Interview with Adlai Stevenson III
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Interview # 1: July 8, 2014
Interviewer: Mark DePue

DePue: Today is Wednesday, July 8, 2014. My name is Mark DePue, Director of Oral History with the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library. Today it's my honor to be talking to Senator Adlai Stevenson. Good morning, sir.

Stevenson: Good morning; thank you.

DePue: We've got a gorgeous day here in Chicago. We're at your residence. Why don't you tell us a little bit about where you live and where we're actually doing the interview?

Stevenson: We're having this interview at my home on Fremont Street in Chicago, which is also doubling as my office and the office of my company, C&M International. But I also have a home in northwest Illinois. In fact, that's our legal residence. It's near Galena. We have a farm there, and we spend weekends at the farm and the weekdays at this location.

DePue: You already had an extensive interview around 1999, 2000 timeframe with the folks at the University of Illinois of Springfield, UIS. This is very much part of the major project I'm doing, as I mentioned to you before, with Governor Jim Thompson. That project has to include political opponents, as well. It's been part of the plan from the beginning of this project that we have an opportunity to sit down with you and talk especially about the eighty-two and the 1986 election.

Stevenson: Eighty-two and eighty-six.

DePue: So I'm thrilled that you're giving me the opportunity to talk a little bit about that, even though you're on the record, to a certain extent on that, already.

I wanted to start and just very briefly have you lay out a little bit of the background, in part because your family has such a fascinating connection with Illinois and with the United States in general.

Stevenson: Well, I served in the legislature and then as a state treasurer and then ran for the unexpired balance of Senator [Everett] Dirksen's term in the United States Senate, getting elected in 1970. The seventies was a transitional era in our politics. The Senate I entered in 1970 bears very little resemblance to the Senate today. There's no partisanship in the Senate I entered. It was beginning to change. The media was becoming more episodic and visual, and costs were going up; money was beginning to pour in; ideologues were arriving in Washington, even as they were leaving Beijing, China, as I point out in my book.

So, after all those years in elective office, I decided to leave the Senate in eighty-one and was thinking that I might then seek the office that I had always wanted to occupy, as governor of Illinois, and serve Illinois as my father had in that office, perhaps being of more influence on national issues as governor than you could be as one of 100 senators in a changing Congressional environment. So that's the background.

I did decide to run for governor in 1982. I must say that returning to Springfield as a candidate for governor was a very disturbing experience. That decade of the seventies had been transitional in Springfield, too. The Springfield I returned to as a gubernatorial candidate didn't bear much resemblance to the Springfield I left as a state treasurer. It was overrun by lobbyists and by special pleaders, and I began to learn about what I would later call "pinstripe patronage;" government was for sale.

I made my campaign one for reform, political reform. I had reformed the state treasurer's office, quadrupling the earnings on the investment of state funds, cutting the budget every year. I also made this campaign, or offered in it, a program to strengthen our economy. I had spent much of my time in the Senate on economic competitiveness. This was sort of pioneering in those days. I wanted to bring what I learned to our State. To help do so, I brought out some staff that had worked for me in Washington, and we developed a very extensive, comprehensive program for economic reform in Illinois. Anyway, that's sort of the background.

DePue: You said for a long time you'd wanted to run for governor. Had you attempted to do that in the 1960s?

Stevenson: Yeah, in…when was it...sixty-eight I was state treasurer and sought to run. But the Vietnam War was on, and in those days, you had a slate-making committee in the Democratic Party. It was in the background; it was effectively controlled by [Chicago] Mayor Richard J. Daley. He had persuaded me to run for treasurer. I'd never thought of running for treasurer, and I was glad I did; it was a great opportunity.

But I sought to run for governor then, and he said, "No, but you can run for the Senate." [To] make a long story short, I had opposed the war in Vietnam, and according to rumor—this was never really confirmed—President Johnson was insisting that candidates, up and down the line everywhere, pledge their support for the policy in Vietnam.

Daley told me, "You just have to say you'll support the war. As soon as you get nominated, you don't have to support it." (laughs) Well, I couldn't do that, say one thing one day and another thing for convenience the next. So, to make a long story short, in the words of a *Chicago Tribune* article, I was dumped (laughs) from the ticket, for refusing to take this oath.

DePue: Was this for a run in sixty-eight for the Senate or seventy, for governor?

Stevenson: Oh, Lord, was it seventy? Yeah.

DePue: I know that you ran in seventy, were elected in seventy, and that was filling—

Stevenson: No, this is sixty-eight. This was earlier, yeah.

DePue: That would've been running against [Charles] Percy then.[1]

Stevenson: No, no, I think it was Dirksen, not Percy. I think it was Dirksen. It worked out very well for me, because I might've been defeated by Dirksen, had I run. Of course, Dirksen obliged not terribly long afterwards by dying, creating a vacancy to which I **was** elected in seventy.

DePue: You mentioned that you had preferred to run for governor. Is that because your temperament, you think that you are better at being an executor?

Stevenson: Yeah, I wanted to get my hands on the levers. I'd served in the legislature. I loved it, actually. I was probably influenced by my father's example. I wanted to serve Illinois and had done so as state rep and state treasurer. I knew state government inside and out. And I always thought that—in the back of my mind, at least; it wasn't highly developed—that serving as governor in this large, pivotal—then pivotal—state could lead elsewhere.

[1] Charles Harting "Chuck" Percy was an American businessman and politician. He was president of the Bell & Howell Corporation from 1949 to 1964. In 1966, he was elected to the United States Senate from Illinois as a Republican; he served for three terms until 1985, when he was defeated by Paul Simon. (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles_H._Percy)

DePue: To the presidency, perhaps?

Stevenson: Perhaps. (both laugh) The old normal transition was governor to senator. I remember Henry Bellman; when I was in the Senate, he'd been elected governor, served as governor, and then did the traditional thing and came in the seventies to the Senate. After one term he went back to Oklahoma and being governor (laughs). It was changing.

No, not very consciously, but I always had in the back of my mind that possibility. Daley did try in 1976 to persuade me to run for president of the United States. But I felt I wasn't ready, and I didn't and ended up as one of the five contenders for vice president, though that was not something I was seeking.

DePue: That was an important election, obviously, the post-Watergate election, when [Jimmy] Carter came into power.

Stevenson: Yeah.

DePue: The Democrat Party in Illinois, prior to that time though—as you've already mentioned—was dominated by Richard J. Daley and what many people refer to as the Chicago Democratic machine. But there was always a thread, from 1956 on, of people who strongly identified themselves as being independent of the Democrat Party, and they always looked to your father as their ideal of somebody who stood up against the power of the machine. There were lots of prominent Illinois Democrats who were in that vein. Would you consider yourself one of those?

Stevenson: Yeah. All of the great Democratic candidates for president and the Senate were candidates of the machine. Dan Walker [Illinois governor, 1973-1977] beat the machine. He was the popular choice, not the machine's choice; it was supporting [Illinois senator] Paul Simon. [Rob] Blagojevich [Illinois governor, 2003-2009], by then the machine had broken down. The party leaders weren't supporting Blagojevich; we were supporting a guy named Paul Vallas.[2] Paul Douglas, he ran with my father in forty-eight. He was a candidate of the machine.

My office as state treasurer was a great old patronage office. I could hire and fire. That's how I managed to quadruple the earnings on the investment of state funds and cut the budget every year. It's not quite as simple, as black and white, as it looks to people. A lot of reform has led to some very perverse results: the death of the machine and the reign of money.

[2] Paul Vallas was a candidate for Mayor of Chicago and lost the general election on in 2019. Between 1985 and 1995, Vallas served as executive director of the Illinois Economic and Fiscal Commission; Chicago city revenue director; and Chicago city budget director. He was appointed CEO of Chicago Public Schools by Mayor Richard M. Daley and filled that role from 1995 to 2001. (https://ballotpedia.org/Paul_Vallas)

Democrats in this new era have to compete for public office, not on the old terms, with patronage, with armies, with shoe leather. Now we have to compete on Republican terms, with money. I ran against pinstripe patronage in eighty-two.

DePue: I certainly want to get to that later on, when we get to the election itself. It sounds like you had accommodated yourself to the concept that the Democratic machine was there, and you needed to work with those people. But were you at all resentful, when Daley decided you needed to be running for a different office than governor in 1968?

Stevenson: No. I can't remember the name of the candidate; he supported a good man for governor. He'd been lieutenant governor, as I recall, came from Kankakee. I'm sorry I can't—

DePue: Well, gosh, I should know that, too. [Richard] Ogilvie won that election.

Stevenson: Anyway, I thought that was a good choice.

DePue: Sam Shapiro.

Stevenson: Sam Shapiro, yeah.

DePue: He was governor for a few months when Otto Kerner [governor of Illinois, 1961-1968] resigned to take the judgeship, I think in April of sixty-eight.

Stevenson: Lieutenant governor. No, I didn't resent it. On the contrary, I was always grateful for the party's support. I had no illusions. They wanted me to dress up the ticket and bring in votes. Alan Dixon acknowledges in his book [*The Gentleman from Illinois*], that he won on my coattails.

DePue: Certainly in any campaign for governor, your whole career and your life are going to be scrutinized. There was no better known name, I think, in Illinois at that time than the Stevenson family. Can you very quickly walk us through your early education? I think a little bit about your military career, as well, would be important to interject here.

Stevenson: Our home, starting in the early thirties—I was born in 1930—was in Libertyville or near Libertyville, outside Libertyville, in a place—now it's a historical landmark—my parents built. It's now owned by the Lake County Forest Reserve District, and it is home to the Adlai Stevenson Center on Democracy. That became our base.

From there on, we were always traveling, living in Washington with my father, or we were away at college. But he was governor in Springfield. I went to school in Washington and away to prep school and then to Harvard and then volunteered, as you indicated. In those days, we didn't dodge the draft; we served. America's wars were still being waged by the citizen soldier.

I enlisted in the Marines, in an officer candidate program, and volunteered for Korea.

DePue: Were you still in college when you enlisted?

Stevenson: Yeah. To get through college, I joined a Navy submarine reserve unit. I tried one semester (laughs) on Naval ROTC [Reserve Officer Training Corps] and after listening to a Lieutenant J.G. teach me about naval etiquette and that sort of thing, (laughs) I said, I'm not gonna waste a Harvard education on NROTC [Naval Reserve Officer Training Corps] to get through the draft. So I joined a submarine unit; that got me through.

Then [I] went straight from Harvard into the Marines. I flunked my eye test. I went with a friend who was going into a naval officer candidate program, a very good friend. He flunked his blood pressure test. But we were invited back.

So we went back, and we just switched our papers. He passed my (laughs) eye test. I was taking his blood pressure test with that inflatable strap around my arm, and somebody came up and said, "Is your name Cary Lime?" whereupon my blood pressure shot up, and I flunked his blood pressure test. (both laugh)

But he was invited back, and without the benefit of my help, was inducted into the Navy, where he served with distinction as an executive order in an op [operations] center on an LST [Landing Ship, Tank]. I got shipped to… I was a tank platoon commander, briefly to Japan, then to Korea, arriving late fall of fifty-three.

DePue: In other words, right after the armistice had been signed.

Stevenson: Right after the armistice.

DePue: I wonder if you can reflect on what you observed while you were in Japan—this is pretty close to the recovery period after World War II—and then, especially, conditions that you saw on the ground in Korea.

Stevenson: This is where a lifetime interest in East Asia began for me. Most of my business there is there today. Well, Korea was desperate. It was really a horrible scene; there was great suffering. There really was no economy in Korea; they were exporting human hair. In the spring, I was promoted as first lieutenant to the assistant operations officer. As such, I had the reconnaissance and liaison responsibilities.

The job came with a Jeep and a driver, so ,with no conflict at that point, I spent my days roving the DMZ [demilitarized zone], the boundary between South and North, and went into villages at night to apprehend prostitutes. I saw a little of the country, and it was really desolate. To go back

twenty years later, just a totally different country. That's what really grabbed me. It's got one of the strongest economies in the world, but the North still festers.

DePue: Did you feel like you got any different treatment from the chain of command because you were a former presidential candidate's son?

Stevenson: No, I don't think the Marines behave that way. They were wonderful, because there was different treatment, and it was cruel. When my father was running for president, and I was a private, the Marines, being very publicity conscious, would run me and my whole platoon over the obstacle course or double time, with full packs, weapons, around the obstacle course, over and over and over, until everybody got all the pictures that they wanted. We would either faint or vomit, in which case we'd have to eat it off the deck.

They [Stevenson's platoon] forgave me; they didn't hold it against me. I felt guilty. I remember the first test, your test results—you had weekly tests—the first test results were posted on a billboard. Everybody looked at it. There were two tests. Number one on both of these tests was Adlai E. Stevenson. I made sure that never happened again (laughs). I made sure I didn't get 100 percent on any of my tests thereafter. Those troops were wonderful. I think if anything, they kind of felt some pity for me. Life was not made easier because your father was running for president of the United States.

DePue: I've talked to quite a few Korean War veterans. What has impressed me, talking to several of the officers, was that the elites of American society, the people from Harvard and Columbia and elsewhere—as you've already mentioned—were willingly signing up and serving their country at that time.

Stevenson: Think how different it was when [Vice President] Dick Cheney and [President] George Bush, et al. came along. Cheney said he had other priorities. George W. Bush got a political commission in the Texas Air National Guard and then went AWOL [Absent Without Leave].

My father was commander in chief of the Illinois National Guard. (laughs) To have gone to him for... It was totally different. Of course, the war was different. Korea, we didn't doubt our country's purpose. In Vietnam, there were doubts. But I think the big change came about when the… I noticed attitudes towards the war changed radically, as soon as the draft was eliminated, and much of the opposition to the war in Vietnam dissipated.

DePue: We're going to talk more, later on the interview, about this military connection. I want to ask you, how important was that experience in your life?

Stevenson: I don't think it was. It should've been, but it wasn't. I ran for governor against a draft dodger. He pleaded asthma. I was then being characterized as a wimp, and he was advertising himself as a tough man for tough times, a draft dodger.

I told my campaign consultant, "You've got to get a picture of me and my tank on television." They never did it. I don't think anybody in Illinois knew that I was a Marine Corps veteran of Korea. To this day, I don't understand why my campaign staff didn't get it out there. In a close election, like in eighty-two, it probably would've made a difference.

DePue: Very much part of the campaign, in terms of what your political record is, is going to be focused on what you did in the Senate. Can you just, very briefly, tell me what you view as the highlights of that career as a Senator.

Stevenson: I have to say that I earned a reputation as being a workhorse. There were show horses and workhorses. That got me a lot of **very** unusual and very low-visibility responsibilities. I was the youngest member of the majority's policy committee. That's where we determined legislative priorities.

I was made chairman of the special committee, organized to reorganize the Senate, realign, update all of the committee jurisdictions, for example. That's life and death; your committee assignments are life and death. I led the first and only reorganization in the Senate's history. Then there was the Ethics Committee. I was the first chairman of the Senate Ethics Committee, with a vast ethics code to enforce. That's a horrible job.

On the issues, as I mentioned a moment ago, I concentrated on economic competitiveness. This included the legislation, including the Stevenson-Wydler Technology Innovation Act and the so-called Vidola Act, to promote technology innovation and our economic competitiveness. That's still a really crucial issue.

I was chairman of the subcommittee on international finance, with jurisdiction over exports and export policy, always trying to support the EXIM bank and liberalize export controls, basically trying to promote exports.[3] I can go on. We sort of led the deregulation in some areas, like for transportation and interest rates.

DePue: You've already discussed your decision to step out of the U.S. Senate and towards running for the governor of Illinois. Before we actually get into that, though, how would you describe your political philosophy at that stage of your career?

Stevenson: Totally pragmatic. I was not an ideologue, and there weren't many ideologues; reason still reigned; the center was broad. My closest colleagues were probably that now-extinct species of moderate Republican. [Senator

[3] The Export–Import Bank of the United States is the official export credit agency of the United States federal government. Operating as a wholly owned federal government corporation, the Bank assists in financing and facilitating U.S. exports of goods and services. (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Export–Import_Bank_of_the_United_States)

Charles] Chuck Percy was from Illinois; he was a friend. We didn't differ on issues.

I always got characterized as a liberal, but with aversions to foreign adventurism. Boy, if I was a liberal, then Richard Nixon was a real radical (both laugh). He supported wage and price controls. I think of myself as just being a realist.

DePue: Let me break it down into categories. This is kind of a modern-day conventions to understand these things, but fiscal issues and economic issues. You've mentioned that a couple times; put yourself in that kind of a political spectrum.

Stevenson: I believe in a cyclically-balanced budget. I'm a fiscal conservative. Cut the budget every year, state treasurer. My father was the same way. I pointed out in my book that we're Scotch-Irish, but the Scotch predominated (both laugh)

DePue: How about social issues?

Stevenson: What do you mean by social issues?

DePue: Let's start with this one, welfare. Would you have been a supporter? Were you a supporter of Lyndon Johnson's War on Poverty program, and welfare program?

Stevenson: I probably would've been, but that came before my time. From my time in the seventies, I stayed away from those issues. Those were traditional Democratic, liberal issues. I was not on the Welfare Committee. I was on the Banking Committee, on the Commerce Committee. I was trying to produce human welfare by promoting economic competitiveness and a world at peace, not just competitiveness in Illinois, but American competitiveness in what was becoming a highly competitive world, promoting trade and always following my father, trying, promote a world at peace.

One of the things I didn't mention a moment ago, and should, I was also a member of the Intelligence Committee, and chairman of the subcommittee on collection and production of intelligence. In other words, the NSA [National Security Agency] and the CIA [Central Intelligence Committee] reported to **me**. I wrote an article ["Foreign Intelligence or Intelligence"] for *Huffington Post* on this very recently, "apropos NSA and a need for intelligence of the cerebral sort."

I did much of my oversight underground, visiting the station chiefs in Eastern Europe and throughout the Middle East. My wife and I had earlier trailed the Israeli troops into the West Bank and the Golan Heights and seen, heard, in refugee camps, evidence of ethnic cleansing. I was aware of what was happening in that region. Come the election of the Likud in 1977 and its

implementation of a very aggressive, defiant, and unlawful settlements policy in the West Bank and the Golan Heights.[4]

I began the first in-depth study of terrorism in the United States. I was also motivated by the neutralization of Egypt in the Camp David Accords.[5] That yearlong study led to introduction of the comprehensive Antiterrorism Act of 1979, along with a companion measure to distance the United States from this settlements policy. We were subsidizing it indirectly.

No, I warned of spectacular acts of destruction and disruption in international terrorist scene, and warned, "Don't think it can't happen here." But my warnings were ignored. Terrorism didn't become news until after the fact, and I had left the Senate.

DePue: Getting back to a couple other social issues and, again, this is from the perspective of what your political philosophy was when you made the decision to run. ERA [Equal Rights Amendment], supporter?

Stevenson: No, I was a gun owner.

DePue: No, **E**RA, equal rights.

Stevenson: Oh, ERA. I would've been a supporter; I was a supporter.

DePue: How about on the issue of abortion, which has been a hot-button topic for a long time in American politics?

Stevenson: As I recall, it's a woman's right, but there were limits. I think I supported it, except during the first trimester. This is basically a reflection of common law, when life started, with the quote, "quickening in the womb." I supported it, except for the **last** trimester, the last two or three months. I can't remember exactly. It was support, but qualified.

DePue: When did you formally come out and make an announcement that you were running for governor?

Stevenson: (laughs) Oh God, I can't remember the date.

DePue: I should say, we're only talking, what, forty years ago now (laughs) or something like that. I apologize for trying to pin you down some of this.

[4] Likud, officially the Likud-National Liberal Movement, is a center-right to right-wing political party in Israel. A secular party, it was founded in 1973 by Menachem Begin and Ariel Sharon in an alliance with several right-wing parties. Likud's landslide victory in the 1977 elections was a major turning point in the country's political history. (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Likud)

[5] Camp David Accords, agreements between Israel and Egypt, signed on September 17, 1978, that led in the following year to a peace treaty between those two countries, the first such treaty between Israel and any of its Arab neighbors. (https://www.britannica.com/event/Camp-David-Accords)

Stevenson: I remember during the spring of 1980 being asked whether I was going to run for governor. Sometime during the spring, I'd said something really stupid. I said, "The sap is rising" (laughs). I lived on a farm with lots of maple trees, and so the spring would see maple syrup, sap. I'm looking, as we speak, at a poster my campaign staff gave me, teasing me about that saying, that big blow-up there. I think it says something about "the sap is rising."

DePue: Exactly. Adlai, Governor, "The sap is rising." (Stevenson laughs)

Stevenson: I don't know when that was. I was thinking about it pretty seriously then. I can't remember exactly when I decided.

