Interview with Tony Sunderman

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Interviewer: Mark DePue

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DePue: Today is May 21, 2009. My name is Mark DePue. I'm the Director of Oral History with the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library. I'm here today with Tony Sunderman. Good morning, Tony

Sunderman: Good morning.

DePue: We should mention that you're a lawyer. We're sitting in your office here in Charleston, Illinois, and the name of the law firm you're working with?

Sunderman: It's the Brainard Law Offices.

DePue: We are doing this interview as part of the Jim Edgar series. I have the opportunity to meet with Governor Edgar this afternoon to start with the interviewing process. But he thought it would be a good idea that I have a chat with you first and learn a little bit more about those early years in Charleston when you were both growing up. So let's start with this, Tony: when and where were you born?

Sunderman: I was born in Charleston, Illinois.

DePue: And the birth date?

Sunderman: January 24, 1946.

DePue: So you and Jim are practically the same age.

Sunderman: Correct.

DePue: Let's get right to it. Do you recall the first time that you met Jim?

Sunderman: No. Because I would have been about nine years old or younger, I think, when I first met Jim. It would have been when we were in the third grade, approximately.

DePue: Where were you attending school at the time?

Sunderman: I was attending school at the Eastern Illinois University Laboratory School. And I think at that point in time when I first met Jim, he was attending school at the Franklin Elementary School in Charleston.

DePue: So the public school in town?

Sunderman: Yes, correct. One of the public schools.

DePue: I had understood from Fred that Jim attended the lab school somewhere in that process.

Sunderman: He did. He came to the lab school in either the third or the fifth grade, at a point in time when the university expanded the school and had more space available.

DePue: Tell us a little bit about what Charleston was like, growing up at that age.

Sunderman: Well, it's one of those very small communities centered principally around the university. It was a community where kids went everywhere on their bicycles, all over town, from early in the morning until late at night—or in the evening hours, anyway—with absolute confidence and safety. It was just a small, rural Midwestern town.

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DePue: It sounds like one of those towns that we always talk about when we talk about the good old days.

Sunderman: Yes. Kind of Huckleberry Finn-ish, in many ways.

DePue: What were your parents doing for a living?

Sunderman: My father was a lawyer, and in 1956 became a judge. My mother was a homemaker.

DePue: Now, before we started this, we were talking about your name. Your given name when you were born?

Sunderman: William Anthony Sunderman.

DePue: And why is it, then, that you're known as Tony?

Sunderman: Because of an old family tradition where the first-born son was named William, and there were three generations of us in a small town. My grandfather was a dentist. He ultimately was most often referred to as Doc. My father was referred to as Bill, and I was referred to as Tony; that way, everybody knew which Sunderman they were talking about.

DePue: But you're not William III are you?

Sunderman: No, no. I'm told I'm, like, William VIII or IX, I don't know. I've never bothered to look that up.

DePue: But everybody has a different middle name?

Sunderman: Everyone has a different middle name; including my son, who is also William, with a middle name of Richard.

DePue: What does he go by, then?

Sunderman: Rick.

DePue: (laughs) So your father is a lawyer in town. Do you know how the family ended up settling here in the first place, a few generations back?

Sunderman: How my family arrived here?

DePue: Yeah.

Sunderman: My [paternal] grandfather—I indicated he was a dentist—grew up in Clay County, Illinois. He worked for the railroad and put himself through dental school at St. Louis University, at the turn of the century. Once he became a dentist, he first practiced in a little town east of here, Kansas, Illinois; then went to Oakland, Illinois; settled in Charleston in about 1920; and remained in this community until he passed away. My maternal grandmother was a resident of Paris [Illinois], and she met my maternal grandfather when she was a student at Eastern Illinois University, again, at the turn of the century.

DePue: How long has Eastern Illinois been in town? When was it founded?

Sunderman: It was founded in 1898, somewhere in there. The first classes graduated around 1900, I think.[1]

DePue: So it's been a tradition in Charleston for many, many a generation.

Sunderman: Absolutely. Yes.

DePue: Do you recall how you ended up going to the lab school instead of the community schools in town?

[1] Eastern Illinois University was founded in 1895.

Sunderman: My mother was a graduate of Eastern. She taught on a part-time basis at Eastern before I was born and shortly after I was born. It was one of those situations where you signed up the children very early because there were very few slots, at that time, available for children and she wanted me to attend Eastern. She had attended the laboratory school, the university high school, and college. My father was a public school graduate. But she wanted me at Eastern, and that's what happened.

