some seats, but not enough. It wasn't until the elections in '94 that I picked up thirteen seats and won the speakership.

DePue: Now I'm kicking myself, because I don't have the specific number of Republicans versus Democrats after the '92 election. I apologize for that.

Daniels: That's all right. We were, I think; I don't recall, but somewhere around seven.

DePue: That you picked up seven?

Daniels: In the '94 election, I picked up thirteen.

DePue: I'm jumping the gun a little bit, but after '94, there were sixty-four Republicans in the Illinois House and fifty-four Democrats.

Daniels: Right, right. Yes.

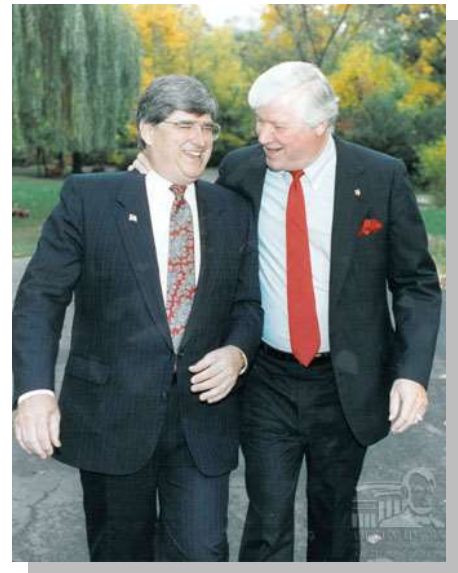
DePue: Presidential elections that year, not the best year for Republicans. The dynamic at the presidential level, you've got three candidates, three serious candidates, because that's the Ross Perot challenge. He got close to 19% of the vote, [George H.W.] Bush gets 37.5 and [William Jefferson "Bill"] Clinton gets 43.

Do you recall how that really played out in Illinois? Apparently, the Republicans at the state level did a little bit better.

Daniels: In the election of '94?

DePue: Ninety-two.

Daniels: Ninety-two. They did do a little better. Pate Philip was elected president of the Senate. We picked up a few seats in the House. I don't recall exactly how many, but not enough for the Republicans in the House to gain the majority. And then, for the next two years, we worked on, not only the process that we were going to follow, but also how we were going to handle the '94 elections. Can I take a



Lee Daniels and "Pate" Philip, the photo used for the Chicago Tribune Magazine cover in 1992.

break here; would you mind?

DePue: You sure can.

(pause in recording)

DePue: Ready?

Daniels: Yep.

DePue: We took a little bit of a break. We're back at it again, and we've just had a great discussion about the impact of reapportionment. It had a very big impact on you and for the Republicans in the state. That gets us up to 1993 and that particular legislative year. Quite a different year, I would think, because the budget battle isn't going to be nearly as contentious, because the state's economy is rebounding significantly.

Daniels: It is, and it's showing evidence of recovery, and, of course, the Republicans are showing strength throughout the country. One of the measures that we would utilize is, what is the public's...I'm speaking as a House member now, because it's different for a Senate member. But, as a House member, we would constantly examine the public's attitude towards the Congress in Washington, D.C.

There's an interesting dynamic that, if there's a good public rating of the congressional delegation on the Republican side, and their opportunities in Congress, that it has a positive effect on those of us in the Illinois House. It's an interesting dynamic. So the converse would be equally true. If people have a negative opinion about congressional Republicans, it works to our disadvantage in Illinois.

So, one of the things we were benefiting by, in '93, is there was a huge public attitude of support for Republicans in the congressional House and, as you know, that was led by Newt Gingrich. Newt Gingrich created the "Contract for America." So, as we approached the elections of '94, we were seeing a tremendous, positive impact on our delegation throughout the state of Illinois. We knew that we were in the hunt, if I can use that word, for a top notch election result. We knew that we had basically lost control of the House in '92, by some 4,280 votes.

DePue: We?

Daniels: We, House Republicans.

DePue: In Illinois.

Daniels: In Illinois. By 4,280 votes. If I could move those over to the Republican side, we would have won the control of the House.

DePue: In other words, there were an awful lot of districts where the vote was very close?

Daniels: Yes.

DePue: Does that mean that you were happy to see—I'm going to characterize it this way—that the President Clinton's administration was overreaching on issues like, one of the first ones was gays in the military.

Daniels: Healthcare.

DePue: And healthcare was the big—

Daniels: And Hillary [Clinton] leading healthcare. We knew that this was very unpopular, and we thought they were making a bad move. It did help us on a federal level, and the attitudes applied to us on a state level.

DePue: I've had other people comment on this. How much of an—and again, you're at the state level; I'm going to ask you a question about the national... But how much of an impact did Newt Gingrich have in the U.S. Congress in affecting what was going on at that level and then, correspondingly, at your level?

Daniels: Well, at the time, '93 and going into the elections of '94, it was a huge positive impact. He was a strong leader; he was known for his vision, and, I think, even today, that one of the things they say about Newt Gingrich is he's one of the smartest candidates for president.

The trouble is he says crazy things at times and difficult to work with at times, but very, very smart in terms of his vision. He created the Contract for America, which was a famous document, I think, that will go down in history, that helped the congressional Republicans gain control of Congress for the first time in what, forty-some years.

That helped us in Illinois because, as I said earlier, the dynamics of the public's attitude and the congressional Republicans helped those of us in the state house, in the Republican's House, and it helped us. We created a program called the Contract for Illinois.

DePue: But was that something that the public knew a lot about?

Daniels: Well, we tried to make sure they did, but in our case, there's not a lot of attention paid to House races in Illinois. You give more attention to Senate races in Illinois, because you have 118 House members. But what we tried to do was encourage each one of our members, our candidates for office, to work very hard to distribute that information.

DePue: Did you know Newt Gingrich personally at this time?

Daniels: I knew him. I can't say that it was anything on a personal level. Would he have taken my phone call? Probably. Was I a friend of his? No. (chuckles)

DePue: The only reason I ask, because part of what he was trying to achieve was not just putting out the Contract for America, but finding the right Republicans to run for these U.S. Congressional Districts in places like Illinois.

Daniels: Right.

DePue: Who was the party chairman for Illinois at the time; do you recall?

Daniels: I think it was Al Jordan; in fact, I know it was Al Jordan.

DePue: So, that was the name that was pulled out of the crystal bowl.

Daniels: Yes. He was the state party chairman.

DePue: Was he effective in helping you?

Daniels: Yeah, he was helpful. And then Harold Byron Smith became the chairman after him. I mean, the Republican Party does not run legislative races. The legislative races are basically run by the leader of the party in the House or Senate. Pate would run his; I would run mine.

It's impossible to separate what you call "political activity" in terms of political views from governmental views, because they tie-in together. Remember, what was my title? The Republican leader of the House, House minority leader. As such, you become a party leader, as well. So, you're in charge of running campaigns. You're in charge of picking the people that would represent the House in the political structure.

DePue: But there was an Al Jordan who was—

Daniels: Party chairman.

DePue: ...party chairman. And, in the case of the Democrats, it was...?

Daniels: Mike Madigan.

DePue: One and the same.

Daniels: Yeah, one and the same.

DePue: So, much like the days when Richard J. Daley was both the mayor of Chicago and the Democratic Party chairman of Cook County?

Daniels: Can you say Mike Madigan learned from Richard J. Daley? One might say that. I will say that Al Jordan was helpful. There is a component of federal

dollars that would come into the state party that they can utilize for state elections. Al Jordan did help in that regard.

DePue: Federal dollars?

Daniels: Not federal—

DePue: Republican at the national level?

Daniels: Donations. I said that wrong and not clear. Donations to the Republican National Committee, which could be then returned to some of the states, where they highlighted opportunities. In '93, we were designated as a state that could win the majority, and we did, in '94.

DePue: Getting back to the budget discussions of 1993—so, we're talking about fiscal year 1994—I think one of the issues that did come up was a proposal of whether or not to raise liquor taxes, sin taxes. From what I read, you were a proponent of a liquor tax increase, but not of tobacco.

Daniels: Well, no. See, on the tobacco part, it becomes a point of no return because, where everybody says, "Stop smoking," the state keeps on taxing it. So, the state is basically saying, "Keep smoking." Even though we say, "Don't smoke," we need your revenue. And I thought, at that point, we were at a point where we were going to be counterproductive.

But the liquor tax had not been increased forever. In fact, I don't remember, twenty years or more. The great protectorate of that industry was some of our leaders in the General Assembly.

DePue: July twenty-third, a property tax cap bill passes the House.

Daniels: Big time, great days, and signed in Lombard, Illinois by Governor Edgar.

DePue: So, it



Senator Philip with Governor Jim Edgar and Minority Leader Lee Daniels in Lombard, Illinois at the signing event for the Governor's Property Tax Cap legislation. The photo appeared in the August 16, 1992 edition of the Chicago Tribune Magazine.

applies for the entire state, in fact, at that time.

Daniels: Yeah.

DePue: And ongoing discussions about O'Hare Airport, what to do there. And a third Chicago airport, we've talked about that quite a bit.

The big thing for 1993, and you might mention a couple of others here, but the flood of '93, by the time you get to July and then August—

Daniels: Another flood? (chuckles)

DePue: Yeah, but this is the flood along the Mississippi River.

Daniels: That's right. And I remember touring that in a helicopter and watching farmhouses floating down the river. It was a devastating sight. Areas of Illinois didn't have any water, so Anheuser-Busch, to their credit, actually put water in cans and distributed it throughout southern Illinois so people had basic water. It was a pretty devastating flood.

DePue: Did that put another strain on the budget?

Daniels: It always does. Every time there's a national or state emergency, it puts a strain on the budget. You plan for it a little bit, but you can't plan for it altogether. It's like a tornado hitting in an area puts a strain on the budget, because you have to utilize state resources to help people get out of their problems.

DePue: By the fall of 1993, from what I can understand, Chicago schools becomes a hot topic again, and this is a cyclical thing. I wonder if you remember anything specific about that particular battle, and the correspondent, I believe, was another contract year for Chicago teachers.

Daniels: Well, it struck us, in the fall of '93, that every person that lives in the State of Illinois has a stake in the educational product and successes or failures for every school district within the state of Illinois. The largest school district in Illinois is obviously Chicago and one of the largest in the country. If Chicago is not doing an appropriate job of educating their young people, it impacts the rest of the state, because these are the future income tax earners, income earners and tax supporters of the state. The same theories apply to southern Illinois, central Illinois, the collar counties, as it does to Chicago.

We were recognizing, at that time, that a substantial number of students in the city of Chicago were not receiving an appropriate education that would match the education quality in other parts of the state. And it wasn't all about money. Money alone doesn't guarantee a superior education. It is a commitment of families and teachers and the administration, superintendents of schools.

So, in '93, we started formulating plans, in order to assist in the reformation of the Chicago school system. One of the things we discovered was that there was no point of responsibility. Everybody knows, in a management structure, you have to have a point of responsibility. Somebody has to be in charge, and somebody has to get credit or blame, as the case may be, for what they do.

In Chicago, it was spread so much all over the place that nobody knew who ran the Chicago school system. Frequently the mayor would speak out, but he really didn't have much authority, other than a little bit of appointment authority to the board. So, that led into the elections of '94 and some of the things we told the people.

DePue: I know, in the fall of '93, a couple of the issues that were brought forth by Republican members. Pate Philip brought up the notion of school voucher programs, where he mentioned 2,000 Chicago students to do kind of a pilot program, to see if that could work. And you were a proponent of charter schools, a fairly new innovation at the time, as well.

Daniels: Right, right. I was a proponent of charter schools on the theory that these schools would be free of governmental regulation, so to speak, free of some of the contractual relationships that the public schools would suffer under. And I was watching its development in Michigan, which was kind of the forefront of some of the charter school system, by Governor John Engler, who I had a very close relationship with.

Governor Engler, by the way, was the Senate majority leader in Michigan. He ran for governor and became governor. He and I had a very close relationship. He was responsible for my being elected president of the National Conference of State Legislators.

DePue: We talked about that last time, I think. October fifteenth, you made a comment that got into the newspapers about the agreement that was reached between the Chicago School Board and the teachers, and I'm going to throw in teachers unions basically.

[DePue reading] "A settlement? I don't think so. A cave-in? Perhaps, an absence of real reform, benefiting the Children of Chicago."

Daniels: Well again, that's along the principle that we were starting to formulate. That is that, were you really protecting the teachers or were you protecting the students?

Our thought at that time, in 1993, that the "settlement" that they arrived at really protected the teachers versus the students. And what you really needed to do was pay more attention to students. More to come later.

DePue: A lot more to come later. The veto session that year, on November fourteenth, a Chicago school reform bill does pass the House. I don't know if I can speak to the specifics. Do you remember many of the specifics?

Daniels: I don't remember a great deal of them, but they were very woefully short. Again, we thought there was a huge opportunity to make some substantial differences in the way that Chicago schools operated on. And we started formulating, as I said, our ideas about the single point of responsibility, because nobody knew who ran the Chicago schools. But we knew that the so-called "Chicago School Reform" was not going to do the job.

DePue: So, you're just waiting for the opportunity to have a majority in both the House and the Senate?

Daniels: Doesn't that sound weird? Republicans talking about reforming Chicago schools for Chicago kids, and they don't even have a legislator representing the city of Chicago? Interesting.

DePue: Let's get into the 1994 election year, but begin with a little bit more discussion of the spring legislative session. Another fairly easy year, because the economy is really rebounding by that time. On April twenty-seventh, I think, the Argonne and University of Illinois and University of Chicago, a bill affecting all three of those institutions passes. Does that ring a bell to you at all in terms of the specifics?

Daniels: Just that Argonne National Laboratories needed some state assistance, and we worked on that program. I don't recall too many of the specifics there.

DePue: Anything specific about discussions on the 1995 fiscal year budget?

Daniels: Well, yeah. (chuckles) We were experiencing a return of some economic benefits to a growth in our economy within the state and country. When we entered '94 calendar year, we found ourselves with a state debt of unpaid bills, of Medicaid bills.

We found ourselves with a structure that was, hopefully, one that we could change. And we knew that you don't raise taxes in a recovery period, but you be very careful on your spending patterns and pay off old bills. In the '95 calendar year, we actually were able to pay off our unpaid bills in full, within that legislative session of January '95 to June of '95, in full, and to balance our budget.

One of the things that I should highlight is we have traditionally, over the years, always balanced our budget. In '95, we knew that the pension problem was going to start building up, and it started becoming apparent that our crude liability for pension problems were going to surface.

We passed a bill which set a forty-year payment schedule, so that, at the end of that period of time, we would have an actuarially sound system of 90% funding, which, by the way, I think is too high. I don't really think you need to fund it that high, but suffice it to say, if we had kept that schedule of payments, we would be on the road today towards balancing our pension problems.

DePue: Instead of being touted as the worst state in the union for pensions.

Daniels: And it is, and it's unfortunate. [Former governor, Rod] Blagojevich would skip payments, and he would say, "We're going to not pay it this year. We're going to skip a couple billion dollars in payments." And all that does is increase and ratchet up the next year.

Now today, what are we, a \$6 billion payment that we need to come up with today? But we passed a pension reform bill that would have made us actuarially sound in a period of forty years.

DePue: Was that '94 or '95?

Daniels: I think it was '94.

DePue: But '94 also is not a year you're going to even look at the possibility of raising taxes.

Daniels: Oh no. No, no, no, shameful. (both chuckle)

DePue: So let's get to the 1994 election, the reason why you're not going to increase any taxes that year. Your own race against Dave Stachura.

Daniels: Stachura, right.

DePue: Was he at all a credible threat to you?

Daniels: No. I never had a race that would cause me any difficulty, with the exception of the very first one in 1974. That one, in 1974, was my first year of my race, and I had Republican opposition in the primary. He was a strong candidate, and I was very successful and won by over 7,000 votes. That was the toughest election I had.

DePue: So, kind of a replication of our discussions about 1992, that 1994, for the reasons we already discussed, is going to be a very good Republican year across the country. It certainly looks like that in Illinois. And you still have this strong desire to become the Republican majority leader/Speaker of the House.

Daniels: Right.

DePue: So what was your thought, your strategy going into that particular year and running the race for all of the—

Daniels: In '94?

DePue: Yeah.

Daniels: We knew that the economy was getting better. We knew that that was going to benefit. We had studied the relationship of Washington congressional Republicans to the country as a whole, and how it impacted us in Illinois. It was positive, and we knew that that would give us a little bit of a bump.

We were very, very concerned about recruitment of appropriate candidates. We knew that the races in the south suburbs would be where we had to make sure we won in the south suburbs. So we spent a great deal of time in that. And, frankly, to Mike Tristano's credit, he was a political technician that knew how to run races and did a good job.

DePue: Is that where a lot of these districts that were very close in the previous elections were located?

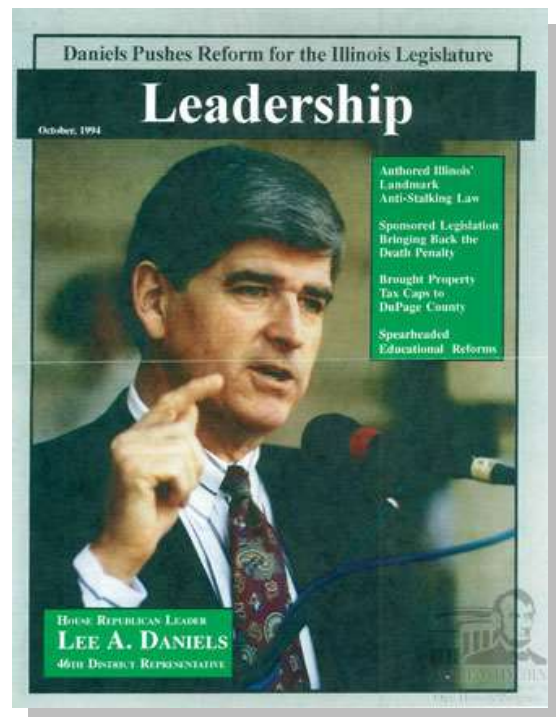
Daniels: Yes, we focused on those. As I said, by a little bit over 4,000 votes, we actually lost control of the House. If we could have switched those votes, we would have been in the majority.

So, we knew where we were strong and where we had our good candidates and, in some cases, run them again. We knew that we had a good opportunity to win. We focused our great efforts on the south suburbs and were very successful. In that election year, '94, we picked up thirteen seats, for the majority.

DePue: And, as I mentioned before, coming out of it, you've got sixty-four; Democrats have fifty-four.

Daniels: Right.

DePue: Would this be an accurate statement, that in presidential years, the Democrats are more successful in turning out the vote



Lee Daniels on the cover of an October 1994 campaign mailing, emphasizing his leadership abilities.

than they are in off election years?

Daniels: It would be a fair statement. One of the things that we found in '96, jumping ahead to that point, is, of course, you had the convention in the city of Chicago. And in 1996, when the convention was in the city of Chicago, in August just before the general election, they had all those workers available to them, to assist in the races in Democrat districts. It was about the worst thing that could happen to us, because it highlighted Democrats in the city of Chicago.

DePue: Jumping ahead again, and then you lost your speakership.

Daniels: We lost our speakership in the south suburbs. That was primarily because of Chicago school reform, which we could talk about later.

DePue: That's quite a topic. What were the issues that you were licking your chops on, to take on, once the Republicans had a majority vote in the House and the Senate?

Daniels: Tort reform, the state budget, meeting our responsibilities and economic fiscal conservatism, not raising taxes and making sure that we dealt with an effective criminal justice system.

DePue: What about education reform?

Daniels: Education reform became a huge issue for us, not only in what we called "quality first," but also in the Chicago school reform.

DePue: But that wasn't necessarily the things that you would most—

Daniels: We didn't campaign on Chicago school reform, obviously, but it became an issue of concern to us.

DePue: So the Contract for Illinois included all the things you just talked about.

Daniels: Yes.

DePue: It would be good if we can get a copy of that sometime.

Daniels: I had hoped to have it for you. I don't have it unfortunately.

DePue: I'm going to read this quote. I think it was coming out of the *Tribune*, or excuse me, *Press Publications*. Is that an official or not, paper.

Daniels: *Press Publications* is a local paper.

DePue: Okay. "Daniels has spent countless hours and resources, trying to get enough Republicans elected this time around to take over the House leadership. We

wish him well in that endeavor.” That obviously wasn’t the *Tribune* saying that, huh?

Daniels: Well, no they actually, the *Tribune* actually endorsed me for reelection as Speaker, in 1997.

DePue: [continues reading] “It would be interesting to see what the Republican led house can do, compared to the gridlock that has been the signature of the Michael Madigan years.”

Daniels: Well, that was a local paper, DuPage County. They were expecting great things to occur, and I don’t think I disappointed them.

DePue: I wanted to reflect a little bit about the governorship that year. The race is between Jim Edgar, again, and the Democratic candidate, Dawn Clark Netsch, who was the controller for Illinois at the time.

She emerged, surprisingly, from a pretty crowded field that included Roland Burris, Rick Phelan, Pat Quinn. Others probably dropped out pretty early. I think there might have even been somebody else in that race. The surprising victor on the Democratic side was Dawn Clark Netsch, which I suspect Edgar was pleased about, because he thought she was pretty vulnerable.

Daniels: Well, vulnerable because she generally stood for increased taxes and increased spending, and he was able to drive that issue home pretty effectively. I have high regard for Dawn Clark Netsch. I don’t agree with her on a lot of political things, but I think she did a pretty good job of representing her constituency. A tough, tough candidate for statewide office on a gubernatorial level, because it involves so much more than just being a good servant, it also... You can appeal to the populous. Jim Edgar, at that time, ran an extremely strong campaign and ran very strong against her.

DePue: And did very well.

Daniels: Did very well and was very helpful to us.

DePue: That he played so well.

Daniels: Oh yeah, no question about it.

DePue: The issue—and you referred to it already—was Netsch’s proposal to raise the income tax level. I think it’s 60% at that time; that sounds like the right figure. But she would always say, “But I’m not just doing that. It’s the tax swap; it’s property tax relief that we want to pursue.”

Daniels: That’s what she would say.

DePue: And, of course, Edgar would drive that point home, that she wants to increase taxes.

Daniels: Right.

DePue: Now, this is jumping ahead of the story a little bit, but Netsch would say, "But once he [Edgar] got reelected, he proposed the same thing."

Daniels: [There's] some truth to that. The fact of the matter is that the property tax swap that they talked about just doesn't work, because the theory is that you're going to equalize all student payments throughout the state of Illinois for education, so every student in the state of Illinois is going to get the same amount of dollars for their quality education. It sounds good, until a district decides that it wants to do better than that, until a district decides that it wants to increase its spending beyond the state level. Once you do that and put it to referendum and that area increases its tax burden on itself, you've then created a disproportionate share of funds for education.

So, it's automatically built in a failure to the system, because you're not going to come back and say. "Oh, since Bloomington, Illinois increased its taxes for its school system, now we've got to increase it in Springfield, and the only way we can do that is more state funds." So you're going to give everyone more state funds. It will never work.

So, the swap theory is not a good theory. Plus the fact, once you do that, and you swap income taxes for property taxes, your educational structure goes to Springfield. No state is real successful in running its school system from the state capitol, and Illinois would be no exception.

Just think of it today. We have a Democrat administration, basically, and the state is basically controlled by Democrats. Do we want them to import the Chicago school system to the rest of the state? The obvious answer is no. We like local control of our educational product. That's why the swap won't work. I didn't agree with Dawn Clark Netsch when she proposed it, and I certainly didn't agree with Governor Edgar when he proposed it. He was not happy about that, but I have a high regard for him anyhow.

DePue: I want to give you a chance to respond. If you don't want to that's fine, but a couple of the issues that Governor Edgar thought played very well to his advantage in that particular race was the Baby Richard case. Any comments on the Baby Richard⁶ case?

⁶The Baby Richard case was a highly publicized [custody](#) battle that took place over Danny Kirchner, a young child whose [adoption](#) was revoked when his biological father, Otakar Kirchner, won custody in a case that was decided in 1995 by the [Illinois Supreme Court](#). The child became known as "Baby Richard" in widespread media coverage. (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Baby_Richard_case)

Daniels: No, it did benefit him. There's no question about that, and he handled it very well.

DePue: The Republican House really didn't have a voice in that discussion?

Daniels: No.

DePue: And the next one, he [Governor Edgar] ends up... Some would say he had a heart attack. He would quickly correct that. He says he had a heart condition that he had to go in and get bypass surgery.

Daniels: He had a heart event.

DePue: A heart event, yeah.

Daniels: Scary, Senator Philip, President Philip, and I visited him in the hospital, at the Good Sam Hospital in Downers Grove, and we were very concerned for him. He was a very popular governor. I had a high regard for him, as did Senator Philip, and we were very, very concerned. Nobody wants to see somebody working so hard that they cause a problem with their physical condition. It was obvious that this contributed, the stress and the workload contributed to his heart condition.

But he recovered strong. He would exercise regularly, and he had a treadmill in the mansion, and went on to, of course, continue to do great things. But it did cause us to be a little bit less argumentative with him. (both laugh)



Lee Daniels and Lieutenant Governor Bob Kustra flank Governor Jim Edgar in his Downers Grove hospital room after his heart surgery in July 1994.

DePue: And he got to sign the budget bill for that year, while he was in the hospital, as I recall.

Daniels: Correct.

DePue: The famous picture of him waving the budget, with his hand outside the window. Did that mean that Madigan was a little bit more amenable at that particular time?

Daniels: I think we all were. You can fight like cats and dogs, and Mike Madigan, in my thirty-two years in the House, we had some just horrendous fights. One would think that we hated each other. The fact of the matter is, I never hated him. I respected him. I knew he was doing what he needed to do for his

members and, privately, we had some terrifically productive discussions. Publicly, we fought like cats and dogs at times. Today, we're friends.

DePue: You might have a comment on this one. Another one of the issues that came up, kind of a blip on the screen, I think, was some discussion that Lieutenant Governor Bob Kustra was not going to run again on the ticket, because he was thinking about becoming a radio commentator.

Daniels: Right, I remember that. (chuckles) Bob Kustra's wife, Kathy Breidert Kustra, worked for me. I also served with Bob Kustra in the House, a very, very smart person. As you know, he has a PhD and [is] very educated, very smart. He became a senator then, and ultimately became lieutenant governor. Frankly, I think he was a little bit bored by the position. (chuckles)

DePue: It's not exactly the power position of Illinois politics.

Daniels: No. And he wanted to do something else that he considered more productive. Jumping forward, I might mention that today, Bob Kustra is the president of Boise State University, which has one of the top football teams in the country. (laughs)

DePue: It's done better than Illinois's football team.

Daniels: It has done better than Illinois; that's right.

DePue: We have talked about the results of that election quite a bit, that, obviously, at the national level it's a huge year for the Republicans. They gained control of the U.S. House for the first time in something like forty years?

Daniels: That's correct yeah, yeah, a significant amount of time.

DePue: And they certainly had control of the U.S. Senate, as well. At the state level, for the first time in how many years were the Republicans in charge of the House?

Daniels: Well, the last Republican Speaker was George Ryan, and that was '81. So, it would have been fifteen years.

DePue: And you've already mentioned that the Republicans controlled the Senate as well. So, 1995.

Daniels: Great year. Madigan has had a great run, with the exception of two wonderful years. (both chuckle) I'm not going to go on much longer, because what I want to do is get some more information for you. But, I could tell you, in terms of starting on our discussion in the year 1995, that I was honored to be selected as the Speaker of the House. It was a momentous time. I took my responsibility seriously, and I would say that I'm extremely proud of the record that we laid down in '95, '96, '97.

DePue: There is an awful lot to discuss when we get into the 1995 year, especially. Is this a good place to stop for the day?

Daniels: Yeah, um-hmm.

DePue: Thank you very much. As always, it's been a fascinating discussion. I look forward to the next session.

Daniels: Me too.

(end of interview)

Interview with Lee Daniels

ISL-A-L-2011-053.06

Interview # 6: June 5, 2012

Interviewer: Mark DePue

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

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.

DePue: Today is Tuesday, June 5, 2012. My name is Mark DePue, the Director of Oral History of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library. This afternoon I'm in Elmhurst, and I'm talking to Speaker Lee Daniels. Good afternoon, Mr. Speaker.

Daniels: Hi, Mark. How are you again?

DePue: Good. It has been a little while.

Daniels: Well, we're moving forward.

DePue: Absolutely. A person like you, you've got a very busy schedule, so it's tough to get on the calendar sometimes, and I appreciate you taking the time to do it.

Daniels: I'd rather be busy than just sitting around.

DePue: Well, I understand that. That's not been a problem for you since you've been out of office.

Daniels: No, it hasn't been.

DePue: What I wanted to start with today, today's focus, I think, is almost exclusively going to be on 1995. That's the year that you did become Speaker, and you had that two-year window. I'm sure you were hoping for more than that, but you had that two-year window to get things done.

Daniels: The world was brighter and more perfect. I know everybody remembers '95 with fondness. When I was with Speaker Madigan, not long ago, I referred to his tenure being unsurpassed in Illinois history, of running the Illinois House the number of years that he's been the Speaker, except for two wonderful years. And, I must admit, it did bring a smile to his face. I'm not sure he totally liked it, but he was gracious.



Lee Daniels on the floor of the Illinois House chamber after his election as Speaker of the House on January 11, 1995.

DePue: Well, those are two strong economic years for the United States in general and certainly for Illinois, as well. So, things were going well for the Republican Party. But I wanted to take a step back and ask you about an award you received in 1991 from the National Conference of State Legislators. We, I think, had briefly talked about that before, but tell me about the Bill Brock Award that you received in '91.

Daniels: Well, that was given by the National Republican Legislators Association in honor of one of the most outstanding—in the process—what they considered to be one of the most outstanding Republican legislators in the country. Bill Brock, of course, was a United States Senator and highly regarded and very close to Bob Dole, who, of course, became our presidential candidate.

In 1991, I was also the president of the National Conference of State Legislators. So I was selected by the National Republican Legislators Association to be the recipient of the Bill Brock Award, a very distinguished award. I was very honored to receive it, and it resulted in some of the work that I was doing nationally and within my caucus in Springfield.

DePue: Any particular legislation that really caught their eye in that respect?

Daniels: I think it was a combination of the years of service and the fact that we were in the process of building our work towards a majority, which we accomplished in '94, as you know, the '95 session. And it was along with the various things that we stood for, lower government spending, less strain on the government budget, paying debts and paying off old bills.

DePue: So 1995, you start the year, and the Republicans finally, for the first time in a lot of years, control both houses of the legislature and the governor's office. You can correct me if I get this wrong, but by my count, going to the Blue Book, sixty-four Republicans and fifty-four Democrats in the House.

Daniels: Correct.

DePue: So, you've got—

Daniels: In that election of 1994, which was a landslide election nationwide, you remember Newt Gingrich was elected Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives. He set a course, on a national basis, of a national movement for Contract with America. And, for those people that were watching the process at that time, they will remember that this was a unique thing, because the Republicans hadn't controlled Congress for forty years. What Newt Gingrich did, wisely so, was to create what he called a Contract with America, that, if he were elected Speaker, he would implement changes, a balanced budget, et cetera, things of that nature.

We took that concept in Illinois and created the Illinois agenda, a similar contract with Illinois, patterned after what was going on with the national Republicans. Part of our process that we were running, in our agenda that we were campaigning on, included such things as balanced budget amendment, debt reduction, Medicaid reform—sound familiar? (DePue laughs)—property tax caps, truth in sentencing, ethics reform and the like. The agenda was fairly aggressive, that we set out when we did present that to people, and one that we really wanted to achieve within our ongoing time.

When I became Speaker, Illinois had a huge debt and old bills. We streamlined the payment of those bills, and by the time we were done with our first year of office, we had paid back all of the old bills.

DePue: You mean the backlog of bills?

Daniels: The backlog of bills. If I remember correctly, we had somewhere of 180 days payment cycle, which would mean, if you were a vendor for the state, you didn't get paid for 180 days. Now, who would want to do business like that? Certainly not the average business person. But they were dependent upon doing some work for the state and understood, at the same time, that they weren't going to get paid right away.

DePue: How was what you just talked about different from the debt that the state had, because I know that the first couple of years that Edgar was in office, he worked hard to get that debt managed? He started off with a billion dollar deficit.

Daniels: Right. And this was the time at which we ended up paying that back, that total debt of a billion dollars.

DePue: So, what you just talked about was part of the debt, but not the debt in total.

Daniels: It was the debt in total that we ended up paying off, during that two-year period.

DePue: But the unpaid bills were only a portion of it, or is that one and the same?

Daniels: It was a portion of it; it was one and the same.

DePue: I notice, also in counting—and you've mentioned this several times before—you go into Chicago and, for the city of Chicago, it's thirty-three Democrats and one Republican.

Daniels: It's a tough race that we have, as I mentioned before. The Chicago delegation, of course, is primarily, almost totally, Democrat. So, you're starting at a deficit. It's like a football game, where your score is thirty-three to one when you start the game, to begin with. So, most of the races that you have to win as a Republican are downstate, outside of Chicago and generally outside of Cook County.

So, we had to focus very heavily on suburban Cook, downstate, collar counties, central Illinois and downstate Illinois. However, we won thirteen races in 1994 to take the majority at that point with, as you've said, sixty-four Republicans and fifty-four Democrats. It was a very hard fought battle. We had an extremely good staff that focused, not only on policy, and that is what we would do when we became the majority, but also focused very hard, in an appropriate sense, bringing the campaigns to every household within Illinois.

DePue: Who was the one Republican in Chicago; do you remember?

Daniels: It was Roger McAuliffe, who passed away, unfortunately, later on. He was half a district; half of his was in Chicago. He also was a Chicago police officer.

DePue: What part of Chicago did he run?

Daniels: Northwest side.

DePue: That would have been my guess.

Daniels: Yeah.

DePue: So, now that you're Speaker, how does that differ from being the minority leader?

Daniels: Well, it's substantially different. First of all, as the minority leader, you're on defensive a lot. In other words, you have to posture yourself to respond to what the majority party or the Speaker sets forth as the agenda. And, in that posture, frequently you're finding yourself learning about something on a particular day, and the next day you have to respond to that, legislatively and politically. It requires a great deal of time and attention in a defensive mode. It's very difficult to be on the offense in the minority. It's like going into a boxing match with one arm tied behind your back, where you're fighting somebody that's got two good arms and two good, strong jabs at you.

In the majority, you're setting the agenda. You determine what is going to be the important issues. For us, the issues were financial; the issues were substantive; the issues were social, and we knew what the people of Illinois wanted, outside the city of Chicago, primarily because that's where our members came from.

So, what we did was create this initiative, which would be a very strong initiative for Illinois and the betterment of Illinois, to bring it in a fiscally sound way. We were extremely fortunate to have a governor like Jim Edgar, because he was focused on the same ideas and, of course, to say that Jim Edgar didn't participate in our success would be wrong. He did. He was the quarterback of the team. We were part of a team, the Senate, the House and Jim Edgar, and worked very well together.

DePue: What was that agenda? You mentioned the Illinois agenda.

Daniels: Well, the Illinois agenda, from a balanced budget to debt reduction—which we talked about earlier—to budget cuts,—in other words, reducing government spending—Medicaid reform,—to look at fraud and abuse and people that shouldn't be on Medicaid rolls, that are taking advantage of the system—to property tax caps, which were very important downstate, because you had balloon budgeting.

What do I mean by balloon budgeting? A school district would budget a very high level for the next year, and when they found out what the cost of living was and what the future would be, they would sometimes still keep their higher level of appropriation or budgeting.

Property taxes, in some cases, in some areas, were going up 20% from the previous year. So, we set a standard saying, 3% or the cost of living, whichever is less, could be the only amount that property taxes increased from one year to the next.

DePue: Refresh my memory, was that something that you had already been able to implement for the collar counties or for the—

Daniels: The property tax caps were implemented in 1995.

DePue: That applied across the board, outside of Cook County?

Daniels: That did, because we had tremendous opposition. Well, '94 is when it was first implemented; I'm sorry. We had tremendous opposition from Cook County. They have a different kind of tax system than the rest of the state; they're called classification. And so, what we did was we implemented statewide property caps at that time, in '95.

DePue: Did the Illinois agenda include anything that changed the House governing rules?

Daniels: Yeah, it did.

DePue: At the federal level, there were some big changes that occurred, because of what Gingrich had done.

Daniels: We didn't want our agenda to be stymied by rules of the House that were antiquated. We wanted to make sure that we were the sole point of responsibility. In other words, what we did, we were responsible for doing, and we wanted to be able to implement our agenda.

So, a lot of the rules were changed. They were patterned after the Senate rules. Remember, the Senate majority was taken over in 1992/'93 session, and they became the majority in that period of time. They implemented some strong rules. We adopted, in the House, the rules that the Senate had adopted. These rules were meant to streamline the operation of government and not allow people to stymie the process.

DePue: Was there some Democratic pushback on those?

Daniels: Oh, terrible, tremendous.

DePue: Because?

Daniels: Because they wanted the opportunity to delay the process and to do everything they could to stall our agenda. So, they fought these rules. As a matter of fact, it just came up recently where Mike Madigan had adopted our rules when he returned again as Speaker and kept those rules enforced. But he's taken it to a

new level than what we took it. I mean, he's almost total rule on himself, by himself.

DePue: Why didn't they have those rules enforced beforehand, when they'd been in the majority for so many years?

Daniels: I think they didn't look at the creation of new rules. Are you talking about the Democrats?