DePue: You made a statement in your earlier oral history interview, back in 2000, that Thompson reminded you of Bill Clinton, a popular politician. This is a direct quote now, "a compromiser, a practitioner of the anything goes kind of ethics; winning is more important than governing." Would you still characterize it that way today?

Stevenson: Well, that's a little strong. But Clinton was the first Democratic president of the new era, the first without an agenda, without a New Deal, the Fair Deal, the Great Society, a New America. He was a conciliator.

DePue: But did you believe that was true for Jim Thompson?

Stevenson: Oh yeah, sure. Yeah. And the Congress, the state government, I returned to, as I mentioned, it just bore no resemblance to the old state government. Everything was for sale.

DePue: Once you make the decision… You said you stepped down from the U. S. Senate in what would've been January of 1981. Were you employed anywhere else, or were you now thinking full-time about and actually running for governor?

Stevenson: Oh, no. That was one of the reasons I went to law school with my father's advice. It was to develop a profession, so you always had a place to fall back on in the lean years. I always went back to my law firm in between elective offices. I went to the Washington office of Mayer Brown for a while.

DePue: Is that M-a-y-e-r?

Stevenson: M-a-y-e-r. It's a famous, very large law firm. It was Mayer, Brown & Platt then; now it's Mayer Brown. I didn't feel very comfortable there. It's different now. In those days, you didn't set up practice as a lawyer, lobbyist, and so on. You went home. It's changed radically.

I was expected mostly to gin up business. I don't think they really expected me to lobby, but I did testify once in the Congress on behalf of clients of the law firm. That made me feel a little uncomfortable, so I

transferred back to Chicago. I may have been motivated partly by thinking of thoughts of running again, going back to Chicago and the Chicago office of Mayer Brown.

DePue: But when you stepped out of the Senate, weren't you already thinking very seriously about making that run?

Stevenson: I was thinking about it. I just wanted to take a breather and take some time to think seriously about it. I was kind of worn out. Public service, at least for me, was seven days a week, around the clock. I went for, what, sixteen years with one vacation; although I got a few weekends with my family. I was tired. I'd go home at night, and that's when the real work starts. During the day, you're pestered by telephone calls, role call votes, hearings, and so on. I needed a little rest, a chance to catch my breath.

DePue: The campaign cycle most anywhere, and certainly in Illinois, if you're serious about running for governor, you're announcing in the summer or the fall of the prior year. So that would've been the late summer or fall of 1981. Is that roughly when you announced?

Stevenson: I can't remember when I announced. I just don't remember. It's been too long.

DePue: Do you remember much about the team you attempted to put together to help run that campaign?

Stevenson: No, I don't. Larry Hansen was always on board and a gal named Barbara Bruns, who came out from Chicago, brilliant. She's the only person I ever had on the staff that could write eloquently, sort of up to my requirements. Then there was David—I get all these campaigns a little mixed up—David Axelrod was a consultant.

DePue: Was Hanson the campaign manager?

Stevenson: I think so, as I recall.

DePue: One of the challenges that any campaign's going to have—you've already alluded that it was the part of politics you disdain—was raising money. Discuss your challenges in doing that early on.

Stevenson: In my entire political life, I made **one** telephone call to a potential donor. I think that was a gubernatorial campaign. I was turned down. It was a wealthy contributor in San Francisco. I felt so unclean that I never did it again; I 'd never done it before. I did have fundraisers.

DePue: You're talking about events.

Stevenson: Events. But I didn't spend any time raising money, personally. I just wouldn't do it. I never was able to raise much money, because it wasn't for sale. I

remember running for state treasurer, the money just poured in, and from bankers, not known for their Democratic proclivities. But they'd been well trained; they wanted bank deposits.

A year after my election, I didn't get so much as a posy at Christmas. By then the records were all public. I was allocating funds on the basis of merit and interest rates offered and so on. From then on, I wasn't for sale. So money-raising was never easy, and I was never good at it. We were **always** outspent.

DePue: This is the post-Richard J. Daley era, though, that you're going to be running for governor.

Stevenson: Yeah, that's another thing. I used to get money from Richard J. Daley, from the organization. That went out. We were left on our own. The campaigns, as I mentioned earlier, were increasingly waged with money, advertising. The foot soldiers were gone. The patronage armies were gone.

DePue: But did the Democratic Central Committee endorse you?

Stevenson: Oh, I'm sure, yeah. I was always able to back off the opposition, [Illinois Attorney General] Neil Hartigan or others.

DePue: Was Neil Hartigan the most likely competition for the position?

Stevenson: That's my recollection.

DePue: He ended up being your lieutenant governor candidate, right?

Stevenson: Yeah.

DePue: How about press secretary? Do you remember who would've been your press secretary?

Stevenson: Yeah, Bill... These names will come back. It's an Irish name…Bill Flannigan. I think he'd worked for my father. He worked in the state treasurer's office for me—he was an old-fashioned press guy—then, I believe, in both the gubernatorial campaigns and was supported by Terry Steffin, who is the daughter of a law partner, senior law partner.

One of the most difficult jobs in any campaign is scheduler, scheduling. It's a brutal job. I can't remember the name of the scheduler. I had to be very, very careful who I picked for that job. That was crucial. I don't remember any people who were just... Nowadays, fundraising is a business. You hire firms to organize your fundraising. Well, we didn't even have our own operation. We had volunteers.

DePue: As I understand, in those days there typically was a firm that the campaigns would contract with to do the advertising.

Stevenson: Yes. Leo Burnett, I think was… One of its partners organized advertising in the gubernatorial campaigns, but we never had a whole lot of money for advertising.

DePue: Do you remember the guidance you gave? You've already mentioned one thing that you wanted them to emphasis that they never did. What was the guidance that you gave to the advertising team and the kind of ad that you wanted to produce, the tone that you wanted to establish?

Stevenson: Well, another thing, I never took polls. I didn't need public opinion polls to tell me what was right or what the people thought. I knew this state like the back of my hand, and I wanted to save the money. There was just one exception. In one of those campaigns I was persuaded by the advertising people to take a poll because they said they needed it to place advertising. Otherwise, we didn't take polls. I can't remember what I told them.

I always tried to emphasize issues. In Illinois that meant very largely reform and economic competitiveness. I was always very strong on the economy, and that brings in a lot of tangential subjects, like education. I remember pointing out that Illinois had more units of local government than any other state. [I] said, "We have to do something about this. This is highly inefficient, and it's creating unresponsive, unaccountable, as well as expensive government."

I didn't know how to go about it. School districts needed consolidating. Some needed just to be eliminated, like mosquito abatement districts. So I suggested creating a commission to study the whole subject and make recommendations for reform. That brought down the house. It doesn't get any public support; the press didn't pay any attention. But it brought me the opposition of every mosquito (both laugh) abatement district and park district. It just brought all kinds of opposition.

It's very hard. I was never very good at massaging and managing the media. The editor off…one of the four—at one point we had four newspapers—but one of the major Chicago dailies once told me, "If you want the *Sun-Times* to cover you, you've got to call me." Well, I didn't do it. I'm not going to spend my time calling all of the editors in the state to tell them what I was doing and get coverage. I was busy enough without doing that. So I don't know, for a lot of reasons I never got much news coverage.

I think among some of the working press and one editorial writer at the [*Chicago*] *Tribune*… Lois Willey used to write these wonderful editorials, supporting me for governor or whatever, and then at the very end, somebody would add, "And therefore we support Jim Thompson" (laughs). I was not

very good at massaging the media. I spent more time campaigning and studying the issues, writing the speeches, preparing the papers, preparing for debates. We always debated early and often.

DePue: For the last few campaign cycles, it seems increasingly the emphasis is on television commercials and also increasingly on negative attacks, attack ads.

Stevenson: Yeah, and your viability is measured by the size of your bank account. We used to hide money. Money was a source of real discomfort, and for very good reason. Now, I don't know, it's negative advertising; debates consist of short responses to simplistic questions. The old dialogue, let alone the Lincoln-Douglas debates, long gone. My father used to take half-hour blocks of time on national television to lay out his program, his New America.[6] Now he couldn't afford many thirty-second jingles. The political process has been trivialized.

DePue: Were your wife and your family supportive of your efforts? Were they helpful on the campaign trail?

Stevenson: Oh, they were terrific.

DePue: What's your wife's name?

Stevenson: Nancy. Oh, Nancy was a real trooper. She campaigned. In fact, she campaigned so effectively that, at one point, I heard complaints that the party had endorsed the wrong Stevenson for governor; It should've been Nancy. She wrote a cookbook. Somebody remarked just the other day that they still had her cookbook. She was highly intelligent. She could really hold her own, the give-and-take, and was a trooper. It was tough, because we also had children, a family to manage, support.

DePue: How old were your children at the time?

Stevenson: That's another thing. My father always tried to protect the children. He didn't want us to be exploited. In the forty-eight campaign, I was the chauffeur, the driver, until I had to go away to college. We had four children, and I can't offhand tell you all the ages.

DePue: School age, though?

Stevenson: What?

DePue: They were school age?

Stevenson: Yeah. Yeah, the oldest is now fifty-six, was born in fifty-two.

[6] Adlai Stevenson II's plan for a "New America" included extending New Deal programs to areas of education, health, and poverty. (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Adlai_Stevenson_II)

DePue: I wonder if you'll permit me to ask you to characterize your own personality and your wife's personality.

Stevenson: No (both laugh). She's very outgoing, very gregarious, cheerful. I'm much more introverted. I had a hard time in the early days. I was kind of shy. Making speeches was not easy for me. I was very fixed on content and the articulation of the idea or the program. I relied too much on script to be effective. My father did the same thing, although he was brilliant extemporaneously. Nowadays, it's pretty much all extemporaneous, and I think the dialogue has suffered.

DePue: Was your father your biggest role model and a mentor for you?

Stevenson: Yes, yeah. For him, the objective was not winning, it was serving. That meant informing the people; that was the purpose of the election and campaign. So in those campaigns, and as titular leader of the party, he laid the programmatic foundation for the New Frontier and the Great Society, which followed.[7, 8] As a candidate, he began the strategic arms limitations process. [He] may have done more to influence policy than Eisenhower, the victor. He didn't want to run in fifty-two. He wanted to continue cleaning house, the reformer.

DePue: In Illinois.

Stevenson: In Illinois. He knew it would be almost impossible to win against the returning war hero, after all those years of Democratic rule in Washington. But he couldn't say no. So he was drafted. He never spent a penny to get nominated in fifty-two.

DePue: That says something about how American politics has changed, too, because that was in the days when candidates **were** finally selected at the convention.

Stevenson: That's right, same thing in fifty-six for him. Those conventions had a purpose. They not only nominated the candidates, but they also debated issues, fiercely. Boy, I remember that one in sixty-eight here, over Vietnam. (DePue laughs)

DePue: A lot of people remember the 1968 convention.

Stevenson: Well, I think there have been some exaggeration. Inside it was very civil, but it was [a] heated debate over Vietnam. We should've been debating Vietnam. The problems were out in the street, where the police overreacted, created big

[7] The term "New Frontier" was used by Democratic presidential candidate, John F. Kennedy, called for advancing "the civil and economic rights essential to the human dignity of all men," raising the minimum wage, guaranteeing equal pay for women, rebuilding the inner cities, increasing federal aid for education, initiating a Peace Corps, and developing a Medicare program to assist the elderly. (https://www.encyclopedia.com/history/united-states-and-canada/us-history/new-frontier)

[8] Great Society was a set of domestic policy initiatives designed to eliminate poverty and racial injustice in the United States, reduce crime and improve the environment. It was launched by President Lyndon B. Johnson in 1964 to 1965. (https://www.investopedia.com/terms/g/great-society.asp)

problems for Hubert Humphrey, who was trapped.[9] As vice president, he couldn't distance himself from the Johnson policies in Vietnam, though late in the campaign he did.

DePue: Senator, I'm embarrassed to say I don't remember when your father passed away.

Stevenson: Nineteen sixty-five, at the age of sixty-five.

DePue: So, he wasn't around to advise you on how to run the campaign or the policy issues or anything like that.

Stevenson: No. No, the only advice I can recall him giving, I rejected (laughs). He said, "Get established in the law; make a name for yourself; create a profession you can fall back on, and then enter at a high level," as he had. First office he ran for was governor.

I didn't want to do it that way. I wanted to start at the bottom and never be accused of having run on my name. That was hard to avoid, so I started… It was just total good luck, in the famous "bedsheet ballot" election of 1964, two hundred and—what was it?—thirty-six candidates, and I led them all.[10] That was a pretty good start, (both laugh) even beating the—

DePue: To the Illinois House at that time.

Stevenson: For the Illinois House… even beating an Eisenhower, Earl Eisenhower. He led the Republican slate. I remember Earl boarded with a very bright reform young Republican, whose name I can't recall at the moment. I remember asking, "What's this with Earl Eisenhower, you boarding with him?" He said, "Oh, Earl's a great guy. There's just one thing about him, he always has gin with his scrambled eggs for breakfast in the morning." (both laugh) That was Earl's first and last public office.

DePue: Since we've been talking about your father and the influence that he had, I wanted to interject a quote here. I'm getting this from your book—*The Black Book* is the name of it—that you published in, what, about the 2007, 2008 timeframe?

Stevenson: Yeah, four years ago, I think.

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[9] Hubert Horatio Humphrey Jr. was an American politician who served as the 38th vice president of the United States from 1965 to 1969 and was the Democratic Party's nominee in the 1968 presidential election, losing to Republican nominee Richard Nixon. (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hubert_Humphrey)

[10] In 1964, voters who entered polling places throughout the state of Illinois were met by what has become known as "the bedsheet ballot," an orange piece of paper 33 inches long, containing 236 names of candidates running for 177 seats in the Illinois House. (http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/ct-xpm-1991-12-17-9104230254-story.html)

DePue: Here's the quote, "The hardest thing about any campaign is how to win without proving that you are unworthy of winning."

Stevenson: My father, right?

DePue: Exactly.

Stevenson: You're under an awful lot of pressure, temptation. Nowadays an awful lot of candidates prove themselves unworthy of winning the offices they win.

DePue: By the way that they run for office?

Stevenson: It's all money, and that money doesn't come from the tooth fairy. It's coming from people who expect influence and receive it, or otherwise it wouldn't pour into our politics.

DePue: Do you remember—

Stevenson: You're always tempted, especially to denigrate the other side. That was the hardest temptation for me to resist, because the other side deserved it. (laughs) But I tried not to be a mudslinger, to be constructively critical.

DePue: Here's another thing I want to kind of establish before we actually get into the campaign itself. That's the backdrop of the American economy at that time. Ronald Reagan was elected overwhelmingly in 1980. The first two or three years of his administration were probably the deepest recession we've had since World War II. I'm sure you remember that well. Just to put some markers on things, the national inflation rate was 8.4 percent at the beginning of the year. It's almost hard to comprehend from today's perspective, 8.4 percent. The unemployment rate was 8.6 percent. And there was a lot of talk at that time about how you put those two figures together and get the "misery… What was it?

Stevenson: The "misery index?"[11]

DePue: The misery index, exactly. But that wasn't all of the problem. Interest rates were at 15.37 percent.

Stevenson: Boy, I didn't remember that.

DePue: That was another very difficult thing; how can you possibly invest and create more jobs if you've got that kind of an interest rate? So the misery index was at seventeen in January. Do you recall how Illinois's economy measured up to that?

[11] The misery index is an economic indicator, created by economist Arthur Okun. The index helps determine how the average citizen is doing economically. It is calculated by adding the seasonally adjusted unemployment rate to the annual inflation rate. (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Misery_index_(economics))

Stevenson: I remember really focusing on the economy; it was a big issue everywhere, and Illinois is as close as there is to a microcosm of the U. S. economy. I think we have more than average potential, which, thanks to our politics, we haven't realized in recent years. Sure, no, I had forgotten the interest rates were that high. Nixon imposed wage and price controls. They'd been off, I guess, long since, and that led to a burst when they came off. It led to, I think, a burst in which—

DePue: Plus the crisis in the Middle East.

Stevenson: Then, in terms of the election, the Iran hostage crisis was a **big** negative for [President Jimmy] Carter.[12] That really hurt.

DePue: But I'm talking about the huge inflation in gas prices because of the embargo that was placed on oil from the Middle East. That was during the Carter years, I believe, but it was certainly still lingering. That's what, in part, had kicked off the high inflation.

Stevenson: That was a huge issue. To encourage conservation and reduce imports, I'd always supported a big increase to gasoline tax. That's a tax that has positive implications. It produces revenue; it reduces the trade deficit; it's good for the environment; it encourages people to use public transportation. But you can imagine how popular that was.

DePue: What were the other economic initiatives that you were stressing during the campaign? This is the **main issue** in the campaign.

Stevenson: I had a huge program, and I can't remember all of it now, a very comprehensive program, which members of the working press explained to me was just too comprehensive and too detailed for them to cover. It would've focused on education. I was always focused on technology innovation. I don't remember all the details.

DePue: Would part of it include advocating for an increase in gas tax?

Stevenson: That, as I recall, was the national tax that I was proposing, not a state tax. There were other issues, gut issues, like gun control. I was a gun owner, gun hunter; I could take the press out and show them how to knock off a couple of geese with two shots or a bottle in a junkyard at fifty yards with one shot from a pistol.

The NRA came at me like crazy. I was in the crosshairs, literally, all over the state. [There were] signs with crosshairs over me. But I just took

[12] The Iran hostage crisis was a diplomatic standoff between the United States and Iran. Fifty-two American diplomats and citizens were held hostage for 444 days, November 4, 1979, to January 20, 1981, after a group of Iranian college students took over the U.S Embassy in Tehran. (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iran_hostage_crisis)

them on. I think it's a paper tiger. People aren't irrational and yet… All the other developed countries have strict gun controls, much lower rates of violent crime. I had proposed a national system for the registration of handguns and handgun owners, as a means not only of restricting access by people that might misuse them, but also of registering the guns because they could then sometimes be traced to the user of that gun in a crime.

DePue: I'm not hearing a prohibition against the ownership.

Stevenson: No, no, and I don't think we ever had to get around to AK-47s. They were machine guns and illegal anyway. I just don't remember the issue being other than the handgun, which remains the crime gun. That's the weapon you've really got to go after.

DePue: Since we're talking about gun control and crimes, etc., anti-crime measures are going to be a big issue, certainly for the Thompson folks. This is shortly after Class X came into being.

Stevenson: Class X?

DePue: Class X crimes. In other words, where people were locked up if they were serious crimes, and the prison population in Illinois was exploding at the time. How about on the death penalty? What was your position on the death penalty?

Stevenson: I always opposed the death penalty. Like in all the other democracies, I felt that the state should uphold, try to inspire respect for human life and for the law. It did neither, by taking human life, sometimes the lives of the innocent. I still feel that way very strongly.

It's no coincidence that the United States, the only developed country that still takes human life, as with gun control, has the highest rates of violent crime of the developed economies. All of them abolished... I think it was Canada. They had one… [They] discovered an innocent had been executed, and that just turned the tide against capital punishment. Here, the revelations are commonplace of innocents being convicted and later being exonerated, thanks to DNA, often.

DePue: And those things are all within the last twenty years.

Stevenson: Right, and we still keep, uniquely in the developed world, capital punishment.

DePue: Of course, [Former Illinois governor] George Ryan is famous now for stopping executions in Illinois.

Stevenson: Yes. Good for him. I don't think that was an unpopular move. The only reason, people think you've got to be tough on crime. It's political expediency that keeps that death penalty alive in most states.

DePue: Going back to the early days of the campaign, do you recall if you had a serious primary opponent?

Stevenson: Which? We're talking about eighty-one?

DePue: This would've been the eighty-two election.

Stevenson: Yeah. I vaguely recall that Neil Hartigan... Oh, I didn't end up with a primary opponent that I can recall, not a serious won. I think Neil wanted to run, and we kind of backed him out. I don't think I had an opponent.

DePue: Tell me about your running mate, the lieutenant governor candidate, Grace Mary Stern.

Stevenson: Grace Mary was a county clerk in Lake County, very bright, experienced public servant from the suburbs. I was not only trying to find somebody qualified to serve as governor, but also who would appeal to women and to suburbanites. In those days it was very easy; I just designated the lieutenant governor candidate, and she was nominated. She was a very effective campaigner.

DePue: ERA would have been an issue in the primaries period, but it went down to defeat at the national level in June of 1982. Was that then not an issue for the main campaign season?

Stevenson: I don't think it was the main issue for a gubernatorial campaign in Illinois. I don't remember it being.