DePue: Let's talk about growing up with Jim. You say the first time you recall meeting him was roughly in fifth grade?

Sunderman: Third to fifth grade, yes. I was nine or ten.

DePue: Would you characterize the relationship, growing up, as good buddies, then?

Sunderman: Yeah. His home was just a few blocks from mine. It was one of those neighborhood acquaintances, and at that point in time, kids ran around, literally, in packs. We weren't allowed to stay inside. Our parents put us out in the morning, and we came home in the evening. We didn't sit around and watch television or play video games, so we were out and about. We would hang at various houses; mine, his, girls' houses, wherever.

DePue: Was this the house right next to the university?

Sunderman: Yes. Corner of Lincoln and Ninth Street.

DePue: Did you go to the same churches?

Sunderman: No. That was always a point of some fun. I'm Roman Catholic, and he was Baptist.

DePue: Some fun. You guys would joke around about that, would you?

Sunderman: Oh, yeah. Sure.

DePue: What's the nature of the joking?

Sunderman: Well, particularly in later life, when one of us would enjoy an adult beverage and one certainly wouldn't, we could attribute that to too much Baptist influence. (laughs)

DePue: Describe the Jim Edgar that you grew up with: bumming around in the streets, riding your bicycles, hanging out at each other's homes—that kind of thing.

Sunderman: He was just a great kid. He was a great friend. His life was different from mine because his father had passed away when he was very young; I never knew his father. His mother raised three boys and did a great job with all three. She worked hard. And Jim, as a result, I think, of not having a father,

had a slightly different perspective than I did; I think [that] is a fair statement. He was sometimes a little more serious than some of his friends. He was, at a younger age, probably slightly more responsible than some of his friends. He was a good kid.

DePue: What kinds of things did the group do together?

Sunderman: We would just sort of hang. By that, I mean we'd be on one porch or another; we'd talk, we'd play ball, we'd take long bicycle rides to the country. In the evening there were often games played. There would be a group of us—a big group—and we'd play kick the can. If the season was right, we'd play football. Jim played basketball. I never was a basketball player, but there were lots of backyard hoops at those points in time.

DePue: So you'd play basketball in the backyard occasionally with him?

Sunderman: I didn't. Basketball was not my sport. But Jim played a lot of basketball. A lot of one-on-one sort of stuff.

DePue: Who was his best friend growing up?

Sunderman: Gosh, I don't know. That would be hard to say.

DePue: One reason I ask is if you'd be classified as that?

Sunderman: I don't know. I certainly was one of them. Whether I was the very best friend or not, I don't know. But certainly we were close over the years. And closer as we grew older, too.

DePue: How often were you guys hanging around at Jim's house? And this is a big house, from what I understand from Fred.

Sunderman: In the summertime we might be there once a day, three times a week. Sometimes five minutes, sometimes a couple of hours; just depended.

DePue: Getting into the junior high and high school years, did you both attend the lab school during that time frame?

Sunderman: Yes, we did.

DePue: All the way through high school, as well?

Sunderman: Yes.

DePue: Do you recall Jim having an interest in politics early on?

Sunderman: Oh, yes. Oh, yeah. He was always acutely interested in politics. I remember—and I know he does recall this as well—riding our bicycles over to see Bill Stratton. There was a lady in our community who was very prominent in the

state Republican Party. Her name was Hazel Watson. I don't remember what the circumstances were, but Bill Stratton came to Charleston; I suppose he must have appeared at the university.

DePue: When he was governor, I assume?

Sunderman: He was the governor at the time; which gives you a pretty accurate date. We were on our bicycles, and we went to see Governor Stratton at Hazel Watson's house. There was some kind of a function there. We just stood around outside, watched for him, and saw him. I remember that just like it was yesterday. And that was in—when was Bill Stratton governor; '58 maybe? [2]

DePue: I should remember.

Sunderman: I should know, too. Jim was interested in politics very early. I mean, he ran for class president in junior high, student council president at the lab school, and student council president at the high school. He was always very interested in politics and public service. No doubt about it.

DePue: All of that would suggest he was a popular kid at school.

Sunderman: He was. He was well-regarded. Absolutely.

DePue: But I've also heard comments that, in general, he was pretty shy.

