

Interview with Gene Callahan
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DePue: Today is Wednesday, July 6, 2011. My name is Mark DePue, Director of Oral History with the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library. I am sitting in the library this morning with Gene Callahan. Good morning Gene.

Callahan: Good morning to you sir.

DePue: This will be the first of what I believe will be quite a few sessions. I am guessing right now three or four sessions. But, Gene, with the career you have had in politics and baseball, we have got a lot to talk about. We got some opportunity today to talk about your career as a journalist and then your association with Sam Shapiro, a short one, and then with Paul Simon and then Allen Dixon, all of that leading up to several years as a lobbyist for major league baseball to include the strike years. So, there is a lot to talk about. I have had several people say, oh, you have to talk to him. He has got these great stories. That is why we love to talk to the people who are not just the politicians themselves but those who are working in the office, press secretaries, aids and people like that because often times you get even better and more revealing stories and insights in that respect. So, that is a long introduction but let's start off with when and where you were born.

Callahan: Born November 5, 1933 in Milford, Illinois. M-i-l-f-o-r-d in Iroquois County and I was the last of four children. My brother was thirteen years older than I. One sister eleven years older and one eight years older.

DePue: Tell us a little bit about Iroquois County.

Callahan: Well, it is the third largest county in the state of Illinois area wise. It is larger than Cook County. A lot of big farms. Extremely Republican. If my memory is correct on this and I think it is, it was the fourth strongest county in the state for Goldwater in 1964 which gives you an example of just how strong a Republican county it is. There have been two Democratic natives in Iroquois County as Democrats elected to the Illinois House. My Dad is one of them.

DePue: And your father's name?

Callahan: Joe Callahan. He was a Democratic committeeman for forty-eight years. Liberal Democrat in a very conservative area. But he paid his bills and told the truth and had a good reputation.

DePue: Where in the state is it located?

Callahan: It is sixty five miles northeast of Champaign. About eight miles to the Indiana line. We live closer to Purdue University than we do the University of Illinois.

DePue: So, in the northern third of the state then?

Callahan: Well, I call it east central Illinois. It is thirty six miles north of Danville if that helps you.

DePue: Okay. Tell me a little bit about your parents and how they ended up in the Milford area in the first place.

Callahan: Well, when my Mom... First, her Mom and Dad came from Germany and settled ...

DePue: What was her name?

Callahan: Meyer. M-e-y-e-r.

DePue: Her first name?

Callahan: Helen. H-e-l-e-n. And she had an eighth grade education. Never spoke English until she went to grade school and church services there were one in English and one in German. She was very religious and she was really the religious anchor of our family.

DePue: Lutheran?

Callahan: Lutheran. Missouri Synod Lutheran, as you know, very conservative.

DePue: Okay. And your Dad.

Callahan: My Dad's family in the 1700s, one relative came from Ireland and that is the only one that we see from the 1700s that came from Ireland. They were hog farmers in Kentucky and then they came from Kentucky to Milford, Illinois where they were hog farmers. My Dad was a hog farmer. My brother was a hog farmer. They didn't think I was much of a hog farmer so they jettisoned me off to college.

DePue: Well Callahan is obviously a very Irish sounding name, but it sounds like you don't have much Irish blood that remained in there.

Callahan: Well, the Callahans around Milford are not Catholic. Most of them belong to the Christian Church there. My Dad went to the Lutheran Church in Milford. Never became a member but went out of respect for my mother. But he had a brother that he was quite fond that was a thirty second degree Mason and I think it was just ... he didn't want to alienate his brother and he didn't want to satisfy my Mom by becoming a member of the church because I don't think he believed in everything as she did religiously. But he never did embarrass her.

DePue: I take it then you attended Lutheran services when you were growing up.

Callahan: Oh, yes, yes. And many times, you know, like Lent, mid-Wednesday services, Sunday services, went to catechism for three years during the school year and then had confirmation.

DePue: What was it like being the son of a hog farmer?

Callahan: Well, my Dad was well respected and we paid our bills. For instance, I remember the first time I ever charged anything. I was in the eighth grade and it's a box of shotgun shells. I used to love to hunt. I go in and I said, Mr. G, could I charge this box of shotgun shells? And he said, are you Joe's son or are you one of his brother's sons—he mentioned the name—and I said, I'm Joe's son. And he said, Okay, you can charge it. Now that has had a lasting effect on me, that comment. Because, you know, if you don't pay your bills, then you are in trouble and especially in home community like Milford. You know, everyone knows everything in Milford. It takes a little while for you to know everything in Springfield but not Milford.

DePue: How big of a town was Milford?

Callahan: Well, it was seventeen hundred when I was a kid. It was thirteen fifty at the census ten years ago. My sister and I ... I say it's going be eleven hundred. I haven't seen the census figures for this time. I am going to say eleven hundred and my sister thinks a little bigger than that. But there is not much there anymore.

DePue: I assume you grew up on the farm though?

Callahan: Oh yes, right. We lived six miles from Milford until I was in the eighth grade. I went to grade school in Stockland, Illinois which is about two and a half miles from the Indiana line from the third grade through the seventh. My Dad bought his first farm in 1938 but where we lived we rented that farm. And now my first two years in school it was a one room school house. That was eight kids in the first year and I went the whole second grade year with two kids in the whole school. We used to have a family reunion and my Dad would say, Tell them how well you are doing in school son. Well, I said, I am the smartest kid in my class and the smartest kid in school. He said, How many in your class? How many in school? And then ... Well, I am the only one in the class and Pauline Schroeder is in sixth grade. And then he would laugh just like you are right now. He thought that was funny but he especially loved doing that at reunions.

DePue: How about chores? I would assume sons growing up on the farm have to do chores.

Callahan: Oh yes. Now my Dad was a sports fan. He loved sports so he let us participate in sports but that is the only break we got. But like when there was a sports season going on, as soon as we got home from home we started working. I started working in the field alone in the sixth grade. I can drive a car to Milford by myself in the sixth grade on the back roads and my sisters they worked in the field during World War II during the summer. They were both school teachers. They weren't school teachers at that time. Our family ... we had a very good work ethic. My Mom physically is the hardest working physical woman I have ever met. She was a meticulous housekeeper. when we thrashed she cooked for all the people there and then she would shuck corn, sweet corn. She had two gardens, one right by the house, one out in the middle of the field. She did all this stuff. And we never had indoor plumbing until I was in the eighth grade. My Mom just continues to amaze me how hard she worked.

DePue: Did you have electricity on that farm?

Callahan: Not until 1938.

DePue: In 1938 your Dad buys a farm and you get electricity that year. This is still in the hard years of the Depression though.

Callahan: Uh-hm. Uh-hm.

DePue: How did he manage to pull that off?

Callahan: Well, how he bought his farm: my brother - who is no longer alive - and I have talked about this, they went out in the barn one day and there is a bridle there in the barn. My Dad said to my brother, You see that bridle there? And Fran says, Yes. He says, That bridle and everything you see here is mortgaged. And my brother said, Even the bridle is mortgaged? My Dad

said, Everything. If we go broke what have we lost? Because they didn't have anything. For instance, my grandparents on my Mom's side lost everything during the Depression. My wife's mother-in-law lost a home in Long Island. My Dad didn't lose anything. And he was able to, I think, get the loan from the Citizen State Bank at Milford because of his reputation and that's how he did it. He couldn't have had much collateral. Now he had farm equipment, you know. See, he was farming before World War I broke out and when World War I broke out he and his brother, Porter Callahan, enlisted immediately. They were never separated by the way, including going to France; they were in artillery together in France. His brother ran the farm operation while he was in the Army and then he came back and then took that over. Now, he probably owned all the farm equipment he had like, you know, all driven to horses. I remember we had eight horses as a kid.

DePue: Well, those World War I years were great years for agriculture and then the 1920s were bad and, of course, the Depression era it got even worse to be in agriculture.

Callahan: Like the first time I ever saw my Dad cry was when Roosevelt died. My Mom did not drive and this was forty-five so that means I was eleven years old at this time. I drive her down to the field and he was in a John Deere cultivator, two row cultivator, stud wheels, you know with lugs and my Mom says, "Joe, FDR died." And he put his hand on the steering wheel and started crying. That had a heck of an effect on me also. Just like that charging a box of shotgun shells did. Because Roosevelt gave our family hope, gave us hope.

DePue: So it sounds like he was very much a Roosevelt, a New Deal Democrat.

Callahan: Positively.

DePue: Was the family Democratic before the Depression years?

Callahan: He was. But, no, the other members of the family ... Well, one became a widow later and one was single and never married, these two sisters. They eventually became Democrats, I think because he was so good for farmers, really. But all the boys were Republican. There were seven kids. It was a mixed family.

DePue: Now this is a little bit young for you, but December 7, 1941, you remember that day?

Callahan: Positively. We were listening to the Lutheran Hour in the kitchen. I remember we didn't have a furnace or anything and we put the coal and corn cobs and sometimes corn in the heating stove. There was a reservoir, you know, where it kept the water warm right on the end of the stove and I was sitting on that. Just to keep your butt warm. Pearl Harbor came over

and my Dad says, “It’ll be over before the snow flies.” Well, he was a little wrong on that one (laugh).

DePue: With your Mom being of German descent, did the two of them have views about what was going on in Europe and Germany especially?

Callahan: Well, here, in World War I there was a lot of prejudice. We did not know—our family know—this story until my Mom died when she was ninety-two years old. She changed her name—just changed it, she didn’t do it legally—but her name was something like Helena something something something, you know, Meyer. But there was so much prejudice against the Germans, and see she is moving from about ten miles, no, not ten miles, seven miles west of Milford, all farming Lutheran community, and now to the other side of Milford and north. She didn’t want to go through all that prejudice being a German so she just changed it to Helen Meyer.

In World War II I did not see that with one exception. We had a hired man whose name was John Brandt. When we bombed Berlin the first time we were having breakfast and, you know, all of us sat at the same table, hired help did and, you know, my Mom would cook. My brother was so happy, was very happy about us bombing Berlin. And John Brandt said, “We have a lot of relatives over there,” and so he passes my brother his ham and eggs, or bacon and eggs probably what it was. My brother says to him, “I am not taking anything from a goddamned Nazi.” Well, he gets up and quits. He quits. You know it was very, very hard to get help in World War II on the farm. My Dad had to go up the road and talk him i to coming back and the deal was he wouldn’t have to deal with my brother anymore. We kept him until he later got another job and then we hired his brother. His name was Albert Brandt, B-r-a-n-d-t.

DePue: Did that experience... Was there any discussion from your Mom or from this hired hand about what they felt about what had happened in Germany with the Nazis?

Callahan: Never heard my Mom say it. And we had Meyer reunions, and Ristow, that was her maiden name.

DePue: Wiscol?

Callahan: Ristow. R-i-s-tow. In fact I have their background on both of them on my Mom and Dad’s side. I can bring that to you so you can just get a feel for they came from and so on. And, I never did hear them discuss ... in fact, my Mom’s brother was in World War II and he was in Europe; I don’t recall where he was stationed, but I never heard any prejudice against the Germans in our family. We were all afraid of Hitler. I remember I used to say, “I’m going to hide under the sink if Hitler came over.” And then we had a shotgun—we had guns around home—and I was going to somehow get that

shotgun and shoot him. And, so there was a fear. There was a fear. And we had a German prisoner of war camp in Milford at the sweet corn canning factory. Now Reverend Meyer, who is no relation to my Mom, the Lutheran minister would have church services at the prisoner of war camp and he caught all kinds of criticism for doing that. My Dad one time, there was a lady – my Dad knew everyone in Milford and I used to think I knew everyone in Milford because he was so gregarious that I would be with him a lot—this lady started talking to him; her son was a prisoner of war at this camp and my Dad gave her a ride to the prisoner of war camp. He caught the devil for that from people in Milford for helping that lady.

DePue: How did she end up in the United States if her son is a German POW in the United States?

Callahan: Well, she was already over here. She was over here and the son stayed over there. I don't know the circumstances.

DePue: Well, that is unusual.

Callahan: Yeah, it is.

DePue: What was it like growing up as a teenager during the World War II years.

Callahan: Well, you had rationing. You had rationing of tires and gas. The farmers came out very well in gas rationing by the way. So we never did suffer from lack of gas. And, because we would just fill up out of the, you know, tractor tank, because my grandparents lived in Goodland, Indiana and we would go over there quite a bit on weekends. The sugar rationing and so on. Coffee rationing and all kind of rationing. I learned to swim and ride a bike in Crystal Lake, Illinois where I had an aunt and uncle live when the war was still going on. I forget how I got up there. They probably drove me, my folks. When the news came on at our house, you did not speak.

DePue: The radio you are talking about?

Callahan: That's right, radio. You did not speak during that period. That was at six o'clock at that time, and ten o'clock at night. And we would go to bed after the ten o'clock news.

DePue: Were you also one of those kids who was devouring the newspapers?

Callahan: Well, my Dad was a very heavy newspaper reader. We would always take a Chicago paper, the Tribune or the Chicago Sun which was Democratic oriented, you know; it was predecessor of the Sun Times. We'd take one of those. We'd take the Danville or Kankakee paper. We'd take the Watseka Iroquois County Times, take the Milford paper. And in the eighth grade my Dad started taking Newsweek and so we read a lot. And there was a Chicago Daily Drivers Journal came out five days a week out of Chicago—

farm markets and household hints for farm women and so on. But we took that too.

DePue: You followed the war closely then. Were you fascinated with that?

Callahan: Can't say that I did.

DePue: Okay.

Callahan: My main interest at that time was sports.

DePue: Well, tell me about your interest in sports. How did you get that bug?

Callahan: Well, I can throw a baseball hard. That was an ability I had. My uncle that lived with us, a bachelor, never married, he and I were very close and he would catch. My Dad was forty-one, almost forty-two when I was born. By the time I got in the sixth grade, he couldn't catch me anymore, but my uncle could.

DePue: Couldn't catch it because you were throwing too fast?

Callahan: Yeah, uh-huh, yeah, yeah. My Dad was a good athlete. My Dad had been a very good athlete. You see, he went two years to high school and he quit high school. Went to telegrapher school in Danville, Illinois and he might have done that after he graduated from high school. Well, anyway he worked on farms and did things. And my uncle, his brother—that's Uncle Art, the thirty second degree Mason—talked him in to going back to high school. So my Dad was twenty years old when he graduated, you know. So he was two advantage of being an athlete. I mean he and another guy named Burdett Lyons, they almost single handedly won track meets. And then Dad played basketball and baseball and track. Track was probably his best sport. They didn't have football at Milford at that time.

DePue: Were you able to listen to the games on the radio?

Callahan: All the time.

DePue: Who were you listening to?

Callahan: Cardinals.

DePue: Cardinals?

Callahan: Yeah, St. Louis Cardinals.

DePue: You were closer to Chicago than you are there.

Callahan: Well, my Dad was a Cardinals fan. You know, history shows that a lot of farmers, poor farmers, were Cardinals fans because they could resonate with

the Gas House Gang, you know, in the south. But my Dad was a Dizzy Dean fan, a Cardinals fan. The only time I ever remember a mixed emotions was when Dizzy Dean got traded to the Cubs and Dizzy Dean was pitching for the Cubs. We root for Dizzy Dean. And my Mom loved Dizzy Dean as an announcer. You know, he and Buddy Blatner used to be on the game of the week on Saturdays. I don't think my Mom ever saw a major league baseball game but she was a Cardinals fan. And my uncle that lived with us always would buy good radios. Then in the eighth grade, I remember he bought an FM set where we could really listen to the night games of the Cardinals clearly. Otherwise we would get Tulsa, Oklahoma, you know, and KMOX was doing the games. I don't recall us getting KMOX though from where we lived even that is, you know, fifty thousand watt station. But, yeah, we would listen. We would put our ears up to the speaker to see how the Cardinals were doing.

DePue: Were most of the neighbors Cardinals fans as well?

Callahan: No, most of them Cubs. Once in a while a White Sox fan. I remember the drug store owner, Herb Lautenschlager was his name, L-a-u-t-e-n-s-c-h-l-a-g-e-r, was a White Sox fan. He was from Chicago—he was a druggist, friend of my Dad's too in the legion they were in—he said, "I'll give you a nickel if you become a White Sox fan." Well, I agreed and I took the nickel. I got home that night and I said, I can't do this, because it bothered my conscience (laugh) So I go back and I said, "Mr. Lautenschlager, I can't take this nickel. I am a Cardinals fan." (laugh)

DePue: Were you one of those kids who had visions of playing pro ball?

Callahan: Oh yes. Sure, I wanted to play pro ball. That was my goal. But by the time I was a sophomore in college, I realized I wasn't good enough. That was out of the realm of possibility. Here is how strong Cardinals fans we are: my Mom asked me one time – I'm in grade school – she said, "Do you pray at night?" And I said, "Yes." She said, "What do you pray about?" I said, "That the Cardinals will win the pennant." And she says, "Is that all you pray about?" And I said, "Yes." And she says, "Well, could you start praying for the family too." And, I said, yeah, yeah I could do that.

DePue: Well, apparently your praying was more successful than those kids who were praying for the Cubs to win.

Callahan: Oh yeah, that's right. I like to tell my grandkids, you know, I was in the sixth grade when the Cubs won the last pennant, 1945.

DePue: What other interests did you have in high school?

Callahan: Well, I played in the band. I played a trumpet for eight years.

DePue: Where were going to school by that time?

- Callahan: Milford High School. I went to a one room school house for two years, Stockland Grade School for five. Eighth grade in Milford and four years of high school in Milford. And I started playing in the band in the sixth grade. My uncle bought me this Conn trumpet. Well it was a cornet actually, for \$225. My uncle that lived with us was like a second Dad. My Dad because of farm politics was gone quite a bit. He was President of the Illinois Farmers Union during the Depression. Was Chairman of the Board of the Illinois Farmers Union after World War II. When he died at eighty-five he was Chairman Emeritus of the Farmers Union when he couldn't even walk anymore. So he was a strong farmer's union guy.
- DePue: In terms of politics how did the farmers union line up versus the Farm Bureau?
- Callahan: Farm Bureau Republican. Farmers Union Democratic. Yeah. And Farmers Union strong Democratic. Strong Hubert Humphrey supporters. For instance, my Dad was for Hubert Humphrey for President in 1960. When I look back at it, I wanted to be the best athlete I could be and I worked at it. I didn't work that hard at being a trumpet player or a cornet player in this case. But I had more fun in band than anything else. We had a great teacher that had just enough discipline to get by. He had a sense of humor. He was fun. I liked him a lot. Liked him a lot.
- DePue: Was it tradition in your family to go to college then when you got done with high school?
- Callahan: I was the first boy of my Dad's brothers to graduate from college. I had one first cousin that went one year, the University of Illinois, and World War II broke out and he never went back.
- DePue: You graduated from high school in what year then?
- Callahan: Fifty-one.
- DePue: And when you graduated from high school, what did you think you wanted to do with your life? Still baseball?
- Callahan: Well, I didn't know I was going to college until mid-summer. I had hay fever very very badly—the older I get the better I get on the hay fever by the way—but it was terrible hay fever that I had. My Dad spent a lot of money on me for hay fever. My brother Fran says, You know, let's face it, you're not worth a damn around here when the ragweed start blooming. And he says, There is not enough farmland here for two families to survive it. He said, We could go out and try to rent more and do it, there is not enough. And my Dad's goal was for all four kids to go to college. My sisters did and became school teachers. Fran was the smartest of all four of us in my view, and he didn't go to college. He wouldn't go, period. But my Dad had

arranged for him an ag scholarship at Purdue University to live free above the swine barn. And my brother wouldn't go.

DePue: He wanted to stay on the farm?

Callahan: He wanted to farm. So, Dad says, "What do you want to do?" And I said, "Well, I like writing sports, you know, I like writing for the local paper." I got paid nothing for that. I was a stringer for the Danville paper and the Kankakee paper, sports only. Paying fifty cents a day for basketball, seventy-five cents a game football. And he said, "You know, you got to have an education to do what you want to do." I still wasn't convinced. He said, "Well, would you try it for me?" I can't say I liked my Dad all that much at that time, but I respected him. My like for him and love for him came later. And, so, we went to see my high school principal who had a Master's degree and was working on a Doctorate and did get it. I told him I would like to consider a small school, you know college. He recommended Knox College in Galesburg; Wabash in Crawfordsville, Indiana; DePaul at Greencastle, Indiana; and Illinois College at Jacksonville, Illinois. I had gone to a college career day in Watseka my senior year and there was a guy named Lathrop or Lothrop that was director of admissions at Illinois College that impressed me. I remember that. There was a kid from Armstrong, Illinois that I played high school basketball against that was really good high school player. I liked how aggressive he was, how clean he was, and how hard he played, named Dale Cain, C-a-i-n. And he was at Illinois College. My Dad and I went over and visited Illinois College and I said this is good enough, and I never applied anywhere else. Now at that time, it was easy to get into private schools because they were hurting. World War II is over. The Korean War is on. You know, the vets had left now, okay. Like the vet housing in Illinois College, they had all kind of openings, you know, so that married people were living there. I was really kind of surprised I got accepted. Now at that time, they didn't have ACT scores, you know. They didn't have that. Now, after you got accepted they gave you a psychological exam to see what you may be good at doing, and what you're not very good at doing. But that's after you are admitted. So anyway, I probably graduated in the bottom third of my class.

DePue: In high school?

Callahan: Yeah. Twenty-eight in the class. We didn't have class rankings.

DePue: But you were first in your class in the grade school.

Callahan: Well, yeah, that's true. That's true, oh yeah. Valedictorian. (laugh) And I used to say in college, I said, I only missed Phi Beta Kappa by two letters – A and B.

- DePue: I want to go back a little bit though in high school because you had mentioned you were already writing for not one newspaper, but several newspapers. How did that come about?
- Callahan: Well, I was writing for the Milford Herald News only. In the Danville and Kankakee papers I was doing it over the phone. I would give them the box scores over the phone. Who scores, how many points and so on.
- DePue: But how did you get that job?
- Callahan: Well, they saw my name ... Well, here's how I got the job in the Milford Herald News. I am a junior and I go in to see Mr. Hartburnt. He owned the paper. I said, Mr. Hartburnt I think you do a pretty good job covering high school sports. He said, Do you think you can do better? I said yes. He said, you've got the job. And that is how it happened. And he gave me a byline and then, you know, the daily papers like when I was in Springfield ... we took every paper and they see my byline and the papers separately asked me if I would do the basketball and football. That is how that happened.
- DePue: Pretty straight line in getting a job then.
- Callahan: Well, yeah, and Mr. Hartburnt used to like to tell that story, you know, after I became somewhat well known working for Dixon and Simon. In that area I should say. I was never a household word.
- DePue: What kind of money were you making then?
- Callahan: Well, working where now? What kind of money where?
- DePue: When you first started as a journalist?
- Callahan: Sixty dollars a week. Yeah, there are two bottom jobs at the paper. Obituary writer and the police reporter and the police reporter job was opening. I wanted to be a sports writer then. Still after college I wanted to be sports. They didn't have a sports opening. I didn't like being a police reporter when I first started and then I really started liking it. I liked the competition of it. I love competition and I like beating the other people in town. It really bothered me when I got beat. And you always get beat once in a while. Bill Miller: we had a great radio reporter here in town and he was tremendous. He was my main competition because he worked as hard as I did. And no one outworked either one of us. So I stayed at the paper for ten years.
- DePue: Well, I think we are little bit ahead of the schedule here. I wanted to talk more about your years in Illinois College in Jacksonville. Your major there?
- Callahan: English and minored in Speech.

- DePue: And what was your reasoning behind that?
- Callahan: Well, I knew I wanted to be a newspaper reporter. I knew that from the eighth grade on.
- DePue: So you had given up the idea that you are going to be able to play professionally?
- Callahan: Yeah. Well, from when I was a sophomore in college I realized there were people so much better than I. You know, I knew that wasn't going to happen.
- DePue: I take it then you went out for the baseball team in Illinois College?
- Callahan: I played three years of college baseball. I didn't play my senior year because I had to pass Spanish or I wasn't going to graduate in four years. And so I had to really hunker down and pass the proficiency test.
- DePue: You know how many people become journalists because they realize they are not a good enough athlete to?
- Callahan: Yeah, yeah.
- DePue: I have talked to a couple of other people already with that same lineage, if you will, into journalism. What was it about journalism that was so attractive to you.
- Callahan: Well, I just liked to write about ... I liked to write about people. I especially like to write about sports. And then when I became a police reporter I got to know the good guys in town that were honest. Got to know about the bad guys that weren't honest. And that was a really great platform for me becoming a political writer. I had great sources as a police reporter. Later those developed and still very good sources when I became a political writer. You know, when guys get busted for some reason or another, legislatures in town, they had a gambling raid one time at the press box. They forget to close the doors. They had a raid that went in because the door was open. It really wasn't a raid. They started going through the cash registers and said, Two dollars for Fanny Jones, you know, in the fifth race at Hialeah (laugh). One was from a state rep from Champaign. Another state rep from Seymour, Illinois. You know, I knew this stuff and it was amazing. Like I still have my source book from when I was a political reporter. There are a lot of honest guys in there. A lot of crooks in there.
- DePue: You went to college then between 1951 and 1955 so it is inevitable whenever I get to this timeframe, in your life especially, and the United States especially, the military factors in there some way. Was there some question that you might be drafted in '61 before you went to college?

Callahan: Well, I never was concerned about that. See I made up my mind ... and this gets back to my Dad's influence again. His goal was four years of college and then you go to the army, you go to the military. He believed you owed your country something. So what I did after graduation I put my name at the head of the draft.

DePue: In 1955 now?

Callahan: '55. And I didn't enlist because I didn't want to serve three years. So I had my name put at the head and went in in September of 1955. And the college was great for me. I was sports editor of the student newspaper. Started working for the town newspaper on Tuesday night and Friday night.

DePue: The Jacksonville paper?

Callahan: Jacksonville Journal Courier. And then I started working as a sophomore at the radio station. I had my own radio show on Sunday from 12 noon to 12:15.

DePue: In those days

Callahan: By the way, neither one of those paid anything. The sports editor job didn't pay anything. The radio show didn't pay anything. But I got to work during the summer for vacation periods, you know, and I got paid for that.

DePue: When you were finishing up your college career were you leaning more towards print journalism or broadcasting?

Callahan: Uh, more broadcasting. But then I realized later my voice was too high and I didn't think I would ever cut it to do any good. And I also was a much better reporter than I was a writer. Like my daughter that was a reporter for sixteen years, sixteen or seventeen. She was a better writer than I. My niece, Colleen Callahan that has been in television media, better writer than I. But I wouldn't take a backseat to either of them being a reporter.

DePue: What is the distinction in your mind?

Callahan: Well, to me it is being a competitor. Writing wasn't all that easy for me. But I could write on deadline. Lot of people can't write on deadline. I could. Like at the Session when the real heavy stuff would come up they would assign me to wherever that was. And I could call in and dictate a story. Some people freeze, you know, on deadline. And I didn't freeze.

DePue: But the competition of getting the story and finding out the information you need, would you say that was what you were excelling at?

Callahan: Oh yeah. It was. That was, yeah.

DePue: Well, what little I know about journalism, especially during that time – there was kind of this hierarchy where print journalism was considered to be more prestigious. Would you say that is correct?

Callahan: That is true. But that had nothing to do with my decision. I didn't care about the prestige of it. I wanted to be a reporter. And the only job in town, I mean I went to WCVS, which is now WFMB, you know AM, went out there. Went to WTAX. Neither one had anything. Went to the newspaper and they had an opening and I got hired.

DePue: And this is all in Jacksonville?

Callahan: No, no, no here now.

DePue: Okay.

Callahan: This is after the army and so on. Then the Jacksonville thing, they saw my stuff in the Rambler, the college paper and they started hiring me on high school basketball nights.

DePue: Well, I want to fill in the blank here of military service. Tell me a little bit about what branch you ended up in and what you did while you were in the military for those two years.

Callahan: Well, I was in the Army. Fort Leonard Wood for the first eight and then the second eight, Leonard Wood. And went to Germany to a place called Muenchweiler, M-u-e-n-c-h-w-e-i-l-e-r, Germany which is about five miles from Pierisens, Germany, which is bigger. That is a town of maybe close to forty thousand. Muenchweiler was a little bitty town. Still rubble on the ground, by the way, in Muenchweiler and Pierisens.

DePue: This would have been twelve years ...

Callahan: After, yeah.

DePue: Ten, eleven years after the war.

Callahan: I was near the French border and I was in personnel work and I worked for an African American named Seymour Finney, Junior, F-i-n-n-e-y, Junior. And he was a high school dropout from Alabama. Got a GED, was working on a college degree when we were working together. He and I loved to play cards and I spent a lot of time weekends drinking beer playing double deck pinochle at his home. I wanted to make him look good because I just wanted to get two years and out. And at the same time, he was good to me. Like on Friday, he would say, Why don't you get lost Cal. And I would say, You don't have to tell me again. He was really a nice influence on me, because Illinois College didn't have hardly any African Americans to speak of. And I liked him. I liked his wife. We had fun together and it was just a

good experience. And also, this is when I really found out that you are a military guy so you know you don't get the IQ but there are two tests if you are in personnel work at that time. You could put those two tests together and figure out what your IQ is, you know. My IQ was just a tad above average. And that is when I made up my mind for me to do anything in life, I was going to have to outwork people. Now, I had never outworked anyone up to that point. Anyone. Including my farm. Not my farm. I used to work sometimes to get out of work. I did not work hard in high school, outside of sports. I worked the hardest I could in sports. And, in college I didn't work hard, you know; I got through in four years. I knew that for me, I would like to think from the time I hit Springfield no one ever outworked me. It took me a long time getting to that point.

DePue: You were over in Germany, quite a few years after the war but you said yourself you could still see plenty effects of the war.

Callahan: Oh yeah.

DePue: Was that the first time you were out of the country as well?

Callahan: Yes.

DePue: So was this experience in the Army something of a broadening one for you?

Callahan: Very much so. Very much so. I traveled a lot. Another kid and I had a 1950 Opel. I travelled a lot in that car. We used to go to Heidelberg. Four of us, long before designated driver, we had a rule that whoever was driving could not have more than two beers the whole day. That was our rule.

DePue: They had stronger beer over there too.

Callahan: Oh yeah, yeah, yeah. We drank a lot of Lowenbrau beer, yeah. That was my favorite over there. Yeah.

DePue: Sounds like you were happy to have that experience and happy to move on afterwards.

Callahan: Right. And I played a lot of sports in the Army too.

DePue: For official Army teams?

Callahan: Yeah, their unit, you know, I played fast-pitch softball, basketball, volleyball. I never played volleyball before. Coached a little league team of Air Force dependents and I did a lot of sports stuff. I really wanted to work with AFN or Stars and Stripes but you had to extend another year to do that and I certainly did not want to do that.

- DePue: When you were getting towards the end of that would have been 1957 then. Tell us about coming to the states and getting that first job.
- Callahan: Well, number one ... see I was engaged ... Ann and I became engaged when I was at Fort Leonard Wood.
- DePue: What is Ann's last name?
- Callahan: Hammond, H-a-m-m-o-n-d.
- DePue: I love talking to your journalists because you spell everything out for us.
- Callahan: She and I were engaged and we got married in October. A real, real way to impress your mother-in-law is to get married without a job. (laugh) And that is what happened. Ann had a job. She had majored in sociology and she was working what later became known ... it was child welfare at the time.
- DePue: Was that family from the Jacksonville area?
- Callahan: No, no. Ithaca, New York. She is from Ithaca, New York.
- DePue: How in the world did she end up Illinois College?
- Callahan: She wanted to go to a small Midwestern school and her principal and class advisor said he had sent kids from Illinois College. They liked it and it was a good school academically and he recommended it. And she had never been in Illinois or anything else and that is how she happened to go to Illinois College. We entered school together at the same time. We never dated as a freshman. Then we got married after the Army. We started dating in my sophomore year in college.
- DePue: Did she see a difference after you came back from the service?
- Callahan: No, never did mention that.
- DePue: Okay. Well, you said yourself that you figured out I need to work harder than anybody else ...
- Callahan: Well, that is true. She knew I wasn't that good of a student. She knew that. So it probably surprised her because hours never meant anything to me. I mean, she would put up with a lot of guff with me being ... you know. I remember one time a guy called a reporter at the Journal and he said, No, not going to do that. Call Callahan, that is something he would probably do. Because it was a night meeting. It would have been. I would cover anything. But she put up with a lot of it too.
- DePue: Well, then, again, tell us how you got that first job, where you ended up.

Callahan: You mean, now the first job with the Register?

DePue: Yeah.

Callahan: Okay, here ... they had this opening and Jim Armstrong is the managing editor.

DePue: This is the *Illinois State Register*?

Callahan: Yeah, yeah. He was the managing editor and the he was making the employment decisions. V.Y. Dallman, D-a-l-l-m-a-n, was the editor. But he was not involved in the hiring process but he signed off on it. I never forget this, so Jim Armstrong offers me this job at sixty bucks a week being the police reporter. He goes in to introduce me to Mr. Dallman. Mr. Dallman looks at me and says, "Are you tough?" I said, "No, not really, but I can take care of myself." (laugh) that was the only question he asked me. Isn't that funny? And we shook hands and I had the job.

DePue: Tell us about the persona of being a police reporter in the 1950s in the United States. Because you know the images that people conjure up of being in newspapers at that time: the editor, the crusty old city editor and all these things that we learned from watching the movies and assume are correct. Callahan: Well, I can't say we ever did fit that mold. I would go to the police station twice a day. St. John's Hospital twice a day, Memorial Hospital—emergency now I'm talking about—twice a day. I would go to the county sheriff's office twice a day. Okay. The police department, both hospitals, the sheriff's office. So when they see you that much and know you are there around more than anyone else, they start giving you stories. As an example, I would ride with the policemen at night. Now my hours were from – at the police force – 6:30 to 3:00, okay. Then I am off. I would go home, you know, read Time magazine and ride with the cops at night. Some of the things I did, I look back at and they were stupid. I remember going in to where they had a robber treed one time underneath a staircase. They thought he was in there. I went in with them. Now I wouldn't do that now, you know. I wouldn't do that at all. That is youthful exuberance there, real stupidity, but I did it. Now like Bill Cellini—you know everyone in politics in Illinois—his Dad was an honest cop, and his Dad was a source of mine. When Bill Cellini first ran for office—he ran for police magistrate—he asked me one day, "You went to Illinois College, you and your wife, didn't you?" And I said, Yeah. "Well, my son is a graduate of Illinois College. Would your wife be willing to have a coffee for him?" That is what they called them at that time. We lived in Garden Court on the east end of town which was a real low rent place. We paid seventy-two fifty a month for rent as an example. Two bedrooms, basement, you know, it was duplex houses. First though he asked me if I would sign a petition. That was it. He said, "Sign a petition." And I said, "Well, is he a Democrat or a Republican." He said, "No, this is city office

you know; you don't need to declare your politics." That is how dumb I was politically. X So I signed it. And then a little bit later he said, Would your wife have a reception for him, a coffee, for neighbors. So she did. She hadn't met him yet and I hadn't met him – Bill Cellini. Eight people were at that reception, he came out and talked to them. Then I met Bill later and we have had a good relationship ever since.

DePue: So, make sure I got this right, it wasn't Bill Cellini's son, it was Bill's father?

Callahan: It was Bill Cellini's father.

DePue: Who was referring his son to you?

Callahan: That's right.

DePue: Okay.

Callahan: That's right.

DePue: That is why I was saying that the age wasn't working out there until I figured that part out.

Callahan: Okay, did I make it clear now?

DePue: Yeah.

Callahan: But I used to ride with him too. Now he was in the daytime. But we would go through the John Hay homes, which was even lower rent than ours was. In fact, that was public housing. We looked at a place at the John Hay homes but believe it or not, I was making too much money to live in the John Hay homes. I probably at that time making seventy-five a week, would be my guess on that.

DePue: Did you learn the trade of being a journalist in college or is that something you learned on the job?

Callahan: Oh, on the job. Yeah. I didn't that much being a reporter in college.

DePue: Was there any other people who are especially influential in teaching you how to be a good journalist? How to dig out the story?

Callahan: Bill Miller, who later became head of the public affairs reporting program at Sangamon State. You know. He was a great reporter. And then from 1961 ... see, when I first started at the capitol I was the youngest guy covering the capitol.

DePue: When did that start?

- Callahan: 1961. Then Tom Littlewood, the bureau chief of the *Chicago Sun Times* took a liking to me and after, I would say close to about a year of judging my stuff, was helpful to me.
- DePue: If you can boil it down to a couple of lessons that guys like Miller and Littlewood taught you, what would they be?
- Callahan: Well, I knew this in my training, but never reveal a source. But out-work people and don't be taking sides in any of the fights. Be objective. You know, be objective. And like, even when you write a column you get to do your opinions in columns and things like that, but you want to be fair. I think there was a guy in town once I wasn't fair with and it still bothers me today. He had coming what he had coming a little bit, but I think I went overboard a little bit.
- DePue: Well, the *Illinois State Register* tells about the politics at the *State Register* at the time.
- Callahan: Democratic oriented, V.Y. Dallman. This is how ethics have changed. When I was a reporter I was active in the Young Democrats. V.Y. Dallman was a delegate to the 1932 presidential convention for Roosevelt. Became director of revenue under Roosevelt, IRS as he was still the editor of the *Illinois State Register*. The *Chicago Tribune* used to refer to him as Two-Job Dallman. Ed Armstrong, who later became editor of the *State Register*, was active in the Young Democrats.
- DePue: But this is at a time when newspapers were proud to declare their political leanings?
- Callahan: The *Journal* was a part and parcel of the Republican party. The *Tribune* was the major voice of the Republican Party in Illinois. The *Illinois State Journal* was downstate. The *Register* was the premier Democratic newspaper in downstate Illinois.
- DePue: But you just also said that your mentors were teaching you to be unbiased and not take a position.
- Callahan: Uh-hm, uh-hm.
- DePue: So where is the connection there between newspapers that clearly are partisan in their outlook, and their journalists who are told otherwise.
- Callahan: Well, see we were only told to be objective. Now when you write a column that is a different ballgame, you know. I started writing a two-day- a-week column in 1961. I covered the '60 campaign with Kennedy, and Nixon came to Illinois. Also when Governor Kerner ran against the incumbent Bill Stratton and they were making appearances, I covered that in central Illinois. And then, I traveled with Kennedy the weekend before – I think it was the

weekend before – yeah, the weekend before the ‘60 election including the torchlight parade in Chicago that Mayor Dailey put on. And the Kennedy speech at the Chicago stadium, but I never did color my stories on Nixon-Kennedy, Stratton and Kerner. Now, I remember I caught some Republicans working at the Leland Hotel on state time and nailed it pretty good but it was objective story. Because I had got a tip on it.

DePue: What was the problem there?

Callahan: They were working in politics while they were being paid by the state.

DePue: Okay.

Callahan: Yeah, yeah.

DePue: How would you describe your personal politics at the time?

Callahan: Democrat. I have never missed a Democratic primary. Never. I never considered myself a Democratic journalist. I considered myself a journalist who happened to be a Democrat.

DePue: Were you a Democrat at that time—and we’re talking, I don’t know how many years removed – forty, fifty years removed, where politics in the United States is very polarized now. Would you have described yourself at that time as a Democrat because of family loyalties and traditions, or because of personal philosophy, political philosophy?

Callahan: I think the first because of my Dad and later it became ... I know right now why I am a Democrat. In fact I was raised, kind of like black and white, Democrat - Republican. But once I got to be a reporter, I saw there was no monopoly on integrity. I mean the Democrats and Republicans can both be bad. And I think it was, like when you write a column, I think it is important to point out the guys that are good, the gals that are good, and bad. And I did that. I did that.

DePue: How did you happen to make the switch then from being a city reporter doing the police beat. I assume at this time you had kind of moved on from doing the sports scene?

Callahan: Well, what happened, and this really bothered me at the time, a sports reporter job came open and Jim Armstrong ... they filled it. I didn’t know it was open. I went in to see him and I said, “You know, you told me I would be considered for the next sports reporting job that came here. You didn’t even talk to me about it.” He said, “You’re too good to be a sports reporter.” And I said, “You know, that ought to be my decision, because that was our agreement.” Well, he didn’t comment much on that. But then I started covering Democratic meetings on my own time. I remember my first one was the Sangamon County Democratic rally in New Berlin. And I

turned in a story. I did the same thing ... I was a case reporter probably two years and then they assigned me to Labor and then Commerce and Industry and school board so that all happened before I became the political reporter

DePue: Sounds like you are being groomed though to take on that position.

Callahan: Well, I guess, when I look back at it. I never looked at it that way at the time but I was turning in stories just going to rallies on my own. I went to all Democratic meetings. I didn't do a Republican one.

DePue: Why?

Callahan: Because I am a Democrat. I thought, this is my time and so I turn them in. I had rheumatic fever in '59 and '60. I am in the hospital in St. John's in '60 and Jim Armstrong and Ed Armstrong came to see me in the hospital. And they said, "How would you like to cover the legislature and write a two-day-a-week political column for the paper?" No one was doing this. They didn't have a political column.

DePue: What was the Armstrong's affiliation with the newspaper?

Callahan: At that time, Jim was the managing editor and Ed ... I don't know what Ed's title was at that time. But he later became editor. Okay. So they came to see me. And I said I would like that. I would like doing that. So I started. As I said, I covered Kennedy and Nixon and then starting writing a column two days a week and then that turned in to five days a week.

DePue: What was the name that you had on the column?

Callahan: Callagrams.

DePue: Callagrams? And what did you like about writing a column versus the hard reporting that you had been doing up to this point?

Callahan: I think you could have some influence on policy and the promotion of good people and the public indictment, at least, of the crooks. I liked that part. As an example, I was very strong for fair housing. To Ed Armstrong's great credit, he gave me tremendous freedom in my column. Tremendous freedom. I was writing fair housing columns before the newspaper ever took a stand. And I wanted the *Register* to take a stand. The only downstate paper that had taken a stand on fair housing was the *Peoria Journal Star*. I said, Ed we ought to be for this. The Republicans had a precinct committeeman—well, he changed parties, I don't know at this point if he is a Democrat or a precinct, whatever—by the name of Harlan Watson. I visited every home on the east side of town in this precinct, Harlan, H-a-r-l-a-n. And I went to these places. No indoor plumbing. And African Americans paid more for rent than we were – my wife and I. And that just really bothered me. My espousal of fair housing laws became stronger. As

an example, with the newspaper's permission, I was putting out the newsletter for the Illinois Association of Realtors. The realtors was against open housing, or fair housing. And I went to see Bob Cook, good man. I said, "Bob, I got to quit doing this. I don't feel right. You and I are just on opposite sides of a issue that is very important to me." And he understood it completely. Years later, he called me to write a speech for him which I did. For a hundred dollars, you know.

DePue: Your focus as a columnist: was it primarily city politics, or did you start getting and writing about state politics and even national level politics?

Callahan: Basically state politics. Basically. But I covered the races, you know, and the county chairman. As an example, when I started, I stopped at the Sangamon County Republican headquarters twice a day, Sangamon County Democratic headquarters twice a day. Republican state headquarters, twice a day, Democratic state headquarters, twice a day. And so it was state. And I remember Art Falls—he is still a friend of mine—he was the head of the United Republican Fund, the chief revenue arm of the Republican party at that time -

DePue: In Illinois?

Callahan: In Illinois. The office was at the Leland Hotel over here at the corner. He said, Are you Democrat or Republican? I said, I am a Democrat. He said, You vote in the primary? and I said, Yes. From then on he trusted me because I didn't beat around the bush to him. And also I was out working people. They would say, If he is working this hard let's give him a story every once in a while. In fact, the editor of the *Illinois State Journal* one time called and raised hell because I was getting these stories, you know, and Al Bernardi, B-e-r-n-a-r-d-i, who later became Illinois Director of Labor under Thompson, said, If your people worked as hard as Callahan you would get more stories than he is getting. And they would have, because it was a Republican paper.

DePue: Tell us then about the politics of Sangamon County and then maybe the politics of Springfield, which is difficult to separate from state level politics, I think, in some parts.

Callahan: It is. Now Johnson Kanady, J-o-h-n-s-o-n K-a-n-a-d-y, was the bureau chief of the *Chicago Tribune*. Later became press secretary to Governor Stratton. He said to me when I got into government, Stay out of local politics. All it will do is hurt you. By local, he meant Springfield politics. Because he had been involved in it and got bruised up quite a bit. He is the guy that (unintelligible?) Dallman, Two Job Dallman. So basically I didn't get involved in the city politics. A little bit later I did and I always did consider these non-partisan races. I voted for Republicans for mayor, you know, and

it wasn't partisan if I thought they were better. So I have supported a lot of Republicans for local office. When I say local, city-wide office.

DePue: But would you say that Sangamon County and Springfield itself is a Republican stronghold?

Callahan: Oh yes. Now in 1958 the Democrats elected four county-wide offices and came damn close to two others. But it is a strong Republican county, yeah. Strong.

DePue: And then what is the relationship between the city politics and this being the state capitol? How would you characterize that?

Callahan: Close. Mayor Howarth had a good relationship with Stratton and then later with Paul Powell, a Democrat.

DePue: What was the name of the mayor?

Callahan: Howarth. H-o-w-a-r-t-h, Nelson O. Howarth. Good mayor. Phi Beta Kappa, U of I. Most of them had a good relationship with the state people, like Mayor Davlin did, you know, with Jesse White. Got along okay with Blagojevich. Jesse was his main guy and but there is a connection.

DePue: How long then did you write the column?

Callahan: From 1961 to 1967.

DePue: These are some interesting years. Did you increasingly then find yourself reporting on state level politics as you went down the road during these years?

Callahan: Uh-hm.

DePue: Well, then let's talk about ... you mentioned the Stratton, Otto Kerner campaign. Tell us a little bit about that one.

Callahan: Well, Stratton was hurting.

DePue: He was a Republican.

Callahan: Yeah Republican. A guy named Hayes Robinson, a state senator from Flossmoor, ran against him in the Republican primary. Fact, Robinson carried my home county of Iroquois. Stratton won pretty good but he got bruised up in that primary. And, you know, when you are governor of Illinois two terms, man, you are just like ... going for a third term in Springfield is very, very tough. You just make so many enemies it is bound to happen. And then Kerner was a fresh face and he was Mayor Cermak's son-in-law and Mayor Cermak had a following because of Otto Kerner,

Senior. See, Governor Kerner's dad was the attorney general of Illinois and he and Cermak were cohorts; it is debatable, from what I read, how close they were, but they were considered pretty close at that time. Henry Horner and Cermak. One thing I learned: Governor Kerner—he was a judge at that time in Cook County, in 1960, taught every year Boys State in Springfield. You know what Boys States? ... okay. They came up to the *Register* to see the editor and I remember he had like a baseball cap on but it had some words here, I don't know what they were. He had a sports t-shirt and he came up by himself. And Stratton I always noticed there were always a lot of people around him and yet that had a bearing on me like, you know, like ... Senator Dixon: I always say, you go in and have your editorial meetings by yourself. You know. Now Paul Simon – this is unusual but I was usually with him when he had his editorial board meetings Then later when I got to thinking about that Simon race when we got beat, I thought that was a mistake for me to be with him. I never made that mistake again. I still consider it a mistake.

DePue: Well, we are definitely going to get there because that is a race I want to spend some time on. It is one of the most fascinating races in Illinois political history, the last fifty years.

Callahan: Yeah, the Walker side, yeah.

DePue: How well did you know Kerner personally?

Callahan: I did. I have an autographed picture of him at home saying, "To Gene, an esteemed friend." I liked him. I think he was an outstanding second term governor. I think he was an acceptable first term governor.

DePue: Why the distinction there?

Callahan: Because he learned ... he wasn't taking all the guff from Mayor Daley and I really think ... have you read the books *Clout* and *Boss*?

DePue: *Boss*, yes.

Callahan: You ought to read *Clout* by Len O'Connor who was a TV guy. Daily wanted to run everything and I wrote a column one time; I said, "If Dailey really wants to run everything why doesn't he just come to Springfield, the Capitol, and have his hand out? Why doesn't he go duck hunting or goose hunting over in Pike County along the Illinois River, instead of just having his hand out?" The Democratic state chairman, James A. Ronan, sent him that column and said something like, You ought to pay heed to this.

DePue: I have heard others explain this, but how is it that Richard J. Daley, who is Mayor of probably I think the second, maybe the third largest city in the country at that time, how did he end up dominating, not just Illinois politics, but to a certain extent had an impact at the national level as well?

Callahan: Well, it appeared ... Well, he was a good mayor. He wasn't taking money himself. I think he weakened corruption. See, I can say that no one I ever worked with at a state level weakened corruption. Shapiro, Simon and Dixon. Not one iota. I think the late Mayor Daley did weaken corruption and I think there is enough evidence to show that, including the books *Boss* and *Clout*. And, uh, also he could bring people together. What he did for Kennedy... See, I think Kennedy was able to carry Illinois because of the United Auto Workers and Mayor Daley.

DePue: Well, the stories, the legends are that there was massive corruption vote fraud in that election.

Callahan: There might be but probably no more than the Republicans were doing in DuPage County. I will never buy that. Just to say that they stole the election.

DePue: Well another fellow journalist described Daley's clout at the national level in part because so many people at the national level contributed to his winning Illinois.

Callahan: Uh-huh, oh, I agree with that. See I think he carried Illinois. I think Kennedy carried Illinois because of Daley and the auto workers. That is my view. The auto workers had a great registration drive and I mean great. They did a job. And Daley did a job.

DePue: So let's go back to Otto Kerner—because he is the subject—and his relationship with Daley, because you suggested there was a big change between those terms.

Callahan: It was a cordial relationship the first term and I think that is why Kerner acquiesced so much to Mayor Daley. But the second time it came around I think he wanted to be more independent and James A. Ronan R-o-n-a-n, the Democratic state chairman for twenty-two years, who was designated that post by Adlai Stevenson, the governor. Mr. Ronan was a completely, and I mean completely, honest man. He was Illinois Director of Finance in addition to being state chairman and Kerner trusted him. And Chris Vlahoplus, V-l-a-h-o-p-l-u-s, who was the guy who got Simon to come here to start that public affairs reporting program at Sangamon State. Vlahoplus retired, by the way, as a journalism professor at the University of South Carolina. Talked to him last week. Vlahoplus was the guy too who was a competitor that I worried about. I worried about Bill Miller locally, Tom Littlewood and Chris Vlahoplus when it came to competition. Oh, you would get beat every once in a while with someone but not very often. But Vlahoplus was really good. Kerner, he wasn't a strong first term governor but he did a lot of good things including mental health, especially mental health, I think he was very strong with equal rights, very strong. And the people downstate liked him. People in Springfield liked him. There is a

period that ... of course, Horner was governor during my lifetime but I didn't know anything about Horner except what my Dad told me. But there had been no more popular governors in Springfield than Horner and Kerner. Vote totals show that. And I think Kerner was fortunate to be re-elected. He got re-elected because of Goldwater and Chris Vlahoplus.

DePue: Well, it was a good Democratic year in 1964.

Callahan: That's right. That is how my Dad got elected to state rep. From that area, he wouldn't have been a state rep.

DePue: Civil rights in those years is very much in the national attention. Is that something you were following in the state of Illinois as well?

Callahan: Yes., and because of my Dad. My Dad almost got beat for Democratic precinct committeeman in 1948. My Dad would let anyone hunt or fish on his land, anyone, as long as they asked. And if they didn't ask, he would go kick them off. When they asked, he would say, Close the farm gates, don't shoot my ducks, don't shoot any of my hogs or cattle. You know, every once in a while we would get a duck shot at, but never any cattle or hogs. And, so, in 1948 these African Americans came and asked Dad if they could hunt at the beginning of squirrel season. And he said, Sure. Well, there had been [someone] who had been hunting and fishing on our land for years. Decided he didn't like African-Americans hunting on our land. And he ran against Dad as a precinct committeeman as a write-in and told everyone in town, "Joe Callahan is a nigger lover." That was his campaign. My Dad was at a hog sale in South Dakota, my brother called him—and I heard this conversation—he says, Dad, you are going to be beat for precinct committeeman if you don't get home. He said, Well, how can that be? And he said, Well—he mentioned the guy's name—has has run as a write-in campaign, and said what he is talking about you. He said, "I think you could get beat." Well, we had nine people on our road at home. I don't know what the election laws were at that time, but I can tell you that all nine on that road went in the Democratic primary and voted for my Dad. Okay. And he is elected precinct committeeman I think by three votes – three or five.

DePue: Now, I am assuming some of these people on your road were otherwise always voting Republican?

Callahan: Oh, may have some of them, yeah. Yeah. Yeah. But they did that for Dad and my brother.

DePue: Is that one of the kind of stories that would occasionally appear in your column to illustrate a point?

Callahan: Oh, no, I never did tell that story about my Dad. No, I never did. No. I told that piece to *Illinois Issues*. I think I told Kathy Best that story.

DePue: This would have been years and years later.

Callahan: Yeah, the one I said you might Google.

DePue: Okay. You mention some of the things you thought Kerner did well on in that first term. Talk to me about Mrs. Kerner.

Callahan: Well, she certainly had the reputation for drinking too much. I saw it ...

DePue: What is her first name?