DePue: How about a different kind of theme or issue altogether, Ronald Reagan and his New Federalism, of sending money from the federal coffers back out to the states?

Stevenson: I, in general, oppose that approach, including what was one time called general revenue sharing. I felt very strongly, and still do, that those who spend the taxpayers' money should be the ones who collect it. To collect taxpayers' money and then give it to other units of government breaks down accountability. You ought to be accountable for raising the money that you spend.

Special revenue sharing, in other words, targeted to a specific national purpose and allocated through the states, that was different. But just to give it away, sharing federal revenue sources, making it easy for states to spend, was not something I approved and probably an unpopular position, running for governor.

DePue: You were quoted—I think I saw in one news article—that it was unworkable. That was the term that you used.

Stevenson: Well, it was wrong. I don't know if that was the best expression; I opposed it.

DePue: We've talked a little bit about taxes already. What would be your major policy positions, as far as taxes increasing, taxes in various—

Stevenson: I can't claim to have been very courageous, except by contrast with my opponent. The most I recall saying on the subject of taxes was that I would do everything in my power to avoid increases, feeling very concerned that increases would be necessary. But I didn't want to support an increase as a candidate. So I just said, "I'll do everything I can to oppose increases." And I cited my record as state treasurer, where I cut expenditures and the budget every year. My opponent, of course, opposed any tax increases and then turned around after the election and supported them.

DePue: Nineteen eighty-three, there would be temporary income tax increase was actually passed for the first—

Stevenson: Was that eighty-three?

DePue: Eighty-three, and then it would sunset at a couple years later, in eighty-nine again.

Stevenson: Oh yeah, eighty-three, yeah.

DePue: There were a couple different types of taxes, and we'll just kind of discuss those in general, if you could: income tax and property tax. Of course, this is a few years after the Proposition 13 out in California and the protests against ever increasing property taxes.[13]

Stevenson: Yeah. I can only think what I would've done, because I can't remember exactly. In general, I always supported progressive income taxes. Now, that was impossible under the Illinois Constitution, so you support flat-rate income tax increases and try to oppose the more regressive taxes, including property taxes. One way you can do that is by more state support for education, which I think is important for the whole state and a big consumer of property taxes.

DePue: Would you have been in favor—apparently it wasn't an issue at that time—to revise the Illinois Constitution so you could have progressive income tax?

Stevenson: Oh, I would've supported that, surely. Just was never very feasible.

DePue: How about sales tax? That's also oftentimes seen as a regressive form of taxation.

[13] Proposition 13 established the concepts of a base year value for property tax assessments and limitations on the tax rate and assessment increase for real property. Passed by voters in June 1978, Prop 13 is an amendment to the California Constitution. (https://www.sccassessor.org/index.php/faq/understanding-proposition-13)

Stevenson: Yeah, but it's necessary. We tried to address the regressivity issue in the legislature, when I was there, by supporting a sales tax but exempting food and drugs. That's one way to make it a little less regressive.

DePue: As I understand, this is about the timeframe that the Illinois law was changed to have that in effect. I can't recall the specific year that that went into effect, but it's roughly in the early eighties.

Can you recall the essential strategy that you developed and the campaign developed in going into the main campaign season, the summer and fall of 1982?

Stevenson: I don't think I ever really had what you call strategies. I just campaigned day in and day out, all over the state—it got so we were meeting people on the street for the second and third time—and laid out my program, debated regularly and tried to emphasize economic issues. I can't remember. There were always these other issues, like gun control, that would come at you, taxes.

DePue: Dan Walker had his Vic deGrazia, his political brain.[14] Did you have something akin to that in your campaign?

Stevenson: I had Vic deGrazia at one point. Vic deGrazia and Dan were in my 1970 campaign, and they walked off with my campaign apparatus, my list. I didn't realize it, but while they were supporting me for the Senate, they were working on and planning his campaign for governor.

DePue: Was Vic deGrazia involved with your eighty-two campaign?

Stevenson: No.

DePue: Did you have anybody like him, somebody who was very insightful and knowledgeable about the political landscape?

Stevenson: No. Probably the closest was David Axelrod, who I have heard say I was not very malleable. In other words, I was an old-fashioned politician.[15] I gave the orders. Nowadays, the campaign consultants and managers give the orders. That wasn't the way I operated. I expected them to carry out my orders, to run the campaign. I was the strategist. We didn't need public opinion polls.

DePue: One of the areas of traditional support for the Democrat party would be labor, but I'm sure you know that Thompson was working very hard to garner labor

[14]Victor R. deGrazia was the mastermind of Walker's victory over Republican Governor Richard B. Ogilvie in 1972, which was of one of the great upsets in recent Illinois political history. (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Victor_deGrazia)

[15] David M. Axelrod is an American political consultant and analyst, best known for being the chief strategist for Barack Obama's presidential campaigns. (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/David_Axelrod_(political_consultant)

support. Can you talk about your desires, as far as labor, and your positions on some of the issues that were important to the labor community?

Stevenson: Yeah, I always had somewhat tense relations with organized labor. I can't remember why exactly. I was a free trader in the Senate, independent-minded. I don't remember whether this became an issue, but I remember Richard J. Daley telling me that I should oppose collective bargaining for public employees. He was making the obvious point that a public official has no real incentive to bargain, because he's bargaining with somebody else's money. I think Daley wanted sort of the power for himself, too. I never supported collective bargaining for public employees. But, of course, Jim Thompson did. He always went along.

DePue: That had been an issue, as I understand, that Dan Walker in an executive order implemented. So, it wasn't the force of law, but as you mentioned, Thompson was supportive of collective bargaining, and I think the law passed in 1983.

Stevenson: Well, that could be. I think Daley had a good point. At first blush, it sounds harsh, unfair, but it's unfair to the taxpayers. Look what's happened. Look at the pension benefits. The people were entitled to somebody to bargain for them, but it doesn't happen through collective bargaining.

DePue: How about Illinois as a potential right-to-work state?[16] That's something that's—

Stevenson: I opposed right-to-work laws. Organized labor was very conservative on international issues. Scoop Jackson in the Senate got it right. He was a hawk and then very liberal. That satisfied the organized labor. I was not a hawk, tried to be very pragmatic.

DePue: Here's the term I always have a hard time wrapping my brain around. I'm sure it makes more sense to you. An issue in the campaign I believe is prevailing wage.

Stevenson: Yeah. That could've been a problem, too.

DePue: Describe what that means.

Stevenson: That means that certain public employees, like carpenters, for which there are corollaries in the private sector, have to get paid the same wages. Now, I have problems with that because, in the private sector that carpenter's work was oftentimes cyclical; it wasn't full-time, day in and day out. The public

[16] In the context of U.S. labor politics, "right-to-work laws" refers to state laws that prohibit union security agreements between companies and labor unions. Under these laws, employees in unionized workplaces are banned from negotiating contracts that require all members who benefit from the union contract to contribute to the costs of union representation. (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Right-to-work_law)

employee's was. He was working full-time. His corollary in the private sector frequently was not. So, it was very much supported by the organized labor.

I felt it overcompensated the public employees. It might work in some cases, but not in other cases. Why should we try to establish the same wage for employees in the private sector who are not fully employed? I got in trouble on that one, too, probably.

DePue: Is the analogy that if you got a trade worker who's making lots of money in the summertime, when you can be outside, and then they're not making anything in the winter?

Stevenson: That's right; that's the idea. That's exactly right.

DePue: Workers compensation issues and tort reform.

Stevenson: Oh boy, this is going back. I just don't remember now of those being issues.

DePue: Did you—

Stevenson: Tort reform, I probably fell out with... I can't remember where tort reform was, but the trial lawyers were big contributors to the Democrats, probably because of tort reform. I don't know where I fell; I can't remember now.

DePue: The next area I want to get into is some of the potential scandals that were being discussed about the Thompson administration at that time. Let's start with one that you've mentioned a couple times before, and I'd like to have you describe this in more detail. That's pinstripe patronage.

Stevenson: It was really a shock to me to find all of these lawyers, lobbyists, everybody hanging around Springfield. That wasn't the way it was. Obviously, there was something out there. I do recall some incidents. The Department of Insurance was awarding legal services to lawyers on cases, as a form of patronage, and there were others.

So, I promised to abolish this pinstripe patronage. I do remember a partner in my law firm coming to me and saying, "We wish you wouldn't attack pinstripe patronage because, when you're governor, we're going to want our share." This was the same law firm that used to donate its services. We were encouraged as young lawyers in that law firm to go out and work in our communities, be good citizens, donate our legal services, huge change and symptomatic. There wasn't any denying of its existence—I don't think there is—and I was going to clean it up, award contracts on merit.

DePue: Would something like your disdain towards the pinstripe patronage, that you saw going on in the Thompson administration, find its way into campaign ads or in stump speeches that you were giving?

Stevenson: I'm sure it did. I don't know about the campaign ads, because I didn't have many; I just don't remember. I do recall maybe coining that expression—I can't remember—but running against pinstripe patronage.

DePue: Yeah, I was wondering where that term came from. You might be the originator of that.

Stevenson: I might be. I just remember being shocked! I had to go to New York to raise money from investment banks who were angling for State of Illinois offerings, bond issues and so on. That just hadn't happened in the old days, leave aside my father's days. His campaign for governor cost $157,000.

DePue: The 1948 campaign?

Stevenson: [In] forty-eight dollars, yeah. I never spent more than $1 million on any campaign.

DePue: I wonder, this is kind of an aside, but would you have some of your campaign commercials from either 1982 or 1986, maybe some old VHS tapes someplace?[17]

Stevenson: Yeah, it's a good time to be asking. I think I do. They might be in the country, where I'm going through all of this stuff.

Stevenson: Otherwise, I have the biggest state archive at Abraham Lincoln [Presidential Library]. They might have some, also.

DePue: If you would allow us, and if we can find those, we like to put that kind of material up on the website, as well.

Stevenson: Oh, great. Yeah, I will. I saw a box out there, what looked like it had all sorts of reels in it. I don't know whether you can use it. This is out of date stuff.

DePue: We could certainly get anything that you found digitized.

Stevenson: Okay, it needs digitizing.

DePue: That needs to happen anyway for preservation purposes.

Stevenson: Okay, all right. Some of it may be going to my Stevenson collection, whatever I can find.

[17] VHS (Video Home System) is a widely-adopted videocassette recording (VCR) technology that was developed by Japan Victor Company (JVC) and put on the market in 1976. It uses magnetic tape 1/2 inch (1.27 cm) in width. (https://whatis.techtarget.com/definition/VHS-Video-Home-System)

DePue: Yeah, I know you've already donated a large number of papers, many boxes' worth, to the Presidential Library already. We'll be happy to take whatever else you might have, as well.

Stevenson: That may include some tapes. I just don't know. I may have some over there.

DePue: Getting back to some of the other things that the news media was bringing to light during this time in the election, some of the warts on Thompson's image, if you will, Thompson's chief procurement officer was indicted in February of 1982 for perjury and official misconduct, and Thompson was forced to fire him.

Thompson was accepting gifts from potential donors, flights, cash, discounts on purchasing antiques and things like that. A thing that had been covered quite a bit in the press was—this is the terminology they might use—this lavish lifestyle in the mansion and the kind of parties and events that he was having in the mansion and other things like that. Is there any of that's familiar to you or that you want to comment on?

Stevenson: Apropos parties (laughs) in the [governor's] mansion and the courtyard. I remember Jim Hogue, editor of the *Sun-Times*, talking to him and saying, "You better be careful. This Thompson is going to really be after you." I said, "Going to be? He already is." Next thing I know, Thompson is hosting a wedding reception for the editor of the *Sun-Times* at a party in the mansion.

The first red flag for me came when I was in the Senate. As I recall, my successor as state treasurer... There was a Jerry Cosentino, who was state treasurer.

DePue: That sounds right, yeah.

Stevenson: I can't remember when, exactly. But I had developed what a Ford Foundation study pronounced, the model for the United States, for the investment of state funds.[18] John Lindsey, a wonderful Republican mayor of [New York], invited me and my staff to New York to advise them on the investment of city funds. Cosentino teamed up with Thompson to use these state funds to finance a big hotel. There's a big hotel development project, owned by a guy named… Was it Cessini? Callini? He got caught subsequently, went to jail… Cellini, C-e-l-l-i-n-i.

DePue: Bill Cellini.

Stevenson: Bill Cellini. I couldn't believe it.

[18] The Ford Foundation, created in 1936 by Edsel Ford and Henry Ford, is an American private foundation with the mission of advancing human welfare. (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ford_Foundation)

DePue: That would be what's now known as the Abraham Lincoln Hotel in Springfield.

Stevenson: That's right. Then it went broke, and they got away with it. They lost a hell of a lot of state money doing something totally improper for a big Republican wheeler dealer. Consentino was a Democrat. This was just (laughs) unthinkable in my mind. It was next to larceny. What a change from what I had done, tried to do. I'm afraid it's never gotten back to where the state treasury was. I can't remember where we were.

DePue: Do you have any other comments about some of the dealings, your disagreements with the way Thompson was doing business?

Stevenson: No, it was just obviously a very pragmatic kind of patronage operation.

DePue: Jim Thompson at that time, this is his third election. By that time he had developed a reputation for being a remarkable campaigner, a very gifted campaigner. I wonder if you can address that. Also, did you do the parade circuit and the county fair and the state fair circuit?

Stevenson: Day in and day out. That's all I did in all my campaigns, following my father's footsteps. All over the state and then in addition, at night going to the ward meetings in Chicago to exhort the faithful, to get everybody registered and out to vote the straight Democratic ticket.

DePue: Did you do the Jackson Day dinner circuit? I think that's what the Democrats call it, their equivalent of the Lincoln Day dinners.

Stevenson: I would have. I just don't remember any Jackson Day dinners.

DePue: How about a circuit to meet all the Democratic Party chairmen for the counties.

Stevenson: Oh, yeah. Oh, the county chairmen's meetings, all that kind of stuff, the ward committeemen, going by their headquarters. Yeah, that's what it was all about. I didn't spend any time raising money.

DePue: Getting back to Governor Thompson, he had a reputation of being a superb campaigner, of doing all those things and doing it right, meeting and greeting and kind of being the everyman. Wherever he went, his dress and his demeanor would change, based on the people he was with.

Stevenson: He had more PR, better PR than I did. I never saw him on the campaign trail. How do I know? I just know I've been doing it since forty-eight. I knew this state like nobody else could have.

DePue: You mentioned it very early in our discussion today, and I wanted to bring it up again. I think this is a sore subject. Part of that whole image… From what

I'm hearing you say, the part of the politics that you object to has been changing, from the early seventies to the time you ran for governor; it was much more—

Stevenson: Well, PR and media money, and—

DePue: Yeah. Part of that image was reflected by this particular McNealy cartoon. It's got you dressed up with boxing gloves, and it's all in reference to this whole dialogue in the midst of the campaign about who's a wimp—

Stevenson: Yeah.

DePue: …and that you're portrayed as a wimp.

Stevenson: That's the Marine Corps tank platoon commander.

DePue: We have that available and will include that when we incorporate it into the transcript, as well.

Stevenson: Oh, that came from the *Tribune*. Well, the *Tribune* was the head of the Republican Party. I don't think you found that much elsewhere. *Tribune* was the equivalent of the Cook County Democratic organization. Tagge, the political editor, was the boss. He gave the orders.

DePue: So in 1982 it was still a strongly right-leaning newspaper?

Stevenson: Yeah, except they had this wonderful Lois Willey, whom I mentioned earlier, would write very nice articles or editorials about me, but then they'd always support the Republican. I don't think they ever supported Democrats statewide.

DePue: Do you recall the origins of this whole discussion in the campaign? The kind of thing the media just eats up is this who started the whole discussion about being a wimp, of you being a wimp.

Stevenson: That might've been Mike Royco.[19] I really don't know. I know Royco wrote that I had held a news conference to deny I was a wimp. This was just total fiction. I don't know how they planted that or got it going. I wanted to come back with the Marine Corps, and I couldn't get that out. People would call. I remember one of our telephone receptionists saying, "Somebody called and said, 'Is it true that he was a Marine?'" They were incredulous! (laughs) Why didn't my campaign leader, consultant, get it out, put it in our advertisements? That's a question I've never been able to answer satisfactorily.

[19] Michael Royko Jr. was an American newspaper columnist from Chicago. Over his 30-year career, he wrote over 7,500 daily columns for three newspapers, the *Chicago Daily News*, the *Chicago Sun-Times*, and the *Chicago Tribune*.

DePue: Were you willing? From our previous discussion, it sounded like you would've been happy to have the press or even in your own campaign ads illustrate Thompson's record in the military.

Stevenson: I'd rather emphasize my own. I'm not sure that I ever called him out for having pleaded asthma, when I got somebody to take my eye test. I don't think I ever made an issue out of that. I just wanted to bring out my background.

DePue: From what I read, he was 4-F due to his asthma.[20]

Stevenson: Yeah.

DePue: And you thought he should've been serving anyway?

Stevenson: You're damn right! (laughs) Yeah. I could've been 4-F, too. Asthma, can you imagine that?

DePue: I haven't talked to Governor Thompson about this campaign yet, but from what I heard, there was a reporter who approached him and said, "Is it true that you called Stevenson a wimp?" And he said, "I never called him a wimp." But that was all it took for the news media.

Stevenson: Sure, sure. That's all it takes.

DePue: Here's another campaign cartoon from the era. I don't know who the artist is in this case. I'll let you take a look at that one. Let me go ahead and just read it into the record, so we know what we're talking about here. It looks like a pollster asking, "And what do you think the biggest issue in the governor's race is?" And this poor homeowner says, "Trying to figure out what Adlai is saying."

Stevenson: I know why that is, because I had a big program, and I was making big speeches, trying to articulate my program, as my father had done, my program for Illinois. As one reporter said, "It's too complicated for us to report." So, you can see what's happened to our politics now. It's just trivialized with thirty-second jingles and no program. Whose fault is that? Is that mine or is that the media's?

DePue: I want you to elaborate on that. Obviously, you were not happy at all with the way the media covered the race. Had that changed from—

Stevenson: It didn't cover it. I went through—I think, that first campaign for governor—at news conferences, getting one question from a reporter about an issue. I

[20] 4-F is a classification given to someone trying to join the military, indicating that he or she is *"not acceptable for service in the Armed Forces"* due to medical, dental, or other reasons. (https://www.quora.com/What-does-4-F-mean-in-relation-to-the-military)

was so stunned that I remember it. It was from Charles Wheeler in Springfield.[21] It was a question about education. They were covering the game, not issues. And they didn't come out on the campaign trail.

I remember one reporter from a foreign country following me on the campaign trail and saying, "Well, this isn't what we were told to expect at all." My audiences were responding, as they always had. But there were no reporters from the Chicago media, the Chicago newspapers, to cover [it]. The editors were sitting there, waiting for rumor and garbage to flow in. I may be able to find some downstate cartoons; they're a little different.

DePue: We like to be able to portray the story of these campaigns in a lot of different ways. That's why I was asking for your political ads or your campaign ads, as well.

Going back to the media, this is just a few years after Watergate and Woodward and Bernstein and the kind of deep investigative reporting that newspaper journalists were supposed to be doing.[22] So, the question is, what had happened? Or was that a myth all along?

Stevenson: What, about the reporters?

DePue: Yeah, the kind of reporting that they—

Stevenson: Oh, they'll report sensation, although I think they were slow to catch on to Watergate. No. But what about the real issue, education, how you balance the budget, how you promote technology innovation and invest in infrastructure? I lay out all of this and go around the state explaining my program and what we need to do in Illinois. I get no coverage.

But if somebody calls me a wimp, that gets coverage, or if, I don't know [or] I make some mistake like "the sap is rising." But news? It just doesn't happen anymore. I wouldn't run. They tried to get me to run a third time for governor.

DePue: In ninety?

[21] Charles N. Wheeler, was a newspaper reporter for the *Chicago Tribune* and the *Chicago Daily Ne*ws. Wheeler found his niche at the *Sun-Times* covering the campaign for delegates to the Constitutional Convention and the ratification of the state's fourth Constitution in 1970. He eventually became director of the Public Affairs Reporting program at University of Illinois Springfield. (https://www.illinoispress.org/Home/tabid/105/ArticleID/355/Always-teaching-always-learning-Wheeler-set-for-last-semester-leading-acclaimed-PAR-program.aspx)

[22] While a young reporter for The Washington Post in 1972, Carl Bernstein was teamed up with Bob Woodward; the two did much of the original news reporting on the Watergate scandal for the *Washington Post*. These scandals led to numerous government investigations and the eventual resignation of President Richard Nixon. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carl_Bernstein)

Stevenson: When would that have been? Yeah, Mike Madigan and Mayor Daley both tried.[23]

DePue: That was the race Neil Hartigan ran against Jim Edgar for the first time.[24]

Stevenson: I guess, yeah. Can't remember. Of course, I won the first time. We can prove that.