Sunderman: Yes, he was. Painfully shy isn't quite the right description, but he was uncomfortable in crowds. One of the most remarkable things about his political career is knowing him when he had a very difficult time putting three and four words together in a sentence in front of a group of people, to watching him perform effortlessly in front of television cameras and assembly halls full of people. It was a remarkable transition.

DePue: I'm trying to make the connection between a shy kid, as you're describing him, and somebody who also is running for class office, and apparently winning.

Sunderman: He did it. He did it on the strength of his ability to talk to people one-on-one, and two-on-one. He got his point across. Frankly, at that age, everybody is

[2] Following stints as a congressman and state treasurer, Republican William G. Stratton (February 26, 1914-March 2, 2001) served as a governor from 1953 to 1961. He lost his bid for a third term in 1960, losing to Otto Kerner. At Stratton's funereal, Edgar told a reporter that Stratton shook his hand in 1958, after Edgar "and three friends rode their bikes around the entire route of a local parade just for a chance to meet the governor." *Chicago Tribune*, March 7, 2001.
Hazel Dooley Watson (May 20, 1906-March 18, 2001), who lived on Edgar's block, was a Republican Party activist from Charleston. At the time of her death, the Illinois House passed a resolution of condolence that called her the Coles County "matriarch of the Republican Party." In a 1995 interview with WILL-TV, Watson talked about her acquaintance with a young Jim Edgar. Hazel Watson, interview by Alison Davis, *Prairie Fire*, PBS, October 12, 1995. http://will.illinois.edu/prairiefire/segment/pf1995-10-12-d/. For the House resolution, see http://www.ilga.gov/legislation/legisnet92/hrgroups/hr/920HR0170LV.html.

kind of shy in front of groups, so he wasn't exceptionally shy. He was able to get his message out and get elected by the student body.

DePue: Did he tell you and his other buddies, "I think I'm interested in politics. That's what I want to do with my life?"

Sunderman: Later, but not in grade school and in high school. He always was very interested in politics. It was certainly no surprise that that's what he did. But he didn't express a public interest in it until much later.

DePue: Was his interest in running for class president or some of these other positions something that you and the guys would sometimes razz him about?

Sunderman: Oh, yeah. We were always needling him a little bit about, What was this going to do for us? In classic Illinois (laughs) political philosophy learned at a young age: we would want concessions for this and that, or can we sell all the chewing gum in the seventh grade. That sort of stuff. (laughter) We had a good time with him in that regard.

DePue: How would you describe your family's political leanings and your political leanings?

Sunderman: My father became a judge at a time when they were elected every four years. And so, my family was pretty politically active. My paternal grandfather had served on the Eastern Illinois University Board of Trustees in the thirties and had been a good friend of either Horner or Green—I don't remember for sure.[3] He was politically active initially as a Democrat, until Roosevelt came along. My paternal grandfather didn't care for Franklin Roosevelt.

So, the Sunderman side of the family was very interested in politics at an early age, and were Republicans. My mother's family—I don't recall them being particularly political. They simply weren't, although my mother obviously was.

DePue: Growing up with Jim and the rest of the guys in the neighborhood, knowing that he's interested in running for these various offices, were you guys really paying much attention, beyond that, to politics?

Sunderman: Yes. We did pay some attention to politics. Jim's interest in politics was quite strong. Mine was strong because [if] my father lost the election, he was not going to be a judge anymore, so that was always of interest. I can remember watching political events on television at an early age with Jim. I can recall watching the presidential political convention. The first one I can really recall

[3] Henry Horner (Democrat) was governor of Illinois from 1933 to 1940. Dwight Green (Republican) was governor from 1941-1949.

watching was the 1956 Republican convention.[4] And of course the '60 conventions were interesting.

We had—and Jim will recall this fellow—we had a professor in the lab school at Eastern named Joe Connelly. Joseph T. Connelly was the Democratic county chairman. Very active politically, and very interested in politics.[5] Joe was our ninth grade teacher. The lab school ran seventh, eighth, and ninth grade, and then we transferred to the public schools for the last.

DePue: So you guys went to public school for high school years?

Sunderman: For high school years, yes. We transferred into Charleston High School as sophomores. Joe Connelly was the professor when we were in ninth grade, at the time of the Nixon-Kennedy election. That occupied the entire class. It was a civics class, so it worked out just fine. The entire year was spent on politics.

DePue: Perfect incubator for somebody who is interested in politics in the first place.

Sunderman: Oh, yes. Very much so.

DePue: I've heard his name in conjunction with Eastern, as well. Was he also a professor who taught political science at the university?