Callahan: Helena. I saw her get upset with the governor once at the St. Nick Hotel¹ and stalk off the stage. And it was embarrassing. I was up front. A state policeman followed her, and got her home. I did a story one time on the mansion being a fire trap. I don't know if I went that strong but you know, Kerner was scared of it. Being a fire trap. She was with a guy named Ward Johnson who was a photographer at the paper, W-a-r-d, Johnson, the way it sounds. He was a state photographer but I was writing the story. And I went over and she was there. The governor was not there. And she was kind to us but before she left she did offer us a drink, you know. Ward and I both accepted. We had a drink with her. (laughs) But I liked her. Now she used me one time. She called me at home. The National Governor's Conference was at Cleveland, Ohio. Eisenhower was one of the speakers. This was the year that Goldwater was the nominee and Scranton.

DePue: 1964 then.

Callahan: '64. By the way, the first time I ever heard the word *cabal* Eisenhower said, "I am not going to be part of any *cabal*." I thought, what the hell is that. I look it up, you know. So anyway, Mrs. Kerner called me at home and said, You are going to the convention? And I said, Yes, I am going. She says, Tony and Helena, the girls, the daughters, they are going to go too. Well, I found out ... so I write this and they were never in the ballgame to go, the kids. But she wanted them to go, you know. And she thought if she could get it in the paper that they were going that the governor would let them go. Well, he didn't let them go. So, I didn't like that, being used, but I was. And how I found out, I went out with Chris Vlahoplus to meet the governor at the plane coming in. Mrs. Margaret Kolom, was the social secretary at the mansion. And I said, Where are the kids? And she said, Oh, they were never ... And I said, Well, Mrs. Kerner told me. And she said, I am aware of that. She knew it, you know; Margaret Kolom did. And she liked me; Margaret Kolom did. Now Mrs. Kerner didn't know me all that well. I mean, well enough to call me Gene. I was never ... and I knew all the stories about her, of course.

¹ The nickname of a hotel properly named the St. Nicholas Hotel but generally called The St. Nick. It was also known as a frequent meeting place of Democrats.

DePue: Did you know the two of them well enough to have a feel for the relationship between the governor and Mrs. Kerner?

Callahan: No, no. Well, I remember this one time. Audrey Peak, P-e-a-k, was the Republican National Committeewoman and a friend of mine. She was from Winchester. We were talking about work habits and I said, Well, the governor gets to work early every day. Goes to the Y early and goes to work. She said, Well, you dummy. You know why he does that?. And I said, Why. She said, To get away from his wife. I thought maybe she was off base at the time. I don't know if she was off base or not, you know. But it would be hard to put up with what he put up with. I got to say that. And maybe she felt the same way.

But I got to say, Kerner was absolutely wonderful to me. And I saw him really stand up on an equal rights thing one time with a guy from the State Chamber of Commerce who was against fair housing laws. Might have been the FEPC. In fact, it was FEPC. It was at a cocktail party at the State House Inn. I was so proud of Kerner, how he stood up to this guy. One of the few times I really ever saw him upset. And really showed it at a public function.

DePue: You remember what timeframe this would have been?

Callahan: Well, when FEPC was up for the first time probably.

DePue: '60s?

Callahan: Yeah.

DePue: '64, '65.

Callahan: '63 or '65 probably.

DePue: Okay. How well did you know about Ted Isaacs and his influence on Kerner?

Callahan: Well, I referred to him in a column. This is a direct quote, "as an albatross around Kerner's neck."

DePue: You probably need to lay out some of the ground work about who Ted Isaacs is and his ...

Callahan: Ted Issacs was Director of Revenue. He was a National Guard friend of Governor Kerner. I think he was a colonel and Kerner was a general. He brought him in as revenue director. Well, Isaacs lied to me in 1963, early. It was either in December of '62 or January of '63. I got a tip they were going to fire Rock Bradley as Illinois Director of Agriculture and name Bob Schneider, S-c-h-n-e-i-d-e-r, as Director of Agriculture. The tip was good.

I called Isaacs and Isaacs said, Oh, no, no truth to that. Well the deal had already been done. I didn't know he was lying to me at the time. In fact they told Schneider to hide out. Well, I found Schneider. I found him at ... it's at Ohio Avenue in Chicago. I am not thinking of the name of it. I found him at this hotel, okay, on Ohio Avenue. And he said, "Gene, let me tell you something. If you use that story it's going to cost me the job. Because Isaacs told me that if it's in the newspapers I would not be the Director of Agriculture." So I didn't use the damn thing.

DePue: Did he come to you or did you go to him?

Callahan: I went to him. I could have legitimately used it. I could have legitimately used it. It gets back to one of things that you do or you don't do. He wasn't using me though, Schneider wasn't. Isaacs was just lying to me. And so then he got involved and the Cook envelope scandal. You know, a paying off contributors and kicks backs and stuff like that. And Vlahoplus and I were (___?), press secretary to Kerner. And I had great respect for him. And, I wrote that anyone who thinks Kerner and Isaacs have made a split ... this is after Isaacs indicted ... don't know what they are talking about. I said, "He is a weekend visitor at the Governor's Mansion." Vlahoplus called me and said, "Gene you are wrong on that." I said, "Chris, I am not wrong." Now I am talking to a friend now, Vlahoplus, okay. And I said, "No, I am not wrong." And he said, "You are wrong." I said, "You ask any state trooper at the mansion where Issacs is spending weekends. If you find out that I am wrong, you call me back."

DePue: Where Isaacs is spending weekends you say?

Callahan: Yeah, at the Governor's Mansion, you know. So Vlahoplus checks it out and never called me back. Because I was right. That is when I referred to him as an albatross around Kerner's neck.

DePue: Timeframe for that, do you recall? Roughly the year.

Callahan: Well, Isaacs got indicted before the '64 election. Got indicted before. That is why ... and he still wanted to be part of the campaign but Vlahoplus just eased him out. Eased him out of the campaign.

DePue: I thought there was an influence with Kerner even beyond that timeframe.

Callahan: Well, when he got convicted. Yeah.

DePue: They still remained personal friends?

Callahan: Yeah.

DePue: What was the attraction there because ...

- Callahan: Well, I think military. And Kerner had named him head of the election office when he was judge. A guy named Dick Thrne ... T-h-r-n-e... was named press secretary to Kerner. Thrne was probably closer to Isaacs than he was to Kerner. There was a decent man. Didn't know anything about downstate Illinois, but he was a decent person, you know.
- DePue: Since we are in the 1964 timeframe, I want to finish up with his first term with this question and have your explanation about the bedsheet ballot in 1964. Because I would think that would be a perfect kind of subject to deal with in a column or two.
- Callahan: Well, you know, they couldn't agree on reapportionment; that is how that happened. The parties couldn't agree. And they had a commission and everything else and they just couldn't agree. The Democrats and Republicans were both willing to roll the dice, you know, and the Democrats, 118, the Republicans to the rest. They say that is how my Dad was elected as state legislator. He would never have been elected otherwise. Adlai Stevenson finished first. My Dad finished twenty-seventh of the two hundred and thirty-six candidates, and was very proud of that. Every newspaper in the state that made endorsements endorsed my Dad except the *Bloomington Pantograph*, which I understand because that is the headquarters for the Farm Bureau, you know, and my Dad was a farmer's union guy. Ike Eisenhower led the Republican ticket; Adlai Stevenson, (___?) and Tony Scariano were in the top five. Great legislators. Well, (___?) was a great legislator. Scariano was a good legislator, better than average, who knew who to get publicity. I wrote a piece, by the way, immediately following the '65 legislative session for *The New York Times* about something like, Adlai Stevenson is judged by his peers as ____? ___, Earl Eisenhower was viewed as the good guy who was a good person and favored by his ... you know. It was a good guy. Something like that. It was a little bit better journalistically than what I just said. But, they used the whole column. *The New York Times* did.
- DePue: Well, that is like getting in to the major leagues finally, huh?
- Callahan: I was the stringer for *The New York Times* and *Time* magazine. Downstate stringer from '65 through '67.
- DePue: Well, you are going to have to help out somebody who hasn't spent his career in journalism. Stringer?
- Callahan: Well, that is like I was a sports stringer for the Danville paper and the Kankakee paper. I gave them sports stories on basketball and football. Here I would give them stories ... they suggested Eisenhower, Stevenson later. It was not my idea. I only ever had one story turned down by *The New York Times* and I called it in. If they agreed to do it, they could write it, and then they would carry it. And *Time* magazine, on the other hand, used almost

nothing that I ever gave them. Also, *The New York Times* paid well. I got a hundred and twenty-five dollars by the way for that Eisenhower-Stevenson piece. *Time* magazine was really chintzy on paying, late and everything else. *The New York Times* was wonderful. And also they taught me a lot. Boy they are sticklers. I really learned a lot being with *The New York Times*.

DePue: But when they accept and when they reject, they are giving you pointers on how to improve the story?

Callahan: Yeah, yeah, and improved it, and improved it. And they were nice about it. I worked with a good Midwest editor named Austin Wehrwein, W-e-h-r-w-e-i-n, later became editor of the editorial page at the *Minneapolis Herald Tribune*. I think it is *Herald Tribune*, might be just *Minneapolis Tribune*. I'm not sure of that.

DePue: Okay. So the '64 bedsheet ballot and the peculiarity of the whole thing that you are running statewide and it always before had been at these, you know, you were running for particular district ... I don't know how to ask this question or where in the interview to ask this question but I will throw it in now.

Callahan: Okay.

DePue: Illinois politics. We play a different brand of politics than other states. Is there something unique or different about Illinois that you have so many of these peculiar kind of scenarios emerge?

Callahan: Well, I cannot judge that. I mean you and I both know there is way too much corruption in Illinois. We got a trophy for that practically. I am a heavy newspaper reader still. But there were two job offers I had from the Register. One was not an offer. They asked me if I would be interested in *St. Petersburg Times*; a guy named Gene Patterson was the editor. How this happened was, Paul Simon and Patterson were friends and Patterson and Paul Simon talked about the possibility of hiring me. And I did talk with them and I got to thinking, you know, what do I want to move to Florida where I don't know anything about politics. Also the *Detroit Free Press* did offer me a job as being bureau chief of the Lansing bureau. I came to the same conclusion, you know. See, and I knew when you were around my Dad I am the only one of my family who ever had a government job even though my Dad was a state rep by fluke. But we were in it, you know, for philosophically. So, I just didn't want to give up my knowledge of what I knew about Illinois. And I am sure glad I made that decision even though I don't like the weather.

DePue: You made a distinction that there is a lot different about that second term for Otto Kerner than the first. Now part of that is that he resigns towards the tail end of it and Sam Shapiro becomes ...

Callahan: Oh nine months, yeah.

DePue: But what were the accomplishments that Kerner had in that second term the reason you say that?

Callahan: Well, I think the major accomplishment when he was running the office and Dailey wasn't. That is what I think.

DePue: You could clearly see the difference.

Callahan: I could.

DePue: How?

Callahan: Just that Mr. Ronan as the buffer between the two was called in to more meetings than he had ever before. See, Mr. Ronan really liked me. In 1960 I did a feature article on him that was not my idea. It was the managing ... go ahead.

DePue: Remind me again the relationship, the position that Ronan had.

Callahan: He was Democratic State Chairman.

DePue: Okay.

Callahan: Jerry Schniepp, S-c-h-n-i-e-p-p, was the managing editor of the Register and asked me to do a feature on Ronan. I had never met him before. So I went over and interviewed him and talked to him. We get done with the interview and he said, Where are you from? And I said, Milford, Illinois. And he said, Callahan, any relation to Joe Callahan? And I said, That's my Dad. And he said, You have a good Dad. So he was inclined to trust me because of my Dad. But it still took him about a year to really trust me. And then he became a great news source of mine. Now, if there ... Irish Catholic Democrats were very anti-media, very, very bad. But Mr. Ronan had graduated from Notre Dame with a major in communications, okay, then offered a job in the *Chicago Tribune*. Decided not to do that. He went to law school, DePaul. So he was one of the few leaders in Cook County that really liked us, you know, after he trusted you. I mean, I knew who he trusted and didn't trust. One time his wife and my wife and I were together in his room at the Midwest Democratic Conference. I am a reporter now, okay. We are having some cocktails in his room and Isaacs name came up, and she says, "Now, Jimmy, you know he is a crook." Now, Mama, Mama, Mama, he says. (laugh). But I tell you ... we are driving up to Madison, Wisconsin together and I said, Why don't we have one of these meetings in

Springfield—Midwest Democratic Conference; we got the governor's mansion and everything else?" He said, "Would you really like one in Springfield?" I said I would. Well, we did it. He bought some booze. We had a reception in his room for all the people and we called his wife and my wife, Martha. Well anyway, so we get the next conference here in Springfield. Hubert Humphrey came in as a speaker and it was wonderful.

DePue: Well, this makes me ask you this question here. What was Helen's view about your involvement as a journalist and then increasingly in state level politics?

Callahan: Now when you say Helen, you mean Ann?

DePue: Your wife.

Callahan: Oh yeah, Ann, Ann, Ann.

DePue: I'm sorry. Ann. I'm sorry.

Callahan: Well, I think she liked ... well, the thing is I was having trouble paying bills. See, when I worked, when I left the paper after ten years I was making a hundred sixty-five dollars a week. And Armstrong told me I am the second highest paid person at the paper. Only he was making more. I was making more than the city editor and the managing editor I told him I was offered a job for fifteen thousand a year for the state. Okay? And, I said, Ed, I will stay for ten thousand dollars. I said I think I am worthy of ten thousand dollars. He says, You are. You deserve that. No, he didn't say I deserve it. He said, You are worthy of that, but I can't get it for you. And he said, I can get you five dollar a week raise. I am trying to get you ten but I can't guarantee a ten. I can never do better than ten, you know. I admired his great honesty with me. So I left. And I hated to leave but I had to do it.

DePue: That was '67?

Callahan: '67.

DePue: 1967, okay. We are little bit ahead of where I want to be but ...

Callahan: Okay.

DePue: That is only the reason I asked you the question here in the first place. I want you to spend a little bit of time about the reforms that were going on in the Illinois legislature at the time and I know you cannot talk about this subject and not talk about W. Russell Arrington as well.

Callahan: Well, Arrington was a visionary. Complete self-made man. Personal lobbyist for big business. The Democrats trusted his word.

DePue: And he is a Republican.

Callahan: Yeah, Democrats trusted his word. The Republicans, I think, respected him more for his work ethic than for his philosophy. Because, he was for fair housing, you know. He was for FEPC,² Arrington was. So he brought the Illinois legislature in to the 20th Century. It wasn't in the 20th century before.

DePue: Why do you say that?

Callahan: Well, staff people. Where you could do more ...

DePue: You mean they didn't have much of a staff?

Callahan: No. Paul Simon, for instance, had a stenographer out of the Senate pool, you know, as a state senator. And you just took whoever you could get. I think Taylor Pensoneau wrote a good book on Arrington. Have you read that book by the way?

DePue: Yes.

Callahan: It is a good effort. And his effort on Ogilvie is a good effort. Hope his effort on Alan Dixon is as good and I am hoping it will be. And, so getting back to my wife, I guess I answered that question. But she liked having the money. Because we never had any money. She is the one that has got to pay the bills. She has always paid the bills. She still pays the bills. I don't even have a check blank. I don't know how to use an ATM machine. If it weren't for her, I would have been in the fix long ago. So the reforms ... see, I happen to think that Paul Simon had as much to do with reform as anyone. Not in passing a bill but just by what he did.

DePue: What were the specific changes that Arrington, and you say Simon, were pushing?

Callahan: Well, they never pushed much together. I got to say that.

DePue: Okay.

Callahan: Now with social legislation they might have but not on ethics legislation. No one ever went as far ethically as Simon wanted them to go.

DePue: Can I just kind of paint my own understanding -

Callahan: You bet.

DePue: - with the Illinois state legislature.

² Fair Employment Practices Commission

Callahan: And if I jump around too much you can interrupt me any time. Nothing offends me. Okay?

DePue: But I think this is an important thing for people today to understand about Illinois legislature, what it was then and now. My understanding is the Illinois legislature through the '50s and early 60s, is very much of a good old boys club. They met every other year for just a few months. It was always in the spring session. They weren't coming for a veto session so it was very much a part-time job and I think the guys who are nostalgic about the era would say, we were citizen legislators: we were a farmer or a lawyer or a doctor or a businessman. We had something where that was our major career. We occasionally came down to Springfield and did business. And when they came down and did business some of the stories you might hear about what was happening while they were in Springfield was kind of like, what happens in Vegas stays in Vegas. They lived a different lifestyle. There were stories about mistresses ...

Callahan: As a reporter, I never got in to that by the way. Never, never, never.

DePue: Okay. So you can't say that it happened or didn't happen.

Callahan: Well, sure it happened. Oh yeah, I know specific cases, you know.

DePue: Was what I laid out fairly accurate you think?

Callahan: Yeah, it is accurate. Yeah. Not everyone. Not everyone. Like, see I never did cover Mayor Daley down here. But his reputation was damn good on that. And of course, Paul Simon, Adlai Stevenson, those guys, you know, they are very good on that. There was social thing too, like Arrington and Dixon used to drink together, you know. Dixon and I became friends really – I knew him – at the place called the Capitol Way Inn. When I was working with Paul Simon. And, now I knew him. I have known Alan Dixon since 1961 and liked him. But '67 over conversation at the Capitol Way Inn is where we became friends, where I became... where I trusted him with anything he would tell me and vice versa.

DePue: What was the nature of the conversation?

Callahan: That I am not getting into. Okay?

DePue: Okay.

Callahan: But he could have lied to me and didn't. And from then on, I know this guy has got it.

DePue: Well, there is one thing consistent in everything we have talked about so far. You can't deal with somebody who lies to you.

- Callahan: That's right. That's right. See I was raised that if you lie, you steal. And I think it's pretty close to right. Not completely right. Not completely.
- DePue: What were the reforms that were going on once Arrington was in position as the President Pro Tem of the Senate?
- Callahan: Well, see I think Simon was the moral force of ethics changes. As an example, a guy named Hudson Sours, S-o-u-r-s, from Peoria referred to Paul Simon as a Benedict Arnold of the Illinois Senate. And it backfired on Sours. Backfired on him very much. Because Simon was always pushing for ethics stuff. He wrote the piece in *Harper's* magazine. Journalistically there are holes in that article, by the way.
- DePue: Well, tell us a little bit about what Simon said in that *Harper's* magazine article.
- Callahan: Well, I have a copy of it at home if you want me to bring it to you.
- DePue: I have read it. I just want to get on record ...
- Callahan: Oh, but just about ... I should re-read it again before I really answer that question.
- DePue: But, in essence, it said something about the corruption that occurs in the Illinois legislature?
- Callahan: Oh yeah. That's right, yeah, yeah. Jack Mabley of the old *Chicago American* ... they threw some recordings over a transit in his room about lobbyists paying off people, you know. And that was a major, major story. This was right in the throes of what Simon was doing, his stuff on ethics, disclosing all income, you know, net worth.
- DePue: When did that *Harper's* article come out?
- Callahan: In the '60s. In the '60s, I believe. I can get you that exact date if you want. Want me to bring it in to you the next meeting?
- DePue: Well, I think we probably need to get that into the record here. Make it part of the interview.
- Callahan: That's fine.
- DePue: I have got a copy of it in my shelf in my office. So ...
- Callahan: Okay, that's fine.
- DePue: Again, here is the reform that I understand Arrington was making—and again, you need to validate or correct the record when I get this wrong—that

he was moving the legislature in ways that it became more professional. He had already talked about the minimal staffing. So Arrington now has some staffing and it was focused on the four caucuses – the House Republicans, the Democrats, the Senate Republicans, and Democrats – that they were being more efficiently staffed. That he was moving the legislature from every other year to ... okay, now we have every other year, but we have a veto session at the end of that year to come back and to override any vetoes or address some other issues. And then, later on down the road, where you have not every-other-year but you have every-year sessions as well. And this a gradual process of what others would refer to as a professionalization of the legislative process. Would you agree with that characterization?

Callahan: I'd buy that. Now, I voted for – well, I don't know it was a vote or not – I was for annual sessions. Later became I wasn't for annual sessions.

DePue: Wouldn't you say you voted for ...

Callahan: Well, that's it. I don't think I did get to vote for them. I guess I was just for it. That is why ... my fault, that say ...

DePue: As a private citizen?

Callahan: Yeah, and I was for it. Because, and this is hypocritical on my part, I was for it because I thought it would help the Springfield economy. Okay. And I was right. But now I look back at it, I think annual sessions are a mistake. I think we get into too much stuff, you know. Especially now where you have so much fighting because really, I think there are only four Illinois legislators. I think the two leaders – Mike Lawrence and I discussed this yesterday. Boy, on the radio. And I think the two Democratic leaders, two Republican leaders, and the rest are ornaments.

DePue: What is often times referred to as the four tops.

Callahan: Oh yeah, yeah. I don't know anyone even would want to be a legislator right now to get something done.

DePue: Okay. I wonder if you can reflect on some of the other lions or the more prominent members of the Illinois legislature and in Illinois government at the time. And this would have been in the '60s, before you started working for ...

Callahan: What do you mean with that?

DePue: Well, some of the other names that are prominent. We mentioned Arrington. We mentioned Simon.

Callahan: Well, you had Al Smith, who later became U.S. Senator when Dirksen died. He was from the same legislative district that Paul Simon was from. He was

from Alton, Illinois. John Lewis, who was speaker of the House and became Director of Agriculture under Ogilvie. They were prominent figures. And you had Ray Klingbiel who got kicked off the Illinois Supreme Court for ethics violations. Forget exactly what he did there but it wasn't proper. And, those were big wheels. Clyde Choate, who was a congressional medal of honor winner, was Powell's guy in the House.

DePue: Powell?

Callahan: Uh-huh, Paul Powell. Paul Howell. Have you read Hartley's book on Paul Powell. Okay, you have done a good job on ...

DePue: Well, I have interviewed Hartley and in the process I had to read his material, and interviewed Taylor Penseneau so I have read his material as well.

Callahan: Now, who was the last one I mentioned?

DePue: Well, I wanted to hear more about Clyde Choate and Paul Powell because that is an interesting duo there.

Callahan: Okay. Well, southern Illinois. One from Vienna, Powell from Vienna. Clyde Choate from Anna. If you want to read something interesting, read the congressional medal of honor book, what he did; it's amazing what he did. And, they were people that fought Simon at almost every turn that he wanted to accomplish.

DePue: But these are Democrats in the House correct?

Callahan: Yeah, uh-hm, yeah. And they were aligned with a guy named Grindle, Senator Bill Grindle from southern Illinois. I forget his town. And Senator Zeigler, Z-e-i-g-l-e-r, out of Zeigler, Illinois. I'm not sure how he spelled his name but he was from Zeigler, Illinois and Zeigler, Illinois is Z-e-i-g-l-e-r. But Choate and Powell were very, very close. In my view he was closer to Choate than anyone ever in the House during my days.

DePue: But they sound like different kind of Democrats than Simon was, obviously.

Callahan: Oh, yes. Oh yeah.

DePue: Well, here is the thing that strikes me—and again, you can nix this characterization—but you have the Chicago Democratic machine that is controlled by Daley, and then you have got this powerful core of southern Illinois Democrats as well. What was the relationship that those two groups had?

Callahan: Well, Powell and Choate were the legislative guys. They weren't the political guys. They couldn't get done what they wanted to do politically

like Daley did. That is the main difference. See, as an example, when Sid Gates in 1962 ran for the U.S. Senate against Dirksen, he did not really want to run for the U.S. Senate but he did. Okay. Now, Powell wanted to run for the U.S. Senate in 1962 but Paul Simon let it be known, you endorse Paul Powell for the U.S. Senate, I am going to run against him in the primary.

DePue: Because?

Callahan: Because of ethics. Race track stock, things like that. And he knew shenanigans in the House and so forth. In other words, race track culture. *Harper's* magazine culture, you know. Simon would have run ... now, that is something that a lot of people don't realize, that Simon would have taken Powell on with or without Daley support. And they didn't want to go through that fight because Simon would have cleaned him up in the media, you know. And Powell would have been denigrated like you don't believe in a statewide race.

DePue: And this is at a time period when Simon is ...

Callahan: ...on his way up

DePue: He is writing frequent columns in newspapers that appear throughout the entire state.

Callahan: Right, including Springfield paper. In fact I met him, Simon, for the first time in probably early '58. Could have been late '57 but it was one of the two. When he brought his newspaper up to Mr. D.

DePue: Would you say it would be fair to say that for both Daley, who is running that Chicago machine, and for Powell who is so dominant in the south, it is very much a patronage machine that is the source of their power or part of it?

Callahan: Oh yeah. Powell is heavy in patronage. Yeah, positively. And Simon was not heavy at all in patronage. In fact he stayed away from it. Stayed away from it. In fact, one time he recommended someone for a job, one of the few times he ever did. It was in the Department of Conservation. Because someone had asked him (unintelligible) legislature he did. Well, he found out later that this gal was this legislator's girlfriend. And man, he was embarrassed about it.

DePue: Did you have a personal relationship with Simon at this time?

Callahan: Yeah.

DePue: How did that start?

Callahan: Well, when I first met him he represented in the Democratic party when I believed in. He was active in a group called the Democratic Federation of Illinois that was formed by Stephen A. Mitchell who was the Democratic National Chairman under Adlai when Adlai ran for President. And Mr. Ronan, who was an organization guy, said the purpose of the DFI – that’s what they referred to, that Democratic Federal of Illinois – was good. It was a way to get volunteers but he thought Mitchell had misused the DFI for his own purpose. And I cannot say whether he is right or wrong on that.

DePue: Was that organization meant to be something of a counter from the Chicago machine?

Callahan: Right, right, right. (unintelligible?), Scariano, Simon. Yeah, uh-huh, right. And I went to their statewide convention here. Paul Butler was the speaker, of Indiana. He had been Democratic National Chairman. I think he succeeded Mitchell. That’s my memory anyway. Simon believed ... remember one time he was speaking before the B’nai Brith in Peoria and he called me. I am a reporter and he said I am on my way to Peoria. I am driving alone do you want to ride over with me. We rode over together and we talked about a lot of things and then he spoke for a state senate candidate in Quincy who won. He was running against an incumbent and I rode over with him as a reporter. His name was Tom Averkamp, A-w-e-r-k-a-m-p, and Averkamp won and so I got to know very well. And then later, I got to know him even better. Like for instances, when he taught at Sangamon State he lived at our home for a semester with us. How that happened was Jean and the kids stayed at Harvard until the school year was over, and he came back here. And when he was at Harvard he let me use his mustang and I said, You know, I’d just as soon you stay out there so I can keep driving your mustang.

DePue: That is a couple of decades down the road though isn’t it?

Callahan: Yeah, that’s right.

DePue: Was part of the attraction between the two men because you are fellow journalists?

Callahan: Former journalists. He was a devout Lutheran, more devout than I. He didn’t wear it on his sleeve. See, I am really skeptical of people that wear religion on their sleeve, and he never did that. Mr. Ronan never did that. Mr. Ronan was Catholic. Never did it. And Paul Simon. There are two people that I have great, great respect for – both of them. And, he was a good writer;. I liked that part of it. There is just a lot of things ... he liked sports and he was just a wonderful man. Great influence on me. He and Alan Dixon both.

- DePue: And it sounds like by the time you were hooking up with him, he appeared to be one of the stars on the rise?
- Callahan: Well, yeah. Well, the organization didn't like him so they didn't like him.
- DePue: You say THE organization.
- Callahan: Democratic State Central Committee. But, you know, now, Mr. Ronan liked him but he was different. Even though, but, you know, they didn't care for Paul Simon because his ethics went too far for them. So many of them. Powell didn't like him. Choate didn't like him. Didn't care for him.
- DePue: Again, this whole period of Illinois politics is fascinating to me. And part of it because you've got Daley there and you've got the slate makers. When we hear the term, slate makers, again, maybe that's something most people aren't familiar with, what that actually means. But my understanding, it's those people who get together and make the decisions about who is going to run for these major political positions in the State of Illinois. So my question in this respect is, you've got Daley and he is so strongly connected with the slate makers, not just picking Chicago politicians, but state level positions as well. So that relationship between Daley and Ronan. My understanding is Daley was the final arbiter when it came down to decisions like who is going to run for governor.
- Callahan: Oh yeah. Mr. Ronan was actually a buffer. That's absolutely right. Now, the guy downstate that had the clout was Mayor Fields. Alvin Fields from East St. Louis. He was the mayor. And also with lout, was Joseph Knight of Dowd, D-o-w-d, Illinois, Jersey County. Joe Knight was indicted but not convicted on the race track stuff. He was Director of Illinois Department of Financial Institutions. But Fields had the most clout. Joe Knight had second most clout of the Democratic slate-making committee. Much more than Powell. Now, you weren't going to get on that state ticket as a downstater unless Mayor Fields wanted you. That was during Mayor Fields' heyday, you know.
- DePue: Okay, well that was a name I had not heard before. But ...
- Callahan: Joe Knight was treasurer of the Democratic party statewide. And when the Democrats were out of power, from '53 to '61, he paid the rent for Democratic state headquarters here in Springfield.
- DePue: Okay. I think what I want to do here is finish up today with your discussion about what happened with Otto Kerner. First with him deciding to resign from being governor and then, of course, the tragic incident that led to his going to jail later on.
- Callahan: Well, when he resigned ...

DePue: Why did he resign?

Callahan: To become on appellate court; he became a U.S. appellate court judge.

DePue: Why would you give up the power and the prestige of being governor to make that move?

Callahan: Well, he just decided what he wanted to do and there people ... now Chris Vlahoplus, as an example. In my view, governmentally, he didn't tell Vlahoplus everything personally. I still think Isaacs was in the mix, and there might have been other people too, but Vlahoplus was his conscience in my view. Governmentally and state wide politically. I think Vlahoplus wanted him to run for a third term. And Vlahoplus wasn't thinking about job security by the way. There were people in the administration that were, you understand. But that Vlahoplus would not ... just like Mike Lawrence would not ever thought of job security, you know, in anything he recommended to Governor Edgar. Same way with Vlahoplus. I think Vlahoplus wanted him to run for a third term for history's sake and because he had been such a good second term governor in many of our views. And so he weighed everything else. He wanted to be a federal judge. He loved being a judge and he decided to do it. And I think he thought the way was paved for Shapiro to not only succeed him as governor, whom he had a lot of confidence in....

DePue: He was the lieutenant ...

Callahan: Lieutenant Governor, right. And possibly be the Democratic nominee. You know. I don't think it was a deal cut for him to be. Because there was a lot of downstate sentiment from Mike Howlett to be the governor, gubernatorial candidate.

DePue: Howlett was?

Callahan: Howlett was Secretary of State. 1972, yes, uh-huh. Yeah. Let me see, '68, maybe '72 or maybe he ran in '72. I think he ran in '72.

DePue: He was controller at that time.

Callahan: Yeah, controller. And he ran for Secretary of State in '72. Howlett would have been our strongest candidate for governor. Even though my relationship, you know, Shapiro, went back to when I was in grade school.

DePue: But again, these are namely decisions that are made by the slate makers.

Callahan: Oh yeah, that was Daley. Yeah, Daley was not that much enamored with Howlett.

DePue: But he was with Shapiro?

Callahan: Yeah, with Shapiro. And I thought ... and Shapiro was not a bomb thrower within the party or outside the party. Good man. Treated me like a nephew. I traveled with him every step of the way from Labor Day on until he left office.

DePue: Would the relationship between Kerner and Daley be such that Kerner is thinking about the decision to move over to become a judge and he goes to Daley to discuss the ramifications of it?

Callahan: Yeah, I think they would have discussed it because of LBJ and everything. And, yeah, I don't know that for a fact.

DePue: Because of LBJ?

Callahan: President Johnson.

DePue: Because of the relationship Daley had with Johnson?

Callahan: Yeah. It was damn good until he got sick of the Vietnam War. See, he was playing ball a lot with Johnson and succeeding. Getting a lot of money.

DePue: So we are not to assume any ... that Kerner is making the move because of fears that he might be indicted or drawn into the fray.

Callahan: No, I don't think so. No, I don't think so. Yeah. I could be wrong on that but I don't think so.

DePue: Okay. So can you lay out then what happens after he is out of office and this issue comes to light.

Callahan: Well, he got nailed and ...

DePue: Can you provide some of the background because I am not real clear on it.

Callahan: Well, there is a person that went to the trial, part of it, that I have great respect for—his name has come up in this interview—that told me that two things. He was convinced that he committed perjury, Kerner. This was a Kerner admirer. Committed perjury on the racetrack stock and also thought he was a very aloof witness. Did not think he was a good witness at all for himself and he got convicted.

DePue: The basic charges dealt with – I can't remember the woman's name now.

Callahan: Marge Everett. She testified without being prosecuted.

DePue: So she is apparently selling stock at a very discounted rate to both Isaacs and Kerner who then later on cash it in for considerable profit.

Callahan: Well profit., Race track dates, see, was very important. And Knight, he was involved in racetrack stuff too.

DePue: Why is the issue of racetrack dates so important when you are talking about the potential for corruption?

Callahan: The better dates you get the better your attendance is going to be, climate-wise.

DePue: So the better the profits are for stockholders.

Callahan: That's right.

DePue: Is this Chicago racetracks or downstate as well?

Callahan: Yeah, Chicago. Yeah, downstate we had Fairmont at the time. I don't know if we had any other parimutuel downstate. I don't think we did.

DePue: Was Fairmont that Powell was so involved with?

Callahan: Yeah, uh-huh, yeah.

DePue: Your views then as a supporter of the Kerner administration and, would it be fair to say a friend, a personal friend, at the time?

Callahan: Even though he says an esteemed friend on that picture, were we friends, yes. Did I like him, yes. Did he ever tell me anything in confidence, no.

DePue: Okay. So not a close relationship.

Callahan: No, no. Now, for instance, my relationship with Shapiro became close. As I said, he treated me kind of like a nephew. And I was only with him nine months. My relationship with Simon and Dixon – extremely close. They told me about—no one tells everyone everything—but they virtually told me everything of their private and public life. That's why I never write a book about them. I'm not going to write a book because I never ... Same reason that Lawrence won't write a book about Edgar. Same thing.

DePue: Your personal views when all of this came crashing down around Kerner. And here is another name, Jim Thompson is the prosecuting attorney. The federal attorney who is pursuing the case. Your views.

Callahan: Well Thompson, legally, proved him right. Tony Kerner, the governor's son, will never forgive Thompson. He is convinced that his Dad is innocent. Was then, still is, convinced of that. I happen to like Tony and I knew Tony reasonably well. Kerner was very well liked in this area. They had a welcome home party when he got out of prison here. Had a heck of an

attendance. It was at the Oaks Club. This community liked Governor Kerner.

DePue: Did you find it painful yourself to see Kerner fall like that?

Callahan: Sure, sure did. Sure did. Yeah.

DePue: What do you think Kerner's fatal flaw then would have been?

Callahan: Not strong enough to say no.

DePue: To Isaacs in particular?

Callahan: Uh-hm.

DePue: Well, what else haven't we had covered here in the '60s? I want to leave Shapiro and Simon here for our next session.

Callahan: I just want to say the Kerner conviction still bothers me. In fact, I haven't brought myself to read the Barnhardt book on Kerner. Have you read that book?

DePue: Yeah.

Callahan: Shall I read it?

DePue: I guess I wouldn't give it a strong recommendation.

Callahan: Okay. I'm not sure I will. I don't like to read to get depressed. I like to read for knowledge. [It was] good just about reading *Clout* and *Boss*. I never read it during their heyday, you know. And, I really learned some things in there.

DePue: I don't remember enough about the Kerner book to characterize it one way or the other quite frankly.

Callahan: Yeah, okay. And Barnhardt I'm not mentioning that book but Barnhardt interviewed me for half an afternoon in Washington, D.C. Barnhardt was a good legislator by the way. Good legislator.

DePue: Any final words for today then Gene?

Callahan: No. There is an Arrington story. You know Arrington would not give up his office to Paul Simon as the lieutenant governor. See, when Shapiro became governor we didn't have a lieutenant governor. Arrington just confiscated the lieutenant governor's office. Did you know this?

DePue: No, I don't think I had heard that.

Callahan: Okay. Simon is elected lieutenant governor. Arrington won't give up the lieutenant governor's office. So now, two years Arrington has got the lieutenant governor's office and Simon—I'm working there, we're down in some little hole-in-the-wall—and later, when the Democrats take over the Senate, Simon gets the lieutenant governor's office. One of the lines on the telephone they forgot to remove – direct line to Clem Stone³. (laugh) And on that, when we took over ... see that was a major story at the time when he wouldn't relinquish it. Powell was having an interview. I'm going to use a bad word now in this interview. I want to give you a direct quote. For instance, I never heard Simon swear. Durbin says he heard Simon say damn once. Okay. I never heard him swear. And I believe Durbin on anything but I tell him I don't believe him on this one. So anyway, Simon has an interview at the press room with a guy named Steve Sh _____? of WGN-TV. I go down to the press room with Powell. And when we took over I alerted the media that Simon was taking over the office and I said a good picture in my view would be Bob Massey taking down Arrington's name. I called the wire service and everything. So they did. The story moved all over hell, the article. So Paul and I are walking back to this ... and Dick Durbin, you know, he is working for Simon. And Durbin, when he gets nervous he would like this ...

DePue: Wipe his brow with his sleeve.

Callahan: Yeah, yeah. "He says, Jesus, Arrington is furious that you let the media know about Simon." I said, "Fuck Arrington." And I said, "Excuse me Paul, excuse me." And he said, "That's alright." (laugh)

DePue: Well, that's probably a great way to finish off with a good story. Thank you very much Gene.

Callahan: Okay.

(End of interview #1 #2 continues)

³ W. Clement Stone, an insurance magnate and promoter of a program on positive thinking.

Interview with Gene Callahan

IS-A-L-2011-030

Interview # 2: July 14, 2011

Interviewer: Mark DePue – ALPL Oral History Program

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DePue: Today is Thursday, July 14, 2011. My name is Mark DePue, Director of Oral History with the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library. I am here today in the Presidential Library with Gene Callahan. Good morning Gene.

Callahan: Good morning to you sir.

DePue: This is our second session. Last time we talked about ...

Callahan: Third, isn't it?

DePue: No, it's our second. Last time we talked about your career as a journalist.

Callahan: Okay.

DePue: We had mentioned that we will probably have three, maybe four sessions, depending on how far we get today. But we've got to finish with this great story about your work in major league baseball, which I am really looking forward to. In part, because I don't know much about it. But today we wanted to talk about becoming that trusted advisor to a series of politicians and especially Paul Simon and then Alan Dixon. And once we get into that realm, we have an awful lot of, first Illinois history to cover in the process, and then U.S. history when we get to Alan Dixon's years in the U.S. Senate.

But we left off last time: Otto Kerner had just gotten out of office. So we want to pick it up with Sam Shapiro. And I want to ask you then how you came to join the team with Sam Shapiro; he was lieutenant governor, and then when Kerner went to the courts, he became the governor in 1967, I believe.

Callahan: Well, here is how it happened when I went to work with Governor Shapiro. First, I had known him since I had been in grade school. When he ran for state representative the first time, my Dad was the only Democratic precinct committeeman that supported him in Iroquois County and my Dad would go everywhere with Governor Shapiro when it came to Iroquois County. Because Governor Shapiro was Jewish, some of those farmers thought that he wouldn't eat pork. Well, number one, my Dad wouldn't be for anyone that wouldn't eat pork. He wouldn't care what the religion was but if they didn't eat pork, he wouldn't support them. And, he really liked Shapiro. They travelled everywhere together. He ran well in Iroquois County. Then I started covering Governor Shapiro in that '60 campaign as a reporter and in '61 in the lieutenant governor's office. And then, Chris Vlahopoulos with whom I spelled for you – by the way, I talked to him last week. Chris Vlahopoulos wanted me to succeed a person named Bill Faurer, F-a-u-r-e-r, who is an attorney now in Springfield. Bill Faurer decided to go to law school. At that time, there was one thing called a meat scandal in Illinois, a meat inspection. Ralph Nader had come up with some real good stuff about the inadequacies of meat inspection in the state of Illinois. And I was hired to clean that up with Dr. Paul Doby, D-o-b-y, who of all things was state veterinarian. The meat inspection at that time was under the Department of Agriculture. And then later it went to the Department of Public Health. I assume that is still the same.

DePue: Are you talking about the U.S. Department of Agriculture?

Callahan: No, no, no. The Illinois Department of Agriculture. So, we got involved in that. We did clean it up. We got some very good newspaper editorials about how fast we had moved on it. We were one of the first three states to be approved for inter-inspection of meat at the state level. California, New York and Illinois all approved the same day. And, then, when Governor Shapiro became governor and Bill Faurer went to law school, Vlahopoulos asked me to be assistant press secretary. I always thought that I got that because Chris and I were friends and Governor Shapiro was saying, thank you to my Dad.

DePue: And remind us again, Vlahopoulos' position?

Callahan: He was press secretary and probably of the really good government guys probably closer to Kerner than any single person. I always give credit for Kerner's re-election to Chris Vlahopoulos and Goldwater. Because it was a landslide in Illinois. And Vlahopoulos got Ted Isaacs, who was [under] indictment, out of the campaign. Vlahopoulos had guts and he was honest and he had a lot of ability. That's how that happened. Now, from September ... I didn't become assistant press secretary until September 1, before the November election. I traveled with Governor Shapiro every minute, every minute.

DePue: We're talking '68 now?

Callahan: That's right. In 1968, I traveled with him all the time including even after the election, you know, up until he left office. He treated me somewhat like a nephew. Not like a son, but like a nephew. He never had any kids. His wife, Gertrude, liked my candor. This is a story that might interest you. There were four of us. Governor Shapiro and his wife and another person. Going to northern Illinois. Going to Chicago for a Democratic function. It was on a Sunday. Mrs. Shapiro says, How do you think the campaign is going Gene. I said, No good. It's not going well at all. And she said, Why do you say that? I said, the Governor is not working hard enough. Now here is Governor Shapiro here. Mrs. Shapiro here. I'm here. This other person is here. And the other person said, Oh, Gene, it's not all that bad. I said, It is that bad. I said, The Governor is not working hard enough. The people around are not working hard enough. We are not getting the job done. Well, Mrs. Shapiro started crying. And then she said, You better listen to him Sam. So, what happened, we agreed, we are going to put together a heck of a schedule beginning on Tuesday. And it was a **doozy**. The Governor came in that night and he says, Cancel tomorrow. I'm not going to do it. It's not worth it. I had to call the Lake County chairman, tried to talk him out of it. But he wouldn't do it. He was a wonderful man, a good government guy, but he didn't like campaigning hard. Now, when he first started he did. You know, when he was states attorney of Kankakee County. That's a Republican County. He won. He won for state rep. He was a tremendous worker for them. Something happened there along the way. Of course, you got older and I guess he lost his campaign drive. So that's how that happened.

DePue: Okay. That gets you in to 1968. He was not surprised about the results of election with Ogilvie winning then?

Callahan: No, I didn't ... Vlahopoulos and I talked the day before. We didn't have many highlights in that campaign. Governor Shapiro debated Ogilvie and Governor Shapiro demolished him in that debate. Demolished him. And I give credit basically ... There were four of us that worked on that debate: Vlahopoulos, Paul Simon, the Governor and I. Now I got to say, I don't deserve really much credit for it. Vlahopoulos and Simon do especially Vlahopoulos. He had him so well prepared. Every question that would come up Shapiro had the answers, you know. Everything. And Ogilvie been humiliated—that's too strong—but really beat him badly.

DePue: Why do you say that? Were there some particular issues that came up in the debate or was it just a matter of style?

Callahan: No, it wasn't a matter of style because neither of them, both of them had a reserved style. You know. Shapiro was a little better speaker than Ogilvie. But one of the things ... Ogilvie had a guy that was he was close to that was

part of the syndicate. Later got murdered. Last name was Kane. Vlahopoulos came up with this line that Governor Ogilvie has the mark of Kane on him. Pretty rough comment. Then other things came up and Governor Shapiro, you know, he had been a state rep, lieutenant governor, was lieutenant governor. You preside over the Illinois Senate. He knew what he was doing. Governor Ogilvie, a smart guy and a good guy. I think (unintelligible) honest, too, Governor Ogilvie. Good governor. I think Taylor Pensoneau's book is really on target, that book. And then the only other highlight we had in the campaign was when Audrey Peak, the Republican national committeewoman, publicly endorsed Governor Shapiro over Ogilvie. But you know when you only have two highlights in the campaign, that's not too good.

DePue: What was Shapiro's reaction when he got defeated? Relief?

Callahan: No, I wouldn't say relief. But he took it well. He took it well. Continued to treat me the same. No difference in how he treated me; a guy named John Taylor from Chandlerville and I were with him more than any two people. But I respected him, how he took it.

DePue: One of the peculiarities of that election was that you have Ogilvie who wins the election as the governor and then you have the Democrat, Paul Simon, who wins as lieutenant governor.

Callahan: Well, here ... now Vlahopoulos and I talked. See, it never had been done before in history of Illinois where a lieutenant governor was elected with a governor of another political party. I thought Simon was going to win and Vlahopoulos said, "I can't see that happening." Well, Simon worked his tail off in that campaign. Now, up until September 1, when I became assistant press secretary, a gal by the name of Karen Gustafson—her name was Karen Erickson I think at that time, she later married—she and I were handling all of Paul's downstate press stuff as volunteers. So Paul wanted to pay us. Well, we didn't want any money because we believed in him and I was not that heavily involved in Governor Shapiro's campaign, you know, because I was still assigned to the Department of Agriculture. We were doing a lot for Paul Simon and we didn't want any pay, so Paul said, Well, I want to pay you something. So, I said, Why? And he said, If I call you at night or midnight or something I feel better if you are getting paid for it and I'm not taking advantage of you. So Karen and I agreed to take thirty-five bucks a month. So what we did, we never cashed the checks. We took the money (laugh) to take care of his concern but we didn't want it. Then when September first came, Simon was probably – outside of my wife – the second person I called. I said, I'm not going to be able to help you anymore and here is why. Of course he was very pleased plus I got a five thousand dollar pay raise (laugh).

DePue: You were very pleased.

Callahan: Yeah, yeah, I went from fifteen thousand a year to twenty and my wife liked that. Now Governor Shapiro did have a sense of humor. This is an example. Sammy Davis, Jr.⁴ was going to be at a fundraiser for Governor Shapiro. It was on Michigan Avenue in Chicago. Beautiful part of the city. And almost the whole house was African-Americans and beautiful women. First time I ever did see a diamond in a navel, you know, low slung dresses and so on. By the way, Sammy Davis, Jr. never did show up at this fundraiser. But, so, my wife meets us at the airport when we come back to Springfield and the Governor said, You should have seen Gene today at this fundraising reception. You would have thought he was at a tennis match and he went (laugh)... But he was a fun guy, a good guy, but at that point he didn't want to campaign hard.

DePue: Well, at the end of the campaign at election night you realize, okay, I think I am out of a job now. What are your thoughts at that time?

Callahan: At three-forty a.m. in the morning, Mike Howlett called me and said, Gene, you have got a job with me. He said, If you want a job with me you got a job. He says, You don't want to go back to the news business. He says, You're good at politics. And I said, I really appreciate that because I didn't know what I was going to do. I still have great respect for Howlett doing that. Then Simon asked me to be his press secretary and administrative assistant in the lieutenant governor's office. Paying less money than Howlett and I had talked about. But Mike Howlett, whom I always liked, had a temper and I just didn't want to deal with that. And Simon was an even keel guy. That's his term for himself, by the way—even keel. We talked about what we would do and so on. I went to work with Paul.

DePue: I don't mean to question your logic on this, but I guess I will.

Callahan: Well, go ahead.

DePue: Here you got Mike Howlett, secretary of state ...

Callahan: No, he wasn't secretary of state then. He was auditor of public accounts.

DePue: Okay.

Callahan: See, he now ...

DePue: Okay, you're right, you're right.

Callahan: They called it auditor of public accounts and then changed the name to controller.

⁴ Sammy Davis, Jr. was a famous African-American singer/actor of that time, often in association with Frank Sinatra.

- DePue: Controller, okay. Uh, so controller is one of the traditional constitutional offices in the state of Illinois and lieutenant governor is kind of a burial ground, or it's a place where you get lost in the fog.
- Callahan: It's true.
- DePue: And nobody knows who the lieutenant governor is, what in the world they are suppose to do, because there is nothing in the constitution that gives them anything at all. To a certain extent it is up to the governor and now you have got a Republican governor and a Democratic lieutenant governor.
- Callahan: There is the logic of it. In the campaign, he said, I am going to be the ombudsman for the state of Illinois. Paul Simon said. I didn't know what the word ombudsman meant. I couldn't even spell it, you know. He explained to me what he wanted to do to help people that didn't have anywhere to go and he could cut the red tape and he said, "You will be doing a lot of casework." And I did. And Dick Durbin did. Yvonne Rice did. I can tell you everyone there. Craig Lovitt, one of the smartest men I have ever been around, did. L-o-v-i-t-t. He was from Galesburg. And we really did a job under Paul's direction when he was a state ombudsman. He was the first lieutenant governor that really had a lot to do and he did it. And Ogilvie was decent to him. Now they had a tremendous argument between the staffs, and publicly, on the state highway program because Ogilvie wanted to have a major bond issue and Paul was against the bond issue for the roads. And Paul was more of a pay ... he was very frugal even though he was a liberal guy. He really was conservative when it came to money, including staff salaries. And how he lived, everything else. The ombudsman, I think, really gave Paul Simon a statewide image that he didn't have before. Now, his image before that was squeaky clean like John Knuppel was state senator from Petersburg referred to him as Mr. Clean.
- DePue: Did you say John ...
- Callahan: Knuppel. K-n-u-p-p-e-l. Referred to him as Mr. Clean on the senate floor and he was. This is an example. When he ran for governor, at the Bismarck Hotel our rooms were right next to each other. I traveled with Paul almost all the time. When I look back at, was a mistake.
- DePue: Okay, now we are talking '72 at this point.
- Callahan: Yeah, right, okay. But here's an example of Paul, how clean he was. A guy comes in to sing. This guy is at the sub-cabinet level of the governor. He says, Paul, if you name me director of transportation, here is ten thousand dollars for you. He had ten thousand dollars in cash in his hand, okay. He gives that to Paul. Paul said, No, no, no, no. I don't want to do that, don't want to do that. And, of course, he made no agreement and didn't take the money (unintelligible). We had a hundred thirty five thousand dollar deficit

after that race too. He knocked on my door and he told me about the meeting. He says, Now, if I am elected governor, I don't want that guy anyplace in my administration. And he wouldn't have been; we're talking about a well known guy here. That is just how he operated. There was never any ... I'm proud to say that under Shapiro, you might say this is ___? up to here. Probably is. But there was never a scandal with Governor Shapiro. Never a scandal with Paul Simon or a scandal with Alan Dixon. It's not just enough to be honest; you got to be honest and smart. Craig Lovitt, who worked with both Simon and Dixon, was brilliant and smart, and I give him so much credit for that.

DePue: I want to take a step back because we are talking in 1968 ...

Callahan: I know I got ahead of myself there.

DePue: No, no, that's fine. No, but I'm going to take you a step back even further than you probably anticipated.

Callahan: Okay.

DePue: Because 1968 is a pretty traumatic year for the United States.

Callahan: Uh-huh.

DePue: And I want to get your reflections of some of the events that were occurring that year and your reflection through the eyes of people like Paul Simon as well. One of them – and I understand you might have written about this or had views about the Cairo riots in '77.

Callahan: Yeah, well, yes. Paul, Dick Durbin, Yvonne Rice, Y-v-o-n-n-e R-i-c-e and I spent a lot of time in Cairo⁵. The sheriff there ... I at that time came upon a murdered man at the Pyramid Courts. The Pyramid Courts was a low rent, you know, subsidized housing in Cairo. Murdered. Shot. We were dealing with Father Beau Davis at the catholic church there. Reverend Cohen, who later went to prison, was a quote "leader" end quote, at that time down there. And then Martin Brown, a newspaper publisher who had a lot of guts and really later he was run out of town because he stood up for what was right. His wife and kids did move to one of the suburbs in Chicago before and he stayed on about another year. I don't recall if he owned that paper or if he was the publisher of it. I think he owned it.

DePue: Can you give us a little bit of the background of the demographics of Cairo at the time?

⁵ Cairo, pronounced Kay-ro, is a town at the southern tip of Illinois, an area that was very southern in view during the Civil War.

Callahan: Extremely poor. Complete segregation. Peyton Burble was the states attorney. It was the night that Charles Wheeler, who was bureau chief of AP here in Springfield, W-h-e-e-l-e-r. Charles Wheeler, Yvonne Rice and I went to this restaurant to eat dinner and the next morning Peyton Burbley and he says, You were one of the guys that was out there at the restaurant last night with that nigger woman, aren't you? States Attorney said that, okay, and Peyton Burbley had been head of the National Guard under Adlai Stevenson in Illinois and I don't know how many years he was head of it. But that is just ... that is a microcosm of how terrible it was down there. I was physically scared one night when Yvonne and I met an African-American minister in Pyramid Courts and we had to ... Here was the deal: we flash our lights, he would take his blind and give us the signal to come. And we walked through a—a yard wouldn't be the right thing to say, pasture is not the right word—but pretty good stretch of grass before we got there. I was scared. Physically scared. Nothing happened. Nothing happened. One time Reverend Cohen called me here in Springfield on a Saturday night. He said, Gene, they are shooting at us down here. I said, I don't believe that. He said, If you don't believe it, listen to this. You know, and he puts his phone up, the damn bullets flying by. That's how bad it was.