DePue: Yeah, before you imposed these—

Daniels: The whole system was changing in the '90s, and we were trying to expedite the creation of appropriate legislation. Much of the system that I operated under, from '75 until '95, very little had changed, in terms of the operations of the House or Senate, but we tried to implement that change. For instance, one of the things we did, we furnished a laptop computer to every member in the House. That hadn't happened before.

DePue: That they could have right there at their desk.

Daniels: Right at their desk. That was done in '95.

DePue: With Internet access?

Daniels: With Internet access.

DePue: That would be both a blessing and a curse, I would think.

Daniels: Well, yeah. But, remember, there's a lot of time on the House floor that can be extremely boring, because you don't know everything about everything. So, if a doctor is sponsoring legislation that made a deal with some very strong medical facts, you may rely on his expertise or her expertise, but not something that you necessarily go into in depth and go into that. Having Internet access allows you to still have contact with the outside world.

DePue: One of the things we've talked about a little bit before is the amount of power that the four caucus leaders, the House and Senate caucus leaders, had. Now that you're the Speaker, are you the first among equals in that respect?

Daniels: Well, you've got to say that, with the governor, with the Senate president, with the Speaker, the reason the Speaker is ordinarily considered to be more powerful, is only because he has more members. So, I had sixty-four members, and I don't know the exact number Pate had, like thirty-two. But, a good double the members that he had. So, generally speaking, depending... And, of course, there's always personalities that are involved, but it's because of the size of your membership.

DePue: You mentioned personalities, and maybe that's why most Illinoisans have this notion that the Speaker is the most powerful, because Mike Madigan has been in that position for such a long period of time—

Daniels: He's very powerful.

DePue: ...and considered a master of the political game.

Daniels: He is; there's no question about it. He also is the Chairman of the Democratic Party of the state of Illinois.

DePue: So, you weren't necessarily more powerful than Senator Philip was?

Daniels: Not necessarily. I wouldn't say less powerful, but not necessarily more. I never saw myself in that vein. I saw myself as part of a team.

DePue: Well, speaking of another important part of that team is Governor Edgar and his staff. Did the relationship with the governor and his staff change?

Daniels: Not really, because I had an extremely good relationship with Governor Edgar, and Kirk Dillard was his chief of staff for a period of time. He had some good, strong people—Governor Edgar did—running his staff.

He had a vision on how he wanted to take the state. I didn't always agree with that. You wouldn't expect me to. He had a different role. I ran the Illinois General Assembly, the House. And, as such, I had to not only report to my members, but various districts throughout the state, and then a statewide component. Governor Edgar was responsible for the state as a whole. It's a different vision, and it's a different concept.

Just like you can get in governmentally and talk about the democratic process between the House and Senate, and you can go into all nuances and so forth, House of Lords versus the House of Commoners and things of that nature, there is a difference between it. But I still considered myself to be part of a team.

DePue: You mentioned that there were some occasions where you would differ from the governor and his staff.

Daniels: Yeah.

DePue: Can you characterize those areas where you generally were in agreement and then those in disagreement?

Daniels: Budgeting, we were generally in agreement. Government spending, we were generally in agreement. We didn't have any money, so we had to be very careful in how we spent the money, when Edgar took over in '93. We were very, very concerned about how we'd move the process forward.

On areas of differences, human services, I was a very strong proponent for human services and, particularly, assistance to those that are less fortunate than you and I. Education reform, we had some different views. He even favored a local income tax, when he was a legislator in his early days. I was diametrically opposed to that. He favored a shift in the property tax to the income tax. I was opposed to that, at that time and still am today. But this was a strong bill that he and Stan Ikenberry proposed. That's one of the falling outs that we had, not permanent, just on that issue.

DePue: Now that one, is that back in the late '70s, when he was in the legislature? Are you talking about—

Daniels: I'm talking about when he sponsored the income tax for school districts. But the one on the shift was done when he was governor.

DePue: And we'll get to a much more detailed discussion of educational reform here, in a while.

How would you characterize yourself on some kind of a political spectrum, compared to the governor? More conservative or—

Daniels: I think the governor was a strong, strong fiscal conservative. I would call myself fiscally conservative, but not as strong as he was. I think he provided us good leadership, and I enjoyed working with him in that regard.

But, I'll tell you something; I don't know many people, Republican or Democrat, that would say that they're anything but a fiscal conservative. (DePue chuckles)

DePue: You know, I ran across a quote that you said exactly the same thing, "If you polled ninety-five members of the legislature, ninety would say that they were fiscally conservative."

Daniels: And we know better than that. A very strong Democrat—I won't mention the name—said to me, "The difference between Republicans and Democrats is, you're sent down here to reduce government. We're sent down here to spend and create new programs." I think that's a fairly accurate assumption. Democrats learn early on to build coalitions and to create government programs and expand government. Republicans, on the other hand, have more of a business attitude and keeping spending low and to reduce spending. (train passing)

DePue: I know that Governor Edgar is proud to call himself a moderate Republican.

Daniels: Socially, yes.

DePue: And would you classify yourself in that same vein?

Daniels: I would say I'm leaning more towards that, but there are certain issues that I crossed, that made me more conservative in my social beliefs, but I'd say more moderate. I've been pro-life, which would have an indication that you're more conservative. But I was pro-ERA, which would have an indication that you're more moderate.

DePue: I wanted to take some time to have you talk about the staff and its involvement. Well, first of all, before we get to that point, now that you control the three major sources of legislation, the two Houses in the legislature and the governor's office, who was the driving force behind the agenda, putting together legislation and starting the process?

Daniels: In general?

DePue: In general.

Daniels: Well, it was a combination of my leaders. You're talking about in the House?

DePue: No, I mean even in the governor's office. Was it the governor deferring to you in the House or to the Senate?

Daniels: Oh no, no; we worked together. The governor had his priorities, and budgeting was one of the priorities of necessity, because he had to come in with a balanced budget and did a good job at that. In fact, we jokingly, at times, called him "Mr. No." "I know, when I ask you this question about spending, you're going to say 'no.'" And he says, "That's right, no." And we did that respectfully.

DePue: Does that mean that his office originated the legislation in the fiscal areas?

Daniels: No. It means that we all worked together.

DePue: I'm not trying to box you in. I'm just trying to get an understanding here.

Daniels: No, I understand.

DePue: I'm just trying to get an understanding.

Daniels: I'm just saying that I had my members working on it, my staff working on it. Pate had his, Senator Philip, and the governor had his. But the governor, in many areas legislatively, becomes the lead. He comes up with the ideas and, many times, because you can pass anything. If he won't sign it, it doesn't become law. So, you want to work with the governor's office to the degree that you can.

DePue: I know that the legislative caucuses have people on the staff, and there's a portion of the legislature itself that is there to assist in the crafting of the

legislation. Did legislation oftentimes, if there was something like tort reform, it would start both in the House and the Senate, with different versions?

Daniels: Many times there would be bills, similar bills. Chicago school reform...that happened with tort reform. We passed tort reform pretty quickly in the House, with all Republican votes, no Democrats voted for it. But, the same bill was pending in the Senate. We sent it over to the Senate, and they ended up passing our bill.

Chicago school reform was a joint effort. Mary Lou Cowlshaw, Representative Cowlshaw, was the lead person on our side. And Senator Philip took a strong lead on his side.

DePue: I'd like to have you spend a little bit of time, talking about the basic structure of your staff, the Speaker's staff. First of all, did you have a larger staff when you became Speaker than you had as minority leader?

Daniels: Oh, absolutely. You had to have a larger staff, because you had more work to do, in terms of proactive development of the agenda and moving forward with the agenda and preparing the agenda. Daily, you would come out with the approach that you'd want to take. That included, not only doing the actual physical work, but also advising the press, the media, and getting the message out to the public, because one of the things you don't want to do is pass something that the public doesn't understand.

Now that, of necessity, has to happen at times, like the capital bill, which could be billions of dollars. Nobody totally understands the capital bill, until you read all the finite language in there. But you want to make sure, to the degree that you can, you let the public know, through the media.

DePue: How large was your staff, in ballpark figures?

Daniels: I think it ranged upwards of 180, at the highest point, 150 when I was Speaker.

DePue: How many staff would your average legislator have?

Daniels: Well, the average legislator would have a secretary in Springfield. That would be their person that worked with them in getting the work done there. They would have access to the Speaker staff to do legislative work for them and to work on legislation and communications, media communications, and getting the message out. They would then have a staff back home, based upon their appropriation, that would be for their district office, and that varied. I don't remember exactly what it was in 1995 and '96, but it could be \$20,000, which would be for office rent, a secretary and running their district office.

DePue: It doesn't pay for much more than one or two.

- Daniels: No, but I'm taking a guess at the amount at that time. It could have been \$30,000; I'm not sure.
- DePue: So the lion's share of the staffing is occurring in the four caucuses, and especially in the majority positions.
- Daniels: That would be correct. The staffing serves the Republican members in the House, Democrat members in the House. Republican members of the Senate [and] Democrat members of the Senate are chosen and operated by the leader of that chamber.
- DePue: I'm going to put you on the spot a little bit. Can you recall the basic divisions in the staff, how it was organized?
- Daniels: We had a policy staff; we had a communication section; you had a research section. Policy staff dealt with issues of policy that we wanted to implement and work on and develop, such as Chicago school reform. Then the research staff would actually do hardcore research on it, and the media staff would get the message out and work with the media.
- DePue: I know there's a legislative research unit.
- Daniels: Yes there is, with the state.
- DePue: And that's outside the normal staff structure?
- Daniels: That's outside the normal staff structure of the four caucuses. That's through a commission, which serves all four caucuses in a bipartisan, nonpartisan, fashion. So, the legislative research unit will do research per the request, a written request, of the unit.
- The reference bureau will actually draw legislation that either staff members can go have drawn or an individual legislator can go have drawn. The reason for that, of course, is to have uniformity in the drafting of legislation. For instance, if you don't have a provision in the law that you're writing and passed that this law, upon passage, will become effective immediately, upon signing by the governor, it will not become effective immediately. So, you always want to have that in there. That's just a little nuance that the legislative reference bureau, drafting bureau, makes sure is in every law.
- DePue: And that's probably one of scores of examples.
- Daniels: Oh, tons of them. They're experts at it, and it's a good thing that we have them.
- DePue: So, the legislators themselves don't have to be the ones who are expert at drafting the legislation. Are they giving the themes, basically?

- Daniels: They have to be able to read it. They have to make sure it conveys, because, remember, you're conveying to a staff person, not your staff, but the unit, what it is you want to do. So, you've got to make sure it's stated how you want it stated, and, if not, you go back and have it redone. They also draft amendments.
- DePue: Doesn't that process though, lead to the point where your normal, average citizen can't begin to comprehend the legislation, if they're actually picking it up and reading it?
- Daniels: Well, the good thing, speaking for the moment about today, is all of this is on the Internet, including live streaming. You can go on the Illinois General Assembly site, and when they're in session, you can get committee hearings live streaming, audio streaming, video streaming. When the House or Senate is in session, it's right there in front of you, if you desire. You can also call up the legislation too, at any given time.
- DePue: Let's talk about selecting the staff. Who is making the decisions of who's going to be serving on these caucus staffs?
- Daniels: It varies. Obviously, the leader will select the top staff and name the top staff. That would be the chief of staff, as an example. That would be the head of the research division. That would be the head of the policy division and the press secretary. Obviously, that would have heavy input.
- In my case, and I'll speak for my case, the chief of staff would have overall responsibility for the staff. But then, within that structure, there's assigned other responsibility. Denise Pierce Reed, who was my assistant of twenty-seven years, basically was in charge of all the secretaries and support staff for the legislators. She would maintain that staff, which at any point, could be fifty people. Plus, she would run my office in Springfield. And when I say "run that," I mean supplies; she would make sure that everything was running smoothly there, and she would report, not only to me, but also to the chief of staff.
- DePue: Well, let's start with the chief of staff. Tell us about your chief of staff at the time.
- Daniels: At the time, when I became the Speaker, it was Mike Tristano.
- DePue: He'd been with you for a while already?
- Daniels: He had been with me for two years, and, after winning the majority, he resigned to go on to other endeavors and then ended up coming back, two years later. He was a very strong chief of staff. He had a vision on how he wanted to go forward with winning the majority and would implement that and also the agenda that we were dealing with. He was in charge, basically, of the people that were on my staff.

- DePue: But did you just say that, during the time you were actually in the majority, he stepped out for a couple years?
- Daniels: Yes. Mike Stokke became the chief of staff, S-t-o-k-k-e.
- DePue: Was he already a member of the staff at that time?
- Daniels: No. He had done work with the Illinois Manufacturer's Association. He was recommended by some people that were close to me, that when Mike [Tristano] decided to step away, Mike [Stokke] took over, and he ran things.
- DePue: So, he didn't have to learn any new first names in that respect.
- Daniels: No. He knew the players in Illinois.
- DePue: Was he the gatekeeper, the person who was controlling who gets to you, has a chance to get your ear?
- Daniels: I think that depends upon the issues. If you go to see the chief of staff and you want to talk about an appropriation, and that means you'd be taken to me, yes. But, if you're talking about an everyday appointment, somebody that wants to come in and see me, whether it's somebody dealing with a particular issue or constituent or a member of the public, and if you want to use the term gatekeeper, Denise Pierce would have been the one that would head that up.
- DePue: Would somebody like the chief of staff have both the political and an operational kind of a role? How does that divide itself out?
- Daniels: It's hard to codify because, by the very nature of Illinois's process, we're a part-time legislative body to begin with. And, by the very nature of our partisan staffs, it's the Democrat staff; it's the Republican staff. But you're very, very careful, and we were very, very careful in making sure that we did not mix politics with state work and that we did not do politics on state time, and we didn't do politics using state funds. We were very, very careful in separating that and implemented ethics reform and other things that dealt with these issues, to make sure that we were careful on it.
- DePue: Even before this time, though, that would have been considered a violation of law?
- Daniels: Well, as your process became more and more involved and you had a higher degree of responsibility for legislators, it became apparent that there was a mixture of the two, because, when you run for office, you talk about policy. But also, is it a political thing? When you go give a speech and talk about education reform, is it a political speech or is it a policy speech? It's hard to define. So, we were very careful not to mix the two.

DePue: Which makes any kind of ethics legislation especially dicey to write, I would think.

Daniels: It is; it's difficult to write. You have to be aware of it. Even today, we had a member of one of the staffs being censured or, I think, actually put on a leave for a short period of time, because he used a state computer that had a political message go out. It's difficult to control, but you do your best.

DePue: Let's go back to Mike Stokke. The general perception is that a political chief of staff in a position like this; this is the enforcer; this is the guy who imposes discipline.

Daniels: No, he's not. I would correct you and say, he's not a political chief of staff. He's a chief of staff for a legislative operation.

DePue: But, whether you're the president or you're the governor or positions like this, the chief of staff has, at least in the public perception, the public has this view that they're the hard knuckles person who keeps discipline.

Daniels: Yeah, they are. Carter Hendren in the Senate worked for Pate Philip. Tim Mapes is a long-time chief of staff for Mike Madigan. Bill Holland was with Phil Rock for years and Mike Tristano with me for a short period of time. But I had several chiefs of staff, and you have to be a strong, dedicated person. And, by the way, it's a twenty-four seven job. You never stop working. It's something that...It's Saturdays; it's Sundays; it's a total commitment.

DePue: Would Mike Stokke be the kind who would fit that profile?

Daniels: He and I had some disagreement over the workload. I don't blame him for that, because I'm one that is pretty much a twenty-four seven kind of guy. That's how we won the majority; that's how we worked to try to keep it. I keep myself busy, which, I think, is the right thing to do, for me. I think he had a little bit different vision on what the workload should be and ultimately made a choice to go with Speaker Hastert in the Congress. And he did a very good job there.

DePue: Then that would have happened, what, '97?

Daniels: Yeah.

DePue: When he moved on. Does the Speaker also control some...I don't know, let's call them perks, or some things like assignment of office space and parking and things like that?

Daniels: We did that on seniority, but the answer is yes. It's all on how you set it up with the caucus. In our case, it was strictly on seniority, selection of office space, unless you were a leader. If you were a leader, there were designated

leadership offices. But your selection of secretaries, your office assignment, your parking spaces, we did on seniority, and I think most caucuses did.

DePue: Does that mean that, when you became Speaker, you took over the offices that Madigan previously had?

Daniels: I did do that. He wasn't happy about that. (DePue chuckles) And the interesting thing about it is, after I lost the Speakership, he kept the offices that he had moved to.

DePue: Were his former offices a little bit larger or more plush?

Daniels: No, they were just behind the chambers. He liked it more open, in the front.

DePue: That's interesting. Another example of how personality plays a role in this.

Daniels: Yeah.

DePue: Once you're in position, and you've got the caucus; you've got this more robust staff; what's basically the strategy for the Republicans, in general, to push through this pretty ambitious agenda that you had?

Daniels: Well, in my case, it was organizing the caucus, making sure that they were behind the agenda and moving forward with it. Just to say that we're for job creation or education reform or Chicago school reform is one thing, to actually implement it is an entirely different thing. So, you have to have the support of your caucus and work very hard to have that support, which we did.

DePue: In '95, what's top on the priority list?

Daniels: Well, I think you have to always put budgetary items, fiscal responsibility.

DePue: But, Mr. Speaker, that's always the last thing that gets accomplished.

Daniels: Yeah, because it's so detailed. Remember, you're talking about billions of dollars. I could show you legislation today. The capital bill that recently passed in the year 2012 is 1,450 pages long, and even if you tried to read it, even if you are a legislative expert, it still has confusing parts to it, because it bounces back to one area to another to another agenda and so forth.

DePue: But you had to know, when you started that year, that you're going to close the legislative session with the passage of the budget. So, what were the other things, prior to that, that would have been a little bit more straightforward, that you wanted to pursue first?

Daniels: Well, I mentioned property tax caps, and that's statewide. I mentioned welfare reform, and that was a national movement, as well, getting able bodied men

off the welfare rolls. In other words, if you could work, you need to work and not stay on the welfare rolls.

We streamlined the death penalty appeals process. We passed truth in sentencing, which means that, if you're sentenced to ten years, you had to serve at least a certain portion of the time of that sentence. [Our work extended] to lowering the DUI [driving under the influence] to .08, which was a major initiative of the secretary of state at that time, to ethics reform.

The '95 agenda included taking care of frivolous lawsuits, [the] Structural Reform Act, which was a business reform that we implemented, and the like. Campaign finance reform and some senior citizen legislation were all parts of our activities.

DePue: And some of these, I'm going to want to ask a little bit more detail, as we go through here. Your management style, your personal management style, how would you describe it?

Daniels: Well, some said I micromanage. I never thought I did, but in hindsight, maybe I got a little involved, because I worked a lot of hours. I'd get there, generally, around 7:00, 7:30, and many times leave around 9:30, 10:00.

DePue: Well, I read a quote that was attributed from a Rick Pearson article that stated you were an admitted micromanager.

Daniels: (chuckles) You mean I actually said that to Rick? (DePue laughs)

DePue: Well, that's what he quoted you as saying. The same article said that, "Madigan often treated the Republican minority like a doormat."

And then, here's a quote, and I think this is your quote, "Don't confuse a willingness to compromise, a desire to drive for consensus, with any form of weakness. My belief is that this country needs to have strong leaders with broad-based knowledge and commitment to resolving problems, not maximizing political standing. If you understand that, you'll understand a lot more about Lee Daniels."

Daniels: I'd say that's an accurate quote, because I did involve myself in policy to a great extent. I think, on reflection, I can easily say that maybe I wasn't the political expert that Speaker Madigan is, and I give him credit for that. But I was an expert in policy determination and how to move forward on that, and I did drive for consensus.

Whether it was the RTA reform, whether it was tax cap legislation, under Jim Thompson in 1983, which resulted in a temporary tax, which we kept our promise to taxpayers, or whether it was a contribution towards Chicago school reform, which was downstate, outside of Chicago legislators, caring about Chicago children, all of these things mattered to me. And all of

them were a drive towards compromise and consensus. Some of that, I think, we could do better in today than we've done.

DePue: You had a fairly decent majority, but you didn't have a veto proof majority.

Daniels: No.

DePue: So, part of what you have to do is to impose some discipline within the party, and you had your conservative wing, and you had more moderate or liberal wing as well. How did you go about getting some unity, as far as the party was concerned, on these important pieces of legislation?

Daniels: Good policy, good discussions, good meeting, good interaction, good communication with your membership, and meeting with them and talking it out. Certainly, when you talked about education reform, a legislator from southern Illinois may not have the same view as a legislator from DuPage County. But you have to start understanding that and working towards driving that consensus.

Certainly, when you looked overall at some of the legislative agenda, the Structural Work Act reform. The Structural Work Act allowed two bites of the apple for somebody that was injured on the jobsite, as a result of a Structural Work Act problem. At the same time, they then could file another lawsuit on top of that. We eliminated the Structural Work Act, which gave you one bite at the apple, based upon negligence or inadequate safety precautions. It saved tons of money for Illinois businesses and was the right thing to do. Not all my members agreed with that at the start. Some of them were plaintiffs' lawyers. Three of my caucus members were actual plaintiff lawyers that ended up voting for the bill.

DePue: Was that in terms of the discipline that you needed to be successful when you were the Speaker? Was it different than what you needed to do as the minority leader?

Daniels: Some similarities, but when you're Speaker, you're passing the legislation. When you're in minority, you're on the defensive, and you're trying to stop legislation. In other words, you're making the majority party put up the votes on legislation that you oppose. That's not always easy to do, but in our case, we had a very, very unified caucus and a strong caucus.

DePue: That's ultimately the measure of your success as Speaker, I would think.

Daniels: The measure of my success is I had the pleasure of leading a great caucus and a great staff.

DePue: Was that partly—now here's an opportunity for you to pat yourself on the back—but partly by design, in terms of in your political role as the minority leader, picking the right candidates to run for these districts?

Daniels: Well, I think candidate recruitment is an important process. We talk about that all the time. You want to make sure you have the right candidate that presents himself or herself in a positive fashion and the Republican message and doesn't have something in their background that could be negative.

We lost a race in the '90s by twenty-some votes, because our candidate, which we didn't know about, failed to pay his property taxes. Well, in the '90s, we were dealing with high, escalating property taxes. It became a huge issue. He lost a Republican district by less than twenty votes.

You do vet candidates to the point that you can. You talk to them about either a background, what they do; do they have an understanding that this is a big job, that there's a lot of time involved; there's a lot of precinct work, and there's a lot of meetings and nighttime work, and you're away from your family? And when you win, you're going to spend six months of your life physically in Springfield, away from your family. How will your wife feel about that? What will this do to your family? In some cases, it tore families apart. It was very, very important that you make sure you address these issues and your candidate thinks about those issues.

DePue: I wanted to spend a couple of minutes asking you some questions about your relationship with Senator Philip. At one point in time, both of you are minority leaders. And then, a couple of years, he's the majority leader in the Senate, and you're minority leader in the House.

Daniels: Right.

DePue: And now you're both majority leaders. Was there a change in the relationship when you went through that series?

Daniels: I would say, from my viewpoint, we became equals at that point. Nobody was higher than the other. I think that Pate had a tendency always to look at me like a brother, a little brother, and I think it was difficult for him to accept the fact that we were equals. That's how I looked at it. I'm not saying he did. I'm not being critical; I'm just saying, I can understand Pate's views, and I did. We had some tremendous disagreements, which you would expect. I had twice the members.

Having twice the members meant that I had twice the diversity. I had liberal members; I had conservative members; I had moderate members, and he had somewhat of the same, but not the numbers that I had to deal with. Plus the fact, his opposition was Emil Jones, Emil Jones, whom I respect and like. Emil Jones was not noted to be the same leader that Phil Rock was or certainly not the same leader that Mike Madigan is.

DePue: In terms of getting discipline within his own caucus?

Daniels: In the political. And again, I'm not putting anyone down, because I have a high regard for Emil Jones. I worked with him on a lot of things. But, let's face facts, there's nobody in modern times that we've dealt with that have the ability that Mike Madigan has shown, in terms of maintaining a majority, getting his process done and the negotiation skills. If you look at today, which is 2012, all of that that I just said, is panned out by all the years that he's been in.

DePue: Because he's still there.

Daniels: He's still there.

DePue: Did you have more run-ins with Senator Philip, once you were both the majority, than you had before?

Daniels: Probably, because of the nature of the process itself. Some of my members... You've got twice the members; you've got twice the ideas.

DePue: I found in one article, a description of the nature of this relationship.

Daniels: (laughs)

DePue: You're laughing before you even read the quote.

Daniels: There's a lot of them.

DePue: That working with James Pate Philip... One article referred to Philip as the bull in the china shop, and you were described as the china shop manager. A fair assessment?

Daniels: At times. Pate was very forthcoming and, at times, would make some interesting comments publicly that I didn't necessarily agree with. He had his views, and by the way, he was extremely successful. What was he, the president for ten years? You can't take that away from him.

They were able to maintain the majority, where we actually lost the majority. So, one can be critical of that if they want to be. I look at it in a positive sense, because we're all kind of a team. We're all in it together. To me, the worst thing would have been losing the governor and the makeup of the House and Senate.

DePue: And generally, Philip was credited with at least holding that caucus together and getting some discipline in that respect.

Daniels: No question about it, but nobody had a better caucus than I had.

DePue: I'm not surprised to hear you say that.

Daniels: Self-serving. (laughs)

DePue: So, if Philip is the bull in the china shop, and you're the china shop manager—

Daniels: I keep on putting the bowls back together again.

DePue: ...who is Edgar?

Daniels: He's the quarterback; he's the governor. He's the guy that you come, you sit down with and say, this is what you're thinking, and where are you on this, governor? What are your thoughts? Remember, we have an executive budget state. What do you mean by that? The governor proposes the budget.

The general assembly enacts the budget. So, the governor first lays out the budget. You want to know where he's going, because at the end of the day, after all this work in crafting a billion-plus dollar budget, billions of dollars, you want to make sure that the governor is going to approve it.

DePue: And that was a feature of the 1970 constitution was it not?

Daniels: Yeah, um-hmm, executive budgets.

DePue: Well now, I think it's time to go through some of the specifics. I don't know if you're going to have comments on all of this, but I'm sure you'll have comments on some. Let's start with the welfare reform bill. You have mentioned that already, I think. March thirteenth is when that possibly was signed.

Daniels: Yeah, and part of the welfare reform bill dealt with putting able-bodied men to work, getting them off the welfare rolls. It was a very similar and strong piece of legislation on the national scene and one of the frameworks of Newt Gingrich's policy, as well. So, welfare reform was a big issue that we dealt with and one of our quick activities that we engaged in.

DePue: And once you do that, then you've gone quite a ways towards solving some of your budgetary issues, as well?

Daniels: It helps, not totally; it helps. You still had a lot of budgetary problems, but it dealt several hundreds of million dollars in savings.

DePue: Another one, and I know this one was—

Daniels: By the way, it was called Welfare to Work, initially.

DePue: Welfare to Work, okay. Another one of the early initiatives was tort reform.

Daniels: Right.

DePue: And that was also in March.

Daniels: Tort reform was part of our major agenda, and that was passed with all Republican votes. The Democrats fought it very extensively, because they're supported by the trial lawyers, and the trial lawyers opposed us on it. But I wanted to point out that it was the right thing to do. Three of our members were active trial lawyers that voted for the legislation.

DePue: So, you lost three, and none of the Democrats voted for it.

Daniels: No, I didn't lose three. The three voted for it.

DePue: (laughs) Important semantics here.

Daniels: Peter Roskam was one; Al Salvi was one; Tim Johnson was one. Tim Johnson went on to be a congressman, as you know. Peter Roskam is the fourth top leader in the U.S. House of Representatives today, and Al Salvi is still practicing law. So, there were three of my members that were active trial lawyers that ended up understanding the importance of what we were doing. It wasn't outrageous; it was something that needed to be done.

Unfortunately, the [Illinois] Supreme Court threw the whole thing out and ruled it unconstitutional, which I disagreed with. But, if you look at the makeup of the Supreme Court, you can easily understand it.

DePue: Well, that was my next question anyway. I don't know how long it took them to get to the position of throwing it out. Was it in the same calendar years or so?

Daniels: I think it was. I'm not positive about that.

DePue: The question then, did you have a belief, at the time you passed it that it would be able to get passed the Supreme Court test?

Daniels: We thought so, because we dealt with a lot of lawyers in putting it together. And we thought we had put together a piece of legislation that would be effective.

DePue: Do you recall the specific reason that the Illinois Supreme Court ruled it unconstitutional?

Daniels: One of the things was dealing with the pre-affidavit being a good lawsuit, certified by a practicing physician, [that] they thought was unconstitutional. There were some other issues; I don't totally remember.

DePue: Repeal in March, of an eighty-eight year-old workplace safety bill.

Daniels: That's the Structural Work Act that we referred to earlier.

DePue: Okay, that's the same thing there. Any further comments on that?

Daniels: No, I think I pretty much covered most of that.

DePue: Unemployment insurance, was that one of the issues, as well?

Daniels: Balancing the unemployment. What we did was, in unemployment insurance, we cut some of the tax, reduced that. You taxed employers 16%, and we reduced it so that we saved approximately \$128 million to Illinois employers. That was one of our budget cuts that we implemented, about \$128 million in savings. And, of course, it was a job growth issue too.

I need one of those books over there.

DePue: Hang on. We'll just pause quickly here.

(pause in recording)

DePue: Are we ready?

Daniels: I am.

DePue: We took a very quick break, and we're back at it. We've been talking through some of the legislative highlights of 1995. And we're now at a point where we turn it over to educational reform.

Both higher education reform and Chicago school reform in '95, I'm sure took a lot of your time. It was something that Governor Edgar definitely got animated about, when we talked about it. So, how about higher education reform?

Daniels: Well, there were a lot of provisions of higher education reform that the governor presented. One was to take the politics out of the creation of the university board of trustees, which he felt strongly about and wanted to have a reform of that mechanism for an appointment process of qualified people.

DePue: So, this was something that basically originated from him in this case?

Daniels: Oh yeah, very much so, and that he was very much in favor of. Of course, ultimately we ended up passing that. Education reform, in the higher education, university and colleges, we know we were interested in not only the quality of education but also maintenance provisions, and how do we protect our infrastructure at the universities and how we continue to move forward at the universities, which is things that he worked on as well.

But he also, on the education reform in general, was a big, strong supporter for shifting from reliance on property tax to income tax. That was a very strong initiative on his part. He didn't have much support in the General

Assembly. As a matter of fact, he held a special session, which talked about that with Stan Ikenberry. It was roundly dismissed pretty quickly.

DePue: Well, I did want to talk about that at length here, but I think that's a little bit ahead of our timeline here. How about Chicago school reform?

Daniels: Well, Chicago school reform was really an initiative of the House and Senate Republicans strongly, obviously with the support of the governor. One of the things that we did was we assigned members of our caucus to be in charge of that taskforce.

In my case, it was Representative Mary Lou Cowlshaw, who was our leader in education. She was from Naperville. She spent a great deal of time putting that together and dealing with the structure of Chicago school reform. Basically, the way we looked at it was every child in Illinois deserves the same opportunity for a quality education. There's some things that you can never change, some of the environmental structure, where you grow up, what kind of neighborhood you live in. You know, you can't go in there and pass a magic wand, but you can create opportunities in the educational structure.

One of the things we found out early on is, in Chicago there was no single point of responsibility. At the time, nobody was in charge of Chicago school kids. Oh, you had your boards that were lined up; you had your school councils that were lined up. But, at the end of the day, everyone was pointing at somebody else.

So, we ran on the philosophy, of a business management philosophy of a single point of responsibility. We communicated with Mayor Daley, and we said to him, "We want you to take over Chicago school responsibility. We want the mayor to have that responsibility." He ultimately agreed, and that was a major part of our legislation, in terms of creation of Chicago school reform, to have the mayor of Chicago being the sole single point of responsibility for the quality of education in Chicago.

Moving forward from the passage of that legislation, monumental legislation, I've been somewhat disappointed that it didn't pan out to the degree that we wanted it to. Not to take away from any teacher or any person that's trying to educate children, but I think that we all know that the quality of education in Chicago needs to be improved, generally speaking. Now, obviously, that's a generalization.

DePue: My understanding is that the legislature was always perturbed, if that's the right term, that Chicago, on a frequent basis, would come to the State of Illinois to ask them to help bail out their school system.

Daniels: No question about it.

DePue: Was part of the reforms meant to address that, as well?

Daniels: Well, it was meant to address that, and the financial aspects of it were also a consideration too. One of the things we set up was a form of governance, with the mayor appointing a board of trustees to assume control of the school system, which made the mayor the point of responsibility. He would appoint a new president. He would give the authority to the trustees to levy taxes that were necessary in the district, to adopt a budget for the school district and to help resolve some of the financial problems that they were seeing, which ultimately would benefit the state as a whole.

DePue: I know that, once the reforms took effect, that one of the key decisions, you went from having a superintendent to having a chief executive officer, who the mayor would appoint, himself.

Daniels: Right, that is exactly right. The president of the school board, he would appoint a new board, a full-time, compensated chief executive officer, who is responsible for the management of the system. Again, because he makes the appointment, he becomes the person responsible for that.

DePue: So, the ball is in his court. If it fails, it's on him then.

Daniels: That's exactly right.

DePue: And he can't be pointing fingers at anybody else.

Daniels: That was the theory.

DePue: Well, Paul Vallas was selected as the first chief executive officer, who, as I understand, was not an educator at all, was he?

Daniels: No, not that I recall. But [he] had a pretty good reputation, and everybody credits him with doing good work.

DePue: Do you recall the initial blush? Were some of the reform efforts successful?

Daniels: I think some of them were. I don't recall specifically on that. Governor Edgar would certainly follow through a little bit more on that.

DePue: Again, he got quite animated on that one. I know part of the deal also was to try to reform some of the union rules, especially in terms of how long it would take the teachers to gain tenure, that that was extended out.

Daniels: Yes, and collective bargaining. They were given authority to enter into collective bargaining agreements, up to four years, and so they extended another year. They created more opportunities for charter schools. And contracts with third parties were performed by a bargaining unit, to make sure that you had effective contracting provisions. There was a lot of that legislation. I think, overall, the goal that we had was to give Chicago kids an opportunity for a better education.

DePue: At least short-term, I know there were some considerable successes, both in terms of what was going on in the school system and the financial status of the school system.

Daniels: You couldn't help but have some successes. (DePue chuckles) It was a mess. And, by the way, as I recall, there were only a few Democrat votes on Chicago school reform.

DePue: And my understanding is, after it was implemented, lots of people were trying to take credit for it.

Daniels: Victory has a thousand fathers; defeat has none. The bill, House Bill 206, was under my sponsorship, passed the House, sixty-seven to forty-nine, with sixty-four Republicans and three Democrats. It passed the Senate, thirty-three to twenty-six. In the Senate, to no one's surprise, the Democrats threatened the prospect of purging a public system, plagued with years of financial management, on the rest of us and turning it all over to the State of Illinois. But we passed this legislation to avoid that. It didn't pass with a wide majority, but it passed with enough votes to make it effective.

DePue: So, would it be fair to say that, as in tort reform, Chicago school reform would have never happened, without a majority in both the House and Senate for the Republicans?

Daniels: Let's put it this way. Do we have problems in Chicago schools today? I mean, you have a situation where kids walking to school are fearful for their life, and you have a situation right now that Chicago teachers, in 2012, are threatening to take strike votes and great dissention in the system.

Under the current administration, that's totally Democrat controlled, do we see major efforts by the legislature to help with Chicago school reform? No. So, who did it happen under? Once again, down-staters caring about the state as a whole and down-staters primarily governed by Republicans. That's my partisan message. (chuckles)

DePue: And how long have the Democrats been in control of both the governorship and both houses?

Daniels: Well, let's see, Blagojevich and Quinn.

DePue: Two-thousand two to 2012.

Daniels: Yeah, ten years. They certainly had enough time to do it. It's will.

DePue: The next one, workers' compensation—an issue that was also part of the Illinois agenda, I would think—didn't necessarily turn out quite as well. Can you talk about that a little bit?

Daniels: Sure. I said earlier that workers' compensation was the one issue that I thought was the most difficult issue to deal with in the state of Illinois, because the parties are so diverse.

Where traditionally, you could line up trial lawyers, and you could line up doctors, and you could line up business. They all have various positions that they fill, and you can address the issues as they come up. There are so many interconnections. Some doctors were for workers' comp reform; others were against it. Trial lawyers were against it; the Manufacturer's Association had a different view than the trial lawyers. And the traditional coalitions would break down.

So, trying to reform workers' comp became extremely difficult. To be very candid, we found that we were unable to accomplish the goals that we wanted to accomplish, a standardized form of compensation, arbitrator's rulings that would have easier to accomplish and more understanding. Ultimately, we had to give up on the major workers' comp that we wanted to accomplish.

DePue: Can you help me understand—there's a certain level I understand—the difference between what you were trying to accomplish in tort reform versus work comp reform.

Daniels: Well, work comp reform, there's no fault. Tort reform is based upon fault. Tort reform is a civil justice system for damages. Worker comp reform says to the worker, as long as you're employed on the job, and you're performing your job functions, and you're not violating any of the rules or principles that are set down, you will be compensated for your injuries.

The question is, what is the level of compensation, for how long, and is it permanent disability? If so, you can recover a compensation, based upon the fact that you are working in a workplace.