Sunderman: He came to Charleston and was employed in the lab school as a lab school teacher. I think he taught not only civics, but math or something as well. He transferred into the political science department at Eastern at some point in time, and I don't know when that was. It was after we were out of the laboratory school. The university closed the laboratory school, and again, I don't know when that was. But I know that Joe was in the political science department at the university when that happened.[6]

DePue: Was there any particular politician that you guys seemed to gravitate to or were especially impressed with?

Sunderman: I can't specifically recall one who was more important than another.

DePue: Well, let me put it this way. In that incubator experience that you had about the Nixon-Kennedy election and the debates, who won out in that equation?

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[4] The convention was held in San Francisco, California, and renominated Dwight Eisenhower and Richard Nixon as the presidential and vice presidential candidates. Original footage available at http://www.archive.org/details/1956-08-20_Republican_Convention.

[5] Dr. Joseph T. Connelly served on Eastern's faculty from 1958 to 1989, including a stint as department chair. http://www.eiu.edu/~polisci/faculty_emeritus.php. Connelly was the Coles County Democratic chairman and may have been the faculty member who first brought together Edgar and Carter Hendren, Edgar's campaign manager in 1982 and 1990. Carter Hendren, interview by Mark DePue, April 28, 2009, Interview #1, transcript, Jim Edgar Oral History Project, Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library, Springfield, IL, 8-9.

[6] Eastern closed the lab school June 1, 1974. *Eastern Illinois University Centennial: 1895-1995*, (Paducah, KY: Turner Publishing Co., 1995), 53.

Sunderman: (laughs)

DePue: From your perspective.

Sunderman: From my perspective, at that time, Richard Nixon was the Republican candidate. It was hard not to be enamored with the Kennedy family… But our political leanings were Republican.

DePue: When Professor Connelly was teaching the class, was he slanting it one way or another?

Sunderman: Probably. We always accused him of that. Joe was very honest in his expressions of political beliefs and preferences. As I recall, if he was telling us something about the Kennedys, he would do it in such a way that we knew that that was his personal belief. Joe had respect for the political process and the opposition, so, if he slanted it, we knew he was slanting it. It wasn't such a thing as he was psychologically undermining our upbringing in family beliefs in any way. (laughter)

DePue: You guys are also growing up in a time when there are World War II veterans and a healthy number of Korean War veterans every place you turn.

Sunderman: Right.

DePue: I was growing up in the same years. Was playing war games, or that kind of thing, part of the equation at all, or an interest in the military?

Sunderman: I suppose, at a really early age. I don't remember doing a lot of that. But I think we did in fourth, fifth grades, something like that. We would do that. Certainly I don't recall that in later years.

DePue: Between interest in politics for your group, interest in sports, those kinds of things, how did that sort itself out? Was sports front and center most of the time?

Sunderman: I wasn't, and am not now, much of an athlete, so sports were never number one with me, personally. Jim had much better athletic talent than I and than many of us did. We all played little league. Jim played little league and he played junior high, high school basketball. He played football. By the time we were in high school, sports were a big thing, whether I was spectating or whether Jim was playing. Probably not as important as girls, but there was some consideration for that.

DePue: Let's talk about girls. Was there much dating going on in high school among the group?

Sunderman: Yes, there was. Probably starting as early as junior high school.

DePue: Do you recall Jim having any steadies in junior high or high school?

Sunderman: Not so much in junior high school. I don't recall junior high school, but I do recall that in high school he certainly had girlfriends, yes.

DePue: Any in particular who stand out?

Sunderman: Yes. But I'm not—

DePue: That I should be asking him about?

Sunderman: I'll let you ask those questions. (DePue laughs) I'll let him direct his responses.

DePue: By the time you got into high school, what's your career interest?

Sunderman: Principally, I was engaged in having a good time and doing as little homework as possible. And I probably, in all honesty, had no particular focus in high school. Towards my senior year, I thought maybe I wanted to be a lawyer. But certainly that wasn't formulated early on.

DePue: Was that something your dad or your parents were suggesting was a career path for you?

Sunderman: No, not at all. My father was very hands-off about my career. He was pleased that I became a lawyer, but he was very careful not to suggest it. I think he wanted me to find my own way, doing what I thought I would be good in.

DePue: Would you characterize Jim as one of your closest friends during the high school years as well?

Sunderman: Yes.