DePue: Can you recall how that was resolved eventually?

Callahan: Well, the Chamber of Commerce and the city administration asked Paul to mediate the confrontation. He did help. It hurt him politically. As an example, my brother – I don't know if it was my brother was the county chairman at that time or not. He was county chairman for fifteen years. And my brother was good on the civil rights issue so don't ... He said, What is Paul doing sticking his nose in that thing down there in Cairo. All that is going to do is hurt him. Well, it did hurt him. It did hurt him politically at that next election. It hurt him in '72. Over his long, long, career it helped him. But for the short time it didn't help him. Paul came up with a strong report what should be done, could be done, and so on. I don't have a copy of it. It's got to be someplace around. Might be in the archives at the SIU library or it might be the state library but you can figure that out. Paul wrote that himself too, that report. Because he wrote almost everything himself. Did I tell you the Wall Street Journal article? He asked me, Did you ever write anything for Paul Simon. I said, Well, I wrote press releases. He said, Well, how about did you ever write a speech or one of his columns? I said, Well, one time I got a comma in one of them. (laugh) But he really did that stuff.

DePue: Well, a lifelong journalist and a author of, I don't know, almost a score or more of books.

Callahan: Yeah, that's right.

- DePue: Getting back to 1968 then, I am glad I asked you about the Cairo because that is very much in Illinois.
- Callahan: That's pronounced Cairo, like the syrup. Okay. Now you hear it most of the time mispronounced in the media but it's Cairo [Kay-ro], not Cairo [Ky-ro], Cairo. Okay. I didn't know that until we spent so much time down there.
- DePue: And it looks like Cairo [Ky-ro] if you're ...
- Callahan: It sure does.
- DePue: Okay, thanks for helping me out on that one. '68 starts with the TET offensive so there is so much going on with the Vietnam war and, of course, it's the presidential election year as well. And, then you get in to – I think it's in April – when you've got Martin Luther King's assassination and you have riots across the country, but Chicago is torn apart in that timeframe. Certainly riots in Chicago. Your reaction, or people that you are dealing with? I mean this is Shapiro now who is governor.
- Callahan: In 1968, well, I was in Plano, Illinois when Robert Kennedy was assassinated.
- DePue: I think in July out in ...
- Callahan: California.
- DePue: California.
- Callahan: I was in a motel that I never would stay in one again that didn't have a telephone in it. But now I'm working with Paul Simon. Paul Simon and I knew the next day was to meet a guy named George Sangmeister, S-a-n-g-m-e-i-s-t-e-r, who was states attorney of Will County. Sangmeister later became a state rep and a state senator. We were to meet Sangmeister, just the three of us, what things we could do politically and so in Will County. I go to a pay phone and call Paul and tell him about Kennedy being assassinated. He didn't know it at that time. I happen to sleep and then back and forth in the hotel room, motel room, and I had the TV on – which I still do all night – and knew what was going on. I didn't see it right at the time but then I kept seeing, you know, the playback; they were still scuffling when I was cognizant of what was going on. So, I told Paul that happened. And of course, that was terrible.
- Then I was in a motel in Galesburg when Martin Luther King was assassinated. Now, here is something that I am not proud of in my career. There had been so much violence connected with... You know when Martin Luther King would go someplace there would be violence. I didn't have the respect for Martin Luther King that I should have. There have been issues I have been wrong on. I was wrong on Martin

Luther King. I have great respect for Martin Luther King. I was wrong on the Vietnam war. And one of the reasons I was wrong with the Vietnam war was because my great respect for Hubert Humphrey. Philosophically I am probably closer to Hubert Humphrey and Ted Kennedy, the two national Democrats of my time. And, so, in my heart I had no influence on anything. I don't mean to imply that, none. Now, I had heard Martin Luther King speak and it was one of the two greatest speeches I have ever heard in person. I heard him speak here at the state armory in Springfield, the AFL-CIO state convention. It was a tremendous speech. But, I did not ... I was wrong on my judgment on King. I was wrong on the Vietnam war. And Hubert Humphrey came to the conclusion he was wrong on the Vietnam war, too, later. And Senator Douglas supported the Vietnam war. You know, he was ...

DePue: You talking about Paul Douglas?

Callahan: Yeah, Paul Douglas. Paul Douglas enlisted in the Marines when he was in his fifties, when he was an alderman in the city of Chicago. Enlisted. And he supported the Vietnam war. Now, when I look up to someone, like if someone tells me that I have great respect for that guy's honesty, I believe that. I believe that. And you can say that is a weakness of some kind and some time if someone will say so and so is honest, I will say, I don't believe that. But, you know, like with Paul ... As an example, when Paul Simon ran for Congress the first time he was having a fundraiser and he was having Roland Burris at the head table. And I said, Why in the world are you having Roland Burris at the head table. Because he was a complete Dan Walker guy. And he said, He is really a good guy. And I said, Are you sure of that. He said, Yeah, I really am. Well, I did think Burris was okay for a long time until he agreed to accept that Senate seat from Blagojevich. See, I don't think anyone should have accepted that Senate seat from Blagojevich. No one, including Alan Dixon, Sheila Simon, you name it. I wouldn't be for it. Because the guy was, and is, a bum.

DePue: Were you surprised—taking it back to '68—when Chicago got torn apart by the Martin Luther King riots following his assassination?

Callahan: Yes, and then I understood it. I understood how volatile it was. I was at the Democratic National Convention.

DePue: Yeah, well, that is obviously the next thing we are going to.

Callahan: Okay. Now, I went there with one purpose. One purpose. To teach Governor Shapiro how to use a teleprompter.

DePue: Were you a delegate there?

Callahan: No. I was an aide to Governor Shapiro. Now how did that work?... Yeah, I was an aide at the convention. I still wasn't the assistant press secretary at

this time. Vlahopoulos wanted me to be there. I had one duty: to teach Governor Shapiro how to do that. And I thought, boy, this is going to be pretty good. I can that and I'll be able to drink beer, watch it on TV and all this stuff. And, so in the end, I ended up as the liaison between the state police and the National Guard.

Now, here's how that happened. Bill Morris was the state police chief, and General Boyle was head of the National Guard. Now Bill Morris trusted me from my days as a reporter and also he trusted me from my work with the Governor, with Governor ... I'm just trying to get the timeframe here. Because at the convention time I wasn't assistant press secretary ... But anyway, Morris trusted me and I had gone to school with General Boyle's son, Bruce Boyle; he was a decent athlete, played football and track at Illinois College. And so Vlahopoulos names me as the liaison. Really it's just a matter of communication. You know, did I have any influence on anything? No. I knew what was going on. And really, I didn't fully understand the impact of what was going on. Vlahopoulos did. Vlahopoulos understood the impact of what the Democrats had done at the National Convention quicker than anyone I know of. But I think Paul Simon did.

DePue: What do you mean exactly by what the Democrats had done? Because you have got things going on inside the convention, you got all this nonsense going on outside.

Callahan: That's what I'm talking about. What's going on outside the convention. In fact, my brother was judging hogs at the Ohio State Fair. He calls me because he is very concerned about my Dad's safety, you know; I said, Fran, Dad's alright. See, we were getting picked up at the hotel. My Dad just went up to watch the convention; he wasn't a delegate or alderman. He had been an alderman and delegate when Kennedy was in California. Only time my Dad ever flew by the way. And, I said, Dad's okay. They go out there in a bus. They got protection. They got barbed wires around the amphitheatre. But see the people at that time were more concerned about what was ... I mean like my brother and people like that were more concerned what was going on than we really realized how bad it was. And we didn't know until later. Now Vlahopoulos had the feel how bad it was. And I think Simon did, even though we did not talk about that that much at that time. In fact, I don't recall talking to Paul much at all during that convention except he was part of a plank on pulling the guys out of Vietnam early. It was what they called the Peace Plank. Bill Clark who was our candidate for the U.S. Senate ... let's see, he ran in '62, yeah, '62, Yates did. And, uh, no Bill Clark ran in '62 for the Senate. No, that's not right. I'm a little off there. But Bill Clark ... Dailey thought supported the Vietnam War. See at that time Dailey supported the Vietnam War and then he changed, you know. He was very strong against the war. When I went to work with Alan Dixon I said, I never want to go to another Democratic national convention. I don't want to go. I said, If it's ever really, really important. It gets to where it's important to you personally, I would

reconsider that. But it's never goal to go to another one. And I have never been to another one. That's how much it affected me.

DePue: While you were there in '68 though, were you more focused on what was going on inside the convention hall than outside?

Callahan: Positively, positively.

DePue: Were you surprised when you heard about all the stuff that was going on outside?

Callahan: Yes.

DePue: What did you think of Daley's reaction to that?

Callahan: Well, I remember Daley's reaction to Ribicoff and, you know ... I was on the floor. I had floor privileges and I knew ... but I couldn't ... where I was, I couldn't see Daley do this, you know. And I never heard Ribicoff swear or Daley swear. I never heard that. Uh, but I couldn't have been very far from that when that happened because I was with, you know, the Illinois delegation. I wasn't a delegate but I had floor privileges.

DePue: What exactly happened then with ...

Callahan: Well, Ribicoff, you know, denounced what was going on outside. And then the controversy is what did he say that ... Did Daley call him a faker or did he call him the f-u word? And, uh, there is a difference of opinion on what Daley said, and Ribicoff gave him a rejoinder of some kind. I don't know what it was but it was not a pleasant experience.

DePue: It was Illinois politics and national politics and the most controversial issue of the last ten years all wrapped in to one, huh?

Callahan: That's right, yeah.

DePue: Well, afterwards, one of the things that occurs is that this young lawyer from Chicago, Dan Walker, is given the assignment of investigating the city of Chicago's response to the riots and what later became known as the Walker Report. He condemns what the police had done and actually calls it a police riot. Do you think that was a fair assessment at the time?

Callahan: The police riot might be a little strong but I guess I don't see how you really get ... I mean I have a lot of criticism of with Walker but I wouldn't get in a peeing contest with him over that terminology.

DePue: Okay. What do you think of Shapiro's dealings with what was going on in Chicago and, in particular, in 1968, with both the Martin Luther King riots and the Democratic convention.

Callahan: Well, let's take the convention first on that question. I think everyone was satisfactory. We were in close contact with the National Guard and state police all the time. Never any animosity, nothing bad between the two. I don't know who the liaison was with the Chicago Police Department. I was not involved with the Chicago Police Department at all. Then in the Martin Luther King riots, you know, they happened at so many other places too that I never did single out this was a Chicago deficiency at that time. I just thought it was a very, very sad situation.

DePue: Okay. So now we get to the point of getting past the election. Ogilvie has won the election in '68. Tell us about how you ended up on the Simon team then.

Callahan: Well, Simon talked to me almost immediately after the election; he said, I would like for you to go to work with me. Would you come down for lunch at Troy where we could discuss this. I don't know whether his wife was involved in the discussion or not. Well, Charlie Wheeler, that I mentioned before – the AP bureau chief that was the guy that Simon respected and I respected. I said, Charlie Wheeler wants to interview you. Could he ride down with me and interview you and then you and I could talk after that? And he said, Sure. We excused Charlie after the interview and Paul told me what he wanted me to do specifically. What the salary would be and I agreed to do it.

DePue: On the spot there?

Callahan: Yeah.

DePue: Because this is the time you already had the offer from Howlett's team, right?

Callahan: Yeah, yeah, yeah. And I called Howlett up to let him know what I was doing. I had a great relationship throughout my life with Mike Howlett, throughout my life, even though I didn't care to work with him, you know.

DePue: What were your specific duties. You said Press Secretary.

Callahan: Press Secretary and Administrative Assistant was my title. And I approved all correspondence. In fact, Dick Durbin and I got off to a rocky start. He graduated from law school in '69 and he came to work right after that with Paul. And Paul became impressed with Durbin because he worked with Paul Douglas when he was going to law school. See, Simon and Douglas were really close. That was his hero; Douglas was Simon's hero. And he liked him. Paul Douglas liked him and then he had a job in the governor's office in Washington, Durbin did, after Senator Douglas got beat. I had met Durbin on that plane with Hubert Humphrey in that '68 campaign, but I didn't know him. Didn't know him at all. And, I go through all the correspondence and Durbin at that time, when you'd ask Dick Durbin in

writing, What time it is, he would tell you how to make the clock. You know, very verbose and everything. So, Paul calls me and he says, Dick tells me you said you and he were having trouble in correspondence and said you won't approve anything. And I said, That's right. And he said, How come? And I say, He's going to get you in trouble. I said, You can't write all that stuff he is writing, get in all that detail. It's going to get you in severe trouble with you doing that. And he says, Well, he's told me, either you quit or he quits. One of the two. And I said, Well, you have to make that decision. He said, Would you be willing to talk to Dick about it. And I said, Sure. So Durbin and I talked. We get it ironed out and we have been close ever since. I mean, we've had a great relationship, you know, since then.

DePue: What were his official duties with Simon at that time?

Callahan: Well, he was the parliamentarian of the state senate. In other words, he is the legal advisor. But, see, under the old constitution the lieutenant governor presided over the state senate.

DePue: But Durbin's role?

Callahan: That was it. He was parliamentarian.

DePue: Parliamentarian, okay.

Callahan: Yeah, he was parliamentarian and he would do legal work. And we all did case work. We all did everything in that office, you know. Titles never meant anything to us. We weren't hung up on salaries, you know. We really completely believed in Paul Simon. That's it.

DePue: But to a certain extent from what I understand, he basically had to carve this train out himself in terms of what his role was going to be.

Callahan: Positively. And to Neil Hartigan's credit, he kept doing that plus other things. Neil Hartigan was a very good lieutenant governor and Hartigan got extremely active in the senior citizens movement. I remember one time, my Mom said to me, I'm going to a senior citizen meeting and we have a real good speaker. And I said, Who is the speaker? She said, Neil Hartigan. Well, hell, he generated the whole thing, you know. But the senior citizens loved Hartigan and he and Walker ... See Walker wanted to fight all the time. He was terrible. He wanted to fight everyone.

DePue: Well, I'm definitely going to spend some time talking about Simon and Walker but I wanted to spend a little bit of time also talking about some of the initiatives that were going on in the Ogilvie administration—because there are a couple of important things—to see what your reaction was, or Simon's in particular. Let's start with the state income tax issue. Everybody was thinking, Okay, Ogilvie is sticking his neck out. Here is a

Republican who is advocating to impose an income tax when there hadn't been one before. But for a variety of reasons Ogilvie thought it was necessary. Where was Simon coming down on that issue?

Callahan: Well, a little background first. James A. Ronan—who I had mentioned earlier, Democratic state chairman—when I am a reporter, I said Mr. Ronan, don't you think we need a state income tax? He said, Sure we do. But, he says, the first guy that initiates it, is going to get beat the next election. Okay. So Kerner and Shapiro would never go for an income tax. Kerner went for a sales tax early in his administration which Paul Simon opposed, the sales tax, okay. Now, if Paul Simon always believed in the income tax, now he ... I'm getting in two ways to go in this conversation but, now, when he was running for governor – if you remember, he said he wanted to reduce personal property tax and for an increase in the income tax to pay for education. Well, Walker ... and Paul was right. And Walker demagogued the issue for income tax increase, you know. That was the main reason Paul Simon got beat was his stand on income tax because he was being straight about it. And, uh, that's when (unintelligible) on this. I was against Paul Simon doing that; I made up my mind after this happened. I said, I think this is not going to sell. I said I have no objection to what you're saying not being right, but Paul thought it was the thing to do, to lay it out there and so on. Well, I wasn't for that politically. But I made up my mind, after all this is over, that Simon gets beat, I said, I'm never going to be that ambivalent again about anything. And I tell you, anytime that anything ever came up when I was friendly with Simon, I would say to ... I was in a meeting with four people: his chief of staff in Washington, Floyd Fithian, former congressman, Jean Simon and I was not for Paul Simon for running for President at that time. I wanted to see him president some day. I didn't want to see him then because I thought it was a mistake. He would make a promise that the next time he ran, I said, It's going to hurt you when you run. You're going to have to make a promise that you won't run for president. And that is absolutely what happened. He promised he would not run for president again.

DePue: What year was it he ran for president? Was it '92?

Callahan: When Dukakis got it.

DePue: Eighty-eight.

Callahan: Yeah. That would have been '88; that's about right. So anyway. Alan Dixon one time asked me, How can you be so god damned independent/. I said, Because my Dad has a little money. That's how I answered that. And I have never been wishy-washy on anything since that point.

- DePue: But your discussion here is about what happened with Simon's position about taxes in 1972 so I am assuming that Simon didn't have any fundamental issue with Ogilvie's imposition of those taxes.
- Callahan: Yeah, I don't recall him ever speaking out against it. You know, I don't think he publicly supported it. But, uh, because, see ... well, Ogilvie and Daley made a deal. By the way, getting back a little bit, I did not know this until about ten years ago – this next point: Shapiro and Ogilvie made a deal that they would not discuss anything about raising any taxes because they both knew there had to be a tax increase. So they said that wasn't going to be part of the campaign rhetoric. But I didn't know that. Even though I was assistant press secretary, okay.
- DePue: Well, now you've got Simon as lieutenant governor and you just said that he didn't make any public statements or have any public views on the issue of income tax, but he's got to know at that time, wow, this is going to be a benefit to my political career.
- Callahan: Oh yeah, yeah. And it was until we blew the issue publicly which I think we did. But some people can say, well, that's Paul Simon, there is a lot of truth to that. You know, Senator Douglas used to say, There is a little bit of hypocrisy in all of us. In that issue there is some hypocrisy, what I'm saying.
- DePue: Well, I think I will take this opportunity now—before – before we get into the '72 election—to talk about Simon as a politician and Simon and his views. So let's start with that second question first. His political views. How would he position himself on a political spectrum?
- Callahan: Well, liberal on social issues, conservative on financial issues. And he was able to sell that at a lot of places. It's pretty hard to do, you know. But he was frugal in his own thing. For instance, one of the first things he did was get rid of the Cadillac when he became lieutenant governor. Got a just regular car, you know.
- DePue: You mean the state Cadillac?
- Callahan: Yeah, the state Cadillac. Then just got a regular state car.
- DePue: In those times especially, law and order issues always were part of the campaign too. Where was he on that?
- Callahan: Well, he was against “stop and frisk.” Alan Dixon was against “stop and frisk,” but on the same time he was a public supporter of police but not on that. Paul was a humanitarian of great extent. I was with him in the '68 campaign he called me and asked me if I could have dinner with him. I'd go over and meet him at the Bismarck Hotel. He comes out. His coat looks absolutely terrible, absolutely terrible. Messy. And I said, What happened

to you? He was coming through Litchfield and he saw this car—it was icy—go off the road and over in the field. And they went over to help this guy. You know, just help him. He had blood all over him and he hadn't got his coat cleaned yet. I was with him one time in Chicago in a taxicab, and he saw a woman fall off a curb. And he asked the taxi driver to stop. Now there is no one around. He's got no one to impress. He wanted to help that woman that had fallen off the curb. And the guy stops and by that time there is someone else that saw this and came and helped this woman. And he ended up didn't do it. If you wanted to be in a foxhole with someone, Paul Simon would be a good guy to be in the foxhole with.

DePue: This might be a good point to bring up the question about his public appearance. His persona that had developed.

Callahan: Well, the bow tie was what he was known for. How he happened, when he ran for state rep the first time—I I did not know him then—is that he spoke, he took on the machine down there, which was a very powerful one – one of the most powerful in downstate Illinois: Madison, St. Clair area and he was from Madison—and the *Alton Telegraph* referred to him as the candidate with the bow tie. And he thought that was a pretty good way to go to be identified with something and he did for after that. In fact, when he ran for governor, one of the people advised him to get rid of the bow tie. You know, he wouldn't do it, never would.

DePue: Do you think that played to his advantage or disadvantage?

Callahan: I think over the long haul, advantage. See, it's just like sometimes, you know, you win a short victory by doing something. But let's say he had gotten rid of the bow tie. If he caved in on something like that that was popular at that time, then there are all kind of things that happened. Now, did Paul spend a lot of money on clothes? No. Was he neat? Yes. Was a clean? Positively. You know, but clothes were not that important to him. Cars weren't that important to him. Money... I think he was a terrible fundraiser until he almost got beat in 1980 for Congress for re-election. He was pathetic. For instance, we had a hundred thirty-five thousand dollar deficit when he ran for governor and got beat. He raised almost none of that money to pay for that deficit. Dick Durbin, a guy named Ray Johnsen, J-o-h-n-s-e-n, and I raised almost all that money to pay off that deficit. Then when he ran for Congress he wasn't any good until he almost got beat, and then he became a very good fundraiser. Now Alan Dixon on the other hand never was a good fundraiser, never was good.

DePue: Getting back to Simon and his persona, I think the public, especially when he ran for president, that he had this persona that he was mild mannered. Meek might even be the word. And the bow tie kind of reinforces that perception. I assume that was part of the reason why consultants were advising him to get rid of the bow tie.

- Callahan: Probably. Probably. Yeah. I can't guarantee that's accurate but probably.
- DePue: You don't think that was a disadvantage at all when he was running in Illinois?
- Callahan: I never felt that, no. In fact, I think over the long haul again it was an advantage.
- DePue: You handed me the article he had written for *Harper's* magazine back in '64 where he was focused on the Illinois legislature and the corruption going on in Illinois. That certainly didn't sit well with Republicans or Democrats, either one, especially some of the people in the Democratic machine up in Chicago. Do you think that hurt him as a statewide politician?
- Callahan: Oh positively at the start. Yeah. As an example, in 1970 ... I'm thinking ... let me see ... no ... when Adlai Stevenson ran for state treasurer, it might have been '66, I was a reporter. Mr. Ronan, the state chairman again, asked me, You want to put up a trial balloon on something? I said, What? The Republicans, they were going to do Harris Rowe from Jacksonville, the family relative to Richard Yates Rowe and so on. Harris Rowe had a good reputation, a good family name. So the Democrats decided that Adlai would be a good candidate for state treasurer. I was okay with Adlai. So, I mean I was a reporter now and I said, Well, how about Paul Simon? Not after that *Harper's* piece, you know. About Tony Scariano? I said. He said, No, they didn't want any part of Scariano. So I write this piece on Adlai Stevenson about being considered the top echelon of the Democratic party to run for state treasurer. Well, and that is what happened. And he ran. I would say the Stevenson candidacy probably was Daley's idea. Probably. And with Mr. Ronan carrying it out downstate. No, that hurt Paul for the short haul. Helped him in the long haul. Now journalistically, when you read that piece, you can say, How can he write this? you know, because it's not documented that well in my view. But, boy, it sure had an impact, I'll tell you that. Had a great impact.
- DePue: Well, I don't want to talk about Simon and not mention his wife, Jean, as well. What did you think of Jean?
- Callahan: I liked her for a long time. I respected her. I didn't cover her as a legislator. She was wonderful to me when I worked with Paul.
- DePue: We should mention, it was formerly Jean Hurley and they met in the legislature.
- Callahan: That's right, yeah. She and I had a disagreement over a local issue. We got it straightened out and we were always very good to each other politically and, of course, Sheila – I have such great respect for Sheila.-
- DePue: The daughter.

- Callahan: Yeah, the daughter. And Martin too. Sheila and I had a strong disagreement one time because we are both strong people. But we got it straightened out. In fact, she worked at the state treasurer's office when I was there. Alan Dixon hired her. That's when Paul was teaching at Sangamon State [University], started that public affairs program.
- DePue: So this would have been '90s then?
- Callahan: No, not '90s because Alan Dixon was elected to the Senate in '80. Alan Dixon was state treasurer from '70 until January '77. So I would say, when Paul came back from Harvard to set up the program at Sangamon State— ...
- DePue: Okay.
- Callahan: She worked at the state treasurer's office.
- DePue: Okay, I was thinking SIU. Okay. My mistake.
- Callahan: Yeah, yeah.
- DePue: Okay. Well, let's talk about another issue that was very much in the news during the time Ogilvie was governor and that's the Constitutional Convention. And whether or not Illinois needed a new constitution and what was going to be in that document. What was Simon's view towards whether or not the state needed the new constitution?
- Callahan: He was for that.
- DePue: Did he get involved at all with that process?
- Callahan: He testified. I have no idea what he testified about when I look back. I don't recall what he said. For instance, I remember what Alan Dixon said. Alan Dixon was for combining the state treasurer's office with the comptroller; thought it was unnecessary to have both of them. But I don't recall what Paul testified on.
- DePue: Could it possibly have been the issue of, hey, don't we need to have a lieutenant governor of one party and ...
- Callahan: Yeah, I would say that was true. Yeah, I would be surprised if that's not there. Yeah. My memory is not as thorough on that or clear on that as Alan's for some reason.
- DePue: But apparently he wasn't directly involved in that. Just as Ogilvie was kind of, to a certain extent—he had a liaison there—but he was also kind of a bystander in the process.
- Callahan: Yeah, uh-hum.

DePue: Okay. When it came to voting on that issue, it went to the general public, was he a strong supporter of the constitution then?

Callahan: It's my memory he was.

DePue: Okay. What other issues would he have taken on during those four years? You talked about being an ombudsman especially.

Callahan: The thing that got the most attention was his opposition of that highway bond issue. I mean that was major headlines. In the end my memory is Ogilvie kind of got his way on that legally, but Paul was more of a pay-as-you-go guy and Paul felt very strongly on that, in opposition to the governor. But he and the governor still had a decent relationship. Was it great? No. That would be an exaggeration but it was pretty good. As an example, they arranged, where the governor was out of the state, Paul Simon agreed to be out of the state – because Paul automatically became governor when the governor left the state. They arranged it where Cecil ParTEE, who was an African-American, president of the Senate, would be governor for a few hours. I figure with the Governor Ogilvie was, I remember Paul was in St. Louis. It was a completely contrived thing the two of them did. I remember Craig Levin of our staff giving Cecil the paper – the picture went all over the country. You know, with Cecil ParTEE. P-a-r-t-e-e, by the way. But that was an example. They thought it was a good thing to do for him. And Ogilvie was okay on some rights issues. You know ... Simon was great. (Unintelligible) at one time, there was a Lutheran minister named Keith Davis in East St. Louis, white.

DePue: And Simon himself is a Lutheran.

Callahan: Yeah, right. And, uh, these African-American guys on the street corner. One of them was a friend of Keith Davis and they said, Who is that honky coming down the street with Reverend Davis? And the other guy said, That's no honky, that's Paul Simon. (laugh)

DePue: Okay. One other event that occurred—this this might seem kind of in the minutiae—but in 1970 you have Kent State and you have another flash point of things going on on college campuses to include SIU,⁶ which is kind of Simon's old stomping grounds, as well. Any response to that question?

Callahan: Yes. A similar thing happened there. I spent a lot of time at SIU at that time, the chamber of commerce and the university. I'm not sure the university did – the Chamber of Commerce, I think again, and the City Council—asked Paul to do a study of what happened. And Paul did. He named Paul Verticchio, V-e-r-t-i-c-h-i-o, who is a circuit court judge. We had all kind of hearings in Carbondale on that about the fires and so on. Verticchio—I would pick him up in Benld, I guess he lived in Benld, down

⁶ Southern Illinois University in Carbondale, Illinois

in Macoupin County, that's where he was from. But we spent a lot of time down there. Verticchio and I did. And I was Paul's representative during those quote "hearings" end quote.

DePue: Okay. Getting close to talking about the election and before I get to that point, I want to talk about Simon's relationship with Richard J. Daley, with Mayor Daley, and with the machine.

Callahan: Acceptable. The reason Paul Simon was endorsed, we did a heck of a job on getting commitments for Paul, in writing. I had them. I had them in writing. That was my project. If I remember correctly, we had eighty-five or eighty-six Democratic county chairmen. Paul got the Illinois AFL-CIO to endorse him before slating, which was very unusual.

DePue: Okay, again, it's important to understand that you are going to correct me when I get this wrong, but it's the slate-making process where the Democratic chairmen get together and they decide who they want to support as the candidate.

Callahan: That's right. That is right. And Paul's effort was so good. You combined eighty-six county chairman—if it was eighty-six, and I think it was—and the AFL-CIO for you, that's pretty powerful stuff. And, uh, Daley, in my view, acquiesced toward endorsing Simon because of his squeaky clean image, which they needed at that time at Cook County. They were never close. But see, Daley was not close to anyone really of the good government guys downstate. I mean he was close to Paul Powell. He was close to Mayor Fields who was out of East St. Louis. He was close to him. But not on a personal relationship. As an example, Simon had a very good relationship with Mike Howlett. Alan Dixon developed a very good relationship with Mike Howlett. Simon was not close to John Touhy, the Illinois Speaker of the House. T-o-u-h-y, who succeeded Mr. Ronan as state chairman. Mr. Ronan respected Paul Simon but it took him quite a while to do that. See, I knew Mr. Ronan better than Paul did, thanks to my Dad, and he trusted me as a reporter. So I was... When you have a staff, a staff person can help you in places where you need it and then your boss can help you in places where the aide needs it. But I would say acquiescence is the right word. Daley, was he ever really strong for Paul? No, but do I think he was for Paul in that '72 race, yes. I think he was for him. He was for him. It's fair to say, he was.

DePue: What is the role that Ronan would have played in that process of picking the state level candidates and Daley's role.

Callahan: Well, but see, as I mentioned, he was the buffer between Kerner – Mr. Ronan was – the buffer between Daley and Kerner. Especially his second term, because the first term Daley and Kerner were, I think, just, you know, most of the time and they start having disagreements in the second term,

Daley and Kerner. And so on. And Governor Shapiro was picked, I think, to succeed him for two reasons. One, Kerner really liked Shapiro; that helped him. But Howlett was a very independent guy and I think he was too independent for Daley to be for. Now, Mr. Ronan and Howlett were very close. They were both from the seventh ward in Chicago, and Howlett who you know had been campaign manager for Paul Douglas. See downstate people, like Howlett, he was very strong in the Catholic community downstate. Because he was a very prominent Knights of Columbus guy, Howlett was.

DePue: So I guess you are painting us a picture that it would have been either Simon or Howlett in that '72 primary election that they wanted to endorse then?

Callahan: Yeah. And I believe, even though I became assistant press secretary to Shapiro. In '68, Howlett was our strongest candidate for governor.

DePue: Not Shapiro?

Callahan: Not Shapiro. That's my view. And but Daley did not want that, okay. Then in '72 when the slate had started, Simon was the strongest candidate for governor. Stronger than Howlett.

DePue: Daley didn't want Howlett back in '68 because he was just too independent?

Callahan: Yeah.

DePue: But you can say even more so in the case of Paul Simon?

Callahan: Howlett was an organization guy but he was independent within the organization, okay? Within the organization, he was independent. Simon was independent period.

DePue: He was part of that group of very prominent, vocal, independent Democrats that started in the Stevenson days.

Callahan: Well, then got mobilized in that Democratic federal [election] of Illinois group. Steve Mitchell, you know, admin (unintelligible) for Tony Scariano. Paul and others, yeah.

DePue: Well, Walker likes to include himself in that group too.

Callahan: I never thought he was the leader. He was in it, you know. And I don't know who was president of it. You see, you have to understand, I am anti-Walker. I think he believed in governing but he did things that he shouldn't have done and I resent how he used ... he went from being Adlai Stevenson's campaign manager to using that position in ways that I don't appreciate. He demagogued Paul Simon to death and I have trouble with him.

- DePue: Okay. Let's get in to that race.
- Callahan: Do I think he was brilliant with a great IQ? Yeah, probably highest of my lifetime.
- DePue: Okay. We're talking about the '72 gubernatorial campaign. The race for Walker certainly started in '71 and it started with this notion that he was going to walk across the entire state starting at the very southern tip of the state and spend the next several months walking through, I don't know, a thousand miles or so. Were you and was Simon concerned at that time about this guy, Dan Walker, who is out there hitting the highways and byways of Illinois with a constant message that was anti-Daley.
- Callahan: Not when it started. But yes, later. In fact, my brother was the first one that called me that told he thought Paul was going to lose the primary.
- DePue: When would that have been?
- Callahan: In the summer.
- DePue: Of '71?
- Callahan: No, '72, of '72. I thought we were okay. There were things ...
- DePue: That would have been after he ...
- Callahan: In other words, well, '71. Yeah, it would have been '71. Yeah, it would have been '71 because the primary at that time I think was in March.
- DePue: Yesh.
- Callahan: I think. And my brother told me that. My brother was a very street smart guy, very street smart. And that really shook me up and then I found out ...
- DePue: Was that because he thought Walker was resonating out there.
- Callahan: Yeah, and plus people were so pissed off at Daley. You know, it was very strong anti-Daley feeling in Illinois. Walker was able to paint Simon as a puppet to Daley which could not have been any farther from the truth. You know, no truth to it at all. But it worked. It worked. And, he was brilliant in one area—free radio. He was so much better than we were. So much better than we were. From that point on, I got to tell you Alan Dixon was great on free radio. But he just murdered us on free radio.
- DePue: What was Simon's reaction to being painted as Daley's puppet?
- Callahan: Well, it probably bothered me more than it did him. I think the Saturday before the primary election, Walker said something I thought ridiculous.

And I got a call from a *Sun-Times* reporter; he said, Dan Walker said so-and-so and Paul was out campaigning—that's before we had cell phones and direct communication and everything—he said, What do you think of that? I said, It's nothing but a deathbed confession. Paul comes in – it's in the Sunday paper – and he said, Did you say that? And I said, I did; I looked at him, Yeah, I said that. He said, I don't want you to say things like that; that's terrible. I said, I want to tell you something. I am going to keep saying things like that. I'm going to keep saying things like that until the damn polls close because you ought to be saying it and you are not saying it. Okay. Now, because I thought, how is he going to fire me (laugh) on the eve of the primary. Now, one of the books, I don't know if it's the one Taylor Pensoneau did on Walker...

DePue: Or Walker's own book?

Callahan: No, it wouldn't have been Walker's own book but it might have been. But Paul says that I was right, you know, on that later. It's in one of the books, okay, where he thinks I was right. But Paul and I never lost respect for each other. I mean, never, never.

DePue: If the two of you had to do that campaign over again, how would the strategy be different?

Callahan: Well, it would be: every time Walker said something we wouldn't have ignored it like we did for way, way too long.

DePue: Was that just because Simon didn't take his campaign seriously?

Callahan: Not seriously enough, now as we look at it. Not just Paul. A lot of us. Now. As an example, the week before – it might have been two weeks before that primary – Alan Dixon, Bill Colson, he might have been on staff for the campaign manager for Paul in that campaign—Dixon Colson and I had meetings with every Democratic chairman in Illinois downstate, a hundred and one. There was only one Democratic chairman thought we would lose his county: Ray Chancey of Jackson County. He said, We're not going to do it. Well, we lost a lot of counties. In other words, the county chairmen, a lot of them, were still productive at that time, much more productive than they are now.

DePue: Productive meaning effective?

Callahan: Okay, yeah, effective, yeah. And so yeah, I guess you would have to say no one took it ... Well, we had that trip though because we were scared. We got scared.

DePue: When was the trip?

Callahan: I'm going to say ... if the campaign is in March, February, February. And, now election night – I'm getting a little ahead of myself – but the primary election night, I thought we were down the chute. And I go out and Alan Dixon and Jody and Paul and Jean came up on the airplane together from southern Illinois, the four of them. I go out and meet them at Midway. And I said, Don't say anything. Don't say anything because, Paul, I think we're going to lose this thing; but we don't want to say anything. So he didn't. We got him back to the hotel and we ended up losing the race. But you would say, what would we do differently. One, not that statement on the income tax. We should have not done that. Number two, we didn't do free radio. Number three, Mike Howlett told me before the primary, Every campaign needs a son of a bitch newspaper; Paul Simon doesn't have a son of a bitch. He said, That's the trouble with your campaign. And Howlett said, This is the worst campaign I have ever seen. Now, if you asked them ... after that race, Simon asked Dick Durbin, a pollster by the name of Dick Day, Richard Day, and me to write where we thought we were decent and where we thought we were poor in that primary. And we, you know, I was probably the most blunt of the three.

DePue: That sounds like typical Simon. Let's figure out what happened wrong.

Callahan: Yeah, yeah, and that's what we did. Durbin's was much longer than mine. And mine was more concise and blunt, just like those comments "Every campaign needs a son of a bitch." And I said, the next time you run you better have one.

DePue: Would you have seen yourself in that role possibly?

Callahan: I could have done that, yeah.

DePue: Okay. How much did the change in the way primary elections were run in Illinois where you could have cross-over vote, where Republicans could come over and vote in the Democratic primary? Did that play a role?

Callahan: Oh, I think it did. Do I think that beat us? No. But, yeah, I think it played a role. I think the tax issue and the animosity toward Daley downstate beat us. And our campaign; we can't be bragging about our campaign. It wasn't a very good campaign. See, as an example, you might say, Well, I bring up Dixon too much in this stuff, but, see how close they were. Like example, election night, the four of them come together, you know, from ... you know Paul and Jean and Alan and Jody. That is how close they were.

DePue: These are the two miracle boys of Illinois politics.

Callahan: Yeah, and they were very, very close including owning twelve of the fourteen newspapers together. And ... I ... it just ... well, we just, we just, we had a bad campaign. Like Mike Howlett says, one of the worst campaigns he had ever seen. You know, so,

- DePue: As a member of that team were you willing at the time to agree with that assessment?
- Callahan: I don't quarrel with it. Well, our Shapiro campaign wasn't very good either because, you know, he didn't want to work. But Paul Simon is a worker; Paul Simon is a tremendous worker.
- DePue: But up until the last couple of weeks it sounds like Simon team thought, We're going to win this thing.
- Callahan: I would say so, yeah. Yeah.
- DePue: How about Walker's constant attacks on Daley and the machine? You had already mentioned that he tried to tie Simon in with that as well. Was it the main thing that put him over the top you think?
- Callahan: I think that and the income tax issue. Yes.
- DePue: Any other comments about that campaign? Because I know that is one you feel strongly about.
- Callahan: I feel very strongly about it. It's one of the two greatest setbacks I have had in my life.
- DePue: That is probably a decent way to finish the conversation on that one.
- Callahan: Alright.
- DePue: So where do you go from there? You are in March of an election year.
- Callahan: Well, we get beat. And, one time, I am devastated by this loss personally. Simon one day, he calls me in the office. Because I have a very good work ethic. And he says, I understand you are getting to work late every morning. I said, That's right. He said, I understand you are taking long lunches and drinking quite a bit at lunch. I said, That's right. He said, I understand you are leaving early in the afternoon and drinking some more, Going down to Norb's and drinking. I said, That's right. He said, Let me tell you, I lost this election, you didn't lose it. And you better get straightened out. Okay. And I did. I got straightened out. I mean, I wasn't an alcoholic, don't misunderstand me, but it still bothers me we lost that. And, uh, in fact, a highlight of my career was when Alan Dixon was re-elected to state treasurer because I had just gone through two tough losses with Shapiro and Simon. I thought, What the hell am I doing here? I must be doing a lot of stuff wrong, you know. And I needed a jolt of inspiration. And then Alan Dixon talked Paul Simon into running for Congress. He wasn't going to do that. And I was in the conversation, the three of us did it.
- DePue: What year would this be?

Callahan: Well, '72 '74. So this was '73. We are going out to the Democratic date at the state fair. Walker is governor. Okay. A guy named Nick Leasek is driving us. I was told he died recently. He was from West Frankfort.

DePue: What was his last name?

Callahan: Leasek, L-e-a-s-e-k, I think. Nick Leasek worked in the treasurer's office. He was driving. Alan and I picked up Paul at the Leland office building because that is where his Sangamon State office was, okay. Pick him up out in front. We get in and Alan says, Paul, you got to get down to southern Illinois and run for Congress. He says, Kenny Gray is not going to run. Kenny Gray is still alive, by the way. And Paul says, Oh, Kenny Gray has been saying for a year that he's not going to run. Alan says, He is not going to run this time. He says, "You got to get down there and run. You might think you have a forum here"—this is almost a direct quote—"you, you think you have a forum here. You see, you don't have any forum here. Sangamon State, no one is going to listen to you. You got to get down there and run." So, he said, Well, I have given my word to Jimmy Holloway—he was the state rep from Sparta—that I would support him when Gray didn't run, and I will keep my word; I'm for Jimmy Holloway if he wants to run. And Alan says – Jimmy Holloway is still alive too – he said, Jimmy Holloway can't win in that district. And see, he was close to Holloway too, Alan was. And he says, You got to do this. So, he said, Well, I can't do it with Jimmy. So I had a good relationship with Jimmy Holloway. I would call Holloway when we got back to the office and tell him the conversation went this way. He said, Jimmy, there are some people that want Paul Simon to run for Congress. (unintelligible) Alan Dixon, I don't want him to run. Backtrack a little bit, we swore Nick Leasek to secrecy that nothing would be said. And I'll get back in a minute to part of it, but I said, Jimmy, there are some people that want Paul Simon to run for Congress but he has given you his word that he would be for you. He says, I don't want to run for Congress. And I said, Well, would you be publicly for Paul Simon if he would run for Congress. He said, Positively.

So, now backtrack just a little bit, this is Dixon. Dixon would tell people, We did, we talked after Democratic Day, we went through the hog barn there. And old Alan said, We're chomping around in this hog shit out there at the state fair. I have to tell the boy he's going to run for Congress. (laugh) Alan loves to do that kind of stuff. So, now, Paul decides to do this. We call Rich Hancey,—now we shouldn't say we, Paul Reasy with Rich Hancey, the only County Chairman that told us he wasn't going to win for governor—he was a real estate guy. to find him a place to rent. So, he gets a place down there. So now he's a candidate.

Paul Powell was dead. Clyde Choate was for another Democrat and so was Mike Howlett. Mike Howlett called me and he says, Gene, are you aware of all those people that are against [Paul] down there? I said, Is

it Clyde Choate and some people like, you know, in (unintelligible)? I said, Yeah. And he said, Do you think Alan ought to get be involved in this. I said, Well, Alan is the guy talked him into running, you know. See, I was closer to Howlett—as I mentioned earlier—than Alan was. So, now, this is to me the best speech Alan Dixon ever gave. Joan Jensen, who was Alan's secretary in Bellville, and Alan and I were on our way to Marion, Illinois to a first fundraiser for Paul. He said, Gene, what do you think I should say tonight? Now, I am thinking of Alan Dixon here having ... and I said, Alan, I am so prejudiced for Paul Simon I am not the guy you ought to ask. He said, Well, what do you think I ought to say. I said, I'm not going to answer that. I said, You got to say what you think is best for you. Well, he gets up. I have no idea what he is going to say. Boy, he gave a Simon speech that it is almost difficult to believe. He says, this is a moment of decision for the people of southern Illinois. He says, This is the guy and you got to examine his record and everything else and he was really gangbusters that night. One of his best efforts. And then, from here Dick Durbin and guy named Tim McAnarey, M-c-A-n-a-r-e-y, and I spent a lot of weekends down there with Paul Simon. Carpet bagging was the main issue against Paul down there. We didn't want anyone to know that we were there, because we are all from Springfield. And so we would go down there, lick envelopes, we would go to the strategy session on Saturday morning but we would start on Friday licking envelopes, doing stuff, you know, and then come back about noon on Sunday. McAnarey and I would spend a lot of that time drinking beer at the same time we are licking envelopes and things like that (laugh).

Here is an example too of Simon in that race. We wouldn't take a shower from the time we arrived on Friday till we go back on Sunday. I'm sleeping on the sofa. McAnarey is sleeping on the floor. Paul is going out to campaign at a coal mine. Paul takes his coat off and covers McAnarey up with it because he knows he has got to be cold. It's incredible those kind of stories about him, you know.

But it was a good campaign and I remember I was so nervous. Dick, McAnarey and I were all down there primary night and a guy named, Dauber Ziegler—his brother was a state senator, Paul Ziegler—was the Democratic committeeman from West Frankfort. Paul Ziegler was never a fan of Paul Simon, his brother, okay, never. And, no way. But Dauber Ziegler's precinct comes in and it was amazing how he just beat the crap out of a guy. He was from Benton. Just beat him badly. And I thought, My golly, Paul is going to do it. That was one of the happiest times of my life politically.

DePue: Well, something of a resurrection for yourself after two tough defeats.

Callahan: Yeah, after Alan Dixon being elected, you know, and Alan was like in '70. I was working ... see, when I say '70, yeah, '74. That would have been '74, yeah, that's right, yeah.

DePue: Were you already on the Dixon team by that time.

Callahan: I was, yeah, I started. What I did when Paul got beat. Now I don't know what I 'm going to do now. Now Howlett offered me a job, okay.

DePue: Howlett?

Callahan: Howlett offered me a job again, okay. And Neil Hartigan through Simon offered me a job. Not directly. Howlett did his to me directly.

DePue: What was Hartigan's position at the time?

Callahan: Hartigan then was lieutenant governor.

DePue: Okay. But that was after the election, yeah.

Callahan: Yeah. So, I didn't want to do that. So I went to work with City Water Light and Power here, the public utility in Springfield. I didn't know the guy that was commissioner but I knew his brother who was a lobbyist for United Airlines. The commissioner's name was Hugh Gardner, the way it sounds, who had been appointed commissioner of public utilities because of a death, and I went to work with him. In fact, I went to work with him getting more money than I got with Simon. My Dad would have taught me a long time ago never make a decision based solely on money. But I just bring that up about Simon being frugal too. So anyway, I worked there nine months. Paul was at Harvard and he called me. He said, Alan Dixon would like to talk with you about going to work with him.

DePue: Paul called you?

Callahan: Paul called me. Yeah. And he said, I think you really ought to consider this. Well, I would write Paul by the way when he was at Harvard a letter once a week telling him things I believed that, you know, and so on, and I remember one time I said in one of my letters to him, I saw Victor DeGrazia—that was Walker's guy—at Shadid's Book Store. We both said we were glad to see each other and I said, Well, you know Paul, we were both lying. (laugh) So Paul told Alan that I had had job offers ... could have gone to work with Howlett or Hartigan and didn't want to. And I thought if a guy as honest as Paul Simon would get beat and still go ahead and race, I wanted to get out of it. So that's how I happened to go to public utilities. And then he said, I think you ought to consider going to work with Alan Dixon.—This is the statement I am referring to:—Really he said, you guys are a lot alike. When you work, you work. When you play, you play (laugh). He said, Now I am more of an even keel guy, you know, Paul said

to me. So Alan and I had a conversation and made an agreement. And I was with him nineteen and a half years.

DePue: The question about Hartigan. Hartigan approaches you. Did you see Hartigan, was he too much of a Chicago guy for you?

Callahan: No, that never bothered me. See like, Edgar (unintelligible) I consider one of the greatest public servants I ever observed. No, no. Now Howlett at that time had a temper. Excuse me, Hartigan also had a temper. And I didn't want to do that.

DePue: Well, you brought (unintelligible) this as well. Certainly Howlett is from Chicago but Hartigan was part of that machine.

Callahan: That's right. No, that wouldn't bother me. No, because see like Mr. Ronan is the state chairman and I loved the man, absolutely loved the man. He trusted me. He was a great source of mine as a reporter.

DePue: Okay. I've got somebody who knows as much about politics in Illinois as you do, I want to get your reaction to the 1972 national democratic convention. And that was the convention where two delegations from the city of Chicago ended up down there and then they basically bounced out Daley's delegation.

Callahan: Well, as you know, I will never go to another Democratic convention. And so I don't know any more about that '72 convention than most people. I mean, I just what happened. I really didn't care all that much, I got to say. But excuse me, by the way, after that convention Paul Simon became Director of the McGovern campaign in Illinois. And, of course, we got demolished. You know, McGovern got demolished in Illinois. McGovern was the first presidential candidate that I ever contributed to and that was for one reason: Dick Durbin. Dick Durbin ... and I gave him fifteen dollars (laugh). I didn't make much money in those days. I admire Simon for doing it and Durbin for helping and so on.

DePue: Before we get into talking in much more depth about your ...

Callahan: Could I have that warmed up and a little more coffee, please?

DePue: You bet, hang on.

Gene and I just took a very quick break. Gene, what I would like to start with here after the break is to get your reflections about Dan Walker as governor.

Callahan: Wanted to fight all the time. One of the great campaigners we have ever seen in this state. If he didn't want to fight all the time I think he would have been a legitimate candidate for president.

DePue: That he had the ability, that he had the intelligence.

Callahan: Oh positively.

DePue: Did you essentially agree with his politics?

Callahan: Well, I never knew what his politics were basically. Because he wanted to fight all the time. You know. If someone come up with a good idea, he would find some reason to fight. In my view, that is why he got beat for re-election. I didn't vote for him for re-election, you know. I just, uh, I don't think he was well grounded as a human being. So I have no strong feeling for Dan Walker except compared to Blagojevich, at least he believed in governing. Blagojevich is the worst ever, you know. So Walker is not that bad.

DePue: Okay. We'll get a chance to talk about Blagojevich just a little bit later on, but I guess I'm not surprised to hear you say that at all.

Callahan: No.

DePue: How did you end up on Dixon's team?

Callahan: Well, just the way I said about Paul Simon called me to and asked me if I would meet with him to talk with him and do that and I did. And we became closer and closer. I never did plan on going to Washington, D.C., not ever. In fact, when Alan Dixon ran for Secretary of State, I picked him up one night. He was coming in from Champaign, Illinois. Been there for a golf day and I'm driving back. I pick him up close to midnight. He said, Now, Gene, if I win for Secretary of State I want you to be ... wait a minute don't say it. Because I tell everyone that asks me would you consider me, I say, we don't talk patronage. We don't talk about it. So I stopped Alan Dixon because I said, Alan if you go ahead with that comment I can no longer say that. that we haven't promised anything and I don't want you to ever discuss that with me again, okay. So he never did. So then I became the Assistant Secretary of State. Now, getting back to Washington again. There were two people, my brother and I were unusually close, and he asked Alan Dixon one day...

DePue: Which brother is this?

Callahan: I only had one. Francis. F-r-a-n-c-i-s. Fran. He was the one who was Democratic Chairman fifteen years. He said, What is Gene going to do if you win for the Senate? He said, He's going to run my Springfield office, okay. Now, my brother tells me this. He is having an interview with the Alton newspaper and they asked him what would Gene Callahan do—because I had a great relationship with the Alton newspaper—if you win? He said, He will run the Springfield office. And, both my brother got to me and the editor of the Alton paper got to me and told me what was said. Alan

and I never discussed it. Now, the day after Alan Dixon is elected, I am at a place called Chew Bars; it's this saloon here in town.

DePue: Is this elected as treasurer now we are talking about?

Callahan: No, elected to the United States Senate.

DePue: Oh, okay.

Callahan: I'm going to Washington now. You know, he said, Gene, I really want you to go to Washington with me. Now, you can run the Springfield office if you want. But the action is going to be in Washington. We are going to be making the decisions in Washington. You are going to hire a good team. So he said, Will you think about it? I'm going someplace for vacation, probably Florida. And he said, I'd like to know your answer when you get back. Well, my wife did not want to go to Washington, you know. I didn't plan on going to Washington. So, now I'm a little ahead of that question, okay. So I think about this for two weeks. We are coming back from Milford, my home town, and I'm going back and I said, Ann, I made the decision. I think we are going to go to Washington. Now, I arbitrarily did this. Well, she started crying. Now, she hadn't cried since John Kennedy was assassinated and that really shook me up. And she said, Why are you doing that? And I said, I think I owe it to Alan Dixon. And she said, When are you going to start thinking about yourself? I said, I am thinking about myself. I think we can help people. I think we can even help our family in Washington, D.C. So she finally agreed. So I told Alan Dixon this story. He said, Jesus, I don't want Ann to be mad at me. He said, I don't want you to go out there with that. So I called her and I said, Now, have you made your decision. Are you ready to go to Washington? So she says, Yes. So, now I'm talking about six months later, someone that knew us well said, How do you and Gene like Washington? And Alan said, Our wives love it and Gene and I like it. (laugh) Okay, go ahead.

DePue: Well, I wanted to talk about getting on to the Dixon team initially though, and how that happened.

Callahan: Okay, now, I wrote him a very lengthy memo and I mean lengthy. It was a warm day and I did it in the backyard where we live here in Springfield. I told him these are things that I think you have to do if you are going to be governor or United States Senator.

DePue: This would have been what year?

Callahan: I go to work with him in '57. Let me see, '57, '67. Paul gets beat in '72. This would have been ... he would have been elected now state treasurer in '74. So this would have been the summer of '75. Well, no, it was the summer of '74 probably. Probably the summer of '74. Things that I thought he had to do to have really a career. One of them was complete

income disclosure which he didn't want to do by the way. That is when he said, How can you be so god-damned independent. He asked me.

DePue: But obviously you knew he had ambitions at that level?

Callahan: Oh yeah. And I outlined this and I also said there are no copies. I said, Tear this up. I said, there are no copies of this memo. Right now, I wish I had a copy. You know, he probably wishes I did too. So anyway, we had a game plan. We were able to carry it out and he worked very, very hard. Did a lot as state treasurer; he put money in banks in every county of the state of Illinois. First one to put them in savings and loan. We never lost any money when the savings and loan fiasco happened in Illinois and he worked hard. In 1974, our campaign was based, our constituency ... well, in this order – bankers, hog farmers and athletes. We had a strong support of athletic people. And also of hog farmers, thanks to my brother. Throughout the state, hog farmers.

DePue: Well, that is a peculiar constituency to start with.