DePue: Well, we definitely are going to get to that, and that's going to be kind of a lengthy conversation, as well, as it should be.

Stevenson: I never had this kind of trash in my early campaigns. Running for the Senate in seventy-four was against Bill Burdick. We'd served in the legislature. He was first rate. He had great integrity. When he used to rise in the House, everybody listened to him. We debated issues, none of this stuff. He wouldn't have been a party to that any more than I would have.

DePue: That gets back to my question, and you're a perfect person to discuss this in some detail, I think. What had changed in the nature of how the news media covers these campaigns?

Stevenson: Well, that's not a secret. They're all cutting back… Some of the newspapers are dead. We only have two.

DePue: But I'm talking about from the early 1970s to 1982. What had changed?

Stevenson: Well, it's continuing to happen. They're cutting back on news staffs everywhere. News people are the first to complain about it. If you read the *Tribune* today, most of the bylines are from other newspapers. They share the news. If you go to the *Pantograph*, you'll find they don't have any reporters on their staff, in Bloomington. *Pantograph,* that was the family newspaper. "Print all," it implied something of First Amendment obligation.

That's why I created the Stevenson Center On Democracy.[25] How can people be informed in the Information Age?[26] Maybe you can get the *China*

[23]Michael Joseph Madigan is an American politician who is the speaker of the Illinois House of Representatives. He is the longest-serving leader of any state or federal legislative body in the history of the United States, having held the position for all but two years since 1983. (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Michael_Madigan)

[24] When Jim Thompson chose not to run for a fifth term in 1990 as governor of the state of Illinois, Edgar was tapped as the Republican gubernatorial candidate, running on a platform of fiscal responsibility and additional funding for education and early childhood programs. (https://www.cyberdriveillinois.com/departments/library/heritage_project/home/chapters/maturity-and-leadership-the-1980s/jim-edgar/)

[25] The Adlai Stevenson Center on Democracy was formed in 2008 to enhance the global understanding and practice of democracy. The goal of the non-profit organization is to address challenges to democratic systems of government and conceive practical ways of addressing them. (https://www.stevensoncenterondemocracy.org/events.html)

Daily or *Al Jazeera* [a state-funded broadcaster in Doha, Qatar]. I get the *Financial Times* every day, get a little news that way.[27] This is pretty basic, and look what's happened to the country.

DePue: Do you think, if the news media had done more due diligence in talking about the policy issues that, one, the public would've paid attention, and two, it could've changed the outcome of the election?

Stevenson: I never had any trouble with the public. The public was interested. Everything began to change. They used to let out school, and everybody would pour into the gymnasium to hear the candidate for state treasurer, for the Senate. Well, that began to change as the candidates began to respond to a different environment.

DePue: So, you didn't have as many opportunities when you ran in eighty-two to see that happen?

Stevenson: I think it was probably changing, not as many such opportunities. But you still had all the Kiwanis Clubs [an international service club]; you had all kinds of fora. I liked those gymnasiums because I liked talking to the kids, trying to get them interested.

DePue: Going back to you and the campaign trail, this is a grueling schedule you kept.

Stevenson: Oh yeah, brutal.

DePue: Was the strategy to focus on the entire state, to really emphasize where the strength of the Democratic Party was in Chicago, or to get into the suburbs, which is traditionally Republican turf?

Stevenson: I don't know that we really had a strategy. It takes a lot of time downstate. I always had a wonderful guy who knew every pothole in Illinois, John Taylor. He ran my Springfield office. We drove, partly because we couldn't afford airplanes very often, and it just takes a lot of time to reach fewer people. But I wanted to do it; I wanted to cover all of Illinois. And I had roots downstate. I had always run pretty well as a Democrat downstate.

I could count on a big Cook County vote. I wanted to get downstate and in the suburbs. Suburbs becomes, in some ways, a little more difficult. It's much denser, of course. Yeah, we'd go to shopping centers downstate. I'd go to a factory gate. You had to adjust a little. Sometimes Harold Washington

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[26] The Information Age (also known as the Computer Age, Digital Age, or New Media Age) is a historic period in the 21st century, characterized by the rapid shift from traditional industry that the Industrial Revolution brought through industrialization, to an economy based on information technology. (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Information_Age)

[27] The Financial Times is an English-language international daily newspaper owned by Japanese company, Nikkei Inc, headquartered in London, with a special emphasis on business and economic news. (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Financial_Times)

would come out with me.[28] In Cook County you went to all the churches, the black churches, to exhort the faithful. When was Harold Washington?

DePue: Was it eighty-three? Jayne Byrne might've been mayor when you were running. I should know that. I can't recall.

Stevenson: Well, in one of the campaigns for governor, Harold Washington, who'd been my seatmate in the Illinois House—

DePue: He definitely would've been mayor in eighty-six.

Stevenson: Maybe it was in eighty-six… Well, in a city you go to the train stations and greet all the people, the commuters, coming in and out. That's getting the suburbs and in the city. You go to the churches; you go to the ward meetings and functions.

I remember going to Harold Washington's office once to meet a leader from St. Clair County. That's opposite St. Louis [Missouri]. It's a Democratic area. This is a black political leader, and I can't remember his name. It's a corrupt area, Madison and St. Clair Counties. Harold wanted to introduce me to this guy, because he was deciding... He was very blunt; he wanted money. I said, "Harold, the mayor knows that I don't do this; I don't pay for your support." A few weeks later he came after Thompson, who might've had a slightly different ethic. In fact, not long after that they named a street in East St. Louis after Thompson. I didn't do it.

When I was leading Hubert Humphrey's campaign, he asked me, "All these ministers at the black churches are asking for money." And I said, "Don't do it." I didn't do it, ever. But I may have been unusual.

DePue: I think, in the vernacular... (phone rings) We can pause if we need to. (pause in interview)

We had a very brief break here. What you were just talking about, as I understand it, in the vernacular in Illinois politics, that was "walkin' around money."

Stevenson: No, I think that's a slightly different (laughs) kind of walkin' around money.

DePue: Oh, is it?

Stevenson: I ran into walkin' around money in Washington, when I was chairman of the Ethics Committee. I had to try a Senator, actually, to the Senate—this may have been the only time this has ever happened. He used to explain how he

[28] Harold Lee Washington was an American lawyer and politician who was the 51st mayor of Chicago. Washington became the first African American to be elected as the city's mayor. He served as mayor from April 29, 1983 until his death on November 25, 1987. (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harold_Washington)

had had a coat, which he would hang up in his home. The pockets were all full of cash, which were for his wife and others. He explained that that was just walkin' around money. People would give him money…in Georgia. Was it South Carolina or Georgia? I think it was Georgia. I never heard of that around here (laughs). I never heard of anybody just getting handed cash, which you'd stuff in your pocket.

DePue: It reminds me of Paul Powell and the downstate money.[29]

Stevenson: Oh, the shoeboxes. Yeah, but that was not walkin' around money; that was big money. Yeah, I remember being called and asked to comment on his death and the discovery of the $600,000 or whatever it was in shoeboxes. "His shoes will be hard to fill. His shoeboxes will be hard to fill." (DePue laughs)

DePue: Did your wife go on the campaign trail with you, or did the two of you go different directions?

Stevenson: We would converge from time to time for functions, but usually split, cover more ground that way.

DePue: You've mentioned a couple stories; do you have any other stories that you remember that illustrates your time on the campaign trail, especially from this eighty-two election?

Stevenson: Oh my god. There are just all kinds of experiences, stories that come back, events. I almost got killed in a plane crash.

DePue: What happened in that incident?

Stevenson: Oh, we rarely could afford airplanes, but there was a little airstrip near our home, out in the country. From time to time we would charter the cheapest airplane we could find, which was a single engine plane out of Dubuque, flying around Illinois in this plane with a pilot. At night, he'd have to get out a flashlight (both laugh) to view his controls. One night we came in on this little strip, which had one row of lights to mark the edge of the strip. He came down on the wrong side of the lights, and we just missed trees by inches.

There are so many stories. I had an experience once very similar to my father's. I was shaking hands. We always would go to the courthouse squares; you'd find these old guys on park benches and go up and shake hands and ask for the vote, introduce yourself and the office you're running for. One of them said, "Why, Adlai, of course I'll vote for you for governor. I voted for you the last time that you run for governor. Where you been all those years?" (DePue

[29] Days after Illinois Secretary of State Paul Powell died in 1970, a shoe box filled with cash was found in his hotel suite. A federal investigation determined that Powell had acquired much of his wealth through illegal cash bribes, which he received for giving noncompetitive state contracts to political associates. (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paul_Powell_(politician))

laughs) Well, he voted for my father, back in forty-eight! And my father had that experience, because his grandfather had run for governor back in 1914.

DePue: There's a big chunk of Illinois history between those years. How about something from parades? Any memorable parades?

Stevenson: Well, in one of those campaigns everything went wrong, and I broke a foot. God, I remember going through a parade with a big bandaged-up foot on top of a car. A lot of parades. The one obligatory parade in Chicago was St. Patrick's Day. All the candidates would line up at the front of the parade, down Michigan Avenue. In the old days, there were torchlight parades at night, wonderful events. Bloomington used to have them, even for public in Bloomington. But in Chicago, the ward organizations would all parade to the Coliseum for the great rally, carrying torches in the streets.[30] This has all long since passed. Those are just political.

I go to small-town parades. I've seen an awful lot of fire trucks. They'd just empty the local fire station, or the fire stations from around the area, on the Fourth of July, for example, they'd just go from one town to the other, and your parades are mostly fire trucks. Fourth of July is the obvious time for parades. I think parades, all that sort of hand-to-hand—

DePue: Any stories from county fairs or maybe the Illinois State Fair? There's another obligatory event.

Stevenson: Yeah. Certainly back in my father's time it was sort of dying out. You would campaign in two caravans, one headed by the gubernatorial and the other by the Senatorial candidate, and you'd converge at night for county fairs and rallies. The county fairs aren't what they used to be. They're, I think, sort of petering out and probably not much of a focus anymore for political activity.

DePue: That wasn't the case in eighty-two, was it?

Stevenson: They all sort of merged together. We probably had a lot of county fairs then that I'd go to. The state fair was a big event. I can't remember anything that sort of stands out, factory gates. I always had a microphone.

DePue: Your opponents… I think it would be accurate to say that certainly the Thompson campaign was trying to paint the picture of who you were as unenthusiastic, not charismatic, a boring kind of a personality. You think all of that was fair game?

Stevenson: Well, definitely not charismatic. I don't know what that's got to do with it.

[30] The Chicago Coliseums were three large indoor arenas in Chicago, Illinois, which stood successively from the 1860s to 1982; they served as venues for sports events, large (national-class) conventions and as exhibition halls. It closed in 1971 and was sold for redevelopment in 1982, however portions of the building remained standing until the early 1990s. (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chicago_Coliseum)

DePue: Would you describe Thompson as being charismatic?

Stevenson: No. (laughs) Charismatic and boring? "Dreadfully dull." Where did that expression come from? I think I used that sometime. That came back to haunt me. Maybe discussing issues, taking politics seriously is dreadfully dull or boring, but I don't think so. I think we tend to underestimate the intelligence of the people. I've never found them bored or uninterested, but I never had any press to cover me, but at the local Kiwanis Club or wherever. The local press, yeah, but not the Chicago press. Maybe the Peoria press would turn out, but you'd never get the Chicago press. There isn't much of it left from what I can see.

DePue: Getting back to something we had talked about before, but still in this whole notion of painting an image of the opponent's campaign, Thompson even suggested that… Relating to your discussion about his not even having been in the military, apparently at one time he made the statement that you got into the Marines to get wounded. (Stevenson laughs) Do you remember that?

Stevenson: To get wounded?

DePue: So you could go further into politics.

Stevenson: Oh boy, I never aimed to get wounded. But I will admit that one of the reasons I had joined the Marines, as opposed to the Navy or somebody else, I thought it could help politically. But no matter what it was, I wanted to do whatever I could in my life to get the most out of life. If I'm going to be in the military, I want to go in the best, get the most out of that experience that I can. I felt the way to do that was to go in the Marine Corps, not into the Navy or the Army or the Air Force. I wanted to be a Marine.

At that time, when I volunteered, the Marines were in Korea. We were in combat. I volunteered for combat. I wanted to get everything that I could out of that experience. That's been true throughout my life. Why not? But that's going a little far, I think, to say I wanted to get wounded (both laugh). God, how can you even think of such a thing?

All my friends came back from Korea, from the preceding class, with posthumous honors. They were all killed. One of them came back with a posthumous Medal of Honor. The Marines were looking for cannon fodder. They really needed us.

DePue: You're talking about Harvard graduates.

Stevenson: One of them was not Harvard. One of them was… He was from here, but the other two or three were Harvard. Two of them were in my club, but they were a year ahead of me, wonderful people.

DePue: You've mentioned that you really—I think this would be a fair characterization—you really did not like the fundraising part of campaigning.

Stevenson: I hated it. It was unclean, and I didn't do it.

DePue: Did you otherwise like to campaign? Did you like being on the campaign trail?

Stevenson: Well, yes and no. Day after day after day after day, it gets very tiring, and you neglect a lot of things that you want to be doing. I wanted to be thinking through issues and writing speeches, and that gets difficult when you're out there. So yeah, I liked meeting the people, conversing with them. One of the complaints, as with my father, was that you wouldn't just move along, like an automaton, because I like to hear from them, talk to them. You learn, as I explained in *The Black Book*, how to shake a hand. You've got to grab that farmer, up in the yard, fast, before he gets you, or you go in there.

DePue: So you're grabbing at the fingers, rather than getting all the way in?

Stevenson: You're getting bruised and swollen. You have to protect yourself, and you learn to do that early. Nowadays I don't think…they just fly around. I enjoyed it up to a point, but boy, it could be wearying, tiring.

DePue: Would this be a true statement, that you were running, that you were on the campaign trail, so you could have the chance to actually govern, to do the policy things?

Stevenson: Yeah. Why else?

DePue: There are people out there in the political world who much like the campaigning, and they're not much interested in the governing. Would you characterize Jim Thompson as one of those?

Stevenson: Who likes the campaigning and not the governing?

DePue: Yeah.

Stevenson: Oh, I wouldn't characterize him that way. I don't know what he likes. I never really was very conscious of him doing all that much out on the stump. I remember during one of those big winters, he was off in Florida. I was out making the rounds as a Senator. I just don't think of him doing this factory gate to factory gate and county square stuff as much.

DePue: I don't necessarily mean that, but—

Stevenson: He got credit for being—

DePue: …the politicians who love being on the campaign trail but not much interested in the job, once they get elected or are in office. That's what I was trying to suggest.

Stevenson: Oh, I think he's got to be... Why would you go...? He's got to be interested. Now, he may be interested because of ambition and ego and more interested in self-service, maybe making money, than governing and serving the people. But you've got to... I never would have accused him of not being interested in governing. I don't think he had the addiction to policy that I did, policy partly because of exposure over generations and through my family to the world, not just Illinois.

DePue: How about debates? How many debates do you recall you had with Thompson?

Stevenson: I can't remember how many, four or five, something like that.

DePue: Were you eager to get into debates with him?

Stevenson: Yes. Oh, yeah. I think I always proposed them.

DePue: Why?

Stevenson: It's your obligation. My great-great-grandfather proposed the Lincoln-Douglas debates. Real debates are a way of informing the people, and that's the purpose of the campaign. But these debates have degenerated, including the presidential debates. Now you just sort of answer silly questions with short answers, trivial answers. I like the head-on debates. I can't remember… I think some of ours were head-on. We, in those days, would make opening statements and then question one another. That's a much more informative way of debating.

DePue: Were you confident, going in, that you could out-debate Jim Thompson, a guy who had been a trial lawyer and knew how to stand up in front of crowds and speak?

Stevenson: I was confident that I could outperform in terms of informing the people, discussing issues. But if it's playacting, no, I wouldn't have expected to outperform in that respect. But on policy, yes, by all means, no question.

DePue: From what I was able to tell, there were four debates. The first debate was September first.

Stevenson: That's probably right.

DePue: I don't recall where that debate was, but it didn't take long for some to say that you won the first round and that Thompson was making allegations that you were lying.

Stevenson: I don't remember. How do you win a debate? The purpose to me was not to win; it was to inform the people. Nowadays it's assumed that this is just a campaign gimmick; it's a device for getting votes.

DePue: Here are the allegations that Thompson was making. He was referring to your campaign, saying that the unemployment rate for Illinois rose faster for the last five years among the ranks of all the states than others. He challenged you on that, saying that was a lie. Normally in politics, the opponents avoid using the "L" word. Maybe that's different then than it is now.

Another one was that the state government's debt in the last five years has risen twice as fast as the federal government's debt. That was the statement you were making that he was taking issue with. Did you find that side of the campaign, those kind of allegations, distasteful?

Stevenson: No. No, I don't think that's very effective. I don't know what the facts are, but I had a really good staff on issues. I don't think they would've fed me anything that was clearly untrue.

DePue: Did you feel it was appropriate to come out on the attack yourself?

Stevenson: Oh yeah, darn right, but on issues not on personality.

DePue: It puts your campaign, then, on the defensive, as the other side is on the attack. Then you have to basically sally off the attacks as much as possible.

Stevenson: Sure. It depends on what they're charging. I have to respond. That's what it's all about.

DePue: September fifth, I think, was the second debate. At that time, Thompson was leading in the polls. You've already said that your campaign didn't do any polling itself. Were you paying attention to what the polls were saying?

Stevenson: Oh, the newspapers… Sure, the newspapers always published polls. That's really a misfortune, too, because they become self-fulfilling. I was something like eighteen points behind, going into that Election Day, and it ended up virtually tied.

DePue: I know I saw something early in the campaign that you were ahead.

Stevenson: Towards the end, I was way behind, didn't have any money. The polls are one reason that you fall behind. You have to keep the money in to keep yourself up in the polls, to keep the money in, etc.

DePue: Apparently that second debate was a debate focusing on taxes and tax increases. The third debate, October third, Thompson in Springfield and you in Chicago. Do you remember that one?

Stevenson: I can't remember. I remember vaguely one of them, because my aunt was there. The problem that did me in was the Israeli lobby. They came down, just hammer and tong, intimidated a lot of our friends. Nancy got spat on because I tried to prevent terrorism.

DePue: Why don't you lay that out in some more detail for me, how that came about in the first place. It's an issue that we haven't even discussed yet, and it would seem to be peripheral to Illinois politics?

Stevenson: Doesn't matter where you are. Paul Findley, they got him. They got Chuck Percy, that was for the Senate. No, I tried to prevent terrorism, and I was trying to help Israel as well as the United States. I'd introduced the Arab anti-boycott law.

DePue: This is all while you were a U. S. Senator?

Stevenson: Senator, and had strong supporters like Phil Klesick, former president of the World Council for Jewry.[31] But many wilted. The money dried up. Some of it shifted to Thompson. This is part of a national phenomenon. There have been books written about it. [It] doesn't matter what you're running for or where, you pay the price, not with Israel, but with the lobby, which is a rightwing sort of network of institutions. It's coming under some pressure now, but it's capable of raising **a lot** of money and intimidating people.

After I introduced this measure to reduce funding for Israel by $200 million a year, until such time as the president could certify that Israel's settlements policy was consistent with U. S. policy, I introduced that knowing it would fail, but I wanted to prove that given a choice between representing the United States and representing the Israeli lobby, the Congress would represent the Israeli lobby. I got seven votes. I made my point.

Nobody paid any attention, except the lobby. Quentin Burdick came up to me after that vote, a Senator from North Dakota, and said, "Sorry, Adlai, but I'm up for reelection." Now, there are not a whole lot of Zionists in North Dakota, but money goes a long way. As a matter of fact, there's no secret about it.

DePue: Was Burdick a Democrat or a Republican?

Stevenson: I think he was a Democrat.

DePue: Traditionally the Jewish community has been much more liberal, much more supportive financially to Democrats than Republicans.

[31] The Council for World Jewry was founded as a home for Jews from all over the world, joining together as partners to ensure our common and collective survival. (www.worldjewry.org)

Stevenson: Right, and that very largely dried up as a source of income, and some of it shifted to the other side. Chuck Percy's only offense was voting for an arms sale to Saudi Arabia. They got him.

DePue: Are you saying that you weren't getting any money from the traditional—

Stevenson: I was getting some.

