

Title Page & Abstract

An Interview with Jim Reilly

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

Interview # ISG-A-L-2009-026

Jim Reilly, Chief of Staff for Governor Jim Thompson from 1983-1989 and for Governor Jim Edgar in 1994, was interviewed on the date listed below as part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library's *Illinois Statecraft – Jim Edgar* Oral History project.

Interview dates & location:

Date: August 10, 2009 Location: Regional Transit Authority office, Chicago, IL

Date: August 11, 2009 Location: Regional Transit Authority office, Chicago, IL

Interview Format: Digital audio

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

Transcription by: Audio Transcription Center, Boston, Massachusetts

Edited by: Mike Czaplicki, ALPL Foundation contractor & Rozanne Flatt, ALPL
volunteer

Total Pages: 72 pgs Total Time: 2:16 + 2:24 / 2.27 + 2.4 = 4:40 / 4.67 hrs

Session 1: Early life through Reilly's early years as Gov. Thompson's COS

Session 2: Chief of Staff years with Jim Thompson & with Jim Edgar in 1994

Accessioned into the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Archives on 02/01/2010.

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

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Abstract

Jim Reilly, *Illinois Statecraft*, ISG-A-L-2009-026

Biographical Information Overview of Interview: Jim Reilly was born on January 31st, 1945 in Springfield, Illinois, and grew up in the state capitol. He graduated from Illinois College in Jacksonville, Illinois in 1967, then enrolled in the University of Chicago law program. After a short stint as a school teacher in Winchester, Illinois, Reilly returned to the University and received his law degree in 1972. He joined a law practice in Jacksonville, and soon became the city attorney. In 1976 Reilly ran for the state legislature as a Republican, and was a freshman legislator along with Jim Edgar. The two began a friendship and professional association, representing comparable districts, and sharing a similar personal story, political philosophy, and legislative assignments.

In 1983 Governor Jim Thompson selected Reilly to serve as his Chief of Staff, a position that Reilly retained through 1989, when he took a position as the Chief Executive Officer for the Metropolitan Pier and Exposition Authority. Reilly's tenure as COS included the tough budget battles during the recession of 1983, the expansion of McCormick Place in Chicago, and Thompson's 'Build Illinois' project. He discussed the 1986 election campaign against Adlai Stevenson III, battles with the state legislature on tax increases, especially a failed attempt to add a sales tax on services, and Thompson's relations with the legislature and with the several mayors of Chicago. Reilly remained with the MPEA until late 1993, when Governor Edgar asked him to serve as his Chief of Staff during the 1994 election campaign. Following that, Reilly returned to the MPEA. From 1999 to 2004 he served as CEO of the Chicago Convention Bureau, and in 2005, he began his tenure at the Regional Transit Authority as Chair.

Subject Headings/Key Words: Illinois state legislature; U. of Chicago Law School; Governor Jim Thompson; Class X felonies; Committee on Governmental Reorganization; Cutback Amendment; Build Illinois; Governor Jim Edgar; Illinois sales tax policies; Adlai Stevenson III; Mike Madigan; George Ryan; Phil Rock; James 'Pate' Philip; Mayor Harold Washington; Mayor Richard M. Daley; McCormick Place; Metropolitan Pier and Exposition Authority; Chicago Convention Bureau; Regional Transit Authority

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

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