Callahan: Sure is. Sure is. Sure is. See, my brother was on the board of directors of Illinois Pork Association. He had two international grand champion hogs, he and my Dad. We had sold hogs to Italy, Mexico, China, you know, Russia, and our family name was good if Fran never made any bones about being a strong Dixon supporter.

DePue: By the time he joined the team, he already had a strong statewide reputation though did he not?

Callahan: Alan Dixon was elected in '70 for two reasons – Adlai Stevenson and Mike Bakalis. Now you could say, really it was Adlai Stevenson and Ray Page. Because Ray Page was the Republican incumbent for state school superintendent and his reputation had really, really slipped. It slipped so much that it was, you know, a plus for the Democrats. And Bakalis beat Page, ran a hell of a campaign. Dick Durbin ran his campaign by the way, Bakalis. He took a leave of absence from Simon's office to run that campaign and did a tremendous job. That's really about the constituency ... no, no, he really didn't have a constituency in '70. Remember this, I'm going to the washroom in the first floor of the capitol and Alan Dixon had been there; he's coming out and he said, Gene, Do you think Paul would let you take two weeks vacation to campaign. He said, I thought people knew me. Now, he is now State Senate leader. He said, No one knows me. No one knows me. Would you just go down to my home area in St. Clair, Madison County and tell them what we're doing, what I'm doing and so on. He said, God, I don't want to get beat in my home area. So, he didn't win by a big margin. If you look at the figures, I kind of think thirty-six thousand, maybe thirty something.

- DePue: This would have been his first campaign for treasurer in 1970?
- Callahan: Yeah, statewide. I'm not sure right on thirty but he trailed the ticket. Adlai and Bakalis carried Alan Dixon in. Now, later, Alan Dixon carried Roland Burris. He carried Jerry Cosentino in. You know, it works that way in politics.
- DePue: Okay and so do you remember the month the year that you actually joined the team? Formally joined the team.
- Callahan: Oh yeah, yeah. It uh ... let me see. June 16th of '74.
- DePue: Okay. So that's another election year for him. He brought you on to help with the election campaign.
- Callahan: Uh-hm. Well, then see, my title was executive assistant. He tells his people I was his chief of staff from day one. I never considered myself a chief of staff at that time because see, back then, I didn't know that much about money. I knew something about government and a lot about politics. I never considered myself any budget guy or money guy.
- DePue: But what's the difference between the executive assistant and chief of staff?
- Callahan: Well, we had an assistant state treasurer as an example. We had a deputy state treasurer. Don Smith was assistant state treasurer. Joe McMann was deputy state treasurer in Chicago.
- DePue: Okay. So, chief of staff ... okay, then I was wrong in understanding this. When he said chief of staff, he was thinking chief of staff of the department of the treasury. The treasury department not for his personal political campaign.
- Callahan: No, no, no, oh no, no, no, no.
- DePue: So, an executive assistant would have been again ...
- Callahan: That was my official title.
- DePue: Okay. With the Department of the Treasury.
- Callahan: And let me tell you, I never considered myself the chief of staff during those periods. Now by the time we got into the Secretary of State, I did. As an example, I was the only person that had permission to sign his name. Craig Levitt was the only one who had permission to sign my name. And one time I went to see him because I signed off on thirty-six hundred employees, and I had to sign off on every employee. Well, I went in to see him. I said, Alan, I said, I would like to get out of this patronage business. I said, Joe (unintelligible) is doing Chicago. Because his title was deputy secretary of

state. Tim McInerney and I worked together and I said Tim McInerney is, you know, he is honest and has your ... I said, they can handle it. Well, what happened – I got out of the patronage business for about six weeks and a guy connected with the mob got hired in Chicago and we got a report on it. And Alan calls me and he said, Whether you like it or not you are back in patronage.

DePue: Okay, you need to flesh this discussion about patronage out. Because you are an official state employee now working for the Secretary of the Treasury, Secretary. Where does the job of patronage come in in that position?

Callahan: Well, here is what it was. See, the Secretary of State's office never had a personnel code. Alan Dixon is the first one to put it in. But he and Bill Harris, who was his opponent, they both agreed that there ought to be a personnel code in the Secretary of State's office. Harris was the state senator. So we had bipartisan support to get the thing through. Not only defeated, you know, he would have been there to put that through. So what happened, like you take a test, he had to have an A. But let's say there are eight A's, you could legitimately pick anyone you want to with the A. Now, as Mayor Fields used to say, in East St. Louis. One time a this reporter says, Mayor, it looks to me like you are hiring all your cronies. He said, Do you expect me to hire my enemies?

DePue: Was this patronage business you are talking about, was that when he was Secretary of State or also in the treasurer's?

Callahan: And I was assistant secretary of state. I never had a title, patronage. Now under Kerner, there was a guy, chief of patronage. That title kind of, you know, see there is patronage now. I mean not everyone says there is no patronage. There is patronage. And you can do it legally. Absolutely legally.

DePue: I have talked to a lot of people about the subject of patronage and it has such a negative connotation that people automatically jump to conclusions. It is just that is part of being in politics and being in public service so I am not meaning anything negative in that respect. My question though is when you joined Dixon, he was the Secretary of Treasury.

Callahan: He was State Treasurer.

DePue: State Treasurer. It's a constitutional office. Were you doing patronage work then?

Callahan: I tell you, we only had ninety-three employees.

DePue: Yeah, that is what I was thinking.

Callahan: See, and hardly we ever had anyone ... well, we hired Tom Pape who later became Democratic Chairman who handles my money by the way. He is a financial consultant with A.G. Edwards. And we had a few jobs, you know, in the State Treasurer's office. Had a lot of jobs in the Secretary of State's office plus a lot of summer jobs. And those summer jobs, they would get them (unintelligible) with the, you know, Democratic committeeman, Democratic chairman. And, poor kids were athletes, you know. And we would call committeeman and say we want to hire so-and-so.

DePue: Well, that is the trajectory in Illinois politics. You want to get to that Secretary of State position, especially back in that time, because it was such a lucrative source to find jobs for people.

Callahan: See, that is absolutely right. Now, that is why Mayor Daley was not for Alan Dixon being Secretary of State. He was for Neil Hartigan, okay. Auto Workers, Neil Hartigan. Adlai Stevenson, Neil Hartigan. Now, how did we do it? How did he get slated for Secretary of State? And this is the key moment of Alan Dixon's career right here, this story. This is it. I was the go between. Howlett did not want to run for Governor. You know, had not planned on running for Governor.

DePue: We are talking about '76 now.

Callahan: We are talking about '76, Thompson.

DePue: When he beat Walker in the primary?

Callahan: That is right. He did not want to run. Alan Dixon had announced for Governor in '76. Had announced for Governor, okay. Before Alan Dixon announced, I went up to see Howlett because Alan felt that if Howlett wanted to run he owed it to Howlett to be for him. Not for any deal, for Alan to run, okay. But he said, I owe that to Howlett. Howlett said, I'm not going to run for Governor. So Alan announces for Governor and doing alright.

In the meantime, there was a poll taken. In fact, our own poll showed this, that Howlett was five percentage points better than Alan Dixon in the Democratic primary. Where Dixon was five percentage points better than Howlett in the general election. Dr. John Jackson, at Southern Illinois University, did the poll. Still alive by the way.

So Daley wanted to beat Walker. His main thing was to defeat Walker. So, some time goes by, going to see Howlett again. He says, I'm not going to run for Governor. Don't want to run for Governor. So now I keep getting reports, you know. So I go up and see Howlett and he said, Gene, I don't know how much I can withstand this pressure. So I go down and tell Alan, Howlett is going to run for Governor. And that is what happened. He did not, he did not have the guts to tell Daley to fly a kite,

okay. He did not want to run. That is why he was such a bad candidate for Governor. We are talking about a good man here.

So, Howlett says to me, I will be for Alan Dixon, anything he wants to run for. This is after that coming. This would have been the fourth conversation. He said, Is (unintelligible) going to run for Lieutenant Governor? If he picks something else I'm for him and I'll stick with him. So, we go downstairs in the office. Het gets Paul Simon on the line, Joe McMann, who was Deputy State Treasurer, and me. We had this four way conversation. And Alan says, Gene, tell them what the situation is. I explained this. And he starts out with Paul. He said, Paul, what do you think I ought to do. He said, Really. And Alan says, It appeals to me being Secretary of State. Because Howlett explained to me, you know, he would handle his legislative program, you know. He says, Alan knows the legislature. I don't know the legislature that much, which Howlett didn't. And Paul says, Don't run for Lieutenant Governor. He said, Run for Secretary of State; if you run for Lieutenant Governor, they will keep pushing you around like they are trying to push you around right now, meaning Daley.

Joe McMann, who had been Paul Powell's Deputy Secretary of State, of course, wanted to be Secretary of State. So Joe said, Oh, he was (unintelligible) for Secretary of State. And then he asked me, and I said, I think you ought to do what you want to do. He said, Don't give me that answer; tell me what you think. I said, For your own career, I agree with Paul Simon. So, Howlett comes back now. The pressure gets on Daley. Adlai, Autoworkers, all for Hartigan for Secretary of State. Okay. John Touhy, the Democratic State Chairman at this point, for (unintelligible) Daley. They're for Hartigan. So, Alan comes home for a weekend. He said, Gene, I want to ask you something. If they don't slate me for Secretary of State, I'm going to run for Governor. It's going to be a three way race. Would you stick with me? And he said, Now, wait a minute before you answer that. I'll never forget this. He said, Before you answer that. You and I will be on those country roads throughout the state. We'll think we don't have a friend in the world and we won't. We have no chance of winning. Walker will win the primary. But he says, I'm tired of being pushed around, and my wife, Jody, is tired of me being pushed around. If I run, will you stick with me? And I said, Yes, I'll stick with you. So, we go right up to the day of slating. All these people are against Howlett for Secretary of State.

DePue: Where is the slating meet?

Callahan: Chicago. There are two sessions. One in Springfield, one in Chicago, at that time. John Touhy—I am having breakfast myself—comes up one last minute to make a pitch to me that Alan should not do this, for the sake of the party. I said, John, he's going to do it. And he said, You mean he would

run for Governor?. I said, You can count on it as much as I am sitting here. Either it will be a three race for Governor and, by God, Walker will win the primary. Well, they didn't want Walker to win the primary. So they reluctantly slated Alan Dixon for Secretary of State. That is how he got to be slated. Key point of his career.

DePue: Which is the job he really was going after?

Callahan: No, no.

DePue: Governor?

Callahan: No, no, no. He really meant it. See, as Lieutenant Governor then, he would be in charge of legislative program running and you could practice law at that time. He loved the practice of law. He loved being an attorney. He still practices law. He's eighty-four years old.

DePue: What is it about the Secretary of State position that makes it just a good place to continue your political career?

Callahan: Jobs and name ID. If you don't have a scandal, you should be Secretary of State forever. Jesse White is so lucky to have Jim Burns, you know, as Inspector General. Jim Burns will tolerate no one taking a penny and he ought to kiss Jim Burns butt every time he sees him.

DePue: Okay, you said jobs and name ID. Flesh the jobs side of that position.

Callahan: Well, you know, there are thirty-three thousand, probably plus, jobs or four thousand, I don't even know what the figure is now. And you still could hire a lot of people legitimately, you know.

DePue: And practically every place in the state.

Callahan: Well, yeah. Howlett learned this. He was right governmentally but he was wrong politically. He closed about four or five driver's license locations around the state, southern Illinois, because, you know. And man, he caught so many (unintelligible), I'm not going to do that again.

DePue: Is that the kind of thing you hear from county chairman about?

Callahan: Oh, you bet. You bet.

DePue: Name ID.

Callahan: Well, you got to have your name every place. Check your billfold, you know.

- DePue: Well, Governor Edgar, of course, this was his trajectory as well. He says, Hey, kids don't know who the Treasurer is or the Controller but they knew who the Secretary of State is because he is the guy that gives them their licenses.
- Callahan: That's right. He's got it right. Yeah.
- DePue: Okay. What was Dixon's idea then, his agenda, going in to be Secretary of State. Did he have some big issues he wanted to push?
- Callahan: Oh yeah, five year license plates. That was his. Putting the sticker on. He had this commercial where you, you know, you wouldn't have to freeze your fingers. It was a great commercial. A guy named Mort Kaplan in Chicago did it.
- DePue: What was it before the five year license plate?
- Callahan: Every year.
- DePue: So a brand new plate every single year?
- Callahan: Yeah, uh-huh, yeah. So five year plates. I remember, here is an example of Simon's ethics. Oh God, it was reflectorized plate ... oh, I ... Minnesota, the license plate firm. It was very well known. But anyway, they wanted to fly us out there to take a look at how they did these plates. Oh, Jesus. I'll think of that. Uh, and Alan said, No, we will pay our own way to go out. Because we didn't want to be obligated to any firm, you understand, to making the license plates. So that was a major thing that we did, I guess. Yeah, I'd say that is a major thing. Oh, chop shops, we really clamped down on chop shops severely. In fact, we had one guy murdered that apparently his reputation wasn't the greatest to start with. You know, the guy that he was employed at Secretary of State's office.
- DePue: In case we've got someone who is reading or listening to this, chop shop being, what were they?
- Callahan: Well, here is what it is. Uh, I have got a Mercedes Benz, really a good one. You steal it. You take it to a garage. They just dismantle that damn thing, you know. They dismantle everything, all the ID stuff and then they sell it for a hell of a profit. It's all profit, because they sold the car. And then it's just a thing you know the syndicate was heavily involved in it.
- DePue: Okay. I think I want to finish today then with a little bit of discussion from you on Alan Dixon as a politician and Alan Dixon as his political views and then his political skills as well. So let's start with political views that he would have. How would he have identified himself.

Callahan: I would say, practical moderate, and later, I think, developed in kind of a practical conservative Democrat. I remember one time Alan—when he hired me—he said, Now I want to be candid with you. I'm not as liberal as you, Paul Simon and (unintelligible). I told (unintelligible) that story and he says, He is sure as hell right on that (laugh). But, yeah, he ... Alan and I, we had our ... When he said that, I said, But, you are great on civil rights and you are great on right-to-know legislation. Those are the two most important things to me. And he always was great. Had a great civil rights record, you know. Right-to-know, always tremendous on it. Was the original sponsor, right-to-know law. As was Mick (unintelligible) and Simon.

DePue: I guess I'm not familiar with the right-to-know law. Should be.

Callahan: Well, right to know is just freedom of the press really what it is. Where you can get records, you know. And it keeps getting stronger over the years. But there is still, as you know, they get hang ups where the attorney general doesn't want to have certain things. Maybe so (unintelligible) legally, she's right on that. See, I am a great believer in the fish bowl atmosphere of government. Disclosing everything, I just believe in doing.

DePue: Okay. So how about on fiscal issues?

Callahan: Oh, conservative. He was for the balanced budget amendment in Congress. As was Simon, by the way, for that. He is very benevolent to his children and grandchildren, Alan is. But he is a very frugal guy. In fact, in 1975, when he did his speech before the legislature, he used the word parsimonious to describe himself and, hell, I'd never heard of that word either. So I looked it up in the dictionary. So now many years later, Clinton names him the head of the [Military] Base Closure Commission, the national, you know ...

DePue: That was after he was out of the Senate.

Callahan: Yeah. And, the FBI does a check on him. So, they asked me about Dixon, things like ... Well, I said, he is very parsimonious. He says, You are the second guy that has used that word about him; what does that word mean? I said, He is a tight ass. (laugh) The guy laughs, you know. And I go (laugh) ...

DePue: Okay, so fiscal conservative generally. How about on social issues? You already mentioned civil rights.

Callahan: Oh, great on civil rights.

DePue: How so? Can you think any particular ...

Callahan: FEPC⁷, fair housing⁸ legislation. Against stop-and-frisk. Later in years, I think he would have been for stop-and-frisk, over the years. But, see, there were so many African-Americans in St. Clair County that he thought they would be stopped all the time just on any whim.

DePue: Yeah, we haven't mentioned where he comes from in the first place, and it is curious to me that both Simon and Alan Dixon, these are southern Illinois guys.

Callahan: Yeah, yeah.

DePue: And his base is East St. Louis area.

Callahan: Yeah, his base was St. Clair and Paul's base was Madison. Yeah.

DePue: So, they are right next door to each other. Okay. What other social issues? Some of that ...

Callahan: Well, ERA.⁹ FEPC, open housing, ERA later, you know. He was always, you know, very good on that stuff.

DePue: Okay. Well, this is more of a federal government list, so I'll start at the state level. Crime issues? And on the national level, national defense?

Callahan: Well, he was on the armed services commission, committee. He took Scoop Jackson's place and you know how conservative Scoop Jackson was on those issues. He really worked hard at that. He loved being on that and he liked the banking committee too, because he had been on board of directors of the bank in Belleville and he had been State Treasurer. He understood it. And armed services was always an interest to him. Mel Price, who had been his congressman who was a very good congressman until he got too old—he should have quit before he did—and he was head of the armed services commission in the House, so he had a strong interest in that. There was one gun, Sergeant York was the gun, that he didn't think worked and he went down and tried the damn thing and couldn't hit a target, you know. It was greased to pass the Senate and he stopped it from being passed. He was conservative in those areas. I think, he had a concern that Dwight Eisenhower had about the military / corporation,¹⁰ you know, combined.

DePue: Concern about again, too cozy?

Callahan: Yeah, that's right, yeah.

⁷ Fair Employment Practices Commission

⁸ By "fair housing" he probably means the law prohibiting lending agencies from discrimination for mortgages. Among other things, the practice of "red-lining" neighborhoods, was prohibited.

⁹ Equal Rights Amendment to the U.S. Constitution regarding discrimination based on gender.

¹⁰ When General, then President, Dwight D. Eisenhower was leaving office he gave a speech in which he famously warned about the necessity for public attention to the "military / industrial complex".

DePue: Okay, well, once we get into his career in the Senate we will have a chance to delve in to a lot of these issues in particular as we go. But I wanted to finish up today then, with talking about Alan Dixon as the politician.

Callahan: Well, good speaker. There were years that I thought he came over too hot, you know, like he would be speaking before like a Democratic group. You know, he would get loud and carried away at everything. He mellowed on that, and I think from advice, that he was not a shouter anymore. He was a shouter when he was president of the Young Democrats of Illinois. He was a shouter early in his days and he became more sophisticated in his speaking approach, I would say, where he wouldn't turn people off by his ... when he was really, you know, would get carried ... I don't know carried away might be too strong. But there was the Broyles Act. A senator from Mt. Vernon put it ... that is where you took an oath that you are not a communist and, uh, he gave this speech against the Broyles Bill and this was terrible where you have to sign something that you are not a communist. You know, he was against this very much. Simon was against it. So, one day ... Now Simon and he sat together—this was in the House when this happened—and he gets a note that is delivered to him in red ink, like it's blood. He says, If you speak one more time against the Broyles Act, you can see right here that is going ... He said, I'm going to shoot you. That's it. I'm going to shoot you. So he shows that to Paul Simon and Paul looks at it and he said, What do you think. And Paul says, Well, I sure hope he is a good shot (laugh). But, I mean, like the Broyles Act, if he believed something, he would really, really go. At that time ... you know, and then the speaking over the years started coming down. Not just everyone. I remember one time on a radio interview, uh, that I had, uh, I really leveled Walker about something. And Gene Graves called me. He is the father of Lesley Graves, the judge here in town. And Gene Graves said, You know, your message is fine but, he said, You come over too hot. He said, You got to be more reasonable in how you present yourself. And that had a great influence on me. Gene Graves is dead now but before he died I was able to tell him I thought that was one of the best pieces of advice I ever had from anyone.

DePue: How was Dixon on the campaign?

Callahan: Oh terrific. Oh yeah. I mean he could give a hell of a Democratic speech and then to the banking groups he could, you know, be reasonable and everything. He knew what he was doing and he worked hard. Very good campaigner.

DePue: Was he the kind of guy who would fit in whatever group he did? Was he more of a Jim Thompson style of campaigner, or Jim Edgar's style of campaigner?

Callahan: Oh, positively Thompson. Positively Thompson. And Walker was a great campaigner. Now Walker was a great campaigner.

- DePue: Okay. I'm going to read you a couple of different things that reading on Dixon himself and see what your reaction is. This is from the book by David Kenney Robert Hartley on certain tradition where they covered all of the different senators, and they described Dixon as a national-born office-holder.
- Callahan: I don't know what office holder means in that context. What ...
- DePue: Well, that is kind of why I threw it out to you here. Because he can be taken in the context that he is a professional politician.
- Callahan: Well, when he made most of his money in real estate and personal injury cases I don't think you can say that. He was a state official a long time. I mean he was elected the first time when he was what, twenty-three? At twenty-one, elected police magistrate when he was twenty-one. Legislature when he was twenty-three. So he served an awful long time and I never considered him a professional politician. I mean, when you say, I guess, they could defend that statement and I can probably defend mine.
- DePue: Sometimes your people say that some people in public office are there because they love the race. They love the campaign. They love the politics. Some people put up with the race and the politics so they can then get to office. Where would you put Dixon in that?
- Callahan: Oh, I think, he loved, he loved politics. He loved the campaign trail if he didn't get overly tired; you know, sometimes he would. And he probably loved the campaign trail more than Paul Simon. Paul Simon probably loved the governmental effort more than Alan Dixon. Now as an example, how they relaxed. Paul Simon liked to read and travel, you know, and write. Read, travel and write. Alan Dixon, and Paul, fourth, would be going to some sporting event, especially pro football. Paul liked pro ... In fact, he and Alan had season tickets to the old St. Louis Cardinals. Okay. And Alan liked to drink beer, play golf, be with his friends, you know, drinking beer, playing golf. He really didn't like to travel, Alan didn't. He just liked ... He had fun doing this thing like right now, what you and I are doing. He probably had more fun doing this than Paul would. Paul would rather write it himself, you know, rather than go through this. But not Alan. Now Alan is doing a book with Taylor Penseneau as you know. I would say that is a pretty fair, pretty fair analysis. But Alan loved the Senate, and he liked being a state legislator. I think both of them liked being well known. And see, after Paul Simon ran for President, he was really well known. I mean really well known.
- DePue: Was Dixon more comfortable with the legislative side of the process or the executive side?

- Callahan: I think legislative, yeah, I think so. That is kind of a close call but I think so.
- DePue: Okay. One of the things you do hear, when people talk about Dixon it's Al the Pal. That appropriate for him?
- Callahan: Yeah, I think so. Jim Donnewald named him that. Jim Donnewald who was a state rep, state senator from Breeze, Illinois.
- DePue: Was that meant to be a compliment?
- Callahan: Well, the ... Donnewald said it as a compliment in the campaign against Dave O'Neil. When Alan beat ... see, there were only two new Democrats elected in the nation in 1980: Chris Dodd, who had been a member of the House in Connecticut, and Alan Dixon. The only two new Democrats. Dave O'Neil had been sheriff of St. Claire County which is a tough thing for a Republican to do, but he was. And he also he picked up on Al's pals, in a very derogatory way.
- DePue: This would have been the ...
- Callahan: 1980 general election.
- DePue: Okay.
- Callahan: We had pins made up. I don't know whose idea ... it wasn't my idea but I liked it. Al's Pals. I'm not on the internet as you know but Mary (unintelligible), she has got a thing on the internet, Al's Pals. Where she like ... he had a birthday July 7th and you ought to see the people that wrote happy birthday messages to him on the internet. And his son took them to him because Alan doesn't ... oh, he does a little bit on the internet.
- DePue: So you played that one right back in ...
- Callahan: Yeah, right back to him. Yeah, yeah.
- DePue: Also a lot of people have described Dixon as a consummate political insider.
- Callahan: That's true. Yeah.
- DePue: And a pragmatist.
- Callahan: Positively. Could bring people together. Yeah, in fact, when Alan was running for Governor, he calls me in one day and he said, Gene, people at home say I'm being too tough on Walker; they say they don't think that's me, you know. So he said, Tone down the stuff, you know.

DePue: When you first joined the Dixon team, and especially those first couple years that you were with Dixon, did you have a good sense of what his ultimate ambitions were politically?

Callahan: Well, yeah, I did. Because I wrote him that long memo and he did almost every thing that I had in there.

DePue: What was the top.

Callahan: The top, disclose, completely disclose every penny and campaign contributions, and he had no problem with that.

DePue: But the objective, the ultimate objective.

Callahan: For either Governor or Senator. For either one. Either one. And also for disclosing his net worth. Now, I had trouble ... he agreed to do it. See, I recommended when he ran for state treasurer to disclose all his money. And Tom Lofthus was his press secretary that I had recommended, okay, back in 1970. And Alan agreed to do it. And then, by God, he wouldn't do it. When the time came to do it, he wouldn't do it. So, I did this ... This was a major part of my thing, net worth. And so we had it all done, that is when he said, How can I be so independent. And Celine Bentley says—that's my assistant—Close the door, and these three ties we were yelling at each other, you know. We have the release now, we got everything down there. And that is when he says, It's no one's business what money I have. No one's business. So I said, Okay, don't do it and see what happens to you, was my comeback. Then he says, How can you be so god-damned independent. I gave him that line about my Dad, having a little money, and he laughed. He says—I'll never forget this—he says, Okay, send the son-of-a-bitch upstairs; we need a press release. Now he has told me that is one of the two best things that I ever did for him, you know. So I feel pretty good about that.

DePue: Stuck to your guns.

Callahan: No, no, he didn't tell me ... yeah, he didn't tell me that then. Told me that years later, one of the two best things. But he really believed it was no one's business. And maybe it's not, but, by god, I believe if you want to get ahead in this business you got to disclose it. See, I kept all my checks for probably forty years, or thirty. My wife did. Because I always thought—started when I was a reporter—if anyone ever said I was a crook, I would just throw everything out there. I said, show me.

DePue: Well, there is one other question I've got for you today and then we are going to pick up next session, we'll get into Dixon's time in the U.S. Senate, especially how he got there in the first place and then his career in the Senate. The question I want to finish off with today is, at this point in your life, did you have any of your own personal ambitions to get in to public office?

Callahan: You mean talking about running?

DePue: Yes.

Callahan: No. Now, here is what happened. In 1968, let me see, early, yeah, in 1968, Alan Lucas was our state representative. I got to make sure I got this year right. Let me see, yeah, '68. Alan Lucas, L-u-c-a-s, nephew of the former U.S. majority leader, Scott Lucas, okay, was our state representative here. Under the old constitution, there are three members in every house district, okay. We had minority representation so here we had two Republicans and one Democrat; Lucas was the Democrat. After the primary, he got a job offer of lobbying for the Midwest Truckers Association and he decided he was going to quit. He had been in, I'm going to say fourteen years, sixteen maybe, twelve to sixteen years we'll say, that he wasn't going to run. So Jack O'Brien, we had representative committees. John (unintelligible), the guy I mentioned earlier, the state senator. A guy named Eddie Akin, A-k-i-n, from Mason County and Jack O'Brien, whose ballot name was John Fitzgerald O'Brien, by the way. Still alive, former clerk of the house. I want to get back to O'Brien on a matter of something you asked me recently. So Jack O'Brien said, You are my choice to be the state representative. And I said, Well, I said, John Nup (unintelligible) could never be for me. And he said, oh yeah, Nup (unintelligible) told me that he is for anyone that I'm for. And he said, I want you to be. So I thought about it. I thought about it. I talked to my wife. My wife was very much against it. Now, let me say this, whoever picked that was going to win. If they are a dog, they are going to win you understand. It is a cinch win. Okay. I talked to Mr. Ronan who wanted me to run. I talked to my Dad who wanted me to run. I talked to a guy named Roger Irving who is now dead who is quadriplegic and a college friend, a great government guy, wanted me to run. My wife, she had it pegged absolutely right. She said, All the people you have made angry, she said ... now the column you wrote because I was not a safety first columnist – I mean I was competitive and I was strong and if I thought someone was a crook I tried to prove it, you know. And that ... you might say, well, the guy is innocent until he is caught. Well, you now, you get a smell for the guys that are on the take. Just like in the legislature, you can't prove a lot of things but you start watching them, okay. My wife said, They'll come out of the woodwork on you. So I know I'm going to be elected once, but the second time, I add ... also I believe so much in disclosure, it paid nine thousand dollars a year at that time to be a state rep. And I couldn't take a pay cut like that because I know what happens. See you start getting job offer, do this, and then you say, you know, you do PR and stuff like this. I didn't want to do that. I didn't want to go through it. Now, I am no more honest than the next person but there are certain things I believe in strongly and that is one of them. And with what my wife—because she was right and I understood that—and how I feel on disclosure, I said, This is not for me. And then O'Brien came – a wonderful guy, Jim Londrigan was our state rep for years

and then became a judge. In fact he is going to be at my daughter's fundraiser tonight. That's how far we go back.

DePue: Okay. This has been a great session. I'm looking forward to next session getting now from state level politics into the national level politics. But thank you very much Gene.

Callahan: You bet.

(End of interview #2. #3 continues)

Interview with Gene Callahan

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Interview # 3: July 20, 2011

Interviewer: Mark DePue – ALPL Oral History Program

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DePue: Today is Wednesday, July 20, 2011. My name is Mark DePue, Director of Oral History for the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library. Today I have my third session with Gene Callahan. Good morning, Gene.

Callahan: Good morning sir.

DePue: We have had two super sessions so far and it has taken us from the time you were born all the way up through about 1979, 1980 when you are Chief of Staff for then-Secretary of State Alan Dixon. Where I wanted to pick up today is to get into that crucial decision that Dixon made—and I assume this happened in 1979—to be running for the U.S. Senate, a seat that looked like Adlai Stevenson was going to be moving out of. So, I will let you take it from there.

- Callahan: Well, that is right. When Adlai Stevenson said that he wasn't going to run, Alan Dixon—if my memory is right this was on a Friday—we put out a press release immediately saying, Alan Dixon Monday is going to officially announce he is a candidate for the U.S. Senate. And that is how fast we did it. We worked on the statement all weekend at my home and did all the press advisory in the state of Illinois. It was one time in my life that I never accepted phone calls. When the phone rang, I didn't pick it up, because I didn't want to give any reporter anything more than what we put out and I wanted to be fair with everyone. And Alan Dixon wrote the statement, I wrote the press release, and from that day on immediately, Alan Dixon was the candidate come hell or high water for the U.S. Senate.
- DePue: Okay, a couple of questions on that. Paul Simon was in the mix at the time as well. At least some reports said Paul Simon might have been interested in that. You used to be working for Simon and were still close to him, so was that ever part of the equation for Dixon's decision?
- Callahan: Well, Paul did think about it for awhile. And then I think it got to the point where we thought he owed it to Alan Dixon before him. Okay. I think he just thought politically he owed it to him because of what Alan had done for him. You know, like when he ran for governor, Alan was sent to the forefront downstate working with him. And, uh, I am working with Dixon because Paul Simon recommended him in the (unintelligible) as Dixon. Well, Dixon wanted me but Simon is the guy that contacted me, because Alan knew how close I was to Paul. And that's how I happened to go to work with Alan.
- DePue: The other question I have in this one is: You and I have talked quite a bit about the slate-making process in this state and how that determines who the Democratic candidates are. And it works the same way on the Republican side. Doesn't sound like it was working in this case, or that Dixon kind of superseded that.
- Callahan: Well, Alan just decided he was going to go period. You know, I am just trying to think right now ... what year did Mayor Daley die?
- DePue: '76. It was December, I think. It was late in the year.
- Callahan: Okay, okay. Okay. As I recalled earlier, Alan, you know, had not announced for governor and then Mike Howlett kept his word to Alan Dixon. Mike Howlett is integral part of Alan Dixon's career because that race, right there, made Alan Dixon statewide. But when we beat Adlai Stevenson, Neil Hartigan, Mayor Daley and so on, December '76, yeah.
- DePue: That would have been right after the election then.
- Callahan: Oh yeah. See, Howlett just said that if Dixon is not slated for Secretary of State, I am not running for governor. Because he had told me twice and the

third time I knew he was weakening, you know. Because I was the conduit because, thanks to my Dad, I was closer to Howlett than either Dixon or Simon. But Alan and I have a saying, you know, there is certain people I always say, every time you see, like Mike (unintelligible) pull his pants down and kiss his ass. You know. (laugh) But we owed Mike Howlett an awful lot.

DePue: But apparently you didn't feel like you owed to the slate-making committee this time around and maybe it was because Daley is out of the picture so it's a weaker institution.

Callahan: Yeah. And, you know, Alan just ... like the story I mentioned when he said would I stick with him in a three-way race for governor, when he said we don't have a chance of winning. See, Howlett gets beat if Walker is renominated if it is a three- way race for governor. Alan Dixon runs last in that race.

DePue: Okay. Again, that was the '76 race; now we are talking about his crucial decision in '79 to be running for the Senate in 1980.

Callahan: See, the Democrats wanted him to run for governor in '78. We even had a pollster come in. Mort Kaplan is the guy that was an integral part on all our campaigns. Was an integral part of Walker's campaign, by the way.

DePue: In fact I have interviewed him.

Callahan: He is a good man. Kaplan had a national pollster, and I don't recall who it was came to Springfield. We go into Alan's office and he says, let me tell you, I don't want to do a poll. Because we knew what the poll would say. The poll would say, he was the strongest guy for governor, you know, in Illinois. Well, he decided he didn't want to run for Governor then. And he said, I don't want a poll. I will pay all your expenses and fee; I have wasted your time. I know that but I will pay you for your time and pay you for what you think I owe you. There are no hard feelings or anything, but I am not going to run for Governor.

DePue: Well, that is interesting. We should mention in here that, okay, Thompson first won the election for Governor in '76, so why is he running again for '78? It is because the new constitution had kicked in and now the gubernatorial elections are going to be off-phase from the presidential elections.

Callahan: See, this really helped Alan Dixon even though, boy, it was tough running statewide that often. But his name I.D. went up so much, you know. Like in '78, Alan Dixon is the only candidate ... was the first candidate to ever carry every township, every ward in Cook County, and every county. Carried all one hundred and two counties. Every township, every ward in Cook. First one to ever do it. Now, Jesse White – I don't know if he did it –

Jesse White almost did that if he didn't do it too since then. But Alan was the first one of either party to do it, including Edgar.

DePue: Yeah, Edgar missed it by one county.

Callahan: Yeah, we shot the whole gamut.

DePue: Okay, well, that certainly is impressive. Was there a primary race that he still faced?

Callahan: You mean you're talking about the Senate race now?

DePue: Yeah, the 1980 race.

Callahan: Okay. Well, in 1980 Alex Seith, S-e-i-t-h, who had really ... he came close to Percy, Alex Seith did. But he ran a campaign at the tail end it against Percy. He got into some issues that they shouldn't have gotten in to.

DePue: Yeah, this would have been a different senatorial race then.

Callahan: That's right, yeah, yeah. But he was the Democratic nominee, Seith was, against Percy. And then when we announced, I remember Seith called me at home. He had a commercial that he was, you know, it was tough on. He thought it was real tough on Dixon. And he called me. He said, I would like for you to come up and review this. He was doing it in front of the press. I would like for you to come up and review this. You don't want to do this. And I said, I appreciate you calling Alex. He said, Well, will you be there? I said, I appreciate you calling. And he is going to say, (unintelligible), let me ask one ... I said, I just appreciate you calling me. That is all I tell him. And, of course, I didn't go, you know.

DePue: That is an awfully peculiar request for somebody that said ...

Callahan: Well, Alex was a strange person. I shouldn't use that word, strange. I don't mean that. He was unusual in that sense, okay.

DePue: Did you ever have any doubt, or did Dixon have any doubt, that he is going to be able to carry the primary?

Callahan: I thought we would win it. We had polling. Peter Hart was our pollster and he is absolute great pollster. I would trust him with anything. We had Peter Hart, and Mike McKeon, an Illinois pollster. Peter Hart is nationally and McKeon is more Midwest and statewide. The polling looked good all the way through.

DePue: In which race did you figure it would be tougher to win? Was it the primary or the general election?

- Callahan: Oh, the general, positively. There only two new Democrats in the nation elected in '80 as Democrats.
- DePue: Okay.
- Callahan: Chris Dodd and Alan Dixon. We used to say we that we had the freshman class meetings in a phone both.
- DePue: Well, the Republican candidate that year was then Lieutenant Governor Dave O'Neil. Tell us a little bit about Dave O'Neil.
- Callahan: Well, sheriff of St. Clair County, which is a tough nut to crack as a Republican. His record was decent and he was from Belleville as Alan was from Belleville. We were fortunate to win. See, Bill Scott very well could have beaten us if he had been clean but, you know, he got indicted. Clean, Bill Scott was the toughest opponent for us. A clean Bill Scott. He had been State Treasurer and Attorney General.
- DePue: But he was not on the ticket in ...
- Callahan: He was what?
- DePue: But he was not on the ticket in the general election?
- Callahan: No, no. See he got indicted and then he got convicted and went to prison.
- DePue: Okay. Otherwise, he would have been the Republican candidate, you are saying?
- Callahan: Oh, yeah, positively. And you would have to say, with a Republican, you know, it was a national trend until he got indicted; his reputation publicly had been pretty good. Not pretty good. It was good.
- DePue: Well, Gene, tell us then why in your opinion, not everybody's, that 1980 was such an overwhelmingly Republican yea, and then go into the strategy you guys were going to take.
- Callahan: Well, Jimmy Carter was very unpopular, and you know Jimmy Carter was a drag on the ticket. And so we were just able to do it.
- DePue: Was Dixon in the position of looking for help from Carter, or did he just prefer that Carter not show up?
- Callahan: No, we didn't care for any help from him. But we never ran away from Carter. Alan never ran away from him. But, the guy later—I'm not thinking of his name—was his political guy in the Midwest. I later worked with him on baseball matters. A good guy. He wanted us to endorse Carter before the primary, and I said to him, What do you mean? You haven't

endorsed Alan Dixon; you know, I said, you shared a platform with Alex Seith recently Why would we want to endorse President Carter when you are there with Alex Seith? Well, not much you could say on that. We never endorsed anyone in the primary. See, I would say Alan, probably voted for Carter. It would be my guess. I'm not sure of that. I know this. Paul Simon, Dick Durbin and Mary McInerney ran as Kennedy delegates and all of them got beat. I voted for Kennedy myself.

DePue: In the '80?...

Callahan: '80 primary, yep, you bet. But Dick Durbin and Paul Simon both got beat as Kennedy delegates, you know what is up in Illinois. And Barry McInerney, that's Tim's brother, good man. They are all good people.

DePue: And running with Kennedy is obviously running against the sitting President, which is awfully tough to do.

Callahan: That's right. That's right.

DePue: Well, let's get a little bit of more meat in terms of what challenges the Carter administration, Carter himself, was facing to get re-elected. You had the misery index that was constantly in the public eye; misery index was unemployment, which was at seven point two percent. Inflation rate, which was sky high at about thirteen and a half percent. So, the misery index, which it was labeled, was over twenty percent and that is awfully tough to beat. Then on top of that you have the Iran hostage crisis.

Callahan: You bet.

DePue: And some other things. Very, very high interest rates at the time. The economy was just in the toilet.

Callahan: My brother was a nationally known hog farmer and he almost didn't survive in '80 financially, and I asked him what happened. I will never forget this. We were in Champaign. I thought my brother was having problems. Again, we were very close. And I said, Are you having financial problems? He said, I sure am. And I said, What happened? He said, I built one too many hog confinement houses. I think he was paying eighteen percent interest, you know. But he survived it.

DePue: It wasn't that many years earlier that grain prices had gone through the roof because of the sales of grain to Soviet Union and things like that. So, the farmers caught it in a very bad cycle too, as you just mentioned. What was the strategy then going into the general election?

Callahan: Of '80?

DePue: Yes.

Callahan: Well, the first thing we did, Alan had Paul Simon do a one day seminar for us. And we did it at the Holiday Inn Airport in St. Louis. Simon went over every issue. Simon was so good on the issues, you know. Went over every issue he thought would come up in the Senate campaign. Foreign Policy. And then he talked Alan Dixon into making a trip, which Alan did not want to do, but he agreed to do it. Alan went to Italy, Israel ... let me see, about five countries. He went to Israel, Italy, I think he went to Poland. I could find out the countries he went to. He agreed to do this trip. And Simon helps with setting up meetings at the embassies and all kind of stuff. They lost one of Alan's bags. Remember I told you he was a fastidious dresser, he gets his bag, he said, You tell Simon I'm not going to go with any more of these damn foreign relations trips. He only went on one when he was U.S. Senator for twelve years. He didn't want to go on that. But his colleagues said, You got to go something. So he went to Sweden for some United Nations thing or something. And that's the only one he ever went on. See, Simon loved to travel. I mean loved it. That was one of his pastimes. But Dixon, no. Dixon liked to go to sporting events, play golf, drink beer.

DePue: You said it was Simon who was addressing all of these issues. Why have Simon? Why not have Dixon do this himself?

Callahan: Well, Simon, remember I told you earlier, meat and potatoes Democrat. Okay. Secretary of State.

DePue: You are talking about Dixon now?

Callahan: Dixon, second most jobs. Simon had already been in over a hundred countries. Over a hundred countries, Simon had. And before he ever became Congressman too. I mean, he used to go all over. And been to Vietnam, Simon did. Before, let me see ... he went to Vietnam I think in ... let me see, '67 maybe. I'm not sure what year.

DePue: '68 was the Tet offensive when things really turned sour in Vietnam.

Callahan: But he went over there before ... let me see ... he ran for Congress I think in '80, he ran for the U.S. Senate in '84 and he ran for Congress in '74. Yeah, that's it. And as I've told you, Dixon is the guy that talked him into running for Congress; I have told you that story. Anyway, Simon has this one day seminar. I don't recall if Durbin was there or not. Tim McInerney was there. Joe McMann, who ran the Chicago operation, was there. I would bet Mort Kaplan was there. I don't recall everyone that was there. But no more than six or eight people were there. And Paul went over every issue that he thought ... and then we had our polling figures showed ...

DePue: So this, I'm sorry to interrupt, but this is a session to train up Dixon on these issues? Not something that is being discussed to the general public?

Callahan: Oh no. No, not the general public.

DePue: Okay.

Callahan: So Dixon would be prepared, you know. Our polling showed that the people of Illinois thought Percy and Adlai had both forgotten the State of Illinois. And Kaplan came up with a great commercial. A Senator from Illinois, for Illinois. Our polling figures did that, and Kaplan did a great media job for us in '80. And in '86 he did too.

DePue: Do you recall some of the particular issues that became important during that campaign? I got a few listed here.

Callahan: We did farm stuff, which was minimal. He kept his fences mended in Cook County very well. His idea was, you had to take care of three areas if you are going to run as a statewide candidate. You got to take care of your home base. You got to take care of the state capitol. And you got to take care of Chicago and suburbs and the collars¹¹. I remember Alan Dixon in 1980; we had a big map, and he said, Boys, you carry me in one important county, I am the next United States Senator. Okay.

DePue: He knew he was going to get Cook County.

Callahan: He knew he was going to get Cook. He knew what he was going to do downstate. He knew he was going to be with Dave O'Neil.

DePue: So if you get Lake or DuPage ...

Callahan: By the way, I think he only won Belleville by one point. I think it was one vote or something. You know.

DePue: Well, what you just said it is: very much a state-centric focus that he had.

Callahan: Oh yeah, yeah. And see, Alan had been to every county in the state. He had been in the financial institution of every county of the state. He courted the bankers. Put money in every county. First one to put money in savings and loans in Illinois and came out okay with that too. So he took care of the business community, and as I told you, our '74 campaign was based on banking community, farmers – hog farmers, really – and athletics. He just kept building on that, and his coalition worked until he got beat.

DePue: What was the message on the campaign trail then. You are wanting to be a U.S. Senator and you have got to address the issue of the U.S. economy. What was his message then?

¹¹ "Collars" means collar counties, those Chicago suburban areas in Cook and surrounding counties.

Callahan: Well, I remember one of the things he said—and he had to put this in a way where he didn't offend Adlai too—but he said: If I had been United States Senator we would have a third airport right now circling the Belleville [Illinois] area; we wouldn't have been going over to St. Louis airport. He said, we would have had an airport. He was strong on preserving Scott Air Force Base, and he did. He saved it. First as a Senator, then chairman of the [Military] Base Closure Commission, you know. Scott Air Force Base. Mel Price built Scott Air Force Base—I mean I'm talking in political terms now—Congressman Mel Price. Mel Price, you know, got too old. And then Alan Dixon ... I would say Price built it, Dixon saved it, Costello continues to save it. I'm not being real enlightening here. The national issues in '80 had to be Iran and things like that, you know. And I don't even remember the main issues in the debates that they had. We had a system. I never went to any of the debates on purpose. I stayed in the campaign headquarters and then I would have people that listened to it calling that I knew were objective, would not give me any BS.

DePue: Were you the campaign manager?

Callahan: In essence.

DePue: Was there somebody ...

Callahan: We never, no, we never named a campaign manager.

DePue: Okay.

Callahan: On purpose. Because we didn't want the friction. We didn't want any friction. As Tim McInerney said, We knew who to go to to get to know what was going on anyway, you know. But I had people in that '80 race, and again in '86, tell me some things. As an example, there is a guy named Marty Marx. Marty Marx had been president of the Young Democrats of Illinois. Worked for Alan Dixon. He gave Alan Dixon a thousand dollar campaign contribution. Marty Marx is from Jacksonville at that time. Been an alderman over there and he is now in Pittsburgh. He runs campaigns in Pittsburgh. At least that is where he is based now. Sharp young man. And given Alan Dixon a thousand dollars. Dave O'Neil used this as an example how Dixon was shaking down Secretary of State employees for contributions, because Marty Marx wasn't making all that much money. Let's say he was making six hundred, seven hundred a month, and he gives Dixon a thousand dollars. Single, you know. So, right away I got to find Marty Marx. Well, I found him. They were having a party out at the Holiday Inn. Marty is half stiff. I said, Marty, let me ask you two questions: How did you happen to give Dixon a thousand dollars? He explained it to me. And I said, Did anyone ask you; did anyone of Dixon's staff ask you to give a thousand dollars? And he said, No. I said, You willing to take a lie test on that? He said, Yes. I said, Okay, now, get your

ass sobered up. Take a shower, get your ass sobered up, get here to campaign headquarters. We blew that story apart like you can't believe, that night, that night. I put Marty Marx on the telephone to any reporter that wanted to talk to him. That is an example of about how we were ready. Then we would have people that would say Dixon was weak here. I remember one time, this was in '78, he lost his cool at a debate with – what the hell was her name? – Sharon Sharp. '78, that is the campaign where he won every county but he really lost it. Scott Shearer was over there and he called me and he said, Boy, he said Alan lost it. And he told me what it was about. But we just did the best we could on everything like that. For damage control, he didn't make many errors. He made one there and he forgot ... Something she said really got to him, you know.

DePue: You don't recall the specifics on that?

Callahan: I don't. I might find that out for you because Scott Shearer would know. I don't have him on ... Tim McInerney might know.

DePue: I am going to ask that some of the other issues that I knew at the national level were prominent at the time and a couple I know he was addressing during the campaign. Let's go to the area of foreign affairs and, obviously, much of what you explain Simon was doing was trying to get him prepped up and give him some credentials on foreign affairs. Iran hostage crisis. That was the millstone around Carter's neck. What was Dixon saying about it?

Callahan: Do you remember when the hostage started? About what month?

DePue: No, but it was ... because there was the national news every day they would say 'day such and such' of the hostage crisis. '79 maybe.

Callahan: I don't know that Alan addressed it. He probably defended Carter the best he could on it without going overboard. I mean, that is the way he operated. But I don't recall that.

DePue: How about a stance against the spread of communism against what the Soviet Union was trying to do, both in Central America and Afghanistan in particular.

Callahan: Oh, he probably had been more Nixonian than Simon on those issues. In fact, aid to the Contras is an example, you know. I think maybe he had a checkered voting record on that if I remember. There was more than one vote.

DePue: That would have been an issue in 1980. In '86 it was ...

Callahan: No, that was later. That was later. But anyway, he was more of a hawk. As an example, he succeeded Scoop Jackson on the Armed Services

Committee. I mean, I'm not saying that he was as hawkish as Scoop Jackson; he might have been, might have been.

DePue: Again, that would have been '86 that he got to the Armed Services Committee.

Callahan: Yeah, yeah, whatever year, I forget, yeah.

DePue: How about on fiscal issues. What kind of message was he sending out?

Callahan: Fiscal conservative, yeah, yeah. We had, as an example, in 1974—this was a Kaplan idea—big picture of Alan Dixon, saying, He is tight with a buck.

DePue: You can speak to that.

Callahan: That's right. (laugh)

DePue: Okay. Some social issues then. A couple that I have been able to track down, his position on [school] busing. I have a quote from a Tribune article back from 1980: "In my heart of hearts, I am not for busing."

Callahan: Yeah. Alan said that?

DePue: Yeah.

Callahan: Yeah. Well, I was for busing, by the way, but I think it proved it didn't work. But, I can't quarrel with his position. I don't quarrel with him.

DePue: I would think that that would be something that some of his base, some of the Democratic base, didn't necessarily want to hear.

Callahan: Oh, that's true. I remember like Abner Mikva, he told me, "When Alan says now I'm not as liberal as you and Paul Simon and Abner Mikva. well, you're sure as hell right on that." You know, that was true. But see, Alan was great ... he was great on civil rights, even though (unintelligible) not great on civil rights. Great on the open meetings laws and things like that. See, civil rights and open meeting stuff was my main interest. Still are. Still are. And he was wonderful on that. Never deviated from it.

DePue: This one was very much in the national level radar because Regan, being who he was....

Callahan: Yeah.

DePue: ...abortion issue.

Callahan: He supported the Hyde amendment.

DePue: Which was?

Callahan: I want to double check that. I think it was no federal funds for abortion. He supported the Hyde amendment. And, he reluctantly got involved in that because the Bishop... Bill O'Connell, who is still alive, was the best legislative reporter I have ever seen in Illinois, by the way, Bill O'Connell of the *Peoria Journal Star*. I would rate him number one. And, he told me about the Catholic bishop over there – I don't know who it was at the time – was having trouble with Dixon because he wanted him to be for the Hyde amendment. Well, I was sent to Peoria to have lunch with Bill O'Connell and we had lunch at a place called the Puff. And I remember, O'Connell is a good beer drinker like I am. And I remember, he hardly ate any food; he took a few bites, put a napkin over it. I said, Aren't you going to eat anymore? No, he says, My teeth are bothering me. (laugh) So anyway, over that luncheon, I told him he could tell the Bishop that Alan was for the Hyde amendment and we did as much as we could probably during that campaign without being zeroed in on that issue. Did the best we could on it. Now, the Bishop here – McNicholas – we were getting anti-Kennedy sermons. And the Bishop ... Tim McInerney wrote him a letter ... well, first asked for an appointment, because McInerney had gone all through Catholic schools: grade school, high school, and Creighton University. That's the guy I called recently, I'm having lunch with today. And he wouldn't even see McInerney, the Bishop. So, what we did, the guy that was Scoop Jackson's AA, had had the same trouble with the Catholic bishops in Seattle. He advised us – I don't know what month this would have been – he advised us to answer the Bishop in a very strong letter. And he says, He'll come back and probably hit you one more time and let it die. That's what he did. We were prepared with pamphlets. We had Catholic churches in metropolitan areas zeroed out for the objections to Dixon's sermons from the pulpit. None happened. McInerney probably would know. We probably had seven hundred thousand. Never used them but we were ready to use them. We were going to put them on every windshield wiper, you know. We had zeroes (unintelligible), I mean, Springfield is one of our areas. All the major, you know, metropolitan areas. Taylorville: Taylorville priest gave an anti-Kennedy sermon and we had a gal in our office (unintelligible) the church the following Sunday. Remember the congregation. (unintelligible) in Taylorville. In fact, she sent me a hundred dollars the other day for my daughter's campaign. Her name is Pat Barry. Pamphletted her own church.

DePue: Well, your discussion here reflects the way that abortion played into the political scene and it was one of those things – and correct me if I get this wrong – but a lot of politicians would hope that that issue just goes away, but they knew they had to address it in some way.

Callahan: Yeah, that's right. I agree with that completely.

DePue: Okay. And was Dixon's position going for the Hyde Amendment, was that a reflection of how he truly felt about the issues?

Callahan: I think so, yeah. See, he is conservative on that. In fact, I myself, I am pro-choice but I am against abortion. I mean, I don't know anyone that is for abortion. But, you know, I had made up my mind if either of my daughters got pregnant, I'd advise them to have the baby. But whatever they did, that is up to them. I'm not going to be the judge, you know.

DePue: Well, ever since it's been issue ...

Callahan: It would tear you up. And my wife is adopted, you know. And Paul Simon's son is adopted.

DePue: I wasn't aware about Simon's son.

Callahan: Yeah.

DePue: Here is one I know you'll be able to address as well fundraising. Was Dixon a good fundraiser?

Callahan: No. Bad. Paul Simon wasn't any good either until 1982. See, he almost got beat in '80. Simon did.

DePue: For a congressional seat.

