

Title Page & Abstract

An Interview with Thomas Geoghegan

Part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library
Illinois Public School Funding Oral History project

Interview # EF-A-L-2019-006

Thomas Geoghegan, was interviewed on the date listed below as part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library's *Education is Key-Public School Funding* Oral History project.

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Interview Format: Digital audio

Interviewer: Philip Pogue, ALPL volunteer

Transcription by: _____

Edited by: _____

Total Pages: _____ Total Time: 1:01 / 1.02 hrs.

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The interview is archived at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library in Springfield,
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Interview being
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Abstract

Thomas Geoghegan, *Public School Funding*, EF-A-L-2019-006

Biographical Information/Overview Thomas Geoghegan was born in Cincinnati, Ohio in 1949. He attended Cincinnati schools, graduating from St. Xavier Prep School. Thomas attended Harvard University, majoring in history and British literature. He earned his JD from Harvard Law School in 1975. Between his first and second year of law, Thomas took off a year and worked as a journalist for the *New Republic* magazine. Thomas worked for the U.S. Department of Energy from 1977-79. In 1979, he joined the Chicago law firm of Leon Despres, now known as Despres, Schwartz, and Geoghegan Ltd. In his career, Thomas has represented employee groups and labor unions and has argued cases before the U.S. Supreme Court. Several of his cases have involved education (Chicago school closings, Chicago elected school board, and migrant children attendance in school). Thomas has contributed op-ed articles for several influential newspapers and has also written two plays and six books.

In this interview, Geoghegan discusses a school funding lawsuit initially filed in 2017 involving twenty-seven Illinois school districts, mostly found in downstate Illinois. The litigation cites the twenty-seven components needed for a student high achievement as stated by the State Board of Education, which also calculated its costs. The State Board of Education has identified the gap between the current level of funding and what the school district should be receiving to meet adequacy standards. Since the state of Illinois has put in much less than that level, the suit asked for increased state spending. At the time of the interview the suit was at the Court of Appeals level. The suit also notes that the state of Illinois is ranked 50th worst in school funding.

Subject Headings/Key Words: financing Illinois education; Committee for Education Rights; education funding lawsuit filed by Thomas Geoghegan against the state of Illinois; lawsuit on Chicago school closings; Despres, Schwartz, and Geoghegan Ltd lawsuit on educating migrant children; Despres, Schwartz, and Geoghegan Ltd lawsuit on the elected school board; Illinois educational standards;

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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