DePue: And the group of friends that you had—who would you say was the leader of that group? Or was there?

Sunderman: I'm not sure there was. I don't think there was a leader that you would refer to as someone who led the charge.

DePue: I want you to cull your memory a little bit. Can you recall any specific incidents or stories about you and Jim growing up, either in the junior high or high school years?

Sunderman: One of the things that Jim still needles me about arose, I think, in our senior year in high school. Jim had been the student council president. We were graduating and it was hard for Jim to let go. He had selected someone he thought would be a good replacement for him as the student council president. He wanted to groom his replacement. There was another student who wanted

the job who was running for it. So this fellow came to me and said, "Would you give a speech for me? I want to be the student body president." I said, "Sure." First guy that asked, I was good for that. It didn't make any difference to me.

We had this assembly in the high school gymnasium, and all of the students were there and the candidates gave speeches. I got up and gave a speech for this candidate, and I was highly critical of the past administration because they hadn't accomplished the things that they said they did. It was kind of a fun speech and got lots of hoo-hoos and ha-has from the crowd.

It infuriated Jim. Absolutely infuriated him. Because number one, I was his friend, and I should have been doing what he wanted me to do, and that is support the guy he'd picked to be his candidate. Instead I'd gone off and given this speech, and the guy I gave the speech for got elected, which really burned him. I just told Jim, "Look, I'll give a speech for everybody that asks. So if you'd asked, I'd have done it." And he still remembers that. (laughs) And there are other memories that probably I'd let him share, not me.

DePue: What do you recall of the things that you were saying in this speech that he hadn't accomplished, that his administration hadn't accomplished? (laughs)

Sunderman: I don't remember specifically. I remember I was calling it a do-nothing council and literally kind of banged the drum on that theme; really, the truth of the matter is, a high school council doesn't do anything, anyway. It can't.

DePue: Was your speech totally tongue in cheek, then?

Sunderman: Yeah, it was. You had to say something to get their attention, and you had to say something that would make them think, Well, maybe this guy ought to be instead of the hand-picked successor, maybe this other guy ought to have a shot at it. But Jim was not happy about that.

DePue: How quickly did the two of you patch that up afterwards?

Sunderman: Within days or hours. (laughter) It wasn't any long-term rift, by any chance.

DePue: And how quickly did it take to start laughing about it afterwards?

Sunderman: Oh, gosh, I don't know. That took a while. But we certainly can now.

DePue: Where did you go to college afterwards?

Sunderman: I went to Eastern with Jim.

DePue: Straight away?

Sunderman: Straight away. Right.

DePue: What did you major in when you got there?

Sunderman: I majored in business.

DePue: And it took a year or so before Jim got to Eastern, as well, did it not?

Sunderman: It did, because Jim had a scholarship to Wabash College. I don't remember the circumstances of that scholarship. But that's where he went. He was there a year and then he came back to Eastern.

DePue: Once he came back to Eastern, did you guys start hanging together again?

Sunderman: Yeah. By the time he got back to Eastern, I had a job at a clothing store right across the street from campus. Jim came back and got a job at that same store, and we ended up working together.

DePue: The name of the store?

Sunderman: It was called Cavins, C-a-v-i-n-s, and Bayles, B-a-y-l-e-s. Cavins & Bayles on Campus. There was a Cavins & Bayles men's store on the west side of the square, and they went down and opened a clothing store on campus. That was at a time and an era when students dressed up. I tell my children the story and they're just incredulous. But we wore polished penny loafers and slacks and jackets to class. And the girls wore skirts and dresses. That was the standard attire.

DePue: To get our time frame right, this is '65, '66...

Sunderman: This was 1966.

DePue: Governor Edgar has told me that was an important experience for him, working in that clothing store. Do you recall, first of all, the name of the manager?

Sunderman: The manager was named Jerry Bennett.

DePue: Tell me a little bit about Jerry Bennett.

Sunderman: Jerry Bennett was a local fellow. Still lives in Charleston. He was hardly any older than we were. He had come to work downtown and had been instrumental in getting this store down on campus opened up. Jerry was a hard worker; in getting the store open and doing that kind of thing, he worked night and day. Once the place was open and we were there, it was sometimes hard to find him. He was next door playing cards or doing something. (DePue laughs) But, he was a good boss for a bunch of college kids. He started the day by telling us what needed to be done, then left, and we did it, got it accomplished, and had a good time. We had a great time. There were a bunch

of us working there, both men and women. It was just fun. Plus we got our clothes cheap, which was always a great advantage.