DePue: I know that one of the differences—and I believe from organizations that would typically be supporting the Republicans—the medical society, the Illinois State Medical Society had one view, and the Illinois Manufacturer's Association had a different view. Can you lay that out for us, basically the differences?

Daniels: Well, the medical society, of course, is protecting the doctors who furnish the care to the individuals. One of the things you tried to do was set a standardized fee for that service. The medical society was very, very opposed to that, whereas the manufacturers basically said, "Look, we don't want to get into a situation where we're writing open checks to doctors in a no-fault system." So, that was one of the rubs that took place.

And you had treatments by doctors that would be therapy for, say, a broken arm or something like that, to recover the muscular structure. And

you'd have a heat treatment, which would have X dollars in billing. The Manufacturer's Association wanted to present limits to that, where the doctors would say, "No, you can't limit a doctor's treatment."

DePue: So, it almost gets into the kind of discussions we have today about managed care?

Daniels: A little bit, yeah.

DePue: How did it work out? Did the Illinois Manufacturer's Association, your members, pretty much unify in their support for that organization?

Daniels: No, it was divided. That's why you couldn't get the necessary votes. In tort reform, in Chicago school reform, in our death penalty appeals, shortening this time, the truth in sentencing, parental notification, job creation, in all these things we were able to put together a very unified approach by membership.

Workers' comp divided the membership. You had some with the manufacturers, some with the docs and some with the trial lawyers. You had a divided caucus. It became very apparent, you weren't going to be able to put together the sixty votes.

DePue: And the Democrats were relatively unified in their opposition to it?

Daniels: (chuckles) Yes.

DePue: Not relatively, perhaps.

Daniels: Yes. So, you couldn't count on them for any assistance.

DePue: Still, you've accomplished quite a bit. Did you feel good by the time you were getting close to wrapping things up, and now the budget is the issue? Were you feeling good about what you had accomplished in that first session?

Daniels: I think that we accomplished a great deal, that first session. I think, on hindsight, we may have accomplished it too fast, too quick, too early, because it didn't look as if the accomplishments were as great as they were. And it's the old theory about, if you make things look easy, then the perception is they are easy.

This process, the legislative process, the accomplishments of what we did in the House, the Senate, with the governor, were incredible and have not been duplicated since. It was a tremendous amount of work, a tremendous amount of credit to staff, to the legislators, to the caucuses, primarily to the Republicans and, of course, to the governor, who was the quarterback.

DePue: It's been compared by a couple people to FDR's first hundred days, this flurry of legislative activity that was able to get accomplished. Do you think that's a fair comparison?

Daniels: I think it is a fair comparison because, frankly, the agenda that we made promises to Illinois, we accomplished in eighteen days, eighteen legislative days in the House.

DePue: Now, I don't know, this might surprise you; it might not. Governor Edgar, reflecting back on this time period... I don't want to get too far out of line here, in terms of characterizing what he said. I was trying to find the language, but wasn't successful. He generally preferred to have a divided legislature to work with.

Daniels: Governmentally, I think that's sound. I've never liked one party control, Republican or Democrat. I think it's more productive to have a diversity and to drive for a consensus. Most of my legislative career, as you know, thirty years of my legislative career, I worked with a divided government and felt working with it would be fairly successful. No, I'm not surprised by that, and I don't necessarily disagree with it.

DePue: The General Assembly also passed Conservation 2000 during this timeframe. I think that basically approved \$100 million for a six-year conservation plan. This was something else that I know Governor Edgar was strong on. Any comments on that?

Daniels: That was his program. We pretty much adopted his views on it, no problem.

DePue: And truth in sentencing, I think you've mentioned that.

Daniels: Yes. That was one of our goals. In other words, if you're sentenced to prison for fourteen years, we want to know you're going to serve about 85% of your sentence. And that was a law that we passed.

DePue: Well, that harkens back to some of Thompson's initiatives, early in his administration, Class X sentencing.

Daniels: Class X, right. And what Class X did was create a new form of felony violations and put certain sentencing along, which was a harsher form. It was a criminal justice crackdown. Truth in Sentencing dealt more with the area of making sure that, when you're sentenced by a judge, that you serve a minimum amount of that sentence, instead of being released early.

DePue: So kind of a compliment to the Class X initiative.

Daniels: Kind of, I guess you could say.

DePue: But it also drives up the prison population, doesn't it?

Daniels: It can.

DePue: Was there any construction of prisons going on at that time? I know that was a big thing during a lot of the Thompson years.

Daniels: Yeah, I think that's always been the case, that prisons have been an issue of where they would be constructed. I'm not sure exactly when Tamms was built. Some of the areas, it's a job creation issue for the guards and for the corrections people. So, they fight for them. That's pretty standard throughout our history.

DePue: That leaves the big piece, what you said was probably the top priority and is usually the last thing that's done before the legislature adjourns, the '96 budget. It was passed on June 5, which, according to the records I have, was the earliest agreement in sixty-two years.

Daniels: I think that's true, and one of the earliest adjournments at the same time. It was a balanced budget. We eliminated in '96, the hospital assessment tax; we had a supermajority vote for some of the provisions of it; we implemented statewide property tax caps, and, as I said earlier, we had the earliest adjournment since 1908, in completing our work, which were all strong points of what our agenda was.

So, we felt that we were going into the elections of '96, November, with very strong academic and agenda background that would appeal to people, because, along with that, we created job opportunities; we created \$128 million in tax cuts for unemployment insurance. We had, as I said earlier, the Welfare to Work initiatives; we developed a Quality First education reform program, making the quality of education a primary responsibility of the state, statewide; new charter school legislation, allowing for the creation of charter schools, and set the largest school funding hike in the history, up to that point, without a tax increase, and cracked down on school violence through legislation.

So, that, along with a great line of social agenda, led into the elections of '97. I think we were extremely proud of not only balancing our budget, paying off a billion dollars in old debt, during this period of time, but also showing the people of Illinois that we could get our work done quickly, on time and get out.

DePue: You mentioned a hospital assessment tax. What were the specifics on that?

Daniels: It was a bed tax—it was a tax on hospitals that cost some of our inner city hospitals a great deal of money—that we started to eliminate.

DePue: So, the hospitals themselves would be paying a tax for every bed that they had?

- Daniels: That was what they were doing, and we eliminated that.
- DePue: Was that part of the \$198 million that you've mentioned here?
- Daniels: A hundred and twenty-eight million was on unemployment insurance. The hospital assessment tax was different than that.
- DePue: Well, here's one that still resonates today in very negative ways, pension reforms.
- Daniels: Ah, pension reforms.
- DePue: I didn't hear any mention about pension reforms at that time.
- Daniels: Part of the problem that you have, historically... By the way, I'm a major advocate for pension reform. I think Governor Quinn has done a good job in laying out a program that should be implemented. I'm concerned about retirees, particularly those people on a lower pension, that can't make up the difference if they're cut, because they're out of work; they retired. We had a contract with them; we agreed to do X, and cutting back from X just doesn't seem fair to them.

But, there's some simplified things you could do. You could raise the retirement age, and you say, anybody over forty-five, you can't retire until you're sixty-seven. It gives you twenty years to plan. But, if you do it to somebody that's fifty-five and looking at retirement at fifty-seven, it doesn't give them enough time to plan. So, that's one thing you could do.

Another thing is, all new hires, you could go to a 401k program. Now, I'm talking about today. Why is it so important today? For several reasons, one, your teachers' pensions have been a huge drain on the state budget, and teachers are not state employees. There wasn't that much of a drain, back in 1995. Your salary of the average legislator was half of what it is today. Your pension benefits had the same impact on the state's budget that it has today. Time has moved up, not only the numbers of retirees, but also the amount of dollars that the retirees receive from the state funds. Plus the fact, the 2008 recession won't go away. We just can't seem to get out of this hole that started with this huge recession in 2008.

In '95 and '96, our whole process was building up, but we did address the pension issue in 1995, by passing a law that would have fiscally balanced our pension system in forty years. If we had followed that law and not stopped making payments, that was done in the Blagojevich Administration, we would be on track to an effective, balanced fiscal system and the pensions.

However, that's not to say that changes wouldn't need to be made. Of course they would, because today the average legislator makes about \$61,000 a year. When most of these pensions were passed, the laws were passed, it

was substantially less. It didn't have the same impact on the state's budget. Changes need to be made, but we did address that in 1995, and people frequently refer to that and say, if we had kept our promises in '95 on the pension system, we wouldn't be in the hole we're in today.

DePue: One of the things—

Daniels: A long answer to a short question.

DePue: I'm not surprised that you spoke with some passion about it, because it is the overwhelming issue that the governor and the legislature seems to be dealing with right now. It's the only issue that basically the phrase is, "The can was kicked down the road again." So, there will be a special session in the summer to deal with the pension issue.

Daniels: And there should be. I totally agree with that, but I think you have to put it in context, where you're at. And the context requires you to look at what it is that we should accomplish at that time.

DePue: One of the issues that was the sticking point this spring was Madigan's position that responsibility to pay the government's portion of the teacher pension should be passed down to the local school districts and not be on the state. Would you agree basically with that?

Daniels: I think that, if you start from the premise that teachers are not state employees, I think it's pretty hard to disagree with that. Then you have to ask the question, well why would the state be responsible for picking up their pensions, first?

If you start with the premise that school boards have been able to increase the pensions of their school employees and administrative staff, without fiscal responsibility, because the state is picking up that increase, you start getting to a conclusion. And the two points bring to the conclusion that (A) school boards should have a huge stake in the process and be responsible for their own actions, and (B) that the state's responsibility is to state employees, not to non-state employees, and (C) the argument that teachers don't get Social Security is not as a result of the Illinois system; it's a result of federal law.

If you want to make those changes, go ahead and make them. But the fact of the matter is, there's a strong argument that the school districts should pick up their pension responsibility and then, ultimately, be responsible for their own actions.

I think Speaker Madigan and Governor Quinn have a point. I think that phasing this shift back to the school districts is the appropriate way of doing it, a ten-year period of time, which will eliminate some of the strain on the

state budget, which will open up money for taking care of people that need state help and eliminate some of the squeeze.

DePue: ... which would put more pressure on local property taxes.

Daniels: Sure it would. But it also puts the responsibility where it belongs. We have a local school system in this state, run by local school districts. That's our choice. We could change that. I don't advocate it. You could send all our money to Springfield. Let Springfield run the Elmhurst school system or the Springfield school system. You know how far that would get. But, as long as the system has local control, there needs to be local responsibility.

DePue: So, what do you say then—this is a little bit off the subject here for us, but we'll pursue it just a little bit farther—what do you say to the teachers, to the teachers' union and, to a certain extent, the general Illinois public who say hey, we're in this problem because the state legislature wasn't adequately funding it. So, now—

Daniels: In 1995 we were. That's the time that I had the primary responsibility as Speaker, and we passed the law for adequate funding. Under the Blagojevich Administration, they stopped making the payments and started diverting those payments elsewhere, which put us in this huge jam. If we had kept our payments... We should still make the changes; we should still amend the pension system and still take new employees and go into a 401k plan, but you wouldn't be in the jam that you're in today.

DePue: Would you say, though, that the anger against the legislature and against Blagojevich is justified because of what didn't happen in the 2000s?

Daniels: I think that there's a valid point.

DePue: Well, let's go back to 1995 then. (both laugh)

Daniels: Well, like I said from the very start, I think where you have an area of responsibility, you need to take that responsibility.

DePue: When you've talked about the power and the influence and the skill that Mike Madigan has as a politician, but a lot of this anger is being directed back at him right now.

Daniels: Well, with the power and with the leadership, requires responsibility. I think Mike Madigan laid his case out very effectively. He couldn't get any support from... I think it was evident that the governor backed off at the end and others did.

DePue: In this particular year.

Daniels: You have responsibility, when you're the head of it.

DePue: What I want to do next is to maybe take another aside here and talk about your relationship with the press, especially as Speaker. Your views on the press in general?

Daniels: A necessary function of the operation of democracy. Without a free press, without free speech, you lose your democracy, and you don't last very long.

DePue: Was the press fair to you as the Speaker?

Daniels: Yeah, I mean, there was both sides of that issue. Over the years, I've been criticized; over the years I've been supported. I think that the press was surprised at how fast we got things done. You can always find somebody that can write an article about dictatorial, too strong, forcing members to do that.

On the other hand, you've got to look at the net result of where you're at. You can find an equal number of articles saying, successful legislative session, good points and so forth.

DePue: Part of the dialogue today, whenever you're talking about the press, and especially—this is at the national level—that the press, the news media, has a liberal bias. And you, on the conservative side of the political spectrum, what would you say about the press that you dealt with at the time?

Daniels: When I was Speaker?

DePue: Yeah. Did you feel that it was biased?

Daniels: No. I felt, for the most part, that they were fair. I mean, I would have my disagreements on certain points, and there were certain press people over the years that I don't particularly care for, but I'm sure there were press people that didn't care for me either, so.

DePue: Was Rich Miller one of those?

Daniels: Rich Miller and I have had an on again off again relationship. He originally had—

DePue: The author of the *Capitol Fax*. I think he was, even at that time.

Daniels: Yes. Rich Miller generally has been critical of me and my administration. I have made times that he's been the author of Mike Madigan's newsletters (chuckles) and been a major supporter on that end.

DePue: So, you would say that, in Rich Miller's case, he was biased.

Daniels: I think there's a certain bias there. But again, I defend his right to print what he wants.

DePue: Anybody else that you'd include on that list?

Daniels: Oh, I think you had some ultra conservatives that took exception, like Dan Proft was one who might have taken exception to some of my policies. But, you know what? It doesn't make any difference.

When you're elected and selected as a leader, you have to lead, and you have to be responsible for your actions. I'm proud of my record, over the thirty-two years I was there. And I'm proud that I was able to serve as the role of Speaker for a mere, short two years, but it's an experience that I loved, I enjoyed, and I think I did a good job at it.

DePue: What I wanted to turn next to, then, was a subject you've already mentioned a couple times, and that's general educational reform at the state level. It's a relatively...I think it would take us a little bit of time to go through that. So, are we ready to do that now or do you want to postpone for tomorrow? We're at just short of an hour and a half. It will probably take another fifteen minutes or twenty minutes at least, I would think.

Daniels: Let's take a break for a second, if you don't mind.

DePue: Call it quits for today, if that's okay?

Daniels: That's great.

(pause in recording)

DePue: Okay, we took a very quick break, and we're at educational reform. To kind of set the stage here, before I turn it over to you, Mr. Speaker, educational reform was very much one of the main issues in the '94 election, as you well know. Dawn Clark Netsch was talking about this property tax swap.

Edgar ran against that and easily defeated her, in part, because she was a big spender. I don't need to go into too much details, but the argument, now that Edgar got the nomination—he won the election—he did want to do something about the funding support for education for students across the state. At that point in time, as I understand, you can correct me on this, 70% of the funding was from the property tax; it came from the local property tax.

Daniels: Right.

DePue: I know that the Illinois State Constitution had aspirations to make it much higher, that the income tax would be supporting these local schools, and that was part of the issue. Up to 95%, in some of the richer districts, was coming from local property taxes.

I read one estimate that something like 700,000 of the state's two million students were not adequately funded. That was part of the issue as

well. That wasn't just Chicago, but a lot of the downstate districts as well. And from \$3,000 to \$15,000 funding in various schools. So, there was a wide disparity there, as well.

That was very much part of what the election in '94 was about. Again, Netsch wanted to have a property tax swap, so an increase in income tax and a corresponding decrease in the property tax.

Daniels: I think the basic premise that one needs to look at is, is there ever a total opportunity to eliminate disparity between school districts and between the educational process? With a state like Illinois, are you always going to have the same quality of education in a suburban district, inner city district and downstate district?

There are many reasons why that won't occur. For one thing, several downstate districts have very small school districts, some as small as 200 people. That's a very expensive form of running a district. And, when you try to consolidate, with this issue of consolidation, which for years has been discussed in the assembly, unable to accomplish, because you have core groups of students and property owners that don't want to give up their local control and their ability to put extra money into their district.

The idea of a property tax swap is to equalize educational opportunities. That's what Dawn Clark Netsch was saying. The very nature of it speaks to why that won't happen, because you're going to send your money to Springfield, and then Springfield is going to return it to you? Where is Springfield going to return it?

It will all depend upon the political winds at that time. Do the Democrats control the House; does Chicago control the House and Senate and the governor's mansion, or do the Republicans control it? When the Republicans control it, are they going to send more money into the suburbs and downstate or into Chicago? In other words, I'm posing a series of questions that became very apparent, plus the fact, this idea that all school districts will be equal, is something that's hard to accomplish.

So, let's say that you tell your minimum contribution to education is \$1,000, hypothetically. But you have a school district in Mendota, Illinois, that says they want to pass a referendum. So, they give \$1,001, because they've determined that they want to have a new science program. So they pass a referendum at \$1,001. They are now out of whack with the rest of the state that's at \$1,000. And this is going to happen over and over again, in Oak Brook, a Yorktown, a Springfield. Some of our—a Homer Glen—some of our areas in the rest of the state are going to have a disparity in the available dollars for education.

That doesn't always convert to a better education and, as a matter of fact, in my case, traveling the state of Illinois, I've been very pleased to see the quality of education in some of our smaller rural areas, because the students have a tendency to be more serious about it, at times. Money is not the only driving force for a quality education. There's a lot of factors involved.

Dawn Clark Netsch campaigned on a property tax swap. To those of us that live downstate Illinois, remember the makeup of the General Assembly, Republicans outside of Chicago? To those of us that lived outside, we saw that as a huge tax increase to us. Wealthier districts, sending our money to Springfield and the loss of local control. That's what has killed, over and over again, this issue of property tax swap for income tax.

DePue: You didn't buy in on her premise that property taxes in your districts would be lowered to compensate for the increase in income tax?

Daniels: Not in a minute. You might have lowered it for a year or two, but you would have definitely gotten back higher at the time, because, after all, the theory was an equalization, right? Wasn't that what she was arguing for?

DePue: Exactly.

Daniels: Well, so, are you going to tell somebody in Lombard, Illinois that they can't pass a referendum to build a new high school, because somebody in Chicago doesn't have the same urban resources for additional dollars, or somebody down in Mendota, Illinois doesn't have the same resources? There's always going to be—dependent upon where you live—there's always going to be a disparity in opportunity. That doesn't mean that you can't take advantage of your quality education in certain forces, but it does mean that this swap just will not work in its concept. Conceptually, they talk about it, but in actual playing, it won't work. It won't pass.

DePue: May 4, 1995, I believe, is the date that Governor Edgar appoints University of Illinois President Stanley Ikenberry—a name you've mentioned here a couple times already—to head a blue ribbon commission on education to study this problem. So, right after the election, Edgar is essentially accepting that this is a big problem that needs to be addressed.

Daniels: Right.

DePue: Did you have any suspicions about why he established that commission in the first place?

Daniels: Well, we knew, historically, Edgar had a bent towards using income tax more for education. I had a very high degree of respect for Stan Ikenberry and worked closely with him on higher education issues, thought that, when he came out with his blue ribbon report, that he was missing the bet. And, where

he might talk in an academic sense and used to dealing with a faculty, he was not used to dealing with the political realities in the State of Illinois.

DePue: Did you have the notion in '95 that this was just a cover for what the governor wanted to see happen with this tax swap?

Daniels: No, I didn't. As I said, I had a high regard for Stan Ikenberry, and I was willing to wait to see what happens. Obviously, you're always concerned. You're appointing an academic that deals with a faculty to run a commission that would deal with academic recommendations. That's not necessarily going to take into consideration what the real people in the real world want to happen.

DePue: So, the rest of the commission would be important, in terms of what the membership was.

Daniels: Yeah, and I don't remember offhand, the makeup of the commission.

DePue: Would you have had a voice in determining some of the membership?

Daniels: I don't remember.

DePue: Do you think that it was a fair question to say, we want to increase the amount of spending that was coming from income tax?

Daniels: Oh sure, sure. It's a fair question. And what that resulted in, as you know, is the creation of a foundation level. That was a compromise, to get away from the property tax swap that wasn't going to work and was going to harm suburban areas, and they were going to be asked to send more money in income tax to the state than they would have gained in a property tax offset.

What it actually ended up doing is forcing a compromise, and that's the foundation level. In other words, there will be a minimum level of dollars sent from the state to each pupil in the state of Illinois. In some cases, a school district will spend substantially more than that. And, in some cases, they will benefit from that foundation level, because the state will give them more money to acquire that.

DePue: So, if there is an increase in the amount of money per pupil that the state, from income tax, is going to be providing, that means that you're putting much more pressure on the state's annual budget, as well.

Daniels: That would be true, sure.

DePue: And in heady economic times, that's easier to do than in down economic times, like we've got right now?

Daniels: It's always easy. I haven't finalized the review of the state's budget right now, but there has been some cuts in education funding today, for one of the rare times in our state's history.

DePue: Well, even in those years when Blagojevich was governor and there was incredible pressure on the budget, I recall that almost every single year there was an increase in education.

Daniels: An increase, that is exactly right. It's been the sacred cow, over the years.

DePue: I'm going to go through some of the things that, once the initial Ikenberry Commission report came out, I believe this was in March 1996. We're going to get beyond our timeline in certain respects, but it's appropriate to kind of talk through the whole lifecycle of this educational reform.

The specific findings were a recommendation that they would pay \$4,225 per pupil, and that would take it from...the '96 level was \$2,949. So, that's a significant increase that they were recommending.

Recommended baseline state funding at \$2,000 per pupil and an increase in state taxes of \$1.9 billion and a decrease of \$1.5 billion in property taxes. That was the part that you just never bought?

Daniels: Never bought.

DePue: And that would mean that there's \$400 million more available to fund schools, each and every year.

Daniels: Well, we can continue to increase the money to schools every year, year in, year out. The question becomes, at what point do you have enough money in there for schools to operate? I think that was one of the determinations made in 2012, that, at some point, we have to put a few brakes on some of our expenditures.

But, for years, we've always increased state funding; that was a given. Your very first discussions in your budgetary process was, how much more are we going to put into education funding? And '95 and '96 was no different.

DePue: And education funding, a direct translation, how much more per pupil are we going to be giving?

Daniels: Right, right.

DePue: How about the notion that, with this recommendation, eventually the state's portion or contributions would represent 50% of the cost? Did you buy in on that percentage?

Daniels: No.

DePue: Again, that was kind of a meaningless number?

Daniels: Again, I think we have a difficult determination on what's the right level. I think you operate within the available revenue sources, that we set a foundation level, and then we increase that every year.

DePue: Do you remember any discussions that you had? Again, we've got the four tops, the governor—

Daniels: You're talking about for the swap?

DePue: Yeah.

Daniels: I remember very short discussions with Governor Edgar. He wasn't very happy. That was a temporary glitch in our relationship, because I have a very, very high regard for him, then and now.

DePue: This is a two-year discussion. Was that right up front and an ongoing discussion?

Daniels: He never was confused on where I stood, and he wasn't confused where Pate stood.

DePue: Were you and Pate in agreement on this one?

Daniels: Yes.

DePue: Does that mean that he's got to look for Democratic support?

Daniels: Or he'd have to look elsewhere.
(laughs) That means that, as long as Pate Philip and Lee Daniels were in control of the House and Senate, it wasn't going to happen.

DePue: I'm going to go through a timeline in early 1997.

*January
1997, Edgar*



Governor Jim Edgar shakes Speaker of the House Daniels' hand after Edgar's State of the State Address. Senate President "Pate" Philip stands behind Daniels.

gives the State of the State speech, with education funding at the top of the agenda. That couldn't have been a surprise to you.

January and February, Edgar tours the state to drum up support for the school funding reform.

In the *April and May* timeframe, he actually uses \$375,000 of his own campaign funds in an advertising campaign to push for the reform legislation.

In *August*, he announced his retirement from politics.

It's in that fall session that, I think, you finally decide something on educational reform. Again, I'm going to mention here the specifics of the eventual bill. I think that was finally decided in December of '97. Does that sound right?

Daniels: That sounds right.

DePue: Which would have occurred in the veto session, then?

Daniels: Yes.

DePue: So, it took two and a half years, basically, to work it through.

Daniels: I can't remember exactly when his health incident was, but he had a health problem that—

DePue: Well, that occurred in his election year. I think you might be referring to his heart problem during the middle of the election.

Daniels: Yeah, but he had continuing health problems too. Anyhow, that factored into his retirement.

DePue: So, the specifics of the bill that was finally signed, \$4,225 per pupil, \$1.5 billion in funds for local school construction, improvements in the—

Daniels: By the way, which was extremely important to the collar counties, the school construction aspect of it.

DePue: ...improvements in the certification and tenure, improvements, as in toughening up the tenure requirements, I would assume?

Daniels: Yes.

DePue: And guaranteed funding in the future. So, by fiscal year 2000, \$4,325; by fiscal year 2001, \$4,425. Those are obviously decisions made, regardless of what might be happening in the economy in those out years.

Now I know that you wanted to talk about some other issues that were emanating from the legislature.

Daniels: Well, but what you outlined, I had no problem with. It was a good compromise. Tightening up on tenure is the foundation level we could support. We strongly advocated the school construction grant program. That was very important to growth areas and suburban areas and was part of our compromise efforts there.

One of the things we did, in our education reform, was look at the quality of education, and in that process—and I'll cover it just briefly—we talked about achieving standards, which would be enforced through periodic testing. We passed the Prairie State Exam, which is still in force today, and some alternative school systems, which we put into force, and reducing the bureaucracy at the State Board of Education.

We did support an additional appropriation for schools at that time. We wanted to make sure that students had a quality education at all levels. We didn't want anyone graduating from high school that couldn't read, and we made an effort to address that. I think that's still one of the problems today.

As you know, I have taught college for three years, and I find one of the problems in college is writing and reading today. To me, this, if it's not addressed, is a huge failure.

DePue: Can you tell us a little bit more about what the Prairie State Exams are?

Daniels: Beginning in 1999, in the 2000 school year, Prairie State Exam would be administered to all high school students (coughs) in grade twelve. That exam would be for those that are set to graduate and focus on five core areas of learning. One would be writing, mathematics, social studies, science, and it would be offered in January or March of each year. The goal is to make sure that they're getting a quality education. That was our overall charge that we had in place.

DePue: That we're just not promoting students to graduation, and they don't have any of the skills they need?

Daniels: Right. So, students who meet all the graduation requirements and achieve a good score on the exam, receive a Prairie State Achievement Award as part of their high school diploma.

DePue: But is it still possible for students who couldn't read effectively, who couldn't write, to still graduate?

Daniels: I'm sure it's still possible.

DePue: And, as you said, you see the evidence of that when you're teaching.

Daniels: I see the evidence of that when I'm teaching. I've had to tell my students, if you think that writing is not an important part of your exam, you're mistaken, because, if I can't understand what you're writing, how do you think I'm going to give you the top grade? So, even when you have somebody write a research paper, if they don't review it, back over and over again, and make sure that what they're writing makes sense... That's something that I don't think belongs in college. I think you have a right to assume that people can do that by the time they get to college. It's not a valid assumption.

DePue: Some of the things you just listed here echo a little bit of No Child Left Behind, which is federal legislation during the Bush Administration, standardized testing in the particular.

Daniels: Yeah, it would. In the final analysis, it's about parents. I don't want to get into the social responsibility issue, but you see parental responsibility in quality education all the time. You can't substitute a teacher for a parent. A teacher can encourage; a teacher can stimulate; a teacher can excite, but a teacher cannot live the environment that somebody has to live in.

DePue: I'm going to read a couple quotes here. This is from Madigan, and it's not addressed to you.

Daniels: Okay. (chuckles)

DePue: Madigan said, after this long-drawn-out battle about school reform, "The governor deserves the bulk of the credit, because he's the one who initiated the proposal. He's the one that provided the persistence and perseverance to get it through."

Daniels: I don't think there's any question about that. That was a major initiative by the governor, and it was well done...once he gave up on the property tax swap. (both laugh)

DePue: And the disagreement, in this case, was within the Republican caucus.

Daniels: For the property tax swap? Mostly Republicans would have opposed it, yeah.

DePue: This is a quote. I'm having a hard time finding who I can attribute this to. I think I got it from the *Illinois Times*, but I don't think it's attributed to the *Illinois Times*. But for the time period, 1995 to 1997, Lee Daniels, "Has earned national recognition as one of the nation's top ten legislators for unceasing devotion to his constituents in DuPage County."

Do you know the national organization that would have given you that award as one of the top ten legislators?

Daniels: That would have been in the National Republican Legislators Association, again.

- DePue: And here's the rest of the quote. "Daniels has worked proactively with the legislature to develop successful plans, promoting fiscally responsible state spending, producing better schools, improving the Illinois business climate and fighting for property tax relief."
- Daniels: That's what I put under my pillow every night and hope my wife reads it. (DePue chuckles) You're grateful for recognition on hard work, but the fact of the matter is that nobody does it by themselves. And, as I said earlier, I had a great caucus that I worked with. They were unified; they worked strongly together; they worked hard, and everyone understood that we were there twenty-four seven, until the job was done.
- DePue: So, we just covered '95 and '96, especially, and went through '97 for school reform. A lot got accomplished in that timeframe.
- Daniels: It did.
- DePue: Your disappointments or what didn't get accomplished? I think we had talked about one at length.
- Daniels: Good election results. (chuckles)
- DePue: Pardon me?
- Daniels: A good election result in '96. No, workers' compensation would have been one that we had wished we could have accomplished. I think we did just about everything that we could do to address the issues that were important to Illinois at the time. We improved the business climate; we acted on tort reform to the best extent that we could; we dealt with job creation, which is a big thing today, in 2012; we dealt with cutting spending at government levels; we dealt with some of the regulatory agencies and making it easier to do business in Illinois; we improved the unemployment insurance rate for businesses; we paid old bills, and we took advantage of a recovering economy. Instead of adding new programs and putting us in debt in those programs, we took care of what we had to take care of and paid our bills. And we passed pension reform, which, as I said, in 1995, we put together a program, in forty years to have an actuarially sound system, which, if the Blagojevich administration had acted upon, we wouldn't be in the jam we're in today. And we paid attention to our less fortunate citizens.
- Things were good at that time, and there was a can-do attitude. Unfortunately, we had to do this primarily with Republican support. I think today, I would drive harder to try to have a bipartisan support. I'm not sure I could have gotten it done, but I would have still worked at it.
- DePue: If you were to critique yourself, that would be the critique then?

Daniels: Yeah. Look, I did what I thought was the best possible job that I could do, as an individual that has strengths and weaknesses. I know that I put in every bit of effort that I could put into running the House and dealing with state issues and resolving those state issues.

That's one of the reasons I think I have a very high responsibility with Governor Edgar. I think he feels strongly about my role in that, and I think it's a positive role. And I feel strongly about him because we worked strongly together to try to accomplish this, but you don't do it by yourself.

I'm grateful that I had that opportunity. It's a tremendous opportunity, and it was a tremendous honor to be able to serve in that position, as it was the rest of my thirty-two years in Springfield.

DePue: I think that's a great way to finish for today, Mr. Speaker. Thank you very much.

Daniels: You're welcome.

(end of interview)

Interview with Lee Daniels

ISL-A-L-2011-053.07

Interview # 7: June 6, 2012

Interviewer: Mark DePue

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

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.

DePue: Today is Wednesday, June 6, 2012. My name is Mark DePue, the Director of Oral History at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library, and I'm here with

the former Speaker of the Illinois House of Representatives, Lee Daniels.
Good morning, Mr. Speaker.

Daniels: Good morning. How are you?

DePue: Good. June sixth.

Daniels: Yeah, and I was reminded, in reading the newspaper this morning, June six, 2012, that I only served one term as Speaker of the House. (both chuckle)
They were writing an article on Speaker Madigan and how long he's been the Speaker, with the exception of two wonderful years. (laughs)

DePue: Well, June sixth was before my time and a little bit before your time, as well, but June 6, 1944 was, of course, the D-Day landings.

Daniels: Right.

DePue: But, June 5, 2012 was an important day politically in the United States, as well. I wonder if you have any reflections on the election in Wisconsin yesterday.

Daniels: Well, I think what it did was give some government control back to the ability to impact in a positive way, our states' budgets in various states throughout the country. The vote in Wisconsin, of course, dealt with the issues of collective bargaining, union rights, and the ability of unions to require dues payments subtracted from the payrolls of union employees and union members. And, of course, Wisconsin changed a lot of that, and they started to show an economic improvement within the state of Wisconsin. So, as you know, as you just observed, it's very, very controversial.

Here in Illinois, we have strong unionization. As you know, most of our state employees today are members of the union because the governor, over the past few years, has issued executive orders, which give certain benefits to union employees and not to members that are not members of the union. So, it's an issue that's going to resonate throughout the country, and I think that you'll find Wisconsin's lead being followed, perhaps, in states like Ohio and maybe Florida. Indiana has already started on that movement. Illinois is a ways away from it. Illinois is a pretty strong union state. That being said, we have a lot of work to do in a lot of areas, but it certainly was a monumental election.

DePue: To put a marker on this, Governor Scott Walker of Wisconsin was reelected, if we will; it was a recall election.

Daniels: Or defeated the recall.

DePue: He defeated the recall.

Daniels: Right, right. And, as I understand, that's pretty rare. I think there's been three recalls, and this is the first one that's been defeated. I also think I read that all of the senators that were up for recall defeated the recall, as well.

DePue: I think there were four. When I went to bed last night, three of the four had been confirmed. So, the fourth as well?

Daniels: I think the fourth, as well. I think that was a much narrower margin.

DePue: Which means that, in Wisconsin at least, the Republicans still would control the Senate.

Daniels: That's correct. But, I think you're going to find Wisconsin now perhaps settling down and looking towards stabilizing their budget and issues that they need to deal with. Like I think you're going to find Illinois today, starting to work very aggressively on the pension problem. And the question is how you resolve that. We talked about that yesterday, June fifth, a little bit, on teachers and so forth. But it's really a difficult problem to deal with. Legislators, they know, members of the House and Senate, that they have to deal with this.

DePue: Well, let's get back to a couple of decades ago.

Daniels: The past. (laughs)

DePue: We talked extensively about what went on in 1995 and '96, when you were the Speaker of the Illinois House, and how important that was, to actually be in that position and getting a lot of things accomplished. I understand you wanted to start this morning, though, with one of the procedural aspects that went on at that time.

Daniels: Right. In 1995, when I had the good fortune of serving as the Speaker, one of the first acts that you do after you're elected is adopt rules for the operation of the House. We wanted to make sure that the Illinois agenda that we campaigned on and that we told the Illinois citizens we were going to enact would, in fact, become a reality. And we didn't want the minority being able to totally frustrate our efforts. We were, after all, elected by the people in the majority. They expected action by us, and we were committed to take that action. So, we examined the rules in the Senate, which had two years prior to '95, or '93, obviously, became Republican majority in the Illinois Senate, and they took their effort in—

DePue: Okay, go ahead. We'll take a quick break.

(pause in recording)

DePue: You just started to talk about the procedural change. Okay, we had to take a very quick break, but we just started talking about the procedural change that you made when you first got to be Speaker.

Daniels: Sure. We wanted to keep our commitment to the people of Illinois, and in order to do that, we knew we had to pass a new series of rules in the operation of the House. So, we examined what they did in the Illinois Senate two years prior to us taking control of the House, and we literally took their rules and put them in operation in the House and adopted the Senate rules in the House.

Those rules were certainly tighter than what they had previously been done. They do give a lot of authority to the Speaker, and the authority to accomplish an agenda. We felt very strongly that this was the right way to go. So, those rules were adopted by the majority, and we operated under those. And, because of those rules, we were able to enact our legislation very quickly and very effectively and keep our promise to the people of Illinois, remembering, of course, that we were talking about balancing the budget; we were talking about debt reduction, improving the business climate in Illinois, Chicago school reform, tort reform, business and civil justice reform, along with several other provisions of the '95 agenda. And then, the '96 agenda was talking about saving taxpayers money and cutting the cost of government, expanding job opportunities. Sound familiar? Still today.

Building a better future for our children and protecting our families were all part of our '96 agenda. There's no question about the fact that the new rules allowed us to accomplish this, without allowing a minority party to frustrate it.

DePue: Did it limit debate or what was this?

Daniels: It didn't limit debate. Debate was okay, but it put a new provision in how you adopt amendments and rules. They had to go through a rules committee. They had to go through a committee structure, and the floor amendments were not as easy to adopt as they had been before. So, it required more of a committee structure.

When I lost control of the House in '97, or [the] '96 election for '97 session, Speaker Madigan kept those rules. So, you flash forward into the future. Those rules can be utilized by the Speaker if he, or perhaps she, in the future chooses to frustrate good legislation and to stop good legislation and good ideas. That's been the criticism today, that the rules of the House, which we passed in '95, are being used today to frustrate the passage of good legislation and the opportunity of members to participate.

And so, just a little side note, because today, on the pension structure, one of our members, in May, was totally frustrated because an amendment was put on in the committee two minutes before they brought the amendment out for people to look at and then put on the House floor for a vote.

DePue: The amendment was put on by Madigan?

Daniels: By Madigan, in committee. And two minutes before they started the committee, they gave the minority party the copies of the amendment. Now, that happens, but the criticism of the rules is that it can frustrate the passage of good legislation. That's true, but it's like anything else, unintended consequences can always be part of a new rule or a new idea or a new concept. Certainly these were not intended to frustrate good legislation; they were intended to help pass good legislation.