Callahan: Yeah, for reelection; guns and oil. He voted against small oil people down there on a matter and they came out of the woodwork. And the gun owners, the hunters, came out of the woodwork on him. And he became a good fundraiser. Dixon borrowed a hundred and fifty thousand dollars for his campaign in the primary. We paid it back, which was a political mistake. That is how you can make a mistake. We shouldn't have paid it back because if we hadn't have paid it back, we could have used that money in the general election. You know, when they came in. But we paid it back and then he borrowed another hundred and fifty thousand dollars for the general election. Dixon did. He had the collateral, of course, to get the loan. I would say after ... he had a thirty five thousand dollar deficit when he ran for State Treasurer. Dixon did. And we got that ... well, one of them was a phony bill from the publishing company in Cook County. Absolute phony. And he just said, I'm not going to pay it. Well, in the end, Mayor Daley handled it somehow. But I can tell you, Alan Dixon told me, he said, I'll never pay it. He doesn't like getting screwed. Talking about contributions, see, if you gave ten dollars now to Dixon he would write you a thank you note saying thank you so much for ten dollars. Well, Paul Powell gave Dixon three hundred dollars. He said this is from so and so. And Alan writes him a thank you note that says, Thank you so much for the three hundred dollar campaign contribution.

DePue: This would have been in the early seventies.

- Callahan: Yeah, probably the first time he ran for State Treasurer. And the next time he sees that guy, he says, I appreciate you thanking him but, that should have said four hundred dollars. And he said, No. He said, I gave Powell four hundred dollars. He said, Well, he gave me three hundred. So, Powell just skimmed a hundred off.
- DePue: Well, maybe that explains part of that money they found in the shoe boxes.
- Callahan: Oh yeah. See, I think that was campaign money. I mean, he had just had had five years of progress; fundraiser was a mammoth success. Mammoth success at the St. Nick Hotel. And, uh, yeah, Powell was something.
- DePue: Well, that's part of why Illinois politics is so interesting, when you get the stories like Paul Powell.
- Callahan: Yeah.
- DePue: Okay, so you say Dixon was not a good fundraiser. Who was doing the fundraising?
- Callahan: I was doing a lot of it. Joe McMann was doing a lot of it. I was his best fundraiser downstate.
- DePue: Were you the guy picking up the phone, making the calls?
- Callahan: Yeah, yeah.
- DePue: Did Dixon do much of that?
- Callahan: No.
- DePue: Didn't like to do that or was it just a matter of principle?
- Callahan: No, he didn't like to do it. Now every once in a while, we would talk him in to making maybe a few calls. Maybe. But you can say he didn't raise much money and he'll tell you he is a bad fundraiser. He will tell you that himself. He knows it. And as I said, Paul wasn't any good either. See, we had a hundred thirty-five thousand dollar deficit—and I mentioned this to you earlier, you know—when Paul got beat for Governor. Dick Durbin, Ray Johnson and I raised almost all that money to pay for that deficit.
- DePue: After the election was over?
- Callahan: After we got beat, yeah, and boy, that is a tough thing to do.
- DePue: What was the kitty looking like at the end of 1980 election campaign?
- Callahan: Well, we were probably a hundred fifty thousand in red. Because we paid it off. See, two fundraisers. What we did—now I don't know what year—we

hired a professional fundraiser in Washington and it was a woman and she was good. Then we hired one another time when she got out of the business. We hired a gal that was great. Her name is Paula Levine, tremendous. She is a close friend of Joe Biden's sister and I can't tell you how good I think she is. But, boy, she knew how to raise money. She was so much more attuned to Washington than I ever pretended to be, to the power structure, you know. I am Illinois oriented.

DePue: Were there debates? You mentioned that there were.

Callahan: I kind of think there were three. I think there was one in St. Clair. One in Cook. One, I don't know remember where. That's probably where they were.

DePue: Do you have any stories or memories about those debates. How that went?

Callahan: Well, the Marty Mark story I do. Alan came out well in debates. Alan is a very good speaker. By the way, he is the smartest guy I ever worked with. Alan Dixon.

DePue: And you have worked for quite a few folks.

Callahan: You are damn right. He is the smartest.

DePue: Paul Simon?

Callahan: Yeah, he is smarter, yeah. Yeah. Dixon was second in his law class at Washington University as an example.

DePue: What was the mood of the campaign going into election night then?

Callahan: In '80? We're scared. We're scared. Well, it was winnable. The polling figures showed it was winnable, you know. But we were never over-confident.

DePue: By that time did you think this is going to be a big year for the Republicans? Because, I believe – correct me if I get this wrong – but a few months away from the election, Carter still looked like he was going to be able to do it.

Callahan: Well, the Iran thing just intensified. The hostage thing. That is why, you know, it kept getting worse and worse as an issue up to the election time. Alan Dixon called me – I think the polls closed at six o'clock at that time, might have been seven, but I think six – Alan Dixon calls me five minutes after six. He says, Gene, you are talking to the next United States Senator from Illinois. See, I would never go to Chicago again. I stayed in Springfield because I was up there when Paul Simon got beat. I felt the same way as I did, I don't want to go to another Democratic National

Convention. I didn't want to go to Chicago. The action was in Chicago. I didn't care about that. I never cared about that kind of stuff.

DePue: The celebration was going to be in Chicago and you didn't ...

Callahan: No, but we had one the next day. We had it here in town at a bar down by the railroad station.

DePue: Did you believe it when you got that call?

Callahan: What happened, one of the networks proclaimed him the winner.

DePue: Okay.

Callahan: That's how he did it. He was not doing even that from ... and that is when he called me. He said – let me go off the record on one thing here. Can you turn that off one second?

DePue: Oh gosh, I hate to do that.

Callahan: Okay, can we not use this next story though?

DePue: Well, I mean we can restrict, we can redact it for a while, if you want to ...

Callahan: Well, no, I won't tell the story then. Okay. I won't tell, because ... but it is a funny story. When we get done I'll tell you about it.

DePue: Okay. And everybody is going to be very curious about what that story is.

Callahan: Okay, okay. Nothing dishonest. I want to say that, yeah.

DePue: There is always somebody in these major campaigns who is the numbers cruncher, who has figured out the votes based on county, based on precincts, the whole thing. Who was the guy in Dixon's campaign?

Callahan: Tim McInerney would have been. Tim McInerney is the best political organizer among Democrats that I have seen in downstate Illinois. As an example, my Dad was on his deathbed. Lived to be eighty-five years old. State rep, former state rep, Democratic committeeman, vice-chairman, president of the Illinois farmers union. I remember he had his hands folded. And I go to him, and I said, How are you doing? He said, Fine. You need any money? And I said, No, I'm fine. I lied, you know. He said, I want to tell you, you put together the best political organization downstate since Henry Horner. Well, I hoped that McInerney was the brains of our downstate operation. Mike McKeon and Jimie Wheeler – still close to both of them – are guys in the collar counties. And, Jimie is J-i-m-i-e Wheeler. He lives in Sherwood now. McKeon lives in Joliet. He is the pollster. And

Joe McMann took care of Chicago and Cook County, with some help in the suburbs from Wheeler and McKeon too.

DePue: Well, you had already talked about how that was a big Republican year but Dixon and Chris Dodd are the two big victors on the Democratic side and Dixon wins by fifty-six percent. This is no small margin.

Callahan: Scott Shearer tells a story. When it got down to the election time, Alan didn't like traveling with people. I didn't like traveling period. And I didn't travel with Alan Dixon. I traveled all the time with Paul Simon when Mike Howlett convinced me what a major error that was for me to be traveling. He said, You ought to be thinking; you shouldn't be traveling. So I never traveled with ... I learned a lot from Mike Howlett, by the way. Mike Howlett would ... see, some people only tell you the good stuff. Howlett would tell you the bad stuff. He told me in the Simon campaign, he said every campaign – remember, I told you, every campaign needs a son of a bitch. He doesn't have a son of a bitch, you know. And I wasn't a son of a bitch under Dixon and never deviated from it. I was a downstate SOB. Joe McMann was the Cook County. He had been elected official, circuit court clerk, and president of the Illinois Young Democrats. So, Joe McMann knew his way around; he had a floral business in addition he had been Paul Powell's deputy secretary of state. He was Alan Dixon's deputy secretary of state. Joe McMann did a heck of a job for Alan Dixon, all the way from '70 up until '80 then he got Alzheimer's and so we had to work around that from, well, from the early eighties on, we had to work around that.

DePue: Can you break down briefly the way that election turned out in different regions of the state then?

Callahan: Well, we ran well downstate. We ran well in Cook County. I forget how many counties we carried in the wards and townships but Alan Dixon had ... I think we only carried one collar county. I think Will was the only collar county. Jimmy Wheeler and Mike McKeon, that's their base, you know. And they worked. Those guys worked. I remember one of the primaries – I forget which year – the St. Patrick's Day was the day before the primary. Wheeler and McKeon called me about ten thirty at night. They are both stiff. Boy, I chewed their butt out. I said, You better be ready to roll tomorrow morning. I called about six o'clock in the morning. They are already up and at it, you know. But, we just didn't take anything for granted. Every year, I call Wheeler and McKeon on St. Patrick's Day night, you know. Every year.

DePue: DuPage county at that time had the reputation of being one of the most staunchly Republican counties in the country.

Callahan: Uh-hm.

DePue: So ...

Callahan: We ran reasonably well there.

DePue: Okay.

Callahan: Reasonably. Well, for a Democrat and then later we carried it, you know.

DePue: So, he wins by fifty six percent. Very substantial victory.

Callahan: Now, let me make one point here. Remember, it is hard running statewide like '74, '76, '78. If we hadn't of run in '74, '76, '78, I don't think we would win. Alan Dixon's, you know ...

DePue: You mean that experience?

Callahan: No, not experience, name ID.

DePue: Okay.

Callahan: And won major victories, like in '78 carried everything, you know. And we ran an honest administration. There wasn't any skullduggery going on with us. And in the Secretary of State though, I remember one time Alan says ... it's a state armory ... first meeting he had with all the downstate employees. He said, I run a scandal free administration all my life and I always will. We are going back to the capitol now and you should never use that term again. Because you can have a scandal any time in the Secretary of State's office.

DePue: Well, I was just going to say, that brought down George Ryan many years later and a long tradition, if you will, of people who are abusing licensing submissions ...

Callahan: That's right.

DePue: Submissions. Obviously Ryan was, the allegations are all about going to people in the Secretary of State's office and expecting contributions to his campaign and you talk to anybody, oh, it's happened in all these Secretary of State's office.

Callahan: Denny Jacobs, who is a friend of mine, former state senator, good guy. He is the father of the present state senator. I knew his Dad. I have known them for four generations, okay. And he said, Stuff like that has been going on forever in the Secretary of State's office. I called him, I said, Denny, I am very disappointed in you for saying that. Now, I'm gone, I'm retired now. But let me tell you, I protect Alan Dixon's image any place. Because I know we didn't take a damn penny. McInerney one time got offered thirty thousand dollars for a three digit license plate. Thirty thousand in cash.

And he tells the guy, Let me tell you. “Number one, I don’t have enough clout to get you a three digit plate.” (laugh). I thought it was funnier than hell. “And number two, we don’t operate that way here.” Isn’t that something. Having run in ’74, ’76, ’78 paved the way to help us. That was a major factor. When you look back at it, ’80, see, we had the Secretary of State’s office too, three thousand employees, you know. And, uh, a lot of people in the Secretary of State’s office worked. They didn’t want Alan to leave because they loved him being Secretary of State. See, Joe McMann really wasn’t for Alan Dixon running for the U.S. Senate. He loved the Secretary of State’s office. Now, he was a Chicago meat and potatoes guy, you know. I am a downstate meat and potatoes guy.

DePue: My next question then is, and here is something I am very curious about, I just don’t know the background of it: Adlai Stevenson was the senator that Dixon is replacing and he steps down early and Dixon is appointed, not in January when the rest of the freshman class comes in, but in December. How and why did that happen?

Callahan: I think you have that wrong there. I don’t think he was appointed in December. I think Adlai declined to do that.

DePue: Well, I read that in the book ...

Callahan: I tell you how we can... Do you have a Blue Book around here?

DePue: Yeah, we do.

Callahan: Okay, the Blue Book would show the date that he became Senator. I don’t think that is right. I think Adlai was asked to do that but he didn’t want to do it.

DePue: Well, the comment I heard that he did that and therefore he had higher seniority.

Callahan: I don’t think that is accurate.

DePue: Okay.

Callahan: Maybe my memory is wrong. You know, I am only seventy seven. Seventy eight in November.

DePue: Well, this is the kind of thing once we do the transcript and we do the editing, that we can make sure we get the facts accurate.

Callahan: That’s right.

DePue: Okay. Okay. The other thing is Dixon—we have already kind of alluded to this—he steps away from being Secretary of State and now they are off

sequence. So that means that Jim Thompson has the power to nominate the new Secretary of State. Any insights into that story?

Callahan: Well, what is interesting at that time, Alan favored George Ryan to be Secretary of State, not Jim Edgar. See, remember I told Jim Edgar was very rough on Democrats. Very, very rough on Democrats until he hired Mike Morris ? See, to me Mike ...

DePue: What do you mean by rough?

Callahan: Well, he had fired all kind of people and he got beat in two lawsuits. We lost one suit all the time we're Secretary of State and we blew it. Guy took money. Absolutely took money. Flunked the lie test. Took money. And, by God, or civil service department blew it. We missed some deadlines on something. Still makes me sick. The guy still lives in Springfield. Later, he got hired by the city, got fired. The city is doing similar things, okay. And it still agitates me that we lost that case. Well, Edgar hardly ever won a case. He would fire our people and they would sue him and they win. They had to take them back. One guy, John Shivey – former major league baseball player – he worked for a long, long time hardly doing anything, you know. Wasn't his fault he wasn't doing anything. But, there is an example. Mike Lawrence brought political civility to the Secretary of State's office.

DePue: And he didn't come on board til 1987.

Callahan: Yeah, yeah. Now, I'm prejudice toward Lawrence. And I have even come to accept Edgar but I never accepted him til Mike Lawrence went there. Did I tell you the agreement that Mike Lawrence and I ... I think I did. Our agreement, , I said, I'll never say anything badly about Edgar privately or publicly unless I call you first. And I did one time. That is when he said I used the F word several times.

DePue: Why did Dixon support Ryan though because this is before ...

Callahan: Legislative relationship, you know.

DePue: Ryan was the speaker at the time or he was the lead Republican at least.

Callahan: And also, he worked with Alan on some judicial reform stuff. I knew Ryan before he was ever a state representative, you know. My brother was Democratic chairman of Iroquois and he was from Kankakee. He was head of the board of supervisors, Ryan was. George Ryan: what got him in trouble in my view, the most trouble, see, people can be loose but they better have someone damn strong with them and not give in anything at any point. Like Craig Lovitt was the brains of our operation. L-o-v-i-t-t, from Galesburg. Phi Beta Kappa in college. Masters from University of Virginia. County chairman, state committeeman. Loved the Democratic party for what it stood for. He was so good on ethics and something like

that. Everything like that. I just checked with Lovitt on some things, you know, I said, Is this legal and so on. And, here is a story I like: There are three members of Congress, two members of the House and Alan in the Senate and state director of a congressman, a regional director and I that were guests of the Chicago Tribune at the Cubs in Arizona. Two guys there talking about frequent flyer miles. They said, this will really be good for our frequent flyer miles. We flew from Washington to Arizona. So, we get back, Alan says, I want to use these frequent flyer miles. Now, keep in mind Dixon is honest, okay. He said, I want to do that. So Craig Lovitt checks it out. You can't do that. You can't do that. And he says, So, Alan didn't do it. Now, he goes on the trip the next year. He said, I want Lovitt to re-check this again. So Lovitt re-checks it again and does it. Third time it happens and the last time Lovitt said, No, goddamn it. I'm not going to check it again. It's against the law. Now, about three years ago or four, maybe five, Lovitt's been dead for fifteen years probably, and some congressman got nabbed doing what I just said. I said, Aren't you glad we had Craig Lovitt. (laugh) But see, what I'm saying is, not to make Lovitt or myself a hero at all, but if you don't have a strong guy ... Let's take Mike Lawrence. He got an anonymous letter about that scandal at CMS, or whatever department it was. What he did with it, turned it over immediately to state police. That is what you have to do.

DePue: If you are referring to the MSI scandal, which was started in the Public Aid?

Callahan: Yeah, that's it. Yeah.

DePue: Everybody I interviewed about the Edgar administration and Mike Lawrence, he is always referred to as the conscience of the Edgar administration.

Callahan: Positively right. Yeah, yeah. I just think very few people know as well as Mike Lawrence. Very few people.

DePue: Okay. What I want to have you do next then is for us to talk about that transition from being Secretary of State, state focused, now Dixon has got to go to Washington, D.C. and he has got to set up his office in both Washington, D.C. and back here. I want to have you discuss that in some detail and your specific role especially.

Callahan: Well, I was the head of that operation to do that. And the first thing I did, I had lengthy meeting with Tom Wagner who had been chief of staff for Adlai. Went into private business. And then I had a similar visit with Larry Hanson who was the chief of staff for Adlai. I knew both of them well. Wagner and I had an especially close relationship and Hanson and I had a decent relationship. It got stronger over the years in fact. They gave me the people that they thought very strongly about. They said, Don't mess with

correspondents. Because they said they are the backbone of taking care of me and they are good.

DePue: The correspondents?

Callahan: In other words, they are answering mail, drafting letters for the Senator.

DePue: Correspondence.

Callahan: Yeah, correspondence, yeah. And then some other people like Wagner and Hanson's personal assistant was a gal named Barbara Allen. They both told, they said, now you will find a lot of people don't like Barbara Allen, but, she is good. Well, she taught me more. She taught me more than anyone in Washington. Barbara Allen did. She was absolutely tremendous. Now, they were right. She was curt. Most of the people on the staff didn't like her. Lovitt didn't like her. Scott sure didn't like her. But I like her. Because see, I like someone strong telling you you're full of crap when you are full of crap. Now, Lovitt and (unintelligible) that way too but they just didn't cotton to her, you know. Now the only reason she left me was when they brought in the computers, you know, and she said, I'm too old to learn all this. I don't want to do it. I love working with you but I'm not going ...

DePue: That sounds like it happened a few years down the road.

Callahan: Yeah, that happened, yeah, but we went ... I think she probably worked with me for five years and recommended her for another job. She got a job, I forget where, maybe HEW, maybe.

DePue: How about the decision where you are going to end up, whether it's Washington, D.C. or back in the state?

Callahan: Well, I didn't care to go to Washington and I think I covered that, my wife didn't ...well, I didn't really want to do it. But I thought I owed that to Alan Dixon. I really did. And you know, he treated me well. He backed me up when I ... one time, one time I gave the quote, when they put together the state ticket in—let's see, in '78, '78 I think it was. The meeting was with Alan Dixon, George D(unintelligible), the Democratic county chairman, Michael Bakalis and there were four people in the meeting and they were sworn to secrecy of what the state ticket was going to be, okay. Joe McMann asked Alan who the ticket was, and Alan says, I'm sworn to secrecy, I can't tell anyone. And he said, Gene, I'd like to tell you what the ticket is. No, I said, do you know what the ticket is. He said, I do. Can you tell me? He said, No, sworn to secrecy. Well, the story got out somehow. And, a guy named Paul Zimich of the St. Louis *Globe Democrat*—the paper no longer exists—based here in Springfield, he called me. He says, You wouldn't tell me what the ticket was. How did it get out? And I said, Well, let me say this. There were four people in that meeting and Alan Dixon kept his word, sworn to secrecy, and Alan Dixon kept his word. Now, that

means one of the three ... so, he quotes me as saying this. Now, Alan is driving from Bellville to Springfield and he stops in Litchfield and he said, Did you say this? And I said, I did. You said, You have done me grievous harm. He said. Because, you know, I was really calling one of those guys a liar, which I meant to do. Because I was protecting him. And he said, I want to talk to you again. So I called Simon (laugh) told him what happened. He says, It's a great quote if it doesn't get north of Springfield. (laugh) So anyway, Alan comes in and I said, you know, we got over it right away. I mean, but ... grievous harm, that was his quote.

DePue: Well, going from Springfield to Washington, D.C. working in one of the senate office building there and finding a place to live, I mean, it's a lot pricier neighborhoods than in Springfield certainly.

Callahan: I was making forty thousand a year at the Secretary of State's office. I had read that if you are moving from someplace else going to ... they say the different states ... going to Washington, you need ten thousand dollars more money to break even. So I told Alan I would have to have fifty thousand dollars. And he agreed to that. We get closer to that and he said, you know, I agreed to give you fifty thousand but could we get under fifty thousand. And I said, No. I have told my wife fifty thousand dollars and it's going to be fifty thousand. And he said, Okay. You know, he was parsimonious. Would never lie to you. Would never think of lying to you.

DePue: Did each one of the senators have a certain dollar figure that they had to work with?

Callahan: Yeah. Yeah.

DePue: What was the size of his staff?

Callahan: I forget what it was but there is a limit what you can do and I think when Alan ... toward the end I was near the limit or, I don't think I was at the limit, but I was near it. I was making over a hundred thousand.

DePue: But the size of the staff. I read someplace that he had forty-six people on his staff. Does that sound about right?

Callahan: Yeah.

DePue: But I assume they are not all in D.C. by any means.

Callahan: No, no, no, we had ... let me see, we had four here in Springfield and we probably had eight to ten in Chicago, would be my guess. And the rest there. We had a good staff. Very, very right people. I did not like Washington my first two years and got to like it. See, I even went to Alan after the first two years. I said, Alan, I don't think - I'll get back to your living place in a minute - I said, I'm not sure I'm cut out for this; this

Washington is not my style of town. I said, I'm an Illinois guy; I'm more of a precinct politician than I am a national politician. He said, Gene, you're taking care of Illinois, and you're doing a good job at it. That's all I care about. I can take care of things out here.,

I put the staff together, always with his approval. I mean, there were guys we wanted. We wanted Scott Shearer. We wanted Charles Smith and we wanted Sylvia Davis Thompson, who was the number two person in Illinois senate. African American woman. Graduated from high school at fifteen, college at nineteen. Masters degree at twenty-one from Illinois. She went to Tugaloo? And she was involved when Medgar Evers was assassinated, she ended up in jail. You know, remember when they put all those people in jail for having a torchlight parade. And, uh, one of the great persons I know. By the way, you follow high school basketball at all?

DePue: Not much.

Callahan: Well, there is a girl here in town, Medley, that goes to Springfield High. It's her grand-niece and also a very good student. She is getting college offers all over. I'm hoping she goes to Northwestern, Notre Dame or Illinois. Southern was the first one. Because I'd go see her play—they start recruiting at the eighth grade—because I can see she was going to be something. She made all state two years in a row. All state basketball players. Okay.

DePue: Were a lot of the people you had on the staff carry-overs from the Stevenson staff then?

Callahan: Oh yeah.

DePue: Most?

Callahan: Well, the smartest guy we had legislatively there, Bill Mattea, was ... he was one that ...

DePue: Mattea?

Callahan: M-a-t-t-e-a. William Mattea. Hanson and Wagner both recommended him and he was terrific and still is. I called him on a matter this week about the balanced budget amendment and I said, Aren't I right, Dixon and Simon were both for the balanced budget amendment? And he said, That's right. And he said, In fact, Simon was a sponsor and wanted a balanced budget. And I said, Well, tell me about the Republican, the one that the Republican ...and he said, That's all baloney. He says, number one, that is just some more of the Republican bullcrap, you know, on finances. It is not even analogous to compare that with the one that Simon and Dixon supported. So, of course, I was thinking my daughter might want to be for the balanced budget amendment if it was the same way that Dixon and Simon had it.

But, my antenna went up when Durbin voted against it. See, Durbin's voting record would be more similar to Simon's than it would be to Dixon's. But I think Durbin brings the best of qualities from Douglas, Dixon and Simon all in one pot. Durbin negotiated all of our debates, all of them, okay. And, what was really interesting, in the '80 campaign, O'Neil and Durbin had debated. See, Durbin was Mike McAllister running mate for lieutenant governor. And, uh, they debated the lieutenant governor and Durbin just creamed him in this debate. And, uh, when Durbin was named as our negotiator (laugh), he could hardly stand that because Durbin had creamed him, you know.

DePue: You probably have told me this already but, you know, you started working with Durbin – he was working for you when you were press secretary for Simon.

Callahan: Yeah.

DePue: And he was not a formal part of Dixon's team for the '80 campaign was he?

Callahan: Oh, no, he negotiated our debates.

DePue: So, he was kind of from the outside helping and assisting?

Callahan: Oh yeah, but see, our organizations were always very compatible. Durbin is very, very bright too and, you know, he is from St. Clair county. He and Dixon had an affinity for each other, and Simon loved Durbin. See, Dixon and I tried to get Durbin to run for governor when Blagojevich was nominated, and, we really worked on him. But see, Simon was closer to him. Simon wanted to stay in the senate.

DePue: Well, things could have been quite a bit different for Illinois if they had.

Callahan: Oh yeah, it would have been honest. Yeah.

DePue: You were mentioning your living circumstances in D.C.

Callahan: Oh yeah. When we moved out there, Ray Johnson who ran Simon's office—he wasn't the chief of staff—but he ran the nitty-gritty stuff and we worked together, under Paul as lieutenant governor. In fact, he succeeded Paul as the owner and editor of the Troy paper. Ray Johnson was a Con-Con delegate, in fact, thanks to Paul Simon Ray picked out of the house in Alexandria we rented for eighteen months there until we moved on capitol hill. See, I didn't sell my house here. My daughter and son-in-law moved there and then Sherry, when got her Masters degree, lived there. I didn't want to sell it. And we had a real good plan. In fact, Durbin was ... we considered buying it together and he was going to live in the basement. He and I were ... it was a very nice basement, you know, and it was real close.

Just ... well, you could hit the Hart building with a baseball, that's how close it was.

DePue: The Hart building?

Callahan: That's the Senate ...

DePue: Senate office building?

Callahan: Yeah, yeah. And the capitol is just across the street, you know. I mean, just across the street. Well, we looked at it but Craig Levitt and a guy named Matt McLane, who was a CPA and ran Alan's books, they said, You could afford to buy this house. He said, But you would have to sell your house in Springfield. Well, I don't want to do that yet because my daughter ... my two daughters, you know. And I said, No, I don't want to do that. Is there any way I can swing it otherwise? He said, Yes, but, you can't be stopping at the Monical anymore. The Monical was a place I liked stopping and have beer, you know. It was kind of the Senate Democrat place. The owner's wife had been treasurer of Hubert Humphrey's presidential campaign as an example. They still own, the family. And, uh, in other words, my lifestyle would have changed too much for me to buy it at that time, and then we bought later. When my daughter got a Masters degree, we sold our house here and bought a house.

DePue: Okay.

Callahan: And, as an example, we sold our home here for what sixty ... I kind of think sixty-five thousand dollars... and the house we bought there was two hundred and eighteen thousand. As an example. And the house we bought wasn't nearly as nice as we had here in Springfield.

DePue: Yeah, I'm sure that is the case. It's a lot pricier out in the D.C. area isn't it?

Callahan: Yeah, that and San Francisco are usually at the top of the heap. Yeah, usually.

DePue: And things have only gotten worse since the time you started there too.

Callahan: Oh yeah, I'm told the house that we paid two eighteen for, now, a year ago it was four hundred and some thousand.

DePue: Okay. 1980, my understanding is that in the U.S. Senate at the time, Howard Baker is the majority leader, president of the Senate, and Robert Byrd is the minority leader. Tell us a little bit about the nature of the Senate that Dixon came into.

Callahan: Well, let's take one of the Illinois issue first. It was Dixon's idea that brought the Illinois delegation together. In fact, he told Paul Simon what he

had in mind. He said, Rostenkowski will never buy this. Well, Alan and Rosty Had a very good social relationship, you know. Rostenkowski had been in the legislature with Alan. They, you know, drank together.

DePue: And at that time was Rostenkowski already the ways and means county chair?

Callahan: Oh yeah, he was the ways and means guy, yeah. And he was the most influential guy in Illinois, in the congressional delegation. He was Daley's guy. Paul said Rostenkowski will never buy it. Rostenkowski bought it. And they would have monthly meetings where only the member of Congress could go. No one else. We had one gal, Mary Dom(unintelligible) was her name. She was from Belleville. Been a very successful business woman since she returned home. One of fourteen kids, by the way. She was the only one. She took minutes of the meetings. She was the only one outside members of Congress. In other words ... see, what happened, what killed some things like that (unintelligible) passed (unintelligible), they sound like the chief of staff. The members would never go. Well, they had them right there, you know. They had them right there and there was no deviation and they all spoke for themselves. That lasted all the time that Dixon was there and, uh, I'm told after Dixon left he just kind of... you know, didn't happen anymore.

DePue: Republican, Democrat?

Callahan: Everything.

DePue: So Percy was there as well?

Callahan: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

DePue: Okay.

Callahan: And now, his relationship with Baker was excellent and I think a lot had to do with that was Pekin, Illinois because, you know, Mrs. Baker is Everett Dirksen's daughter.

DePue: Oh, that's right.

Callahan: Yeah, and, so he had a great relationship. He had a cordial relationship with Byrd. I would say, he was probably closer personally with Baker than Byrd. But Byrd... you know, you don't get to be the number three guy in the U.S. Senate if you don't have some friends.

DePue: Okay. You're saying that about Byrd?

Callahan: No, I'm saying that about Dixon there who ended up number three person in the U.S. Senate.

DePue: That was after the '86 election I think.

Callahan: Yeah.

DePue: Okay. You hear stories about the good old days in the U.S. Senate, the way it's much more acrimonious today. What was the atmosphere like back in 1980? Was it collegial like you sometimes hear today?

Callahan: I think collegial is too strong a word. Uh, I don't think anything has ever been the same since Watergate. That's my evaluation. Journalistically.

DePue: '73, '74 timeframe.

Callahan: Yeah, I'm talking journalistically, legislatively and things like that. Alan was close to Michael, you know; he was the top Republican. And, uh,

DePue: Bob Michael you're talking about?

Callahan: Yeah, uh-huh. Ray LaHood's predecessor. And Alan had a good relationship with all members of the Illinois delegation. Some closer than others. Uh, I can only think of one that he ever had difficulty with.

DePue: Okay. What assignments did he initially get when he was out there? Committee assignments.

Callahan: Agriculture. He asked for agriculture. That was his top priority for committee even though he wasn't a farmer. And armed services. But he didn't get armed services; he got agriculture. In fact, now here is what a nuts-and-bolts guy Robert Byrd is. Robert Byrd called me one night at three o'clock in the morning here in that '80 campaign. He said, Senator Dixon has been trying to get a hold of me but we have missed, do you know what he had in mind? And I said, Yes. He would like to be able to say that if he is elected that you will name him to the agriculture committee. He says, I never make commitments like that. But, he says, you tell him that I don't know anyone who would be better to be on the agriculture committee.

DePue: That's pretty darn close to a commitment.

Callahan: Yeah, that's right. So we had ... and Alan really pushed on that. See, like the Farm Bureaus, basically a Republican organization, and, uh, not farmers. They didn't endorse – I don't know if they endorsed in the statewide elections at that time – but we had a good relationship with the Farm Bureau. Now the thing is, I never got involved with the Farm Bureau because the Farm Bureau hated my Dad.

DePue: Well, he was a President of Farm Union guy.

Callahan: That's right. As an example, in 1964 election, every newspaper in the state that made endorsements endorsed my Dad but one – the Lincoln Pantagraph. (laugh)

DePue: Which is where the Illinois Farm Bureau headquarters is.

Callahan: That's right (laugh). So, yeah, Alan from day one... Then, of course, he and Chris Dodd had a very good relationship because of both being freshman. And Chris Dodd had something going for him too. He was a member of Congress. He was a House member. So you could say Alan was the only non-Congressman in the United States elected in 1980 – Democrat.

DePue: Well the other two committees I believe he was assigned to were banking and community development.

Callahan: Well, he got banking later though didn't he?

DePue: Well, I think he had this in his first term though.

Callahan: I think you're right. I think he got it after the first two years and he had to give up one. Now ...

DePue: Small Business is the other one I had listed here.

Callahan: That's right. Now, here is what happened on the banking committee. He wanted to be on the banking committee but they told him he had to drop agriculture if he was going to be. So we had to work out some PR strategy and Scott Scheer was our guy in agriculture. Had a Masters from Illinois in ag economics, farm boy, knew my brother. We really hired him because of my brother, Colleen. Colleen dated him at one time. And, uh, Fran, my brother, really, really liked him. And, we hired him at the state treasurer's office, Scheer. Scheer went with us every step of the way, okay. So we had to devise a strategy how we explain this because the farm bureau was really upset with Alan, you know. And so was Farmers Union, upset with him, before even the ag committee. He had to give up the ag committee.

DePue: Oh, okay.

Callahan: But here is how we sold it and it was absolutely true the farmers were in bad, bad shape financially. He said, I think I can do more for the farmers of Illinois on the banking committee than I can on the ag committee. And a lot of truth to that, absolutely a lot of truth to that. Of course, we already had a base with the bankers, you know. But that's what happened. He had to give up agriculture.

DePue: Yeah. This was in one of those time periods, again the early '70s were great times for a lot of farmers. Many of them got over-extended. They got to

those hard economic years in the early '80s and a lot of the issues were bank loans.

Callahan: That's right and Alan thought he could help them more. Yeah.

DePue: Okay. Okay.

Callahan: It wasn't a matter of deserting the farmers. What is very interesting, I think the Farm Bureau and Farmers Union both came to realize that there is a lot of truth to what he was saying.

DePue: What were the issues that he was especially focused on for that first term then.

Callahan: I would say, taking care of Scott Air Force base. I think being in unison with most Democratic policies, most. I can't think of any that stand out that he broke. When he got on the armed services committee ... but he didn't get that til the second term I don't think, the armed services ...

DePue: Right, right.

Callahan: Yeah. And then small business, the matter of small business loans and things like that. And he was kind of a small business guy himself. He and his brother owned a travel agency in Belleville.

DePue: Did he own some real estate as well?

Callahan: Well, he made his money in commercial real estate, and personal injury cases is where he made his money. I'll tell you a story: When you have agreed to his net worth and we made an agreement that when he became a millionaire that he would buy me a beer. So, the year before he became a millionaire he was nine hundred and some thousand and I said, Alan, you have juggled these damn figures to keep from buying me a beer. (laugh)

DePue: I would think that his right hand man occasionally deserves a beer and go out to dinner.

Callahan: (laugh) We had a great relationship. I mean, Alan – still do, you know. Like I told him yesterday ... he didn't remember using this line. A guy that is helping my daughter, Sherry, was a key volunteer for us and he said one time they were talking about someone. And I bet it was Mayor Daley, probably. Where Alan said, I'm willing to kiss his ring but I'm not going to kiss his ass. (laugh) And I said, You remember? He said, No, but I like it. (laugh) But isn't it funny, you know, how the memory though sometime you get like some of these things that we are talking about now, I get the years off a little bit and stories off a little bit and so on.

- DePue: Before we started today, you told me an interesting story about Reagan's inauguration.
- Callahan: Yeah. Phyllis Schafley.
- DePue: Yes and I wonder if you could share that for the record as well and anything else you remember about that.
- Callahan: Sure. With my philosophy it's kind of surprising that Phyllis Schafley and I had a very good relationship starting when I was a reporter. She always returned my phone calls. Never b.s.'d me. She is way off the deep end as far as I am concerned philosophically, but she is a nice person. She calls me and asked if we can get her tickets for the Reagan ... see, every senator allowed so many tickets and a couple of them are very good seats. And we hadn't divvied any up.
- DePue: And let me just give a little bit of background for Mrs. Schafley. She is often times credited as the person who defeated ERA, at least the passage of ERA in places like Illinois. I think Tennessee or Kentucky, some other places. But also, she is very proud that in the 1980 Republican convention she got Reagan's anti-abortion plank into the platform.
- Callahan: Yeah. She is a solid person, you know, that espouses her philosophy. But anyway, she couldn't get tickets to the Reagan inauguration. And when she called me and asked me, Could you help me here? I am surprised she didn't call Alan. Well, I guess I knew her better than Alan at that time. I doubt if she would even know me now, or remember me probably. But I don't know. And I said, Hasn't the governor taken care of you, the President? She said, No, no one has. I said, Let me get back to you. So, we decided – Alan's decision – give her the two best tickets we had. And we did. That's how she, you know, and she never forgot that either, by the way.
- DePue: What were Dixon's views and what and why kind of relationship did he have with President Reagan?
- Callahan: Good. Yeah, good relationship. Getting back to Illinois, again, and sports. Alan introduced Reagan once at the (unintelligible) Society. The (unintelligible) - that is from Elkhart, Illinois, played major league baseball and the group of guys – a guy named Bruce Ladd, L-a-d-d, was the instigator for the (unintelligible) Society because he is from Illinois. Played in the world series, was (unintelligible) baseball fans. Reagan was the speaker and Dixon introduced it to him at the annual luncheon, or the bi-annual luncheon. I forget what they did.
- DePue: What year would that have been, do you recall?
- Callahan: '81 or '2, I would say.

DePue: Okay, so after Reagan was president.

Callahan: I'd say '82, probably, year, '82 or '83.

DePue: Okay. One of the things very early in Reagan's administration that kind of shocked the entire nation is the assassination attempt by John Hinckley. Do you recall that?

Callahan: Oh, very well. I was talking to Jack Clark, the publisher of the newspaper, on the telephone. And someone came in – I had a TV on my desk though, too, that I could turn on any time I wanted to watch the news. I don't think I was watching it but someone had told me, or I might have been watching it, and I said, Gene, President Reagan's just been shot. But I remember it very well. And, of course, Lynn Nofziger and I were friends. Now, Lynn Nofziger was Director of Communications for President Reagan. Now, you know that name, Lynn Nofziger? Well, he was the political editor of the Copley Press. Springfield was a Copley Press. In the '60 and '64 campaigns, he was my boss in Illinois when Goldwater... okay, and I remember... Goldwater had this morning meeting in Carroll. Had it at the football field and it was really early in the morning. When I say early, I mean between six and seven a.m. And they had a decent crowd and everything. So, Nofziger wrote this article. He came to look at my stuff and just as a favor let me see what he was writing. He wrote some stuff. And I said, Lynn, Do you really believe this shit? He says, most of it. (laugh) Isn't that a classic? But Lynn Nofziger is a good guy, just wonderful to me, always, even when he was a Reagan guy and, you know.

DePue: Did you have flashbacks to the Kennedy assassination and the impact this could have on the country if he were to pass away?

Callahan: I guess I didn't think that thoroughly about it especially when I found out that he was out of danger. And it was just such a shock. You know, that was the main thing. I happened to be in Plano, Illinois when Robert Kennedy was assassinated and I did have the TV on there. In fact, I think I mentioned this to you Paul Simon and I were going to meet that next day with George Sangmeister and I went to a pay phone—because, dammit, the hotel didn't have a phone in your room, could you believe it?—and told him about what happened. Simon, they can't find the speech. And I don't know now if it was the day after Robert Kennedy was assassinated or the day after JFK was, but he gave it at the courthouse in East St. Louis – beautiful speech. But they can't find it. The library can't find it. The archives neither, they can't find the speech. I sure wish they could.

DePue: Well, back in the old days in the nineteenth century, they would have had that entire speech in the newspaper someplace.

Callahan: It was a beautiful speech.

- DePue: That is too bad. Let's talk about the economy and Reagan's attempts to revive the economy, and where Dixon was on that.
- Callahan: Well, see, I don't think he wanted to allow that stuff. Because we had record deficits under Reagan. You know, Dixon wasn't that type of guy.
- DePue: Well, I read an article someplace that for the 1982 budget, it was described in the newspaper as a bare bones seven hundred billion dollar budget. How things have changed now. And that he generally supported that budget. Do you recall that he voted for support of that '82 budget?
- Callahan: Well, if it was a bipartisan agreement, he would have. You don't mess with their bipartisan agreement. Yeah, he would have.
- DePue: This was in the timeframe especially in those early years. Now, I think I'm getting the terminology right. There is this group of conservative Democrats, many of them southerners, in the House, especially: Bollweevil Democrat.
- Callahan: He wasn't that far. No, no, no.
- DePue: Were there others in the Senate that would fit in that category.
- Callahan: Well, Shelby left the Democratic party in Alabama. But, Byrd certainly wasn't a liberal. Senator Byrd. And the leadership was not liberal in the Senate. Now Mitchell later was, you know, liberal. Did a good job too.
- DePue: How about some of his tax reform measures. The Kemp - Roth bill – and I think that is early in this timeframe.
- Callahan: He supported that.
- DePue: That was a twenty-five percent tax cut as I understand.
- Callahan: He supported that.
- DePue: Maybe this is the same thing. Economic Recovery Tax Act of 1981 which, I believe, took the rates from seventy percent to fifty percent for the top bracket.
- Callahan: He probably would have supported that.
- DePue: And later on, I believe, it was '84, the Tax Reform Act – and, again, I'm not a hundred percent certain but I knew they went from fifty percent down to twenty eight percent.
- Callahan: I would bet he would have supported that. Just guessing. Guessed at that. I don't recall.

- DePue: Okay.
- Callahan: Capital gains. He takes a conservative approach on capital gains.
- DePue: But you also said he was upset that the budget deficits were getting so high.
- Callahan: Oh yeah. They broke records under Reagan. Conservatives don't point that out very often.
- DePue: But these are the things that the Democrats were saying lead to those budget deficits.
- Callahan: Well, they very well could be right. Yeah. I don't quarrel with that.
- DePue: Okay.
- Callahan: Yeah. See, I'm not a rubber stamp for Dixon's philosophy on things. I am a rubber stamp when it comes to ethics, equal rights and freedom of the press. I mean, he and I are in tandem on that.
- DePue: The other thing that caused the budget deficits was what Reagan was advocating for the defense and the defense budget. Where was Dixon?
- Callahan: He was always for strong defense. He probably voted with Reagan on most of that stuff except there was ... the leadership one time was really strong for something that ... oh, I can tell you what it was. He and Senator Dunn were very close.
- DePue: Senator Dunn from ?
- Callahan: Georgia.
- DePue: Okay.
- Callahan: Senator Nunn....
- DePue: Okay. Senator Nunn.
- Callahan: ...as head of the armed services committee, I believe. And he was against Tower for Secretary of Defense. Remember Senator Tower from Texas? Alan reluctantly voted against Tower and what he was doing; he was voting with Nunn. Nunn was considered the expert on armed service stuff in the Democratic side in the Senate. So he voted with Nunn and against Tower but that vote bothered Alan. Bothered him.
- DePue: That he had to do that.
- Callahan: Yeah. He didn't have to do it, but he did it. You know. That wasn't an easy thing for him to do.

- DePue: Well, that reflects a little bit of pragmatism on his part.
- Callahan: Yeah, that's right, yeah. Oh, he is a practical guy, yeah.
- DePue: Okay. Also he was a supporter of the presidential line item veto. Was that something that most Democrats would have backed, especially with a Republican President?
- Callahan: I think he and Simon both supported that. That is my memory. Am I right on that?
- DePue: Well, I've got an editorial he wrote. This appeared in the Chicago Tribune in April of 1984 and here is part of the language where it's coming out – clearly, he is going to the effort of doing the editorial itself. You might have actually written this.
- Callahan: No, no. See, it is a funny thing. I wouldn't have now ... let me just see this. I would say that Bill Mattea wrote this with sharp editing by Alan. He was a very sharp editor.
- DePue: Okay. Now here is the quote I wanted to read.
- Callahan: Okay.
- DePue: “The item veto would be a powerful new tool to help bring down federal budget deficits that now seem almost impossible to tame.” Boy that sounds interesting versus what we are doing right now. “Forty-three states, including Illinois, have item veto provisions in their constitutions. They are there for a reason. The result is a more efficient, more disciplined and more accountable spending process.”
- Callahan: I think Paul was for that too. You know, I don't want to speak authoritatively on that on Paul.
- DePue: Well, this particular article was written before Simon got to the U.S. Senate.
- Callahan: Okay, alright.
- DePue: Okay. So, pretty much down the line you are describing somebody's who is fiscally conservative in that respect.
- Callahan: Yeah, right.
- DePue: I'm going to hit a couple of other issues that were kind of highlights of Reagan's early administration. The firing of the Patco Union guys – the aircraft traffic controllers.
- Callahan: I don't see him supporting that.

DePue: Was he a strong union supporter?

Callahan: Yes, he was strong for the unions.

DePue: Okay. 1983 Dixon came out with a bill – and this is very much in line with the thing you were talking about – August '83 to assist small businesses to bid for government contracts.

Callahan: That would be right up his alley.

DePue: Okay. Now, this again, would be legislation coming out right after the heels of all those horrendous stories about the Pentagon abuses for small parts ...

Callahan: Price of toilets and things like that. Yeah.

DePue: Exactly. And 1985, again something that you have alluded to already, his efforts to get aid to hard-pressed farmers: Cash advances at harvest time. And response to Reagan's veto for legislation earlier. Anything in particular that is coming in this respect. This one especially you have already addressed to a certain extent. Backs a similar measure aimed to help both farmers and their bankers to renegotiate their loans so that they would not have to go into default.

Callahan: Uh-hum. Yeah. See, Alan had a great relationship with the Illinois Bankers Association and the Community Bankers Association. A guy named Arthur Murray, I think was the founder of the Illinois Community Bankers Association. He is from Milford. And my brother was on the board of directors of the Milford bank; Art Murray and my brother had a great relationship. Now Murray is basically a Republican, in fact, is a Republican. Just sent my daughter a hundred dollars, by the way, last week for race for Congress. And so he really listened to the banking community of this state, the people that he respected. And Art Murray was one of those guys that he respected. Here in town, we had some great bankers – A. D. VanMeter, who is still alive. That's A.D., Jr's Dad. Bud Lohman, L-o-h-m-a-n, he was the First National Bank. A.D. VanMeter was the Illinois National Bank. The Marine Bank was one of the Bunns but the woman – her name is Mary Ann Richter, still alive – was, at that time, I'm told the highest paid salaried woman in Springfield. She was not the president of the bank. She was a high up. Well, she is the wife of one of those guys I showed in the Young Democrats.

DePue: Oh, the picture we were looking at yesterday.

Callahan: And he and I were close. Also, Conrad Noll, former County Chairman that ran for Attorney General. He is the Noll family here in town. Very prominent family. He started the Capital Bank, Conrad Noll. He was a Republican that supported Dixon. So yeah, he did well with them. But see, he knew what he was doing. He had been on the board of directors of the

Belleville Bank. He was state treasurer. See, no one could pull the wool over him on banking issues. I mean, he wasn't a tool of anyone because he knew what he was doing.

DePue: You were chief of staff for him at the time. Were you involved with a lot of policy issues, or were there others that took a lead in that more so?

Callahan: Oh, yeah, positively, yeah. Like a state treasurer, a guy named Don Smith, who succeeded Alan in state treasure. Republican, former treasurer of DuPage County.

DePue: So, you are saying that others were more involved with his policy issues.

Callahan: Positively. Oh yeah. I never did try ... like on ag issues, which I know something about, I never got ... I thought it was a conflict because of what my Dad had done with the Farmers Union. Scott Schear handled all the farm issues. Way later, I think maybe late, maybe in the early '90s or late '80s, they got so they did trust me. They knew I was my own guy. Here is a story I like. Charles Schuman was president of the National Farmers Union. I told you story didn't I? Did I tell you this story?

DePue: Well, I have interviewed his son in fact.

Callahan: Well, Charles Schuman was the speaker at my Illinois College commencement. My Dad took me to college and never set foot on campus to the day I graduated. And he sees the speaker is Charles Schuman. He said, you mean I got to pay for your – he was very serious – pay for your education for four years to come here and listen to this shit. You know.

DePue: Well, a little bit of background about Charles Schuman. He was, as you mentioned, president of the American Farm Bureau at the time and very much an advocate of having government get out of the farmers' business.

Callahan: And my Dad was completely the opposite. You know. In fact, the story I like – we never told my Mom this – Scott Schear was a thing over at the University of Illinois. And he was sitting with the Schuman family; well, Charles and his wife. Now, his wife is from Milford. I have known her all her life. She went to our same church, you know. So, Scott Schear says to Mrs. Schuman, I have a friend that really thinks highly of you. She said, Who is that? And he said, Gene Callahan. And Charles Schuman said, Gene Callahan, is that Joe's son? And Scott said, Yes. And he said, Outside of being a socialist, he really was a good man. (laugh) But we didn't think my Mom would like that. I told my two sisters and brother. Fran laughed like you are, my brother.

DePue: Okay. Let's get back to some of the issues and maybe again ...

Callahan: Let me just ... I was the Illinois guy, you know. People wanted to get in to talk to Alan, they would see me.

DePue: You were the gatekeeper for him.

Callahan: I was. And we had a great secretary, Connie Forkham. Like the story that you probably read about, when I kept Ralph Nader from seeing Alan, as an example. And, uh, do you remember that story.

DePue: Uh...

Callahan: Well, you relying on me to test your memory here. But here is what it was. Ralph Nader would not return my phone calls when I first got involved with heat inspection and stuff. Would not return them.

DePue: This is in the early '70s now?

Callahan: This was 1968.

DePue: Okay.

Callahan: Yeah. And I even had a college roommate, or maybe lived on the same floor with him at Harvard and, by god, he wouldn't return my calls. So, now, many years later he wants to get in to see Alan Dixon. And I tell Alan this story and said, I'd like to keep him from seeing you. He says, You do what you think is best. So, I tell Connie Forkham, you know, what it is and I said now, and if they ask, just say, Why can't he get in to see him. He said, because he didn't return the phone calls that chief of staff Gene Callahan in the late 1960s on the meat inspection and he would not approve him getting in.

DePue: So you have a long memory when it comes to those kinds of things.

Callahan: You are damn right. I remember every one who ever lied to me or didn't return my phone call.

DePue: Okay. Foreign affairs issues, and there were quite a few during the Reagan years. The Iran hostage crisis, of course, that gets resolved right at the beginning of his administration. Any memories about that?

Callahan: Well, yeah, we had Charles Smith, who was born and raised really in the military. Went to a military academy. Went to Notre Dame before he flunked out because he was screwing around. Graduated from Loyola, got a Master's here at Sangamon State at night. His mother was the head of the business department, by the way, at Sangamon State. Mrs. Smith, I forget her first name. Beautiful lady. But Charles, the military and armed services guy. And then we had Greg Garmisa who was a graduate of Stanford and he is an attorney, was a major guy on foreign relations for us. His Dad had

been a state rep and state senator in Illinois. Sparky Garmisa, G-a-r-m-i-s-a. Then Bill Mattea and Craig Levitt were involved in foreign policy stuff too. I was not involved in foreign policy stuff.

DePue: Okay. You already said that he would have been for Reagan's initiatives to build the military back up, to make for a stronger military.

Callahan: No exception to that now. Sergeant York, you know the gun that brought ... he is the guy that beat that. Because he went down and fired and that damn thing wouldn't hit anything.

DePue: Where did he fire. Was it out in D.C. someplace?

Callahan: No, no, It was someplace way down south.

DePue: Oh, at one of the missile ranges probably.

Callahan: Yeah, yeah.

DePue: Okay. What did he think about Reagan's, well, let's call it "blunt rhetoric" when he dealt with the Soviet Union. Things like naming the Soviet Union the evil empire and taking a very harsh stance on that to begin with.

Callahan: He wouldn't have bothered him. That wouldn't have bothered Alan. No.

DePue: How about your own personal views on that? Did that trouble you to have that kind of rhetoric?

Callahan: Well, one thing you have to say about Reagan – I think Reagan was a failure as a domestic President, my views—but I give him some credit for bringing down the Berlin wall. I mean, I think you had to give him credit. Whether you like him or dislike him or whatever, I think he deserves a lot of credit for that with his tough stance. So, I applaud that part.

DePue: Well, that leads right in to the question about SDI – Strategic Defense Initiative. What the newspapers labeled as Star Wars. Would Dixon have been supportive of that?

Callahan: I think so, yeah. I think so.

DePue: Did he or you or the Senator understand at that time – this is what we hear today – that was part of Reagan's strategy. It is not just that we want to do this for our own national defense or the betterment of the world, but we can outspend the Soviet Union and cause grievous economic harm in the process.

Callahan: And he would have liked that word grievous – Dixon would. (laugh). Yeah, I think that is true.

DePue: Okay. How about this, and here is one, where other Illinois Senators got themselves in trouble sometime: Relations in the Middle East, especially Israel and Palestine.

Callahan: Very pro-Israel. Dixon. Very pro-Israel. When he and Mort Kaplan – who is Jewish – met with the Jewish leaders in Cook County, Chicago really, in Cook County in the '80 campaign, he said, "You elect me to the Senate and Israel will now have a better friend." And a guy named Bob Asher, who I got to be for Dick Durbin early and raised a tremendous amount of money for Durbin, and you might ... Bob Asher ... I never met Bob Asher until I was elected to the Senate. But he was Alan's guy on Israel issues. He later became President of APAC, national President, Bob Asher. And, Asher asked me to have breakfast with him in Washington. He said, Robinson – forget his first name – Robinson dented Finley, Paul Finley.

DePue: Dented?

Callahan: Well, you know, mean ran against him for the ... and did a good race. Now, he said, Do you think Robinson can beat Finley if he runs again? And I said, No. And he said, Why? I said, He is Jewish and he is labeled as a Jewish candidate. He ... I'm talking to the guy that's head ... two, he is considered a draft dodger. He is not a draft dodger. He did alternative service. But I said, You cannot sell Robinson in this district. And he said, Is there a candidate that you think could beat Finley? And I said, Dick Durbin is our strongest candidate if he decides to run. We talked longer, and he said, Now, you are saying Dick Durbin could beat Finley? I said, Oh, no, I never said he would beat him. I said, he could beat him. He is our strongest candidate. Well, he said, will you set up a meeting with Dick Durbin and me. Well, they did and it went very, very well. And if you remember, the Jewish money is what ... and Durbin is a great campaigner ... Jewish money and Durbin's ability beat Paul Finley.