DePue: What was the discount on the clothes?

Sunderman: 40 percent or something. Jim and I stayed there for a long time. I think we may have gotten our clothes at cost by the time we'd finished. But it was a substantial enough discount that it was...

DePue: Do you recall how much you guys were getting paid?

Sunderman: Oh my. No, I don't. I don't remember.

DePue: Any stories that you can remember from those days?

Sunderman: The most important one from Jim's standpoint is that he met his wife there.

DePue: Was she working there?

Sunderman: No, she wasn't. We were juniors and she was a freshman, I think. She lived in Pemberton Hall, which was the dormitory across the street from us, and she would come by the store. There was a laundromat next to us and a little Coke-hamburger place called The Little Campus on the east side of us. She would come by, and we'd kind of look at her. She was, and is, a very attractive girl. She caught Jim's eye right away; she was pursued, and he was successful, in relatively short order.

DePue: You say he was a junior at that time?

Sunderman: I think so. He may have been a sophomore in class standing because of the transfer. I don't remember how the hours worked out, but it would have been my junior year.

DePue: He was married while he was still in college, correct?

Sunderman: Correct.

DePue: Were you dating at the time as well? Did you do any double dating with Jim and Brenda?

Sunderman: I double dated with Jim in high school. I can recall a number of instances of that. I don't remember whether I was dating [in college]. I was, but I don't recall ever double dating with them. I remember being at social gatherings with them.

DePue: How well did you know Brenda during those years?

Sunderman: I got to know her really well because she was around, and I was around them. It turned out that her mother was a Charlestonian. Her mother was from

Charleston. Her maiden name was Margaret Chamberlain, and it turned out that Margaret Chamberlain and my aunt, my father's sister, were good friends.

DePue: How would you describe her personality?

Sunderman: Margaret's?

DePue: No, Brenda's.

Sunderman: She was a sweetheart. She really was. She was a very sweet little girl; good sense of humor; just a very pleasant girl.

DePue: Was she outgoing?

Sunderman: Yes. Well, she was a little shy. She's overcome that. She was a little shy when you first met her, but when you spent time with her and after you became friends, she was outgoing.

DePue: Would you still describe Jim at that time as being shy?

Sunderman: Yes.

DePue: Would you say he's inherently an introvert or an extrovert by nature?

Sunderman: He's an introvert by nature.

DePue: By this time in his college years, what did you understand his life goals were?

Sunderman: He was, I thought, destined to be a college professor. He was deeply into political science and campus politics, to no surprise. I really think he thought he would be a political science professor of some kind. Or history. He was very, very interested in history.

DePue: I think I asked you before about what your major was, once you got to college?

Sunderman: I was studying accounting. I got a BS in business, with a concentration in accounting and economics.

DePue: Which suggests that you and Jim weren't in the same classes together, generally?

Sunderman: Very rarely. No. I don't recall ever being in class with him.

DePue: Can you tell us about any of the election campaigns that he ran while he was in college? Were you involved with any of those?

Sunderman: Only marginally. He ran for and was elected to student body president. I remember we were at Cavins & Bayles, and I think we utilized some facilities

there to make some signs or posters or some things like that. But I don't specifically remember doing very much in that campaign other than, obviously, voting for him or talking him up in various places.

DePue: You didn't deliver any stump speeches for his opponent at the time?

Sunderman: I did not. No. I did not. (laughter) He would have been really unhappy about that. No, no.

DePue: As you're getting closer to the end of your years in college, what are your career aspirations?

Sunderman: By then, I had decided that I would go to law school. The issue was timing because we did not graduate at a particularly auspicious time in history, and most of the grads were leaving for the South Pacific or South Vietnam. When I graduated, my number was up. I applied and was admitted to the University of Illinois College of Law, and actually attended class. They had a great program whereby if you got in, you were in. And if you left school to serve your military obligation, you were guaranteed a slot upon your return. And I got in, 1968; I got about two months of school in before I went to the military.

DePue: What did you do in the military?

Sunderman: I typed my way through the war.

DePue: Were you drafted?

Sunderman: No, I was not. I was not. When I realized where I was, I made application to the reserve units around here; I got into a National Guard unit in Mattoon, of all places, so I left.

DePue: 130th infantry unit at the time.

Sunderman: Yes. 130th infantry unit. It was the walking infantry. It wasn't mechanized; they walked.