DePue: I understand you were reminded about this by listening to the radio?

Daniels: Yeah. I was listening to the radio and they said, "Oh, these rules were adopted by Speaker Lee Daniels in '95." True. We did pattern them after the Senate rules, which had been operating for two years prior to that, true. And we utilized them to pass good legislation. I'm pretty proud of our '95 and '96 agenda. Anybody that examines it, looks at it, it's a pretty proud agenda.

DePue: I wanted to go back myself and just highlight one other thing that happened in 1995. We don't need to talk about this in too much depth. But July 1, 1994, of course, that's the traditional beginning of the '96 fiscal year. That was the actual date that the Department of Natural Resources was created, and it was a combination of several other agencies and departments before that time, Department of Conservation, Department of Energy and Natural Resources, Department of Mines and Minerals. Any comments about that?

Daniels: The continued effort to reduce the cost of government and the operation of government by consolidating agencies. This is one of the things we looked at very carefully, how to actually bring government spending under control. And we thought, by consolidating these agencies, we would save a substantial amount of money, cut the state payroll, which was effectively being done at that point, and help the Illinois citizens to keep the cost of government lower.

DePue: Well, let's get to the '96 legislative year, and much of this we've already touched on—

Daniels: Sure.

DePue: ...especially the discussion about the big issue of what to do with school reform. But some of the other agenda items for that year were a balanced budget,—and I know we talked about that—eliminating the hospital tax, and I believe your comments yesterday about saving \$128 million, was that—

Daniels: That was saving the employer costs on unemployment insurance trust fund. We cut that cost substantially.

DePue: We did talk a little bit about the hospital tax though yesterday. Supermajority vote for tax increases, we didn't talk about that.

Daniels: Well, what we did was, we wanted to pass legislation that required...Any time there's a tax increase it required a supermajority vote. That was part of the effort to streamline the opportunity to make sure that the citizens were part of that process. That would have been a constitutional amendment, and it didn't succeed.

DePue: But was that, in part, an assumption that somewhere down the road the Republicans would be in a minority, and you wanted to make it harder to increase taxes?

Daniels: Well, you know that, at some point in time, you're going to lose the majority; and so, yes, it was all part of that effort.

DePue: Quality First education, we did talk about that quite extensively yesterday, and the creation of charter schools. That's something else we talked about yesterday. Sex offender legislation, that was on the agenda for 1996 for you.

Daniels: We wanted to protect our children, and, of course, we wanted to create new notification for sex offenders. That was the basis of that law, that you had to register, at the time, when you were in an area, when you moved into an area as a sex offender, if you were convicted of that.

DePue: And here's one that I think would require a little bit of explanation, for me at least, third party death penalty appeals restricted.

Daniels: Well, what we wanted to do is...It seemed to us that, if somebody was convicted of murder and sentenced to death, that sitting on death row for fourteen, twenty years just was not right. So, what we tried to do was streamline the death penalty process.

And, of course, as you know, really the Supreme Court controls the process of appeals and rules and regulations requiring that. So, you can't pass laws that say you have to have a trial under certain circumstances. But, we can impact the timeframe on it, and that's what we attempted to do.

DePue: And you're talking about the Illinois Supreme Court in this case.

Daniels: Right, right. Well, and ultimately, on death penalties, many of them go up to the United States Supreme Court at the same time.

DePue: Now, that was what I was able to figure out for the agenda. Do you have anything to add for the '96 timeframe?

Daniels: The Illinois '96 agenda dealt with the budget primarily and job opportunities and a better future for our children and protecting our families. That was a huge part of our agenda and, of course, the school reform at the same time. As we talked about earlier, on the Quality First program, we talked about

achievement tests, the Prairie State Exam, establishing a system of high academic standards and increasing safety for children and teachers.

It was a pretty broad-based education reform that was strongly supported by Governor Edgar. Working with his office, we were able to accomplish those changes.

DePue: Although you're Speaker, you're also the representative for this part of DuPage County. And one of the issues here, as we've talked in previous sessions, was what's going on in O'Hare Airport. I believe, at this time, March of '96, you were proud, and you were happy to tell your constituents, "I was able to block more runways for O'Hare Airport." Does that sound familiar?

Daniels: (chuckling) Of course. And it was something that we were constantly striving to do, because, at the time, one of the things that we did do was, we were being faced with the possibility of O'Hare Field building more runways and jets coming over more of our constituents and, of course, interfering with their quality of life.

In those days, the jets were a lot noisier than they are today. So, there's been improvements in stages of the jet engines themselves. But sometimes it was so bad in this area that you had to go inside, turn on your air conditioning and close all your windows, because, within every two minutes, maximum, every two minutes, a jet would fly overhead, if you're in the flight pattern. You literally couldn't sit out in your backyard.

So, remembering, of course, that O'Hare Field became an operation in 1956. Well, the communities around O'Hare Field, like Elmhurst, Bensenville, Wood Dale, Addison, have been in operation a lot longer than that. So, we felt very strongly that we should have more input in the creation of new runways, and we did block them.

And we made an effort, of course, to create a third airport around Lake Calumet area. We were very close to accomplishing that, but that's a difficult issue to resolve.

DePue: And as far as the city of Chicago is concerned—at least my understanding of the politics around O'Hare Airport—that's a cash cow for them.

Daniels: A cash cow. I remember very well, sitting down with Mayor Harold Washington, shortly before he died. Mayor Washington said to me, right off the bat, "Lee, don't take my airport." And I said, "Mayor, we don't need to take your airport if we have some cooperation on running the airport and the issue of noise modification."

I don't want to go into too much detail, because it gets very complicated, but in every airport in the country—again a generalization—they

had a acceleration and a de-acceleration plan for landing and takeoffs. You had to accelerate up to 3,000 feet, within a certain period of time, and when you were landing, you were de-accelerating faster.

At O'Hare, they didn't have such a plan. They could take off lower and slower, increasing the noise on the ground, and land lower and slower, increasing the noise on the ground. That was just a side issue, that we wanted them to create that plan. Well, why would the airlines oppose it? Because it's more expensive; it eats up more fuel to have a plan like that.

DePue: But for Mayor Washington to be saying things like, "Don't take my airport," does that suggest that there was some movement afoot to take O'Hare away from the city of Chicago?

Daniels: Yes, and to create a regional authority, similar to our Regional Transportation Authority, and to build a third airport. Now, interesting enough, as you know, Mayor Daley became mayor in this process, and one of the last acts of Jim Edgar was to take over Meigs Airport, because the mayor, Mayor Daley, threatened to close Meigs.

Well, why would the state have an interest in that? Because we send many state employees every day, up to Chicago to work during the day and then transport them back to Springfield at night by air. Mayor Daley wanted to close Midway. That would have cost additional monies in transporting our employees up to Midway, and then a transportation cost to the State of Illinois Building.

So, there were suggestions like, just don't send any more state employees up to Chicago; close the Chicago office and leave everything in Springfield, similar to like they do in Florida. In the state capital of Tallahassee, almost all operations are controlled there.

That wasn't acceptable to the governor. And the governor came to me and said he wanted to pass a bill, taking over Meigs. I said to Governor Edgar, I said, "Do you know what this is going to do? This is warfare." He said, "Yeah, well, we can't close Meigs. It's too valuable to the people of Illinois." I didn't disagree, but it was one of the last acts I did as the Speaker. I passed a bill, out of the House, which then passed the Senate, which took control of Meigs and gave it to the state of Illinois, which you know you have the authority to do, because every municipality is a structure of state government.

You could literally abolish the city of Chicago, if you wanted to. Nobody wants to, but that's the power of the state. The state's the sovereign. The municipalities are subdivisions of the sovereignty, which are created by the sovereign. So, taking over Meigs was a power that the state had available to us, if it was properly utilized.

DePue: That means it was no longer part of the city of Chicago?

- Daniels: It was no longer owned by the city of Chicago. It was owned by the state. That's the law that was passed. Governor Edgar, unbeknownst to us, met with Mayor Daley and struck a deal that he would only keep the airport for five years. At the end of that five years, it would be returned to Chicago.
- DePue: Wouldn't that have to be a piece of legislation, as well?
- Daniels: He wrote it into the legislation that we passed.
- DePue: An amendatory veto?
- Daniels: Yeah, but he ended up striking a deal with Mayor Daley, so it doesn't require the legislation. So, the legislation didn't become law.
- DePue: And so, the rest of the story, as far as Meigs Field is concerned?
- Daniels: As we all know, on the night of the fifth year, midnight, the trucks moved in and Caterpillar tractors moved in, and they destroyed the landing field at Meigs. And the city of Chicago closed it down, without notice.
- DePue: Was there backlash that the mayor got when he did that, from the citizens of Chicago?
- Daniels: Most citizens didn't use Meigs. It was used by private airplanes and by the State of Illinois. And so, most citizens may have said, well why would you do that? Mayor Daley said, because it's a safety reason, because it allows people to land at Meigs and possibly fly around and fly a plane into a building. So, he closed it for safety reasons, which was not true.
- DePue: How about from the business community in downtown Chicago?
- Daniels: There's some business people that used Meigs. I always thought it was a very effective airport, because it allowed businessmen to move in and out of the airport and work the day and then return to their corporate headquarters or wherever. And certainly, flying state employees up there was a good thing. But it was above my pay grade at that point. We weren't in the majority any more. The governor cut a deal with the mayor and the five-year plan was in operation. It's just like little things that occur, which don't get much headlines. It's like the chief at the University of Illinois.
- DePue: Chief Illiniwek.
- Daniels: Yeah. Now that was a big, huge movement in Illinois, to eliminate and abolish the chief, because certain forces claimed that the chief was demeaning to Indian tribes. One of the things they cited was, at halftime at a football game, they would have an appointed Indian chief, representing the University of Illinois, do a dance in the football field. Now, I'm not an Illinois graduate, but

I have friends that are that were very, very serious about the symbol that the chief represented.

DePue: One of those former Chief Illiniweks happened to be working for Governor Edgar, Tom Livingston.

Daniels: Tom Livingston was one of the former chiefs and was very strong about his opinions on it and, of course, made sure we knew, and I knew. I supported the chief. I thought that it was an excellent symbol of the University of Illinois. Now, to be distinguished from mascot, it's not a mascot; it's a symbol of the University of Illinois and its heritage, and, of course, the Illini Tribe, which is no longer in existence. Because it's no longer in existence, they couldn't come to a treaty agreement with any one tribe, saying this was okay, unlike Florida State; Seminole is their name. The Seminoles of Florida State actually have a treaty and an agreement with the Seminole Tribe in Florida, allowing the usage of that name.

I thought it was much ado about nothing. I didn't think it was demeaning at all to Indian heritage. In certain circles, they viewed my views as wrong. So, we passed legislation that basically said, "The chief will be the symbol, the official symbol of the University of Illinois," and sent it to the Governor. It passed the Senate, as well.

The governor changed the word **shall** be the symbol to **may** be the symbol, which allowed the trustees to vote on it. That one word change, from **shall** be the symbol to **may** be the symbol, allowed a change in the future, which didn't close the issue as we wanted to do. [It] kept it open and, ultimately, the trustees bent to pressure and eliminated the symbol of the chief, which, to this day, is still a subject of great debate. I know people that will not make any donations to the University of Illinois because of that.

DePue: Was the governor getting pushback from the trustees at the university or other communities at the university, that he made that change?

Daniels: I don't know all the circumstances there. I was quite shocked when he did that.

DePue: I wanted to go back to Meigs Field very quickly. I got the impression by your comments about Daley's rationale for closing Meigs, that you weren't convinced that it was primarily for safety reasons, that he had other motives involved.

Daniels: Yeah, I think he wanted to create a northerly island. I think he wanted to make it into a music venue, a venue for people to go to and to walk around. And, he's created a prairie style setting there. In my opinion now, there are other circumstances.

I'm sure, if you were to search out some people that were close to it, like a fellow by the name of Hugh Murphy, who works with Jones Lang LaSalle today, they may understand greater motives for it, if they are willing to talk to you about it. (chuckling)

DePue: I did want to mention also, and we alluded to this yesterday. Though we don't need to go into too many of the details about the discussions about school funding, that this did really bring to a head some of the differences that you had with the Edgar Administration. The papers, in April of '96, were reporting that the two of you weren't even on speaking terms for a while.

Daniels: It was a short time. (chuckling)

DePue: Would that be accurate though?

Daniels: Yeah, there was a short time he wouldn't take my calls, and I accused him of being somewhat childish on the issue. But he obviously disagreed with me.

DePue: Anything further on the passage of the sex offender law that we mentioned before?

Daniels: No. I think the notification provisions were put into force then, which we believe was good, and it has served a good purpose.

DePue: It's worth mentioning, in 1996, the legislature adjourned on May twenty-third.

Daniels: It was the earliest time in history for the adjournment of the Illinois Legislature.

DePue: And I thought I saw something like, from 1908.

Daniels: Something like 1908 is right. We felt that was part of our new way of doing business within the State of Illinois. We were very strong about, not only rejecting a legislative pay raise, which we did in that year, and not only that, sponsoring and working on ethics and campaign finance reform, but completing our work on time—well, ahead of time, actually—adjourning early and letting the people of Illinois know that we are prepared to continue to do our work, continue to work on our efforts. And, by doing that, that's why we adjourned early.

DePue: Part of the lore that goes along with issues like when the legislature adjourns, deals with James Pate Philip and Philip's desire to get north and go to his resort in... Was it Michigan that he headed off to?

Daniels: Yes.

DePue: Was that part of the equation, as well?

- Daniels: Well, it was always said that that was part of the equation. You can't lose sight of the fact that we adjourned early to finish our work. And, if somebody made a comment that they want to get up to their place up north, I don't think that's the primary reason for finishing your work early. So what?
- DePue: Did it save the citizens of Illinois money to adjourn early?
- Daniels: Oh, substantial money. It costs at least \$50,000 a day to stay in session. Plus the fact, you know the old court ruling out of Boston that basically says, when the legislature is in session, your life, liberty and pursuit of happiness is in jeopardy, to paraphrase. (DePue laughs) True.
- DePue: That sounds like something a good conservative would say.
- Daniels: Well, the legislature has the ability, as you know, to basically enact any law, from cradle to grave and beyond your grave. They tax your estate. So, you can say that they can do anything when they're in session, but when they aren't in session, they can't do much harm.
- DePue: That brings us up to the point, to get done with the session. Now you can put on your politics cap.
- Daniels: Politics cap?
- DePue: Yeah. Because 1996 is another election year, and I'm sure your goal, going into that, is to preserve the majority. And, of course, we know that you weren't able to preserve the majority. So, I wanted to start with your thoughts, your strategy, for how to preserve the majority that you had in the House at that time.
- Daniels: Doing good work. Do the job for the people of Illinois. Pass legislation that you promised you would pass; deal with the issues, backlog of bills, a criminal justice program, a business program, a job creation program. Get your work done; get it done on time and get out, and then go and take your message to the people of Illinois. That was our whole strategy behind it.

What happened was this subject called Chicago school reform. Now, can you imagine that? Chicago school reform actually contributed to our loss of the majority in the Illinois House. And one would say, well, maybe you shouldn't have done that in the first place. Maybe, because you're from downstate Illinois or outside of Chicago, maybe you should let Chicago deal with its own educational problems.

The point is, for all good reasons and for all good intellectual and personal reasons, members of the Illinois House on the Republican side decided that we should weigh in on behalf of Chicago kids and make a change in Chicago school reform. And so we made those changes, which we've talked about earlier, and we enacted those.

The Chicago teachers were livid. They met, on many occasions, with Speaker Madigan. And they were assigned, literally assigned, precincts in the south suburbs, outside of Chicago.

DePue: Republican districts.

Daniels: Republican districts that were controlled by Republican members that won in [the] 1994 election and took over control of the House, basically by winning nine seats in the south suburbs.

DePue: So, these had been districts that previously had been electing Democrats.

Daniels: Right, right. And the Chicago teachers went and walked those precincts in the '96 elections, quite effectively. We were unable to hold on to nine seats total. We lost nine seats in the election of '96, and, thereby, losing control of the Illinois House. It changed the majority. If you had to point to one single factor, you would have to say Chicago school reform and Chicago teachers.

DePue: I'm sure that you are aware that this was going on during the election, that this push from the Chicago Teachers' Union was a direct challenge to your power as Speaker. Were you trying to do anything to counter what they were doing?

Daniels: We weren't aware to the degree. Literally, two or three weeks before the election, we had tons of teachers showing up in these precincts, walking precincts. Of course, door-to-door canvassing and walking is the most effective way of campaigning. But you need bodies to do that, and that's one thing that Speaker Madigan has been very successful with, building an army of people that go and work precincts, door-to-door.

Traditionally, a lot of Republicans, statewide, in other parts of the state, would do their work by phone calls or mailings, but not the ground activity that was done by Speaker Madigan's forces. There's no question about the fact that he had the number one political structure in the State of Illinois, then and now.

After all, he holds dual roles, not only as the powerful Speaker but as the Chairman of the Democratic Party. That means a lot. That means that all money on the state party can be directed where he wants it directed. That's a very, very powerful position that he holds today and did then.

Also, it's a powerful position to work with an organization like the Chicago Teachers' Union. And isn't it interesting that here we are in 2012, and the same issues that we tried to help resolve in 1995 and 1996 are being debated today?

DePue: Well, I was just thinking about that, listening to you talk about this. You can't help but make a comparison to what happened yesterday in Wisconsin, where

Governor Walker was challenged, because he took on the power of the teachers' union and state unions in Wisconsin.

Daniels: Correct. Generally speaking—again, this is a generalization—Union employees, teachers, will walk precincts to get their message across. Business people generally send money, and, of course, if you have a connection with unions, whether it's the Teamsters, the electrical union or mechanics union or a teachers' union, in general, you have a strong force behind you.

We were not totally aware of all the strong activity that was going on with the teachers' union. When we were able to put it all together, of course, it was very difficult to stop at that point.

DePue: Was Maureen Murphy one of the people who was being challenged in those south suburbs?

Daniels: Yes.

DePue: I know that she wanted to have you...At least I read a report that she wanted to have you make a pledge that there would be no tax increase that you would support.

Daniels: Yes.

DePue: And apparently you refused, or you did not want to make that pledge.

Daniels: I don't make that pledge. That's one that I think...You know, my record speaks for itself. I voted for tax increases in the past; I'll vote for them in the future. But I personally don't make those pledges, because I don't think that it's an effective way to go.

Now, that doesn't mean I didn't make statements to that effect, that I'm not going to support tax increases. Generally, it's a specific tax. I'm not going to support an income tax increase. But, generally speaking, I do not make those, or did not make those kind of pledges, because I thought that it unreasonably tied the hands.

Take today. How do you solve this trillions of dollars in national debt, without cutting spending and increasing revenue in some way, to start reducing that debt? The question is how do you spend that revenue? That's the question. So, where you can increase a tax, if you utilize it to reduce debt, that can be a pretty effective tool. But, if you utilize it to create a new program, then you're just creating a new deficit that's very difficult to control in the future.

DePue: And certainly, at this point in time, it wouldn't have been a surprise to anybody that you had been feuding with Governor Edgar over that very issue of a tax increase, in the first place.

Daniels: Well, feuding on the tax increase is a little strong. Disagreeing, yes.

DePue: Okay.

Daniels: Feuding over a tax swap, yeah, that was probably... He was pretty angry about that. And again, I quickly add, of course, we had our disagreements. It's like at home, when you grow up in a large family, which I did. I'm one of eight kids; there was a fight every day. You still loved your brother or your sister, but, on the same token, you have disagreements.

Well, the very nature of political representation creates the opportunity for disagreements, as it should. History is replete with evidence of huge, strong battles on the House floor, the House of the people, the Illinois House. That's why I love it so much. We represent the people, while the Senate represents the state.

So, these battles that take place are done with great passion and great force and great belief in what you feel about. It's the most wonderful thing that man has ever created, to be able to stand up in an assembly and to talk the views that you want to say, like Mike Bost just did a few weeks ago, in 2012, here in Illinois.

DePue: He was the Republican who stood up and voiced a strong objection to what Madigan was doing?

Daniels: Right, based upon the rules that Madigan adopted. [He] said, basically, his famous quote now, "Let my people go." (both chuckle)

DePue: I've heard that somewhere before.

Daniels: We've had fights on the House floor.

DePue: You mean fisticuffs?

Daniels: Fisticuffs. We've had people throwing soup at people, on the House floor. We've had major disagreements, because you don't go down there without a desire to accomplish something. I don't know anybody in my thirty-two years in Springfield that didn't come to Springfield with the best of motives.

DePue: Having said that, a lot of the critique you hear about politics today is it's so much more divisive. The two parties are so much farther apart that there isn't any compromise or meeting in the middle. Do you think that was the case, or was that something that was evolving during the timeframe, especially in the nineties, when you were serving there?

Daniels: Look, there were times that, if Mike Madigan had a gun, he'd have shot me. There were times, if I'd had a gun, I would have shot him. I say that figuratively. We had some horrendous fights, and some very, very strong

words were passed between us over the years. However, we never lost sight of the fact that, at the end of the day, when it was time to finish your work, we would come together and finish our work.

More often than not, we would sit down at close of session, put all of our things on the table and agree on a way to resolve, not only the budget, and to balance it, but also the major legislation, what was important to him, what was important to me, and how to get it done. We created, I think, a mutual respect. I have a high degree of respect for him.

I think that, in issues like pension reform and some other issues, he could take a stronger leadership position today. But, he's a smart man, and he knows what to do and how to get it done. And I believe he will get it done.

DePue: But looking from the outside today, are you seeing a different climate in the last five or ten years?

Daniels: Yeah. Well, that's almost to say that it wasn't divisive back in '95 and '96; it was. Democrats refused to cooperate on anything. We couldn't talk to them about anything. We passed a budget without their votes; we passed Chicago school reform without their votes. They literally refused to talk about anything and set the stage for the '96 election, which they did very effectively.

DePue: I wanted to change the discussion a little bit and ask about some of your own personal, political aspirations. Were you ever approached about running, for example, for the U.S. Senate that year?

Daniels: I was approached. I was approached over my career on many different offices. I would say treasurer, secretary of state, attorney general, U.S. Senate, never Congress, because Henry Hyde was my congressman, a very good friend and an excellent congressman, so I never...in my district. You know, there was some talk about you could move into another district.

DePue: What personal aspirations did you have then?

Daniels: My personal aspiration was to do the best job in whatever job I was fulfilling. Kind of when you start the role of the leader of your party in the House or Senate, you kind of set your future course, because there are so many decisions that you have to make, some of which are popular, some of which are unpopular. You have to make them almost on a daily basis, to get the job done, of your responsibility of moving government forward. It doesn't necessarily create the best atmosphere for becoming a member of the executive branch.

Now, you can do it, and one of the ways you do it is you don't do anything. You avoid controversy; you serve just a short time, two years, four years, six years, maybe even eight years. Lynn Martin did it. Lynn Martin, of

course, became a member of Congress, as you know. As an example, Tim Johnson successfully went to Congress. So, there's examples, Peter Roskam.

But the most famous example is Barack Obama, who was a community organizer, then became a state senator. What did he do in the Illinois Senate? Without getting into any partisan differences, the answer is, not much. His eyes were always on a national office. And some claim that he was running for president the day that he took his oath of office in the Illinois Senate. Of course, you know that he didn't stay long in the Illinois Senate, didn't stay long in the U.S. Senate and ran for president. [He didn't] have this strong background of legislative votes and so forth to oppose.

DePue: Now, you were in a different House, but did you know much about him? Did you have any experience with him when he was in the Illinois Senate?

Daniels: The only time that I had experience with him was when Emil Jones, then in the Senate, wanted to name Barack Obama to the General Assembly Retirement System, in my place. And Mike Madigan called me up and told me that he wanted me to stay. I was Chairman of the Illinois General Assembly Retirement System for thirteen years. Of course, Emil Jones didn't pursue that, but that's the only contact I had with Barack Obama. I didn't really know him.

DePue: How about if you took Senator James Pate Philip out of the picture, would you have been interested in running for the Illinois Senate?

Daniels: Not in my current position. Remember, I was the Republican Leader; so, if I'd go to the Senate, I wouldn't be the Republican Leader, probably not. My future was cast in the Illinois House, and I believed in the Illinois House. I liked the Illinois House. I didn't have ambitions to go to the Illinois Senate.

DePue: Well, you previously had spoken eloquently about the Illinois House and the nature of the Illinois House. I got the impression that you were making a distinction with what was going on in the House versus what was going on in the Senate, that it was closer to the people, that you had that opportunity.

Daniels: Right, right. Well, of course, at one point Pate retired. So, there was opportunities, but I didn't want to be in the Senate.

DePue: Is this a little bit before the '96 election and a little bit before Dennis Hastert got to the Speaker position at the U.S.?

Daniels: Yes.

DePue: And he wasn't from your district?

Daniels: No. You mean my legislative district?

DePue: Yeah.

Daniels: No, no. He was out in western DuPage.

DePue: The western suburbs.

Daniels: Right.

DePue: Did you have a relationship with him though?

Daniels: Sure. He was a member of the Illinois House, and he was a very effective member of the Illinois House. He's a smart guy. He did our electric utility deregulation bill, which was about as complicated an issue that you can come up with. Very few people even understood the premise of it. But he dug into it—I assigned him to take care of those issues—and did an excellent job in representing the Republican caucus in those issues.

DePue: Just an opportunity for you to reflect on the U.S. Senate election for 1996. That was the election where we have Dick Durbin on the Democratic side versus Al Salvi on the Republican ticket. Most would say, in retrospect, that Al Salvi wasn't a strong Republican candidate. Was that one of the things that you had been approached about, to be part of that ticket, to be on that ticket?

Daniels: I had been, but, it wasn't a serious effort on my part. You always court this thought about it, but my die was cast in the Illinois House. To me, ultimately, I was flattered by the talk, flattered by any kind of talk, at one time, lieutenant governor talk.

But, to me, I knew that, at the end of the day, I started my career in the House. Well, I didn't start in the House; I started on the Township Board of Auditors, but became a House member. That's where my career was, and that's where it was going to finish.

DePue: Well, Durbin pretty well thumped Salvi at 56% to 40%.

Daniels: Yeah. Al Salvi was and is a strong conservative. It just wasn't the time to get that kind of a message out. Durbin had experience in the Illinois Senate, as you know, worked for Phil Rock for years, so he knew government.

DePue: The 1997 legislative year. Again, you are now in the minority.

Daniels: Yes, and I'm moping. (chuckles)

DePue: And you also had a chief of staff change, it sounds like, from what we had talked about yesterday.

Daniels: I did. Mike Stokke was my chief of staff when we were in the majority, and he wasn't very fond of that position. We had an agreement that he would move on, and he ended up going with Denny Hastert at that point.

Of course, history tells us what happened there. Denny Hastert became the Speaker of the U.S. House, which was great, and Mike had a good career with Denny Hastert.

Mike Tristano indicated that he would come back, and he did come back at that time, in '97, as the chief of staff.

DePue: What kind of a chief of staff was he? We had talked about—

Daniels: Strong, very, very strong. He had a set plan in his mind, which worked in the '94 elections. He wanted to implement those back in '97 and work towards the elections of '98, implementing those plans. There was no question about the fact that he was a very strong person in his beliefs. Whenever you have a strong personality, you have a tendency to alienate people at various times. Mike had his share of supporters and enemies; there's no question about that. But don't we all?

DePue: How much heat did you personally take for losing the majority?

Daniels: I took some heat. There's no question about that. There were some comments that, we weren't up to the challenge.

DePue: Where were those comments coming from?

Daniels: I don't recall specifically at this point, but some naysayers. There's no question about that; that happens. But, I reminded some people, I said, "Look," I said, "we didn't anticipate the tremendous pushback on the Chicago teachers and school reform because, after all, we did make agreements with Mayor Daley." And we did ultimately have some agreements as to Chicago school reform and how he would handle that and how he had input in some of the final legislation. We didn't advertise that very much.

That and Mike Madigan had a tremendous political force. There's no question about the fact that he has tremendous influence in many areas of Chicago, whether it's McCormick Place, whether it's the Teachers' Union, whether it's the unions in general, SEIU [Service Employees International Union], AFSCME [American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees], AFL-CIO [American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations], all these people were people that were funneling funds to him and political workers.

DePue: But it's interesting, by that time, by early '97, there were obviously some significant improvements that were happening in the Chicago School District at that time, that was capturing the public's attention. Obviously, it wasn't the

kind of thing that the Teachers' Union wanted to see, but the public was in favor of a lot of those changes.

Daniels: You jump to today; you have many of the same arguments today that were happening in '94, '95, '96, and '97. The fact of the matter is that Chicago schools need continued reform. There's too much politics involved. When we talked about limiting strikes and the authorization to strike, I don't think teachers ought to be able to strike. I think this issue of tenure gets a little carried away today. So that's pretty controversial, and, of course, that would create tremendous opposition to some of my views.

I never did sponsor a bill that eliminated tenure, but I think that a lot of that gets a little carried away today. Once tenure is granted, they're almost untouchable. And where I think in early years, where a teacher could be summarily dismissed without any kind of consideration or thought, I think today, tenure is too protective of bad teachers, and we need to move teachers in and out of effective positions.

DePue: I know part of the change that occurred in that school reform was to give principals the ability to remove teachers if they saw they weren't performing.

Daniels: Right. And that was something that the Teachers' Union were very opposed to. Rahm Emanuel himself is talking about reform. A simple thing like adding some hours to a school week—not day, week—tremendous pushback.

Teachers' salaries are not as bad as they used to be. There are examples where some high school teachers are making over \$100,000 a year. I don't see that as a profession that one should be making the high end of the economic ladder in salaries. Having said that, I don't fault people for being successful. But, on the other hand, they are public employees, local district employees, as we talked about earlier.

DePue: Did you have any challenges to your leadership role after that '96 election, as you had in the early '90s?

Daniels: No. There were some rumblings going on, but nothing serious at that point.

DePue: Well, let's move on to some of the legislation, then. One of the things that you took on in March was legislation for campaign finance reform. It struck me, the things that...and again, I got this from an article. Two of the things that you were pushing for—and you can correct me if this is off base—you were suggesting that 50% of campaign funds should be raised within a member's district.

Daniels: Right.

DePue: And that, also, there should be a prohibition on lobbying until one year after an individual was out of office.

Daniels: Right.

DePue: Now, the second part doesn't surprise me as much as the first. Can you explain your rationale there?

Daniels: Well, that's because we wanted to make sure that a legislator raised his or her money within their legislative district and not be funded by a union or, for that matter, a business group, totally, that they ought to have a requirement that they raised their money locally and that the money is spent locally.

DePue: Well, the reason I'm asking about this and I'm curious about this, is that my understanding—and we've talked about this before—the power of the Speaker, the power of the minority leader, if all this money is funneled through those four tops, the four caucus leaders, and then the caucus leader makes decisions about which district is going to get extra support and more emphasis on the election.

Daniels: Yes or no. I mean, it can be that way. But in my case, we had a campaign committee, and the campaign committee would sit down and determine which districts we wanted to highlight as potential pickup districts.

Now, in general terms, we would run anywhere upwards to twenty-one campaigns an election cycle, twenty-one campaigns throughout the state of Illinois. Of course, none in the city of Chicago, (both laugh) because we weren't going to win in the city of Chicago, but the suburbs, sure, Rockford, south suburbs, down central Illinois, downstate Illinois, sure, we had a lot of campaigns going on.

But not all money comes through the leaders. A good number of dollars come through the leaders, with major business groups or unions, as the case may be, but an effective member can raise, he or she can raise a lot of money on their own, if they work at it. And it requires work.

DePue: Was that 50% limit something of a counter to Madigan's power?

Daniels: It would be, sure.

DePue: Was that what your thought was at the time?

Daniels: No, my thought was to make sure we had more local control, more local input.

DePue: Consistent with your views on education, as well.

Daniels: Yeah. And it would also reduce the impact of outside money. It didn't work. (both chuckle)

DePue: You weren't able to get that through?

Daniels: No.

DePue: I wanted to ask about your own fundraising efforts. We got beyond the election cycle, but to go back to that, I understand that you had two major fundraisers a year, one in March and then a golf outing, as well. Can you talk about that a little bit?

Daniels: Well, part of my job, of course, as the leader, is to encourage and help elect Republican members to the House. As such, that requires, and is, an ever increasing dollar commitment that has to be made on behalf of candidates.

If you live in Rockford, you have to buy television for your legislative races. If you live in Elmhurst, you don't buy television, because it's too expensive, the Chicago TV. So your races are more done by direct mail. Television is very expensive. You live along the eastern part of Illinois, you might have to buy TV out of Indiana. If you live in Decatur or Springfield, television. Or, if you live in southern Illinois, you buy all kinds of TV down in southern Illinois. Different costs, but still an effective way of communication.

So, the fundraising efforts became a very critical part of every leader's role, whether it's Pate Philip or Emil Jones or Phil Rock or Mike Madigan or me. I had two events a year. One was in March, which was a pretty effective event, and a golf outing in August.

DePue: What was the event in March? Is there a specific activity that you did at that time?

Daniels: It was a fundraising activity. It moved around from venue to venue, generally in Chicago. We would have different events throughout.

DePue: Bring in a high profile speaker?

Daniels: Yes, yes. I had Governor Thompson out of Wisconsin; I had Senator Dole come in and speak. I've had President Ford speak at a House Republican Campaign Committee fundraiser. Jim Thompson, of course, was a very important part of that, Jim Edgar, George Ryan.

DePue: And the golf outing, a little bit more fun?

Daniels: Yeah. Still a lot of work. The largest golf outing in the state of Illinois, held at Medinah Country Club. We had all three courses being played, and we'd serve 2,000 dinners. We put on the course, some 800 golfers. So it was a pretty big event.



Lee Daniels, Representative Vince Persico and fellow Republicans talk over an issue on the floor of the Illinois House of Representatives chamber, circa 1997.

- DePue: Let's go back to the legislative year in '97. Sometime in the spring, the creation of the College Illinois program, do you recall much of that discussion?
- Daniels: I do. I recall some of the discussion. I don't recall a great detail about it.
- DePue: Any comments about it? It's come under some flack here recently because it wasn't...there was a loss of a lot of the funds that were in that program in the last few years.
- Daniels: Well, because they're raiding the funds of all the programs. Under [Rod] Blagojevich and [Pat] Quinn, they keep on sweeping funds in every program they can find, to use to pay operational costs.
- DePue: But, I kept hearing advertisements, over the last two or three years ago, at least, as to how safe that particular program was, if you invested money there to make sure your child can go through the Illinois schools.
- Daniels: That also depends upon the investments that they made too. Some of those investments started falling aside in the 2008 recession, which won't go away.
- DePue: Were you supportive of that though?
- Daniels: The Illinois College program? Sure.
- DePue: The next one here again, I guess a little bit more highlight on some of the areas of friction between you and the governor's office. (Daniels laughs) This one, over the dome stadium, his push to have a dome stadium that, I guess, had a multiple use, versus your preference, apparently, to have something that would just take the Bears stadium and upgrade that.
- Daniels: Where's Chicago? Where's Chicago? We don't live in foo-foo land. We're outside people.
- DePue: You like the idea of outside football?
- Daniels: Absolutely, that's what football is all about. I don't like indoor football. To me it's like arena football. I understand the NFL [National Football League], for money purposes, wants to have all the Super Bowl in a dome stadium, and there's pushback now. Some people in 2012 are trying to get the NFL to come to Soldier Field for a Super Bowl. And they say, "Well, what about the weather being inclement?" Well, that's football. So, no, I didn't support a dome stadium and don't support it today.
- DePue: Was it strictly for that reason or fiscal reasons, as well?

- Daniels: Well, financially, it could be very expensive. The dome stadiums have, in years, gotten better than they were initially. But no, I wasn't in favor of a dome stadium.
- DePue: So, this argument or disagreement gets wrapped up into the ongoing disagreement that you had with the governor's office about the income tax swap, because that's still going on. This is from an article by Rick Pearson, where he says, it was, "All but certain to widen the rift that has developed between himself (yourself) and Edgar. Daniels savaged the governor's proposed income tax hike for school funding reform." And then, apparently, it got a little bit personal. Whether it was Tom Hardy or the governor himself who said this, here's the comment that Pearson quoted, "If he—the governor—earned what Daniels makes, he also would be against an income tax hike."
- Daniels: (laughs) Well, I could tell you that the governor makes a lot more than I do today.
- DePue: Here's what Pearson quoted you as saying, that you made a six figure salary, as did Edgar, "But the difference is that mine comes from the private sector and his comes from taxpayers." And reading this today, I'm thinking boy that sure sounds like the election cycle we're in right now. And here's Republican against Republican. Gosh, suddenly there's a slap at making money in the private sector.
- Daniels: Look, I said it earlier in some of our sessions; I'll say it again. I have the highest respect for Governor Edgar. I think he was an excellent governor. I had disagreement with him. He had his thoughts. Remember, he comes from southern Illinois.
- He comes from Charleston, and there's different views down there than there are from, say, DuPage County, the collar counties and the city of Chicago. We're more of an urban area, and he was more of a rural area. Naturally, he's going to have different views.
- He loves horseracing. I think horseracing is fine, but I'm not a big fan of it. He is with the University of Illinois today; he's a lecturer. I've been a professor at Elmhurst College, after I retired from my law firm. I had a very successful private practice and private business career and continue to have so. But sure, we had disagreements.
- But, I've said it before, that's the nature of government. We don't want everybody agreeing on everything. Where would you get? You'd walk into a room, and you'd say, "Well, this is a good idea." Okay, that's fine. You would have no progress. Progress comes through disagreement resolution, compromise. That's what's great about our government.
- DePue: And the sale of newspapers comes through heightening the conflict.