DePue: What year was that? I can figure that out if we need to.

Callahan: Let me see, '80, '82. I think Dick ran in '82, the first time.

DePue: And at least from what I understand, one of the major issues in that campaign was Finley's position on the Middle East.

Callahan: Yeah, right.

DePue: Which was what?

Callahan: Well, what's the guy with one eye ... wore pistols ... Arafat.

DePue: You mean the Jewish leader?

- Callahan: No, no, no, no. He was the Arab leader. Arafat, wasn't it? Wasn't it Arafat, the guy that had the pistols?
- DePue: Yeah, I don't recall that he had one eye though.
- Callahan: But anyway, Dixon told him you ought to post that Arafat picture and Finley every place you go. And by the way, Paul Finley went too far on that issue for this area, you know. Paul Finley was a good congressman, good constituent congressman. Took care of people. Still alive, by the way, office on the Illinois College campus.
- DePue: He still writes editorials frequently for the newspaper and they are usually very pro-Palestinian.
- Callahan: Oh, yeah, still. Very much so. He gave me a book that he wrote. He said, If I give you this book, will you promise to read it? I said, No. (laugh) But he gave it to me anyway.
- DePue: What was the rationale behind Dixon's position on Israel?
- Callahan: He just ... he had a lot of Jewish friends. And, I think that was more it. And he believed in Harry Truman. A strong Truman guy, Dixon was. Very strong. And Roosevelt.
- DePue: One of the things though, that when the Marine barracks in Lebanon were attacked in 1983, he was one of those guys who came out and says we need to be pulling our troops out of there. Do you recall that?
- Callahan: No.
- DePue: Okay, again, that is something I read in the newspapers.
- Callahan: Oh, yeah, sure, I remember very well.
- DePue: Certainly a part of this whole discussion about the Middle East during that timeframe, and this leads in to getting into Paul Simon as well, was Charles Percy's position on the Middle East. Any memories about how that got Percy into trouble?
- Callahan: Oh, it sure did. DePue: Can you flesh out the details of that to begin with?
- Callahan: Well, Asher was really, really strong for Simon, you know.
- DePue: What was it that Percy did that got him in so much trouble with the Jews?
- Callahan: They just thought he was too pro-Arab and not strong enough for Israel. And they didn't like him. I talked to a guy, still alive, that is Jewish, friend of mine, and he said he really believed that Percy was anti-Jewish. Now, I

don't believe that. I never did see that he was anti-anything. He was good on some right issues, Percy was. But, by god, my friend believed that. And this guy was in the media. This guy that I am talking about.

DePue: Well, one of the things, he called Arafat a moderate.

Callahan: Oh, that is baloney, you know. He was not a moderate. That would be enough to get (unintelligible). See, I'm pro-Israel myself. I have been to Israel.

DePue: And I believe he was a supporter, maybe a vocal supporter, of the sale of AWACS [Airborne Warning and Control System] aircraft to Saudi Arabia. Do you know how Dixon came down on that issue?

Callahan: I think he was against it. I think he was against it. Not sure of that, you know. I don't ever want to mislead you on anything.

DePue: Okay. And one other thing: just by looking at some newspaper articles, I know that at least one point at time, Dixon came out in support of establishing or forming some kind of a hunting squad—whatever you want to call it—to search out terrorists. And, again, this is in the 1980s.

Callahan: Oh, he wrote a hell of a piece for Playboy magazine on that. That was very profound, even as of today. Dixon did. You want me to get a copy of that for you?

DePue: That would be great. We can include that in the record then.

Callahan: Okay, yeah. Yeah, very profound.

DePue: So again, we are talking about a fiscal conservative in line with a lot of things that Reagan is trying to do. And very much a hawk when it comes to military issues, it sounds like.

Callahan: Yeah.

DePue: Okay. Uh, MX missile, do you remember that as an issue?

Callahan: Sure, yeah. I would say he was for it, but I don't know that.

DePue: From what I read he was against the MX missile.

Callahan: He was? I wonder why. I wonder why he would have been against that. Interesting. Okay.

DePue: And for a nuclear freeze. Does that sound ...

Callahan: That sounds ... yeah, I believe that.

- DePue: Okay. Now, this is something that deals more with his second administration, but when we are in the neighborhood, let's talk about it now.
- Callahan: Okay.
- DePue: Reagan supported Nicaraguan freedom fighters, the Contras, and often times those guys were based on Honduras at the time.
- Callahan: I think he was originally for that. That is my memory.
- DePue: Of course, that got very ugly in Reagan's second term because of the Iran Contra scandal.
- Callahan: Yeah, yeah, right. I think that is when he would have turned against that. I think originally he was for it.
- DePue: Do you recall anything about the Iran Contra scandal and Dixon's views on it at the time, or involvements in the hearings?
- Callahan: Oh, yeah, we just thought they were all lying. You know. He felt that Judge Thomas was lying and Anita Hill was lying.
- DePue: Judge ?
- Callahan: Thomas.
- DePue: Oh Thomas, okay. Yeah, we'll get to that here in a little bit.
- Callahan: Yeah, and I don't see how anyone could have trusted like the North ...
- DePue: Oliver North?
- Callahan: Yeah, the Oliver North people.
- DePue: Did he believe Reagan, when Reagan said ...
- Callahan: I doubt it. (laugh) He didn't believe it.
- DePue: You guys weren't necessarily talking about that at the time?
- Callahan: We would have talked about it but I wouldn't have been the force behind what he did on it. Do you understand? I mean, I hate to tell this story. But there is a guy named Robert Johnson of Monmouth, at one time he said—we are at a social thing—and he said, What is Dixon saying on SALT Two or SALT Three? And I said, hell, I don't know, I'm a hack. I said, Ask Levitt. He likes to tell people I said that.

DePue: So what we are hearing here is very consistent. You weren't necessarily dealing with the nuts and bolts policy issues, but that on the political issues and running the staff you were the guy.

Callahan: That's right.

DePue: Okay. Well, where I want to go next then with this is to ask you about that 1984 election campaign. Well, obviously this is not an election year for Dixon. But it is for Charles Percy and it is for Paul Simon. So let's start with the relationship that Dixon had with Percy.

Callahan: Good relationship. Never said anything negative on Percy in that campaign. And that bothered some of the Simon people. But see, that is not Dixon's style to go out and do that. His working relationship with Percy was good but he was for Simon, you know. He was for Simon but he would have never, never attacked Percy under any circumstance would he have done that. You know, a guy would have been a pretty miserable guy for Dixon to do that to as a colleague.

DePue: As the old press secretary for Simon, was he reaching out to you to get your advice when he was making the decision whether or not to run that year.

Callahan: Yeah, uh-huh. See, here is what happened on that. This was a tough situation for me, and tougher for Alan. See, we are both close to Phil Rock and my wife is close to Phil Rock.

DePue: Who was President of the Illinois Senate at the time.

Callahan: Yeah, and a great Senate President. Paul said he wasn't going to run. That was his original thing; didn't plan on running. So we encouraged Rock to run. Alan and I both did. Told him to get in early. Well, he did and then Paul changed his mind. Now Alan and I are in a hell of a situation. So, now Alan ... what I did, I told Alan, I said, You know I go by – in my view he voted for Simon ... but I'm not ... see, he and Rock were close. Closer than I was to Rock, okay.

DePue: Were they both in the Democratic primary?

Callahan: Yeah, yeah. Rock was endorsed by the party and Simon beat him. So I didn't do much publicly either for Paul. I helped him and I contributed to him but I tell you what, I was ... you know, Senator Douglas says, There is a little bit of hierocracy in all of us, you know. And this is where this a little bit of hipocracy in me right here. I wrote Alan a note and I said, Unless you tell me not to do this, I'm going to contribute a hundred dollars to Paul Simon. Because, you know, I'm not a money guy. I do much better for Dick Durbin now because I do have a little more money than I used to have. I said, I'm going to give it to him the day before the primary; if you tell me not to do it, I won't do it. Well, he reads it and finally tears up the note and

says nothing, you know. So I contributed to Paul and voted for Paul. As every member of our family voted for Paul. It really bothered me though. I went to see Rock afterwards. I said, This is the toughest – still is – toughest political internal thing I have ever been through. I don't want to be phony with you. I would do it the same way again, because I don't choose new friends over old friends and Paul and I go back to 1958.

DePue: Did Rock understand that?

Callahan: He was very cordial to me. Very nice. I never felt that he was warm to me after that and I got to tell you, I don't blame him. I don't blame him at all.

DePue: Was that a close race between the two?

Callahan: Not that close. See, Phil, as great a leader as he was, was not a good statewide campaigner. You know, difference, big difference. Simon and Dixon are both great campaigners. Walker, a great campaigner. Howlett, until he ran for governor, a great campaigner. Paul Douglas, a great campaigner. Thompson, a great campaigner. Thompson is one of the best.

DePue: Well, you didn't mention Edgar in there.

Callahan: No. I think he was acceptable, yeah.

DePue: Okay. Getting back to Simon then ...

Callahan: See, as an example, the story you told for the machine, you know, about how Thompson would go drink shots with guys getting off in the morning over Keystone, you know, the place at Pekin, the breweries. He would drink with them. In the morning, he would drink with them, you know. And they loved it. Hell, they loved Thompson over there. See, Thompson was not a high-hand governor.

DePue: Well, the story for the record here, the story we were sharing that reflected how careful Edgar always was about his personal appearance. Very careful in that respect.

Callahan: Let me tell you, Alan Dixon too, yeah. Much more than Thompson or Simon, you know. A story that – I'm not going to mention the one guy's name because I don't want to embarrass him or his family, but Alan is giving a speech on the floor of the Senate. He is kind of a flamboyant dresser at times, Dixon. Celine Bentley, who was my personal assistant and we tried to get to come to Washington and she didn't do that. She is one of my four best friends, by the way, Celine Bentley is. Called me and said Alan has got this wild tie on. Says it doesn't look good, the colors are running together. And someone else called me that I respected. I go in to see Alan, I told him about these calls. He said, Don't you tell me how to

dress. He says, You and so and so are the worst dressers I have ever seen in politics (laugh). And he was serious too.

DePue: Yeah but you guys aren't the ones that are TV.

Callahan: That's right (laugh). The other guy was on TV. Okay.

DePue: Okay. You remember anything about that general election campaign between Simon and Percy?

Callahan: Oh yeah. Let me tell you what I remember the most. Unemployment figures went up the day of the final debate of Percy and Simon, okay. I call Paul, and we got the figures in the Senate office. And I call Paul to tell him, but they said he is in a meeting and cannot be interrupted. I said, Well, let me tell you. I think I have some information that is very important to him before tonight's debate. Well, they got someone to come to the phone. And I really don't know, it might have been Alexrod—I don't remember who it was—and I told him what the unemployment figures were. They were disturbing. Well, Percy didn't know about the figures at the debate that night. He used the word blip, you know and Simon crawled all over that saying, you know, unemployment figures was merely a blip. Said, you know, we're talking about lives here. Simon really, really hit him hard on that issue. And I always thought, Israel, Israel money, unemployment, is probably what elected Paul Simon. Because they were both good campaigners. Percy was a good campaigner. He wasn't as personable as Paul but he was a good campaigner. He wasn't as good as those other people I mentioned, but he was good.

DePue: Okay. So you go from having this ...

Callahan: Well, wait, Percy offered me a job to be his press secretary.

DePue: Really?

Callahan: Yeah, yeah. I would have been his second press secretary. He had Skinny Taylor, who was the President of the Republican County Chairman's Association, offer me the job.

DePue: When was this?

Callahan: Let's see, he was elected in '66. So I'm talking about '67.

DePue: Okay. So this is well before this ...

Callahan: And I said to Skinny, Times have changed on this particular issue over my answer. No, I said I couldn't do that I am a Democrat. I like Percy. I am a Democrat and if I took this, no Democrat would ever have any use for me and no Republican would ever trust me. Which was absolutely true at that

time. He said, Would you think about it over the weekend? I said, Skinny, No. No use in thinking about it because I just wouldn't do that.

DePue: Okay. I want to finish then. We are getting close to two hours here today.

Callahan: Okay.

DePue: To talk a little bit about the nature of the relationship once Simon is elected in 1984. The relationship that Simon and Dixon have.

Callahan: It was, is great, right up to the end. Mike Lawrence, Alan and I were pallbearers at Paul's funeral. Ray Johnson was. A guy named Elmer Fedder who is in the newspaper business with him in Winchester was. That's five. I'm forgetting ... I might think the other one who he was. But, oh yeah, they were close. Very few people knew how close they were, you know.

DePue: Were you the person who kind of facilitated that very close relationship?

Callahan: Well, they were friends before I ever got involved, but I think I helped cement it. For instance, when Alan ran for state treasurer, he told me that—I don't know if I mentioned this before or not—but he asked me if I would take vacation time to help him. And I took two weeks—might have been one week—one week or two weeks vacation time and went down and helped Alan. Then Alan talked him into running for Congress and gave the best speech I ever heard Alan give.

DePue: You mentioned that.

Callahan: The best speech I ever heard him give. In Marion, Illinois. Well, they cussed at each other. I mean, they never got in each other's way. They had different interests really. But not that Alan neglected those big things or Paul neglected Illinois. But they had their special interests.

DePue: Well, that is a great way to finish off for today. You have kind of eluded to this before, but highlight the differences in their focus that these two gentlemen had.

Callahan: Ethics, the same. Completely honest. Wouldn't take a buck and wouldn't tolerate anyone taking a buck. Could not stand people not working hard. Either one of them. I mean, we had to fire the son of the treasurer in his 1970 campaign because the kid just completely screwed up a thing from not working. And I fired a gal for saying she had a dentist's appointment; Mack McClain that I alluded to didn't believe her and checked out. It was a doctor's appointment. Checked out. She didn't have a doctor's appointment. I said, fire her. Fire her today. Tell her to leave when she comes back from lunch. We wouldn't tolerate anything like that. I fired a guy; there were rumors at Secretary of State's office that he was connected with the mob. We could never prove that he was connected. But a state

legislator ... we made him work. Well, the legislator asked me to come to Chicago. I did on a Saturday and had lunch with this guy and him. And we worked it out and, by God, he was going to work. If he didn't work, he was going to be fired. Well, by God, he didn't work and we fired him. And the legislator comes down ... See, I believe the worst things you can do in public life is steal, lie, not return a phone call and get in a public fight. Okay. After we fired him, this legislator comes down to our office and. Craig Levitt and I were together and he told me, So and so is out there. He wants to see ... I said, I'm going to punch him. Now, I was serious. I said, I'm going to punch him, Craig. I said, I'm not putting up with any shit from the guy, you know, defending a mobster. And I was being a little loose there but apparently the guy was but I couldn't prove that. And if you ... get out of here. I said, Okay, I won't hit him but I'm going to get him down and choke him. I thought I could handle the guy or I wouldn't have been as brave, of course. If he had been built like you, I wouldn't have said that. (laugh) But anyway, Craig says, Get out of here. So I start going and he says, No, no, no, not that way. He is out that way. He says, Go out the back way. But anyway, so you got me and I told you the story about when Paul one time called me in after losing the election, you know. Because I wasn't living up to my responsibilities, you know. He was right.

DePue: That was the '72 election.

Callahan: That's right. Still one of the two worst setbacks in my life. And, uh, so anyway, their ethics are the same. Their interests differ. Like Paul Simon was a voracious reader, writer, traveler, professional football nut. Alan loved to play golf. Alan used it, Paul one time complimented Alan on this. One thing I will say about Alan, He plays a lot of golf and uses it to his political advantage. And he did, you know. I remember one time in Washington, where someone wanted to play golf with him and says to me, Gene, I'll pick my golfing partners. (laugh) He was quite serious too. So I never got that guy to play golf with him.

DePue: The things you hear though in terms of the differences that the two men had in policy issues, their focus on policy issues.

Callahan: Well, Alan I call a practical conservative and Paul a practical liberal. They were different philosophically but same on the things that mean the most to me like equal rights and legislation for the media.

DePue: One of the things you hear is that Dixon had a focus, a laser focus on things that were going on in the state that would benefit Illinois.

Callahan: That's right.

DePue: But Simon had a bigger picture.

Callahan: That's right. I agree with that.

DePue: Okay. Well, that's probably a good place for us to finish today. Didn't get quite as far as I was thinking we might get.

Callahan: But you are about out of tape though.

DePue: We're about out of tape. It's lunch time.

Callahan: Listen, I'm at no timeframe. I am completely retired. I haven't done anything for money since I retired and I don't want to. You get offered money from time to time including about three weeks ago. But I was able to help the guy. It was a business guy that I was able to help with.

DePue: Well, we have half of Dixon's term in the Senate to go and there is some pretty interesting things to talk about here, so we have plenty more. This has been a great conversation today with a lot of great insights.

Callahan: As I said, I don't want to ever mislead you on any of the big policy stuff because I never considered myself smart enough to handle things like on foreign policy. That's why I talked to Alan about going back after two years. I didn't think I was living up to what a Senate chief of staff ought to do. But I was doing what he wanted done.

DePue: Well, we are going to go much more in to the personal relationship the two of you had when we start off next time. That would be a great way to start.

Callahan: Okay, okay, alright.

DePue: Thanks Gene.

Callahan: That is why I will never write a book. See, because that Paul and Alan gave ... I know of almost everything there is to know about their personal and private lives. No one ever knows everything. But I tell you, no one knows more than I know about both of them.

DePue: Okay.

Callahan: Okay.

DePue: Thanks Gene.

[End of interview #3. #4 continues]

Interview with Gene Callahan

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Interview # 4: July 26, 2011

Interviewer: Mark DePue – ALPL Oral History Program

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DePue: Today is Tuesday, July 26, 2011. My name is Mark DePue, the Director of Oral History for the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library. Today is my fourth session with Gene Callahan. Good morning, Gene.

Callahan: Good morning.

DePue: We have had a great series of sessions up to this point and obviously your role with both Simon and Dixon I have learned as much as I have from you as anybody else I have had the opportunity to interview. So this is very important, and it is also rare because most of my interviews are focused very much on Illinois state politics, and obviously Dixon as the state senator. It is more of a national scope. We got through about 1986 last time and I want to start with just some general questions for you. Start with the specific relationship that you had with Alan Dixon and kind of flesh that out a little bit more. Let's start with a quote that he had about you. "Gene is the most remarkable guy I have ever known. He could be making three times his government salary if he wanted to go into consulting, but he is totally dedicated to working for Illinois. We are lucky to have him." So, here is your opportunity to say some words about Alan Dixon.

Callahan: Well, that quote, now and the part ... I'm not going to comment on those glowing remarks except I did have many opportunities to make a lot more money. And I had opportunity to make much more money even when I went to work with major league baseball. I could have made more but I wanted that job. I pursued two jobs in my life. One when I became a reporter here in Springfield in 1857 and when I went to work with major league baseball. I would say that my relationship with him started in a conversation at the bar at the St. Nicholas Hotel in 1961 when I was a reporter. I know just where he was standing and I was sitting; it was a side

bar at the St. Nick and I was impressed with Paul Simon. I knew Paul a lot better and I asked him, Is Paul Simon as honest as I think he is. He says, Honest: let me tell you something—I am involved in all these newspapers for Troy at that time—and he says, last year I made seven and a half percent profit on my shares, and I have never been into paper. Never been to one of them. He says, Does that tell you whether he is honest or not? I mean, that is an example of how Alan liked money. Still likes money. But I tell you, he is very, not loose, but he is very cordial with his kids. He takes care of his kids. He takes care of his grandkids. But he is, as we have said many times, parsimonious.

DePue: We talked about the source of his money, how he was making a living beyond the money he was receiving as being a member of the Senate. But can you flesh that out a little bit more.

Callahan: Commercial real estate and personal property; personal property and corporate buildings mostly, you know. And personal injury cases as a lawyer, is where he made his money.

DePue: When was the last personal injury case he had?

Callahan: He didn't do any at the time when I worked at the state treasurer's office, so I would imagine his last one was 1969 or 1970. And he made good investments. Like if you look at his net worth it would climb but he is comfortable financially. Talked to him this morning, by the way. And, he was playing golf at the time. So we are going to talk this afternoon.

DePue: Where was the real estate he was investing?

Callahan: In around there, in the Belleville, St. Clair County. And he might have even invested some because he had a friend down that that is still alive that is in his nineties, Ray Gella. Very close friends. In fact, Ray Gella wears two hearing aids and Alan says about him, He's the only guy I know that wears two hearing aids and still can't hear. But he is probably Alan's closest friend in that area.

DePue: I think it was around 1987 or so I saw an article that proclaimed Alan Dixon a millionaire. He was part of the millionaire club of U.S. Senators at the time. Is that something he was proud about?

Callahan: Oh, yeah, yeah. I think so. Remember I told you earlier though, that each time he would creep up a little bit in his net worth and I accused him one time of keeping it because he told me he would buy me a beer when he became a millionaire. Well, I asked him to buy me a beer and I accused him of juggling the figures so he wouldn't be a millionaire to keep from buying me a beer. But, yeah, he is proud of his success, financially and politically. Yeah, you bet.

DePue: This is going to be something of a rehash since we have been talking so much about Dixon, but I would like to have you think about what adjectives best describe the man.

Callahan: Ability, integrity, perseverance, compassion, loyalty, sense of humor.

DePue: Okay. How would you describe yourself?

Callahan: A tad above average intelligence and an unusually hard worker.

DePue: Okay. You have already told us the marks you consider to be important in other people and I don't know how many times you have told me, You better be returning phone calls.

Callahan: I think the worst thing you can do in public life is steal, lie, not return phone calls and get in a public fight. I think those four things are the worst things you can do.

DePue: Was your job then in part to make sure that your guy, in this case, Dixon, didn't get into these public fights.

Callahan: Oh, I'm not talking about public fights. I'm talking about physical fights.

DePue: Oh, okay.

Callahan: Oh, I don't mind public fights. No, you're bound to have public fights, but I mean physical fights. Getting stiff at a bar, something like that. Getting in a fight in your office where I told you the story where I wanted to hit a guy once. I think I told you on tape on that. And that is Craig Levitt who probably couldn't have licked an ant physically, but he was very, very bright. Brightest guy that I ever worked with on a staff on a day-to-day basis.

DePue: Let's talk a little bit about the staff that Dixon had. I think you already mentioned, it was about forty-six people. How many in D.C.? How many back in Illinois?

Callahan: Well, it would be about two thirds in Washington and the other third ... we had ... let me see, three, we had four here in Springfield. We had one in Belleville. And the number in Chicago was probably ten, maybe eight, eight to ten probably. And, uh, the rest was Washington. I might be off just a tad there in Chicago.

DePue: Okay. Another one of the comments that Dixon had for you is that when you worked for Gene. And he is talking about ...no, I'm sorry, this is Durbin's comment about you.

Callahan: Okay.

DePue: So this would have been some time before, but his comment was, When you work for Gene it was a 24 / 7 commitment.

Callahan: That's true.

DePue: So, that was your expectation for yourself.

Callahan: You bet.

DePue: And for others.

Callahan: You bet. Alan Dixon always knew where I was. Always.

DePue: So a demanding task master?

Callahan: I believe that people should work as hard as I worked. Not harder. But, yeah, I expected hard work and return phone calls. For instance, in Washington, I didn't put in the answering machines—you know, the answering service—in the office on purpose. Because we had two guys who were both very good public servants were absolutely terrible at returning phone calls. I would be on their butt all the time to return them. They finally returned them. But they were so good and so smart, it wasn't a cause for firing, you understand. But I wanted them to communicate with the people and I knew if they had that answering service, they would screen every phone call that ever came in, you know. So we never had it, on purpose. When you called Alan Dixon's office, you got someone to answer the phone. Like you call Chicago Bulls, or Chicago White Sox, you get a person to answer the phone. You don't get some tape. You call the St. Louis Cardinals, you get a tape.

DePue: But we are talking about a large state. There is what? fifteen million something like that at the time. All these constituents who could call, pick up the phone and call Alan Dixon's office and expect to get an answer.

Callahan: Well, yeah. You bet. Oh, there are a lot of times you can't get an answer right now or get back to you. For instance, we had to get rid of a guy in Washington that had really bothered both Alan and me that we had to do that. But he wasn't doing any work. Wasn't doing the work. That was a man. We had a woman that she wasn't living up to our expectations and when she left we found she had all these letters in her desk that she squirreled away. What we did, was called everyone. Said, Your letters were misplaced; we didn't see them. Senator Dixon. I was calling most of these people and say, Senator Dixon, I never saw your letter until today but I want you to know we apologize. We'll try to get on it.

DePue: One of the nicknames that you earned was the state's third senator. You smile. Explain that one.

- Callahan: Well, Steve Neal wrote a very glowing column about Dixon, Simon and me after Alan was re-elected in '86. Steve Neal and I had a good relationship, and he loved some of the things I did. He loved to drink beer. He loved baseball. He loved boxing. I never cared much for boxing, but he did. He really knew sports. And, as you know, one of the wings of the library is named after Steve Neal. He was very kind to me, that article, and what he did, he meshed my long-time association with Alan and Paul.
- DePue: Okay. You just mentioned the '86 election for Simon. Let's talk about Dixon's election campaign that year.
- Callahan: Well, in Dixon's campaign in '86, we ran against Judy Koehler. She was a state legislator from Peoria area and we beat her handily; she carried a few counties that were around her home base. She later became a judge, I think an appellate court judge at the state level. But, what we did, we never mentioned her name in the campaign, never. I was running the stuff. When she would say something ridiculous, I would say, These comments are just a reflection of what Arthur Finklestein in New York who is dictating her entire campaign has to say. And I said, After this election is over, Arthur Finklestein of New York will get on an airplane and go back and he will say good-bye suckers. A guy that I know is a friend of Finklestein and he was a nationally known guy. At the airport, he says, I have never seen a campaign like this. They are running the whole campaign against me. Well, he did it on purpose, you know. Did it on purpose.
- DePue: You got to flesh out a little bit more about Finklestein's role here. How he got involved with her campaign in the first place.
- Callahan: Don't know that. I imagine it was from the Republican National Committee probably. Because, see, he was New York based. He had a lot of good clients.
- DePue: What was his role?
- Callahan: PR, PR strategy.
- DePue: How did Koehler get the Republican nomination?
- Callahan: Well there had to be a primary fight and I forget who was in that fight and she was not a very good candidate. Well, we had a lot of things going for us too. We had the residue of the Secretary of State people still were heavily involved in our race, you know. See, the core ... like I had a luncheon that I paid for about two months ago at Norb Andy's. Alan came for it, and I invited reporters that I have great respect for that knew Alan—the new ones I didn't. I got accused by Celine Bentley and Chris Groves that it was a chauvinistic party because I didn't invite any women, but I didn't on purpose, really. Just one this guy stuff. Norb Andy's is more of a guy's bar anyway. We had all of our volunteers there from all over the state, and old

volunteers. I have told people every one liked the party except my wife because she had to pay for it. (laugh) We didn't plan any speeches, and Alan says, I want to speak. I said, Oh, Alan, we're not going to speak. No, he said, I want to speak. So he gets up and the first thing he said, You know, this is the first time I have ever known Callahan to buy. (laugh) and I told him the next day that he had severely insulted me.

DePue: There had been one or two other times that you bought?

Callahan: Not many.

DePue: Let's go back to Taylor. How would you describe her politics?

Callahan: n the edge of being right-wing.

DePue: Steve Neal described her as ultra-conservative. This was 1986.

Callahan: I won't quarrel with that judgment.

DePue: Okay. So a poor fit for the Republican party at that time?

Callahan: At that time. Yep.

DePue: In what way was she conservative?

Callahan: Well, she was against about everything. She pretty echoed Phyllis Schafley, you know, on issues. That is how I remember her. On specifics, I don't recall. I just remember I just thought she was way out of the mainstream.

DePue: She was trying to associate herself as much as she could with Ronald Reagan.

Callahan: Yeah. Didn't fly. And Alan had a decent relationship with Reagan and so it just wasn't a very good campaign.

DePue: One of the things I read, don't know that the Reagan campaign did much to support her either.

Callahan: It didn't appear to us that way.

DePue: Okay.

Callahan: We were never in tandem with anyone in that ... in fact, the gal ... let me tell me one of the persons, was Dave O'Neal. The gal that is married ... Mary Matalin. was involved in one of the campaigns against us. Now I don't recall if that was Dave O'Neal. I think it was Dave O'Neal that she was involved with in the campaign here in Illinois. I think. It was definitely one of the two and I think O'Neal.

DePue: Okay. Early in the campaign after she emerged from the primary as the victor, one of the things she did she starts to identify herself and try to define her opponent. And, of course, this is Dixon. She called him a wimp because he did not lead the Democratic party with Adlai Stevenson, III who had won the primary for governor that particular year. But then he had some embarrassments because of some LaRouche's on the ticket. I wonder if you can tell us a little bit about what you know about how the LaRouche's ended up winning in the primary and the secretary of state and lieutenant governor position and how that played out.

Callahan: Well, they won with simple sounding names like Smith, Jones, some other name, Fairchild was one of the names.

DePue: Hart was another one., uh, I remember Alan Dixon says, You know, you can call me a lot of things but wimp is not one of them. That's where Alan's sense of humor was good, like he got a kick out of the Al's Pals, you know. In fact, at that volunteer party I mentioned earlier at Norb Andy's, some of the guys brought their Al's Pal's buttons with them.

DePue: Al's Pals? So that was playing in that particular election year as well.

Callahan: Yeah, yeah, uh-hm. I think Dave O'Neal used them first. I'm pretty sure Dave O'Neal but we just ... we have used it to good advantage.

DePue: How did it play out having the LaRouche candidates and then Stevenson deciding he needed to run on his own I think under the Solidarity banner?

Callahan: Well, yeah, see, I think ... but see you had to have a full ticket. You had to have a full ticket now. All the Democrats were on a ticket. I forget how that worked. But for instance, we picked our own opponent, you know, in that third party thing. We picked him. And Einer Dhyrkopp was a guy we asked ... now Einer Dhyrkopp had a very good reputation.

DePue: What's the first name?

Callahan: Einer, E-i-n-e-r. Dhyrkopp, D-h-y-r-k-o-p-p, I think. I'm not sure that is the exact spelling. But he would be in the Blue Book.

DePue: Okay.

Callahan: He is a successful businessman from Shawneetown. A very good contributor to the Democratic party. Was a Walker guy. But later became a strong, strong Paul Simon guy. I mean really strong. One of the strongest in southern Illinois for Paul Simon.

DePue: A little bit of irony there isn't it?

Callahan: Well, what happened, I called Einer because I knew him well, and I said, What in the world are you doing supporting Walker? Well see, he makes furniture, Einer, that's part of his business – and he says, I did a lot of business with him when he was at Montgomery Ward. I can't turn my back on him. And I said, I understand, when he told me that. Now, his wife though was publicly for us. And it wasn't any contrived thing. You know, some times in politics you see contrived stuff. But nothing contrived on ... because she is as independent as he is. She is still alive by the way. Einer died about a year ago. I had a lot of high regard for Einer. But, when we were picking our ticket, I said, Alan, we got to come up with someone. He says, Bryce Irving. Now, Bryce Irving with (unintelligible) states attorney in Pike County. I said, and he was completely loyal to Dick, says, Oh, no, no, no, no. I said, too good a ballot name; we don't want that. And I said, how about Einer Dhyrkopp. He says, I like it. So I called Einer and asked him if he would run. And that is when (unintelligible) said that we only picked him because he had a funny name and I came up the line that it is an insult to every Danish American in the state of Illinois and the United States of America.

DePue: What were the positions that Einer was ...

Callahan: U.S. Senate.

DePue: U.S. Senate.

Callahan: Yeah, yeah.

DePue: Under the Solidarity ticket?

Callahan: Yeah, I think so. I forget the name of the party but what they did. Yeah.

DePue: Yeah, I was a little slow to pick up what you are talking about. So you are fleshing out the rest of the election ticket so that Stevenson is obviously going to be running on the Solidarity ticket and then you have to have the rest of the slate there as well.

Callahan: Yeah, yeah. I assume that is still the law.

DePue: And Stevenson got thumped.

Callahan: Yeah.

DePue: Did you think before that time that Thompson was going to be vulnerable. He had already been in office, I think, ten years by that time.

Callahan: Oh he was vulnerable. He was vulnerable twice. Against Adlai and against Hartigan, but we didn't get it.

DePue: Okay.

Callahan: I talked to some people since last week about some things that we discussed and ... well, it's Tim McInerney, a guy I had such great ... we both believe that Thompson is the greatest saloon campaigner we have ever seen. You know, like he would go in that Peoria area and drink shots in the morning with these guys. Never stiff, I don't mean that at all. But he would campaign with those. McInerney says, I think Dixon was second. I said, Yes, but Thompson was quicker to buy a drink for the house (laugh).

DePue: There is some consistency here what we are talking about. One of the other things I think that she tried to attack Dixon with was the comment that Republicans like Dixon but they couldn't say why. Do you recall that?

Callahan: No, but I don't recall that.

DePue: Okay.

Callahan: But that is to Dixon's credit though the way I look at it.

DePue: Well, we have discussed his politics up to this point already and there were many issues that he ended up supporting President Reagan on. So, what she is doing is trying to run a conservative campaign against—would you describe Dixon as a moderate or a conservative Democrat?

Callahan: I'd say moderate. Moderate to conservative Democrat. But great on civil rights issues and great on media, freedom of the press. I mean, he believes in open government. See, he, Paul Simon, Abner Mikva were original co-sponsors of the Right-to-Know law in Illinois. And he never deviated that, ever in his career.

DePue: Do you recall any debates that you had with Koehler?

Callahan: Yes. And as I mentioned, I never went to any of the debates. And I told you the Marty Marx story last week and Tim McInerney reminded me, and I said, I didn't go to the debates but remember I said, we had people there that I respected. They could tell me what, you know, where we ... like we blew it. Alan blew a debate once, I would say, over at Champagne. That was against Sharon Sharp, 1978, for Secretary of State. But, McInerney told me another thing where we did. He took twelve guys up to the debate, Tim did. And what they did, they covered every pay phone. Not with, not ... just so they knew, they knew and could call with the take on what the reporters were leading with and everything else. Okay. They were right there by the pay phones. That is how we were able to get Marty Marx out of that hotel, you know, out here in Springfield. I told him to sober up and get in and we're going to answer this. And we just blew the story out of the water.

DePue: He ended up winning the campaign in the November election. Sixty three percent. And he had polled thirty two percent. So this isn't a decisive victory; this is a overwhelming victory. And that represented his twenty-ninth consecutive victory, so is he one of the miracle men of Illinois politics at the time?

Callahan: He had one of the great careers in Illinois history and got first elected when he was twenty-one years old, police magistrate. Twenty-three to the legislature and he kept going until he finally got beat in 1992. See, keep in mind, Paul Simon got beat three times. Dick Durbin got beat three times before he was ever elected to anything. Mike Howlett got defeated twice before he was elected. Alan's career was never interrupted by loss and then the loss ended the political career.

DePue: And we are going to finish off today with that because that is an important and fascinating discussion that we are obviously leading up to.

Callahan: Okay.

DePue: So, his second term. He is elected in '86 you go into '87. It is a bad year at the national level for senate Republicans. What was going on at the national level do you recall?

Callahan: Well, the last ... let me see, '80, '84, '86 ... the last two years of a President's second term is usually not very good. They go down. You know you take Truman, that was really his, you know, he was elected once, but, uh, he had been Vice-President. You could take young Bush, same thing. When you are in public life a long time you get a lot of scars. And, for instance, that is how Alan Dixon got beat the last time. Al Hofeld spent over three million dollars of his money blowing a hole at Alan Dixon and, uh, Carol Moseley Braun came up through the middle. Now, Dick Durbin is the best person to run a campaign that I have known in the Democratic party since I have been around, including his own. He runs his own campaigns. Dixon, Simon, did not run their own campaigns. Kerner did not. Shapiro, well, Shapiro's campaign wasn't very good. No one wants to take responsibility for that one. So anyway, Dixon ... we went negative for part of a week. And, as I mentioned to you, Durbin was a very integral part of our team.

DePue: Now which campaign are we talking about here?

Callahan: We're talking about '92 now. I just want to ... how all this comes together. But you get a lot of scars, you know. And Dixon called Durbin, broken (unintelligible), you know the national media guys. And Dick Durbin and myself, Ed, and he says, I want all of the negative commercials pulled. That is not me. I'm not going to do it. I would rather lose than do that. So he

wouldn't bend at all. We're leaving the room, Dick Durbin says, Alan just lost the primary.

DePue: Again, let's go back to '87. Now, you've got ...

Callahan: Excuse me, excuse me for getting off ...

DePue: No, no that's fine. These are the kind of insights that we definitely want to get. '87, you have a new Senate; the majority in the Senate that year is Democratic. You've got Robert Byrd, the majority leader and President of the Senate. You've got Bob Dole as the minority leader that year. How does Dixon position himself so he becomes the deputy whip in the Senate?

Callahan: Well, he had a lot of friends in the Senate and the Rhodes Scholar? Bill Bradley. Bill Bradley considered running against Alan but Alan had too many votes. And Alan ran for it and was unopposed in the Democratic caucus.

DePue: What does the deputy whip do?

Callahan: Counts votes and people that are on the line calling and try to get a commitment from them. And, if need be, try to use the best persuasive arguments you can; sometimes they use loyalty, sometimes they use different things. For instance, I mentioned that when Alan voted against Senator Tower for Secretary of Defense that vote bothered Alan but it was a vote of loyalty to Sam Nunn. So those are the kind of things.

DePue: What was his relationship with Byrd?

Callahan: Very acceptable, very acceptable.

DePue: And Byrd is the one who has the reputation for being the constitutional scholar, isn't he?

Callahan: Oh yeah, uh-hm. He is also the guy that called me very early in the morning, you know ...

DePue: That's right, that's right. How about Bob Dole?

Callahan: Excellent relationship. Excellent.

DePue: And you describe that even better than the one he had with Byrd.

Callahan: Personally yeah. Personal, not political. Yeah. See, by the way, Alan was the first member of the U.S. Senate to publically endorse Mondale for President. Now you might find that a little strange, being the moderate Democrat to conservative Democrat.

DePue: Okay.

Callahan: In that race, my brother was county chairman. And I'm working getting county chairmen in writing to be for Mondale. This was when Hart was running. We had a lot of county chairman in Illinois. Talking about Illinois campaigning for Mondale. My brother would never tell me he was for him. So I called him. You know, we had been working on this three weeks or so and I called him and I said, Fran, this is embarrassing to me. And I meant it. I said, here I'm making these calls for Mondale to be for him and you're my brother and you won't commit. And I said, Would you endorse him? A great silence on the phone. And he says, Okay. (laugh)

DePue: Do you know what his reluctance was about?

Callahan: Well, Mondale would have been too liberal for my brother. He wasn't too liberal for Alan, but my brother was strong on civil rights stuff and the women's issues weren't that prominent to him or from those in Iroquois county at that time. But he had been fine there too, I think. He had a good relationship with the black community when he worked at the Chicago stockyards.

DePue: Okay. I wanted to ask you a little bit more, something we have talked about a bit already: Dixon's very deliberate role of playing as the congressional leader for the Illinois delegation.

Callahan: That was positively his idea. His idea alone because he didn't think ... remember I said the polling showed that we did. That Illinoisans thought Aldai and Percy forgot about the state of Illinois. He really wanted to do something about it. And before he was ever inaugurated he went to Paul Simon about doing it. And Paul thought it was great but said, Rostenkowski will never buy it. Well, Rostenkowski because he and Alan have had a long time social relationship and they had served in Illinois legislature together as Paul had with Rostenkowski. But Alan was a lot closer to Rusty than Paul Simon was.

DePue: By this time you have got a couple of fairly prominent Republican leaders in the House as well. You have got Bob Michael.

Callahan: He had a very good relationship with Michael.

DePue: Henry Hyde.

Callahan: Excellent. Excellent relationship. In fact, there is an article in the, I think, in the *Tribune*. It was either in '80 or '86 and I think '80, where Neil is trying to paint Alan as a stooge for Mayor Dailey. Henry Hyde publicly repudiated that statement. Publicly. We didn't ask him to. He just did it. He said, You know, Alan Dixon was always a thoughtful legislator. I served with him. And to say he is a stooge of anyone – I don't think they

used the word stooge, but the same thing – and that’s not fair to Alan Dixon and not fair to the political process.

DePue: You just mentioned the Mayor. The Mayor at the timeframe that he was there, Harold Washington, I think Washington got there in ’83 until ’87 when he died suddenly in office and then there was a very short time ... well, let me just take them one at a time. His relationship with Washington.

Callahan: Excellent. And in fact he was co-chairman of his re-election bid. That is my memory, or maybe the first time after the primary he was chairman, co-chairman, and I think he introduced him at the major fundraiser too, I think that. He introduced him at some major rally at Washington. Now, I knew Harold Washington, knew him well. Alan knew him—well is an exaggeration—I say I knew Harold Washington reasonably well. Alan Dixon knew him well. But really the conduit with Harold Washington was Emmett O’Neal. Emmett O’Neal was a volunteer in our operation and then later became chief of staff at the Chicago level. He ran the Chicago office after Joe McMann who ran it became ill. And we had a woman in there for a while and that didn’t work out real well. Not because she was a woman but just didn’t work out the best. And, uh, so, Emmett retired from his business operation and became chief of staff. And he and Harold Washington really, I mean, they would go to each other’s home. Mostly Harold’s home because Emmett lived in Wilmette or Winetka, one of the two. But, yeah, it couldn’t have been better with Harold Washington.

DePue: Do you recall some of the issues that were especially important for Washington to have Dixon carry out to D.C.?

Callahan: Well, Rusty and Alan carried almost everything for Chicago. For even about twelve years. Alan in the Senate and,uh, more than Paul because, as I said, Alan was more local, Illinois oriented, than Paul. But Rostenkowski was the Mayor’s, the guy, and his relationship with Washington was not hostile. I don’t know whether it was warm or not. Ours was warm and so was Paul’s. Paul’s relationship with Washington was excellent.

DePue: Okay. When you say Paul’s relationship with Washington, we talk about Mayor Washington?

Callahan: That’s right.

DePue: Okay. How about Eugene Sawyer who is only there for a couple of years. David Orr had kind of a interim position as Mayor and then Eugene Sawyer and in ’89 you got Richard M. Dailey.

Callahan: Alan had a good relationship with Sawyer. Very good relationship with Dailey, you know, there was never any problems ever, any problems with the Mayor. Now, young Mayor Dailey got upset with Paul Simon and me when Jim Burns became U.S. Attorney because Mayor Dailey wanted Dan

Devine to be U.S. Attorney and Steve Neal wrote a column that Simon listened to Dixon and me rather than Mayor Dailey. Dailey didn't like that and he even mentioned my name. Well, it was accurate. He did. Because he liked Burns and he knew Burns was completely honest. And for instance, Burns is the guy that keeps Jesse White out of trouble. Great public servant, Jim Burns. Played for the Chicago Bulls, by the way. Did you know that?

DePue: No, I didn't.

Callahan: Allstate in basketball. All big ten at Northwestern and played less than a season with the Bulls.

DePue: Are there any particular issues though that you recall. Was it the third airport or some extension of interstate system or ...

Callahan: Don't recall.

DePue: Okay. How was Dixon able to exercise that leadership over congressional delegation where, quite frankly, he has quite a lot of egos that you are bumping into.

Callahan: I think the key to it was that staff members could not go. If you weren't there, then the press would know who was there and who wasn't there. They weren't invited but they could stake any meeting out that they wanted to. And he was able to do it, I think, just because of his personality. Alan is a flamboyant speaker at times. Flashy dresser at times. But basically he is just down-to-earth even though he is fastidious in his personal demeanor. But he has a great personality and he is more of a back slapper than Paul Simon. Doesn't BS. And Alan Dixon is wonderful on follow through. Tremendous on follow through.

DePue: Okay. Some of the issues we have talked a little bit about before that: he was wanting to bring more money back to the state because of that exchange that wasn't working out for the state of Illinois at the time. So many tax dollars going on, not nearly as many coming into the state. Going back I should say. The main ones, the main issues that he was pushing. I guess you would call this pork barrel or earmarks now.

Callahan: By the way, I believe in earmarks. Especially, why would someone from Illinois not be for earmarks when you have got the number three in the U.S. Senate, now you got the number two guy in the U.S. Senate. Why wouldn't ... in that time we had Bob Michel, you know. You had Rostenkowski. Why in the world wouldn't you want earmarks for the state of Illinois? And with Durbin there now, I totally believe in earmarks.

DePue: What were the earmarks that were being pushed.

Callahan: Probably a lot of Chicago stuff, lot of metro east area. Probably Scott Air Force Base. He always took care of them a lot. We talked earlier about banking business, banking loans for farmers when the farmers were having such bad – that wouldn't have been an earmark. But, you know, he was never satisfied because I don't know what the ratio right now for tax dollars spent and returns are any better now than it was. But we are never going to catch up anyway on it. But, you know, you got to make a stab at it. And he made a stab.

DePue: Well, one of them I saw was (unintelligible), as well.

Callahan: Oh yeah. We were heavily involved with (unintelligible). Heavily, for money, positively.

DePue: Okay. The many positions that he had the second time around. I know that he had the agriculture committee and we talked before about giving that up and taking on other committees instead, banking and small business in a way to satisfy those same needs. But I know he was chair of the armed services subcommittee. Was that a position he sought as well?

Callahan: Yes. Well, see, he sought the armed services committee when he took Scoop Jackson's place. And you know, he was pro military. Yes, anything that happened in arms it would have been something he would have pursued. Because he loved that committee, by the way. And he loved the banking committee too.

DePue: Now, I don't recall. Did he have any military experience of his own?

Callahan: Yeah, yeah. He says that he was in the bathtub Navy. He was, you know, like the ROTC aspect. In fact, he went to Michigan State or Western Michigan. No, he went to Indiana State, I think, when he was at the Navy. You know, when they send guys to college. That's why he called it the bathtub Navy.

DePue: Do you recall any significant shifts that he had in his attention or focus in that second administration from what he had in the first?

Callahan: You mean changes?

DePue: Yeah, policy, public policy issues.

Callahan: No, no.

DePue: Okay.

Callahan: That doesn't mean there weren't but I think that would stick out to me if I saw him really reverse something philosophically. I mean, I'm confident I'm right on that even though I'm no policy wonk.

DePue: In 1988, and this would have been '87, the Democrats are throwing their hat in the ring for the Presidential race and it's going to be a lively race because you knew that Reagan was going to finish up his second term in '88. I wanted to ask you about what is reported as his lukewarm support for Paul Simon, when Simon makes the decision in '87 to throw his hat in the ring.

Callahan: Well, here is how it happened. Alan had given Sam Nunn his word that if he ran for President he would be for him. Okay. And there was a good chance Nunn was going to run at that time. He didn't, you know.

DePue: What was the reason for the relationship that he had with the Senator from Georgia?

Callahan: Armed services stuff. They were in tandem. That is how he voted against Tower. And, see, Paul wasn't planning on running. Now, as an example, Paul had a meeting at his home with Floyd Fithian, F-i-t-h-i-a-n, who was his chief of staff and a former congressman from Indiana, Paul's wife, and Jean and myself—the four of us—about whether he ought to run for President. I was against him running for President. Not because of Nunn, because I thought it was a bad time. He hadn't been in the Senate for a full term. And I said, Paul, the chances are you making it are not that great. And if you don't make it they are going to hit you about you just using the Senate as a stepping stone to run for President. And I said, That is going to be the main issue against you and it was. When Lynn Martin jumped on that and Paul made a commitment that he wouldn't run for President because of that.

DePue: What timeframe was that?

Callahan: Well, I tell you how you could find out the exact month. We left that meeting that night with myself the only one not running for President.

DePue: Is this early '87 timeframe do you think?

Callahan: Yeah. Now, even though I was not for him running, I went to Iowa and campaigned for him. Alan Dixon gave speeches for him too at different places in the country where they thought that he would be the most valuable. We left that meeting and here is what it was going to be. If Bumpers didn't run for President, he was going to run. He said, Bumpers is the only guy that is articulating issues that I believe so strongly on. And Jean Simon really believed that. Now, I go from his house and I go home and he said, Gene, we wasted your time tonight. Bumpers just called me; he is going to run. Okay. About ten days, two weeks later, Bumpers said he wasn't running. From then on though, they never invited me to any more of the presidential planning meetings.

DePue: Why not Dixon running for President?

Callahan: He didn't care to.

DePue: Just didn't have that level of ambition. Had you known that Simon—when you were working for him back in his lieutenant governor days—had that kind of burning ambition?

Callahan: Well, I knew he had ... the interesting thing about Paul. I know why he ran for governor and we have gone over how Alan Dixon talked him into running for Congress. The most down I ever saw Paul Simon – when he ran for chairman of the budget committee. He called me and said, What are you doing tonight? And I said, I'm not doing anything. I think (unintelligible) was in Illinois at that time. He said, I'd like for you to have dinner with Jean and me. So we go to a French restaurant; I didn't know Washington well enough, I couldn't tell you the name or even where it was located. And he was so discouraged he says, because so many people had lied to him, you know, on the vote. And he didn't get it. In my view, that is the night he really came to the conclusion he was probably going to be up or out. He was going to run for the Senate but he wasn't going to run for the House again. And, uh, that is my view. He didn't say that that night but that is the impression.

DePue: So this was when he was still a member of the U.S. House.

Callahan: That's right. And then, on the Senate race, the man I had mentioned to you about, Phil Rock. How Alan, my wife and I had all encouraged Phil Rock to run because Paul wasn't going to run at that time. And then Paul decided to run which I am very glad he did because I thought he and Alan were a tremendous team, as Phil Rock and Alan would have been. But see, Paul is really a United States Senator and Alan Dixon is a United States Senator for Illinois. Alan's burning desire was to help Illinois.

DePue: What were the issues that you recall when Simon was wrestling with when not to run for President that were especially important to him.

Callahan: Oh, I think the liberal issues. You could take just about whatever the main ones were at that time. He would have been on the side of the liberals. He ran a good race in Iowa, Paul did.

DePue: Well, as I recall, he was pretty obscure before that and by the time he emerged he wasn't obscure anymore.

Callahan: Yeah, that's right. Well, you know, if I'd walk down the street with Alan—well take Washington—people didn't know Alan. And after Paul ran for President, everyone knew Paul. Everyone. You would go into a restaurant with him or anyplace, they knew Paul Simon. Went to the football, Penn State, and, hell, more people knew who he was.

DePue: So he had a small, but a very loyal core of support didn't he?

Callahan: Oh yeah, yeah. He sure did.

DePue: Okay. This is about the same time here that we have some Supreme Court nominees. I want to take these kind of one at a time as well.

Callahan: Okay.

DePue: The first one, as I understand, it might have been one before that, but the one I want to start with is William Rehnquist, whose nomination is going through the Senate about the time of that '86 election campaign. Anything that you recall on that one?

Callahan: Nope.

DePue: He was late in his endorsement and that was one other thing that Koehler was going after him on that he should have been coming out earlier.

Callahan: Well, see, sometimes in campaigns, you have responsible opposition. Some times you don't choose, very irresponsible. In my view. In my non-partisan view.

DePue: Now, the newspaper at the time mentioned that his was a controversial nomination.

Callahan: Rehnquist?

DePue: Yeah.

Callahan: It never did bother him. Hell, I think he voted for every Supreme Court nominee except one.

DePue: Well, the next one on the list is Robert Bork, so let's ...

Callahan: No, I don't think he voted for Bork. I'm confident he didn't vote for Bork. Or did Bork's even come for a vote or did he take himself out at the end?

DePue: Oh, I thought it came to a vote. Yes.

Callahan: Let me tell a story. A guy named Tom Krologos, K-r-o-l-o-g-o-s, became Ambassador to Belgium under young Bush. Krologos was at a PR firm that did work with major league baseball and when Bud Selig would have press conference in Washington, Krologos said I would really grill him. I mean, really grill him. Well, Krologos was in charge of Billy Bork to be prepared. Now Krologos is a tough guy and knowledgeable and he would ask him all these tough questions. After a while, he said, I don't want to do this anymore. He doesn't want to take the tough questions. That's from an inside guy that worked at Ford's White House. I think it was as a Senate liaison thing, Krologos. And Bork just didn't have time for that.

DePue: Okay.

Callahan: If this is ever published, it would (unintelligible) Krologos says on that.

DePue: Yeah, this fight was going on in the summer then in to the fall of 1987, October, I think is when it finally did come to a

Callahan: Okay. What did he lose, by four votes?

DePue: Forty-two to fifty-eight. So, pretty significant vote.

Callahan: Yeah, you bet. Okay.

DePue: And today, we look back at that and we see a difference in the way Supreme Court nominations go through the Senate.

Callahan: Sure. Sure.

DePue: Do you have any insight on what was about Bork that caused that change. What was going on in politics at the time about the Supreme Court nominees that that became such a flashpoint for controversy.

Callahan: I think he was so over right, so ultra right that the Democrats just couldn't take him. That's my view. I mean, he was way over the veil, in my view, for them to support.

DePue: The issue normally comes down, and the way it is framed today is: It's are you a strict constructionist? In other words, interpret the Constitution very strictly in terms of trying to determine what the founding fathers wanted. Or are you in the side of: It's a living document that has to be evolving based on what is going on in the country. Where would Dixon come down on that issue?