DePue: …Jewish community?

Stevenson: It had gone way down, and some of it shifted. And workers weren't all there.

DePue: Workers, you mean campaign workers?

Stevenson: Traditionally, as you're pointing out, a lot of them were Jewish. Some stood fast and were proud. Others... You're a self-hater. I mean, you can be really abused by fellow Jews if you don't toe the line. They have an expression for it.

DePue: But wouldn't the worker part of the equation be very focused on the Chicago area and the Northern suburbs of Chicago, where it was traditionally Democratic strongholds anyway?

Stevenson: Yeah. This is money, primarily. It's also votes, and it would be primarily up here.

DePue: I know this subject is going to come up again when we talk about the challenges that were made about the election results. That looks like it might be at a later date, if that's okay with you.

Stevenson: There is a sequel to this, proof.

DePue: Yeah, absolutely, and I definitely want to spend plenty of time talking about that. That's why I don't want to try to cram it into today's session, if you're okay with that.

Stevenson: Sure.

DePue: The third debate, also, there were allegations from the Thompson folks that pork barrel…that you didn't do a good job of bringing home the bacon to Illinois.

Stevenson: That is just totally false. We really made it a big priority, bringing home the bacon. I could document that. I had a really good staff working full-time on what we call projects. They always make these complaints. A lot of them were water projects, all over the state. We brought home the bacon. Fortunately, I had committee assignments that helped, and because I was this workhorse, really working with my majority leader—who was also chairman of the

Appropriations Committee—I was able to bring home the bacon. They can say anything, but that is totally unwarranted.

DePue: The fourth debate was October 16 in Carbondale. Do you remember anything about that last debate?

Stevenson: No.

DePue: How about endorsements? By this time you're deep in the campaign; you're just two or three weeks away from the election, and it's about the time that newspapers, unions, and other organizations are coming out with endorsements. Do you recall how you fared in that respect?

Stevenson: I think I got some lukewarm labor endorsements. I did not get, of course, the *Tribune*, and the *Sun-Times* went over to Thompson. There aren't many Democratic papers downstate. I think the one that I was really disappointed in and surprised by was the *Post-Dispatch* in St. Louis. I should've gotten that. Thompson must've really worked them over. But that had been, in the past, a Democratic paper and supporter. Democrats always came up short on newspaper endorsements.

DePue: Well, what's distinctive—

Stevenson: I think the *Pantagraph*, which we no longer controlled, may have supported me or was neutral. I can't remember. It was on—

DePue: That was the Bloomington paper, yeah?

Stevenson: Yeah, Bloomington paper.

DePue: And labor unions—and this is a change from what most people think normally is alignment—most of them did come out for Thompson, especially the public sector unions.

Stevenson: Yeah, for reasons I've mentioned. I don't get many special interest groups. I'm not for sale.

DePue: You mentioned already the late polls were putting you eighteen points behind in the election. What was your and your campaign team's mood going into election?

Stevenson: Let's see, we're talking about eighty-two?

DePue: This is otherwise a very tough year for Republicans, and it's an off presidential year, but they know they're going to have some serious losses in the House and the Senate.

Stevenson: Nobody was giving me a prayer, and we didn't take polls. I don't know what we expected. I don't think I was surprised that all of a sudden, we started pulling ahead as the votes were reported. But we noticed that big Republican DuPage County was holding back its votes, so we raced people out there.

I had watchers there, and they observed, at the Remake Center, the DuPage authorities punching out punch cards. This was the first time these punch ballots had been used in Illinois. People were unfamiliar with them, and it was raining, and a lot of the cards were messed up. We saw them just punching out, in order to express the intent of the voter. This is totally illegal. Then they released, finally, enough votes to put Thompson over by 1/7th of 1 percent.

DePue: Did the Democratic machine, the old traditional Chicago Democratic machine, come out and do the traditional business of turning out the vote on Election Day for you in Chicago?

Stevenson: I don't think they gave me much choice. I made a big mistake. I think Vrdolyak was the county chairman then.

DePue: Ed Vrdolyak?

Stevenson: Ed Vrdolyak. And he asked me for money. I didn't have it; I didn't give it to him. As a consequence, the sample ballot that the precinct workers passed out didn't include the names of the candidates for governor and for lieutenant governor, because I hadn't paid.

DePue: You mentioned already, the Election Day is November 2; the results of that election, very thin margin. It was only validated by the State Board of Election on November 22, a 5,074 vote lead for Thompson, out of well over 3.6 million votes out there. That's a decent turnout.

Going back to Election Day, and then the rest of this we're going to lay out in our next session, if you're okay with that. I wanted to talk to you a little bit about Election Day. Do you remember where you were voting?

Stevenson: God... I voted… Our residence was in Hanover, northwest Illinois, but I remember being here in Chicago.

DePue: That's where your main campaign office was?

Stevenson: Yeah…listening to the returns. It was a long, long, long night. I can't remember how I… I must've voted out there and come in town or voted early or something. But I remember Tom Hynes coming in.[32] I was trying to get a

[32] Thomas C. Hynes was an American politician who served as Cook County Assessor, president of the Illinois Senate, and 19th Ward Democratic Committeeman. Hynes was also a candidate for mayor of Chicago in 1987. (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thomas_Hynes)

little sleep. This thing had turned around. It really sort of energized everybody.

DePue: When it came in as close as it did.

Stevenson: Oh, boy. We thereafter immediately took advantage of our rights under the law to spread lawyers over virtually all the counties in the state to examine the precincts, examine the ballots. They came up with **overwhelming** evidence of all kinds of irregularities. John Schmidt was my lawyer, a former associate attorney general of the United States. We presented this evidence, some of it, to the court. Do you want to get into this now?

DePue: No, I would like to be able to cover it in quite a bit of detail, so I think it would be better if we postponed, if you're agreeable to that.

Stevenson: Sure.

DePue: I think that's the only way to do this subject justice.

Stevenson: Okay.

DePue: So let me finish today with this question… I already read the quote that your father had about campaigning and revealing character. On November 2, were you proud of the campaign that you ran?

Stevenson: Yeah, I think I was **very** proud, considering the outcome. We hadn't any money; we had discussed the issues, and we're up against the Israeli lobby, and lost most of the newspapers, and the people of Illinois were coming through, as they always had. Disappointed that I hadn't won, but I think kind of exhilarated. It really recharged all the batteries. We **really** got mobilized for this recount.

DePue: I think we've enticed any readers here to want to be diving into the next session that we have. You and I will go ahead and stop for today. Then all we have to do is figure out when that's going to happen. Thanks very much, Senator Stevenson. You were thinking that maybe your memory wouldn't be that good in the discussion today; you did a remarkable job.

Stevenson: Well, I'm trying. Thank you.

(end of transcript #1)

Interview with Adlai Stevenson III

IST-A-L-2014-019.02
Interview # 2: August 5, 2014
Interviewer: Mark DePue

DePue: Today is Tuesday, August 5, 2014. I'm Mark DePue, Director of Oral History with the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library. Today I am on the near north side of Chicago, sitting with Senator Adlai Stevenson III. Good afternoon, Senator.

Stevenson: Good afternoon. Good to be back.

DePue: We had a very interesting session last time. We talked a lot about the 1982 election. To remind any listeners to this later, you've already had an extensive interview back in 2000. So this is part of the project I'm doing with Governor Thompson, and we're focusing almost exclusively on 1982 and 1986.

As I said, we had a very fruitful discussion last time on 1982, but I wouldn't let you finish (both laugh) with your discussion about the recount afterward. Before we jump into that, a reminder here that the unofficial count the next morning put Thompson in the lead by 9,401 votes. With something like three and a half million votes counted, that's about as razor thin as you're likely to get. But in the lead-up to the election, in a lot of the polls, he was leading significantly, 15-20 percent.

I wanted to start with this question for you: How do you explain why that margin of 20 percent disappeared when Election Day came along?

Stevenson: I've never trusted polls. In fact, they cause a lot of mischief in our politics because you have to keep the money coming in to keep yourself in the polls to keep the money coming in. It's part of the problem. Instead of polling opinions that are uninformed by debate, we really ought to be focusing on debate.

I had campaigned without much money, all over the state and strenuously. We debated several times. I think the message, which is primarily focused on economic development, an elaborate plan for the state, was getting through. The main problem from the beginning was—and I'm sorry if I'm repeating what I said before—was my efforts in the Senate to prevent terrorism and bring peace to the Middle East, which had led to introduction of the Comprehensive Anti-Terrorism Act of 1979 and another measure to reduce U. S. financial support for Israel, until such time as the president could certify that its policies were consistent with U. S. policies.

Well, this alienated the so-called Jewish lobby, and a great many traditional Jewish supporters switched, or they bowed out. Of course, some like Philip Klutznick, former president of the World Council of Jewry—and one of my advisors—stood fast. But the net result was I had very, very little money. And a number of traditional Democratic voters in the state had gone over to the other side or were just dropping out, certainly by more than enough to make the difference. But having said all that, we won the election, and we had proof. We had eyewitnesses.

DePue: What I'd like to do now, Senator, once we get into this, is kind of take this step by step, and lay it out in some detail. I'll give you a chance to elaborate quite a bit on what you've said now a couple, three times on this. Before we begin, tell me the position that you are going to be challenging this election, the position that the State Board of Elections is going to be having in this.

Stevenson: The State Board of Elections, as I recall, certified the election of Jim Thompson. But we had rights under the statutes to field people, all over the state, in the polling places, to examine the ballots.

DePue: After the election.

Stevenson: Yeah, after the election. They were mostly lawyers, and they produced evidence, overwhelming evidence, of **extreme** misconduct at the polls. For example, DuPage County, which is a very large Republican county, withheld its vote until late in the evening, when it released just enough to put Thompson over the top.

We had observers at what they called a remake center. This was the first time Illinois had the punch card ballot. People were unfamiliar with it; it had been raining. If they kept the polls open, we would've won by… We'd have won clearly. But the polls were not kept waiting; many people in

Democratic Cook County couldn't vote at all. And, as I say, in Republican Cook County, these ballots were coming in, without having been punched right. This is where the hanging chads were first discovered that became famous in the Bush-Gore election.[33] But nobody paid any attention. We saw them actually punching out these punch cards, the authorities, to quote, "Express the intent of the voters." I could go on. There were irregularities all over the state.

We presented this evidence to the Supreme Court, as was our right. But it tolled the clock. It didn't do anything until three days before the inauguration of the next governor, by which time it was too late for us to go to federal courts or whatever. By one vote, they denied us a recount.

DePue: Let me lay out some of the specifics here. I'm actually holding… I think this is the Supreme Court decision that determined this. So, November 2 is the election, and the unofficial count put Thompson ahead by about 9,000. The Illinois State Board of Elections, which was pretty new, had been created, by a piece of legislation, I think that Thompson had signed, as well as the law that governed recounts, which is one of the ironies of this. They made their decision announcement on November 22, a 5,074 vote margin in favor of Thompson. I understand you immediately challenged that.

Stevenson: Oh yeah.

DePue: And you had already done something like 25 percent of the precincts, in terms of—

Stevenson: John Schmidt was my lawyer, and he'd remember more of the details. I thought we had the right to go into the polling places after certification by the board, but I may be wrong about that. I can't remember.

DePue: I know that, in that case, you were asking for… Was it 100 percent of selected counties or 100 percent of the state?

Stevenson: We were asking for the whole state, a recount of the whole state.

DePue: Everybody remembers the 2000 election. It doesn't happen overnight, does it? It takes a long time to do that.

Stevenson: Oh, the 2000?

DePue: No, a recount of the entire state, in this case, would've taken many days, instead of just—

[33] In the 2000 United States presidential election, many Florida votes used Votomatic-style punched card ballots where incompletely punched holes resulted in partially punched chads: either a "hanging chad", where one or more corners were still attached. These votes were not counted by the tabulating machines. The aftermath of the controversy caused the rapid discontinuance of punch card ballots in the United States. (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chad_(paper))

Stevenson: That's one of the reasons, I guess, that a court just tolled the clock, waited until… I don't think it would've taken terribly long, but they waited until three days before the inauguration to announce their decision.

DePue: So as I understand, November 22, and then December 7, Stevenson and Stern—I think Stern is his lieutenant governor candidate—

Stevenson: Running mate.

DePue: …filed with the clerk of court an action to petition of state election contest, in other words, challenge to yours. Then I think… Yeah, December 10, Thompson and Ryan filed a motion to strike the petition, and December 13 Stevenson and Stern filed objections to the motion to strike. So, it ends up in the court. Does that mean that from December until this decision comes down, there is no recount going on?

Stevenson: There was no recount, no.

DePue: And then the decision comes down on January 7.

Stevenson: In many, if not most, jurisdictions, in an election that close, a recount is automatic. In this case, the court did nothing until three days before the election.

DePue: Before the inauguration.

Stevenson: The inauguration. I'd been advised by counsel, including a federal district judge, that we had no recourse in the federal courts.

In the case of Bush-Gore, the Supreme Court did take jurisdiction, and effectively elected Bush by a partisan one-vote majority, confining their decision to the facts of that case, which is enough to arouse some suspicion.

DePue: As I understand it, it dealt with Florida election law, essentially.

Stevenson: Yes, and as I recall, the Florida officials wanted to recount parts of the state, not all of the state, and I think the U. S. Supreme Court said that was not proper.

DePue: Let's get back to the specifics that you've raised here. One of the things you've said, that there were lots of voters—I assume, in Chicago—that weren't able to vote because the voting booths, the election stations closed?

Stevenson: There were long, long, long lines at the polling places when the polls closed. I think that was very largely because of unfamiliarity with this new voting system, and it was raining. Hands were wet; the cards got wet and folded; the people had to be told how to vote.

DePue: The hour that the polls closed, was that determined by state statute, or by—

Stevenson: That I don't know, but it's not unusual for polls to stay open. We did not find irregularities in Cook County, which surprised people because that's reputed to be where all the crooks are. But that is the most watched jurisdiction, probably, in the country. You get to DuPage County, or go downstate to little Washington County, or go to Kankakee, and [at] most of these places, there aren't any watchers. In some of them, there weren't any Democratic election judges. These are downstate, supposedly pristine counties, and we found irregularities there, all kinds.

DePue: You've mentioned the nature of the punch ballots. What else were you finding in downstate areas?

Stevenson: For example, in Kankakee, in one precinct in Kankakee, which was a public housing project, I won like 80, 90 percent, which was to be expected. But all the absentee ballots for that precinct came in 100 percent for Thompson.

I remember, in Washington County there was only one election judge. There were no Democrats, and she said it was against God's will to record straight Democratic ballots. I've got the name of somebody who can testify—because he saw it with his own eyes—what was happening in DuPage County. But John Schmidt, who presented some of this evidence to the court, could give you a lot more detail than I can.

DePue: I would like to get his contact information, if he's willing to talk about this.

Stevenson: Yeah, he's at Mayer Brown, my old law firm. I can get that for you.

DePue: And was all of this raised as part of your petition to the Illinois Supreme Court?

Stevenson: Yeah. John, again, could be more explicit. And the court ruled by one vote, and that vote was cast by a Democrat, who went over to vote with the Republicans.

DePue: Let's deal with that, and then we'll go back to the specifics of the vote fraud challenges themselves. That particular justice is—

Stevenson: Seymour Simon. I'm told—this is hearsay—told by a reliable source, who I can give you off the record. He tells me that one reason Simon voted as he did was because the Thompson administration was funneling a great deal of legal fees to Simon's son.

Another informant, with whom I served in the legislature—he later became a judge—told me only a few months ago, maybe a year ago, that Simon, his friend, my friend, had told him he was voting as he did on the

Supreme Court because of "Israel." Of course, I was a friend of Israel. I even wrote the Arab Anti-Boycott Act.

DePue: And Simon is Jewish?

Stevenson: I would assume so. But as I say, many, many Jews were for Israel, too. I was trying to save Israel. Look what's happened since, including 9/11.

DePue: I know we talked about this a little bit last time, but I guess for my own clarity and understanding, why, explicitly—shall we call them the Jewish lobby—why were they upset with you?

Stevenson: I remember… When was it that Paul Tsongas was running for the Democratic presidential nomination? He called me repeatedly to ask me to head up his national campaign. I didn't want to do it. Finally, I said, "Paul, before you persist, maybe you ought to check with the Jewish lobby." And he called back—not the Jewish lobby, the Israeli lobby—he called back and said, "You're right, Adlai" (laughs).

It goes back to what I was saying earlier. I had been in the Middle East, starting in sixty-seven, when my wife and I trailed the Israeli troops into the Golan Heights and the West Bank. We saw the evidence of ethnic cleansing, and we heard it in the refugee camps. In [one location] there weren't any human beings. This was ethnic cleansing. I was horrified. Incidentally, Seymour Simon was with me on that trip. He was a friend. But nobody else came with Nancy and me on this little side trip that we took. We saw not one human being circumnavigating the Sea of Galilee.

I went back many, many, many times after that, including as chairman of the Senate subcommittee on the collection and production of intelligence. In other words, I could meet with the CIA station chiefs and study this region. I became increasingly concerned.

After the election of the Likud in seventy-seven, it began its very aggressive and unlawful settlements policy.[34] In defiance of the United States and at Camp David, Egypt was effectively neutralized. That's when I began the first, probably only, in-depth study of terrorism in the United States. It took a year, and it led to measures for Israel's benefit, as well as America's and the world's, to my defeat.

DePue: I'm going to take this opportunity to jump way ahead to 2014, because as you and I sit here, about two weeks ago, somewhere in that neighborhood, Israel, after being repeatedly rocketed by Hamas and Palestinians from the Gaza area, decided to invade the Gaza area, to root out all the Hamas terrorists, and

[34] Likud, officially the Likud-National Liberal Movement, is a center-right to right-wing political party in Israel. A secular party, it was founded in 1973 by Menachem Begin and Ariel Sharon in an alliance with several right-wing parties. (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Likud)

to go after the tunnels that the terrorists have dug and to go after their cache of missiles. Here's an opportunity for you to jump ahead and share your feelings about what's going on today.

Stevenson: If anybody really wants a detailed description of Israel's militarization, starting with the Six-Day War, they ought to read a book by Patrick Tyler. I can't remember the name of the book, but Patrick Tyler is a journalist and the author. He can take you through it, step by step by step. Every one of these incursions, these attacks, these invasions, becomes bloodier and more destructive than the last, this more so. They're hitting at U. N. shelters for innocent children.

I certainly don't defend Hamas, but they're going to end up helping Hamas. Hamas was in difficulty with many other countries in the region that didn't approve its tactics. But Hamas now, not to mention the Palestinians, are gaining support because of the overreaction of the Israelis, their resort to artillery and to missiles and to invasion with troops and tanks against people who are starving; they're imprisoned; they're blockaded; they don't have power; they don't have food; they don't have medicine.

Much of the world, certainly in Europe… The United Nations [U.N.] is appalled. This steady progression is a result of Israel's militarism and refusal to go along with the United States, including Secretary [of State] [John]Kerry, and trying to establish not only a durable truce but also a permanent settlement, based on withdrawal from occupied territories, in mutual recognition of a Palestinian state that reconciles Hamas with Abbas and Fatah, his regime.[35]

The Israelis have demonstrated over and over and over again that they prefer to resort to militarism, to force, and they get dug in deeper and deeper. This is only the latest. Won't be long before those rockets are replaced with weapons of mass destruction. It could be chemical; it could be biological.

DePue: I'm sure you've heard the comments that Hamas's charter not only doesn't recognize Israel, it doesn't recognize Israel's right to exist, period.

Stevenson: Well, I'm not a supporter of Hamas (laughs). In fact, Hamas and the Palestinians that I knew, including [Yasser] Arafat, because nobody talked to him.[36] I was an emissary once for him. They all accept the right of Israel to exist. The Arab states as one, the Arab League, they've all accepted it. That's

[35] Fatah, formerly the Palestinian National Liberation Movement, is the Palestinian nationalist political party that nominated Mahmoud Abbas, president of the State of Palestine and Palestinian National Authority, in the Palestinian presidential election of 2005. In 2005, Hamas won in nearly all the municipalities it contested. (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fatah)

[36] Mohammed Yasser Abdel Rahman Abdel Raouf Arafat al-Qudwa al-Husseini, popularly known as Yasser Arafat, was a Palestinian political leader. He was chairman of the Palestine Liberation Organization from 1969 to 2004 and president of the Palestinian National Authority from 1994 to 2004. (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yasser_Arafat)

one of the reasons Hamas has these difficulties. Why should we be helping Hamas? The Palestinians—

DePue: Why don't you just put that up here, Senator?