Daniels: Of course. Tom Hardy wrote some scathing articles about me in the past, and today Tom Hardy works for the University of Illinois.

DePue: Let's get to another area where I think there would have been some agreement. That was another initiative to reorganize the State of Illinois government. In this case, July first of '97 would have been the first date, the creation of this new Department of Human Services, where you are joining together several of the areas that dealt with welfare issues, that dealt with mental health and things like that, which from previous—

Daniels: And the DD [developmentally disabled] community.

DePue: ...from previous discussions, these are things that are close to your heart.

Daniels: Right. Looking back in hindsight, I think we created too big of an organization. I ultimately supported the merger, but I don't think I'd make the same decision today. I think that certain agencies have gotten the short shift under that, and I would—

DePue: Funding-wise?

Daniels: Funding-wise and treatment-wise. I thought it was a better way of consolidation, a way to reduce overall costs and deliver better cost controls to our charges, our citizens, the people that are in need of government service. I don't think that's panned out.

DePue: Ninety-seven was also the timeframe that Governor Edgar was coming under considerable heat himself, because of the scandal that was associated with him, with the Management Services of Illinois, the MSI scandal. And on August seventeenth—now, obviously, the trial had been going on for some time, but—August 17 of '97, Michael Martin of MSI and Ron Lauder, and I think Lauder was in the administration some place—

Daniels: Yeah, I think he was, yeah.

DePue: ...were convicted for a bribery scheme, associated with the MSI itself. Your reflections on that and how close it got to the Edgar Administration.

Daniels: Well, it did get close to the Edgar Administration. It didn't taint the governor himself, but he actually had another person, I think, go to trial, that was found not guilty. Who was that...Al something? I can't remember the name, but it did get close to his administration. We were concerned about it and concerned for him because, again, I may have had disagreements, but I thought he was an excellent governor.

DePue: Do you think he was an honorable governor? Did any of this taint him?

Daniels: I think he was an honorable governor, yes. You get newspaper reports that have a tendency to taint somebody, and they start writing the reports and adding things to it. Remember, everybody that writes a report puts in their own views, even though they say they don't.

Like the elections today, in Wisconsin yesterday, that was a huge victory for Republicans in Wisconsin. What's the spin that the Obama Administration is putting on it? Well, they may have defeated the recall, and the Republicans may have won there, but the people of Wisconsin still love Obama. Well, there's no way that you could say that it wasn't a defeat for Democrat policies. It's a spin, and they spin everything.

They tried to spin a close connection to the governor. It wasn't; it didn't, and it didn't taint him at all. He's an honorable governor.

DePue: Just a couple days after that decision came down, though, Governor Edgar announces that he will not run for reelection. Was that anything of a surprise?

Daniels: No. We knew at that time that he was considering that, and, of course, he advised us before he made the announcement. I don't think it had anything to do with that. I think it was a matter—

DePue: I wasn't suggesting there was a connection there.

Daniels: No, I know you weren't. I just was offering that.

DePue: Did it surprise you, though, when the decision came out that he wasn't going to run again?

Daniels: Not totally, no.

DePue: Were you approached at that time to consider it?

Daniels: No, not that I recall.

DePue: Now, obviously, the person in the wings, who was really vying for an opportunity, was George Ryan.

Daniels: Right.

DePue: He had been the secretary of state for many years at the time. Did you have a lot of relations with him as secretary of state?

Daniels: Yes. Remember, George Ryan... My second term in the Illinois House became the minority leader of the House. In 1981, he became the Speaker of the Illinois House, and then he was elected lieutenant governor with Thompson, and then I became the minority leader. So, I was one of George Ryan's assistants when he was Speaker, and he did support me for minority leader, as

did Governor Thompson, when I was elected in the position of minority leader in '83. So, I did have a close relationship throughout my legislative career and when George Ryan was Secretary of State. And I was a supporter of his.

DePue: The reason for the timing on Governor Edgar's part is to give other people the opportunity to make the announcements that they want to run for governor, in that case. That gives Ryan the chance to announce in 1997.

So that gets us up to 1998 and another legislative year. But, no surprise, it's not quite as active as the off year election would be. But February 12, Edgar makes an announcement, a speech, that he recommends the construction of a presidential library for Abraham Lincoln and proposes, at least seed money, start money, at \$2.2 million. I know this is a subject that's pretty close to your heart, because I walk into your office, and there's pictures all over the place that highlight the dedication of the library and museum.

So, let's start. I'd like to have you walk through that whole process and maybe even to back up, because I know your wife was on the board of trustees, I believe, for the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency.

Daniels: That's correct. Jim Thompson appointed her to the board when the agency was created.

DePue: Can you refresh my memory on her name again?

Daniels: Pamela, Pamela Daniels. [Governor Thompson] found her to be interested in historic preservation. She's a University of Illinois graduate, lover of the chief. She accepted the appointment, confirmed by the Senate, and served in that position all the way until I retired from the General Assembly. So, she was one of the longest serving members of the Historic Preservation Agency and was very effective in her role as a member of the agency.

DePue: How much did she have to do with this announcement that Governor Edgar made on February 12, 1998? Of course, February 12, because it's Lincoln's birthday that day.

Daniels: She had some input into the movement of the Lincoln Library, but, in terms of the announcement for the seed money, that was something that was worked in the appropriation process. Certainly she, along with Julie Cellini and Susan Mogerman and Governor Edgar and his staff, a lot of the lifting was done within the appropriation process, because, as you know, Governor Edgar still was very, very concerned about the state's budget and our future and was very controlling of that.

DePue: But the governor also is a great lover of history.

Daniels: He is.

DePue: Everybody has to make that connection with Abraham Lincoln, as well.

Daniels: Yes. It had a thousand stepfathers, I could call them, because, for years, people had been talking about an Abraham Lincoln museum.

But it wasn't covered by the Presidential Act, because it was a museum prior to the Presidential Act, which... Don't hold me to this, I think it started with Roosevelt; but I'm not sure. But anything prior to Roosevelt is not government funded. I'm not positive exactly when it started.

DePue: [J. Edgar] Hoover was the first one.

Daniels: Hoover, okay. Thank you for advising me of that. But anything prior to Hoover is not part of the Presidential Library Act. So, whatever we did, we either had to do privately, or we had to convince Congress to pass legislation authorizing it.

In Illinois, we decided that we were going to do it within the State of Illinois, controlled, operated and run by the State of Illinois. There's no question about the fact that you name the Congressman or you name the Senator; they all proposed this. Some of them will say they had a big part in it, when they didn't. Some of them would say they had a big part in it, when they did. But overall, the decision ultimately was made by Governor Edgar to approve the seed money for the Lincoln Library and Museum.

DePue: The two names that do come up that are important with keeping the momentum going and then making sure it came to fruition was Senator Dick Durbin, who is from the Springfield area in the first place—so, that one's natural—and Governor George Ryan, as well. Can you walk us through the rest of the point, where it actually is funded and constructed?

Daniels: Governor Edgar and I met at length and talked about how we could get this done and what the plan would be. Of course, he knew that it wouldn't happen during his administration, at that point. I believe the amount was \$4 million in planning money and seed money that he agreed to put in the appropriation. That started the process. So, without question, he is one of the implementers of the beginning of the process. I worked with him on that appropriation and the concept and how to put that together, followed up by, as you indicated, of course, George Ryan, during his term.

George and I spent a considerable amount of time discussing this and how we would frame it, where it would be. Obviously, it would be in Springfield, and obviously, it required X number of dollars. The figure that was thrown around, about \$150 million. The concept would be \$50 million from the feds, \$50 million from the state, \$20 million from the city and \$30 million from private funds. That was the general concept of how we would make this work.

The planning process, of what it would look like, the architectural and so forth, would be left to the Historic Preservation Agency, and to work out that with the Capital Development Board. But, the structural fundraising part was the one that started very aggressively with George Ryan.

He was very supportive of it from the beginning, but his chief of staff was not. Bob Knudson was very opposed, generally, to the creation at the start. And where George Ryan and I agreed that we would put a \$50 million appropriation in for the commencement of the library and museum, Bob Knudson kept on frustrating that effort. Many, many times I'd have to go back to George Ryan and say, "George," I said, "You and I have an understanding, but your chief of staff..." And so, he'd call the chief of staff in, [speaking in a deep voice] "I told you that I wanted to do this, and this is what I want done." "All right; all right." But he wouldn't do it.

So, to make a long story short, back and forth many, many times. Finally, George Ryan insists that it happens, and, of course, the process is started with the state appropriation.

Now we have to have the federal assistance and the agreement with the City of Springfield. That brought in many different players at the time.

DePue: That's where people like Senator Durbin come into the picture.

Daniels: Yes, yes.

DePue: How was this, in your support for the creation of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum—that's a mouthful—different from your resistance to a dome stadium in Chicago?

Daniels: Well, considerably different. First of all, he's a favorite son of Illinois. Secondly, that's a historical event, with his presidency and, arguably—and I happen to feel the best president that the country has ever had—saved the union in the Civil War. We needed to make sure that the people of Illinois and the country understood the importance of this man and the brilliance of this man. I mean books, volumes...I don't know if any president has had any more writings than Abraham Lincoln has had.

DePue: You're correct.

Daniels: And today, experts like Doris Kearns Goodwin are continually putting pieces together about Abraham Lincoln. I have a whole series of Lincoln books, here in my office and at my home. We needed to honor, not only this presidency, this man, but the brilliance of his governance and this type of governance that we need to study and to replicate to the degree we can.

Dome stadium? That's a sporting event. Are you kidding me? That's like gladiators banging heads together. So, there's no comparison. How's that? (both laugh)

DePue: You didn't hesitate a bit on that one, Mr. Speaker.

Daniels: No.

DePue: Not at all. How much did your wife's involvement at IHPA keep this process moving forward? Or, once it got into the political spectrum, she was kind of out of the picture?

Daniels: She wasn't out of the picture, because she was on the planning... She became the first treasurer of the foundation, which was raising individual funds, business funds and individual support for it, you know, the penny from the schools and concepts like that.

So, she was very involved in that aspect and was the first treasurer. Literally, I can remember her at home, with reports on the kitchen table, working late at night. She was putting together, to the penny, exactly where the money was, how it was being spent and what was left in the bank. Ultimately, she turned that over—as it progressed to a bigger roll—to an accounting firm.

DePue: Well, she's not here today, but would that be the one seminal experience she had while she was a board trustee that she can point to, the creation of the library and museum?

Daniels: That would be a very important part. Of course, the overall parks and museums that are also run by the Historical Preservation Agency was also part of that too. But that's the biggest part.

DePue: Well, again, you're going to have to speak on her behalf, but is she disappointed by seeing the continued funding cuts for most of those historic sites that have been experienced the last few years?

Daniels: Sure, because she's a believer in preservation and a believer in the value of the parks and the historic sites. But, you know, our decision makers have to put priorities first.

DePue: June 30, 1998, the state passes a fiscal year 1999 budget. So, we're going into the next administration by that time. Thirty-eight billion, so it had been creeping up, but, by this time, as you and I both remember, 1999 was a pretty robust year, economically, for the United States. Those were years, also, that the federal government was running a surplus. The State of Illinois had a funding balance of plus \$1.2 billion.

Daniels: Imagine such a thing?

DePue: And there was a rainy day fund.

Daniels: Right. That was part of the things that we campaigned on, too, the creation of a rainy day fund. Yes, it showed you that, under the administrations of Thompson, Edgar and Ryan, we were tending to the checkbook and making sure that Illinois government didn't create all these new programs, but took care of the old bills and made sure we were operating government in a responsible fashion.

Unfortunately, the current administrations, under Blagojevich and Quinn—and they are tied together—are not as effective in running our state's economy.

DePue: How involved were you in the push to change the exemption, the personal exemption on the state income tax, from \$1,000 to \$2,000?

Daniels: Well, somewhat.

DePue: Certainly a supporter of that?

Daniels: Yes.

DePue: Also, some business tax exemptions, as well.

Daniels: I supported that.

DePue: Do you recall any of the specific exemptions?

Daniels: I don't, but I recall the process, and I recall paying attention to job creation and to improving the business climate in the state, the good times to do it.

DePue: One of the last things for any administration to do before they head out the door is to make appointments to boards and commissions. Governor Edgar was no exception in that respect. He had a whole slate of people he wanted, to a certain extent, to help out. I'm sure he would say, to appoint the right people to the right boards and commissions.

Daniels: Right.

DePue: But, he ran into some heat. I don't know how much from the House, but certainly from the Senate side.

Daniels: None in the House. We didn't have advice and consent; it was all in the Senate, Senator Philip.

DePue: Any reflections on that?

Daniels: Sure. Senator Philip didn't want the retiring governor naming all these new people to it and felt that the incoming governor ought to have that authority.

And, of course, he as the Senate leader, had some input on the confirmation process. I don't think he felt that he was consulted as much as he should have been.

DePue: And the governor didn't take kindly to that.

Daniels: No. It would almost indicate there was constant feuding going on. There were differences, but it wasn't constant feuding. As I said, I've had Governor Edgar speak to the college, and he's even quoted the value of Elmhurst College in the educational system. We were delighted to have him; we communicate, and, I think, he was a great governor. I don't want to emphasize too strongly, but, of course, we have disagreements. You can't be a strong leader and not have disagreements.

DePue: But we've also spent plenty of time talking about the accomplishments that occurred during the two years that you were in the majority and, certainly, during the eight years that he was governor.

Daniels: And we can talk further on it, if you want. (laughs)

DePue: You'd be happier to do that, rather than the conflicts?

Daniels: Well, of course.

DePue: Let's get to the gubernatorial election, though. We already mentioned that the Republican candidate is George Ryan. The Democrat is Glenn Poshard, a downstate Democrat.

Daniels: A very respected person in downstate Illinois, but not known throughout the state. I thought it was a mistake by the Democrats, because I thought George Ryan was going to win. I didn't have much question about that. Not to take away from Glenn Poshard, because he certainly was a good governmental official, and, of course, had a good reputation in southern Illinois, but they didn't know him in Chicago or the collar counties or central Illinois.

DePue: Who do you think would have been a more credible Democratic candidate?

Daniels: Oh, I don't know if I want to speculate on that. I don't spend much time on that theory. (laughs)

DePue: And, in a state that was tending increasingly Democrat, as you painfully knew.

Daniels: Yes, I did.

DePue: Still, Ryan wins 54% to Poshard, 44%. And so, now we've got all the way from 1976 to, at least through 2002, we've had Republican governors of the state.

Daniels: Right.

DePue: Can you reflect on that anomaly, where you have such a strong Democratic state, and yet, we have such a long run of Republican governors?

Daniels: Well, part of the theory is that Democrats would prefer to have a Republican governor, but a Democrat House and Senate. They would prefer to have a divided government, because the Republican governors are much easier to work with in terms of needs for the city of Chicago. Once they agree with the mayor, they then can sell it to the constituency in the House and Senate. That's just part of a theory. Some people would agree; some would disagree.

The other part is that Thompson, Edgar, Ryan were very effective campaigners. Thompson, from Chicago, Edgar from Charleston, and Ryan from Kankakee, had been around for a while, and people knew who they were. Edgar, remember, was secretary of state. Ryan certainly was lieutenant governor, secretary of state, former Speaker of the House. So, they made a great ascension into the role of governor. Good campaigners, strong fundraisers, strong political knowledge, and far better than what the Democrats were putting up.

DePue: So, the citizens of Illinois were rewarding success that previous governors had had?

Daniels: Right.

DePue: Well, a different election, one that you weren't directly involved with at all, but the senatorial, the U.S. Senate election that year. You've got an incumbent, Carol Moseley Braun, running against the upstart, Peter Fitzgerald, at the time. Any reflections on that one?

Daniels: Well, remember, prior to that, Carol Moseley Braun had beaten Rich Williamson for office. Rich Williamson probably is one of the brightest guys that ran for the Senate in Illinois, had a great history in governmental service and a great knowledge of issues. But Carol Braun had won in that year and Peter Fitzgerald—

DePue: It was the year of the women, as I recall, that she won.

Daniels: That's right; that's correct. And Peter Fitzgerald, I remember, he was a state Senator, close to Senator Philip, had personal wealth and the personal ability to finance a campaign and ran a primary that worked for him. [He] came from the collar counties and was an effective campaigner, conservative and close to Pate Philip, which helped him in DuPage County.

Carol Braun was found to be somewhat in disfavor, and there were all kinds of discussions about her love life, her boyfriend and other issues that came up.

DePue: Support of some rather seedy African dictators.

Daniels: Right, right. Now, I served with Carol Braun in the House, and I thought she was a very nice person. I didn't think she was an effective U.S. Senator, but again, I'm not talking about personalities; I'm talking about effectiveness and governmental ability. I think it was a good time for Peter Fitzgerald to run, and he ran and won.

DePue: Did he have a reputation, while he ran, or that you knew of, as being something of a renegade, of being out on his own, rather than a party player?

Daniels: Right, pretty much so, and, of course, that panned out in his service.

DePue: Let's go to 1998 and the legislative campaign that you were putting together then. Obviously, you were hoping to make some inroads and more members in your own caucus.

Daniels: Yes, we were. And we had good evidence that we had some opportunities. Again, it's another issue of who am I fighting, probably the most effective political operative in the history of the state of Illinois. I don't know anyone that you could say has been more effective over his term than Mike Madigan. I give him credit for that, but that's who my opponent is. I kept on saying to others, "Give me your opponent, and I'll do a lot better."

DePue: Well, that might be the way we finish the discussion today, because I want to pick it up next time and get into the George Ryan administration. I know you'll have a lot to say about that. Another fascinating discussion; thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Any closing comments on your part?

Daniels: No. It's just a long history and an honor to serve the people of Illinois, and we'll continue.

DePue: Thank you.

(end of interview)

Interview with Lee Daniels

ISL-A-L-2011-053.08

Interview # 8: July 31, 2012

Interviewer: Mark DePue

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

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.

DePue: Today is Tuesday, July 31, 2012. My name is Mark DePue, the Director of Oral History with the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library, and I'm here today with former Speaker Lee Daniels. Good afternoon, Mr. Speaker.

Daniels: How are you today, Mark?

DePue: Great.

Daniels: Another session. (chuckles)

DePue: I think this is our eighth session.

Daniels: We're working through; we're getting to modern times, right now.

DePue: It is modern times, because we're practically to the 21st century.

Daniels: Oh, that's a good thing.

DePue: We finished off last time with a discussion about the 1998 election year, and, of course, that's the election that brought George Ryan into the governorship. So, after fourteen years of Jim Thompson and eight years of Jim Edgar, now you've got the third Republican in a row as governor.

In this case, Ryan is going to start his year as governor quite different than Edgar had done some eight years before. Edgar inherited a \$1 billion deficit, and Ryan is going to inherit roughly a \$1 billion surplus and a rainy day fund. And that has as much to do with the national economy and the Internet boom and things like that as anything, I think.

But, I wanted to have you just reflect a little bit about George Ryan when he's moving into the position. Now, I know you've had a long relationship with the man, but how would you describe his personality? Let's start with that.

Daniels: Outgoing, receptive to new ideas, very strong in his leadership and believed in his ability to govern. And, I think, if you reflect fairly on his years of public service, excluding the problems that he had, he was a pretty effective administrator and governor.

Now, I know that that would get several different responses from people. But the fact of the matter is, he knew the legislative process; he knew government, and he had been experienced at, not only the county level, but also at the state level, as a legislator, then followed by lieutenant governor, then secretary of state, then governor. So he knew the players, and he knew how to get things done.

DePue: Some have said that he was more comfortable in the skin of being a legislator than as chief executive.

Daniels: Oh, I don't know. I'm not sure I would totally agree with that. I would think that he liked being governor a lot, and I think he was comfortable in that role. Anybody that accepts that position or is elected to the position finds it to be a daunting area of responsibility, and particularly as you face problems every day. If you could imagine the myriad of responsibilities that are coming to you, the thousands of state employees at all levels, and as the chief executive of the state, it's a pretty awesome responsibility. I think George was comfortable in his approach.

DePue: Some also have said that, at his heart, he was a dealmaker.

Daniels: Oh, he was the ultimate dealmaker. He knew how to put things together. He was interested in moving forward, not sitting still. He never stopped thinking about programs and how to get things done. And, yes, it was a good time for him to be governor, because the heavy lifting, in terms of the budget, was done by Governor Edgar, who had done a very commendable job in protecting our state's resources and getting us through a difficult time, so that, when the economy started improving, as we hope someday it will, in our current situation, that Governor Ryan was able to benefit from that and was able to pass a bill, Illinois First, which had a number of positive programs to address some of Illinois' needs.

DePue: Would you say that he was more effective in working across the aisle, working with both Democrats and Republicans, than Edgar had been?

Daniels: Well, I think it's fair to say that. That's not critical of Governor Edgar, because Governor Edgar basically had to review every state program, make substantial cuts, something that, in the legislative process, they don't want to do. And so, the governor found himself frequently at the point of being the deliverer of bad news.

On the other hand, Governor Ryan was able to work with all sides, Republican and Democrat, House and Senate, to accomplish many of his

goals, because the economy had improved so that you could look at programs like Illinois First. You could talk about infrastructure improvement to roads, bridges, our universities and new programs that he felt were necessary.

DePue: How much was that a factor of his personality, because most people have described that there's quite a different personality between him and Governor Edgar.

Daniels: Well, there's no question about that; there's a substantially different personality. George Ryan was very outgoing and Governor Edgar was more of a private person. Both of them, to be strong family men and strong supporters of their families, and known to be that way, but both of them had different personalities.

DePue: Well, your history with Ryan goes back quite a ways. In fact, would you say it's fair that he had a big role in you becoming, in 1983, the minority leader?

Daniels: I don't think there's any question about that. He and Thompson had big roles, and Senator Philip had a big role in that as well, for which I was grateful for their support.

I started in the House, observing George Ryan, in my formative years, in 1975. We had a little rocky start, because of my vote for then Speaker Bill Redmond. I watched the development of George Ryan, and, of course, he named me as the Majority Whip, or one of the whips in the House and to his leadership team. So, he brought me into the process.

DePue: How would you characterize your own relationship with Governor Ryan?

Daniels: Throughout this process?

DePue: Yeah.

Daniels: It was close. I had a high degree of respect for him. I thought he was very capable. But I also had an extremely high respect for Governor Thompson and Governor Edgar, and I did for Governor Ryan.



House Minority Leader Lee Daniels and Governor George Ryan confer in the Illinois House of Representatives chamber, 1999.

DePue: Were you Ryan's

go-to guy in the legislature?

Daniels: In many ways I was.

DePue: More so than Pate was, than Senator Philip?

Daniels: It's hard to characterize, because I don't know the private conversations that Senator Philip and the governor had. I do know that the governor called on me on many occasions to assist with the budget and other activities.

DePue: I read one article where the relationship was described this way, that the two of you "enjoyed a cozy political relationship."

Daniels: Well, I think that's fair and a fair commentary. I think, over the years, we had developed a close respect for each other. I thought Governor Ryan was an excellent governor. And, to this day, I still feel that way. I think he did an excellent job. It's unfortunate that he got into the difficulty he did, and, of course, he's paying a price for that.

DePue: I understand that Governor Ryan wanted you to become the party chairman when he stepped into the office as governor.

Daniels: He did, yes.

DePue: What was the reasoning for that?

Daniels: I think, like we said earlier, I think we had a high degree of respect for each other. He knew that I knew how to reach out to people and to build coalitions and build the party, and he was very supportive of that initially.

DePue: Who was the leader at the time?

Daniels: I believe, if I recall correctly, it was Harold Byron Smith was the Republican chairman. He stepped down, and then there were several other people that wanted to seek that position.

DePue: Did you personally want that job?

Daniels: I was not as interested in it initially, but then followed up, after certain people approached me and asked me to do that, that I decided to make that run.

DePue: This was in 1999 we're talking about.

Daniels: Right.

DePue: Well, what happened?

- Daniels: Well, I didn't get it. (both laugh) There was some opposition that crept up, people that wanted to choose someone else. At the end of the day, I knew that I needed to step away, and I did.
- DePue: Well, again, the papers reported that one of the people who was opposed was James Pate Philip.
- Daniels: That would be true.
- DePue: What was his reasoning; do you know?
- Daniels: I do not know for sure, because he never told me for sure. It's just that, Pate always looked at me like a stepson or maybe a son. Pate was the Chairman of the DuPage County Republicans and wanted to maintain his role as that, as well as being the leader in the Senate. And he had a big say in it. It was a difficult time, because Pate and I had always worked through our difficulties, and this was a difficult time.
- DePue: So, that's essentially how you chalked it up? You obviously were trying to read into what's going on, why wouldn't he support me?
- Daniels: Well, anybody would do that. I think it's fair to say that he preferred someone else.
- DePue: Who else did he prefer?
- Daniels: I'm not sure. I'm not exactly sure.
- DePue: Was it at this time that Jim Edgar was put up as a possible candidate to take over the chairmanship?
- Daniels: I think he was sought out but decided not to.
- DePue: That might come a little bit later. Who ended up getting the position then; do you recall?
- Daniels: No. It's kind of one of those areas I don't recall. I know Rich Williamson was the chairman, at the time. I don't recall who ended up getting that.
- DePue: Was it also the case, at this time, that Mike Madigan would have been the Democratic Party chair?
- Daniels: Oh, absolutely. Mike Madigan had been the chair for a while. It would have been an interesting dynamic. (chuckles)
- DePue: Though I would imagine that the party chairs don't have much to do with each other, directly.

- Daniels: Well, that would be true. Some of the things that the party chairs would influence would be the direction of federal money throughout the state, such as when there's a presidential campaign. Some federal money comes into the state, which the party chair determines how to handle that, with, of course, the consent of the other state central committeemen.
- DePue: Federal money, in terms of the write-offs or when people do their income tax, and they can donate party money?
- Daniels: No. Whether it's donations from the national GOP or a national Democrat organization, would be the determination.
- DePue: So it's not government money; it's party money.
- Daniels: No, that's not government money.
- DePue: That's what I wanted to make sure of. Did you end up bowing out then, basically?
- Daniels: I did. I decided, in consultation with my supporters, that the fight was not worth carrying on. It was not time to do that. Pate's opposition was evident, and, obviously, over the years, he had been an important supporter. Not having his support was unusual, but I didn't have it.
- DePue: Was that maybe one of the rockiest points you had in your relationship with him?
- Daniels: It was a difficult time.
- DePue: I wanted to have you talk a little bit about the staff that Governor Ryan chose. I don't want to get too much into his corruption and legal problems until later in the discussion, but, obviously, part of that came from his staff as well. Could you tell us a little bit about the staff he selected?
- Daniels: Bob Knudson was his chief of staff, and Bob Knudson was, without a question, a loyalist to Governor Ryan, and, in terms of his position, served the governor at his pleasure, obviously, but was very strong in his support of the governor. He's a person that we interacted with a lot. Of course, a lot of times, I had direct relationships with Governor Ryan. Bob Knudson, of course, was charged with the operation of the staff, day-to-day operation.
- DePue: What was your relationship with him like?
- Daniels: It was okay. It was not a strong relationship, like I had with some other people, but we had a respect for each other. I had known Bob Knudson for years. He worked with Governor Ryan when he was in the House.

DePue: Was it something of a non-issue that you didn't have a real good relationship with Knudson, since you had such a good one with Ryan himself?

Daniels: I didn't say I didn't have a good relationship with Bob. I said it was okay. I don't mean to imply by that, that I didn't have a good relationship. I always felt I did have a decent relationship with him, and we communicated.

DePue: Anybody else on the staff that you want to reflect on, at the time?

Daniels: No, not particularly. I remember that they all worked very hard. Government is a very hard job, and government requires a great deal of work. I think the average public doesn't realize how hard these legislators and staff work at it. I had a high degree of respect for all people in government.

DePue: You described Knudson as being very loyal to the governor.

Daniels: Yes.

DePue: Was that reciprocated, as well?

Daniels: Yeah, it was. The governor was a loyalist, in both ways. He expected people to be loyal to him, and he was loyal to them.

DePue: Well, let's get into Illinois First, because that was a major initiative. May 21, 1999, I believe, is the date that the legislation was passed and perhaps signed. And journalists, being who they are, they decided to call that day "Fat Friday"—I guess it was a Friday—because it was four pieces of legislation and none bigger than the legislation that created Illinois First.

Daniels: Well, remember what we came off of, some very difficult, austere years. So, anything that was passed that would be dealing with the problems that existed, because of the inability to do infrastructure improvement, would have to be a mega deal, so to speak, and Illinois First was.

Governor Ryan was able to move that through the legislative process very effectively because, as I said earlier, he knew the legislative process. He lined up support from the Republicans and Democrats in both the House and the Senate. I was supportive of it and supported his efforts.

I can understand where somebody would call it a fat day in Illinois government. But, on the other hand, there was so much that needed to be tended to, any program that would have been put together by any governor would have been the size of this one.

DePue: Simply because it had been so long?

Daniels: It had been so long. We had... There's a number of things... Look at your own home. If you do not maintain your home and address the problems of it, it builds up over time, and it's more expensive when you finally do address it.

DePue: Again, this is the kind of thing that the journalists thrive on. There was a report about the "four tops." Anybody who understands Illinois politics understands the role of the four caucus leaders in the House and Senate. There was a story about the meeting between the four tops and the governor himself, where he's trying to sell this program to all of you. It's reported that, at one point, Pate Philips said, "\$12 billion? I can only go as far as \$10 billion." And the governor came back and said, "It's either \$12 billion or nothing. If you guys don't want it to be for \$12 billion, there will be no \$12 billion," and then, apparently, walked out of the meeting after that. Do you recall any of that?

Daniels: I honestly do not recall that. But, having said that, could that dialogue have taken place? Of course, it could have. There was a lot of dialogue in these legislative meetings, much of, if not all, not recorded for posterity purposes. We didn't have a recording machine in them, and, of course, we had an unwritten rule that we could speak candidly, without any attribution outside.

DePue: Without these kind of quotes appearing in the paper.

Daniels: Well, yeah. I'm not sure that took place, but I'm not going to say it didn't, because I don't recall.

DePue: Were there any staffers, typically, in these meetings?

Daniels: Oh yeah, sure, sure. There were staffers there on both sides. I had my staff there; Senator Philip, Speaker Madigan, Emil Jones and others had their staff there too.

DePue: Who would have been your chief of staff at the time?

Daniels: In '99, it would have been Tristano.

DePue: Would he typically be the guy sitting in on these, as well?

Daniels: Yes, and my approp guy—when I say "approp guy," I mean appropriation head, which was Kent Gaffney—would frequently be in there.

DePue: How long had Gaffney and Tristano been with you, at that time?

Daniels: Tristano was off and on. He was there before I was Speaker and then came back after I lost the speakership.

DePue: And Gaffney?

- Daniels: He'd been there a while. I don't know the exact time. Ed Welk was the other appropriation person, and Ed Welk may have been at that time, W-e-l-k. He may have been the appropriation person at that time. I'm confusing some of my dates. (chuckles)
- DePue: Well, that's understandable. It's only been thirteen years now or twelve years.
- Daniels: Yeah, just a little bit. Well, the career went a total of forty years, if you include township government.
- DePue: I think one of the issues that any political election that you run—and I would think that the 1998 campaign for governor wouldn't have been a little different—when the issue about raising taxes came up, that both sides would have said that they were probably opposed to it. But \$12 billion doesn't come from nowhere, and, from what I understand, there were significant increases to fees and maybe not so much the taxes.
- Daniels: There were fee increases, no question about it. You had to pay for it. You can't sell bonds without paying for it. There wasn't an income tax increase; there were fee increases in there. I don't recall all of them, but there was enough to sustain the program and be able to sell the bonds.
- DePue: One of them was the vehicle license stickers, from \$48 per year to \$78. So, that's a significant increase for that.
- Daniels: It is. But we studied how it was in states surrounding the area, and it wasn't that much out of line with other states.
- DePue: And here's one that's an easier one to do, in most cases, a liquor tax increase, so it falls in the category of sin tax.
- Daniels: Right.
- DePue: Did you have any qualms about raising any of those fees?
- Daniels: I think it's fair to say that Republicans, by their nature and by their background and by their philosophical bent, always are concerned about raising fees or any kind of taxes. But, when you balance them off on what you need to do to address the public's needs, whether it be in human services or whether it be in education or whether it be in helping our less fortunate people in the disability arena, you have to balance that off to whether or not it's appropriate to raise a fee or to raise taxes.
- DePue: Can you explain, then, the way a bond initiative would work versus regular financing of state government?
- Daniels: Well, there's several different kinds of bonds. There's revenue bonds, which depends upon the revenue; there's obligation bonds, which pledges the full

faith and credit of the state. But, in general terms, when you have a bonding program, you have to have a corresponding stream of revenue that pays for that program.

Now, it could be, because you have surplus funds in an income tax scenario or sales tax scenario, so your surplus funds are enough to cover any bonded indebtedness. On the other hand, when you specify what funds are there that will pay off the bonds, that's another way of looking at it.

DePue: Now, I mentioned before, there is a billion dollar surplus and that there was also a rainy day fund. Were those one and the same?

Daniels: No. The rainy day fund would have been a separate fund that was created for the very purpose that it said, in the event that things are difficult. You would identify that; you'd have that fund to tap into.

DePue: Do you recall if the rainy day funds were used for this Illinois First program?

Daniels: I don't. I don't recall.

DePue: What kind of things, then, were part of that Illinois First project?

Daniels: Well, it would be infrastructure improvement; it would be road and bridges. It would be programs that would be throughout the state of Illinois that the governor chose and the legislature highlighted as important areas, a multitude of areas.

DePue: Well, again, journalists would characterize this, especially the way it was done in Illinois First...Apparently the governor was careful to make sure that certain constituents were going to get their piece of the pie. This is the kind of thing that often gets called "pork."

Daniels: Such a word. (both chuckle) One man's pork...What is that quote? One man's pork is another man's necessities? I'm paraphrasing, obviously. But, if it's in my district, that helped my constituents, it's absolutely essential to the operation of government.

If it's in an enemy's district or a Democrat district, it's pork, pure and simple pork. But, when you get into the politics of it, the fact of the matter is all these programs had to pass scrutiny, had to pass investigation. And 99.9% of the programs were necessary for the continuation of identifiable government programs.

DePue: Here's what you said at the time, "We've analyzed the needs on a statewide and local level. Is reconstruction of North Avenue pork? I don't think so."

Daniels: Well, and to those people that live in this area, North Avenue was a trap. I mean, it was almost a death trap.

It had electric poles very close to the highway. So, if you took your eyes off the highway, you could hit one of the poles, and of course, you know what the result of that would be. It had trees lined along North Avenue, very narrow lanes, and it was old, in terms of its infrastructure. So, what we utilized that money for was widening North Avenue, burying the electrical wires, so we got rid of all the poles. It's completely safer today than it was before we did it.

Now, somebody outside could characterize it as pork, and I understand what they're saying, as I just articulated before. But, for people that travel North Avenue, which, by the way, is far more people than from my district, it was an essential improvement.

DePue: Well, having driven here plenty of times, it's only about four blocks, five blocks north of here.

Daniels: Right.

DePue: Was the rehabbing primarily between the two interstates here?

Daniels: Yes. Well, first of all, it was between 83 and the Interstate 294. That was a huge, huge amount of work, but then we went west from there.

DePue: When did 355 come into the equation?

Daniels: I don't recall. Governor Thompson was the governor.

DePue: So that predates what we're talking about now by quite a bit.

Daniels: Absolutely, yes.

DePue: Do you remember any other initiatives that would have been beneficial to DuPage County?

Daniels: Well, there was a lot of road projects contained in there. All those road projects, which I don't recall specifically what they are, would have been beneficial to the county.

DePue: Was this an area that was really growing at the time?

Daniels: DuPage County was one of the fastest growing counties in the country, and the needs were growing.

DePue: Well, this was one that apparently raised some journalists' attention, \$11 million for DuPage County Forest Preserve.

Daniels: Yes. Senator Philip, I think, was a major sponsor of that, for the tri-county park. Was that what it was for? I don't recall, but it was for forest preserve

properties. And, of course, as you know, with a county that was growing like ours, it became essential for the improvement.

DePue: I wanted to read a couple of other quotes here—

Daniels: Sure. (laughs)

DePue: ...and get your reaction to them, deals with this Illinois First time period. This one is Rick Pearson, *Chicago Tribune*.

Daniels: Know him well.

DePue: Here's what he wrote at the time. "Alternately, socializing and arm twisting, Governor George Ryan single handedly returned pork to the state house menu, during the spring legislative session, weaning hungry legislators from the low fat diet served up by Jim Edgar, while passing the largest public works program in the state's history."

Daniels: That would be true. It is the largest public works program in the state's history and after a very difficult, austere period of time that Governor Edgar dealt with. So, as I said earlier, any program would have been large in nature, because of the time and what needed to be dealt with.

And, did Governor Ryan know how to work the process? Did he know how to interact with the legislature? Absolutely. Just like President Johnson knew how to work Congress.

DePue: Well, you set this next quote up perfectly then.

Daniels: Thank you.

DePue: Democrat Robert Molaro from Chicago, House or the Senate?