Callahan: A combination of both. That's not a weasel answer. I don't view it as a weasel answer. I think he would take into consideration all that and vote accordingly.

DePue: So, was it more important for him to get a measure of the character of the man or the candidate I should say?

Callahan: I think so.

DePue: What did he think, what did you think about Ted Kennedy early in the nomination process really went after Bork hard and made some comments that were very uncomplimentary about Bork. Did Dixon think that was a bit beyond the pale?

Callahan: I didn't think so. Now, he and Kennedy had a good relationship. In fact, they fished together in Florida and he liked Kennedy. In my view, he didn't vote for him when he ran against Carter. I voted for Kennedy. He might have voted for Kennedy though. I never asked him that. He would tell me, but I just never have.

DePue: Okay. We already mentioned the outcome of the Bork hearings. He was defeated rather handily in the Senate and I would say beyond that point then, the Senate hearings for Supreme Court nominees have not quite been the same. They have always been more contentious.

Callahan: Just like negativity on the press in government ever since Watergate. Nothing has ever been the same since Watergate. I buy very much your statement there.

DePue: I shouldn't be doing that but ...

Callahan: No. It's what is accurate.

DePue: Anthony Kennedy. Did he have any issue with Anthony Kennedy's nomination?

Callahan: No.

DePue: Okay. And that one went through very quickly. Clarence Thomas' hearings in 1991. Now that is one we do need to flesh out a little bit more I think. A little bit of background here. Clarence Thomas is nominated, the first—well, not the first—he would have been the second black Supreme Court member and a conservative. Also pretty conservative. Also a strict constructionist in terms of his interpretation. That seemed to be going through the Senate pretty quickly until Anita Hill made some allegations about the relationship, sexual innuendos that he had made. Things like that. I'm going to turn it over to you and let you flesh it out from there.

Callahan: Well, Alan talked to a liberal member of Congress, very liberal, that he had great respect for. And I'm not talking about Senator Simon now, okay. Great respect for. Very strong democrat too, and a successful political guy. He told Alan, This is about as good as you're going to get. So Alan was inclined to be for ...

DePue: What does that mean?

Callahan: Well, in other words, with this Republican administration, this is about as good as you're going to get. Okay. Thomas, in other words.

DePue: This would have been George W. Bush's nominee.

Callahan: Yeah. Now, Alan and I differ on Thomas. But if you recall one of the things that I said in one of the interviews that I gave you, I never had any respect for aides that would go around and when it turns out wrong, say, Well, now, I advised Dixon not to do that. Or if it turns out right, say, Well, it's my idea. I did that. I don't have no respect for people that do it. And you will never see me quoted, my views on Thomas. I'll just leave it to say that is one thing he and I differed on.

DePue: Does that mean you don't want to flesh out the reasons that you were ...

Callahan: Okay, when I was ... I was not for him because he forgot where he came from. He forgot his community. Forgot how he got his college education. He forgot about the African-American community. I think he is a terrible judge right now. I have always felt that Anita Hill and Thomas were both lying. Both of them. So Alan and I differed on that one. But am I going to criticize Alan Dixon for it? No, I'm not going to criticize him. He had a view and I had a view. But I couldn't live with myself if I said I was for the guy though.

DePue: Was he asking your opinion in situations like that?

Callahan: Oh, he asked different people. He asked different people.

DePue: Who was his main advisor on the staff when it dealt with legal issues?

Callahan: Bill Mattea, M-a-t-t-e-a. Still alive. Very good man. Talked to him a week ago. Could I have another cup of coffee please?

DePue: Sure. We'll have to take a quick break here. [break] Okay, we took a very quick break and I'll turn it over to you again here Gene.

Callahan: You asked me what my views were on Thomas. But I want to say that I give my views. I don't say now, you ought to vote this way, that way and so on. Now, when it got down to the final vote. I understood Alan voting for Thomas because no ... see, I would say hardly anyone believed either one of them. Either one of them, you know. But you couldn't prove it, you know. Paul Simon and Gene and a guy named, Bob Dixon – he was a lobbyist for Illinois Bell – and I were at a Penn State game, football game. We went up for the weekend. I think it was Notre Dame and Penn State. The Thomas vote was going to be that week and has Alan decided for sure how he is going to vote on Thomas. Because he and Paul were going back and forth, and I said, I think he is going to vote for him. He said, I understand that. After that though is when all hell broke loose with Anita Hill, after that statement, you know. And then, it took on a different dynamic. Now, the liberal congressman that I mentioned earlier ... when Alan voted for Thomas, he mentioned this congressman by name on the floor of the Senate. And this congressman called me, he said, Did Alan use my name? And I said, Yeah, he did. He said, Jesus, I don't want to get involved in this. He

says, Can you have it stricken from the record? Which you can do, you know, you have so many hours to do that. Well, we had his name stricken from the record. But that is what a dynamite issue this was. And this is a guy Alan trusted – still does, completely. And that vote is a major reason Alan lost. I am a believer in no one thing beat you, no one thing, usually. But (unintelligible) felt it had blown a hole in us by that time. Carol Moseley Braun was able to synchronize the women and the women's movement. And Alan Dixon with a great civil rights record got demolished in her home area. And she won. But all that came together and the Thomas vote was the galvanizing point for the opposition.

DePue: What was it that was so controversial about the Thomas nomination, about the Thomas appointment?

Callahan: Well, I think what I said earlier, more than the legal stuff. See, I don't see how you can accept all these things in government, you know, your education. Then come back and blame it. You don't stand up for your own family. You don't stand up for the African-American community. I don't understand people like this, you know. Michelle Bachman running for President now, but she is against subsidy. Bullcrap. You know, her family is getting all kind of subsidies.

DePue: Michelle Bachman, you're talking about.

Callahan: Yeah, that's right. I mean, I wouldn't vote for her ... of course, I've never voted for a Republican for President so that is not a fair statement.

DePue: Would you consider that Thomas was—I hesitate to use the word but—a racist in his views?

Callahan: No, no, no I don't think he is a racist. No I don't, I don't think that. I just think he is out of whack from where he came from. You know, it would be like me turning my back on the farming community when I worked for Dixon. As I mentioned earlier, I stayed out of all ag issues. Like Canadian bacon, when that was an issue. You know, export import. Because my Dad was so associated with, you know, the hog industry and my brother now. When I was on the board of trustees at SIU, I recused myself from anything that came up for Copley Press because my son-in-law was sports editor and anything from Lee Newspapers because my daughter worked with them. Any advertising, I just took myself out. And, I think what he did was just the opposite. He gets himself just turning away, you know, I would never turn my back on the farmers or the newspaper industry, you know. But I just don't understand that.

DePue: Okay. The result of that was Thomas is confirmed by a vote of fifty-two to forty-eight.

Callahan: Yeah.

DePue: And so he is currently still on the U.S. Supreme Court, and it is impossible now as we talk about these issues not to make the link with the election that is coming up but we will get in to that here in just a little bit. Okay. There is one other area that I really want to focus on though, and that's the Gulf War, the first Iraq war. And I wanted to ask what Dixon's position was on that. So, let's start off with the invasion of Kuwait in August second of 1990, his initial response to that, do you recall?

Callahan: I don't but I would say he supported it without... I don't want to speak authoritatively on these kind of things but I'd be surprised if he didn't support it.

DePue: Okay. So he would have come out early in support of Operation Desert Shield?

Callahan: I would think so.

DePue: Okay.

Callahan: But, you know, I don't guarantee that.

DePue: Well, it becomes a different issue, Operation Desert Shield, of course, is George Bush decides—and he is working with the United Nations all along through this process—but they decide we are going to protect Saudi Arabia. We are going to send significant U.S. forces to the Middle East to protect Saudi Arabia and the rest of the Middle East. That is one thing. But then, when you get into December timeframe and the decision now is we are going to expel Iraq from Kuwait, do you recall any of that?

Callahan: I don't.

DePue: Okay. The vote then in Congress, I believe, occurred in January of 1991. Do you remember how Dixon came down that?

Callahan: No, and the issue was what?

DePue: Give the President the authority to launch an invasion.

Callahan: I would guess that he voted for that. But I'm not positive.

DePue: Okay. Any other memories that you have about the Iraq war as an issue?

Callahan: I remember when the Grenada thing came up, he says ...

DePue: That was a couple of years before ...

Callahan: Alan says, we finally got a war where we won. (laugh)

DePue: There is that sense of humor again.

Callahan: Oh yeah, yeah.

DePue: But was he generally then supportive of things like Grenada and Panama and Iraq?

Callahan: Yeah.

DePue: Okay. Changing the subject entirely then. He also made the proposal—and this is about the timeframe I think this came up—that the national primaries – I think you’re primarily talking about presidential ...

Callahan: It was regional primaries.

DePue: Regional primaries – eight regional primaries. What was the rationale behind that.

Callahan: Well, I think whose idea that was was Tim McInerney’s idea on that. He thought it was fair and, uh, he thought it was responsible and he agreed with Tim and did it. And moved it. If I remember correctly, he put the bill in the regional primaries. I don’t know where it went or anything.

DePue: But what was the problem with having the current primary process?

Callahan: I think time ... let’s say time, you know, a lot of people think that when Nixon ... you know the Kennedy - Nixon race where the timeframe being different three hours from the west coast. They are saying how Kennedy’s carrying here influenced the vote out there, you know, three hours time limit. I think that would be one. And, I think he felt maybe with the regional primaries if a person can survive all those would have more national appeal. That would be my guess on that.

DePue: Was there some concern that states like Iowa and New Hampshire, maybe South Carolina, played too big a role based on the demographics that they had.

Callahan: He never mentioned that. I think the results show that they do.

DePue: Okay.

Callahan: Well that gets us in to the election of 1992.

DePue: Okay. And we have been flirting with that for some time because there is somebody ... this is all connected.

Callahan: Yeah.

DePue: Obviously we have to start with the reasons that Dixon, this time around, the guy who had won twenty-nine straight elections had won the last election

for Senate by sixty three percent suddenly finds himself in a very hot contested primary race. Can you explain why that happened?

Callahan: Well, I think I did a little bit ago. And I can reiterate that. Al Hofeld blew a hole in him and spend three million dollars of his money. The Thomas vote and Carol Moseley Braun got in. Nationally, it was the year of the woman as a starter. And with Hofeld's money and her entry in the race and at that time she was a responsible candidate. And Alan's refusal to go negative because, you know, polling shows people don't like negative advertising but it works.

DePue: Who was Albert Hofeld?

Callahan: Oh, he was a trial lawyer, then President of the Illinois Trial Lawyers Association. DePue: From the Chicago area?

Callahan: Uh-hm, yeah.

DePue: Why was he ...

Callahan: He didn't like Dixon's voting record, you know, enunciated a few things and slammed Dixon on everything that came up. And, uh, if it had been a one-on-one race, Dixon would have won it. In my view, he would have won it. But not a three way race, the way it ended up.

DePue: On a political spectrum was Hofeld farther to the left or the right of Dixon?

Callahan: Left. Carol was very much to the left for Dixon, yeah.

DePue: Was it philosophical or was it just personal ambitions that Hofeld had?

Callahan: I think both. I never met the man so, you know, I didn't know Hofeld.

DePue: Well, he spent millions of dollars of his money. Did he have the expectation that he could actually knock off one of the most popular politicians?

Callahan: I think he did.

DePue: Do you know about Hofeld's character, personality?

Callahan: I know more about it now.

DePue: Can you flesh it out a little bit for us.

Callahan: Well, I got to get into the personal stuff, but the *Chicago Tribune* had amazing stories about him about four, five years ago. Long after he was in that race. I wouldn't hire him as an attorney.

DePue: But you don't want to go too much farther than that?

Callahan: No, because it is personal stuff. It was banner stories in the *Tribune*. It might be worth your while looking at.

DePue: What were the nature of the ads that he was putting out about Dixon?

Callahan: You name it, it was there. Garbage in, garbage out. But it worked.

DePue: All negative stuff?

Callahan: All negative stuff.

DePue: Okay. Was some of it dealing with the Clarence Thomas hearings?

Callahan: Now, I don't know if he got into that as much as she did, you know.

DePue: She being Carol Moseley Braun?

Callahan: Yeah, yeah.

DePue: Compared with the money the two guys had to spend, she had practically nothing.

Callahan: That's right, yeah.

DePue: Can you talk at all about David Axelrod's involvement with the Hofeld campaign?

Callahan: Well, we had our differences. Now, David and I have made our peace, okay. And I tell you how we happened to make our peace. When my son died, he reached out to me and I am grateful for that. David Axelrod told us in writing that he supported Dixon and then he became Hofeld's main guy. I have all the letters ... I have the letters where, you know, where he was in the race and that we had misinterpreted, especially back and misinterpreted something that had happened. Well, it proved that we hadn't misinterpreted it but ...

Hubert Humphrey and Ted Kennedy are my favorite all time national Democratic senators. Humphrey said if you carry a grudge so long they will eat you up. And I try not to do that. Now, I do believe in the Kennedy philosophy: forgive and remember. But when a death happens in your immediate family, and someone reaches out to you, you never forget that. And I don't forget David doing that. And I respect him for doing that. And, you know, it's difficult for me even to discuss that.

DePue: Was there a point in time that Senator Dixon realized that he might be in serious trouble?

- Callahan: Well, when we had that meeting and I think he decided it wasn't in him to go negative. He didn't have his usual bounce in the campaign. You could feel things weren't going well. I thought, at the end, the polling was close. In the polls they showed us, we had to get negative. Peter Hart's our pollster and I think Peter Hart is the best in the country—Democratic, that is. Maybe the best period. You know, he does polling for the Wall Street Journal, as an example. He is a nationally known guy, complete integrity. And the polling showed we had to go negative. That is when Durbin says, he just lost the primary when he made that decision.
- DePue: Was that a month or two before the actual primary election?
- Callahan: I would say, uh, about a month. Yeah, about a month. Three weeks to a month.
- DePue: Okay. Tell us a little bit about Carol Moseley Braun as the third named candidate in this campaign. At that time, what was Dixon's view about her threat?
- Callahan: Well, he considered her a threat because the polling showed she was a threat. And the last polling we did shoot was very close and gaining. So, yeah, we knew it was possible. I told my wife election day, I said, Now, I want you to be prepared for something. I think we're going to get beat tonight. And she didn't believe it. You know, I said, Ann, I think we're going to get beat tonight, and I did. Now, like in the Paul Simon race when we lost it in '72, I thought we would win that race, even though my brother—whom I have great respect for, he's dead now—thought we were going to lose it. May lose it. He didn't say would lose it. But he was the first one to ever tell us what serious shape we were in though, my brother was. But, yeah, I was ... and then election day, Mike McKeon – the guy I think is the best pollster in the Midwest – Mike Lawrence will disagree with me on that comment, by the way. I was having lunch at the Track Shack. He was doing exit polling. He said, I think Alan's going to lose. He was the first one that told me that, you know, that day. He said, I think Alan is a loser.
- DePue: The primary campaign is a very expensive campaign. Did Dixon have to do some different things to raise the money to do that challenge?
- Callahan: We had a deficit but it wasn't huge, and we got two ten thousand dollar contributions after we lost. Try to raise money for a guy that's lost the Senate race. That is a tough, tough baby. I got both of those ten thousand dollar contributions, and I am very grateful to these guys that gave it. And then you find people you thought were your friends, run away from you.
- DePue: That doesn't surprise me.

Callahan: No, they really run too. In fact, there is one guy that Alan always had a good relationship. He ran away from us and he wouldn't return my phone calls even. Never did, never did return them. Now, this is very un-Christian like saying, I'm going to say now, very un-Christian like. A gal that I know from Belleville, finished first in her law class, Southern Illinois University. She is now a clerk for a U.S. federal judge. Told me about so and so's mother died, and said, I thought you would want to know that. And I said, Let me say something: I'm sorry she died but I don't care ever to hear anything about the guy that was running from me. Whatever happens, I don't care to know anything about it.

DePue: Do you recall the debate that the three of them had? That Dixon and Braun and Hofeld had?

Callahan: Nothing stood out for me.

DePue: Okay. Do you think that just by being there that Moseley Braun was able to get some more credibility?

Callahan: I think so, yeah. I had a very good friend that went to law school with her and he said, Don't underestimate her. She is very bright.

DePue: Okay. A little bit ago you kind of outlined the reasons you think that he lost the race. I want you to do that again with as much clarity as you can.

Callahan: Okay. Well, Hofeld blows the hole in Dixon on every voting issue that comes up – expenditures, not office expenditures, you know, pork barrel maybe. But anything that would come up. Spent three million of his own money on it doing that. And then Alan votes the Thomas vote; hurt us a lot. And Moseley Braun, as I said, got the women energized and the African-American community energized. In that area, Alan had always run very, very well because he had a great civil rights record. And she beat him. And I think those are the basic reasons.

DePue: Okay. It ended up Moseley Braun polls 38.3 percent, Dixon second about four points behind, 34.6 percent. And the most of the rest obviously goes to Hofeld after that, considerably lower. The mood that evening when you guys realized after this incredibly long service that Dixon had had in government and politics, what is the mood in the campaign?

Callahan: Down. It was not as down as when Paul Simon got beat for different reasons. We did not have a good campaign in '72 for Paul Simon. Our campaign was responsible. The legwork with the volunteers continued. We had problem with women because of the Thomas vote downstate. The mood was sadness. The day afterwards we had a wake at a bar restaurant on the north end of town. It burned down—I'm not thinking of the name of it—but we had people from all over the state come in. We drowned our sorrows and Alan called me ... he didn't come to the wake, by the way.

And I was not with him in Chicago; as I told you, I never went there. He called me either that day or right after that and he said, Will you not leave me til I leave office? I said, Of course, I won't leave you. That's the only thing of substance we talked about.

DePue: Had you been thinking, seeing the poll numbers and saying, He could lose this race, what am I going to do after this?

Callahan: Oh no, I have never played politics that way. I don't believe in safety first politics. I was always willing to be fired and I think if you are not willing to be fired, you're not going to be effective if you are a chief of staff. Now, that doesn't mean you say, You do it my way or I quit. Oh no, that's not it. You talk things over. See, Alan and I had an agreement that if he ever did something I couldn't stomach, I would give him two weeks notice and if he did something I couldn't stomach – or vice versa, in other words, we had two week agreement. We never even came close to doing that. And we would argue over things but never, ever personal arguments. See, I love the man and when you love someone you tell the truth. And I never hesitated to do that and because, as I mentioned earlier, I became more dogmatic on that after Paul Simon got beat because I felt I didn't speak up strongly enough when he came out for that income tax increase—even though I believe he was right—but he didn't need to say it. Shouldn't have said it, politically.

DePue: Had you given Dixon any advice on whether or not to go negative?

Callahan: Oh, yeah, I was for it. We were all for it. He said, It's not me.

DePue: Okay. Well, this is along the same vein. Do you recall his concession speech that night.

Callahan: Oh yeah, I do. I do. I do. That was an ad lib speech. It was a great speech. You know something. We can't get a copy of it. We have tried through the museum and the radio and TV museum; Tom Serafin who did work for us, he has got real good TV contacts. WGN doesn't have it on file. But, yeah it was a great speech.

DePue: What made it stand out so much in your memory?

Callahan: He thanked the voters for being kind to him for so many years. This is the end of my political career. I will not be running again. And said ... I forget how he said, tasted, he didn't say wine but he said, you know, it was a speech with no glamour to it. In fact, the announcers at WGN and other people with the media very praising about how he went out as a gentleman. In fact, the Champaign News Gazette wrote an editorial, "Loss of a Gentleman", titled an editorial about him. And see, Alan very much is a gentleman.

- DePue: Do you think, in retrospect now you can certainly prove this, but do you think he meant it at that time, that that was the end of his political career?
- Callahan: Yeah, yeah.
- DePue: Why?
- Callahan: He thought: he had been United States Senator and he reached number three person in the Senate, which is the highest anyone had done in Illinois since Everett Dirksen. Durbin now has that distinction and I have told Durbin—we live on Durkin Drive here in Springfield—that if he is elected majority leader we will change our street to Durbin, D-u-r-b-i-n. So, yes. There were efforts for people to have him run but no, he has never seriously thought about that.
- DePue: How old was he when he actually lost that race?
- Callahan: Well, he is eighty four now and that race was '92. So, nineteen years ago. Eighty four, seventy four, sixty four, sixty five I guess.
- DePue: Okay. So he still had a long way ahead for him but it was a good time to retire for him then, do you think?
- Callahan: Yeah, I think so. Yeah. We have kidded each other. Well, one thing about your loss Alan, you and I both made a lot more money than we ever would have since then than we would have in the Senate.
- DePue: When did you personally start thinking about, Wow, what am I going to do after this?
- Callahan: I went to work for a major league baseball team. That was my goal. I contacted the Cardinals because I am a Cardinals fan. And I didn't even get an interview with the Cardinals. I contacted Jerry Reinsdorf because I had had dealings with him when he owned the (unintelligible) Corporation. Minimal dealings. And the *Tribune*, I had an excellent relationship with for many years back to the time I was a reporter. And the *Tribune* gave me a cursory interview because I think of, you know, they didn't have anything. Now, Reinsdorf is a very blunt-speaking guy. Not rude but he doesn't varnish anything and he said, Let me tell you, these jobs, unless you are at the top, they don't pay anything. And I said, I'm not asking this for money. I said, I've always wanted to work for a major league baseball team. He said, Well, we don't have any openings now and I don't see any on the horizon because there is a very low turnover on these major league operations. If the ownership stays the same, you know. And he had been the owner for quite a while now of the White Sox and the Bulls. And he said, Well, are you wedded just to baseball? I said, Well I know a lot more about baseball than I do basketball but, No, I said, I would like to work for a sporting team. And, he said, Well, would you be willing to move to New

York, the PR job. That is where the main offices are. And I said, Yeah. I said that arbitrarily because my wife had an aunt and uncle she was very close to on Long Island. So, I knew she would buy that. And so I said, Yeah. So, he says, Well, I'm going to have Steven Greenburg, Hank Greenburg's son – do you know the name Hank Greenburg?

DePue: Uh-hm.

Callahan: Steve Greenburg is Hank Greenburg's son, was vice president of operations. Oh, and Reinsdorf said, I think we are going to fire Vay Vincent. He said, Now after that happens—he said, I think it will happen—he said, I'll have Greenburg interview you. Well, Greenburg came to New York to interview me. Now, this is when the anti-trust thing you could tell was getting hotter, hotter and hotter. Greenburg says, Could you handle anti-trust and PR from New York and I said, No. And anyone that tells you that they can is lying to you or completely naive. You can't do that. You got to be here. You got to be on the ground.

DePue: Here being?

Callahan: Washington, D.C. you know. So he writes me a letter. About ten days after that or within a week – I still have the letter by the way – saying we have decided not to fill the position we have talked about. Now I'm talking about, you know, in other words, I was turned down. I called Jerry Reinsdorf and read him this letter and he said, We'll see about that. Okay. He sets me up with an interview with Selig. Now...

DePue: Bud Selig.

Callahan: Yeah, Bud Selig. Now backtrack a little bit. Senator Cole of Wisconsin – I didn't know this at the time—is Bud Selig's best friend. They have lunch together once a week when they are both in Milwaukee at the same time on Friday, okay. They were college roommates, okay. Cole's office is right next to ours. Cole knew I had a very good work ethic. So he would get to work early. Like, for instance, one day he couldn't get in his own office. He forgot his key. And I said, Well, why don't you come in our office and do it. He said, I see you get in here early quite a bit. I said, Yeah, I just do that. I said, I'm a farm boy. So Alan says, You ought to talk to Senator Cole about working for the Milwaukee Bucks. I said, Alan, I don't want to work for the Milwaukee Bucks. I said, I want to live in Illinois. If I got a job with the Cardinals I would live in Belleville probably, and I said if it was Chicago, I'd get a place I can afford. He said, Well, I've set up an interview with you with Senator Cole. So Senator Cole and I meet in the Senate Senate breakfast room... just breakfast so anyone can go there just not senators. And he interviews me. Well, he must have said some good things to Selig. Well, then Reinsdorf sets up the interview with me. Now it's about the end of December and Alan is leaving office in January.

In fact, Simon told me that I had a job with him if I wanted one, okay; I told him I was really working on this. And Dick Durbin says, What the hell are you going to do?. He called me. Do you know what you're going to do yet? No, I said, I'm working on this. So then, in the meantime, I got job offers; they recommended a guy for a very high paying job outside of baseball and the guy didn't work out. And the guy calls me who has the job he is retired, he says, I will recommend you. He said, In my view you'll get the job. I said, No, I'm really working on this baseball thing. I don't know if I'm going to get it but I think I got a shot. So, I go out to see Selig. We have a good interview. I thought it was a good interview. Simon is on the judiciary committee and that is where our action is on anti-trust. So it gets now about the end of December and I told the wife, I'm going to tell you, if I go on Simon's payroll, I can't lobby Simon for one year. That's the law. I can't do that. Well, that got them in gear. And, Selig asked me if I would come to Milwaukee again. So we go over things again and he offers me the job. And he said, I'll draw up the contract with you. I said, If you don't mind, I'd rather not have a contract. I've never had one in my life and I don't want to go through life that way. Your word is good and my word is good. So I never had a contract with them. So now, we didn't talk about salary but ... well, yeah, we did between those two interviews. Shawn Sheehan – he is a lobbyist for the *Chicago Tribune*, in other words the Chicago Cubs – he said they asked him what I was making in the Senate and he said, Let me tell you Callahan wants that job so badly he is willing to work for nothing. (laugh) And I said, Shawn, What the hell are you doing to me. I need to exist here. So, I told him what I made but then I called the guy that had talked to me about this job. I had no idea what the other one paid. It was a three hundred thousand dollar plus starting job. And I said, I've got this other ... and I said, May I use this and tell them where it is and would you vouch for it if they call you and he said, Sure will, you know. So, I started working making more money than I did in the Senate but not three hundred dollars a year and they were great to me and still are great to me.

DePue: The specific name, the title that you had.

Callahan: Director of Governmental Relations. And I was the first full time lobbyist for major league baseball.

DePue: Okay. We're going to end with that because we want the next session to be pure baseball.

Callahan: Okay.

DePue: And get back to your other love I guess.

Callahan: Baseball, I've loved it all my life.

DePue: Okay. Thank you very much Gene.

Callahan: Thank you. Thank you. I enjoyed it.

[End of Interview #4. #5 continues]

Interview with Gene Callahan

IS-A-L-2011-030

Interview # 5: August 9, 2011

Interviewer: Mark DePue – ALPL Oral History Program

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DePue: Today is Tuesday, August 9, 2011. My name is Mark DePue, the Director of Oral History with the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library. I have Gene Callahan here with me this morning. Good morning.

Callahan: Good morning.

DePue: We are again in the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library. I believe, Gene, this is our fifth session. I’ve been looking forward to this one since the very beginning because I rarely get a chance to talk about baseball.

Callahan: Okay.

DePue: Or to listen to the stories you are going to have to tell us about baseball. We finished last time with you talking about how you got the job of essentially the lobbyist for major league baseball, working in Washington, D.C. But I wanted to back this whole thing up a little bit and start with you talking about your early love for baseball and kind of carry that up this parallel, and not necessarily career, but parallel fascination and love that you had for baseball through your entire political and your journalistic career as well. So, what was the start of it all?

Callahan: Well, I have loved baseball ever since I can remember. My Dad was forty one, almost forty two when I was born. My Mom was thirty eight, almost thirty nine. Usually I say forty two, thirty nine to be precise, forty one, thirty eight. I started playing catch with people as soon as I could, when I was in the second grade. It just wasn’t baseball, I loved every sport. But there were only two kids in the whole when I was in second grade, a one room school house. And I remember having to put an oatmeal box up on a coat hanger and taking a tennis ball and shooting at that oatmeal box and dribbling around on that. We had a teacher, her name was Miss Marshall

and the other student was in the sixth grade. Her name was Pauline Schroeder. And then when I got to be in the sixth grade, my Dad no longer could catch me because I could throw hard. My uncle lived with us; he was like a second Dad to me. He bought me my first baseball glove. He bought me my first basketball. My first pair of tennis shoes. Bought me a trumpet that I played for eight years in high school. Taught me how to tie my shoes. Taught me how to whistle. My uncle did all that. He was a bachelor, my Mom's only brother. When I was in the sixth grade, I was the starting pitcher on the grade school baseball team. That is sixth, seventh and eighth grade. Now my control was always suspect, I'm sorry to say. It's a lack of playing in games really and probably my own inability. But a kid named Wally Huff, one day in PE offered me a quarter if I wouldn't throw hard to him. And I said, No, I'm not going to do that.

DePue: I assume at this age it was strictly a fast ball?

Callahan: Oh yeah, yeah, that's all I threw it, yeah. Just fast ball. Threw it hard, you know, hard as I could. I didn't have a curve then. And, we had a good team. And then the sixth and seventh, I was the starting pitcher in the seventh grade. Then the eighth grade my Dad bought a farm near Milford, a second farm and we were there; they didn't have baseball in the eighth grade. They didn't have it as a freshman so I went two years without playing any baseball at all, any, period. And then the sophomore year they started baseball and I was the starting pitcher after the first game from my sophomore through senior year in high school.

Now to backtrack a little bit, it just wasn't baseball but ... see, I feel I wouldn't be here talking with you if it weren't for my family, Roosevelt, athletics and the U.S. Army. Athletics taught me not to quit and also Clifford Burry was my grade school basketball coach in the sixth grade. I was on what they called the second team. That is the fifth graders and sixth graders. That was the second team. Seventh and eighth grader was the varsity. And I'm not even getting any games. And I said, Mr. Burry if you don't start playing me more I'm going to quit. He said, Go ahead and quit. I knew my Dad would never let me quit anything, you know. Well, it taught me a heck of a lesson. You don't be going around telling someone like. In fact at my Dad's wake, Mr. Burry was there and I told him, Something you told me was a great lesson to me. And when he died I told his both daughters the same thing. So athletics to me was a part of discipline and also I knew, like you go to a basketball game. If you weren't on time you weren't going to start or you weren't going to play. By the time I am in eighth grade I was a starter of a grade school team, basketball. No baseball, no football. Just basketball only. But baseball was my best sport of the three. There were only twenty eight in my graduating class. When you are at small school you play everything if you like athletics.

DePue: And after high school then you were able to stay with baseball to a certain extent.

Callahan: Well, I did. I played in college. In fact I went out for the basketball team first. A guy named Dr. Joe Patterson Smith was not my advisor but he liked me. And I was in history class because I never missed a class. I mean I knew that I was being challenged academically because of my high school record. Joe Pat Smith was his name. By the way, got blinded in World War I, an explosion on a boat. And he calls me in, he said, I understand you are out for basketball, and I said, Yes. And he said, I'm told you are going to go out for baseball. I said, That's right. He said, Which is your better sport. I said, baseball. He said, Well, let me tell you something: you better drop basketball or you are not going to be around here for baseball. Academically he was talking. So I dropped basketball immediately so I never played. And then the baseball team, my first game was against Western Illinois University. It was the eighth inning where we got beat eight to nothing. I walked the first three batters and then I struck out the next three. They didn't score and the coach started me in the first conference game the following week against Wheaton.

DePue: Did you have more than one pitch by that time?

Callahan: Oh yeah, yeah. I had a good curve. I had two different kind of curves, the sinker curve and then really in today's standards would get murdered, a flat curve which they would have caught hanging, the good hitters would, but it broke quit a bit. In fact, my curve ball ended up being better than my fast ball. And you always sometimes look for excuses, why do things happen. I broke my wrist in a farm accident between my junior and senior year in high school and I felt that I never threw as hard after that. But that might be my imagination too, you know. But my curve got better. So anyway, it all evens out.

DePue: Did you think at the time when you were playing ball in college that you might have a chance at the bigs?

Callahan: My goal was to play professional baseball. That was my goal. In my sophomore year in college I realized I wasn't going to be good enough. I realized it right then. And then my senior year, I did not play because I needed to pass Spanish to graduate and I had a tutor. My brother paid for the tutor – thirty five dollars a month – and she was the wife of the Congregational minister in Jacksonville and she taught me. When I went to Illinois College, at first you had to have two years of a foreign language and pass your proficiency test. Later they changed it to two years of a foreign language or pass your proficiency test. And I don't know ... I didn't know until the Monday before the following Saturday that I was going to graduate from college. I was scared to death on it because my Dad didn't know any

of this difficulty because my brother was sending me the money. Because my Dad would never understood me having a tutor.

DePue: But it had to kill you that you had to give up baseball to be able to pass.

Callahan: It did. It did. But I did manage. At Illinois College they don't have fraternities, they call them societies, same thing. So I managed a society softball team and we won the championship so I enjoyed that.

DePue: This was a couple of interviews back, but didn't you play a little bit of baseball in the Army as well?

Callahan: Softball. Fast pitch softball. Played a lot. I played a lot of sports in the Army. I played basketball. Best game I ever had in my life was in the Army in basketball, and I played fast pitch softball. Won a double header once – once as starter once in relief. And played volleyball. I never played volleyball in my life but I did everything I could to get out of real stringent duty in the Army.

DePue: Were you also a pitcher in softball?

Callahan: Yes, I was. What is interesting enough, I had excellent control on softball. Excellent. And also I was smart in softball, that is. And I was very successful in pitching fast pitch softball. Then I played in the young democrats here in '58 and '59 until I got rheumatic fever and then I had to stop that.

DePue: Okay. So you got into your career now as a journalist. What was your involvement in all those years that you were in journalism and then working for first Simon and then Dixon.

Callahan: Well, let me backtrack just a little bit if I may. First, when I was in sixth ... I think I was in sixth grade now on this. I'm not sure what grade, but I was little. My Mom – who was very religious –said, Do you pray? And I said, Yes. She said, Do you pray every night? And I said, Yes. And said, What do you pray about? I said, That the St. Louis Cardinals will win the pennant. I might have told you that story before. But anyway, she said, Well that's fine but can you pray for the family too. So, then, you know, I wrote sports in high school for the Milford paper. It was the first non-paying job. Then I was a stringer for the Danville paper and the Kankakee paper. Then a sports editor of the Rambler, the student paper. And started working with the newspaper and radio station at Jacksonville. Then after the Army I got a job here at the paper as a police reporter, which was one of the two bottom jobs. I never did cover sports as an adult, but I always loved it. Still went to games and went to a lot of high school games and everything.

DePue: Well, this is a question I should be asking Ann, but I understand that when you guys were dating, baseball was part of that equation.

Callahan: Positively. Right. Have you ever seen the movie “The Diner” about the gal that had to learn the players of the Baltimore Colts football team. This happened a lot time before “The Diner” but that is right. She knew all the members. And someone asked her recently if she remembered any of those names. Musial was the only name she could come up with.

DePue: I understand it just wasn’t because she wanted to learn it but you would quiz her about this.

Callahan: Oh yeah. Oh yeah. Second position by position. Yeah. Red Schoendienst at second, Musial at first. Marty Marion, you know, Whitey _____?, you name them.

DePue: Okay you are whipping off these a little too quick for me to write down but that’s okay they can just figure that out on the internet here. Why, why did you think it was so important that she needed to know baseball when you were dating her?

Callahan: Well, I don’t know, I guess maybe just have one more thing in common, possibly. Like when my son, before he got married, he told his wife, that is widowed now, about being a baseball coach. What that entailed. He said, There are going to be a lot of times I am not going to be home, you know. And a coach’s wife, by the way, is the closest thing to a single parent you can be. When I’m talking about these things I wasn’t thinking about not being at home but if I’m going to go to a game I kind of like someone compatible with me going to the game, you know.

DePue: Did she enjoy going to the games with you?

Callahan: I think she got to enjoy them, yeah, after awhile.

DePue: Took a little while to get in to the game though.

Callahan: Yeah, I think so, yeah.

DePue: Were you the patient one who was explaining all of the rules and all the nuances as a baseball throw when you are at a game?

Callahan: Well, I don’t know how patient I am. She would probably say no. I did teach her how to drive.

DePue: You are a brave man.

Callahan: Her parents didn’t have a car and... So, but I’m not the most patient guy in the world. I wouldn’t brag about myself on that.

DePue: You had some kids that got involved in baseball. Tell us about that.

Callahan: Well, our son Dan was a very good baseball player at the grade school level, the high school level. Made all city as a junior and senior.

DePue: At which high school is this now?

Callahan: Springfield High School, and then went to the University of New Orleans on a full scholarship. He was recruited by the University of Illinois, University of Missouri and the University of New Orleans. Illinois, Missouri, University of New Orleans. In fact, you know, your kids, you try to guide them but you don't tell them what to do. I tried to guide him toward Illinois, you know. But he wanted to go to New Orleans. He thought he would get to play more games in the south. Now he wasn't that successful at the University of New Orleans but he played for a tremendous coach who later became athletic director who was completely honest. And when Dan was not pitching well, he did not run him off the program to save a scholarship. You know, some coaches do that. They will try to run kids off. He told Dan, This is a four year scholarship for you. If you don't get in trouble with the law and if you keep your grades up academically. So what he did with his coach's authority and everything, transferred to Quincy College which is now Quincy University and had two good years there. Was captain his senior year and then played one full year of pro ball at the Gulf coast league in Florida. Then the second year he got released after the season and was signed by Seattle for spring training and got released after spring training. Just didn't throw hard enough to make it. They even tried to teach him how to throw a split-finger but his hands, he wasn't big enough in here really to master that. So then he came to Springfield, was an assistant coach at Lanphier for two years and head coach at Springfield High for two years. And his team the second year won second in the state and that is when there was only one class too, I mean all the schools in Illinois.

He was single and that is when he decided he wanted to be a college coach. And I told him, You are not going to be a college coach unless you have a Master's degree or have played in the major leagues. And he hadn't played in the major leagues so he got a Master's degree. He became a grant assistant at SIU where he got his Masters and then Itchy Jones, the head coach, hired Dan. He was the first grad assistant he ever hired as a full time assistant. Then the head coaching job became open at Eastern Illinois University and he got that job at twenty seven years old and at that time was the youngest division one coach in baseball coach in America.

DePue: Very good. Were you the kind of father – maybe you just didn't have time with your schedule – but get to the little league games and not get to the games.

Callahan: I very seldom ever missed a game. I worked so many hours that no one could ever be critical of me taking off early to go to a game. And I always had it documented. Even then I would take like a half day vacation to go to

games. Yeah, I didn't miss games. I didn't miss games of my daughters. I was there. I think it gets back, like my Dad saw me play part of one high school baseball game. But it wasn't his fault. He is a farmer. What is he going to do. You know, he has got to farm. And basketball games, he was gone a lot. My Mom would go and my uncle would go. My brother would go to almost every game. He was thirteen years older than I. And I was also a father who never talked to coaches. I never, never ... there are some parents that are really pathetic, you know, trying to drive their kids to be something that they weren't. And also some outstanding athletes do that, you know, want their kids to be so advanced, they get kicked out of gyms and everything else. I know a guy that played football, played in the pros, all his kid great athletes, got kicked out of the gyms. It happened in the state of Illinois.

DePue: You mention your daughters; what sports were they involved in?

Callahan: Basketball. Lynn still has almost all the scoring records in Springfield. She averaged twenty seven, twenty seven point eight ... I think twenty seven point eight her senior year in high school.

DePue: Springfield High School?

Callahan: Springfield High School. She still has the record boys and girls in the city tournament at forty eight points. She had her number retired at Springfield High. I think she is the only women's basketball player to have that. She was at the time. She was the first.

DePue: So she is in the Springfield Hall of Fame.

Callahan: She is in the Springfield Sports Hall of Fame. And our daughter, Sherry, played two years at Illinois College.

DePue: Sharon?

Callahan: Sherry, C-h-r-i. And she is in the Illinois College sports hall of fame, having played volleyball and basketball.

DePue: Okay. Well, that gets us up to the story that you told us last time we talked but you are now getting in to the early 1990's. Obviously we talked at length about Dixon's political career coming to an end in that '92 senatorial campaign. And if you could just very quickly kind of lay out the groundwork again in how you became the lobbyist for major league baseball.

Callahan: Well, first, I wanted to work for a major league baseball team. Cardinals would have been my first choice. I'm a Cardinals fan. I didn't even get an interview there. Jerry Reinsdorff who owned then, and still does, the White Sox and Chicago Bulls did give me an interview. I had met him before but

didn't know him well. Had dealt with him over the telephone on business type stuff. And then the Cubs gave me a cursory interview because of my long standing good relationship with the [*Chicago*] *Tribune*. But a key thing that happened was, Dixon said, You know, you ought to talk to Senator Cole of Wisconsin—he owns the Milwaukee Bucks—about going to work there. I said, Alan I don't know that much about basketball. And I don't want to move to Wisconsin; I want to live in Illinois. And he said, Well, I've set up an interview for you anyway. And so, Senator Cole and I met in the cafeteria. We talked about different things. And what I didn't know until this interview was he and Bud Selig were college roommates and each other's best friend. And when they are in town they have lunch every Friday at a delicatessen in their home neighborhood.

DePue: And Selig was at that time the acting commissioner of major league baseball.

Callahan: That's right.

DePue: Okay. I think right before that, Fay Vincent.

Callahan: Yeah Fay Vincent got fired. In fact, when I had that interview with Reinsdorff he told me, I don't think Vincent is going to be around here very long. In fact, I remember he said some things that I thought were pretty private on the telephone, and I got up and said, I'll leave. He said, No, sit down. So later, when I got to know him well. I said, Why did you let me stay there when you were talking about very sensitive things? He said, I had checked you out. I knew you didn't talk.

DePue: Do you remember what Vincent got in trouble with the owners about.

Callahan: Not really. But they didn't like the job he was doing, I know that. Well, one of them was ... this was a major thing. He tried to move the Chicago Cubs into the western division. Would have screwed up everything for WGN-TV, you know, two hour difference. And the *Tribune* became an enemy of Vincent and had more to do with business, you know, than baseball. And also, by the way, Stan Cook and I developed an excellent working relationship. He was the president of the Cubs. I had not met him at that time but I was blessed by the *Chicago Tribune* lobbyists in Washington, D.C. – Sean Sheehan that I mentioned a week ago – had told Stan Cook good things about me. And then Senator Cole had told Seeley good things about me and then, as I mentioned earlier, that Reinsdorff used to say, Callahan, the one reason we hired you, we got tired of taking Alan Dixon and Paul Simon's telephone calls. Because they really pushed me. They pushed me hard. And that's how I got it.

DePue: Once you landed the job then, tell us what the job entails.

Callahan: Well, the main thing was to preserve the anti-trust exemption where owners had the right to move where they wanted to move. Also, keep teams from moving where they, you know, ... just because they wanted to on a whim that couldn't do it. And just as important, it saved the minor leagues. And Reinsdorff told me that they had never brought the minor leagues into the equation before. And my assistant in Washington, Sabrina La_____, told me she had met Stan Brand, B-r-a-n-d, who was the minor league's lobbyist and Brand had been Tip O'Neil's chief legal counsel. And Dick Durbin really liked Brand. Now I had never met him; Sabrina had met him at a social occasion so I called him and asked if Sabrina and I could come over to see him. And he said, Sure. Well, that was the beginning of a great relationship because state law, you know, only two people got help, maybe three people could help you, on a major league franchise – the two senators and the congressman that is connected right there and then a few others. But when you get into the minor league things – you know, you got a minor league team in Canton County. You have one in Peoria. You had one in the suburbs. You had one in the Quad Cities, you know. So you could get these congressmen involved. Like Ray LaHood became one of our biggest supporters. Now you would say, well, how does that affect the minor leagues. If the majors would lose the anti-trust exemption, the minor league system would be hardly anything. You would have it like the MBA does. You know they have these, what they call instructional leagues and things like that. But you wouldn't have the minor league ball. For instance, my former son-in-law just yesterday gave me a book, The History of Minor League Baseball. I would say it is that thick, you know.

DePue: Eight to ten inches thick.

Callahan: Well, it's not that thick. That thick, you know. I'll bring it in to show you just how thick it is. It's got Springfield in there when they were in a Three I league. When they were in the MOV league – that's Mississippi Ohio Valley. And, they got the teams when they finished. And I used to go to a lot of games in Danville High School. Between my junior and senior in college, my Dad asked me, You are putting a lot of mileage on the truck. Where are you going? We had a 1950- something. This was the summer of '54, but a good GMC truck, three quarter ton. And I said, I'm going to the baseball game in Danville, minor league games. He said, Who are you going with. I said, Bob Evans. Bob Evans was a friend of mine. Still probably my best friend in Milford, that I had hired. See, I did the sp_____ work at home. I got half the crop and my Dad paid for all the machinery and the gas and everything else and I hired Bob Evans at forty cents an hour. So when we get done picking asparagus we would go swim in the sugar creek and then at night, as soon as we got the hogs fed, we would take off for Danville to go to the games. I never told my Dad where I was going, of course. He said, Well, I want you to quit doing that; you put too many miles. I said, Would you rather me be drinking beer at B&S's tavern in Watseka where all my other friends go, or would you rather me be going to

the baseball game in Danville? Well, he never answered that question and never did be critical of me again for going to Danville.

DePue: I am going to pull you back here because I think for my own understanding, and also for anybody who is going to be listening to this, it is important to kind of flesh out what this anti-trust exemption is all about. I know that it stems from the early twentieth century and there was another league but, suffice it to say, there was a Supreme Court ruling ...

Callahan: Oliver Wendell Holmes

DePue: 1922, something like that.

Callahan: Oliver Wendell Homes. It said that the major league baseball is a sport. It is not a business. And I don't think you can make that statement that clearly now as you could then because it is a business. It is a business both for the players as business by the owners. Well, let's take a look at Los Angeles, what is going on right now with the Dodgers. But baseball has always been able to preserve that.

DePue: Where other sports have not been able to claim that.

Callahan: Baseball is the only one, yeah. It is the only sport with complete anti-trust exemption. Now a few years ago you might remember where the union said they had made some inroads in anti-trust window dressing. I am a very pro-union guy but it was window dressing what they ... it was so miniscule it didn't even stick out to me.

DePue: Well, most people think of anti-trust, they don't normally think of things like baseball or football.

Callahan: That's right.

DePue: They think of, well, that is set up so that you don't have one massive business that dominates the entire thing, that you have to have competition and that is what ...

Callahan: And we have it. And major league baseball has it. And minor league baseball has it. That is why Stan Brand became so effective in this life. So effective. He was able to preserve. For instance, I have a photograph at home from the owner of the Peoria Chiefs, Pete Vonachen saying how much I had done for minor league baseball. When you come to my office at home, you will see that – the Old Peoria thing. And then also, when the new ballpark was built in Peoria, they were having difficulty in certain segments. I was able to help Pete Vonachen. Not because he was from Illinois; because I thought he was right. In fact, he was from Illinois helped a lot too.

- DePue: So if this is established case law going back to the early twentieth century, why do they need to have a lobbyist working in Congress to preserve it.
- Callahan: Major league baseball players wanted to overturn it.
- DePue: Okay. Now explain that one to me.
- Callahan: Money. See, they thought they could threaten major league baseball. Don Fehr was the executive director, is a brilliant man. Do I think he cares about ... and his job was to get his players money.
- DePue: Executive Director of the players union?
- Callahan: Yeah, uh-hum.
- DePue: And their logic was if you get rid of the exemption then there is competition from other leagues or what?
- Callahan: No, no, no, the owners wouldn't have as much power. See there have been some things whittled down, like the Kirk Flood case, you know, which I agree with, where a major league team cannot own. Let's say you sign with the Cardinals. You go to the minor leagues. In the old days, you are connected with the Cardinals forever unless they release you. Now, you are there – I think it's five and a half years, five and a half years – you are with that team. And then they can trade you, you can quit, you can do anything you want to do. You can always quit. I don't mean that. But Fehr did a great job in getting ball players money. I mean I applaud him for what he did on money. But do I think his main interest is a long-term care of major league and minor league baseball. See, they have nothing to do with minor league baseball, the players union. They don't support minor league baseball. Major league baseball does. DePue: So players in the minor leagues are not by definition, union members?
- Callahan: That's right. That is right. That is how they were able to get drug testing a lot earlier in the minor leagues than they were in the major leagues. Another thing: guy named Sam Jethrow from East St. Louis filed a suit – now this is not directly involved with the anti-trust but a case of history – Sam Jethrow sued major league baseball for major league baseball not having a pension for former African-American players, Negro major leagues. And, Carol Moseley Braun, the senator then, defeated Alan Dixon, was trying to help Jethrow. I talked to Jerry Reinsdorff, who was chairman of the legislative committee for the owners. He said, you tell Carol – is how he put it – that Sam Jethrow is not going to win this case. But, keep his cool, you keep your cool, and we will try to get the pension system worked out after this case is over. Well, he was right. The case was dismissed. There is a pension for Negro major league baseball players now. Thanks probably – I don't know in what order – probably Jerry Reinsdorff, Bud Selig, Carol Moseley Braun and myself. Now, I told Carol Moseley Braun this one time

and she said, Senator Reid also helped a lot. Now he must have been working with her directly because his name never came up in anything I ever did with major league baseball.

DePue: When was the demise of the Negro leagues? Was that in the '50's?

Callahan: Well, let me see. Let's see, Jackie started in '46, say, probably got rid about in the '50s. And, by the way, Josh Johnson, who was a very successful educator that lived in Springfield was a guy that I contacted a lot during this case. Well, he was highly intelligent. In fact, I did one of the two eulogies at his funeral. He was a great success story. When he got his first pension check, he called me. Now, he was such a success, he didn't really need that. You understand, like the others did. Some of those guys had no money at all. And then (unintelligible) you know, was in Negro major leagues. He is a legend in Negro baseball. He got a pension and he could have used it. And Reinsdorf had already put him on his payroll there for community relations there because Reinsdorf has a great social heart. And, in fact, he just won ... they call it the Nobel Peace Prize of community service, nationally. He just won this within the last three months. You might have read that at the time. It got great publicity in Illinois.

DePue: Tell us about Bud Selig as a personality and his character that he brought to that job as commissioner?

Callahan: Oh, I really like him. He was a stand up guy. As an example, I told a United States Senator once that he was a disgrace to the people he represented. And I got thinking about what I had said – yeah, that is pretty strong language coming from a lobbyist to a senator. I meant it. Still mean it as I sit here right now. Only time I ever called him at home in five years. I said, Bud, let me tell you what I just did. And he said, Good for you. Okay. Now, another time. Example. I diagrammed a thing where every major league owner was to contact certain people in the anti-trust act. They all did except one. So we had a meeting, just the legislative committee. And I gave them a report. We get to the state and they said, What happened here. I said, Well, so and so told me he was going to take care of it and he didn't make a call. So I see him later at the full meeting of all the owners, and he said, I understand you were very critical of me today at the legislative committee. I said, I was. And he said, Why? And I told him. He said, Well, that's not my style. I said, Why didn't you tell me that is not your style so I could have skinned the cat another way. You didn't tell me that wasn't your style. And he said, What I want you to know, I don't like it. I said, Well, I want you to know, sir, I wouldn't change it one iota. And that was it. Now what that owner did, he never dealt with me again but he did have his attorney deal with me – his chief attorney – and we had a good relationship. And also, his daughter—I found out during that summer—was an intern at a U.S. Senate office and I took her to lunch and talk. Had a pleasant lunch. And I made sure I didn't put that on my expense account

(laugh). And I got a handwritten note from him thanking me for being nice to his daughter. That is the only owner I ever had difficulty with.

DePue: You are not naming the owner.

Callahan: No, no.

DePue: Okay.

Callahan: I will say one thing about the job though. Because a lot of people I tell that story to, they say, Steinbrenner? And I said, No. Steinbrenner and I had a good relationship.

DePue: That strikes me that would be his style, to call people up.

Callahan: Oh yeah, it would be, yeah. He had done it. Yeah, he loved ... Two stories about him. He called me on a matter that did not pertain to baseball, pertained to a shipping business. So when he told me he was very critical of the senator. He said, How do I get around this? So I said, Let me think about it for a day and I will call tomorrow. So I called him the next day and gave him my advice. Now, see we had only had owners meetings four times a year, four times, so I would go up to these owners outside of the legislative committee. I say, I'm Gene Callahan with major league baseball in Washington, D.C. I would always do that, you know, except the ones I knew well. And that was the legislative committee basically to be redundant. So I go up to him now – this is probably my third year with major league baseball – and I go up, I say, Gene Callahan with major league baseball. And he said, Like I don't know who you are. We shook hands and he walked a few steps and I walked and he calls me. He says, Callahan. I turn around. He says, That was good advice you gave me, you know. And another time, I would get tickets which you could do under the old thing. Complimentary tickets for staff people and members of Congress. You can't do that under present rules, by the way. I asked Yankees for two outstanding tickets for a guy in a prominent position in the Senate, staff position. He turned me down. So I called his aide back and I said, I want to tell you something. You are the only team that has ever turned me down since I have been in major league baseball. Now, I want the tickets but put them on my own expense account. So, they took the information down. They called me that day and said, Mr. Steinbrenner has changed his mind. He will have the tickets. You know. But, also there was a local thing when he stayed at the Governor's Mansion. I didn't know he was in town and I called him, and his secretary told me that he was in a airplane on his way to Florida. I said, He doesn't need to return my call. But I said, Just let him know I'm willing to run errands for him if he ever comes to – he came here to watch horses race and stayed with Governor Edgar at the mansion. Governor Edgar loved racing. And, so he did return my call. And he said, I knew you were from Illinois. Didn't know you were from Springfield. And

he told me if he ever came here again he would look me up. But he never did come here again.

