

# Title Page & Abstract

An Interview with Mike Lawrence

Part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library  
*Illinois Statecraft* – ERA Oral History project

Interview # ISE-A-L-2022-027

Mike Lawrence, an Illinois state-house reporter during the ERA fight from 1972-1982, was interviewed on the date listed below as part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library's *Illinois Statecraft* - ERA Oral History project.

Interview dates & location:

Dates: Apr 7, May 17, 2022    Location: Lawrence residence in Springfield, Illinois

Interview Format: Digital audio

Interviewer: Mark R. DePue, ALPL volunteer

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

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

Transcript being  
processed

Total Pages: \_\_\_\_\_    Total Time: 1:27 + 0:51 / 1.45 + 0.85 = 2.3 hrs

Session 1: Experiences of a journalist covering the ERA fight in Illinois

Session 2: Challenges in Illinois politics leading to difficulties in passing ERA

Accessioned into the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Archives on (   date   ).

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

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## Abstract

Mike Lawrence, *Illinois Statecraft*, ISE-A-L-2022-027

**Biographical Information/Overview of Interview:** Mike Lawrence was born on August 17, 1942 in Chicago, Illinois, and grew up in Galesburg, Illinois. Mike had his first by-line in the *Galesburg Register-Mail* at the age of 14 and continued with that paper through his college years at Knox College, in Galesburg, and afterward. In 1966 he moved to Davenport, Iowa and worked on the *Davenport Times* (later the *Quad City Times-Democrat*) until 1986, covering Illinois politics. That job took him to Springfield frequently to cover state-level Illinois politics.

In June 1974 he established a *Quad City Times* bureau in Springfield, covering statehouse politics full time. From 1972 through 1982 Lawrence covered the legislatures yearly battles over the Equal Rights Amendment, which had been sent to the states in the Spring of 1972 following its passage in the U.S. Congress. There were many close votes over the years, but due in part to the state's requirement to pass the amendment in both houses of the legislature by sixty percent or more, it was never adopted in Illinois. Lawrence asserts that part of the reason for its defeat in Illinois was also due to the political dysfunction in Illinois during that period. And due Phyllis Schlafly's Stop ERA movement, (Schlafly had a national reputation but was from Alton, Illinois) the state became the chief national battleground for ERA.

**Subject Headings/Key Words:** Equal Rights Amendment; *Quad City Times*; Esther Saperstein; George Ryan; Gov. Jim Thompson; Gov. Dan Walker; Mayor Richard J. Daley; Susan Catania; Cutback Amendment; 1975 Illinois Speaker selection; corruption in Illinois politics in 1970s; Cumulative voting in Illinois House elections;

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

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