Stevenson: The Palestinians themselves tried to overcome this with a reconciliation government that subordinated Hamas. But the Israelis couldn't accept that either.

DePue: What would you say, today, would be legitimate borders that would make up a new Palestinian state?

Stevenson: Basically, it's what the United Nations and hitherto, or at least in the past, always accepted. It's required by law, international law, the sixty-seven boundaries, 1967 boundaries, with some adjustments. Arafat accepted that. He also wanted a buffer zone, U.N. enforced.

DePue: Would that include a divided Jerusalem, then?

Stevenson: Yeah, **East** Jerusalem would be divided, yeah. It's almost as if people don't realize that Israel is occupying Palestine. It's not the Palestinians occupying Israel. Palestinian people have been deprived of their land, their birthright. Sixty-seven is pretty generous. It's a lot more generous than the Israelis were granted in 1948.

DePue: Let's go back to—

Stevenson: It may be impossible now.

DePue: Yeah. It's the intractable problem that's existed for, not decades, but centuries maybe.

Stevenson: We're creating more of them in other parts of the world, too.

DePue: Let's go back to 1983 now. You mentioned the problem with the hanging chad. I read someplace there was uncovered more than 41,000 defective ballots in Florida. What was the central argument that you had about the nature of the punch ballots and the hanging chad, whether or not they should be counted?

Stevenson: The lawyers made the argument, but the voter votes. If the ballot is defective, then it gets tossed out. The election authorities have no right to cast your vote for you. I think that's pretty clear.

DePue: So you're saying if there is any question about a particular ballot, based on hanging chad or smudges or being wet, anything like that, it should be thrown out?

Stevenson: Well, there wouldn't have been a question. They were punching out these ballots, as to which they thought there was a question. They resolved that question by punching out the chad.

DePue: In that case, you're saying that Republican operatives in some of these precincts—

Stevenson: DuPage County. I don't know what all the offenses were in all the counties. We just found this mass of evidence which others... Bill Mattea is the witness to what happened in DuPage, though I think there are others. John Schmidt would have more evidence. Any other country or state, for that matter… Ukraine had a similar case of a remake center. A recount is automatic, but not by one vote in the Illinois Supreme Court.

DePue: When you got the word of the decision, just three days before the inauguration, what were you thinking?

Stevenson: I can't remember what I was thinking. I have a pretty good idea of what I would have been thinking. The people have been deprived of their choice for governor, and the state's moving in the wrong direction. It really had moved in the wrong direction. It wasn't the same state that I left in 1970 for the United States Senate. It was overrun by lobbyists; the money was pouring in. Pinstripe patronage, I ran against. I had an economic development plan.

I think that the seventies, in some ways, was transitional. What happened in Illinois was beginning to happen in Washington and other parts of the world. Of course, now we're stuck…Washington, with an almost totally dysfunctional and gridlocked government. That corruption was beginning in… Well, it began after I left in 1970. I don't remember Springfield being like that at all, let alone when my father was governor, although there always were some exceptions (laughs).

You can't be in Illinois politics without knowing something of the underside, too. Paul Powell was never a friend of the Stevensons, but we took them on. Take on the gun lobby. Fight it out.

DePue: Did you attempt, at that point, when the Illinois Supreme Court came down with that, to pursue other options, or did you accept that you weren't going to win this?

Stevenson: I had to accept it at that point. There wasn't any time to do anything, and, given the advice of our lawyers, we had no recourse in the federal courts. Given that Supreme Court decision, maybe that was a mistake. Maybe we should've filed some kind of a case in the federal courts, as well as the state court, after that tight election.

DePue: But that would've needed to happen long before this date. Is that what you're saying?

Stevenson: Yeah, I think we would've been thrown out of court. The lawyers were unanimous. And historically that was the case, federal courts do not get involved in election disputes. They'd be weighed down forever. Came as a real shock in 2000 when they did get involved. They were careful to say that this is one time only. Then by a partisan one-vote majority, they rejected [Al] Gore after the public had rejected [George W.] Bush.

DePue: Did you pick up the phone and call Governor Thompson with congratulations at that time?

Stevenson: (laughs) I don't think so. (DePue laughs) I was not feeling in a congratulatory mood at all. In fact, I was probably starting to think about the next run at him.

DePue: In the 1970 Illinois Constitution, there were several questions about that constitution that went to the public for them to vote on, outside of the Constitution itself. Then, however the public voted would be what the Constitution would say.

One of those was the process for selecting judges, whether or not it should be by vote or should be an executive appointment, confirmed by the legislature. In this case, it was by vote. Illinois justices are determined by vote. Do you think that was a mistake in the seventy Constitution?

Stevenson: Oh, it's a mistake in all of the state Constitutions. This is the only country on earth that elects judges, except for Bolivia. No, we reformers, from day one, had supported—as somewhat like the federal case—gubernatorial appointments, but from carefully screened lists of candidates, screened by bar associations and the like. That had always been—

DePue: Would it have turned out differently for you if there was a Supreme Court that was chosen differently?

Stevenson: I just don't think there'd be any question about it. Well, there could be a question about it. I clerked for the Illinois Supreme Court, as a young man fresh out of law school, and I clerked for a judge who was a brilliant jurist and a wonderful human being and appointed (laughs). He was appointed to fill a vacancy, Walter Schaffer, by Governor Stevenson. No, I guess I can't say that there wouldn't have been a question, but given a first-rate...

Well look, I have to say there could be a question, because look at what happened in the U. S. in 2000, when the court, by one vote, effectively elected Bush. They were presidential appointees. But you see now, I think, even the Supreme Court becoming politicized or more political.

DePue: Is that to say that you think the U. S. Supreme Court ruled incorrectly in 2001?

Stevenson: Yes. It disobeyed all of its own precedents. I believe in the rule that started incisives, except in egregious cases. How can we know what the law is if we aren't consistent? They consistently said the federal courts will not get involved. Yet, when it came to electing a Republican, a Republican majority of the court did get involved, in Florida. They should've followed precedent, left it to Florida.

DePue: I'm going to take up the questions that the Illinois Supreme Court made their rulings on. One was that "the Stevenson allegations about voting irregularities and miscounted ballots were not strong enough to warrant a lengthy and costly ballot review" (Stevenson laughs). Your challenge to that?

Stevenson: It's too costly, I guess, to give the people their choice. It wasn't too costly for the Republicans in 2000. Too costly to give the people their choice? And how much? No, that's absurd. I mean, it's disgraceful. It's worse than absurd.

DePue: Here is the other one: the question of the constitutionality of the Illinois statute that determined the process for doing recounts in the first place. "The Constitution does not confer upon the general assembly the power to create a court, or to alter the basic character of a court, the power conferred upon the general assembly to provide for the procedure to be followed and the manner for conducting an election contest." Essentially, the Illinois Supreme Court said that the legislature, which as I understand it, set up this three-member court to evaluate this process... That act of setting up that three-member court was unconstitutional?

Stevenson: Yeah. Well, it's been so long, I don't remember the details. But I do recall that they, in effect, declared there are no recounts in Illinois. That sounds like what you're saying. They had no recounts in Illinois. People can't win their choice at the polls.

DePue: Do you know if there's been a law written since this?

Stevenson: I think there has, to make it automatic, as in other states, if it's close like this.

DePue: Let me see if I can find just a couple other things. Here's one that the majority of the court ruled against you. Here's some language that they used, "The allegations of paragraphs seven and eight of the petition, that the official results were incorrect, and the petitioners believe that they had received the highest number of votes, do not come close to being positive and clear assertions that a recount would change the results of the election. They amount to little more than an expression of hope." That's what was in here. And then there's another comment about the petition not being explicit enough, or specific enough.

I want to find what the minority of the court was saying, if I can get to that quickly. I apologize for taking a little bit of time here. Here's what the minority was saying, a pretty strongly worded minority in this, as I understand

it. "If neither statute is constitutional, it appears that Mr. Stevenson and Ms. Stern would have no means under the Constitution to contest the results of the election. This would result in a blatant denial of due process."

Stevenson: That's what I was saying a moment ago. There's no recount process. You can be as egregious, as corrupt, as you like. There's no recourse for the people. That offended the minority on the court, and rightly so. [It's] denial of due process, to say the least.

DePue: As far as you were concerned, did both sides rule, based on their political preference, rather than judicial philosophy?

Stevenson: Well, not both sides (laughs). The minority was upholding the law. The majority, including that Democrat who told others why he voted as he did—it wasn't for any legal reasons—denied the people their right to a recount.

DePue: Here's what I read in one of the newspaper accounts of all of this; this is your comment: "Tonight we fold our tents, but we will return to fight another day."

Stevenson: (both laugh) That's what I was thinking I might have been thinking, like four years later.

DePue: So, even that early, you say, "I'm going to do this again." Is that what you're saying?

Stevenson: I hadn't recrossed that bridge, but I was thinking that the people just can't be deprived of their rights this way. I'm going to do something about it. I always have been—

DePue: January 11, that's the inauguration. Did you attend the inauguration ceremony?

Stevenson: No way.

DePue: Would you normally have?

Stevenson: I don't think I was invited.

DePue: What I want to get to next is a few questions about—I'm sure you're very familiar with this, as well—U. S. Attorney Dan Webb now takes up the issue of whether or not there is vote fraud going on.[37] From the early statements about this grand jury investigation and the actual investigation done by his office, they were to check every registered voter in Cook and DuPage Counties.

[37] Daniel K. Webb is an American lawyer and public official. He is the co-executive chairman of the international law firm of Winston & Strawn and a former U.S. Attorney for the Northern District of Illinois. As the U. S. Attorney for the Northern District of Illinois, he was the top federal law enforcement official for the city of Chicago on behalf of the U.S. Department of Justice. (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dan_K._Webb)

Stevenson: When was this?

DePue: January 19 is when this started.

Stevenson: In—

DePue: In 1983.

Stevenson: I don't remember that. He's a Republican, an active, partisan Republican, Dan Webb. I don't know what his role was at that time.

DePue: He made this statement at the time he declared that this investigation was going on: "We have not received any specific allegations of vote fraud in any precinct outside the city of Chicago."

Stevenson: That could be true; I don't know. We certainly had the evidence, whether you call it vote fraud or vote stealing or—

DePue: Wouldn't John Schmidt have approached the U. S. attorney about the things he was seeing in DuPage County?

Stevenson: You'd have to ask him. I don't think we were prolonging this at that point.

DePue: Are you aware, then, of the extent of the investigation that Dan Webb's office, U. S. Attorney's office, conducted for the election?

Stevenson: No, and I certainly wouldn't trust him. I doubt that we wanted to prolong this. We would've looked like bad losers.

DePue: I'm reading a couple passages, just to get your reaction.

Stevenson: Was Dan Webb...? Who was Jim Thompson's successor as U. S. attorney?

DePue: I don't know if Webb was his successor, but this was ten years after Thompson was out of that office, but he was certainly the U. S. attorney at that time. I know that he was one of the people coming up with Thompson.

Stevenson: With Thompson, yeah.

DePue: …while Thompson was there. I'm going to read from an article by Hans von Spakovsky, entitled—and this is an article written several years after the fact—"Where there's smoke, there's fire. 100,000 stolen votes in Chicago."[38] One of the passages he has states, "The U. S. Attorney in Chicago at the time,

[38] Hans Anatol von Spakovsky is an American attorney and a former member of the Federal Election Commission (FEC). He is the manager of the Heritage Foundation's Election Law Reform Initiative and a senior legal fellow in Heritage's Meese Center for Legal and Judicial Studies. He has been described as playing an influential role in making alarmism about voter fraud mainstream in the Republican Party, despite no evidence of widespread voter fraud. (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hans_von_Spakovsky)

Dan Webb, estimated that at least 100,000 fraudulent votes, 10 percent of all votes in the city, had been cast. Sixty-five individuals were indicted for federal election crimes, and all but two were convicted. Of those two, one was found incompetent to stand trial, and the other had died." So, essentially, sixty-three people were convicted of vote fraud, all from Cook County. Are you familiar with any of that?

Stevenson: No. They don't bother to investigate DuPage County, do they?

DePue: That's why I started off by saying that Dan Webb made the statement that he would investigate all the votes in DuPage and Cook County. But I have no evidence of—

Stevenson: I don't think you'll find it.

DePue: …that he had looked hard at DuPage County.

Stevenson: Or any Republican county.

DePue: Are you saying you don't believe that they had found significant vote fraud in Cook County?

Stevenson: We didn't find it, so I'm very skeptical. You could ask our lawyers if they know anything.

DePue: I can tell you this, Cook County Democratic Chairman, Edward Vrdolyak—

Stevenson: He was a bad guy.

DePue: …stated that Webb's investigation unfairly focused on Chicago, while ignoring Republican-leaning districts.

Stevenson: Well, Ed Vrdolyak was no friend of mine. Of course, [it] wasn't long before he became an active Republican, a little more profitable, maybe.

DePue: I've been putting you on the spot here, Senator. I apologize for that, but I wanted to get—

Stevenson: No, no, it's your job. I don't feel on the spot. Makes me a little angry sometimes to think back [about] what happened.

DePue: What did you do between 1983 and… I assume 1985 is when you seriously started to run again for governor of Illinois?

Stevenson: I went back to the law firm, and I began doing things on the side, organizing. After leaving the Middle East, I focused on East Asia. So, one of the things I did was to organize the company with a Japanese bank as a partner to intermediate transactions across the Pacific. This was just as the Japanese

were beginning to invest in the U. S., in the early eighties. We created this company to advise them. I still have that company. It advised Japanese on their way out, and it's been active in China for many years.

I had a farm to run and a book to write, plenty to keep active, but I did not go back to being a lawyer full-time. At some point, later in the eighties, I think, I gave up law altogether and worked full-time with this company I had created, worked there full-time.

DePue: What kind of law were you practicing at the time?

Stevenson: I think in the early eighties I was of counsel, so I had an office there. Most of what little practice... I was looked upon to generate…as a source of business, more than the practice, because I'd been in government so long, I really wasn't a very good practitioner. But I did do bank loan work. We represented the Continental Bank.[39] I generated business, and I helped with documenting deals for the Continental Bank.

DePue: Did you end your run with a campaign debt in eighty-two?

Stevenson: I think we did, but it was tiny; it was very, very, very small. I don't remember the amount. We were very stingy, very economical and didn't raise much money, didn't spend much money. I don't think I ever ended a campaign with much debt, maybe a little. It's hard to end perfectly balanced. I think after the seventy campaign I had a little debt, which was easy to repay. Debt after that election would've been difficult to pay off, so I don't think we had much debt.

DePue: When did you start thinking seriously about 1986?

Stevenson: (sighs) I really don't know. I think I told you last time about that poster on the wall behind you.

DePue: Right.

Stevenson: I think that's from sixty-five, in the spring. The spring is when the sap rises in the maple trees. In an unguarded moment I was asked if I was thinking about running, and I said, "The sap is rising" (both laugh). It was one of the stupidest things I ever said. Boy, the press gave me a hard time. My staff gave me a hard time. So I don't know, sometime in the spring of that year I started thinking seriously about running again.

DePue: Spring of eighty-five.

Stevenson: Yeah.

[39] The Continental Illinois National Bank and Trust Company was at one time the seventh-largest commercial bank in the United States as measured by deposits, with approximately $40 billion in assets. In 1984, Continental Illinois became the largest ever bank failure in U.S. history, when a run on the bank led to its seizure by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation. (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Continental_Illinois)

DePue: Had the party already come and approached you about the possibility of a run?

Stevenson: No. I think by then the party was beginning to sort of come apart. We'd been torn by council wars, Vrdolyak and Harold Washington.[40]

DePue: Washington was mayor by eighty-five, I think, wasn't he?

Stevenson: I think he was; that's what I'm thinking. He was a supporter of mine. I remember talking with Vrdolyak, who clearly wanted to know where he would fit. I remember brushing him off with, "You'll have your priorities, and I'll have my priorities." I thought that was sort of sufficiently enigmatic, and that got rid of him.

DePue: Were you saying he was interested in having some kind of role, if you were elected governor?

Stevenson: I think he was looking for patronage and wanting some assurances because I had a very bad reputation; I was honest (DePue laughs). He didn't want to cross me. But he was hoping he could get some assurances, and that's how I replied. I get these campaigns mixed up, but I don't think I had much opposition for the primary.

DePue: I read that Neil Hartigan was part of the potential list of Democratic candidates that year and that he, I guess, decided to run again for the Illinois attorney general position, which he got elected to in eighty-two.

Stevenson: Yeah, we backed him off. We had a couple of debates, and he receded. I don't recall any other contenders that year.

DePue: He's going to be running in 1990, did he figure that he's got time to consider?

Stevenson: He could get reelected as attorney general and not run the risk of getting defeated in a primary for governor.

DePue: Do you remember when you declared that you were going to be running in eighty-six?

Stevenson: No.

DePue: Was that the fall of eighty-five, maybe?

Stevenson: I don't have the faintest idea.

DePue: That's typically the timeframe. I guess my question is, did you know at the time you announced that it would be Jim Thompson as your opponent?

[40] The Council Wars were a racially polarized political conflict in the city of Chicago from 1983-1986, centered on the Chicago City Council. (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Council_Wars)

Stevenson: Oh, I assumed so, but I didn't, I guess, know.

DePue: Well, Edgar was kind of still waiting in the wings.

Stevenson: Who?

DePue: Jim Edgar, Secretary of State Edgar.

Stevenson: Yeah. To the best of my recollection, I just assumed it was going to be Jim Thompson again, and I was kind of looking for a rematch.

DePue: Did you have any preconditions, if you will, for running, things that you wanted to have in place before you made the decision to run?

Stevenson: No. In those days you picked your candidate for lieutenant governor. That was important to me. I had a fatal problem, actually, with Vrdolyak. He wanted money from my campaign, and I didn't have any money. In the past, Daley had always given **me** money. Here he was, I think, at this point, the Cook County central committee chairman. I refused to give him any campaign funds and said he should be giving me funds, whereupon, when the sample ballots the organization would pass out in the primaries, didn't list me and my running mate. And up against the LaRouche candidates, that probably made a difference.[41]

DePue: In other words—

Stevenson: People didn't know that—

DePue: …there was supposed to be a sample ballot that had your names on there that—

Stevenson: Precinct organizations in some of these campaigns used to pass out a sample ballot, just to tell the voters who the endorsed candidates were of the Democratic Party. I didn't appear, and these crazy cultists [LaRouche candidates] got nominated for lieutenant governor and secretary of state.

DePue: Certainly, if not Thompson, your name was the most recognized name in Illinois politics at that time, so it's not so much your name on the ballot. But I wonder if you did any kind of campaigning. Did you spend any money on campaign ads for the primary?

[41] Lyndon LaRouche ran for the Democratic nomination for president of the United States eight times, beginning in 1980. A fringe political figure LaRouche fueled his eight presidential campaigns with conspiracies involving Queen Elizabeth, AIDS and communist spies before going to prison for swindling his supporters. (https://www.reuters.com/article/us-people-larouche/lyndon-larouche-perennial-u-s-presidential-candidate-dies-at-96-idUSKCN1Q22Y5)

Stevenson: I don't think so. We never had very much money. We might've started putting out bumper stickers and posters and that sort of thing, but I'd be very surprised if we had any money to spend on radio or television.

DePue: Who had you selected as your running mate?

Stevenson: Let's see, was that Grace? It was Grace Murray and—

DePue: Was it George?

Stevenson: Oh, George Sangmeister.[42] He was a highly qualified, senior, respected state Senator from the southwest suburbs [of Chicago], really strong candidate. And then for secretary of state, Pucinski.[43]

DePue: Aurelia Pucinski.

Stevenson: Aurelia Pucinski. I don't know about Pucinski, but George, who was my handpicked candidate, he had concerns all along, and I dismissed them. We should've done what I'd done once before, when I was running for state treasurer. We could've gone before the election board and gotten these LaRouche candidates tossed off the ballot, challenged their petitions.

DePue: Was Sangmeister telling you that he was wanting to have that occur?

Stevenson: No, later on he got concerned.

DePue: You mean before the primary?

Stevenson: No, after the primary.

DePue: When it was kind of too late.

Stevenson: Oh no, I mean before the primary. Yes, of course. He was becoming concerned. I don't know what all of his reasons were. We were all running as if there was no contest. The newspapers didn't cover it. The *Sun-Times* said there was no contest for lieutenant governor.

DePue: I read that article. That was a surprise. "They're running uncontested" was how it was stated.

