

Title Page & Abstract

An Interview with Lee Daniels

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

Interview # ISL-A-L-2011-053

Lee Daniels, the longtime Republican leader of the Illinois House of Representatives, and Speaker of the House from 1995-1997, was interviewed on the date listed below as part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library's *Illinois Statecraft - Legislators* Oral History project.

Interview dates & location:

Dates: Nov 3 & 4, 2011, Feb 8 & 9, Mar 8, Jun 5 & 6, Jul 31 & Aug 1, 2012

Location: Elmhurst, Illinois in Speaker Daniels' law office

Interview Format: Digital audio

Interviewer: Mark R. DePue, Director of Oral History, ALPL

Transcription by: Audio Transcription Center, Boston, MA

Edited by: Jan Culp, ALPL volunteer

Total Pages: 353 pgs Total Time: (1)1:50 + (2)1:18 + (3)1:56 + (4)1:52 + (5)1:25 + (6)1:50 + (7) 1:25 = (8) 1:36 + (9) 1:24 / (1)1.83 + (2)1.3 + (3)1.93 + (4)1.87 + (5)1.42 + (6)1.87 + (7)1.42 + (8)1.6 + (9)1.4 = 14.64 hrs

Session 1: Daniels' early life and first year in the IL House of Representatives

Session 2: Daniels' early career in the IL House to his selection as minority leader

Session 3: Daniels as Republican Minority Leader, 1983 to 1986

Session 4: Daniels as Republican Minority Leader, 1987 to 1992

Session 5: Daniels' service in IL House from 1992 to selection as Speaker in 1995

Session 6: Daniels' term as House Speaker in 1995-1996

Session 7: Daniels' service as Republican leader during 2nd Edgar Administration

Session 8: The George Ryan governorship

Session 9: The Ryan and Blagojevich years and the end of Daniels' career

Accessioned into the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Archives on April 9, 2013.

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

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Abstract

Lee Daniels, *Illinois Statecraft*, ISL-A-L-2011-053

Biographical Information Overview of Interview: Lee A. Daniels was born on April 15th, 1942 in Lansing, Michigan, and grew up in Elmhurst, Illinois where his grandfather and father worked as lawyers. He attended the University of Iowa, graduating in 1963, and immediately enrolled in the John Marshall Law School in Chicago. He passed the Illinois Bar in 1967, and joined his father's law firm in Elmhurst. By that time, he was already an elected Republican Party precinct committeeman from Elmhurst, in politically conservative and reliably Republican DuPage County. He was appointed to the York Township Board of Auditors in 1966. In 1974, he ran for the Illinois House of Representatives and won.

For the next thirty-two years Daniels served in the Illinois House of Representatives, beginning his career by casting a vote for a Democratic Speaker, William Redmond, personally breaking a deadlock that had gone on for 93 separate roll call votes. In 1983 he was selected as the leader of the Republican minority in the House, a position that he held until 2003, with the exception of the 1995-1996 legislative years when he served as the Speaker of the Illinois House during the time that Republicans were in the majority. During this long tenure as a leader in the House, Daniels was involved with all of the most important legislative initiatives, and in the yearly budget discussions. He reflects on his experiences with all of the prominent political leaders of the day, including Governors Jim Thompson, Jim Edgar, and George Ryan, as well as his counterparts in the Illinois state legislature, including Mike Madigan, the state's long-serving Speaker of the House, plus Illinois Senate Presidents Phil Rock, James 'Pate' Philip, Emil Jones and Frank Watson. He championed countless legislation, but was especially proud of the accomplishments while he was speaker, to include Chicago school reform, tort reform, and disability legislation. Daniels stepped down from his role as Republican leader in 2003, and retired from politics in 2007.

Subject Headings/Key Words: Elmhurst, Illinois; 1975 selection of the IL Speaker of the House; Speaker William Redmond; Governors Jim Thompson; Jim Edgar; George Ryan; Rod Blagojevich; Illinois House Speaker Mike Madigan; Senator Phil Rock; Senator James 'Pate' Philip; Senator Emil Jones; Senator Frank Watson; IL State Senator Barack Obama; Chicago school reform; DuPage County politics;

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