

Title Page & Abstract

An Interview with Richard Irvin

Part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library
Tumultuous 2020 Oral History project

Interview # T20-A-L-2021-024

Richard Irvin, the mayor of Aurora, Illinois, was interviewed on the date listed below as part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library's *Tumultuous 2020* Oral History project.

Interview dates & location:

Date: Jun 24, 2021 Location: City Hall in Aurora, Illinois

Interviewer: Philip Pogue, ALPL volunteer

Transcription by: _____

Edited by: _____

Transcript being
processed

Total Pages: _____ Total Time: 1:06 / 1.1 hrs.

Accessioned into the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Archives on August 10, 2021.

The interview is archived at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library in Springfield, Illinois.

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Abstract

Richard Irvin, *Tumultuous 2020*, T20-A-L-2021-024

Biographical Information/Overview of Interview: Richard Irvin was born in Aurora, Illinois in 1970. He graduated from East Aurora High School in 1988. Richard then joined the U.S. Army, and served during Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm in a tank transport unit. After military service, Richard attended Robert Morris University in Chicago, earning a BA in Business. Richard then worked as an auditor for an insurance company and later attended Northern Illinois University Law School, earning a Juris Doctorate (JD). Richard worked for the Cook County State's Attorney and then the Kane County State's Attorney, including in a newly formed Community Division. He then launched his own law practice. Richard entered public service by running at-large to become an Aurora City alderman, serving for ten years. In 2017, Irvin won election as mayor of Aurora. He won reelection in April 2021. Mayor Irvin was named the National Small Business Advocate of the Year by the US Conference of Mayors and has been inducted into the Northern Illinois University Law School and Robert Morris University Alumni Halls of Fame.

Mayor Irvin discusses the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on Aurora, the second largest city in Illinois, from May 2020 to June 2021. The pandemic began with the abrupt closing of businesses and in person restrictions in mid-March 2020. The mayor reviewed how the city provided essential services such police, fire, emergency services and water, and the challenges the city experienced to the local economy, including restaurants, malls, the casino, and theaters. He discussed the needs of Advocate Mercy and Rush Copley hospitals. He also reviewed how city government functioned, including the use of Zoom for city council and department meetings. Mayor Irvin talked about the city's assistance to local businesses through grants and the forgiving local license fees. He reviewed the city's vaccination program and the challenges he faced since Aurora resides in four different counties (Kane, DuPage, Will, and Kendall). Also discussed was the impact of the state restrictions on K-12 education, impacting five public school districts. The mayor faced his own battle with COVID-19 in the spring of 2020, and ran for reelection in the spring of 2021 during the pandemic.

Subject Headings/Key Words: Aurora, Illinois; COVID-19 pandemic; impact of pandemic on Aurora, IL; impact of COVID-19 on entertainment venues; election campaigns during pandemic; city relationship with state and federal officials during COVID-19 pandemic; federal financial assistance to communities during pandemic; city vaccination plans;

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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