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[42] In 1976, after two terms in the state House, he was elected to the Illinois Senate. Sangmeister became a powerful Democratic leader in the state Senate, and, in 1986, Democratic nominee for lieutenant governor. In 1988, Sangmeister was elected to Congress in a marginally republican district. After three terms in the House, he declined to seek re-election in 1994, citing his frustration with national politics. (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/George_E._Sangmeister)

[43] Aurelia Marie Pucinski is a judge on the Illinois Appellate Court for the First District. She previously served as a trial judge and clerk of the circuit court in Cook County, Illinois. Although Pucinski had the support of Democratic gubernatorial nominee Adlai Stevenson III in the Democratic primary for Secretary of State of Illinois in the 1986 Illinois gubernatorial election, she was upset by LaRouche supporter Janice Hart, who failed to win in the general election. (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aurelia_Pucinski)

Stevenson: Yeah. Well, the people went in, not knowing there was a contest. They either didn't vote at all; they voted blind, or… I never talked to George about this, but my suspicion was that seeing Pucinski and Sangmeister against these Anglo-Saxon smooth names for the LaRouches, Fairchild and whatever the other was—

DePue: Hart. Janis Hart and Mark Fairchild.

Stevenson: They said, "Oh, Sangmeister and Pucinski, that smells of Cook County and the organization." So they voted blindly for these anti-Semitic cultists, LaRouche cult candidates, forcing me to resign the nomination.

DePue: Do you know, was that primarily rural Democrats and southern Illinois Democrats that were voting for Fairchild and Hart? Or was that a factor going on in the city, as well?

Stevenson: I think it was going on everywhere, but downstate that could've been a factor. I don't think the regular organization went to bat for us, because I hadn't given Vrdolyak money and because there weren't any contests, up and down the line, nothing to really get out the vote, the regular—

DePue: Nothing to get the voting public energized.

Stevenson: No contests, the papers said so. I didn't think there was a contest.

DePue: What were the polls saying prior to the primary vote? What were the polls saying, and what did you believe in your gut were your chances against Thompson in eighty-six?

Stevenson: First of all, with one exception, I never took polls. I didn't have money, and I didn't need polls to tell me what was right. The one exception was for placing advertisements, television advertisements, and the consultants insisted on a poll. What do you need polls for? I knew what the people were thinking. I knew the state like the back of my hand, and I knew what was right in my own mind. I was perfectly willing to debate, but why polls? I'd rather spend the money on television.

DePue: But did you think you could beat Thompson prior to the primary?

Stevenson: Oh, absolutely no question about it. I don't think anybody would've had any question about it. Going back to eighty-two…There's some real pros around here; ask a fellow like Alderman Edmund Burke of the Chicago City Council who won that election.[44] Ask him about fraud. There's absolutely no doubt in

[44] Edward M. "Ed" Burke is an American politician who is the alderman of Chicago's 14th Ward. A member of the Democratic Party, he was first elected to the Chicago City Council in 1969. Burke is the longest-serving alderman in Chicago history. He and his staff were the subjects of federal and local investigations, and members of his staff were the targets of indictments and convictions involving payroll and contracting irregularities. (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edward_M._Burke)

their mind, and there certainly wasn't about what was going to happen. After what happened in eighty-two, there was no doubt about what was going to happen in eighty-six.

DePue: That there would be a large protest vote, that you'd gotten ripped off?

Stevenson: Yeah. Besides that, Thompson wasn't all that popular. We would've run by a landslide.

DePue: Why do you think Thompson was so vulnerable in eighty-six?

Stevenson: Partly because of what was happening in the state. I was running against corruption, against pinstripe patronage. It wasn't much of an issue. Politics had changed. The economy was weak. And I think there was real feelings of remorse and bitterness over what had happened in eighty-two. People would've come out big time. And I don't think the Israeli issue would've been much of a factor.

DePue: Was part of your thinking that, by eighty-six Thompson would've been governor for ten years; that's just long enough for anybody?

Stevenson: Yeah, that would've been a part of it, too. People were ready for a change. As I recall now, the economy was kind of—

DePue: Let me just bring out some specifics here, as far as the economy is concerned. This one kind of surprised me; I thought it had rebounded by eighty-six better than it had. Unemployment rate was 7 percent, still high. It had come down quite a bit from eighty-two, but it's still 7 percent. Inflation at the beginning of 1986 was 3 percent. By the time you get the election, that was cut in half. So that was a very low inflation rate by the time you get to the election. Mortgage rates were also coming down very quickly, but at the beginning of 1986, I believe, they were still in the neighborhood of 10 percent. We would think that's an astronomical figure for mortgage rates today. So that's the basis of the economy.

Then there's the issue of the state budget. I believe that was one of the challenges that you had. Now, the governor's probably going to come out with his state budget around the March timeframe, maybe shortly after the surprise primary. Do you remember any specifics about the budget that year?

Stevenson: It's just too far in the past for my old mind to recall.

DePue: Yeah, that's what, thirty-five, forty years, something like that, thirty years?

Stevenson: I remember, once during that campaign—maybe I mentioned this before—Harold Washington used to campaign with me. Was he still mayor then?

DePue: Yeah.

Stevenson: He'd go out and work the subway stations with me. He invited me into the office once, his office, to meet with a Democratic Party official from St. Clair County, this is the East St. Louis area. Did I mention this before?

Stevenson: No.

DePue: This man, black man… I can't remember his name or his title, but he was a big figure in St. Clair County Democratic politics. That's a traditionally very solid but corrupt county. Harold introduced me, and this person said they would like to support me, but they'd need some financial consideration. And I remember saying, "Well, Harold knows I don't play that kind of game. No, I'm sorry. I'm really stretched. I'd welcome your financial support."

The next thing I know, he was supporting Thompson, and after the election they named a big street in East St. Louis for Thompson (laughs). You can imagine the response that he got when he called on Thompson (laughs). Harold Washington was a wonderful person.

DePue: I wanted to ask you a little bit more about the LaRouche supporters. Tell me what the LaRouche candidates were all about. What was their party platform, if you will?

Stevenson: (sighs) I first bumped into them in Washington. I can't remember all the details now, but it was all about monetary theory, and at first blush it sounded reasonable.

DePue: I think they wanted to abolish the International Monetary Fund, among many other things.[45]

Stevenson: All I remember is that they came up with these monetary theories, and I was on the Banking Committee. Maybe that's why they came at me. At first blush I took it seriously, but it didn't take very long to realize these were kooks. They were also anti-Semitic. But there was a veneer of intellectualism that I guess persuaded some people. It didn't take you very long to realize this was a cult. But I don't recall all the details now. Thank you, Adlai.

DePue: I wanted to ask you next about the decision to run as an independent. My understanding of Illinois politics and election law at the time… I understand your issue of being on the same ticket as Mark Fairchild, who was the lieutenant governor candidate, voted as Democrat; he won the primary as a Democrat. I understand your concern. But if you're going to file as an

[45] The International Monetary Fund (IMF) is an organization of 189 countries, working to foster global monetary cooperation, secure financial stability, facilitate international trade, promote high employment and sustainable economic growth, and reduce poverty around the world. The IMF's primary purpose is to ensure the stability of the international monetary system—the system of exchange rates and international payments that enables countries and their citizens to transact with each other. (https://www.imf.org/en/About)

independent, didn't you need to do that long before March or April of 1986? Did you need to take this issue to court?

Stevenson: No. No, we had a right to file petitions and get on the ballot as a party. I don't remember the technicalities, but that's what we did.

DePue: Why use the name Solidarity Party?

Stevenson: (laughs) For obvious reasons, Democratic solidarity. Alan Dixon and others urged me to stay on the ticket and just carry this guy on my back, Fairchild.

DePue: Because they thought it would confuse the electorate otherwise?

Stevenson: Well, it was very confusing, undeniably so. But I could not, in good conscience, do that. I could not put this man within the proverbial heartbeat of the governor's office. And I was concerned also that we would lose straight Democratic ticket votes with these cultists, two of them, on the Democratic ballot. So, all we could do was to form a third party, which then nominated me for governor, and… Who was[nominated] for lieutenant governor then?

DePue: Was it Jane Spirgel for secretary[46]—

Stevenson: Yeah, Spirgel, Jane Spirgel.

DePue: …for secretary of state. And I've got Mike Howlett as[47]—

Stevenson: Oh, Mike Howlett, of course, who just died. Mike Howlett was terrific. He gave up a sitting judgeship, made a real sacrifice for the party and the state to run as my… His father had been well known; he was auditor of public accounts and so on.

DePue: So this isn't the same Mike Howlett that had been beaten by Thompson in seventy-six.

Stevenson: No, this is his son. He was a fine person, professor and a judge and a good man. [I] just went to his wake. Spirgel for secretary of state, and then we had the possible task of persuading the voters of Illinois to vote the straight Democratic ticket, and cross over and **also** vote for the Solidarity Party ticket

[46] Jane Spirgel was the secretary of state candidate who ran with Adlai Stevenson under the banner of a new political party in 1986. Spirgel, from New York, spent the previous 12 years as the only Democrat on the DuPage County Board. She was elected Democratic state central committeewoman from the Sixth Congressional District and had been an instructor in the public administration program at Northern Illinois University in DeKalb. (https://www.lib.niu.edu/1986/ii8608020.html)

[47] Michael J. Howlett Jr., son of a former Illinois secretary of state, was an accomplished attorney, popular law professor and a Cook County judge. In the 1986 Illinois gubernatorial election, Howlett Jr ran as candidate for lieutenant governor with former U.S. Senator Adlai Stevenson III, who had formed a new party. Stevenson-Howlett went down to defeat in the fall, with only 40% of the vote. (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Michael_Howlett)

candidates for governor, lieutenant governor, and secretary of state. There was one person, a commodity trader, who came up with $500,000—

DePue: Is that Rich Dennis?

Stevenson: Yes. …thinking that the people were entitled to a contest. With election laws what they are, that would've not been possible. Very little money, not much, my family came up with $70,000 or something. We had very little money.

DePue: In other words, this whole fiasco was just the kind of thing that would turn donors off?

Stevenson: Well, I don't think it would turn donors… I think a lot of donors felt that it was a prudent and a honorable thing to have done, but that we didn't have any chance of winning. As it was, we got about 40 percent of the vote; it's amazing. Think what we would've gotten if we had been running on the Democratic ticket.

DePue: Why didn't you include Sangeister and Pucinski on this? Why did you go with two different people?

Stevenson: Yeah. I guess because they'd been defeated.

DePue: That they were damaged goods politically?

Stevenson: Well, they'd been defeated, so shouldn't run them again. Maybe they didn't want to run. I don't remember.

DePue: Now, even by 1986, the Democratic machine in Illinois is still strong. How strongly did the Democratic Party come out in support of you after this?

Stevenson: Oh, the party was terrific. They really went to bat. I don't remember any problems with the party. I'd always had occasional problems with labor unions; I just wasn't quite regular enough.

DePue: I know that Thompson worked very hard to procure the labor union endorsements.

Stevenson: Yeah. He cut in places. So ironic, he was a tough man for tough times.

DePue: You say that ironically. That was his slogan, right?

Stevenson: That was his. I'll never forgive one of my campaign consultants, managers, because I was being portrayed as a wimp, and he was a tough man for tough times. I insisted that this guy use some of our limited television [money] to portray me for what I was, a Marine Corps veteran of Korea, who had volunteered for combat in Korea and served there as a tank platoon commander. And they never ran that.

Thompson even cut into veterans organizations. He pleaded 4-F, asthma. That never came across, and to this day, I've asked other consultants why, running against a draft dodger, did my consultant refuse to depict me in my tank. I still don't know the answer.

DePue: I know one of your consultants was David Axelrod. Was he the one who was fighting that particular tactic?

Stevenson: He was one I requested, and I gave him a photograph of me in a tank. Didn't happen.

DePue: Do you remember who your campaign manager was that year?

Stevenson: I don't necessarily. Axelrod was sort of the consultant and maybe the manager. Larry Hanson might've been.[48]

DePue: I think that's the name I saw.

Stevenson: I think it was Larry Hanson. Oh, Larry Hanson, yeah, and he just never... I consulted with him, "Why don't we go down to the election board and get these guys thrown off the ballot?" He said, "Oh, why make a fuss over it?" He never forgave himself for that unfortunate advice, and I agreed with him. Why have a flap over nothing? But it was a terrible mistake.

DePue: You're saying to get them thrown off prior to the primary?

Stevenson: Oh, yeah, yeah, get them just thrown off the ballot.

DePue: I know that the economy was one of the issues that you talked about. Do you remember some of the other issues that were percolating in Illinois politics at the time?

Stevenson: Taxes always percolate. I think Thompson, in eighty-two, swore no tax increase, and then after he got in office, he supported a tax increase.

DePue: There was a big **temporary** income tax increase in 1983.

Stevenson: Yeah. School consolidation, I don't remember what else.

DePue: I know that pinstripe patronage would've come up.

Stevenson: Oh, I tried to make an issue out of that. I remember a law partner coming up and saying, "We wish you wouldn't make an issue out of that, because when

[48] Lawrence "Larry" N. Hansen was a Vice-President of the Joyce Foundation. He grew up in Elgin, IL and graduated from the University of Illinois and married in 1969. He had a long history of public service and politics, such as work for Democratic politicians including Senator Adlai E. Stevenson, III and former vice president and presidential candidate Walter Mondale. (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lawrence_N._Hansen)

you get elected, we're going to want our share." That never would've happened in the old days. Law firms donated their services. Now they were competing for retainers.

DePue: I wanted to read a couple things, if I can find them quickly. Oh, here we go. Allegations about Thompson and the use of the mansion and a $450 a day food bill. And apparently one of the things that you called Thompson was a "big, blubbering, harpooned whale." (Stevenson laughs)

Stevenson: I should've done better than that.

DePue: Do you remember any of that?

Stevenson: No. What was that, again?

DePue: "A big, blubbering—"

Stevenson: No, but $450 a day for food?

DePue: At the mansion, yeah.

Stevenson: No, I do remember warning Jim Hogue, when he became editor of the *Sun-Times,* that he was going to be hearing from Jim Thompson. He's going to be all over him. He said, "Going to be? He already is all over me." And the next thing I know, Thompson is hosting a wedding reception for Jim Hogue in the executive mansion.

I also remember making an issue out of the state's air force. In the old days, the governor had an airplane, and that was it. But under Thompson… In fact, I tried to take the press in and show them, at the airport, the fleet. There were it seemed like dozens of airplanes, just used to transport politicians. They used to use Meigs Field, commute by plane, a lot of money. I was going to do something. I said, "We have one of the world's biggest air forces in the state of Illinois." That was a place where we could economize.

I never failed to point out—well, I sometimes pointed out—that, unlike Thompson and others, I had a record to run on. I had, as state treasurer, cut the budget every year, and I had quadrupled the earnings on the investment of state funds. I think I mentioned last time, he comes in, and with Jerry Cosentino, they start doing deals using state funds to subsidize—what's his name—Cossini or—

DePue: Cellini.

Stevenson: Cellini, and his—

DePue: Bill Cellini.

Stevenson: …hotel and recreational project, which went bust in Springfield, losing the state money.

DePue: How does the comptroller, though, cut the budget? That's a factor of the legislature and the governor, determining what the budget's going to be.

Stevenson: I was treasurer.

DePue: Treasurer, I'm sorry.

Stevenson: It's an example of increasing the productivity of governing. I slashed the payroll. It's hard; it's really painful. Those were good Democrats—

DePue: You mean in your particular office.

Stevenson: State treasurer. It was a good old patronage office. I could hire and fire at will, get first-rate people in and get rid of the deadwood. Then, with some ingenuity and good advice, come up with a system for the investment of state funds, which was, according to a Ford Foundation study, the model for the country. The mayor of New York invited me there to advise him on how to invest New York City funds.

DePue: I think we did mention that last time.

Stevenson: I had a record.

DePue: One of the charges that Thompson levied against you was that you were running a Chicken Little campaign. Do you remember that?

Stevenson: Vaguely, but I don't remember what it means. What was Chicken Little supposed to imply?

DePue: Well that you were making much to do out of nothing. I think that's the essence of his challenge.

Stevenson: Well, that's kind of a weak response. Maybe he didn't have a better one.

DePue: And you had made the charge that—especially talking about Thompson's Build Illinois project—that you contended that Thompson had ripped that off from the 1982 campaign platform, your platform.[49]

Stevenson: Well, it could be.

[49] "Build Illinois" was Illinois Governor Jim Thompson's all-encompassing attempt to deal with the state's crumbling infrastructure, disappearing jobs and shrinking tax base, an attempt to turn the state around after ten years of slow growth and neglect. (https://www.lib.niu.edu/1986/ii860115.html)

DePue: Again, I'm just reading from different articles here. "Before Thompson ever released the budget, Stevenson issued a rebuttal, contending that the governor had engaged in a decade of deception in drawing up the state's spending blueprints." What I'm kind of beating around the bush to ask is, would you characterize this as a nasty campaign, a lot of name-calling going back and forth?

Stevenson: Certainly not by today's standards. I really had no respect for him, but I don't think it was a dirty campaign. You have to create issues and just… I think basically it was issue-oriented. I just can't remember what all the issues were. I had a hell of a time running on issues because my program was too complicated for the media. The working press would tell me, "We can't report this. It's just too comprehensive and too complex."

DePue: That's certainly something you said for the eighty-two election. Did that still apply, or maybe even more so, in eighty-six?

Stevenson: Yeah, in both of them. But after what happened in eighty-two, I tried to simplify some, because what are you going to do? Eighty-six, that was just nightmarish. I spent an awful lot of time explaining the Solidarity Party ticket, and how people are going to have to crossover and vote for Solidarity and a straight Democratic ticket. I had to go around to labor unions, go around to everybody, just explaining what had happened and what we were trying to do about it. That was a diversion from issues.

DePue: What was your view about the press in eighty-six? I know you complained about their lack of focus on issues for the eighty-two election. Was that still true in eighty-six?

Stevenson: Oh, it was always true. I hardly every had… The press in this new era didn't attempt to cover you out on the trail. They'd go to a rally, maybe. At a news conference, you rarely got any questions about real issues. It was becoming more and more electronic.

DePue: Would you characterize the press as hostile towards your campaign?

Stevenson: Well, the *Tribune* is always hostile, except for a wonderful person on their editorial board, whose name I can't remember now, maybe [it will] come in a second. She used to write a great editorial supporting me, and then somebody would put a line at the bottom that would say, "Therefore, the *Tribune* supports Jim Thompson." I mentioned that to Bruce Dold, the editorial writer at the *Tribune*, not long ago. He was not amused at all. He knew who I was talking about. He mentioned her name, but I can't remember it now.

DePue: Who was the journalist you just talked to, though?

Stevenson: Bruce Dold.[50] He was on the editorial board. He heads the editorial board.

DePue: Dold?

Stevenson: D-o-l-d.

DePue: I know one of the comments that you made after Thompson came out with his budget. You made the point that that budget is not supported by revenues. He's going to have to raise taxes to be able to pay those bills. Does that ring a bell to you?

Stevenson: No, nothing rings a bell anymore, sorry. I'm too old and too—

DePue: How about this one? In terms of one of the things that Thompson passed early in his administration was Class X, which meant that the prison population was exploding, and one of the big businesses in Illinois was building new prisons.[51] Were there any comments or concerns that you had in that respect?

Stevenson: The one concern that I remember… I don't remember long, indeterminate, or just plain long sentencing in that whole issue, but there was a big locational issue. Prisons became sources of patronage. As a correctional matter, prisons should be located near the source of the prisoners to facilitate family reunions. It's just elementary, good corrections.

But in Illinois they were located for political reasons. So, a disproportionate number of the prisons went to southern Illinois, where Paul Powell and others made a big thing out of—

DePue: The economy was especially depressed.

Stevenson: Yeah, it was economic development and patronage. With was most of the prisoners coming from Chicago, that was bad corrections. I don't know that ever became much of an issue, but in my program, it was something I wanted to correct.

DePue: I did see, in one case, you were stating that, in many of these prisons, gangs were actually running the prisons.

Stevenson: I don't remember that, either.

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[50] R. Bruce Dold, a Pulitzer Prize winning journalist, is the publisher and editor-in-chief of the *Chicago Tribune*. Dold became a political writer before joining the editorial board in 1990. In 1995, he became deputy editorial page editor and columnist at the *Tribune*. (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/R._Bruce_Dold)

[51] The Class X felony is, short of first degree murder, the most serious felony offense on the books in Illinois. Upon a finding of guilt, the court *cannot* sentence the defendant to probation. The offense has a mandatory minimum sentence of 6-30 years in the Department of Corrections. The judge must sentence the defendant to prison. (https://www.criminallawyerillinois.com/2010/02/22/what-is-a-class-x-felony-in-illinois/)

DePue: How about this—another quote here—I'm really putting you on the spot today, Senator.