Daniels: House.

DePue: Here's what he said, after this was all done. "He..." In this case, George Ryan. "He schmoozes us, and he schmaltzes us, grabs your arm at the executive mansion and hands you a drink. I mean, this guy is the governor. It's heady stuff."

Daniels: Well, think about that. This is the leader of the state. This is the number one person that runs our state. Of course, you're going to pay attention to him. If you've ever been in a meeting with a lead CEO or the top professor or somebody that runs an organization—that serves in a very powerful and strong position—you automatically have a desire to listen to that person and listen to their views.

Governor Ryan was excellent in people relations. That's why he became governor. That's how he was elected.

DePue: Well, there's one phrase in there that illustrates, perhaps, another difference with Governor Ryan from Edgar, the executive mansion.

Daniels: Yes.

DePue: And a drink at the executive mansion.

Daniels: Yes. Governor Edgar treated the executive mansion as his home because, as governor, he was entitled to that. But that's where he lived. The other governors, like Governor Ryan, would stay there, but also had another place, a home in Kankakee and an apartment in Chicago. They did not live there to the same degree.



Governor George Ryan, Pate Philip, Senator Stan Weaver of Champaign, and Lee Daniels examine a picture in the governor's office in the Illinois state executive mansion in 1999.

Secondly, Governor Edgar was a teetotaler, and, consequently, so was the whole executive mansion. (chuckles) Now, that is foreign to Governor Thompson's executive mansion, which had frequent meetings and frequent gatherings, and Governor Ryan's, which had frequent meetings and frequent gatherings.

DePue: I recently interviewed Senator James Pate Philip. He mentioned that, during the Edgar years, he would invite people up to his office in the state capitol, before they went over to some kind of function at the mansion itself.

Daniels: I was not there, but I understand that happened. And then you said it happened, so it must have.

DePue: Well, let's move on from the whole issue of Illinois First, which apparently, from your description, was popular on both sides of the political aisle.

Daniels: Absolutely.

DePue: Was this the timeframe, also, that you're pushing for tax credits for private schools and some other educational initiatives?

Daniels: We would have been pushing for educational initiatives; that would be basically true.

DePue: Any more comments about the rationale for supporting private schools and tax credits for that and for tougher teacher certification tests?

Daniels: Well, we—I'll speak on behalf of House Republicans—have always paid attention to education. I had a number of education people in my caucus that were either superintendents or involved in education in a teaching capacity. And education was a strong priority for us throughout.

We recognized the value of private education, as well, which, in a sense, contributes to public education, because people that choose to have their children go to a private school, of course, are not a drain on the public school. So, if you take it another way; if you close all of the Catholic schools in Chicago, can you imagine the drain that would be on the Chicago School System? It would be overwhelming. So, there's a strong value to that for state government and our responsibilities of education and meeting that goal, as well.

DePue: But, would this not be an issue that the Democrats in the House would have been vocally opposed to, tax credits, especially for private schools?

Daniels: I think it depends upon where you came from. What I mean by that is, I think it depends upon how you view private education. Certainly, a lot of members from Chicago would support private education.

DePue: Where they had large Catholic populations?

Daniels: Yes.

DePue: How about teacher certification?

Daniels: Well, of course, that always runs into some difficulty. Teacher certification, if you're putting stronger goals on teachers...Just look at today, if I might use that 2012 example, with what Rahm Emanuel is trying to do in Chicago, for longer school days and for controlling pay increases. He's met a strong, strong negative result from that. So, if you try to strengthen teacher certification or teacher requirements, you're going to run into some difficulty.

DePue: Difficulty from Democrats in general or from the teachers' union?

Daniels: Well, you're going to run into it from teachers unions, which traditionally have been a little bit more favorable towards the Democrats.

DePue: Well, in fact, you described what happened to you in the 1996 election.

Daniels: That's right.

DePue: The demise was due to the strong opposition of the teachers' union?

Daniels: Strong opposition. As I stated earlier in one of our sessions, we lost a number of races in the south suburbs, because the Chicago Teachers' Union moved its whole operation out of the south suburbs to support Democrats, against Republicans.

DePue: Did that make you more cautious when you're pursuing these kinds of issues in education, when you know you're probably going to be bumping against the teachers' union?

Daniels: I tried to always operate my governmental career on the basis of what was right. And when you have a situation where you have teachers that are not as competent as they should be, trying to educate children that need their help, those teachers should be weeded out. And you should approach that as a legislator, in a responsible fashion. That's what we tried to do.

We passed Chicago school reform because, outside Chicago, there were a number of legislators—the majority—that believed that every child in Chicago has a right to an equal, quality education, as you might get in southern Illinois, central Illinois or in the suburbs. We weren't seeing that in Chicago, at the time.

By the way, then Mayor Daley agreed with us and very quietly supported this legislation. But, we offended a number of teachers' organizations, who, of course, came out against us at the time. But, we did what we thought was right, and, truthfully, I'd look back on it and say we had good intentions.

DePue: And we talked extensively the last time about Chicago teacher reform.

Daniels: We did.

DePue: So, this is just a continuation. Well, this is a happier note, but it's about this timeframe, in the fall of 1999, I believe, that the Elmhurst Chamber of Commerce inducted you into their Civic Hall of Fame. Do you remember that?

Daniels: Sure I do. I remember where it took place too. (chuckles)

DePue: Tell us about it.

Daniels: I had been on the Elmhurst Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors prior to joining the House. I had been a lifelong resident of Elmhurst, grew up here, went through the school systems here and was very strongly supportive of our local community in many ways, whether it be in education or whether it be in support for my district and support for strong business legislation, which the

Civic Hall of Fame recognized. I was very pleased with that. It was the same year, in 1999, that I had received several other awards, as well.

DePue: Do you recall any of those?

Daniels: Not offhand, but I do know that some of them we've been through. (chuckles)

DePue: Well, it kind of comes with the territory because you are, at the time, one of the most powerful politicians in the State of Illinois.

Daniels: Remember this statement, which you've heard before, "power is positional." It's not always about the individual himself or herself; it's about the position they fulfill. And, because of that, people entrust you in certain responsibilities, and you have a huge amount of power.

I was blessed to be able to be the Republican leader of the House, the minority leader and the Speaker of the House, and I always tried to do what was right, at the right times.

DePue: Well, that's an interesting segue to the next topic, because it was October 1999, not too long after that, that you and several others accompanied Governor Ryan on a trip to Cuba. Go figure.

Daniels: That's what I said, "You're going to do what?" He said, "I'm going to Cuba." "Well, don't we have an embargo on Cuba?" (chuckling) "Yes we do, but I've told the White House I'm going." "Well, what did they say?" "Well, they said they'd prefer that you not go, but they're not going to stop us."

We took the first flight from O'Hare Field to Cuba since they created the embargo. I think it was United Airlines. The then Speaker, Mike Madigan—still Speaker, forever Speaker—and several other people went on that trip.

DePue: I know that you and Emil Jones went as well, but not Pate Philip.

Daniels: No.

DePue: Because?

Daniels: I have no idea. He didn't consult with me, but I'm sure he told you.

DePue: I failed to ask him, and I'm kicking myself now, because I didn't ask him about this one.

Daniels: Let me just say that Pate went on a number of overseas trips with Governor Thompson, when Governor Thompson would take them, whether it was to Africa, China or others. So, he's not foreign to taking the trips. Why he didn't go to Cuba, I don't know. Maybe he didn't like Fidel Castro.

DePue: Communist Cuba dictator, Fidel Castro.

Daniels: But, see, I saw it as an educational experience. Was Fidel Castro going to change my views of him? Not on your life. But, on the other hand, should we know about what's going on in Cuba, as decision makers? Sure.

DePue: Do you recall what the U.S. Government said? Ryan told you that they weren't too crazy about the idea.

Daniels: Right.

DePue: Were there any qualifications that they put on the trip?

Daniels: Not that I know of. We, those of us that went with the governor, didn't interact with the federal government. That was all done through his office. So I'm not sure.

DePue: What was Governor Ryan telling you for why this was a good thing for Illinois to do?

Daniels: I think he personally thought that they should end the embargo and open up trade with Cuba.

DePue: That Illinois could benefit from that?

Daniels: I think he felt that way.

DePue: In what way, agricultural?

Daniels: Trade, agriculture. After all, we are one of the strongest states in the world or strongest areas of the world in agriculture, exports and some of our agricultural products, ADM [Archer Daniels Midland] and the like.

DePue: Going there in October is probably not a bad time of the year to go. What were your impressions of Cuba?

Daniels: It needed a lot of help; [they] needed an Illinois First in Cuba. Many of its buildings were starting to deteriorate in an unfortunate way. It was an interesting country, and, of course, our trip was pretty much limited as to where we would go and what we would do, because we were, at that point, being pretty much monitored by the Cuban Government.

Now, we did have dinner with Fidel Castro, which I thought was fascinating. That went for about six hours in length. He was infamous for the length of his dinners.

DePue: I think he's also infamous for the length of his speeches.

Daniels: Absolutely.

- DePue: Did he give one?
- Daniels: Oh, constantly. He got into a huge argument with the priest that accompanied us, about God. And, of course, I was happy to let the priest interact with Fidel Castro. He talked about the embargo; he talked about many subjects, sometimes in Spanish and sometimes in English, but he did speak proficient English.
- DePue: Oh, he did?
- Daniels: Oh, yeah, sure.
- DePue: Did you have any personal conversation with him?
- Daniels: No, just thank you, Mr. Leader or whatever I called him, Mr. Dictator. (chuckles)
- DePue: Did you overhear any discussions with Ryan and Castro himself?
- Daniels: Ryan sat next to him at the dinner, so there was an interchange there. Fidel Castro was very fond of George Ryan, very fond of him.
- DePue: And you're basing that just on the observation of the two of them there?
- Daniels: Well no, that, and we knew that, because George Ryan had wanted to come to Cuba and was advocating the end of the embargo. So Fidel Castro was very friendly to him. I maintain that, if George Ryan wanted to live in Cuba, he could, as a king...maybe a prince. (both laugh)
- DePue: Well, here's what...Again, I saw a quote that you had to say about this trip, "We made it very clear to Castro that there's nothing about his government that we agree with. But, we weren't there to rub it in or stick it in his face. We did it as a matter of fact. We told him, 'Mr. President, we're here on a humanitarian mission, and we don't agree with your form of government in any way, but we're here to open up discussions as humanitarians.'"
- Daniels: That was made very clear to him, from the Ryan Administration, to the spokesman on the trip and to all of us. Without a person, everyone agreed with that.
- DePue: Did you have an opportunity to talk to any average citizens of Cuba?
- Daniels: We did. We went to some restaurants and so forth. Of course, most of them only spoke Spanish. In some cases, they only wanted to speak Spanish. But all the people we ran into were strong supporters of Cuba and Fidel Castro.
- DePue: I understand you even met, though, with some dissidents? Do you recall?

Daniels: We did, and that was at George Ryan's insistence and with the permission of Fidel Castro, with the objection of the federal government. They really didn't want us to do that.

DePue: Why wouldn't they want that?

Daniels: I'm not totally sure, but Governor Ryan handled that aspect of it. I think they felt that we were state people that were involving ourselves in foreign affairs.

DePue: When you met with dissidents, did they talk openly, and were there members of their own government there listening in?

Daniels: You mean of Fidel Castro's government? I don't think there was anyone there. The meeting that I recall took place in—not [the] ambassador, but Consul General Hutchinson, if I remember her name correctly. I don't know if that's exactly right—in her facilities.

DePue: You don't remember anything about the nature of those discussions?

Daniels: There was some interactions about the form of the government and the dissidents and so forth. Can I take a break here?

DePue: Sure.

(pause in recording)

DePue: We took a very quick break. We were just about ready to finish up our discussion about your and Governor Ryan's trip to Cuba in 1999. How would you characterize the results of that trip?

Daniels: I thought it was very interesting. One of the things that became obvious was the benefit of a free market economy and a capitalistic system like we live in, and a democracy, because we were tending to the problems as they were.

In Cuba, it was like going back forty, fifty years, older cars, people needing jobs, a medical system that they tried to convince us was on the cutting edge, when it wasn't, because even the microscopes that they had at the medical schools were substandard, compared to what's available today. And the educational quality that a doctor would receive in a country versus Cuba was substantially different. That and the deterioration of some of the buildings and the standard of living was a stark difference.

I thought the trip was worthwhile. I thought it was visionary on the governor's image and his own view of it. I was glad I went.

DePue: Most would say that the reason that we've never really recognized or lifted the embargo on Cuba is because of the fact of that sizeable Cuban immigrant population in Florida, and that's a reliable Republican voting block.

Daniels: Well, I think there's some truth to that. They don't want us to lift the embargo, as long as Castro is the president of Cuba. Now, if you were to change that and change to a democracy, I think they'd be totally in favor of it. This may be a little bit above my pay grade, but that's some of the image I have.

DePue: Were you frustrated that we couldn't or we still can't or haven't lifted the embargo?

Daniels: No. I was fully aware of my role in the whole thing. My role was information gathering and observation, not to set foreign policy or try to impact foreign policy.

DePue: I understand, also, that one of the results of the trip was you brought a Cuban boy back with you?

Daniels: Yes. George Ryan had arranged that.

DePue: Do you remember anything about that?

Daniels: Not totally. There was some sickness there that was being tended to.

DePue: From what I read, Radal Medina Alfonso, a seven year-old with some kind of a liver disease.

Daniels: Right.

DePue: So, he would have been returned back to Cuba after he was treated?

Daniels: I think that's true.

DePue: Glad you went though, it sounds like.

Daniels: Yeah, I am glad I went. It was eye-opening, and, if anything, it strengthened my support of our country and democracy and the values of a capitalistic system. God bless America.

DePue: Well, it's interesting you phrase it that way, since some of these debates continue on, even in today's political elections.

Daniels: They do.

DePue: Presidential elections.

We talked, maybe before about this, but I wonder, did you have many dealings... You're House minority leader, so you would have certainly dealt with Emil Jones when you went to the four tops meetings. What was your relationship like with Senator Jones?

Daniels: It was good. It was certainly better when Senator Jones was a House member, as a regular House member, years before that. We interacted on occasion back and forth there. Again, I enjoyed a good relationship with him.

Whenever you become the leader of your party or, if we could say, one of the leaders in the House or Senate, then you have a different role you have to fulfill. That's a role, if you're in the minority, of presenting your views and making sure you were trying to stop the majority from passing legislation that would be harmful to your caucus or your constituents.

If you're in the majority, as all of us at one point enjoyed, even though it was only for a short period of two wonderful years, it's an entirely different scenario. You're able to determine the direction of government and how you want to approach things. In a way, it's an easier job in the majority, because [in] the minority, you have to anticipate, and you have to be ready to move in various directions.

Think about being the defense in a football game or in a volleyball tournament. The defense, you have to anticipate what's coming at you and then, at the same time, be thinking of the direction you want to take.

So, my relationship with Emil Jones was good. He certainly represented his caucus and his constituents effectively.

DePue: Did he have the control over his caucus that Senator Philip had over the Republican caucus?

Daniels: I would say that Senator Philip had a stronger control over his caucus.

DePue: Senator Jones also had the reputation of being, perhaps, one of the worst public speakers in Illinois politics, at the time.

Daniels: Well, I could think of some worse speakers. He certainly wasn't known as an orator, but I wouldn't necessarily classify him as being one of the worst speakers. It depends. There's various ways of articulating your views. I never saw Lyndon Johnson as a particularly strong public speaker, but everyone knew him to be a powerful president and a very successful president.

DePue: So, in the meetings with the four tops, it was clear where Jones was coming from, and he was respected among the rest of the leaders?

Daniels: Well, I think some leaders had difficulty respecting him. I didn't. I had a pretty good idea where he was coming from. I made it a habit of studying what was going to come up in the various leadership meetings, in the best way I could.

DePue: You said "some leaders" had.

Daniels: I'm not going to name names. (DePue laughs)

DePue: I knew you wouldn't.

Daniels: I'm not going to get into some of the private conversations.

DePue: This is a little bit early; we're talking '99 and 2000 here, but by this time, Barack Obama was in the Illinois Senate, as well. Did you have any dealings with him at all?

Daniels: No. The only dealing I had was when Senator Jones nominated him to be his selection for the retirement board, the General Assembly Retirement System. I was the current chairman, and I was asked by people to continue as the chairman, and I was reelected as chairman.

But I never had any communication with Barack Obama, either about that or since then, but I knew he was in the Senate. I didn't know much about him.

DePue: What was his reputation among your members?

Daniels: I don't think they really knew him.

DePue: Let's get to the year 2000, a new millennium, an election year and, at least by some accounts, a pretty quiet year for Illinois politics, early in the year, at least. The first thing I've got down here is May 16, Property Tax Relief Bill passes in the Illinois House. That would certainly have been one of them that would be close to your heart. Would it not?

Daniels: Property tax relief is always close to my heart. We've got to control and confine our property tax increases the best we can, because it's not dependent upon a person's ability to pay; it assesses the value of the property. Whether you have a job or don't have a job, you still have to pay the property tax. So, controlling property tax, giving some relief to seniors, is something that we've always looked for.

DePue: Do you remember any of the specifics for that year?

Daniels: I don't.

DePue: Would that have been a year that it applied, not just to the collar counties, but to the entire state?

Daniels: Well, I think that we... Initially, when we passed the property tax caps, I think in '95 or somewhere in that area—

DePue: Right.

- Daniels: ...It excluded Cook County. We were able, then, to bring Cook County into the cap legislation.
- DePue: And a month later, Gas Tax Relief Bill passes. Does that ring a bell to you?
- Daniels: Well, our gas taxes had increased, based upon increased revenue structure and the price of gas, depending upon the percentage of taxes that were assessed against it. We were worried about increased gas taxes, per se, and the increased cost of gas. And we did our effort to try to keep it down.
- DePue: This is the second budget that the Ryan Administration would have pushed through, and you've already discussed his ability to work across the aisle. I'm wondering if you recall, during any of the years that Ryan was governor, how pension funding worked itself out.
- Daniels: Well, I don't recall specifically what he did on that, but I know that there was a beginning—I think it was later on—where some of the pension payments were not made at the level that the law called for, that we passed in '95.
- DePue: During the time that Ryan was governor.
- Daniels: I think. You know, I'm not positive about that, but I think that maybe there was some smaller payments. Payments were made, but some smaller payments. Unlike in the Blagojevich years, he just deferred the payments, which was really harmful.
- DePue: You're going to have a chance to talk about that in some more detail. (both chuckle)
- Daniels: I can hardly wait.
- DePue: Before we get into the election—pardon me?
- Daniels: I'm just kidding.
- DePue: Before we get into the presidential election that year and the Illinois legislative elections, November 30 was a vote for a renovation of Soldier Field, \$587 million, and it's defeated in the House.
- Daniels: Initially.
- DePue: Initially.
- Daniels: Right.
- DePue: I understand that you were supportive of that, that this was something George Ryan wanted?

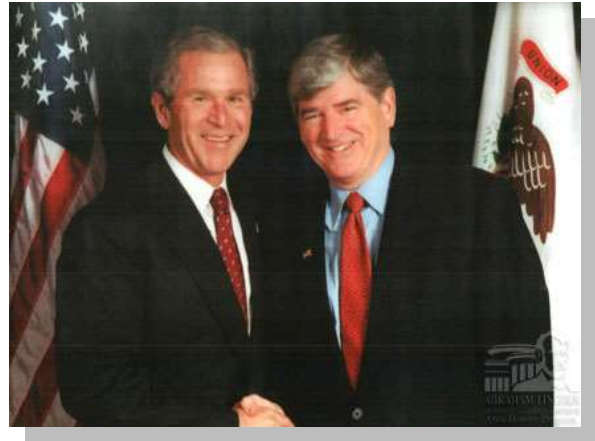
- Daniels: It's something George Ryan wanted. I was supportive of it, because I was convinced that there was no other place you were going to put the Bears Stadium. I know there had been support to move them to Arlington Heights, to move them into DuPage County. I think Senator Philip was the leader of that movement. It just wasn't going to happen. So, alternatively, the park district renovating Soldier Field was the appropriate way to go, on a venue that I thought was important to Chicago.
- DePue: As a general principle, were you okay with the notion of the state spending money for things like sports stadiums?
- Daniels: Well, I think, again, you have to look at the revenue structure. It did bring in some revenue, not only to the city but to the state. People would spend money when they came into the games. I was not generally opposed to that. It does have some venues that help pay [for the] cost of services.
- DePue: How did the whole issue get worked out; do you recall?
- Daniels: Not totally. I think, after a series of meetings, there was a number of people that decided to come about and support it. Do you?
- DePue: No, I don't. I should.
- Daniels: Do you have another quote? (laughing)
- DePue: No, I don't. I should.
- Daniels: I don't recall the initial vote, but I know that, on reflection, then, there was enough support to pass it.
- DePue: Is this the kind of thing, though, that support and opposition crosses party boundaries oftentimes?
- Daniels: Many times it does, yeah.
- DePue: Were many of your Republican members balking on this?
- Daniels: Well, I think downstate members would have been opposed to it, and, of course, I would respect them for their views.
- DePue: Just a very quick reference to the presidential election, primarily because that ended up being an incredibly contentious election.
- Daniels: Slightly.
- DePue: Slightly. George Bush versus Al Gore. Were you at the Republican Convention that year; do you recall? Were you a participant in the national convention?

Daniels: Yes.

DePue: Any memories of that?

Daniels: No, it was a pretty foregone conclusion as to who our candidate was going to be. So, we had a good idea who was going to be selected.

DePue: Well, the end result of that, of course, is that long time period when the whole country is not sure who actually won the election, because of the—



Lee Daniels meets with George W. Bush during his presidential campaign visit to Illinois on 2002.

Daniels: Hanging chads.

DePue: The hanging chads, the fiasco in the Florida election. What was your gut reaction to all of that, as a lifelong politician?

Daniels: As to the closeness of the election?

DePue: The way it all worked itself out, yes.

Daniels: Well, first of all, it's a tremendous compliment to democracy and to our system of government. Here we had a very, very contentious election, very close, riding down to one state, where the Supreme Court ends up making the final decision who's elected president, and not one shot is fired, no revolution, no uprising against our government.

But, sure people had different views, and they articulated those views, whether it was in the media or whether it was talking back and forth at a coffee shop, which they had every right to do. But, you think of this constitutional crisis that worked its way out, showing the greatness of our country.

Now, I know that people for Al Gore were disappointed. People for George Bush were happy. But the fact of the matter is, if you look at it from the standpoint of a governance issue, it's a tremendous compliment to our system of government.

DePue: Was there any impact of that election on Illinois and how the state ran its own elections?

Daniels: Of course, we've always struggled with what's the role of a state party in terms of elections. And for the most part, our elections, in a gubernatorial year, are controlled by the gubernatorial candidate.

In the state elections, when a candidate runs for state office in the primary, they're controlling their own destiny. And many times, in the separate elections, they're doing the same. The state party has not been the funneling of all funds and all activities to controlling all races. They've been supportive of it. Our state party, historically, has been that way, throughout the years and still today.

But the Senate runs its own races; the House runs its own races, and each candidate for public office run its own. Now, after the primary and you have the nominees of the party, they try to come together. But, for the most part, the gubernatorial elections control that direction.

DePue: And you're talking about, at the party level, in terms of managing the campaigns.

Daniels: Right. They really don't.

DePue: How about the election itself? Was there any change of election law and how the state would run elections that resulted from that?

Daniels: Are you talking about voting for governor?

DePue: Well, voting for any election, whether or not we were using punch cards or electronic voting and things like that.

Daniels: I'm not sure. I don't recall the year. Now we're using electronic voting. We're not using hanging chads any more.

DePue: From the perspective of Illinois election history, and, of course, the one that most everybody remembers in legend if not in reality, is the 1960 election and all the allegations about vote fraud that was going on in Chicago that year.

Daniels: There's always been allegations of that, and there's not too much proof connected with it.

DePue: Well, this gets to the ongoing controversy about Governor Ryan himself. When he was elected in 1998, there were several things that were in the press, in the public, about allegations of things that had gone on when he was secretary of state. That came under the overall rubric of "operation safe roads" and "the license for bribe" scandal, the issuance of truck licenses in a lot of the secretary of state's offices, especially in the Chicago area. Let me start by asking you this. Was this a concern of yours, in the early years of the Ryan Administration?

Daniels: We read the same thing that everyone else read. We heard the same rumors that everybody else heard, and, you never had direct conversations with people about it because, if you did, you then became a witness. So, if I were to ask you, "Did you just take that cup of coffee without paying for it?" And you

told me, "Yes I did," then I become a witness to that event. So, you don't discuss those things with people. I never had the direct discussions with George Ryan about these accusations, and, to my knowledge, neither did other people.

However, we knew that they were there. We knew there were some rumors involved, and they dogged him during his whole gubernatorial tenure. So, I think that it's fair to say I do know that it did bother him a lot. They were about activities that took place prior to becoming governor.

DePue: At that time, and I'm talking 1999, 2000, 2001, did you give much credence to all of these allegations?

Daniels: You know, license for bribes... Ever since we created the secretary of states' office, and we have money that is being paid for license, drivers' license fees or license plates, there's been examples of bribery that's been in there.

Even under our very, highly popular and very competent secretary of state today [Jesse White], there's been evidence that people have done wrongdoing in the secretary of state's office. So, it was not unusual to hear that, whether it was under Alan Dixon, Jim Edgar, George Ryan or others. That's a possibility that existed there. So, it wasn't something that we hadn't heard before.

DePue: You mentioned when Ryan first came into office as governor, his chief of staff was Bob Knudsen. But, I understand later on, Scott Fawell became his—

Daniels: Scott Fawell.

DePue: Fawell.

Daniels: Right.

DePue: How well did you know Scott Fawell?

Daniels: I knew Scott from DuPage County. I knew him fairly well. He was very close to Pate Philip and others.

DePue: Was it through Pate Philip that he got connected with the Ryan administration?

Daniels: I don't know that. I think he had worked his way up, over the years.

DePue: Any impressions of Fawell as a chief of staff?

Daniels: He was a strong chief of staff. He believed in his own abilities, and he ran a very strong core group.

- DePue: Were you hearing anything, rumors about his role in the administration or corruption that were connected with him?
- Daniels: I did not. These things that came out later were a surprise to many of us, including myself. I had not heard about any activities of corruption at any level.
- DePue: Did you have any personal dealings with Fawell?
- Daniels: Well, I would, as a representative of the governor's off and on, but I don't recall the specifics.
- DePue: And I think it was in 2001...Here's one of these ironies of Illinois politics. The U.S. Senator at the time was Peter Fitzgerald. Would you say it's accurate to say he was something of an independent guy?
- Daniels: He was very independent. He was from Pate's caucus in the Senate. Pate supported him for Senator. They were very close, and Peter was known as a very independent person.
- DePue: And the reason I ask that is because it was in 2001 that he insisted that, when there is a U.S. attorney's position that's going to be opening here in the Chicago area, that he forwarded the name Patrick Fitzgerald, even though—
- Daniels: Namesake. (both chuckle)
- DePue: No relation, apparently. But he checked around and found out that Patrick Fitzgerald had a very good reputation, I guess in New York State.
- Daniels: I think Peter Fitzgerald, from what I understand, wanted to select somebody from outside of Illinois and felt very committed to that principle and did so, within his rights as the sitting Senator.
- DePue: Did you have any thoughts about it at the time, or is he kind of an unknown quantity to you?
- Daniels: Totally unknown to me. Again, it was somewhat over my pay grade.
- DePue: But he's not a guy who's going to stay obscure.
- Daniels: Well, let's just say that I would have felt that there were competent people from Illinois that could fill that position. However, I wasn't the Senator, and so I respected his ability to make that choice.
- DePue: There are lots of names now that are attached to Patrick Fitzgerald, as a U.S. attorney, in terms of, let's say, people that he was able to put on his resume as people he got.

Daniels: Yeah, he's had a pretty extensive resume.

DePue: How would you characterize the nature of the investigations that his office would run on these corruption challenges?

Daniels: Well, for a long time they were very politically orientated. They were aimed at political people, and it was fairly well known. Of course, I was on his radar at one point, from the terms of looking into my office. But, I'm happy to say that nothing came of that, after an extensive period of time. He did look into a number of law offices. And there's rumors about offices that he looked into that never hit the press.

DePue: Would it be fair to say that, if he thought there was anything there, he would be pursuing it to the end?

Daniels: I don't think there's any question about that. We all know that.

DePue: Were you surprised, in 2001, that George Ryan decided not to run? I mean, he's been dogged by all these allegations for years, by that time.

Daniels: I was surprised, because he certainly didn't tell me that he wasn't going to run. I knew he was thinking one way or the other, I'm going to run; I'm not going to run. But I found out, shortly before he made the announcement in Kankakee, that he was not going to run.

I thought that was unfortunate, because I thought he was a good governor. I still, today, think he was a good governor. I'm disappointed that things happened to him that did happen. Apparently there was evidence to convict him of certain inappropriate actions. So, to say the least, it was a disappointment for me in somebody that I respected and liked.

DePue: Do you think that he could have run a credible campaign, with as much as his name had been in the papers with corruptions in the 2002 election?

Daniels: I think he could have run a credible campaign, to answer your question, yes. Certainly I think, even with those allegations, he would have been a better governor than the one that we ended up with.

DePue: I'm not sure many people would want to argue with you on that at all. Here's a little bit different subject for you, but it's certainly political. Redistricting, I would assume that was done in 2001? Talk about the redistricting process, following the 2000 census.

Daniels: Well, one of the things you want to do is control the process, as a party. In Illinois, of course, we had the House and Senate charged with the responsibility of redistricting all the legislative districts and congressional districts, done, based upon population.

We have never... Well, in recent times, we have not been at a point where we can reach an agreement on the subject matter of that map between the House and Senate. So, it's gone for a draw of the hat, so to speak. And when they draw the name, it's the tiebreaker on the committee that draws the legislative districts.

If the Democrat wins the name, then you generally have a district that's very favorable to the Democrats. If the Republicans draw, then they generally have a district that's favorable to the Republicans. Over the years, historically, the Republicans have not been very successful in the draw of the names from the hat, the bowl or whatever it is.

DePue: Except for one happy experience in 1991.

Daniels: A wonderful period of two years, (laughs) yes. And so, the redistricting at that time was controlled by the Democrats. And they drew legislative maps that were pretty much controlled by Mike Madigan, who is a pretty disciplined and focused person and knows how to draw legislative districts to favor his constituency.

DePue: As a result, how many House seats did the Republicans end up losing?

Daniels: I don't recall specifically. I know it was not a good year.

DePue: Did you feel that there was a lot more license than should have been taken, in drawing those lines?

Daniels: Oh, yeah. We definitely appealed that and definitely argued in federal court that we thought it was unconstitutional, but we didn't prevail.

DePue: Unconstitutional on what grounds?

Daniels: In terms of fair representation, one man one vote, equalization between districts, and for various technical details on drawing maps, based upon the U.S. and Illinois Constitution[s].

DePue: Well, the latest challenge, I believe—in part at least—was that the districts were not contiguous.

Daniels: Right.

DePue: Compact and contiguous, is that the terminology?

Daniels: That is exactly the terminology, and that's some of the things you look at. Could you make a more compact and contiguous district? And does it represent the geographical area that the legislator comes from? All of these are very, very technical arguments that we made in federal court, but didn't prevail.

DePue: So, things aren't going the way of the Republicans, at least in that timeframe. Let's get into the 2001 legislative year. Ryan is still governor at the time. June 22, a coal bill passes. Do you recall anything about that one? No?

Well, this isn't legislation, but I'm sure you remember this date. Tell me about what you recall about September 11, 2001.

Daniels: Well, what a terrible time. I was actually in Peoria, ready to speak to a health organization of about 2,000 conventioners. I was staying at the Pere Marquette Hotel, and I was showering in the morning, getting ready to go over to the convention center and was catching the news, just as I was shaving and just saw part of the TV presentation. I saw a plane go into a building. My initial thought was, what director would, in his right mind, do something like that in a movie or a presentation? How irresponsible can you be?

Then, I kind of kept on shaving. I looked over, and then I saw a bunch of talking heads, Katie Couric and others... I watch Channel 5. At that point, I then paid a little more attention and then, of course, saw a plane go into a second building and realized that we were looking at some disaster that was taking place as I was in Peoria.

I then was riveted by it and made some phone calls and found out that this is, in fact, going on. By that time, people had gathered at the convention site. They called me and said they still wanted me to come over. So, I went over. It was about three quarters full, at that point, because they had nowhere else to go. And so, I gave my speech and talked about how we will get through this, as difficult as it is.

But all planes had been shut down, and I had flown to Peoria. So I couldn't fly out. So, I had to have somebody drive down and pick me up, take me back to Elmhurst. Of course, it was a very difficult time for everybody, and, I think, we all remember where we were.

DePue: As one of the top leaders in Illinois, in the Illinois Legislature, did you have any thoughts at the time that there probably would be some legislative initiatives that you would need to pursue?

Daniels: We didn't know for sure exactly what the... Of course, we were in touch with the governor at the point, knowing that, basically, as far as state government was concerned, the five of us were very involved in the operation of state government. What should be our role? What should we do? Well, in truth, it's really above our pay grade. It's really something totally out of our control, except for cooperating with the federal government in implementing whatever state requirements there are.

In the case of the governor, of course, he is the head of the National Reserves in the State of Illinois, so he was in touch with the federal level in

his responsibility. But we, as legislative leaders, didn't have much formal responsibility.

DePue: Do you recall how Governor Ryan reacted to it and your appraisal of how he did?

Daniels: I recall that he was very concerned. I don't have any specific instances of what he did.

DePue: How about some perspective, as terrible as this is to say, some targets that would have been in the city of Chicago itself?

Daniels: Well, as you may know, I was a partner in a Chicago law firm. That's where I basically made my living. My firm was in a building at the corner of Dearborn and Madison. It was a fifty-six story building, so we were not beyond anyone's thinking of a potential target, because we were in a large building.

I called my managing partner on my way back from Peoria and told him I strongly suggest that he should close down the firm and send people home, which they did.

There was talk about the Aon Center, and there was talk about the Willis Tower...then the Sears Tower, now the Willis Tower. And there was talk about other targets in Chicago. Whether or not that actually was on anyone's planning mechanism was something we didn't know at the time, but certainly Chicago was on high alert. People cleared out of the city very quickly.

DePue: Did you get a sense, in that first day, that the country is at war?

Daniels: Well, I think that was everyone's sense.

DePue: And did you figure out who we were at war with, by that time?

Daniels: I don't think we really knew at the moment. It wasn't as direct as the Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbor, and, certainly, it wasn't as easy to determine where it came from. But there was just a lot of concern about it and a lot of frightened people.

DePue: Again, as a career politician, as one who's been in the pits.

Daniels: I'm a career lawyer.

DePue: A career lawyer, (Daniels chuckles) long-term politician, been in the political arena plenty of years. Were you surprised by how quickly the country rallied together? And were you surprised by how quickly we returned to our partisan ways?

Daniels: Well, first of all, I wasn't surprised how quickly the country rallied together. That's the nature of the American populous. We know when there's a crisis that exists and when people need to be together as a country to support our country. For the most part, Americans are very proud of who they are, what they are and what they stand for. So, no, I wasn't surprised at the tremendous outpouring of support for the country and for our first defenders, police, firemen and the like.

There's a myriad of stories—I'm sure you have your own—about people that were either in the towers or were close by it. Our former chairman, Rich Williamson, his daughter was literally walking to work in the towers. She was late to work. She was never late to work, but this day she was, and her life was spared, because she was late on that particular day. So, there's a hundred stories like that. Overall, people are good, honest, sincere people that love this country. That's what was experienced on the day.

Returning to partisan ways, of course. I mean, we are a two-party system; we are a two-party country; we have alternate views; we should always have those views. In fact, I'm for people being more compassionate about their beliefs than they are today. I don't like it when I see somebody just, oh well, maybe I'm for changes in education, instead of somebody that strongly supports their goals and their viewpoints.

DePue: The critique on American politics today is, it's so much more partisan than it ever used to be.

Daniels: That unfortunately seems to be the truth, doesn't it?

DePue: So you would agree with that?

Daniels: I would agree that we seem to have certain difficulties.

DePue: But, you just said you wanted people to be passionate about their views.

Daniels: Yes. The trouble is they don't seem to be passionate about their views.

DePue: They seem to be partisan about their views?

Daniels: They seem to be totally partisan and thinking about the political consequences, instead of what's best for the country.

DePue: I'm glad you clarified that. Well, this is a completely different subject now. But, in late 2001, I understand that you did become the chairman of the state Republican Party

N '94

Daniels: I did.