DePue: I think right now they're walking in Afghanistan.

Sunderman: Yeah, they are. They are. So, I left the University of Illinois and went to Fort Lewis, Washington in October of '68and then spent my six months of active duty there and came back.

DePue: I'll put you on the spot a little bit. Back in those days, going to the National Guard was a popular thing to do.

Sunderman: Yes.

DePue: Did your family's political connections help in that regard?

Sunderman: No. No. In fact, I don't know that I even talked to my father about it, other than telling him I was doing this, this, and that. I don't think it could have, frankly. He was a judge. He wasn't anybody that had any political clout by then. So I don't think it would have or could have.

DePue: And you already mentioned that you basically clerked your way through that experience?

Sunderman: I did. Every National Guard unit had to have a clerk and every first sergeant wanted, if they could get, a lawyer, or a student, or a college student, or anybody to do it; that's who they got. And so, literally, that's what I did; I typed my way through the war.

DePue: During those last couple of years you guys were in college, did Jim ever suggest to you that he had political aspirations, that he was looking at politics as a career?

Sunderman: No. Because I don't think, when we were in college, he had formulated or refined his thoughts to that point. He was acutely interested in it. He was active in it. But I don't recall him ever saying during our college years, "Hey I'm going to run for office." I don't remember him ever getting to that step.

DePue: These are very tumultuous years for colleges throughout the entire United States.

Sunderman: Yes, they were.

DePue: You have the students' rights movement; the tail end of the civil rights movement, where it was getting much more violent; obviously, the protests about the Vietnam War. Where were you in terms of your political thought by the time you get to '67, '68?

Sunderman: I was probably on the right side of the spectrum—politically right—as far as issues of Vietnam were concerned. I probably changed my belief, personally, about the war while I was in active duty at Fort Lewis, Washington, when I saw the process of how people were assigned to various duties.

I went through in an unusual—they told us it was experimental—company that consisted of two platoons. My company was entirely college graduates. Probably 100 percent Caucasian. I don't remember there being a single minority member of my platoon. The other platoon appeared to be composed entirely of people who had not accomplished a high school education minorities, mostly from southern California. It was a stark contrast from the very beginning, because my group did virtually—I mean, we always got by, we did our inspections, we knew what to do. Then we played hearts with the sergeants and hung around the barracks while the other platoon was constantly out doing calisthenics or being yelled at or screamed at. You know how drill sergeants are.

When we finished and graduated from the advanced training, all of the people in my company went to Germany; Fort Holabird, in Maryland; a couple of them went to the language school at Monterrey. There was a large contingent of us who were reservists that went back to our home units. And we watched every single one of those other platoon members go **straight** to Vietnam where we were convinced they were doomed. It was a very awakening experience for many of us. I think from then on we looked at the war in a different perspective.

DePue: Any idea of the logic that the army had in organizing the platoons to begin with?

Sunderman: I have no idea. If you'd looked for logic in the military from the position of a recruit, it was difficult to see. (laughter) But clearly, the platoon I was in was one that was well educated and from a much different sociological strata than the folks in the other platoon. It was a disturbing thing. It really was.

DePue: I would assume that you all were quite a bit older as well; three and four years older.

Sunderman: Yes. Oh my, yes. We were all twenty-one, twenty-two, twenty-three, somewhere like that. The other folks were maybe eighteen.

DePue: Do you remember if anybody in your platoon wanted to go to 'Nam? Wanted to get into combat?

Sunderman: I don't remember a single soul that **didn't**.

DePue: Was the army trying to convince them to go to OCS? Become officers?[7]

Sunderman: Oh, yes. And they did that in our reserve units, as well. Sure. I remember getting that drum beaten frequently.

DePue: And your intention as far as becoming an officer was—

Sunderman: Absolutely nil. No, no, no. I learned early on that the best position in the military is a non-commissioned, high-status sergeant. No question about it.

DePue: I would imagine your first sergeant even made sure you didn't do a lot of KP [kitchen patrol] or things like that if you're clerking for him.

(At this point Mr. Sunderman's microphone dislodged, and his speaking is very difficult to hear for the next 18 minutes.)

Sunderman: That's true. It was a good slot to have.

[7] Officer Candidate School.

DePue: Let's get back to Charleston those last couple of years, when the war is really heating up and students are paying particular attention because, Oh gosh, when you graduate, you're subject to the draft. What was the climate like on EIU's campus?