DePue: How did the politics play out in Congress itself in terms of those politicians who would be more likely to favor the players side of the argument versus the owners side?

Callahan: Well, some of the strong union people were with the players because the players' union is a union.

DePue: So that means a lot of the Democrats ...

Callahan: Yeah, there would be some. Now, we lost one vote all the time I was with baseball on this committee. It was an eight to seven vote.

DePue: What was the committee, do you remember?

Callahan: Yeah, judiciary committee. And Senator Kennedy voted against us. Paul Simon was handling the Democratic proxies. Senator Hatch the Republican proxies for us. And Hatch voted against us. How do you like that? He was handling the Republican proxies. Okay. Kennedy didn't lie to me at all. He told me he had ... I went to a fundraiser he had but I didn't contribute to him because I told the guy – in fact, the Illinoisan, Bill Singer, was having a fundraiser for him at his law office. The Senator – I don't know if they were married at the time or his second wife – they were there. And he told me about some problems he had. And I said, I respect your views. And we had a pleasant conversation. He did know of my long standing respect for the Kennedy family because Paul Simon had done that for me. And, he voted against us. Well, what I did – a guy named John Harrington...

First you have to understand my philosophy. You have to be willing to be fired any day you are on a job. And if you are not willing to be fired, you are not going to be effective. I was always willing to be fired. I was always willing, and if when I would do something immediately, I would do it. I would move and then tell my boss what I did.

So, John Harrington had raised a lot of money for the Kennedy library. Public democratic, Harrington. I shouldn't say that. A public Kennedy fan. Strong Kennedy fan. Irish, you know. And so on. And I called Paul Kirk, who later succeeded Kennedy as U.S. Senator. Paul Kirk is former Democratic National Chairman, that we had helped become National Chairman. When I say "we", Alan Dixon and I got involved because of a friend who was from Massachusetts originally. Alan told me I could do that. That was something I wouldn't put him out, you know, out there but I wouldn't have been for Kennedy if Alan said don't do it. I mean, Paul Kirk, you understand. I wouldn't do something like that. Because that's who are talking about an election and so on. But this was an issue. I call Kirk and I said, You publicly embarrassed Senator Kennedy. First, let me say, Kirk

liked me and knew me and respected me and vice versa. And I said, Senator Kennedy has publicly embarrassed John Harrington today, the owner and president of the Red Sox. He said, How is that. I said, He voted against anti-trust. He voted against the preservation anti-trust. I said, This is publicly embarrassing that you would do that to a guy that has been so faithful to the Kennedy family. Raised so much money for you. Then I called John Harrington and told him what I had done. He said, Well, you are absolutely right. That is how I feel. Well, Kennedy became one of our two best backers to never let that bill get to the floor of the Senate. We had sixty-seven votes and they told Metzenbaum, You bring that bill up, you are going to be publicly embarrassed. He and Harkin of Iowa. And why was Harkin interested? Triple A team in Des Moines, you know.

DePue: So even though Kennedy voted for the players and committee, he made sure it didn't get to the floor of the Senate.

Callahan: That's right, that's right.

DePue: How about on the House side?

Callahan: Henry Hyde was our main guy. You know, he was chairman of the judiciary committee. Henry Hyde was an athlete. He had a son in minor league baseball. He knew me well. Knew Alan Dixon very well. Knew Alan better than me. And he liked me and his son and I were friends. And he also had a person head of the judiciary committee—I am not thinking of his name right now, I am embarrassed to say—that I had recommended as my successor.

DePue: It would have been a Democrat the first year.

Callahan: Oh yeah, but it was Republican now. When I retired though ... yeah. I am not thinking of his name. But anyway, I had recommended him because he loved baseball. He knew the law. He was for the preservation of anti-trust exemption and every baseball agreed with my recommendation. And what happened was ... I'll get you his name ... his son died on that soccer field in college. His wife did not want him to fly. And really there wasn't that much flying outside of four times a year but he took his name out of consideration. So that is how I got the extra year with major league here from Springfield because he turned the job down.

DePue: When you first got the job did you know what the term was?

Callahan: Now what do you mean the term?

DePue: How long you are going to be in that position?

Callahan: Oh no. In fact, Selig and I agreed on what the salary was and what I'd do. He said, we will draw up a contract. I said, if you don't mind I prefer not to have a contract. I have never had one in my life.

DePue: Yeah, you told us that last time.

Callahan: And I said, Your word is good. My word is good. So I felt it was good as long as I did a good job. If I didn't do a good job, they had the right to fire me. And if there is something I couldn't stomach, I wouldn't have stayed. It was a great relationship. Still is. Still is.

DePue: In both the House and the Senate you talk about the judiciary committee. Is that because they have purview over anti-trust legislation?

Callahan: Yeah, they are the first, yeah.

DePue: How about broadcasting legislation? Was that something that you took ...

Callahan: Let me tell you, that was never ... We had subcontract lobbyists, or contract lobbyists. I shouldn't say subcontract lobbyists. But we knew that area well. I might make political calls to guys that were friends of mine, you know, in Congress, staff people and so on. But I never considered myself as being the authority at all. I would say on the anti-trust, there was no layman that knew it better than I. The technical attorneys all knew it better than I.

DePue: But anti-trust law is a pretty complicated stew of fish.

Callahan: It is, but I knew enough about it how I could handle the baseball situation on the field, you know. Broadcasting, no, I did not. And never pretended to.

DePue: Were there other issues you became pretty involved in in your position?

Callahan: That was it. Also what made it good, see, I was the first. I opened the first Washington office for major league baseball. Now, they had lobbyists before but I was the first one to just represent baseball only. And I could go in ... like, if, let's say that Senator that I said he was a disgrace ... if I had been a contract lobbyist, I couldn't have done that because you have so many other clients, you can't upset it here because of what you are doing here. And I never practiced safety first politics and I certainly never practiced safety first lobby. Same way. And as proof of that, somewhat proof, like the thirteenth, my whole family and I – when I said whole, we change it each year for different kids – we are going to be Reisdorff's guests at his private box in Chicago. And he and Selig are close and I didn't talk to Selig but I called him a week ago on his birthday. So we are in touch with each other.

DePue: Why did Bud Selig serve so long as the interim?

Callahan: Well, I will tell you what I think. He never did—now this is theory based on a little fact, but not completely, okay—is that he didn't want it because he didn't want to move to New York. His wife didn't want him to take it, okay. You know he served as acting for years. Now, it's my theory that when they finally said he could have a full time office in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, I think that probably satisfied his wife and he took it under those conditions.

DePue: That was '98 or '99 timeframe in there?

Callahan: Well, let me see. I left in . '93, probably somewhere in there. Now, as an example, if my wife said I will not move to Washington, D.C., I wouldn't have gone. I have said that. I owe her that.

DePue: Did the players union have a lobbyist in D.C.?

Callahan: Yeah, Fehr, Fehr.

DePue: That was there before ...

Callahan: Oh yeah and they had others, yeah. And they were good. They were good.

DePue: Well, all of this gets us into the most memorable experience in baseball when you were serving as a lobbyist. I don't know if you had a lot of direct involvement with him, but I am sure you can talk at length about how you felt about the players strike in 1994 , which started on August twelfth, right when the pennant races are really starting to solidify, and getting into the exciting part of the season for baseball.

Callahan: Well, that was very, very troubling. Now, number one, I never was involved in any of the labor negotiations. None whatsoever.

DePue: Can you explain the origins of the strike? Why it came about?

Callahan: Money, money. It usually will go down to money on everything.

DePue: The players wanted more money. Was there a salary cap that was preventing them?

Callahan: Oh yeah, well, we never had a salary cap. Still don't. Baseball doesn't. You know, there are salary caps in other sports. There is none in baseball. So there was a lot of give and take and I think it is very unfortunate what happened. They had the All Star game that year and then they didn't have it. In fact, that's the ring I have here. The '94 All Star ring. It was very troubling to me because people that, you know, they would get all over me, and I would listen. I never did comment. I never argued with anyone.

DePue: They being the players?

Callahan: No, no, no, no. Members of Congress, you know. Oh yeah, members of Congress. They wanted to watch baseball. And, there is a newspaper reporter that I know that I called, asking if he wanted to go to a game. And he said, yeah, and I said, you and wife. I said Ann and I are going to go and he said, Well, she won't be coming. Well, I thought maybe they were having some domestic problems, you know, it concerned me. I said, How is your wife? He said, Oh she is fine. Because I knew this guy's ... well, I never did meet her, but I knew this guy's mother from the telephone. You know, from Shawnee town, Illinois. He said, Oh no, she is fine but she said she says she just vowed she would never go to another baseball game she was so upset with the strike. And, boy, that was a tough, tough nut to crack. It took baseball quite a while to get back on even keel there.

DePue: Which side of the argument, at that time, did you have more sympathy for?

Callahan: Well, I had more sympathy with the owners because I thought the players were being too greedy and there were teams that were losing money and there are still teams losing money. For instance, I am very concerned about the NBA situation now. And I think, as of right today, I think there will be a lock-out. I don't think they are going to start playing. As of right today. That could change tomorrow but, boy, there is going to have to be a lot of give by the players on that because there are teams losing money.

DePue: You are saying the NBA?

Callahan: Yeah, the NBA, yeah.

DePue: And, of course, NFL just got passed their dispute.

Callahan: And I'm glad they did. Yeah, very glad they did.

DePue: Was collective bargaining part of the arrangement, or is that something that had already been accepted?

Callahan: Oh yeah, now right now, I think it is a pretty good relationship with major league baseball in the union, as of right now. And I think there has been since the last agreement. But, you know, I worked at the newspaper when there were times when there were labor difficulty. The Copley Press, they were not unionized here. You know, nothing is easy when it comes to labor strike. Have you ever read the book Bloody Williamson?

DePue: I'm familiar with it, yes.

Callahan: You know, what the buyers went through and what the owners went through. That is a terrible situation.

DePue: I know that – at least my understanding is – that all of this dispute between the owners and the union had been building for many, many years. They

had a series of difficult negotiation years and I guess it all came to head in '94 then for them.

Callahan: Uh-hm, uh-hm.

DePue: Who was the big loser in all that?

Callahan: Baseball. Period. They both lost and they both lost regarding trust and it was a tough, tough situation.

DePue: Trust of the ...

Callahan: The people, of the people. Just getting back to what that the reporter's wife said: "This is a sad situation for baseball." God, we had baseball during World War II, you know, and here we in peace time, the economy is pretty good, not playing baseball.

DePue: Is it a factor that the public just couldn't quite comprehend, or couldn't swallow an argument between billionaires and millionaires?

Callahan: I agree with that, yeah. Yeah, I agree with that.

DePue: What was your mood during that time, a guy who had grown up with baseball, loved it his entire life.

Callahan: Oh, I missed it. Oh, I was going to minor league games out there. Went to a lot of minor league games.

DePue: Were you as busy during the strike year?

Callahan: No, no, I wasn't. But the criticism was heavier, you know.

DePue: Probably from both sides. The senators and congressman who favored the anti-trust exemption and those who didn't.

Callahan: Yeah, and keep in mind, I come from a strong union family but I positively believed then – and I believe now, and I believed in my cause and I could go out and sell it because I believed in it. And there wasn't any doubt in my mind about it. And the courts overall have been very kind to baseball. I hope they always are.

DePue: What did you think about the whole notion early, I think in 1995 five, they were toying around with substitute players?

Callahan: Well, I never thought much of that. I didn't like that at all. No, didn't like that at all.

DePue: Why not?

- Callahan: Well, I just ... with quality, quality, baseball. You know, they had triple A, double A, hey, for a reason – rookie league, for reason, quality, you know. If you pay a price for a ticket you want to see the best.
- DePue: But I assume that is the owner's idea to find some way to have something ...
- Callahan: Some of them, yeah. Yeah, some of the owners wanted to do that, not the real practicals, I don't think.
- DePue: You remember any in particular?
- Callahan: No. I wouldn't identify them, you know, if I did.
- DePue: Okay. Do you recall how it finally got sorted out at the end?
- Callahan: I think in the end, when you say who lost, well, baseball lost. I think the management gave in more. In fact, there were some members of the owners that didn't vote for that agreement. Now, that is a public record there – which ones didn't. And I thought the owners gave in quite a bit on that.
- DePue: Well, this gets in another complication of baseball, was tinkering a little bit with the reserve clause and the number of years that a player was actually committed to a team. Was that part of the equation?
- Callahan: No, no. That was the Curt Flood case and he won that through the courts. Baseball players owe Curt Flood an awful lot. And he ought to be in the Hall of Fame, what he did for the players.
- DePue: Was that back in the '70s?
- Callahan: Well, it started before then. It started probably in the '60s. And, by the way, a guy here in town wrote a book on that. An attorney, Neil Flynn. No one knows the Curt Flood case better than Neil Flynn. He is an attorney. He loves baseball. I was able to help with him with that book. Not by any writing or anything like that. But he couldn't get anyone to talk with him and I arranged some people to talk with him and he was completely trustworthy. He wasn't going in with an open or closed mind. I never really talked to him at length on what his personal feelings are on it. He is a Democrat and smart but I don't know. I just did it, I thought, because I knew he was honest.
- DePue: I'd like to ask you just to reflect on some things here as an avid baseball fan and also in the role you have had. I don't think you have had any direct involvement with these things I wanted to talk to you about, but I just wanted to get your impression. The Montreal Expo's were really heating up in 1994. They had this great year. Everything seemed to be falling into place for them finally. And even had some of the spectators were coming to

the games finally. And that whole thing came to a crashing halt because of the strike.

Callahan: It is a baseball and Canadian tragedy. I'm saying baseball, not a tragedy, you understand. But a baseball ... it was terrible what happened to the Montreal fans, where Jackie Robinson started his minor league career – after playing in the Negro leagues, of course – and they never came back. And they finally had to move.

DePue: Tony Gwen, that is another one that is mentioned. He was batting three ninety four at the time this ended and it looked like he had a chance at breaking that four hundred mark.

Callahan: Yeah, yeah. You feel for a guy like that. By the way, I think he is a pretty good announcer on ESPN. He is a successful college baseball coach and his reputation is pretty good at San Diego State.

DePue: When the season started in '95 – I think it might have started – did it start on time?

Callahan: Yeah, let me see, '90, let me see ... we lost '95, I think it did start on time.

DePue: Yeah, I think it was April, right at the beginning of April when the strike ended.

Callahan: Yeah, I think it started on time.

DePue: What was your concern at that time, because by that time it was clear the fans were pretty darn mad.

Callahan: Well, I was number one, relieved that they were playing. And I felt like this, that nothing could get worse. Everything is going to have to get better, you know. And, as far as I was concerned, it did get better.

DePue: Did you have a fear, though, that it was going to take a long time that the fans were going to be alienated?

Callahan: Oh yeah, especially after that one gal said she didn't care to go to a game forever. Yeah, there were people, yeah, didn't come back.

DePue: Well, here is one of the reasons it came back. That was Cal Ripkin's year.

Callahan: I was at the game, with Henry Hyde, Ray LaHood, Melinda Lewis, my assistant, Martin Simon, Paul's Simon and Tony Hyde, Henry's son. Six of us had good seats. It was a great event, very moving. My wife and I saw Cal Ripkin hit his first major league home run so we followed him all the way through. And we think we saw Billy hit his first homerun but I'm not sure of that. I know we saw Cal's first homerun.

- DePue: Billy?
- Callahan: Ripkin. His brother.
- DePue: Oh, okay.
- Callahan: Oh, yeah, that was tremendous event.
- DePue: That was September 6, '95, towards the end of the season, so all that anticipation could build up for the entire season. And it sold out. So you must have bought your tickets long before ...
- Callahan: No, those were six that I got because of my job. I didn't have to pay for those. My wife didn't go because she was in Illinois or she would have been there.
- DePue: Michael Jordan deciding he wanted to be a baseball player. That was about that same timeframe.
- Callahan: Well, there is an interesting thing on that. I am in the White Sox playoff game and I'm with baseball and my son and I are together and we are sitting in the front row seats on those new seats they put up when they have playoffs, you know. And Chad Brickhouse – you know that name?
- DePue: Yeah.
- Callahan: Chad Brickhouse – and I don't remember his wife being there because I know her. But anyway, Jack Brickhouse was sitting behind my son and me and my son goes up to go to the john or something and he comes back and he says, You know, I just heard they were talking up there that Michael Jordan is retiring from basketball. He wants to play baseball. And Jack Brickhouse says, Oh, that can't be true. He says, That would be jumping off the roof. (laugh). Well, it was true. Then I happen to see Jordan play in at pre-season game down in Sarasota, Florida. And you know what is interesting, I bet there weren't a hundred people there. I bet there closer to twenty five to forty there to watch that. Isn't that interesting, you know. But I also know a guy by the name of Curt Champion who is now the roving pitching instructor for the Chicago White Sox. In fact, he is the head guy in the minor league pitching system for the White Sox. He and my son stood up at each other's wedding and he said they really liked Jordan. The baseball players really liked him. They liked him as a person, you know, because he would pay for a lot of their stuff and everything. He couldn't hit, you know, and so he didn't make it. And, uh, it is amazing to me that he came back and played basketball at such a level. He is a great athlete.
- DePue: Do you remember – here is another thing that I think helped baseball – and maybe this happened before the strike, or about the time the strike was just beginning. Ken Burns' documentary series came out and was pretty darn

successful. Of course, a few years before that he had made that incredibly successful documentary on the civil war.

Callahan: Yeah, I don't know what year, but that is an excellent thing. Only one negative I ever heard on it came from Enos Slaughter. You know, he is a Cardinal's legend and I don't know if Slaughter is in the Hall of Fame or not, but Slaughter believes he was mishandled in that about being anti-black and he said Burns would never return his phone calls. Now, that bothered me knowing that. But I got to say, I thought it was tremendous work that Burns did, just like the work he has done on the civil war. I am a great Burns fan. I have met him but don't know him at all.

DePue: The teams of the decade, you know, every sport has to have a team of the decade. In the National league it was the clearly the Atlanta Braves, and toward the end of the decade it became the New York Yankees as well. Reflections on those two teams?

Callahan: Well, they are just great teams. I went to the playoffs and World Series in Atlanta. By the way, some times the playoff games, even though you work with baseball, you don't get sometimes the best seats. Now, like in Baltimore I did because that was a home base, you know. Now, I don't remember if this was a playoff game or World Series game in Atlanta, but we are down the right field line and I want to say we are about ten rows from the top. Okay, they are still good seats. And down below us about four rows was a guy that is the head of the minor league umpiring system. He is the former athletic director of Cheney State, had a doctorate in something. Good guy. And he came up to me and said, I'm glad to see you sitting up here. He said, I thought I was being discriminated against til I saw you. For instance, when Joe Carter hits that famous homerun from Toronto to win the world series, I had a great seat for that. But you never knew where you were going to sit sometimes.

DePue: Getting back to Atlanta: any memories about Ted Turner, because there is another celebrity owner.

Callahan: Ted Turner is like Augie Busch. He didn't – the young Augie – they didn't go to meetings when I was ... I met Augie Busch later with Alan Dixon after I retired. Well, no, I don't know, but I met him but he never went to any of the meetings.

DePue: So you never really knew Ted Turner?

Callahan: Never knew him at all. Never met him. I met young Augie Busch once. Yeah.

DePue: Now this is really going back ...

Callahan: See, their interest wasn't really baseball. I mean Augie didn't really like baseball, young Augie. His Dad loved it. His Dad probably loved it like I love it. And Turner: Now before I got to major league baseball, I used to go to those owner meetings but Turner had a guy – he is still alive – named Bill Barthomey, who is chairman of the board. Tremendous man whom I have known since 1960. I knew him politically. And Barthomey is really a tremendous person. Great on civil rights as an example. He represented the Braves very well, better than hardly anyone could ever. Barthomey, by the way, was a big booster of mine on the job because he knew me politically.

DePue: This was a pretty minor issue ...

Callahan: I don't know if I have answered your question there on that one.

DePue: Well, yeah, you just really didn't know Turner that way.

Callahan: Okay, yeah, I didn't.

DePue: A minor issue as far as the Braves are concerned but, of course, in those days political correctness was the thing and the Braves were celebrating Native Americans and they had the tomahawk chop and things like that. Did that kind of thing ever bother you?

Callahan: Well, that is a tough question. Paul Simon got in real trouble by signing a petition on getting rid of Chief Illiniwik, running for his second term. In fact, they had an airplane go over to the U of I home game that says, Keep the Chief, Dump Simon, you know. Paul and Alan Dixon and Governor Shapiro and all four of us would have been on the same wave length in civil rights and discrimination and prejudice and so on. So, I guess, when I say it didn't bother me, I guess over the long haul, it sensitizes you because you don't like anyone to feel like they have been discriminated against. You know, like if you feel like ... let's say that I discriminated against people from Iowa, you know. You wouldn't like that and you shouldn't like it. Let's say, discriminate me because I come from a hog farming family, got shit on my shoes and that kind of stuff. I don't like that kind of stuff. I don't like nicknames. I don't participate in roasts. I hate roasts because you are making fun of people. And I don't like anyone to ... but that is a personal thing. Am I saying the Braves are wrong? Who am I to say it? You might say, you know, like that North Dakota team that they have gone to court to try to keep the Fighting Sioux's I think their name is or something. Now, the University of Illinois, I got to say did everything they could do to try to get this thing accepted. They had a tribe of Indians saying it was proper and everything. We have had Chief Illiniwicks from here in Springfield – Bif Forsythe who comes from a prominent Democratic political family. But Bernie Schoenberg asked me one time how I felt about that. Not for attribution, by the way. But I told him I can see where Simon

is coming from. And he is the only of the group I just said ever publicly did anything on that.

DePue: Well, I mentioned two of the more prominent owners but there are plenty of others. I assume that these owners are a colorful lot and they have egos to go along with it. Do you remember any other owners in particular you would like to chat about?

Callahan: There is a statement I like on that. Senator Mitchell, at one time was being considered, they said, for Commissioner of baseball. And they say, god, how would you deal with all those egos? He says, I deal with ninety nine every day of the week. You know. And, uh, the egos, no, I got along okay with them, you know. And I never pretended to be anything that I wasn't and nor did they with me, you know. And I really liked the guy, here is the name of the family that owned the Levi Straus from the Oakland A's. But Barthomey(?) and R(unintelligible) were great on civil rights stuff. I mean great. They just didn't talk about it. They lived it. There are certain issues that mean a lot to me and that is one of them. And I watched that, by the way. I went to a game one time where they didn't have one African American on the ground crew and I called R(unintelligible) and said something ought to be done about this, you know. Not one. You know. And there was something done about, by the way.

DePue: Any other owners that you have memories about that you have stories about.

Callahan: Well, Fred Kuhlmann was president of the St. Louis Cardinals when young Busch owned it. And how that happened, he didn't really know that much about baseball. He probably knew as much about baseball as I know about the law, okay. He was a lawyer. He had been Augie senior's personal attorney and he wanted someone he could trust and watch the books and things like that. I liked him an awful lot. And, in fact, he was a guy that ended up being a supporter of mine because he and Paul Simon were active in the Missouri Senate Lutherans, you know. And Kuhlmann, was very nice to me and the Cardinals. And then Stan Cook, the Cubs was. Those are the main ones, and Bud Selig, I have mentioned. I wish I could remember the Oakland guy. He and his father would come to the meetings.

DePue: I can get that in the transcript for you. [The owners of the As at that time was Walter Haas, Jr., and team president was Sandy Alderson from 1993-1995/1997-1998]

Callahan: Yeah, I can figure that out.

DePue: Was there a difference between the owners of national league teams versus American league teams?

Callahan: No, no.

DePue: What is your own personal view about designated hitter rule?

Callahan: Well, I don't approve of it unless both leagues would have it. And I don't think that is going to happen in my lifetime. The players union is not going to allow losing those jobs, you know, those VA (unintelligible) jobs. And then in the national league, I don't think they will go for it as strategically. By the way, Bobby Brown, who was president of the American league and who was a medical doctor played for the Yankees. He was the brains of the DH and Bobby Brown is still alive. I really respect him a lot. A lot. And Gene Budig was later became president of the American league. You know, he was president of Illinois State University, Western West Virginia, and retired as president of Kansas University, but became American league president.

DePue: Towards the end of the time that you were serving as a lobbyist, the thing that was capturing everybody's attention was the bats were really heating up. The home run hitting – there was just this incredible explosion of home runs in the late 1990's. And it all came to a head in 1998 with the race to see who could break Roger Marris's record of sixty one home runs in a season. Your reflections on that.

Callahan: Well, two things. One, I was at the game when he hit his sixty second home run - when McGuire did. Alan Dixon and I and Tim McInerney—that I mentioned earlier from Springfield—and I were there. And at the time, you know, we weren't even thinking steroids. You know, we weren't thinking, didn't know anything about that.

DePue: Were you just thinking this is great for baseball?

Callahan: Yeah, oh yeah. There was a great race between Sosa and McGuire and how they personally had handled it and then, you know, that great feeling disintegrated with testimony before Congress.

DePue: Your reflections on all of that then?

Callahan: I wouldn't vote for any of those people for the Hall of Fame. I believe in forgiveness. But so many of them lied. McGuire at least didn't lie. He evaded it, you know, kept evading it. But I just, you know, I don't sympathize with those people.

DePue: Well, Barry Bonds is the other name, not particularly that year but they ended up breaking a ...

Callahan: I feel the same way, yeah.

DePue: Doesn't belong in the Hall of Fame?

Callahan: I don't think so. No.

DePue: Did you have any sympathy for them because ... Well, you had talked about this earlier. That kind of drug testing hit the minor leagues before the major leagues.

Callahan: Positively.

DePue: Why?

Callahan: Because the owners made it mandatory in the minor leagues.

DePue: Why couldn't they do that in the majors?

Callahan: Labor agreement, collective bargaining. Union wouldn't buy it.

DePue: So from the individual player standpoint, if you are a player and you think somebody else is cheating by taking anabolic steroids ...

Callahan: They are not going to do a thing about it. If you publicly said it, then you might get some action. I mean, probably wouldn't have any action now if this hadn't gone public. So that is why I am such a great believer in the media. I believe in the media. I believe in the free media.

DePue: What has baseball lost because of all of this?

Callahan: Well, they lost credibility over a period of quite a few years.

DePue: And again, that has got to be very painful for you as a lifelong fan.

Callahan: Sure, sure. Just like, I am not for Pete Rose being in the Hall of Fame because it is very, you know. You are told from day one, you don't gamble. And that doesn't go for players, that means for employees. I mean, you know, I wasn't even in a pool when I worked with baseball.

DePue: A betting pool you are talking about?

Callahan: Yeah. You know, where you do an office pool. Pick a team, you know.

DePue: Okay. Well, let's end on an upbeat note here. You mentioned before the ring that you are wearing, but tell us the story behind getting that ring.

Callahan: They gave it to me after I had been with baseball a little over a year.

DePue: They being?

Callahan: Major league baseball. This came from Selig's office and the guy that was the head of marketing said that Commission Selig—or acting commissioner Selig then—asked me to give this to you. And that's it. And I wear it proudly.

DePue: Is that rare in positions like you had?

Callahan: Well, I don't know of too many others that have them. I don't mean to say ...

DePue: Other than players and the coaches?

Callahan: Not many that I have seen.

DePue: Did you get to go to a ceremony for that?

Callahan: No.

DePue: Ever go to a Hall of Fame inductions?

Callahan: Yes. In fact, I went each year when I was with major league baseball. One year my grandson and I sat with Richard Nixon's son-in-law Cox and Congressman Boehlert (??) from Cooperstown. He wasn't from Cooperstown but represented Cooperstown. And Congressman Boehlert (??) was a great supporter – he was a Republican by the way – of the anti-trust exemption. And how that happened ... Dick Durbin helped me so much when I became a lobbyist by saying good things about me. Like with Stan Brand. He and Brand were friends. Congressman Brand. Congressman Richardson who later, you know, governor of New Mexico. Those are just a few, and Sherwood Brown, who is now the U.S. Senator from Ohio. These are guys that are baseball nuts. And you know what is really unique about this, as close as Durbin and I are, he and I never went to a major league game together when I worked with baseball. Now he and I have been to games together and I have seen him at games like at the World Series a few years ago—the last World Series in St. Louis. He was there. And we were down by the flag pole but we were in the first row and he came down to see us and I said, Dick, it's only right that we have better seats than you do. And then he said, But I'm going up now to Commissioner Selig's private suite and I said, Well, tell him hello for me. In the end, he got the better of it.

DePue: I would guess though that you and Dixon attended a few baseball games together when you worked for him.

Callahan: Oh we did. Oh we did. Minor league games too, yeah. Major league games, minor league games. In fact, we went to one of his birthdays, he and his wife and another guy and I they were friends and Ann and I in Baltimore.

DePue: Was he politicking at the time or was he being a baseball fan?

Callahan: Oh baseball fan, yeah. Baseball fan. See, he loves sports.

DePue: What was his team?

Callahan: Cardinals. Yeah, very much so. Very much so.

DePue: That worked good in your behest.

Callahan: Yeah Cardinals. Dick Durbin is Cardinals. Paul Simon is Cardinals.

DePue: Okay. Then how did all of this come to an end for you, a decision to move on beyond baseball and into retirement.

Callahan: Well, I really missed my kids. And I missed my grandkids playing baseball. And two of them playing hockey and things like that.

DePue: Now what timeframe was this?

Callahan: This was – let me see, '94, '95, '96, '97 – this was; I wanted to retire February 1, '97. So, I had given Bud Selig six months notice and, he said everything was okay until the guy, my successor, decided not to do it and he asked me if I could stay on til a successor was named. Well, they were playing Arizona State that year – we already made all our arrangements to go there – and also baseball moves slowly.

DePue: Now Dan's team at Southern?

Callahan: Southern Illinois University. And I said, Bud, I made so many family obligations. I hate to tell you this, but I just don't feel right by doing that. And he said, Would you be willing to check in with us twice a day until I name a successor? And I said, Positively. So for six months, I did it. That is how long it took them to name my successor.

DePue: Were you back in Illinois at the time?

Callahan: Yeah, I was back in Illinois and they were wonderful to me. They even paid my moving expenses back which they had no obligation to because I was hired in Washington. They gave me an expense account, a fax machine, a telephone credit card, mileage when I was doing business. Then when my successor was named I went down and met him in St. Louis at a ball game with the president of the Cardinals then. And we, that is the only time I ever saw. He would call me once in a while, once in a while, but not much. So for six months I really didn't do much. For the first six months, I checked in twice a day, you know, with things.

DePue: At the time you left was there much talk about getting rid of that exemption or ...

Callahan: No, but I was for keeping the office open. See, you have to do remedial stuff all the time. Let's see, as an example, the Nebraska congressional

delegation meets once a week, and you pay for that breakfast. I went to every one of them, Nebraska. I went to California once and [Diane] Feinstein did not make me feel comfortable. You know, I felt like she didn't want me there, you understand. So I never went back to the California one. I went to every one of monthly meetings that Paul Simon did, you know. And I went to them. If any delegation had a meeting, I would go. And one of the real good things, Senator Kerry from Nebraska was an original sponsor of the Metzenbaum bill. You know to get rid of the exemption. I never talked business at these meetings. I go up and say hello to everyone, both senators and just go talk and socialize. For instance, one time there was a guy who was head of the farmers' union in Nebraska that knew my Dad. Things like that. Now, Kerry came in a little bit late. I handed him a piece of paper. I said, I would like to talk some business with you when this meeting is over. And he looked over at me after he sat down and nodded his head yes. And I said, With all the minutes he is putting on it is not even the bill that you originally agreed to, to vote on that. He said, I wish you could be with major league baseball. He said, I'm with you. I'm not for that bill any longer. Of course, we had worked hard at it. Union Pacific, you know, owned the minor league team. And, Union Pacific is big in Nebraska and we had done our homework. But he never took his name off of being a co-sponsor but he was with us. And see, I am a believer in that. You know, like my last year with baseball I saw seventy six of the Orioles eighty one home games. And every game was with someone of influence. Every millionaire member of congress and the right staff people.

DePue: Is that part of your budget then, your expense account?

Callahan: Yeah. Now here ... talk about expense accounts. Let's say you are a member of Congress or you're a staff person. I could take you to a game, buy you hot dogs, beer, popcorn, anything all night, but I couldn't take you to dinner beforehand. Okay. I could buy you finger food, you know. Isn't that something. I remember telling Paul Simon that, and you can't be more honest than Paul Simon. He said, that's ridiculous, you know.

DePue: Well, lobbying and lobbyists have had a bad name for decades and you get the series of laws and that is what you are explaining is, it doesn't necessarily have to make sense the ways these laws ...

Callahan: Well, see, I would take the guys. I would pick them up in front of the capitol. You know, I would take them back. And, sometimes we would go to dinner. And mostly we just got dinner at the ball game because of the timeframe. These are guys that love baseball. My point was, when I first started they didn't have to pay their tickets. Now the last year I was with baseball, they had to pay for their tickets. So I would still pick them up and go but they had to pay for their tickets. So they would give me money and I then I turned the money over to the Orioles.

DePue: Do you think being a lobbyist so many years yourself, do lobbyists in the United States Congress have too much influence? Is it a pervasive and eroding kind of influence.

Callahan: They have influence. And it's just like anything else. You have dishonest people and you have honest people. And, uh, it's a matter of ... I mean I certainly wouldn't want to ruin my Dad's reputation or my mother's or my brother's who was a county chairman for fifteen years. My Dad was a state representative. My sister was a county chairwoman. I wouldn't want to ruin their reputations. I wouldn't want to hurt my kids, you know. It's a matter of ... money has never been paramount with me. Never has been. And if you notice, the ones that get in trouble that is what they Did I mention to you – if I didn't – I was offered the job of being Midwest director of IT&T after Paul Simon got beat in '72?

DePue: I don't think that came up.

Callahan: Okay. I think maybe it did. Because remember I said Governor Stratton had recommended me, okay. And I turned it down for various reasons. One of the questions: Why do you think we are interested? And they said, well, we know you They asked me: Why do you think we are interested in you? I said, Because you know I'm clean. And he said, What do you mean by that. I said, Well, let's talk about (unintelligible) Beard. I said, You have an image problem. And they said, Oh, no, none of that (unintelligible) Beard stuff is accurate. Well, she was giving money to members of Congress, favors. And he said, Oh, none of that (unintelligible) Beard stuff is true. I said, Well, let me say this. My parent's neighbors and my parents in Milford, Illinois think it is true. My neighbors in Springfield, Illinois think it is true. And I said, That's where your image problem comes in, you know. Well, it all was true too. Came out later it was true. Everything was true. So, yeah, it's money. I mean, when people succumb to money, are going to get in trouble.

DePue: What was your aspiration then moving into retirement? Did you ...

Callahan: None. No aspirations. None. I haven't done a single thing for money since I retired. I spoke before the Illinois Association of Electric Coops. The executive director is dead now. His wife was personal assistant to Governor Edgar. I'm not thinking of his name. Good guy. And they offered me five hundred dollars to speak. And I said, I don't want it. I said I don't want the honorarium. I said, I don't want that. I said, I haven't done that. I said, I just don't care to do that. And they said, Well, give it to a charity. I said, No, no. And they said, Well, we're going to pick out the charity then if you don't take it. I said, Well, if that's the case, then Southern Illinois University baseball. So they did. But I have nothing for money and that is the only kind of like speeches I've given that I have taken. Then I didn't take that. I had it earmarked to Southern.

DePue: Are you asked a lot to give speeches and talks in different places?

Callahan: Not a lot anymore. No. I'm on the way down. For instance, I used to ... I would go to a place ... well, Alan Dixon's office was in the federal building. My wife would come pick me up or something. Unless so many on the street I would know. I hardly know anyone anymore. I go to ... last week I went to some place, Ann and I did. And I don't think there was anyone that I knew, you know, because I am out of the loop. And I don't care to get in the loop.

DePue: Have you done any volunteer work since you retired?

Callahan: Well, Southern Illinois University baseball, yeah, yeah. That I have on raising money for. Now, I am putting in more hours than I like for my daughter's race for Congress. I told Ann yesterday, God, I said, I thought I was through with this stuff.

DePue: Well, that kind of thing – I don't need to tell you – it becomes all consuming, doesn't it?

Callahan: Oh yeah, too. Well, she asked me, my daughter, I'm going to say six weeks ago if I would pledge to do two hours a day for her. I said, No. I said, I'm not going to pledge that. I said, I'm going to help you all that I can, as an example. But I said, I'm not going to make any pledges and I said, I want you to win and I want to help you. But, I said, I'm not going to do that.

DePue: Okay. We are going to finish off with a little bit of a discussion about what has happened in Illinois politics since you retired, and especially since 2000 and beyond. So let's start with George Ryan as governor. He got elected in '98, became governor in '99 following two successful terms for Jim Edgar. Your reflections on George as a governor.

Callahan: Well, I have some pro-prejudices for him to start with. I have known him before he was ever a state representative. He was chairman of the county board in Kankakee County and my Dad had been a legislator in Iroquois County. My brother a county chairman and that butts Kankakee County so we knew a lot about George Ryan. I had had successful dealings with him when Alan Dixon was Secretary of State and he was a Republican in the legislature. Our relationship was good. Now, there are many good things he did as governor including this building where we are. And, however, he got loose and he did not have strong people around him that would say, No, you don't do this. You don't do this. And I think Rostenkowski got in trouble because he didn't change with the rules. Let's go back to the lobby thing, when it changed where they had to pay for their own tickets. I'm smart enough to know you got to pay for your own tickets. There can't be any exceptions. And, he didn't change with that. And after Rostenkowski got in trouble he asked us to name a Chief of Staff for him and we did, but

the goose was out of the barn then, you know. And I think if you don't have a strong guy around you – and I'm talking Faywell now, because Faywell was on the take himself and ended up in prison – you are going to get in trouble. And I have some sympathy for Governor Ryan but the people in Illinois who don't know him, don't have any sympathy for him at all. As an example, when Dick Durbin publicly suggested, that because of his wife's health that he be let out early, Jesus, he got crucified for that. Durbin did. Was he an effective governor? Yes. I would just leave it at that.

DePue: One of the things you do hear is some talk about what caused his fall was, that you mentioned that others hadn't been able to – Rostenkowski hadn't been able to adjust to the new rules and that same criticism was George Ryan. And I am assuming that is what the connection you are trying to make there. That he wasn't adjusting to the new rules.

Callahan: Well, that and ...

DePue: And a lot of that was patronage rules.

Callahan: Yeah, that's right, and Blagojevich is vulnerable there too. It's going to be interesting what happens now in the wake of things. You know, they were completely ignoring benefits for veterans. Ignoring them to get their people in. In Blagojevich. And, getting to – I know we are skipping Edgar here for a minute, but Blagojevich – I'm proud to say this and it gave me real problems at the time, I was the first recognized Democrat in central Illinois – maybe downstate Illinois, maybe – to publicly criticize him. On a radio show, and then Bernie Schoenberg called me and I verified everything, gone over everything and even added some more about I thought he was a terrible governor. I voted for him the first time. Contributed to him and I think it is the worst vote of my life.

DePue: Of course, we are talking about Rod Blagojevich who was elected governor for the first time in 2002. Do you remember roughly at the time that you came out and were publicly criticizing him?

Callahan: I can give you the exact date but it was probably about the tail end, some time in his second year. Second, possibly third. But I do have that date, exact date when it is.

DePue: What were the flaws of Rod Blagojevich as a governor, as a politician?

Callahan: Well, I think he wanted money and power. Didn't want to work. And paid no attention to law. I had no sympathy for the guy.

DePue: You had sympathy for Ryan but not for Blagojevich?

Callahan: None.

DePue: Well, there is a famous quote that I have heard a couple of places. At least it is a lively quote about when you first found out that Blagojevich was getting the nomination before he became governor. And your reflections on that.

Callahan: Well, I was for Valise in the primary/

DePue: Paul Valise?

Callahan: Paul Valise, yeah. Alan Dixon was for Blagojevich. The other day, Friday, I mentioned to you we had lunch together. And I said, now, who at this table was for Blagojevich in the primary? And Alan goes (laugh)...and he takes it good naturedly. In fact, I have a bumper sticker in my office at home, which you will see, that says, Don't blame me, I didn't vote for Blagojevich. And I put in my own hand writing, the second time. (laugh) I voted for Topinka the second time. No, I thought he was a scoundrel.

DePue: Well, here is the quote I saw. I love this quote. We waited twenty six years for the governor's office and this is what we got.

Callahan: Yeah, that's right, yeah.

DePue: Where is the occasion for that statement?

Callahan: Well, someone – in might have been Bernie Schoenberg. I don't know. I don't know how that happened. Or it might have been that magazine article. I think it was the magazine article that John Moody wrote.

DePue: Well, that is where I saw the quote.

Callahan: Yeah, John Moody. Well, he asked me about it. And I think that was before I really started to lay blame on Blagojevich, you know.

DePue: What kind of damage then did the Blagojevich administration cause Illinois as a state?

Callahan: I think we will suffer for at least a generation. I think that he has hurt us so much. You go on vacation. People will ask you about him. And then he did all that weird stuff on TV later. So people know who he is. And he is a disgrace to our state. He is a disgrace to his family. He ought to go to jail.

DePue: Well, he is just waiting to be sentenced right now. So, he will certainly end up there. How about the fiscal situation? Is that something we can lay primarily at his feet?

Callahan: Lot of people deserve the blame for that. Governor Thompson was a good governor. He was a big spender. The Build Illinois was an expensive program. Edgar was very prudent fiscally. You have to give ... it would be a lot worse if it weren't for Governor Edgar. And then you had Blagojevich.

You had Ryan was a big spender. Probably not as big, probably, as Thompson, but a big spender. And then Blagojevich: I mean he just did what he wanted to do money wise. He just ignored the law.

DePue: The legislature ended up impeaching him not necessarily because of the things he was convicted for in criminal trial but because of his abuse of his constitutional powers. Were you agreeing with that?

Callahan: Combination of both. I think a combination of both. I mean that, you know, he hadn't been convicted of anything yet. In fact, Blagojevich was worse than I thought he was. I mean, I thought he was bad and said so. But I remember when when it came out at the news conference when they arrested him. I said, my God, I didn't realize he was that bad. And then his wife doesn't deserve any medals for how she handled herself.

DePue: How about the damage that Blagojevich was caused the Democratic party in Illinois?

Callahan: Thank God we have Dick Durbin on the other high end of the ethics spectrum. And, you know, the Republican candidate governor, if he had been moderate on the social issues, would have won.

DePue: You talking about Brady?

Callahan: Yeah. See Pat Quinn only carried four Illinois counties. So he has hurt all of us that are active Democrats. I mean, when I say I am out of the loop, I am out of the loop, but I still contribute in a modest way. My main interest in politics are President Obama, Dick Durbin, Sheila Simon and my daughter. I will do anything I can for those four.

DePue: You think Mark Kirk would have been able to win as Senator this last time around, the 2010 election? Mark Kirk is the Republican candidate for U.S. Senate.

Callahan: You mean without the Blagojevich scandal.

DePue: Yeah.

Callahan: Don't know that. It would have been ... see, they were both vulnerable. Both very vulnerable. You would have to give Kirk the benefit of the doubt getting the plus rather than Gennulious the way things turned around. And I think Topinka won because people, I think, had a feeling for her that she had been misused by Blagojevich and she had been. She was not a campaigner, by the way for Governor. But she was reasonably good. Reasonably good. See, Blagojevich was a good campaigner.

DePue: She was his opponent in the 2006 election.

- Callahan: Yeah, uh-hm, yeah. And I think Topinka is a good public servant.
- DePue: Okay. The next one I wanted to ask you about was Barack Obama who burst onto the scene in 2004 because of that performance that he had at the Democratic convention. Did you know Obama before that time?
- Callahan: Met him the first at Paul Simon's funeral and Mike Lawrence introduced me to him.
- DePue: What year was that again?
- Callahan: Well, I've got that at home too. I don't know.
- DePue: It was about the timeframe or a little after he was senator wasn't it?
- Callahan: Yeah, he wasn't a candidate for president or anything. And, for instance, Paul and Patty Simon—and I alluded to this earlier with you—we had dinner at Saputo's – Dick Durbin, his wife and Ann and I – the six of us, the Tuesday before Paul died. And Paul told us he was going to endorse Obama. DePue: When he was running for president?
- Callahan: No, no, no, no.
- DePue: For the senate?
- Callahan: For the senate. I was for Hines in that race. And Dick didn't say at that time who he was for. He had known Hines a long time but I don't know. I never asked Dick how he voted on that. But Paul – and I found this out later because we didn't get into a deep discussion of it that night – he liked how Obama stood up on the ethics legislation that Paul and Mike Lawrence worked together in promoting in the Illinois legislature. And how he got a hold of Emil Jones to, you know, and all that kind of stuff. And then when he ran for President, Sheila did a very effective commercial for Obama, you know, outlining the Simon legacy and so on. And also, when he ran for the senate she endorsed him, you know.
- DePue: Enthusiastic supporter once he got the primary nod for Senate.
- Callahan: Was I, you mean? Oh yeah. Oh yeah, positively. It wasn't a matter that I was against him. I knew Dan Hines. Thought he was a good public servant. And then I was for him for President. I was for him period when he ran for President.
- DePue: Well, we have had a couple of very tough years here since he has become President. As we are speaking—just to put a marker on the wall—just this last Friday the S&P downgraded our credit rating from triple A to double A plus. The stock market, yesterday, took a six hundred plus point plunge. Acrimony over the debt extension. Politics has gotten uglier, if it is

possible, since he has become President. Your reflections on where we are at in politics in Illinois, politics in the United States today, having spent your life on this.

Callahan: Well, there is a poll in one of the papers I read today. And I don't recall if it is *Tribune* or *Wall Street Journal*. I think it's ... well, I'm not sure which one. But fifty percent of the people are dissatisfied with Obama and that they are dissatisfied with Congress. Right now they are more dissatisfied with ... well, the Obama approval disapproval of Congress, you know – the American people are very, very angry and I think angrier now than when Obama was elected. And there is a piece today—in the *Sun Time* that I don't take—that said he is losing the young people. Now, I don't know if that might be right. But it concerns me when fifty percent of the people, in a recognized poll, are down on Obama. That bothers me. And I don't doubt that but there is still a long ways, long time to go for him to come back. I am hoping that the Congress will take a more serious look at what Dick Durbin and his cohorts—three Republicans, three Democrats—have suggested on tax reform and so on. But, no, I think, it's tough and then we get all these Americans killed last week, or earlier this week, in Afghanistan.

DePue: I think that was Saturday, yeah.

Callahan: Yeah, and, it has now gone from the Bush war to the Obama war and it is a tough thing.

DePue: Let's wrap things up then with some general questions for you. You have a long career, maybe you have had long careers: journalist, as a political advisor and chief of staff, and then as a lobbyist for major league baseball. How would you identify yourself?

Callahan: Well, as I said a week ago on a similar question, I said, A tad above average intelligence, and an unusual work ethic.

DePue: But do you see yourself as a journalist? As a political? As a lobbyist?

Callahan: All three and a farmer; and a farmer, because I was born and raised on a farm and I have great interest in the farming community. I don't have any farming interest or financial interest anymore. DePue: I'm asking you to choose your favorite child, I guess, to a certain extent.

Callahan: Well, I would ... I can't separate them. I have been very fortunate. I have worked with great people at the newspaper. I loved every minute of it except when I first started as police reporter and then I got to liking that. I liked everything I did at the paper. I liked everything I did in state government. There was a period there I thought it was a little slow when I first got into state government and then I got so highly involved on the meat inspection thing. I didn't care for my first two years in Washington, D.C. But Alan Dixon and I – there was no disagreement – but we got everything

straight on my role was. It took about two years for me to understand that. And, then I loved everything about baseball and still do. So it all meshed in there, you know. For instance, I never could have gotten a baseball job if I hadn't gone to Washington. I never would have been hired by Alan Dixon if I hadn't been a political reporter and then worked for Paul Simon. I'd have never got the job with Governor Shapiro if I hadn't been a newspaper reporter. So everything meshed in. And, see, all these people were so good to me and even my main ... I have liked everyone of them with the exceptions of what I said from the timeframe, and it has to do with the people. See, I never had to be worried about a scandal. When you work with Alan Dixon and Paul Simon and Governor Shapiro you don't have to worry about a scandal. You're not going to have one. No, that doesn't mean you're not going to have some dishonesty along the way with some people, especially the Secretary of State's office. You should not have a scandal if you are state treasurer. You should not have one when you are United States Senator. But you can have a scandal at Secretary of State's office. I mean there could be a scandal right now going on. Thank God, we have Jim Burns over there as the inspector general because if there is something going on ... In a radio interview when Blagojevich was governor, I was asked a question not quite like that and I said, If I know something wrong in the secretary of state's office I call Jim Burns. If I know about Blagojevich I call the media, you know. Because I know they wouldn't do anything about it. Now, I really can't ... I've been fortunate. I've liked what I'm doing. Like you probably loved the army. You probably loved the military, but you really like what you re doing now, you know. There are peaks and valleys in things. The peaks and valleys, that is like when Paul Simon when I went to work for Dixon, Paul said, I am more even keep than you guys is. You and Dixon are a lot of alike. When you are up, you're up. When you're down, you're down. When you work you work. Well, he is right on that. He is absolutely right.

DePue: Looking back on this long career with a lot of different paths that you have been going down, what is the thing that you are most proud of, the accomplishment?

Callahan: Well, hopefully recommending real qualified and smart people in government. See, what I always tried to do when we hired people – and I was in charge of hiring in the Washington office and secretary of state's office, and the non-financial positions in the state treasurer's office, which weren't many – I always tried to get people smarter than I around me. And I succeeded at that. See Craig Lovett, as I mentioned to you, brilliant. Tim McInerney, two Masters degrees. And, so ... people ... Mack McClain who was a CPA handled our books in Washington. He was a boyhood friend of Alan and so I did not hire him. But I always try to get people smarter, and the integrity was number one, ability number two. I would go for, you know, you got to get them to come together if you can. And you should be able to. Lot of smart, honest people out there.

DePue: Can you think of the most exhilarating experience that you had?

Callahan: Well, I would say, Alan Dixon's re-election to state treasurer in '74 and his election to the U.S. Senate in '98.

DePue: And I think you already told us this, but the biggest disappointments.

Callahan: Well, I have had two in life. Paul Simon getting back politically, and my son's death of a personal nature. Those are the two major setbacks in my life. The Simon thing still bothers me an awful lot. Of course, this statement is not original, but on the death of one of your children, it is something you must get through. You never get over, but you must get through.

DePue: When did he pass away?

Callahan: On November fifteenth last year. He was only fifty two and was still head baseball coach at Southern. So those are two. And probably the people I have great respect for – if you would say who are your best friends, it would be Alan Dixon, the people I have known in longevity now, you know, Alan Dixon, Celine Bentley, Dick Durbin and Tim McInerney would be my best friends. Paul Simon would be on that list if he were here and there are other people I have high, high regard for. As an example, Mike Lawrence; he is just a very stand-up good guy.

DePue: Why did you mention that it was more painful for you to experience that loss that Paul Simon had versus the one that Dixon had in '92?

Callahan: Well we had a very poor campaign when I look back at the Paul Simon campaign and I was part of that poor campaign, a major part. Now the Dixon thing, we got beat for reasons I have gone through and we could see it coming, especially when Alan made the decision he didn't want to go negative and Dick Durbin, who is the best political operative I have ever seen in our party – statewide political operative – told me that he had just lost the primary that, you know, that was important to me. And then there was nothing we could do about these things. So I could see that coming. But the Paul Simon thing, even though my brother was the first to tell me it could happen, I still thought at the end we would probably pull it out. But we didn't pull it out. And I will just never get over that.

DePue: Much of your life you spent kind of that guy right behind the curtain because you are promoting your candidates; in your case, for baseball it was major league baseball. So how would you personally like to be remembered?

Callahan: I think integrity and practicality.

DePue: Okay. We have been at this for close to ten hours now I think. It has been a lot of fun to hear these stories and important to capture the history as well so

I want to thank you and appreciate that. You have any final comments for us?

Callahan: A couple of things. I want to say the great people that I met outside the political, Jerry Reinsdorff would be one of those. And not because he was instrumental in hiring me but I have seen him in meetings where it would be where he could shut up and wouldn't shut up. And he is a lawyer and he is a CPA. He came from a poor family and made good on his own. Nothing was handed to him, and he did by not lying and cheating. I mean, you will find people who say, Well, I don't care for Jerry Reinsdorff ... and he is very loyal. One time I said I wish I could have been your PR guy from day one. And I really meant that. I still meant it. He says, Oh, my guys do a good job. You know, he wasn't going to let me get by with that, you know. But he is something. He has been very loyal to my family. I can't tell you ... What he does for the city of Chicago is amazing in the area of education, you know. And youth baseball in the inner city. He doesn't forget where he came from, like Judge Thomas. (laugh) Hasn't forgot where he came from. Judge Thomas has. Yeah, yeah. Now there are several questions that are about like names or like dates and so on. You put down on a piece of paper and I will answer every one of those.

DePue: Like I say, it's going to take us a while to get this transcribed and then we edit it and then we give it to you for your review.

Callahan: Okay, okay. And, uh, we need to set a time too. I didn't bring my schedule with me today but I can call Ann – for when you can come out to the house and you can look at what I have on the office walls and if there is anything there.

DePue: Okay. Well, let's go ahead and stop the recording but thank you very much Gene.

Callahan: Thank you.

[End of interviews]