

Title Page & Abstract

An Interview with Jerome Stermer

Part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library
Illinois Statecraft – Gov. Quinn Oral History project

Interview # ISQ-A-L-2020-025

Jerome (Jerry) Stermer, chief of staff and later the budget director for Governor Pat Quinn, was interviewed on the date listed below as part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library's *Illinois Statecraft – Gov. Pat Quinn* Oral History project.

Interview dates & location:

Dates: Mar 31, Apr 2, Apr 7, Apr 8

Location: Telephonic interviews with DePue at home in Springfield and Stermer at home in Coralles, New Mexico.

Interview Format: Digital audio

Interviewer: Mark R. DePue, Director of Oral History

Transcription by: _____

Edited by: _____

Transcript being
processed

Total Pages: _____ Total Time: 1:12 + 2:04 + 1:52 + 2:25 / 1.2 + 2.07 + 1.87 + 2.42
= 7.01 hrs

Session 1: Early life through college and seminary experiences

Session 2: Events of 1968, Peace corps years and experiences with Gov. Walker

Session 3: Tenure at Voices for Illinois Children and COS for Quinn administration

Session 4: Budget Director for Quinn administration and Quinn's accomplishments

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

The interviews are archived at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library in Springfield, Illinois.

© 2020 Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library

Abstract

Jerome Stermer, *Illinois Statecraft - Quinn*, ISQ-A-L-2020-025

Biographical Information Overview of Interview: Jerome (Jerry) Stermer was born on February 26, 1943 in Minneapolis, Minnesota, and grew up in a family with a strong Catholic faith in Elmhurst, Illinois. He attended school at the Devine Word Seminary in East Troy, Wisconsin, a boy's boarding school run by the Society of the Devine Word, a Catholic organization emphasizing missionary work. He began his college in Massachusetts and New York, and finished college at the Devine Word College in Epworth, Iowa. Following that, Jerry began his training for the priesthood at Devine Word's main seminary in Techny, Illinois, but left the order and joined the Peace Corps instead. He spent two years in a remote region of Ecuador from 1968 to 1970. Upon his return to Illinois he helped with the gubernatorial campaign for Dan Walker, who was elected in 1972. He worked from 1973 through 1979 in the Department of Children and Family Services, except for a short time in Israel for an archaeological dig.

From 1979 through 1985 Stermer worked on the Illinois General Assembly's legislative Advisory Committee on Public Aid, then worked for two years at the Legal Assistance Foundation of Chicago before taking on the role of President for Voices for Illinois Children, an advocacy group working to improve conditions for Illinois children, which included lobbying efforts in Springfield. In 2009 Governor Pat Quinn, who had just been sworn in after the impeachment of Governor Rod Blagojevich, asked Stermer to serve as his Chief of Staff. He performed that role until 2010, when he helped with Quinn's reelection campaign. Following Quinn's reelection, Jerry became Governor Quinn's budget director. He talks extensively about his experiences in the Quinn administration including budgets negotiations in the midst of the Great Recession, attempts at pension reform, and the governor's most important accomplishments and initiatives, including abolishing the death penalty in Illinois, legalizing same-sex marriages, strengthening unemployment insurance, a clean water initiative and legalization of medical marijuana.

Subject Headings/Key Words: Governor Pat Quinn; same-sex marriage; Illinois's two-tier pension system; Voices for Illinois Children; Dept. of Children and Family Services; Peace Corps work in Ecuador; abolition of Illinois's death penalty; Illinois budgets during the Great Recession of 2009-2010; Quinn's Chief of Staff;

Notes to the Reader: Readers of the oral history memoir should bear in mind that this is a transcript of the spoken word, and that the interviewer, interviewee and editor sought to preserve the informal, conversational style that is inherent in such historical sources. The Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library is not responsible for the factual accuracy of the memoir, nor for the views expressed therein. We leave these for the reader to judge.

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