- DePue: State Republican Central Committee, is that the proper terminology?
- Daniels: Yes.
- DePue: How did that come to pass?
- Daniels: Rich Williamson, the chairman, asked me to become the state chairman, and I decided I would make another run at it, which I did. It was a very difficult election because, once again, Pate Philip opposed me strongly, and another strain on our relationship, unfortunately. But, I had enough votes in the state central committee to be elected the chairman.
- DePue: Did you have Governor Ryan's strong support at that time?
- Daniels: Yes. Um hmm.
- DePue: Was there anybody, especially Governor Ryan, who was telling you what he thought should happen once you got to that position?
- Daniels: There was a lot of people telling me what they thought should happen once I got to the position. (chuckling) One of the things was to win races, and that's one of the things we wanted to do at a state level and, of course, any national races that were coming up.
- DePue: Well, that gets to the role of slate maker. That's a term that's normally kicked around in democratic, especially Chicago, politics. Do you then become the slate maker, the guy who helps steer people to certain elections?
- Daniels: We never are in a position where we are not involved in some kind of decision as to the candidate for an office. Whether it's called slate making or suggestion on who the best candidate is, Republicans don't shut out candidates for office. Would we vet some candidates for office? Sure. So, slate making is not something that we ended up doing, unless there was an absence of candidates and we needed to work on that.
- DePue: In that case, what kind of people would you look for, would you try to recruit, to run for specific elections?
- Daniels: Depending upon the race itself, we'd be looking for people that had a good record,—doesn't have to be a public record, could be a private record—somebody that's involved in the community or communities or the state, in the case of a state office, and somebody that is not subject to any undue criticism.
- DePue: I know that you held that position for a fairly short period of time and that you—

- Daniels: That was a short period of time. That's the second time that's happened to me. The first time was Speaker. (laughs)
- DePue: Two years as Speaker.
- Daniels: Yeah, one year as chairman.
- DePue: Well, less than one year, apparently. What led to your decision to step down?
- Daniels: I apparently lost the support of our candidate for governor, Jim Ryan. Jim Ryan asked me to step down, and I felt strongly that, because of that. If you lose the support of your "party leader," in this case our candidate for governor, that you could not effectively operate in that position. I conceded. I agreed to his request, and I stepped down as the chairman.
- DePue: What was the reasoning behind his view that you needed to step down?
- Daniels: I'm not totally sure. We had a very brief conversation. He made it clear that he would prefer that I step down. He thought that he would be better off with somebody else as the chairman. Dallas Ingemenson took over at that point.
- DePue: What was the name?
- Daniels: Dallas Ingemenson, who was a Pate Philip supporter.
- DePue: Ingemunson?
- Daniels: Ingemunson, I-n-g-e-m-e-n-s-o-n, something like that, very close confidant of Pate's, over the years, and a very close friend.
- DePue: Which means he's also from DuPage County?
- Daniels: No, he was from Kendall County.
- DePue: Well, that gets us to the point of talking a little bit more about your own chief of staff at the time. Was it '97, perhaps, that he stepped into the role? This is Mike Tristano.
- Daniels: Yeah, I think that's about right.
- DePue: Tell me about his personality.
- Daniels: Strong, sometimes too strong, sometimes offended people, but he was and is a very bright man that worked very hard at his position and really masterminded a lot of our victory in '94, when we won control of the House. He resigned after that to go into another position, and then, after we lost control of the House, came back as the chief of staff, because he wanted to get back into that position.

- DePue: Was that your decision, to reappoint him as chief of staff?
- Daniels: He applied for it, and I said yes.
- DePue: Were there other candidates?
- Daniels: There were a few other candidates, but Mike certainly had the background experience, and we had a good experience in '94, when we won the control of the House.
- DePue: So, from your perspective, because of his role in helping run those elections and getting you to the Speaker, that was the primary reason?
- Daniels: That was one of the reasons. He also had been the chief of staff before. That's a very, very difficult job, and not everybody can fulfill that position.
- DePue: You talked about him having a couple of rough spots in his management style. Would that be a fair way of saying it?
- Daniels: Yeah, that would be a fair way of saying it. There were some people that took exception to his management style.
- DePue: Can you elaborate on that?
- Daniels: Well, a lot of it happened, and I wasn't aware of it, because I wasn't aware of all the meetings he had. But some people were offended by some of the strength of his management style.
- DePue: Were people coming up and complaining to you about some of that?
- Daniels: Not for the most part. It was not something that they would complain directly to me.
- DePue: Did you ever hear the nickname that he had earned among some circles?
- Daniels: I had.
- DePue: The nickname is "Antichrist."
- Daniels: Right, I heard that. I also read it in the paper.
- DePue: What was your reaction when you heard that?
- Daniels: I was surprised, because that's not the experience that I had with him.
- DePue: Do you think he was different with you than other people?
- Daniels: Oh, I think so, sure.

DePue: In what way?

Daniels: I think he was softer in how his approach was to me. He would bring things to me for approval, in terms of legislative product or direction that he would then implement with other people in a different fashion.

DePue: You mentioned a few minutes ago that Patrick Fitzgerald had you in his scope, but he certainly had Mike Tristano in the scope. When did you find out that Mike Tristano was being investigated?

Daniels: I'm not sure exactly, but I wasn't aware of the extent of the investigation went until shortly before he pled guilty to whatever he pled guilty to.

DePue: That was 2005?

Daniels: It was something like that.

DePue: Quite a ways after the timeframe we're talking about now.

Daniels: And I want to correct something and make sure you understand. I was never advised that I was in Patrick Fitzgerald's sights. I was never advised that I was a target of the investigation. I knew that they were looking at my staff, but I was never told directly that I was a person that was the target of the investigation. I want to make sure that's clear.

DePue: But you said that, later on, you discovered that, after—

Daniels: No. Later on, based upon the staff people that he was interviewing, there were questions about me and my management style and whether or not I made these decisions. Obviously, at the end of the day, they found out that I did nothing wrong. Otherwise, I would have been charged.

DePue: Well, we've talked before about how dogged the Fitzgerald office was in pursuing this stuff.

Daniels: Absolutely.

DePue: What were the allegations that were alleged in Tristano's dealings with your staff?

Daniels: Using staff for political purposes.

DePue: Do you recall making any instructions to your staff about what they could and couldn't, should and shouldn't do?

Daniels: Could not use them for political purposes, and if staff wanted to work on a campaign, they needed to come off of the state payroll. We were **very** careful on that, as obvious by the fact that nothing came of that long investigation.

DePue: In your case.

Daniels: Yeah.

DePue: How was that information passed to somebody who's coming into the staff?

Daniels: Well, I would assume the chief of staff would tell them that. I wouldn't interview everybody that came on staff; that wasn't my job. The chief of staff was basically in charge of hiring people.

DePue: And what was the size of the staff that he had at that time?

Daniels: I don't know, 120, somewhere; it's hard to say.

DePue: Which is probably a lot larger than most people would think that you had for a staff.

Daniels: Yeah. Well, there's a total of 118 members of the House, of which, at any given time, you're fifty-some members. So, if each member had a secretary or shared a secretary, right there is huge. And then you have your research staff, policy staff, and then your basic support staff.

DePue: I don't mean to put you on the spot here. I guess I am, but it seems like such a murky, gray area that you're dealing with in the first place. You've got four caucus leaders. Aren't all these people basically chosen at the pleasure? I mean that you are going to select people who are loyal to the party to be in these positions, right?

Daniels: We're an entry level position in many cases. A lot of kids come from college and go to work for the House or Senate, and they become partisans. They become Republican; they become Democrat, or they are when they enter it. They also become a believer in the process.

They also work extremely hard. These are very, very hardworking young people, in general, that spend hours and hours, sometimes twenty-four seven. Sometimes they're working around the clock. And, when the General Assembly retires, the staff still has to do the work for the next day and sometimes work until 3:00, 4:00 in the morning and start again at 7:00 or 8:00.

So, I have a high regard for staff on both sides of the aisle, in Springfield and in state government. They're selected, based upon their application and the director of that department. For instance, in research we'd have a director, in policy we'd have a director, and that director would hire them, subject to the budget and the overall approval from the chief of staff.

DePue: Were a lot of these interns that had worked during their college years or after their college years as an intern position?

Daniels: Some had, but not all.

DePue: Did Rutan apply to these people?

Daniels: No.

DePue: And I should say Rutan was a decision that occurred, I think in 1990, which controlled patronage, that hiring at the state level would not have anything to do with patronage.

Daniels: But it doesn't apply to the General Assembly. I mean, how could you, when you think about it? It's the Democrat side of the aisle. My title was Republican leader of the House. Mike Madigan is the Democrat leader of the House. He's also Speaker of the House. I was also the House minority leader, based upon our constitutional provisions. Rutan did not apply.

DePue: So, this situation that we're discussing here then, that you're discussing, these are people who are committed to the cause, committed to the party, would it be fair to say?

Daniels: Yeah, that would be fair to say.

DePue: So, again, to get the question, okay how do you draw that line between working on state business and working on political business?

Daniels: Certainly, when you're in session, it's easy to draw the line. When you're out of session, many of these people moved over to the political campaign, came off of state payroll and got on the payroll of the political division, which is not state funds.

Very careful records were kept, as obvious, by...I had heard rumors that Patrick Fitzgerald had looked into all caucuses and the records they keep, in terms of state employees and whether or not they were being paid with state funds. To my knowledge, we were all extremely careful in that. I know I was, and I believe the other leaders were, as well.

DePue: But apparently, some of the things that got Tristano into trouble were things like travel vouchers.

Daniels: Yes, I mean, that's the rumor. I'm not totally positive of all the facts and circumstances. After Mike left the state government, we did not talk, because he knew he was under investigation. There was nothing to talk about. I couldn't talk to him about his investigation, and I wouldn't have talked to him about that.

There were some timesheets allegations that I knew about, and, of course, I had personally nothing to do with that. But there also were

allegations of some problems with a state grant, and I think that's what ultimately got him in trouble, if I recall correctly.

DePue: Were you given some guidance from your own legal counsel at some time, that you needed to distance yourself from all of this?

Daniels: Well, you do understand that by its nature. If somebody's under investigation, you can't talk to them, because you're not going to ask them, did you do it? What's the person going to say? No I didn't do it, or yes I did do it, in which case you become a witness to whatever they said. So, you don't have those discussions. You don't go public with it, and you don't talk to anybody about it.

DePue: At what time does that become such a hurdle that it doesn't make sense to have him serve as your chief of staff anymore?

Daniels: Well, I think he knew the time. You know, he knew the time to go. I knew the time to go.

DePue: What timeframe did he step down then?

Daniels: I don't recall the exact timeframe.

DePue: And I'm afraid I don't have that in front of me either right now. Okay, it's 4:00 now; do you want to continue here or pick this up tomorrow?

Daniels: Whatever you want to do.

DePue: The next thing I was going to talk about was George Ryan and the death penalty issue.

Daniels: Strong advocate against the death penalty, and that came when he was first charged with signing a death warrant. The governor of the State of Illinois has to sign a warrant, authorizing the execution of a convicted murderer. George Ryan had a lot of trouble signing the warrant for the execution of a person that had actually killed a girl here in Elmhurst.

It was a very heinous crime and very, very specific. He had his then counsel, Jeremy Margolis, look at all the details of the death penalty conviction and finally, at the end of the day, signed the warrant for execution.

DePue: Would that be Andrew Kokoraleis?

Daniels: That's correct, however you say that. He then said he would never do that again. In fact, he never did. In fact, nobody has been put to death in Illinois since.

DePue: I understand the next time that Attorney General Jim Ryan sent him some names, that's when this all became obvious to the rest of Illinois?

Daniels: It was a surprise, the strength of his conviction, because I had had talks with him about the death warrant and death penalty, per se.

I was a supporter of the death penalty. I still support the death penalty in certain cases, but I would limit it to very careful sets of circumstances, such as the Colorado shooting, I think is appropriate.

But, having said that, George Ryan became an articulate advocate against the death penalty in any circumstance and ended up, as you know, commuting the sentences of everyone on death row, which caused some tremendous opposition by various people.

DePue: Well, I know that this was the same time period that there was a series of cases, and sometimes celebrated cases, where law students or private organizations would take on and advocate that there had been a misjustice that occurred.

Daniels: Northwestern was famous for that, their section that dealt with review of death penalty cases. And I think it's a great idea, in terms of...you don't want anyone being put to death that's innocent or subject to prosecutorial misconduct, or some error in the trial. So, the review of it is appropriate. And we've seen some releases, based upon new DNA evidence that wasn't there at the time of their conviction.

I still support the death penalty. I think it should be utilized in very few and very clear cases. Is there any question about the individual charge in the Colorado shooting, that he, in fact, was the individual that shot to death those individuals? No, I don't think so. That, to me, is an example of where it would be appropriate to ask for and seek the death penalty by the prosecutor.

DePue: And we're referring to the theater shooting in Aurora, Colorado⁷, just this last week.

Daniels: That's correct.

DePue: The issue of these cases, that the Northwestern students found that there had been a miscarriage of justice; let's call it that. Was that something that weighed heavily on Governor Ryan's mind, when he was making this decision?

⁷ On July 20, 2012, a mass shooting occurred inside a movie theater in Aurora, Colorado. Twelve people were killed and around 70 others were injured. The sole assailant, James Eagan Holmes, was arrested minutes later. He confessed, but pleaded not guilty by reason of insanity. Convicted of first-degree murder, attempted first-degree murder, and possessing explosives, he was given 12 life sentences, in addition to 3,318 years, without the possibility of parole. (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2012_Aurora_shooting)

Daniels: Yes, yes, very much so. And I think he worked with Northwestern in helping articulate his viewpoints.

DePue: Were you surprised, when he commuted all of these sentences?

Daniels: I was surprised by the extent of it. My personal advice to him was, where there's a question mark, okay. But there were some cases where there was just absolutely no question mark. But he said he wouldn't cherry pick, and he's against the death penalty, and that's it.

DePue: Well, it sounds like he had personal discussions with you, more than one, where he was wrestling with this?

Daniels: There were a few discussions, but not anything at length, because he was undergoing a self-reflection, introspection of his own viewpoint and his own thoughts.

DePue: Well, the question that always comes up, when you talk about this—and this is going on at the same time he's under all these corruption allegations.

Daniels: Sure.

DePue: Was there a link?

Daniels: I don't think so. I've heard the discussion. I've read about the allegations. I don't think so. I think anybody that knew of him at the time that he signed the death warrant would know that he was sincere about his efforts. Did I agree with him? No, but I wasn't the governor. Do I respect his ability to do that? Sure. He's within his rights. So, I do not think that that was the primary cause of that.

DePue: What was your reaction then, when he suddenly got lots of national attention, because he had commuted all these sentences?

Daniels: Well, I wasn't surprised. I mean, he's been nominated for a Nobel Peace Prize on several occasions; so, I wasn't surprised. There is a worldwide movement, and several countries abolished the death penalty years ago.

I think that the concern we have is prosecutorial misconduct, withholding evidence or the inappropriate evidence or having the possibility of certain exonerated evidence not being available to you to utilize, such as DNA and things like that.

But in today's day and age, there's a lot more scientific evidence, whether it's residue—from a gunshot—on your hands or more scientific review of evidence. So, I think we can be more careful.

DePue: I think this is probably a good place to end today's session, and we should be able to finish up tomorrow. Thank you very much Mr. Speaker.

Daniels: You're welcome.

(end of interview)

Interview with Lee Daniels

ISL-A_L-2011-053.09

Interview # 9: August 1, 2012

Interviewer: Mark DePue

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

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.

DePue: Today is Wednesday, August 1, 2012. I'm Mark DePue, the Director of Oral History with the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library, and I'm here for my ninth session, I believe, with former Speaker, Lee Daniels. Good morning, Mr. Speaker.

Daniels: Good morning, Mark. Here we are again.

DePue: Exactly.

Daniels: Nine sessions. (chuckling)

DePue: I think this will be our last session.

Daniels: There you go. You're going to miss me, Mark. (laughs)

DePue: Yeah, I know. I've worn out my welcome, but it's been a lot of fun to hear your thoughts about what I think is a fascinating and, oftentimes, perhaps a frustrating subject of Illinois government and politics. It's great to hear your perspective, as somebody who was at the very heart of the process in so many important decisions.

Daniels: Well, frequently they describe Illinois politics as a blood sport, and it is rough. But, if you think that you have a corner on toughness in politics, regardless of which part you come from in the state, just participate for a short time in Chicago politics. However, then go downstate, in southern Illinois, and participate in politics in southern Illinois. You will find that it's just as tough down there, just as rough and tumble and just as difficult.

One of the great things I've learned during my career is the various diversity that exists, not only within this great state, but also that politics is rough and tumble all over, and particularly as the media becomes more prevalent and the instantaneous reporting becomes more prevalent.

I can say, on the basis this may be our last session, it's really been a pleasure of mine to serve in government and to try to do the best job I can do. Sometimes that's been difficult; sometimes it's been disappointing; sometimes it's been depressing. Today, I think one of the things that I would like to have [people] take away from serving in government is their responsibility to solve problems and to make life just a little bit better for somebody.

So, if John Jones, not **the** John Jones, but just a named person, is in government, if he can leave government or she can leave government and say "You know, I worked hard, and I made life a little bit better for the people that I served," then they've done well by us.

But, unfortunately today, you have some people that lose sight of that, and they're too involved in partisan politics—both sides of the aisle—and not focused on resolving the differences and making life better for Illinois citizens. We can do it. We can do better; we should do better.

DePue: You picked up a theme we just talked briefly about yesterday, and I really appreciate your opening comments here. Yesterday we finished off with the issue of George Ryan and his decision to commute all of the death sentences on those many people who were sitting on death row, at the time he took over as governor. Very controversial, it's still something that's discussed today. I think that was a fitting way to finish off yesterday.

What I wanted to start with today is the 2002 legislative year. I'm pretty sure it's 2002. Do you remember anything? Normally, in an election year for a governor that would be a year that not much would be accomplished, but I don't know that this was a normal year for an Illinois governor, by any means. Any significant legislation that year?

Daniels: I don't recall specifically. Maybe you can remind me of some of the research that you've done, and I can comment on it. I can say it was a difficult time in Illinois government overall. The governor was under challenge, and we faced the fact that we were going to have a new governor. So, we had new elections taking place. Rod Blagojevich emerged as the candidate for governor, on behalf of the Democrats and was fairly handily elected as governor in 2002.

DePue: Well, there are a couple things I do want to ask you about. From my reading, I saw that, March of 2002, it looked like the general fund balance that the state was going to finish with, at least at one point in time, was nine cents. So, it was right there on the cusp. But I also know that, at the time that Governor Ryan handed over the keys to Blagojevich, that it was in the neighborhood of a \$1 billion deficit that the state was running at that time. At least that was what was being preached by the Blagojevich Administration.

So, with all of that in mind, one thing I think that was occurring—and I believe we talked about yesterday—that's the \$587 million for remodeling Soldier Field. You talked a little bit yesterday about your views on whether that was the right thing for the government to be doing, for the state to be doing.

On May 31, legislation that covered a couple things, Boeing's move to Chicago, any memories about that one?

Daniels: Yeah. It was highly sought after. They moved their headquarters out of Washington, the state of Washington, into Chicago, and it was touted as a major, major advantage for Illinois in technology and job creation. I know that there were some incentives that were part of that move, as you frequently find in big moves, like there was when Sears decided to stay in Illinois years ago, under Governor Thompson. They moved to Hoffman Estates, I believe. In that case, we created some incentives for Sears and, on a side note, just recently renewed many of those incentives, because the previous ones had expired. So, the Boeing move to Chicago was touted as a major coup for the state of Illinois.

DePue: I note, to a certain extent, former Governor Edgar had different views about incentives and things like that. What was your opinion about incentivizing major corporations, either to stay or to move to Illinois?

Daniels: I think we have to be careful as we approach it. I'm not opposed to it in concept. I think you can overdo it. I mean, you can create too many incentives, and then you have a negative impact in terms of the anticipated revenue enhancement that might come from that.

But, if you're talking about ability to create jobs, ability for income to the state, I don't see anything wrong with granting certain incentives, carefully done. That's a generalization, of course, but you have to get specific

as to what's granted and what are the returns. I think that's the responsibility of our government, to make sure that it's done right.

DePue: As you recall then, you would have voted in favor of the Boeing legislation?

Daniels: As I recall, initially, I would be in favor of it.

DePue: Initially?

Daniels: Well, it depends upon what all the circumstances are on any incentive.

DePue: Well, again, May 31, apparently, there was legislation that passed and was signed. Another piece of that was \$800 million, in that neighborhood, for expansion of McCormick Place in downtown Chicago.

Daniels: Once again, we found ourselves with tremendous competition from Orlando [Florida], Vegas [Las Vegas, Nevada] and other venues that were creating mega convention centers and soliciting major conventions, which, as you know, you can put a dollar amount on what it's worth to a particular state.

In an effort to keep our conventions in Illinois—and I don't remember exactly which one we were talking about; it may be the radiologists or the home manufacturers or something of that nature—we decided to expand McCormick Place, to expand our facilities for our conventions.

You know, overall there's no better site than Chicago, Illinois for a convention, and everybody that comes to the town says wonderful things. It's on a lakefront; it's got beautiful views; it's easy to get to; it's the hub of transportation of the country. There are many, many amenities that we have. We have to, and needed to, keep track of our improvements in our convention center and facilities that serve conventions.

Not too long from now, as we sit here today, next week the National Conference of State Legislators are coming to Illinois. That's seventy-five hundred state legislators from throughout the country will be here at a convention at McCormick Place. So, these are things that we need to do to keep track of additional influx of money and, of course, the reputation of the state.

DePue: Is that a hard sell? Was it a hard sell for your downstate Republicans?

Daniels: Sure, sure.

DePue: How would you have voted for that one?

Daniels: Probably for it.

DePue: Is that one of those, also, where there's a lot of crossing the political aisles on both sides?

Daniels: Well, there would have to be some kind of an understanding as to how that vote would take place, because down-staters would, of course, want something in return for their support of something in Chicago. But the argument would be that this is really for the benefit of the state. But the jobs, of course, are in the city of Chicago.

DePue: Well, it is a curious irony, and perhaps not an irony at all, that Scott Fawell was the CEO of McPier at that time. He was getting a bigger paycheck at the time than even Governor Ryan was.

Daniels: Yes, and I think that's still the case, not for Scott himself, but whoever's in that position.

DePue: Would that be Jim Riley now?

Daniels: I think Jim Riley is in that position and, by the way, an extremely competent man. Jim Riley served in the House, a good friend of mine. And, over the years, he's been a very excellent servant to the people of Illinois and a advisor to me on many occasions.

DePue: Well, the next one here, I know is dear to your heart, and I think it's in the same timeframe, this 2002 legislative year. That's the money for the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum. Now, we have talked about that before to a certain extent, but I wanted to pick it up at this timeframe, because I think the issue came to a head, in part, because, once again, Senator Fitzgerald, Peter Fitzgerald, was basically standing in the way of that and getting the federal money.

Daniels: That would be accurate. He was very opposed to the federal money. The original concept, I think, as we discussed before, was to put together a pot of funds of \$150 million for the Lincoln Library and Museum, so, not only to be a research facility, but also a facility honoring the life of, one would argue, our most prominent president.

It would be \$50 million from the state, conceptually, \$50 million from the Federal government, and then \$30 million would be raised privately, and another \$20 million would come from the city in some fashion. And those were just general outlines. The state stepped up with several... I think the initial appropriation was \$20 million, somewhere in that area.

When it came time for the Federal Government to participate in that, Senator Fitzgerald was very opposed to it and spoke quite vociferously against it. He was an opponent of George Ryan's and was quite vocal about that.

However, at the end of the day, the right things were done, and, as you know, today we have a wonderful, historic library and museum that is, I think, the most popular presidential library in the country.

DePue: Certainly in attendance it is.

Daniels: Certainly in attendance, yes.

DePue: Do you recall what Senator Fitzgerald's objections were to it?

Daniels: I think he felt that awarding of contracts... As a result of the state, awarding the contracts would be tainted. What I don't think he understood is the Capital Development Board would be in charge of that, and the people that were handling the contracts were skilled experts in the area, and the political workings would not interfere with the awarding of the contracts. It would be bid out publicly.

DePue: So, there would be competitive bidding?

Daniels: Absolutely.

DePue: Which was one of his concerns, I understand.

Daniels: I think it was. For the most part, I thought his concerns were unfounded, and I think that's proven out. I mean, the library is now operating, and to my recollection, there is absolutely no question about the validity of the contracts that were rewarded and the people that did the work.

DePue: I do want to mention three of the board members. I know there was more than that, but one of them was your wife. How did she end up on the board?

Daniels: She's on the Historic Preservation Board.

DePue: Not the foundation board?

Daniels: Well, she was on the foundation board, but—

DePue: How did she get that position?

Daniels: Let me back up a little bit, if I might, for that.

DePue: Sure.



Groundbreaking day for the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library, February 12th, 2001. Included in the ceremony are Lura Lynn Ryan, the state's Constitutional officers, Springfield's congressional representatives, the area's state representatives, IHPA Board members, Mayor Karen Hasara, and next to her, Lee Daniels.

Daniels: The Illinois Historic Preservation Agency was in charge of the Abraham Lincoln Library, and my wife was appointed by Governor Thompson, when the agency was created, back in the '80s. She and Judy Cellini were the longest serving members on the board.

When the agency was charged with the responsibility of the Lincoln Library and Museum, they then, in turn, started the process of approving the museum and library, but the development of it was done by the Capital Development Board.

My wife then was appointed as the first treasurer of the foundation, which was charged with raising money, and served in that position until such time that she resigned and was replaced by another person, I think a CPA or something like that.

DePue: What timeframe was that?

Daniels: I think it was like 2007, 2008.

DePue: So, after the construction of the library and museum?

Daniels: Yes.

DePue: The other person would have been Lura Lynn Ryan.

Daniels: Yes, but she was, again, on the foundation versus the agency. So, making sure that we understand, the agency was in charge of running the library, and the foundation was a volunteer organization that kept track of donations and contributions to build the library. I think, if I'm not mistaken, that Jim Edgar is the chair of the foundation today.

DePue: I think he might have stepped down, but he's had a long relationship with the foundation. Was your wife proud of her association with that?

Daniels: Well, as you know, it's a non-paying position, on the agency. As the foundation treasurer, she spent a lot of time making sure the books were balanced and all the donations were accounted for, which was the original creation of the outside development and solicitation of funds to support the library. Yeah, she was very proud of it, and I was very proud of her.

DePue: And it's obvious you're proud of your association with the library and museum, since there are several pictures and plaques and things around the office that commemorate that event. (chuckles)

Daniels: Yes, and that's only part of them. I have several others elsewhere too. Well, I am, because victory has a thousand fathers, and, of course, there's a lot of people out there saying they were taking credit for the Abraham Lincoln

Library and Museum. I know how it started; I know how it continued, and I know how it was all put together.

There were several players in there that were critical to it. Governor Edgar, at the start, because he authorized the initial appropriation to start some investigation as to the Lincoln Library and Museum. The agency, Historic Preservation Agency, who did a wonderful job in insisting not only that it be in Springfield, Illinois, because we had competition from Kentucky and Indiana and other states. Obviously, Governor Ryan, in managing the development of that and the groundbreaking of the wonderful facility, and, of course, the people today that are connected with it, that are running it, to make it the most popularly attended library and museum in the country.

Isn't that great for Illinois? It's one of the positives that we can talk about.

DePue: It's certainly been great for me, because I wouldn't have this job without that.

Daniels: You do a good job.

DePue: Any comments, any insights, into the dustup that occurred when, apparently, Governor Ryan wanted to appoint his former chief of staff, Bob Knudson, to the position of the director?

Daniels: Other than Governor Ryan, there wasn't a lot of support for that. And he was advised that that, not only was it not going to happen, but it was not a good thing.

DePue: Was that a conversation that you, as well, would have had?

Daniels: Many people had that conversation with him.

DePue: To include yourself?

Daniels: I would have made that advice to him.

DePue: One other piece of what could be called "pork" and certainly a subject dear to your heart, was the expansion of O'Hare Airport. It came up once again, towards the end of the Ryan administration.

Daniels: Well, that was a constant thing that we were being faced with. Those of us that live around O'Hare Airport, and particularly those of us that are older, remember when the first jet flew into O'Hare, changing life forever to many of us around this area, in terms of noise pollution. There were literally times that you couldn't sit in your backyard and enjoy an outside comfortable day, because the planes flying overhead would drown any kind of conversation or any enjoyment. So, the new pattern of the planes impacted communities surrounding O'Hare that were there long before O'Hare.

As you remember, historically, Mayor Daley, the elder Daley, went and used eminent domain to run a street, which was called the Kennedy Expressway, into the area called O'Hare Field, one third of which is within the county of DuPage, condemn that area, an annex to the city of Chicago, and then created the airport, which was the second airport, or third, you could say, to Midway. First, being Midway, then you had Meigs, and then you had O'Hare.

At that time that he did that, the technology then brought jets into same. The initial jets were very loud, very noisy and very pollutant. We had been fighting the noise pollution for years and found ourselves just arguing, without any kind of response from the city of Chicago that not only owned it but controlled the airport.

That fight has been a little bit diminished today because the jet engines are a lot quieter today than they were before, and you have new landing and acceleration programs. If you accelerate quickly, the footprint of the noise is less than if you accelerate at a slow level, spreading the noise out over a greater area. If you de-accelerate quickly, the noise pollution is less. Those standards have been observed better today than they were initially. The fight with the city of Chicago was like fighting a guerilla, and you're just a little bump in its way.

So, we had made several efforts to try to take control over some of the operations of the field and to deal with issues like noise pollution, air conditioning on areas that were negatively impacted by the airport. [We] made some headway, and then the expansion question came up. That was something that the communities, which I surrounded, were very, very concerned about and objected quite strenuously to.

DePue: Would that mean some eminent domain and taking out some—

Daniels: Oh yes, Bensenville. They went and took homes in the city of Bensenville, people that lived there, condemned those homes, and then moved the people out and destroyed their homes for airport expansion.

DePue: But, as I understand, at least at this timeframe, that airport expansion did not happen.

Daniels: Well, not in the fashion that they initially put into operation, but it's going on today, as we speak. The Bensenville area has been condemned. They have taken part of Bensenville, a good part of Bensenville, and they're still under construction of additional runways.

DePue: And I'm sure that the discussion always was in conjunction with an additional airport for the city of Chicago, as well.

- Daniels: Peotone was an additional airport that was under consideration, yes. Recently, if we can come to modern times, 2012—
- DePue: Sure.
- Daniels: ...the Department of Transportation has announced that Peotone will be built.
- DePue: Where's the money going to come from?
- Daniels: State funds, state and federal funds. [It will] be owned by the state.
- DePue: But, would not be part of the taxing base for the city of Chicago?
- Daniels: No, no. They may work out some provisions. They might move some of the flight patterns over there and then work out some kind of a payment schedule, but the ownership would be the State of Illinois.
- DePue: What would your position be on that, even though you're out of the—
- Daniels: I would be in favor of Peotone. I'd be in favor of moving UPS and FedEx and some of those other cargo operations over to Peotone. O'Hare Field then would have less traffic, but it would be more user friendly.
- DePue: Which would give Peotone a base, some clientele, right from the very beginning.
- Daniels: Right. And you'd still do some commercial flights out of there too.
- DePue: Well, let's get to a more political subject. Is there a more political subject than that? (both chuckle) That was a stupid comment on my part. The gubernatorial elections for 2002, and I wanted to start with the primaries in both cases. In both parties, I'm sure, especially the Democrats, had to be licking their chops, having been out of the governor's mansion for decades, by that time—
- Daniels: Right.
- DePue: ...and thinking this is going to be a great opportunity. Let's start with the Republican, because that's the little bit cleaner one to discuss, I think. Any thoughts on the Republican primary and who you favored in that?
- Daniels: Well, our nominee became Judy Baar Topinka.
- DePue: No, this is 2002, so this would be Jim Ryan.
- Daniels: Oh, I'm sorry, yes. The nominee became Jim Ryan. I had known Jim Ryan for years. Jim Ryan, I thought, did a great job as attorney general. Some of the thoughts I had, initially, were that he probably should stay as attorney general, because he had had some serious health problems and had been fighting cancer and was very, very serious. But he, through his strength of conviction

and his health, overcame the challenges that he faced with the cancer. So, he was not up to 100% level, in terms of engaging in a campaign. I was concerned about that, but ultimately did support Jim Ryan, who became our nominee.

The questions that a lot of us had was whether or not he physically could handle the arduous campaigning in a state like Illinois, which required a great deal of stamina and a great deal of time. I think that, overall, it's fair to say that that did cause him some difficulty, although I'm sure he would not say that. But, the talk around was that he had difficulty keeping a schedule that we had hoped he'd be able to. However, he was a popular attorney general, and we had high hopes for him.

DePue: Well, he has the other disadvantage of having the name Ryan.

Daniels: Well, yeah. I think people, for the most part, knew the difference, but an uneducated voter that's just going in to vote, one way or the other [might not]. I don't think the Independents who voted were necessarily against him, because his name was Ryan.

So, by their nature, Independents like to consider themselves to be more advised as to the candidates and who's running, and this is a high level office. So, was it a positive? No. Was it a negative? Probably so. Was it a huge negative? I don't think so.

DePue: Do you think the Independents were swayed just because of all of the corruption?

Daniels: I think the Independents were swayed because it was time for a change. The argument was that Illinois had been controlled by Republican governors for years, and it's time for a change. Rod Blagojevich was a very outgoing person. If you met Rod, the chances are you liked him when you first got to know him. Rod had friends on both sides of the aisle. He was extremely close to Tom Cross, our new minority leader, after the election. He just was a gregarious person.

DePue: Let's talk a little bit more about that Democratic primary. Did you think, early in 2002, that this would end up being the year the Democrats would take over the mansion again?

Daniels: I was concerned, and I think most Republicans were concerned.

DePue: So, let me ask your perspective of the candidates in the democratic primary. You already mentioned Rod Blagojevich. The other two were Paul Vallas, who had been the Chicago school system's chief executive officer and shot to prominence because of that role, and Roland Burris, who had run in a lot of different elections and held office in a lot of different positions.

Daniels: I've known Roland Burriss for my whole career. I remember him when he was in the Jaycees in Illinois, so, it goes way back to prior to his becoming a state official. He had certainly a strong following in many areas, Chicago predominantly. Paul Vallas had a great reputation and had strong support in the southern suburbs of Chicago. Rod Blagojevich was just an outgoing guy, very friendly and a great campaigner.

I thought probably the most qualified person was Paul Vallas. But, of course, it wasn't my practice to solicit votes for the Democrats. So, when I heard that Rod Blagojevich had won, I kind of thought, well, if you match experience, ability and qualifications in running various offices, Jim Ryan certainly would excel in that.

As we know, history tells us differently. What happened was Rod was an extremely good campaigner, and Jim was a little bit lackluster, to be respectful. I think Rod was able to overcome.

DePue: The primary on the Democrat side, it was Blagojevich pulled 36.5%, and, basically, he got to that number because of downstate votes, and Vallas got 34.5%. So, a pretty close race.

Daniels: Yes.

DePue: Burriss came in with a respectful 29%, so, a three-way split, pretty much.

Daniels: A three-way split, right.

DePue: I ask you to speculate a little bit. How might Illinois' history have changed if Vallas had actually won that primary race?

Daniels: Probably substantially. Paul Vallas is a very capable man and a good administrator and did a decent job in the Chicago schools, although one could argue that there's still a lot of work to be done. I think you certainly would not have had the problems that we faced under Governor Blagojevich.

DePue: And we're going to talk a lot more about those. So, the general election, Blagojevich wins, 52.2%; Jim Ryan gets 45%, so a substantial victory, but not overwhelming.

Daniels: A pretty strong victory.

DePue: Looking at that point in time, and maybe this comes later, but did you feel like, because of the problems with the Governor Ryan administration, that the Republican Party in Illinois was in disarray a bit?

Daniels: Well, it was. We had lost the mansion; we didn't control the House; we didn't control the Senate. It was a new day in Illinois, and new leadership was stepping in, which, I don't care how qualified you are, always takes a learning

curve, in a new position. There was a lot of concern about the future of the Republican Party.

Now, having said that, guess what? It's going to survive. You're going to have a two-party system as long as we're alive and beyond. That's the nature. There's ups and downs for both parties. There were times the Democrats didn't think they'd ever be in the majority, under Thompson, and certainly followed by Jim Edgar and then by George Ryan. Times change; they will continue to change, and, as a matter of fact, the elections of 2012, some of the campaigning that's going on today are, it's time for a change in the state house, in the state Senate, and if Republicans were in control, we'd be solving these problems.

DePue: In this same timeframe, 2002, we talked a little bit about your position, for a very brief point in time, as the state's party leader. Then you stepped down. But this is also the timeframe, I would believe, that you were making decisions about your role as the leader in the Illinois House, as well?

Daniels: Right, right. I had started to recognize that it was probably time for a change. We had a new governor, a new administration, and I had decided that I was probably going to step down. I hadn't made a final decision, until just before the necessary announcement.

I wanted to make sure that I left the House Republicans in as good of shape as I could. There was dissention within my ranks at the time and [I] just decided that it would be best to step down, just like you would if you were a quarterback on a football team. You start knowing when it's time to make another move and time to set your career in a different direction.

DePue: You mentioned the dissention within your own ranks in the House. How much of that had to do with the allegations, by that time, that were swirling around Mike Tristano and what he was doing with your caucus staff?

Daniels: Well, I think that had to have some impact on it. The exact direction, I'm not sure because, at that time, you didn't really sit down and talk with people about that, because there was an investigation that some people were being called and asked to talk to federal investigators. So, you really didn't get into that at all.

But my decision was based upon what I thought was best for me, best for the Republicans and best for the state. I really strongly felt it was time for a change and time for me to move on.

DePue: Were you bothered, hurt that... Now this is before, I think, Tristano was indicted with anything, but you were hearing things by that time. Were you bothered by the things you were hearing about what was going on, basically in your behalf?