Stevenson: It's my brain that's on the spot (laughs). I just can't remember.

DePue: You were saying that Thompson was, "Kind of snide. He had no sense of humor. He was so obvious, so artificial. He was slippery. He'd do anything."

Stevenson: Well, I'm surprised I was that explicit (laughs). Did I say that during a campaign?

DePue: That's my understanding, yes. What the newspapers were picking up was that these are two people who just don't like each other.

Stevenson: It's certainly true in my case. I had no respect for him. But I'm a little surprised that I would've been that explicit. He was kind of the antithesis of everything I and my family stood for and presided over the conversion of Illinois from, our politics to his.

DePue: When you say the antithesis, I wonder if you can be more explicit. How were the two families different?

Stevenson: Well, winning is all that counts. Governing was what counted in our family. It was patronage and tactics. He didn't even serve when his time came. I think I told you about that time he lobbied for Cal Skinner.[52]

DePue: Maybe, but you might need to remind me.

Stevenson: He wanted me to nominate Cal Skinner for U. S. attorney, of all the gall. After hearing him out, Skinner called Larry Hanson and said, "We know Stevenson is close to Congressman Ralph Metcalfe," black Congressman from the South Side [of Chicago], who was a friend.[53] He was under investigation by a grand jury. Did I not mention that? Skinner told Hanson, according to Larry—who's no longer with us—that they didn't want me to be embarrassed. They knew I was close to Metcalf, and therefore they would keep me advised, or **he** would keep me advised of the grand jury's proceedings.

Grand jury proceedings are secret by law. In other words, this supplicant for the high law enforcement position was offering to violate the law to ingratiate himself with me. What kind of human beings are these? Just

[52] Calvin L. Skinner, Jr. is an American politician who served two tenures as a Republican member of the Illinois House of Representatives, from 1973 to 1981 and again from 1993 to 2001. (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Calvin_Skinner)

[53] Ralph Harold Metcalfe, Sr. was an American track and field sprinter and a politician. He later went into politics and in the city of Chicago and served in the United States Congress for four terms in the 1970s as a Democrat from Illinois. Metcalfe was a co-founder of the Congressional Black Caucus in 1971. (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ralph_Metcalfe)

no morals. I never would've... And then the gall of even coming to me to recommend Cal Skinner. That was different kind of politics. I'm a little surprised by some of my language. [It's] a little hard to control my feelings at times.

DePue: Illinois is notorious today for its politics, in part because of the nature of Chicago politics—you and I have talked about that a little bit—in large part because we sent four governors to prison over the last few decades.

Stevenson: Yeah, they were all the popular choice. The choices of the Democratic regular organization were my father, for example, Paul Douglas, for example. Dan Walker, who went to jail, he defeated Paul Simon, who was the party choice. You know, the party organization wasn't all dead. You waged war with shoe leather. Now it's all money. You have to compete on Republican terms, money.

DePue: The reason I phrased it that way is that you'd been talking about Jim Thompson, that he'd be willing to do anything to get reelected. But he was never challenged; he was never indicted. I don't know if there was even a serious investigation under the Thompson administration. He had fourteen years. How do you explain that?

Stevenson: You don't have to betray the public trust by violating laws. Much of this patronage system was not illegal. It's just not a way to serve the people.

DePue: If you had been governor, would there have been legislation forwarded that would make it illegal?

Stevenson: I doubt it. I kind of liked the old patronage system. I could fire people, incompetent people. Nowadays, what do you do? You have to keep hiring until you get somebody who's competent, because firing is very difficult. It's not as simple as it looks.

DePue: How about the pinstripe patronage? Would you have done anything, in terms of ethics legislation, to discourage that?

Stevenson: It's very difficult. I tried. I wrote the first ethics code for Illinois and also for the U. S. Congress and then had to enforce it as Ethics Committee chairman. That was a painful lesson, and I learned you can't legislate ethics. In some ways it becomes counterproductive. Everything that you declare unethical is, by implication, then ethical. You don't cover the waterfront; it just doesn't work. I had wasted more damn time.

I'm sure there are rules and regulations that could be strengthened, but "Basically, you pick the best people you can and back them to the hilt." That was a quote from my father, roughly. There's no way of legislating ethics.

DePue: I have another question, in terms of the substance, the issues of the campaign. In the midst of the campaign, Governor Thompson had vetoed a welfare cost of living increase. I don't know if that rings a bell for you or not.

Stevenson: No, I just can't remember anything.

DePue: Probably, with as many debates you've been in in your life, the debates all would kind of flow together, but I know that the first debate was September 10 in Chicago. At that point you came out strong and were using a recent study on Illinois and its discussion of Illinois as a location of doing business. I think you scored some punches in that debate, in that respect.

Stevenson: Again, I can't remember all that. But the economics, economic development and economic competitiveness had become one of my big thrusts in the Congress. I brought back some of my staff to develop this program for Illinois, to improve our competitiveness. Of course, it's still a big issue here.

DePue: Perhaps even more so today because, if anything, Illinois is much less of an industrial state than it was back in the 1980s.

Stevenson: I guess we've lost some manufacturing. A lot of my emphasis was on technology innovation. Manufacturing doesn't create the jobs it wants. It's partly because of labor productivity going up very rapidly in manufacturing, so you've got to stay ahead of the curve.

DePue: I believe it was at the second debate, September 25 in Springfield, that Thompson made a pledge to build no more nuclear power plants. Do you remember what your position on that issue would've been?

Stevenson: No, I wasn't against nuclear power plants. I don't remember that being an issue in that campaign. We had more nuclear power plants than any other state, and I was very concerned. They'd done some studies about waste treatment facilities. We weren't disposing of our waste, and that was an issue. It's still unresolved. But I don't think I ever opposed nuclear power.

I was also very much involved in energy in the Senate, chairman of the oil and gas subcommittee when the Arab oil boycott hit, and began developing the efficiency standards, the oil reserve, speed limits, all kinds of means of conservation. Conservation was the most effective way of producing energy. I don't remember coming out against nuclear power.

DePue: I'm looking at some comments that Thompson had made. One of them is, "I'm still constantly amazed at Stevenson's capacity to say things that are untrue, that he knows to be untrue."

Stevenson: Sounds like he didn't have an answer to whatever I was saying (DePue laughs).

DePue: And another one, that you were misrepresenting the GOP's incumbent's record on education. Education is always going to be a hot topic in Illinois politics. It certainly was in eighty-two and eighty-six both.

Stevenson: I don't know what the specifics were.

DePue: This might be one that you recall, the comments about Thompson, "The Illinois League of Women Voters criticized Stevenson Tuesday for comparing Governor James Thompson to a woman who can't say no." (Stevenson laughs) and "If he were a female, he'd be pregnant constantly." (both laughs)

Stevenson: Shame on me! (laughs) Well, that was very appropriate, very apt, but not very political, not very discreet. And the League took that up? (laughs) The League was always with me. I must've disappointed them.

DePue: So maybe not the best thing to say, but—

Stevenson: But right on target.

DePue: Late September, early October—I'm not sure of the specific dates—apparently there was some significant flooding in the Chicago area, in the collar counties.

Stevenson: When was this? Eighty—

DePue: This would be late 1986.

Stevenson: Oh, brother. Flooding was a real problem all over Illinois. I spent more time worrying about floods. They have more waterways in Illinois than any other state.

DePue: And normally, when you have to respond to disasters, it can either be a great boon to a political campaign or an utter disaster for a political campaign. It sounds like this one, to use a poor pun, was kind of a wash in terms of how it played out in the election, if you're not remembering any specifics on it.

Stevenson: I really don't remember how it came out. I just remember spending an awful lot of time getting grants for all kinds of water projects in Illinois. The federal government had made a terrible mistake, which was hard for me to oppose. We subsidized flood insurance for people who located in floodplains. That was bad policy. But because we had so many floodplains (laughs) in Illinois, I had to support it. We should be **dis**couraging people from building on floodplains; instead, we were doing the opposite. That was a real bind for me, because it's bad policy, but here, with more floodplains than any other state, I supported the subsidization of the insurance.

DePue: You got both the Mississippi and the Illinois River as well as the Kankakee River, and—

Stevenson: Yeah, and more than that.

DePue: I know that, in terms of the flooding, the only challenge that I read that you had made was that the governor was too slow on calling out the National Guard.

Stevenson: That may be.

DePue: At the end of the campaign, what did you think your chances were for being elected governor?

Stevenson: We're talking about eighty-six now?

DePue: Eighty-six.

Stevenson: Oh, I don't ever think I expected to win as a Solidarity Party ticket candidate, but we owed the people an alternative.

DePue: Did you ever consider, during that election, after the primary, of bowing out and letting somebody else take a chance at it?

Stevenson: No. Bowing out and letting...? I don't understand how that works. Fairchild [the LaRouche candidate] was the problem. I couldn't get him to bow out. I wasn't the problem. I couldn't just bow out and accept defeat. I either had to run with that guy tied to me, or I had to do what I did.

DePue: Did you think you had any chance of victory?

Stevenson: Oh, I'm sure I thought there was **a** chance, but not much of one.

DePue: Do you remember election night?

Stevenson: No. I remember the eighty-two election night. I may have gone to bed early, eighty-six. We didn't have much of a chance.

DePue: It was pretty soon after the election polls closed that the newspapers were calling the election for Thompson.

Stevenson: Sure.

DePue: Did you call Governor Thompson yourself that night to congratulate him?

Stevenson: I don't think so. I don't recall doing that. Maybe I should have, but I was never very enthusiastic about him.

DePue: Would you characterize yourself as bitter about the whole election process?

Stevenson: No, I don't feel bitter. That's just not part of my makeup. I felt disappointed. Gee, I think we probably, on the whole, were disappointed but felt we'd done amazingly well.

DePue: The election protocol would normally be that the defeated candidate does pick up the phone and make that call.

Stevenson: Yeah, yeah. Well, there was nothing normal about that campaign (laughs). Maybe I did. I don't remember. I don't think so. I don't remember calling him.

DePue: Let me put this machine on pause for a second. I'll see if I can find the numbers, because I don't have them in front of me. I'll start this up again. I found the election results: Thompson, 52.7 percent, 1,656,000 votes; Stevenson and the Illinois Solidarity Party, 1,257,000 votes, with 42 percent.

Stevenson: Forty-two? I thought it was closer. Forty-two to fifty-two, that doesn't add up.

DePue: Yeah, it doesn't add up. There would've been other candidates here. I had printed something out, and I didn't bring that with me. I apologize for that.

Stevenson: I thought I got fifty-two... Oh, no, I guess that is—

DePue: There were a couple other candidates. There was a libertarian candidate, and I think there was another candidate on there as well. So, that's the end results of that particular election. It was a fairly significant victory for Thompson and still a respectable number for you. You were surprised that you had done that well, apparently?

Stevenson: Oh, yeah. Running as the Solidarity Party ticket candidate?

DePue: You'd been beaten twice now in gubernatorial elections. What's going on in your mind about your political future after that election?

Stevenson: I think after that election that my political career has come to an end. Eighty-six... I don't think I ever gave thought to seeking public office again. I supported some other candidates. The party came to me… What was the year Blagojevich ran?

DePue: For president or for Senate?

Stevenson: Blagojevich, for governor.

DePue: Blagojevich first ran in 2002.

Stevenson: I was trying to think... Eighty-six... Mike Madigan and, through an emissary, Richard M. Daley and others tried to get me to run a third time for governor. I think that was the year Blagojevich was running.

DePue: Would that have been the first time Blagojevich ran, in 2002, or the second time?

Stevenson: Well, if I ran in eighty-six, it would've been in 2000, four years later.

DePue: You mean 1990.

Stevenson: Wait a minute, eighty-six, 1990, 1990. What am I talking about? Nineteen ninety.

DePue: That was the year that Jim Edgar was running for governor, and Hartigan ended up being the Democratic candidate in that year.

Stevenson: Maybe that was the year that they tried to get me to run. I remember there was one effort after eighty-six. Madigan assured me I'd have no primary opposition. Maybe it was ninety. By that time I had decided no, no more. That's funny. What year did Blagojevich run?

DePue: Again, Blagojevich ran for the first time in 2002, and it didn't take long for Blagojevich and Mike Madigan to have a serious falling out, where they despised each other. I suspect that Madigan would've been happy to have a credible Democratic opponent for Blagojevich in 2006. But that obviously didn't happen, because Blagojevich was reelected in 2006.

Stevenson: I was supporting Vallas then. It must've been—

DePue: Vallas would've been running in the 2002 primary, and Blagojevich just barely squeaked Paul Vallas out.

Stevenson: Yeah, I supported Vallas in eighty-six, ninety... That must've been ninety. I don't think after ninety I was in the running for anything.

DePue: Let me finish off with a few general questions. Between 1986 and 2014, let's say that Illinois politics has remained an interesting thing to watch.

Stevenson: Between when? Nineteen eighty—

DePue: Eighty-six, when you got defeated the second time, and today.

Stevenson: Yeah.

DePue: Illinois politics has taken a lot of twists and turns in those years. Do you have any reflections on the nature of Illinois politics today?

Stevenson: Illinois is as close to a cross-section of the country as there is. We're always accused of being corrupt. I did some research once, maybe outdated, but concluded on the basis of federal prosecutions for official corruption that we were pretty near the norm.

It's ironic, but you can trace much of the dysfunction here and elsewhere to the decline of the party. The party was not perfect by any means, but all the great presidential candidates of the Democratic Party, and for governor and Senator here, were candidates of the regular organization.

DePue: When you get away from that, then you get problems? Is that what you're saying?

Stevenson: You get money and tactics. We didn't have to compete with money, because we had patronage workers, people in the precincts. My father couldn't compete today. I wouldn't want to. I don't know why qualified people would want to run today.

I was in Washington this week—I just couldn't believe it—at a think tank at the Johns Hopkins Center for Advanced International Studies. You can't conduct foreign policy because the Congress is so politicized. Personality, you're judged by your bankrolls. You can read the papers; there's no real discussion of issues.

DePue: The current president of the United States, Barack Obama, has emerged out of Illinois politics. Is he an exception to the rule?

Stevenson: No, I think he's part of the process. He's highly intelligent and an academic, but he's not a fighter. He's not conditioned by a great deal of experience in the world. He tends to… In the legislature, even, he voted "present." He tended to seek the path of least resistance. He's certainly honest; he's intelligent, but he's no Roosevelt. He's more of a Clinton.

Here in Illinois, I think there's some really good people that get very little attention. Some of them are moving up the ladder, Sheila Simon, for example.[54] Paul Vallas is back now as a lieutenant governor candidate. A fellow named Frerichs, who's running for treasurer, I happen to know.[55] He's really extraordinary; he speaks Chinese, imagine that.

DePue: How about Lisa Madigan?[56] She's normally a name you hear—

[54] Sheila J. Simon was the 46th Lieutenant Governor of Illinois, from 2011 to 2015. In 2014, she was the Democratic nominee for Illinois State Comptroller, losing to Republican incumbent Judy Baar Topinka. She was previously a professor of law at the Southern Illinois University School of Law. (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sheila_Simon)

[55] Michael W. Frerichs is the State Treasurer of Illinois, having taken office on January 12, 2015. Prior to being elected treasurer, he was a Democratic member of the Illinois Senate, representing the 52nd District from 2007 until 2015. (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mike_Frerichs)

[56] Lisa Murray Madigan, a member of the Democratic Party, served as attorney general of the state of Illinois from 2003 to 2019, being the first woman to hold that position. She is the adopted stepdaughter of Illinois House Speaker, Michael Madigan. (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lisa_Madigan)

Stevenson: I think highly of her. There are still some troopers out there, but it's a very difficult process because you have to raise money, and it's very difficult to raise money if you're not corruptible.

DePue: You've had a long career, many years in the public eye as a public official, both at the Illinois legislature and constitutional offices in Illinois, as a U. S. Senator, a couple failed attempts at running for governor. What would you look back in your career and be most proud of? What was your most important accomplishment? (Stevenson laughs)

Stevenson: Well, I was instrumental in the downfall of Richard Nixon (both laugh), is an accomplishment. I'm very proud of my record as state treasurer. There I had my hands on the levers. I could really run my own show, and to repeat, quadrupled the earnings and cut the budget every year.

In the Senate, they used to say there were workhorses and show horses, and I was a workhorse, and as such, the youngest, most junior member of the majority's Policy Committee. I was selected from all the Senators, as a junior, to head a special committee to reorganize the Senate. That meant realigning all the committee jurisdictions, updating them, something very delicate. Your committee and your committee jurisdictions are your lifeblood. They had to have somebody they could trust. As a junior I got that assignment, chairman of that special committee. And we did it, probably for the only time in the history of the Senate. You never get any recognition for things like this.

On the policy front, all sorts of initiatives, including the first systematic efforts to promote our economic competitiveness. That meant science and technology, Stevenson-Wydler Technology Innovation Act, the Bayh-Dole Act, which I authored. The computer revolution followed, and not coincidentally, exactly. Oh God, a whole lot of legislation, none of which ever got any attention. The only thing I ever did, efforts to prevent 9/11. Terrorism became an issue after the fact. That's what happens if you're serious; you really don't get much attention.

Now, if I'm chairman of the Ethics Committee, and I'm trying a Senator to the Senate, boy, does that get attention. That was another inside, horrible responsibility. It doesn't go to just anybody. But I was trusted. After having helped write the first comprehensive ethics code, [I] was put in charge of implementing it. That was a horrible job. My supporters used to complain, "Well, we never read about you." That's because I was working (laughs).

I never made a telephone call to solicit funds. I did one, one once, and I felt so guilty and dirty afterwards, I never did it again. So, you don't raise much money; you don't get much attention, but somehow or other I think it still can work.

I remember when I was one of the finalists for vice president in 1976, I appeared with Jimmy Carter before the press in New York, and somebody out in the press said, "But you're not known. You're not flashy. You've got no charisma." I responded by saying, "I was just reelected in the state of Illinois, a large and pivotal state, by a two-to-one majority. Maybe the people like a hardworking, serious Senator." Nobody had any response to that.

I still think it may be possible to win by being totally honest, totally scrupulous, and informed, demonstrating what it takes, which is courage to be right. But we don't have many opportunities anymore, because party organization is dead; the media is episodic and visual, and you have to raise money. However, there are some out there who are struggling. There are some very good ones.

DePue: How about on the flipside? Those are the things you're proud about today still. How about any particularly strong disappointments? We spent our time talking about two, but is there anything in particular in your long career that you would look at?

Stevenson: Well, I sure as hell (laughs) wish I'd knocked those LaRouchies off that ballot! [DePue laughs] God, what a dumb thing to have done or not done.

Female: Sorry, I didn't know!

DePue: We're close to finishing up.

Stevenson: We're being interviewed right now.

Female: So sorry to interrupt! I just wanted to come say, so you had to interrupt for the trees.

Stevenson: Yeah, we're being recorded right now.

Female: Beg your pardon, all right.

DePue: How about this one for you, Senator. How would Illinois history be different if you'd won in either eighty-two or eighty-six?

Stevenson: Oh, I think the whole atmosphere would've been different. Pinstripe patronage would've gone by the board. We'd have had first-class civil servants in all of the public offices, worked in cooperation with the legislature. I'd have made very high priorities out of education, infrastructure. We just squeezed the fat out of that fat budget. I don't know. I think a governor really can make a difference in this state.

DePue: Can?

Stevenson: Can, yeah. That's the office I always wanted. But fate plays a big hand, and I had that chance to run for the Senate. And that was very fortuitous. [I] left to run for governor, and didn't make it. So that's a disappointment. I never got to the office I really wanted.

And another… Richard J. Daley tried to get me to run for president in seventy-six. I felt I wasn't ready, so I ran as a favorite son here, picked up some delegates, which we subsequently gave to Carter, cinching his nomination. I felt I wasn't ready, but in looking back, I sometimes wonder whether I wasn't relatively ready (laughs).

DePue: Would you have thought Jimmy Carter was ready in seventy-six?

Stevenson: No, not really. I didn't know him. He's a **very** decent human being, but he wasn't ready. That's what I'm saying. I think I was relatively ready. Maybe that was a big mistake. That's such an awesome responsibility and prospect.

DePue: How would you like to close up our interview today?

Stevenson: I think we just did (laughs). No, you ask very pointed questions, very perceptive, and obviously reflects a lot of research as well as thought. I'm just sorry my old brain isn't more retentive at the moment.

DePue: Senator, be that as it is, I thought we had a great couple sessions here, very informative sessions. I appreciate you taking the time and giving me the opportunity to do this.

Stevenson: Thank you, Mark.

(end of transcript #2)