Daniels: Sure. How could you not be? I knew it wasn't true. I knew that allegations that we misused staff for political purposes wasn't true. We were **extremely** careful. We were **very** careful in monitoring state expenses and making sure they weren't used for political purposes. All I can say is that after everything's said and done, after a multi-year investigation, nothing occurred, as it applied to me.

DePue: Well, you're stepping down from that role. Did you have any role in choosing the new leadership?

Daniels: I supported Art Tenhouse, who was my deputy leader at the time, from the Quincy area. I thought Art was a skilled and talented person. He was extremely knowledgeable; he was very strong in finances. I thought he would do a good job.

His opponent was Tom Cross, who had been a roommate of mine. We were friendly for quite a while, until towards the end, when he decided to make a move on the leadership role.

DePue: Your roommate when the two of you went down to Springfield for the legislative years?

Daniels: Yes.

DePue: Do you recall any point in time when the tension between the two of you occurred, or is it just because—

Daniels: Well, pretty much when I refused to appoint a legislator by the name of Brent Hassert to a leadership position. Brent was very close to Tom, and they decided that they were going to put Tom in leadership, and they were successful at that.

DePue: Brent Hassert?

Daniels: Yeah, no relation.

DePue: You saw that question coming.

Daniels: [Brent] Hassert, [Dennis] Hastert.

DePue: Let's go to Rod Blagojevich then, as governor. You were still in the legislature at that time.

Daniels: I was.

DePue: Not in the leadership position.

Daniels: I stayed there until 2007, right.

DePue: So, you're no longer going to be going to these meetings between the four tops.

Daniels: That's right.

DePue: Having said that, what was your opinion, early on, of Rod Blagojevich as governor and his governing style?

Daniels: A disaster.

DePue: Early on.

Daniels: Early on. Early on, he was extremely close to Tom Cross, so they were meeting fairly regularly, personally and politically and business-wise. As I said earlier, Tom Cross' father baptized Rod Blagojevich's children. I had no problem with that, and I have no problem with being friends on the other side of the aisle, that's fine. But we felt that the Republicans in the House were not fighting the Blagojevich administration hard enough and coming up with our own programs.

When I say, a disaster, I mean it became fairly apparent that Rod Blagojevich really was a little over his head in terms of governance. He had really not been a serious legislator in Springfield when he was in the House, under Mike Madigan. And he really didn't take his congressional duties very seriously when he was in Washington.

He certainly was a skilled runner, and he spent a lot of time running, which I think is good, to keep your mind in place.

DePue: Runner as in running races, political races?

Daniels: Jogging.

DePue: Jogging? (chuckles)

Daniels: Many of us in the Republican caucus felt that he was not a good governor.

DePue: Right from the beginning?

Daniels: Right from the beginning.

DePue: Was there anything in particular that stays with you, that really kind of set the tone?

Daniels: Kind of early on, he had a bond program that he wanted to sell bonds for the pension funds. Many of us thought that was the wrong thing to do, the wrong direction. Some of his lack of knowledge of the budget came through, and you'd hear that from the Democrats. I'm not going to speak for Mike

Madigan; he can speak for himself, obviously. But you pretty quickly picked up there was very little respect for him [Blagojevich] on the Democrat side of the aisle.

DePue: To include Speaker Madigan?

Daniels: To include Speaker Madigan.

DePue: This is about the same timeframe that there's a change in leadership in the Illinois Senate as well, because Pate Philip stepped down and Frank Watson became the Senate minority leader.

Daniels: Right, a good guy, a competent guy. He served in the House. I knew him well. He is a hardworking man from southern Illinois, from Greenville, if I'm not mistaken.

DePue: Greenville.

Daniels: He was a pharmacist by profession. I liked Frank a lot, and I thought that he did a good job. Of course, then later on, where he suffered a stroke, was unfortunate.

DePue: Unfortunate, not just for him but for the state?

Daniels: Yeah, because I think that he was a pretty competent guy and really worked hard at his position.

DePue: Any impressions of the rest of the team that Governor Blagojevich brought in with him?

Daniels: You had Chris, his financial guy. Why am I having trouble remembering his name...anyhow, who later committed suicide. He was his fundraiser, outside fundraiser, and there was problems that we dealt with in watching the level of fundraising, which was unprecedented, that Blagojevich was raising. There was a lot of questions about how that was going.

DePue: After he was sitting in the governor's position?

Daniels: Yes. Which, of course, we now know some of the events that occurred.

DePue: How about his legislative agenda? Anything that would strike you about that?

Daniels: No. From his standpoint, pretty weak. But, of course, he had the skill master of all, Mike Madigan, to shepherd things through the House that he agreed with. Of course, that would definitely help, but he, himself—

I didn't have much interaction with him, because I was no longer the leader inside. So, I was getting these bits of information in caucus, initially

was favorable to Blagojevich, and then, of course, as things got worse, and they became a little more obvious that this man may be over his head.

DePue: Do you recall a point in time where it was obvious that his relationship with Speaker Madigan was seriously strained?

Daniels: From the start. The Speaker is somebody that respects competence. I don't think he respected Governor Blagojevich.

DePue: Well, the line for Madigan is, he's also somebody who respects somebody who keeps his word.

Daniels: Well, there's no question about that; that's very important to him. As a matter of fact, that's important to all of us. You have to be able to negotiate completion of appropriate arrangements for the state and the budget and some other items. If somebody says they'll support it and line up votes, they've got to be able to do that and keep their word. If they don't, you don't have much respect for them, and you're not going to then sit in serious negotiation with them in the future.

Mike Madigan, without a doubt, is the most skilled person that we've seen in our lifetime. He's very strong in his beliefs about keeping your word and being able to produce, based upon what you said you would do.

DePue: The things that appeared in the press very early in the Blagojevich Administration were that he couldn't be trusted.

Daniels: Well, that would probably be the case. (DePue laughs)

DePue: Again, are there any specific examples?

Daniels: Remember, I didn't have any direct contact, other than to see him every once in a while.

DePue: Obviously, Mike Madigan is not going to be going to you to divulge confidences.

Daniels: No, I mean, we still had conversations back and forth, but that was not my role anymore.

DePue: I think it occurred, even in the first year, marathon sessions when Governor Blagojevich was trying to force through his particular budget agenda, and the legislature being called back and called back and called back, and going way beyond the regular session schedule.

Daniels: Once again, an inability on the governor's part to get the job done.

DePue: So, you're not going to talk anymore about from your perspective, or you just don't recall the details?

Daniels: Again, I don't mean to evade these questions, but the fact of the matter was that I wasn't at the table. I was a regular member at that point. I was appointed by Madigan as chair of the committee on developmental disabilities and mental disabilities, mental and physical, and was happy to serve in that role.

In terms of the budget, in terms of the final negotiations, I didn't have much to do with, other than I examined the human service budget.

DePue: But certainly, you would have been one of the...All the legislators being called into extra sessions.

Daniels: Yeah, I would have been there. But that tells you that the governor, who was the primary mover on that, was unable to get his agenda done, which indicates a level of weakness. And that's the last thing you want. I don't remember how many special sessions, eighteen or nineteen or some incredible number of special sessions were called by him at the same time. It's not a good strategy, and it shows a weakness on your legislative agenda and your ability to get things done.

DePue: You mentioned before that he wanted a bond initiative to make the pension payments, and apparently that didn't happen. Was that part of the—

Daniels: Ultimately, it did. And I think that was unfortunate, because the assumptions that they made was a return on investments that was impossible to get. They wanted an 8% return. Well, that wasn't going to happen.

DePue: Normally, you mentioned yesterday, you talked about the bond initiatives, that there's some way that you're going to pay back that bond. Do you recall what it was in this case?

Daniels: No I don't, offhand. I wasn't supportive of it.

DePue: Over the next few years, there were other things that Governor Blagojevich was wanting to get done. And, let's say, that, at least when he was impeached, going through the impeachment process, some of the things that he was being impeached for were his abuses of power, such as his use of the amendatory veto and some of the initiatives that he was seeking in healthcare, the child healthcare initiative.

Daniels: I remember now, the child healthcare initiative. What he did was, he bypassed the legislature in increasing the Medicaid rolls, without authorization for the expenditure of funds, and then went out and put that in place.

That violates the principle that you cannot spend money unless it's approved by the legislature. That's a constitutional provision. So, the

impeachment was based upon his executive order and increasing [the] Medicaid roll substantially, increasing the debt to the state of Illinois, without legislative approval. As it applied to that and other items, there were very strong impeachment articles.

DePue: But it occurred only after the selling of the [Barack] Obama Senate seat came up. Was there a lot of talk in the legislature, prior to that time, to impeach the governor, because he was doing these kinds of gross abuses?

Daniels: There was talk about that. The issuance of articles of impeachment is pretty strong. That's a very, very unusual event, and members of the legislature would take that very seriously, on both sides of the aisle, and wouldn't want to politicize it because, if you abuse it, it can be abused against someone else in the future. So, this unusual event of him not only being impeached, but then convicted, was something that every legislator would have taken very seriously.

DePue: Was there concern though, that he was setting a precedent for future governors in abusing those kind—

Daniels: Oh yeah, you couldn't allow that to continue, issuing an executive order that puts in operation spending that bypasses legislative authorization. It's unconstitutional to begin with. Secondly, it's just something that you couldn't sit back, whether you're Republican or Democrat.

DePue: I know you're not in the position of leadership at this time, but, if the Republicans had controlled either the House or the Senate, do you think the Republicans would have taken some kind of action to stop him from doing the constitutional abuses?

Daniels: Absolutely. It crossed party lines. Regardless, Governors Thompson, Edgar and Ryan would not have done this, and I can say strongly that they wouldn't have done this. Both Edgar and Ryan came out of the legislative process and understood and respected it. And Thompson certainly was skilled at it. So, it was unusual for the governor to do this. And, whether you're Republican or Democrat, you couldn't let that continue.

DePue: You've already stated that it was clear to everybody that there was no love lost between Speaker Madigan and Rod Blagojevich, so why wouldn't he have made that step? Why didn't he, until, basically, Blagojevich was arrested?

Daniels: You have to be careful. You have to be very careful in how you utilize that power and that authority. You want to make sure that, when you do utilize that, that it's done for the right reasons and not a political purpose. Whether it was Speaker Madigan, or if I had the fortune of being the Speaker a longer period of time, I would have felt the same way. I would have been very, very careful in making that kind of move, and make sure that I had overwhelming

evidence, because it's one thing for the House to impeach, and it's another thing for the Senate to convict.

Just look at the Clinton experience in Washington, D.C. The House impeached and the Senate refused to convict. So Bill Clinton, of course, went on to recover from that experience, and the Republicans lost a great deal of support in the Congress as a result of that.

So, I admire people for maintaining a high level of responsibility in very, very critical and important times.

DePue: Again, if you had been in the leadership position and had been Speaker at the time, would you want to have strong Democratic backing before you made that step?

Daniels: Oh sure. I'd want to make sure that, on both sides of the aisle, there was a view that was consistent with that.

DePue: Well, I wanted to go back to some of George Ryan's problems. We've talked before, that you had a close relationship with Governor Ryan when he was in office. This is during the end of his governorship. In April, 2002, Scott Fawell is indicted. Did you have thoughts at that time, about the indictments going that high in his administration?

Daniels: Sure. And I know that the governor was—although I didn't have any direct conversations about it—but, I knew that the governor was very upset by this. This is somebody that he trusted, somebody that he put a lot of faith in, and Scott Fawell was a skilled person and capable person.

Without getting into the merits of right or wrong, it was obvious from a federal government standpoint and the federal jury that he did a lot of things wrong. Sure, Governor Ryan would be very upset by that, as would other people.

DePue: At that time, did you think there was any reason to believe that Governor Ryan was involved with any of this?

Daniels: No. I did not.

DePue: Why do you say that so emphatically?

Daniels: Because I knew this man, because I knew that he was a thoughtful person; he was a skilled legislator when he was in the House and a very competent state administrator. I personally felt that he had done nothing wrong.

DePue: In March of 2003, roughly a year later, then, Fawell is convicted, and, I think, several weeks later, the word came out that he had "flipped," that he was now

ready to give evidence against the governor himself. Your thoughts when you heard that?

Daniels: I was very disappointed in him and, of course, concerned about the governor. This was somebody that I knew was the closest person to the governor, at that time.

DePue: Did you start to wonder if maybe the governor was involved with this?

Daniels: I think you had to wonder, but I think you still have beliefs that the person that you knew and worked with and were friendly with would not have done anything wrong, like that.

DePue: I think it's December 17, 2003—so he'd been out of office roughly a year at that time—Governor Ryan is indicted on twenty-two counts, including racketeering conspiracy, mail fraud, making false statements, income tax fraud, filing false tax returns, the normal kind of charges you get in corruption cases. Just for my own clarification, racketeering conspiracy, what does that mean to the layman? What is that?

Daniels: Well, I'm not sure exactly how they phrased that. I didn't read the indictments, word for word, but engaging in conduct that would have been illegal in many fronts, on more than one front, in terms of the racketeering and the conspiracy, would be working with others to perform an illegal act.

DePue: Your thoughts when the indictment came down?

Daniels: I was very upset, very disappointed.

DePue: Disappointed in the governor?

Daniels: In the allegations. I was disappointed that they had occurred. I still wanted to reach out and support the man that I knew. I wanted to accept the fact that he didn't do anything wrong, and he would be found not guilty. But the evidence was starting to build up against him and particularly with Scott Fawell's testimony. And I think others testified too, that were close to his inner circle, if I'm not mistaken. It was a difficult time.

DePue: One of the things that came out, about this timeframe, as well, was that the Ryan office had been very careful to keep a very lengthy list of favors that they had been doing for various political figures for many, many years. And the list was page after page after page. Did your name appear on any of that?

Daniels: I'm sure it did at some point. I didn't look at it.

DePue: Like I said, the list was lengthy. Did you have any concerns about when you heard that?

Daniels: Not for me. I had concerns for the governor. I think Scott Fawell probably kept that list, but, again, I want to emphasize, I knew I had done nothing wrong. I had not engaged in any improper activity, and I knew that, in spite of a difficult time, that I would not be ultimately accused of doing anything wrong.

DePue: April of 2006—these things take some time—is when he was convicted on several charges. And, just to follow on again, your thoughts by that time?

Daniels: Very upset, very upset, very, very upset. [I] had trouble believing the allegations and the testimony and the ultimate result.

But, again, in order to totally appreciate that, you need to sit in the courtroom every day, every minute, watch the witnesses, watch the testimony and listen to the evidence. I had not done that. I didn't intend to do that. I had my own views. I thought it was unfortunate and still am upset by the ultimate results.

DePue: Do you accept the verdict as being accurate?

Daniels: You have to, don't you?

DePue: So, in that light, do you feel like he betrayed you or let you down, let those confidences down?

Daniels: I think that everybody that was close to that, whether you were Republican or Democrat, would have felt the same way.

DePue: Well, you've had plenty of opportunity to reflect on this. What was Ryan's undoing, his tragic flaw, if you will?

Daniels: I think his failure to deal in detail and to pay attention to everything that was going on around him. Remember, this is a huge office, and this is an office that has multi responsibilities. Every day is a crisis in the governor's office. You have to rely on people and delegate authority, and when you delegate authority, the people that receive that authority have, by that nature, power and ability to make decisions. If they then start taking action that's inappropriate, it can ultimately get to the top. And, if you make the wrong decisions in terms of curbing that, then you run into substantial problems.

DePue: You oftentimes hear, when people reflect on George Ryan, in many circles, both Republican and Democrat, there is still a lot of regret about what happened to the man. Oftentimes you hear the statement that he just did a really bad job of choosing his friends. Would you agree with that?

Daniels: I think he did a bad job in trusting the operations and power that he gave to some of his friends. I knew them as nice people, but I was stunned by some of the actions, whether it be Don Udstuen or others, that ultimately were charged

with crimes and what they did. And what they did was, they violated not only the laws of the state of Illinois, but violated the confidence that the governor placed in them, as all the other people that placed confidence in them.

DePue: Here's another thing that you hear a lot, in terms of Governor Ryan's conviction, especially. This is from a comment that James Merriner, who wrote for the *Chicago Sun Times*, wrote about Ryan, "Ryan's defenders described him as a 1950s man, governing in a 21st century world. He grew up in machine politics, then the rules changed, and he did not keep up."

Daniels: Well, I think a lot of things were happening around us. Rules were changing all over. The media was more expansive, in terms of its reporting. They didn't like "backroom deals." But yet, how do you get major legislation passed, without sitting down privately and having conversations that you won't?

George Ryan was the kind of guy that, if he liked somebody, he would do what he could to help, and that didn't matter if they were Republican or Democrat. He wasn't as partisan a person, as you might have seen in the fifties or sixties, because partisanship was still strong then, and patronage was strong. But all these things were changing.

I'm not going to say that the author of that wasn't accurate. I would just say that I think the major flaw of the governor was that he didn't deal in enough detail and following the people that he entrusted with power.

DePue: Do you think his sentence was fair?

Daniels: I thought it was a little long. I thought it was unfair, in terms of the length of it, and, of course, he's in the process... I think, today he's in his last year in federal prison. I thought that a shorter sentence was more appropriate.

DePue: It was roughly a year or so ago that there was some talk about him being released, at least for a very short period of time, so he could visit his wife, who was on her deathbed.

Daniels: Lura Lynn Ryan was one of the most wonderful people you'd ever want to know. She was gracious; she was a wonderful mother of six children, including triplets. I knew her as a very, very capable person and a kind person and a compassionate person. She was George Ryan's life partner, and there was no question about the fact how much they loved each other.

One of the saddest things was watching him go to prison—I watched it on TV—and saying goodbye to his wife, who I had a high degree of respect for. And, then later on, her passing when he's in prison just was almost inhumane.

DePue: Of not, at least, letting him go visit her more often?

- Daniels: Well, that would be right. But, that's the prison system.
- DePue: This one is getting even closer to you personally. May 2005, Tristano is indicted on charges he directed state employees to do campaign work. He's formally indicted in 2005. Something of the same kind of a series of questions for you then. Your thoughts at that time?
- Daniels: Again, I was disappointed and surprised. I didn't think that he did anything wrong. I didn't know the depth of the relationship that he had with some staff people, in terms of difficulty in their relationship, and I was disappointed in that.
- DePue: March of 2006, he's found guilty.
- Daniels: I think he pled guilty.
- DePue: He pled guilty.
- Daniels: To...I'm not sure exactly what it was. You may have it there. Do you know what he actually pled guilty to?
- DePue: No, not the specifics of it.
- Daniels: Because I don't think it was to using state employees. I think it was to an extortion count or something like that—
- DePue: That sounds right.
- Daniels: ...in some kind of arrangement he made with a fellow that was wanting to receive state help. So, he did not plead guilty to violating the use of state employees for political purposes.
- DePue: You were quoted as saying, at the time, "There's no allegations in Tristano's plea agreement that I did anything wrong. I feel comfortable as to my responsibilities."
- Daniels: Well, that would be true. In his pleas and in his finding of guilt, there was nothing alleging that I had personally done anything wrong. Again, evidence that the investigation was going nowhere, as it applied to me, and, of course, there was no allegations of any staff violations, other than Mike Tristano.
- DePue: And, as we mentioned yesterday, nothing happened in your case at all.
- Daniels: At all.
- DePue: But, he is the chief of staff, your chief of staff.
- Daniels: Right, right.

DePue: You said before, in terms of your assessment of George Ryan, that he should have been more involved in the details.

Daniels: Well, and one could say, perhaps, that's true in my case. But, I had a high respect for Mike Tristano. He, of course, had been the chief of staff when we won the majority. We had systems in place to make sure that people were properly utilized. But remember, the plea agreement that he entered into did not have to do with the operations as chief of staff. It was an individual extortion count that he engaged in with another person. That was not the operation of the staff itself.

DePue: We did talk briefly yesterday, though, about his relationships with other people, that he was a tough taskmaster. He had earned a nickname, the Antichrist, so he obviously wasn't popular with a lot of people. Do you think, looking back at it, you misjudged his character?

Daniels: Perhaps.

DePue: He got a year in prison. Was that a fair conviction for him?

Daniels: Well, I think, based upon the plea agreement and what agreement he made, probably so. Again, I knew nothing about how these things unfolded, because I was not communicating with him. I was not discussing these issues, nor did I.

DePue: This is certainly...His conviction is part of a pattern of more corruption in Illinois politics. You've got George Ryan; you've got one that is especially going to come to a head with the Blagojevich Administration and all of the things that came out that he was involved in and his conviction several years later, after, basically, you're out of the political arena. My question, I guess, is, what's your thought about all the damage now that's done to the reputation of Illinois?

Daniels: Well, I think it's harmful. I think, though, that people can overcome that. We're not the worst state in the country. We're not the best state in the country. Any type of illegal activity is not appropriate, and people that engaged in this activity—they ultimately were either found guilty or pled guilty—are facing the judgment of their system of government. So, there's nothing you can say that excuses that activity, because you shouldn't.

We need to tighten up on laws, and we need to review them constantly. We need to hold people to high standards in office, and we need to make sure that we clean up government. But, beyond that, people also are expecting our people in governance to properly administer the laws and to make life a little bit better for them.

Today, it's inexcusable that we haven't resolved some of Illinois's problem in the debt structure and the debt that's building, in the pension

reforms that need to be done, particularly as it applies to new employees entering the system, but yet keeping promises to people that we've given, that served us well in their years of service to the state, that they can feel comfortable that we're going to keep our promises to them, and, of course, dealing with necessary reforms in government to make it work.

Illinois's problems, it's not just the problems of past administrations, from Otto Kerner to Dan Walker to George Ryan, Governor Blagojevich and allegations today that exist. It's the overall responsibility that our government officials are not meeting today and resolving our state's problems. That's what's hurting us, that's why people are moving out of the state. Not because Governor Ryan was convicted or Governor Kerner was convicted, but because the state is not dealing with its appropriate financial structure and solving its debt problems.

Businesses are not wanting to locate here, because we are known as an anti-business climate. It's too expensive to open a new business, to run a business, and the lack of job creation. That's what the problem is today.

DePue: Well, since you went here, I think Illinois currently is rated as fiftieth, as the worst state, in terms of honoring its pension obligations.

Daniels: That's true.

DePue: We have the huge debt.

Daniels: That's right.

DePue: You talked about the incredible impact. You were part of that system for many years. Speaker Madigan was the most powerful person for many of these years. Oftentimes, if you'd ask people in the Blagojevich Administration who the most powerful politician in the state was, they'd say it was Mike Madigan, not Rod Blagojevich.

Daniels: And I'd say that too. But, focus on this. During the time that I was in office, we passed pension reform in '95. If the Blagojevich Administration had kept its promises, we wouldn't be in the debt problem today.

Yes, there is time to resolve the pension crisis. First of all, you take every new employee and you put them on a 401k plan. Eliminate the pensions on new employees, because you haven't promised them anything other than a 401k plan at best, a defined contribution plan. And the defined benefit plan that you promised employees that have worked for the system for thirty years, we need to keep our promises to them and maintain those promises. We can do it.

So, what I have to say is that it's just a system that we need to make sure that we improve, and we can.

DePue: It can be fixed.

Daniels: It can be fixed. It will be fixed because, if we don't, the market will fix it.

DePue: Can a Democrat governor and a democratically controlled legislature fix it?

Daniels: If they have the will. But it's going to take some Republican help too. You can't do it by yourself. You have to recognize that this is going to be something that they have to get together in a room and say, here's the actual numbers; here's the financial structure; this is what we need to do; this is how we need to do it, and we need to look at such things as our responsibility to state employees, as a state, not to non-state employees, as a state.

So, if a person is not a state employee, we shouldn't be picking up their pension benefits. That's for the local governments to do. So, it's not fire, not municipal governments, not teachers. It's the state that is our primary responsibility, and that's what we need to focus on.

DePue: So, I assume what you're referring to here is the current recommendation on the table where, over time, teachers' pensions, especially, would be transferred over to local authorities to pick up the pension payment.

Daniels: You have to do it, because what's happened is they've scammed the system for years. They've raised the salaries of retiring teachers and expected the state to pick up the cost. They're non-state employees.

DePue: They being the local—

Daniels: School districts, local school districts. Remember, if you want education to be run locally, like we do in Illinois... Education in Illinois is a local responsibility, and, if you want that to continue on, with local tax support, then you have to accept all the responsibility, which includes a salary structure and the pension benefits.

DePue: And currently, as I understand, it's the Republican leadership in the House and the Senate who are standing in opposition to that move.

Daniels: Well, let's just say that there is no other way to resolve it, other than shifting that back.

DePue: Let's go back to your personal career, 2005—I think it's about this timeframe; you can correct me if I'm wrong here—you made the decision that you're going to step out of the political arena entirely.

Daniels: Right. I did. At the end of my career, which would have ended in January of '07, I would not have run for reelection in November of '06.

DePue: What led to that decision?

Daniels: Time to go. I knew that nothing had occurred in terms of my personal life in terms of the investigation. I knew that I had really done a tremendous amount of work over the years. I had the good fortune of having a great career, a supportive family and others. I knew it was just time for me to move on to another area.

DePue: Was it as fulfilling... Was it as much fun to be just a regular member, as it was when you were the minority leader?

Daniels: It wasn't as much work, and parts of me missed the negotiations that I had done for twenty years. [I] was pretty proud of the fact that, during these twenty years, we solved our problems, and during my administration as the Republican leader of the House, we did not have the debt structure that we have today. We met those problems and did it responsibly and did it working with both sides of the aisle. So, I was proud of my career and disappointed with some of the events that are happening today or lack of events that are happening today.

But [I] left the House as a winner. I never lost an election, other than the speakership election, which I lost a lot. (laughing) But, never lost an election, served six and a half years as township auditor and thirty-two years in the House.

DePue: Did that decision have anything to do with how dysfunctional the Blagojevich administration was?

Daniels: No. What it was, was my personal time to make a change and somebody else to step in. My successor was a gentleman by the name of Dennis Reboletti, who is doing a very competent job, has excelled in the House and, today, is the floor leader in the Illinois House. That was my successor, and I was happy to support him.

DePue: Well, on the way out, there's time for reflection on the job that you'd done, and other people had reflected as well. Here was one comment that you were described as, "Often charming, always respected." And another, on the flipside of that, "Sometimes difficult to work with." And detractors sometimes described you as "autocratic, mercurial and arrogant." This is in your role as minority leader and Speaker. Do you think they got it right?

Daniels: Well, everybody is entitled to their view. I know this. I know I always did the best job I could do. Nobody worked harder than I did; nobody dealt with issues more than I did, and nobody was more concerned about the operation of state government and the direction of state government than I was. Did I always make the right decision? Of course not. Would I review and redo some of those? Perhaps. But, the fact of the matter is, I never, ever operated on a basis of not doing the best thing for the people that I represented.

DePue: At the time, then, you did make that decision—you decided to step out of the public arena, so to speak—did you have any qualms or regrets about doing that?

Daniels: No. To ask the follow-up question, are there any parts of it you miss? Of course there is. I spent my life in state government. If I were there today, I'd be down in Springfield, Illinois, arguing for the changes that I just gave you an example of, and saying, "We have to do this. It's not a Republican issue; it's not a Democrat issue; it's a people issue. It's our government and how people view Illinois. People are moving out of this state and the job creation is diminished by our inability to resolve these problems. That's the problem with the state."

DePue: I want to ask a couple questions about...going back to the corruption issue. Then we're going to get to some things, allowing you to wrap this whole experience up, because it's been a lot of fun.

First of all, before we get to the corruption issue, what have you been doing for the last few years since you did step down from the legislature?

Daniels: In 2007, I retired from the legislature and retired from my law firm. I was a partner in a major Chicago law firm called Bell, Boyd & Lloyd. And I set up a business called Lee Daniels & Associates, which is a government and community relations firm. And I do government and community relations today. I've taught at Elmhurst College, government, for several years and enjoy my relationships back here and occasionally interact with some of my former colleagues and new colleagues.

DePue: Are you still a practicing lawyer, as well?

Daniels: No. I'm on retirement from my law firm.

DePue: Well, what I want to ask you about the corruption is this. You mentioned it already, Illinois has the reputation for being a very corrupt state, politically. It shares that distinction with places like Louisiana, New Jersey and others.

Daniels: Florida.

DePue: Florida. Do you think some of the academicians and others who observe this would be correct to say there's a culture of corruption in Illinois?

Daniels: No, I don't think so. I think it depends upon how you view it. Now, the people that have been convicted of crimes did something wrong. But let's talk about the multiple numbers of people that don't do anything wrong and even those that may be accused, but haven't done anything wrong. I think that it's highlighted as problematic, and I know that every day we hear about new problems, whether it's in the City of Chicago or elsewhere. We just had some new indictments come out in the City of Chicago.

The fact of the matter is, no, I don't think it's a culture. I think that people go the wrong way. The nature of mankind is to make mistakes and errors and, perhaps, engage in inappropriate conduct at times. We have to crack down on it. Our problems today are the lack of effective governance in resolving the problems that people elect others to resolve.

DePue: You also hear that part of the reason that Illinois has had such a long run of convictions and corruption issues is because the Illinois electorate has tolerated it, has allowed it to fester.

Daniels: Well, the ultimate responsibility has to go to the electorate. Obviously, they elect people to office, and they have to make the judgments. I think we could all do a better job of examining those people that run for office. I don't think you can put it on them, as much as you could say, maybe we just need to do a little better job in investigating who we vote for and what the pattern of votes are.

DePue: Well, to pick up on that, you stepped down in November of 2006. That's the same timeframe that Blagojevich is reelected as governor. Did it surprise you that he won reelection?

Daniels: No.

DePue: We mentioned before, the Republican Party in the state was kind of dysfunctional at the time. Do you think that Judy Baar Topinka ran a credible race against him?

Daniels: She's a capable person, and, as you know, obviously, she's back in state office now. But, I think that Blagojevich ran a very good campaign that kind of painted her as out of touch. And maybe it wasn't time to reelect her to another position.

DePue: But, by that time, 2006, there was plenty of information out there about all the things that were going on within his administration, not to mention how dysfunctional his relationship was with the state legislature.

Daniels: Well, if the point you're making that the electorate could have done a better job on who they elected to office, it's hard to argue with that, because of the results. But the fact of the matter is, based upon what people had available to them, they saw a very gregarious and outgoing governor who was young and a young family and attractive, versus an elderly stateswoman who had served in many excellent positions credibly, but may not have been up to the physical challenge of what people wanted to see, image-wise, in their governor.

Now, is that shortsighted? One could argue it is. One can also argue that we need to do a better job in who we elect to state office...or any office.

DePue: Well, I've got some concluding questions for you. Let's start with this one. Looking back on a long career, what would you look back on and be most proud about, in terms of your accomplishments?

Daniels: I think there are several. At the top of the list are such things as my commitment to our less fortunate, those people with mental and physical challenges and the laws that I was able to sponsor and write over the years and the continued work that I still do in those areas.

I think that paying attention to education reform, as we did in the Chicago school reform and general state reform in education, making sure we do what we can to serve a better system. Serving in the capacity of the leadership of the state in times that, not only were challenging, such as Governor Edgar faced, but in the go-go years, such as Governor Thompson had and in better years that Governor Ryan enjoyed, but dealing with issues and resolving those issues at the time and balancing our budget at the time.

So I think, as I look over my career, there are many things that I could highlight, and one would include the Lincoln Library and Museum, by the way, as one of the fathers of the library itself. I think there are numerous examples of my accomplishments. But also, most importantly, is being able to serve the people of Illinois.

DePue: Is there any point that seemed to be the most exhilarating for you?

Daniels: When I was elected Speaker.

DePue: (chuckling) I had little doubt that that's what you'd say. And I've got a quote that you said at that time, that I think illustrates that very well. "I can't explain it..." It being the excitement of being elected Speaker. "You just have to go through it. It's a lesson in humility, when you think that this is the eighty-ninth General Assembly and that I'm probably the sixty-fifth Speaker."—You were the sixty-seventh by that time—"which shows you that not a lot of men have had this job."

Daniels: Well, it's got to be like winning the gold medal at the Olympics. (chuckles) Recently we saw our women's gymnastics team win the gold medal, and similar statements were made. You can't really explain it. It is, in fact, a lesson in humility, because you are elected as the chief legislative officer of the State of Illinois on both Republicans and Democrats and charged with a huge responsibility. I like to think, and I believe, that I fulfilled that capably, responsibly and honorably.

DePue: We have touched on this a little bit before. You certainly had opportunities to run for other offices.

Daniels: Right.

DePue: Both on the executive and positions, maybe, in the U.S. Congress. Are you content that you spent your career in the state legislature?

Daniels: That was my calling, and when I decided to run for minority leader in 1983, I made a decision, at that time, that I would be a legislator, probably for the rest of my career.

Now, I was approached for other offices, and I toyed with running for other offices, but it was not in my calling. I am very content as having been a legislator in Illinois, and I'm content with the job that I did.

DePue: Anything that you recall with particular disappointment?

Daniels: Well, I think you can always refer to some of that. Not winning the majorities, not being able to serve as Speaker. It was a very difficult time, leaving the Speakership and returning to the minority. That was very, very hard and, again, another lesson in humility, another lesson that nothing is permanent.

The day that Mike Madigan leaves office, in spite of the longevity that he's served, it will be a new position for him and another lesson for him in humility, as it was for me, but, not only when I left the leadership role as Speaker and became minority leader again and served in that position for several years, but also in leaving the legislature in general.

DePue: Was there anything particular that you felt like, boy, there's just a couple pieces of unfinished business that I wanted to do before I stepped down as Speaker?

Daniels: There is always unfinished business. The job of Speaker or Republican leader or minority leader is all consuming. There's never a day that goes by that something can't be improved and done better.

I knew that; I recognized that. I learned that from a good friend of mine by the name of Bill Redmond, who was elected Speaker of the House, who said to me, "This is a job that nobody can complete; every day is a new challenge. It will consume you, if you allow it, but, if you control it, you can get a lot of good things done."

DePue: Looking back at that long career, did your views evolve over time?

Daniels: I think they would have to, because you have to be able to learn. Every day, to me, was a learning experience. I used to say, when I was in Springfield, "I learned something new every single day." It's the legislative process.

That's why it's impossible for somebody to serve there for four years, five years and master the process, because, first of all, it can't be mastered. Second of all, it's a daily challenge. Every day is new; every day has a new crisis, every day a new responsibility. The job is an awesome job and requires

twenty-four seven attention. And, I can say that it's a privilege to be in that position.

DePue: Awesome in terms of the...?

Daniels: Amount of responsibility and the amount of personal satisfaction you can gain from it and the amount of loss of sleep, (both chuckle) in every respect.

DePue: What would you like to be remembered for?

Daniels: A guy that just did the best job he could do and was sincere in resolving problems of the state and was honored to fill in that position and still has a lot of work to do and still will continue to be involved and to state his opinion and to give advice when requested.

DePue: Well, speaking of being remembered, do you remember the day that you had your portrait hung?

Daniels: I do.

DePue: Can you tell us about that?

Daniels: What an honor, to have my portrait hung as the sixty-seventh Speaker of the Illinois House of Representatives, in the House chambers, which will be there forever more. I guess, formally, you're in the Speaker's gallery until you pass, and then you're moved to the back. And then, when it's filled up, you're moved to another location in the capitol. But it was a huge honor, a recognition by my colleagues and the period of time I served as Speaker of the House.



Official portrait of Lee Daniels.

DePue: I understand that happened in 2011. Why did it take that many years?

Daniels: Speaker Madigan and I never talked about it. To be very honest, normally when you're Speaker, you have your portrait hung. I was so busy, I never thought about it, and then I never thought about it during the time I was in office.

So then, when I left office, it just slipped my mind, until one day President Cullerton called me and said, "You know, I'm having my portrait done, and I went over to the House to get examples, and yours isn't there. Why not?" And I said, "I've not asked the Speaker, and we've not talked about it." "Well I'm going to take care of it."

So, he goes over to the Speaker and he says, "Mike, why isn't Lee's picture..." "I don't know; we never talked about it." So, I got a call back from

John Cullerton. He said, “You call the Speaker now, and get this done.” So I called Mike and he says, “Sure, tell me when you want to do it, and get your portrait done.” That’s how it happened.

DePue: Does Speaker Madigan have a portrait up already?

Daniels: Not yet. In the House, the tradition has not been during the time you’re Speaker. He’ll have it hung after he leaves, as he should. He’ll have it prominently done. It will probably be bigger than mine. (both laugh)

DePue: Well, you’ve spent an awful lot of time with me, and I really appreciate your doing that.

Daniels: My pleasure.

DePue: Why did you agree to do this series of interviews?

Daniels: First of all, it’s a charge of the Lincoln Library and Museum, and as you know, I have a very close affiliation and fondness for it, both my wife and I. Secondly, it is part of history in the state that I’ve been blessed to be able to be part of. And, I think, to the extent that I can recall, and there’s several items I don’t, but I’m happy to be part of that history.



Lee Daniels and Dr. Mark DePue during their oral history interview in June, 2012 in Daniel's Elmhurst law office.

DePue: Well, you’ve certainly done a very good job of remembering lots of information, and it’s invaluable for us to be able to collect it. Any closing comments for us?

Daniels: Just keep doing the good job you’re doing, and thank you for being part of the Lincoln [Presidential] Library and Museum. It’s a great heritage that we’re leaving to the people of Illinois and the country.

DePue: Well, it’s been my privilege to interview you. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Daniels: Thank you, Mark, thanks.

(end of interview)