Sunderman: It was certainly not as intense; it was not as acutely or apparently opposed to the war as many of the larger campuses were. Eastern was a little sheltered. It was generally populated by students from a radius of a hundred miles, on average, so, it didn't have a lot of the, for lack of a better term, outside influences that the bigger universities did. The University of Illinois, for example, was quite a hotbed of opposition. It was palpable when you were on campus in Champaign that there was a strong feeling of protest and antiwar activity that you didn't have at Eastern. Eastern was a little more laid back. There was certainly opposition, but it was not as acutely apparent.

DePue: Do you know where Jim himself was on the issue of the war, and politics at that time?

Sunderman: I think his attitude was very much like the rest of us. I think when we went in, at an earlier age, he believed the domino theory; he believed we were doing the right thing.[8] But his attitude towards that changed, as ours all did. He didn't have the direct military experience that some of us had, but he certainly understood the issue.

DePue: He's in student government. Did he run for student body president?

Sunderman: Yes, he did.

DePue: Was he in the student senate or organizations like that?

Sunderman: Yes, he was, and I don't remember when he got elected to the student senate. It must have been our junior year. The year after he came back in.

DePue: What I'm getting at here, this is at a time college campuses are protesting about—

Sunderman: Everything.

DePue: — school administration, as well.

Sunderman: Oh, absolutely.

[8] The Domino Theory was the belief of American strategists that a transition to communism in one nation would lead to a linear progression of communist takeovers in neighboring nations. This idea was a common justification for American intervention in Vietnam. President Eisenhower was the first to publicly apply the analogy of dominoes to Southeast Asia, doing so on April 7, 1954. http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=10202.

DePue: Do you recall any issues or problems with that? He would have been at the focal point of that if there were some protests going on.

Sunderman: He would recall that. Prior to his election there had been a couple of student body presidents who had been quite confrontational with the president of the university, a man named Quincy Doudna.[9] D-o-u-d-n-a. As an aside, his wife appeared in the obituaries today. She just died at 107.

DePue: Oh my gosh!

Sunderman: Yeah. She outlived Quincy by thirty.

DePue: What was her first name?

Sunderman: Her name was Winifred. Winifred Doudna.

DePue: You don't see that name too often anymore.

Sunderman: No, you don't. We don't see Quincy Doudna very often, either. And Quincy had had a very difficult time with a couple of the student leaders prior to Jim. Our firm had represented a (unintelligible). When Jim became the student body president, his relationship with Quincy was really much better. Jim was firm in his dealings with Quincy—as firm as you could be, being a student dealing with the president of the university. But they got along pretty well. They really did. And that may have been, as far as I can remember, Jim's first experience in what ultimately became a higher level of politics. It was his first experience at dealing with somebody in a position of authority, in a political context. He got along well, and I think Quincy respected Jim.

DePue: Listening to your stories about the confrontations that Professor Doudna would have had prior to the time Jim came into the picture—I am going to speculate here—you can tell me when I'm off base. These people before Jim were quite a bit more liberal in their leanings, quite a bit more confrontational in their association. And I would think just at the time when most college campuses are becoming much more liberal, or even radical, Jim gets elected here, and is not necessarily that way.

Sunderman: I think you're absolutely correct, but with one exception. I'm not sure how liberal some of the predecessors were, but they were radical in their approach to campus issues. Jim was, no question about it, more conservative than his predecessors. But he represented the majority—the major philosophy of the students.

DePue: How integrated was the campus at that time?

Sunderman: Not very.

[9] Doudna was president of Eastern from 1956 to 1971. *New York Times*, April 23, 1987.

DePue: Not many kids from the Chicago area coming down?

Sunderman: The university really drew its core students from a close radius. It was not until later that the university expanded its range..

DePue: Do you recall Brenda and Jim's wedding? Tell me about that.

Sunderman: It's interesting you say that because the governor and Brenda were here in town in April, and Brenda looked at me and said, "Do you know where we were before on this date long ago?" And I said, "Sure, I know exactly where we were, we were across in that church for your wedding." She remembered. Their wedding anniversary was the day they were down. The thing I remember most about the wedding: it was small, and it rained; there was a terrible storm. I wondered if the gods were in charge or not, but it worked out beautifully for everybody involved.

DePue: Were you a part of the wedding party?

Sunderman: Yes.

DePue: What role did you play?

Sunderman: I'm trying to think. It was a small wedding. I was not the best man. I honestly don't remember whether I was a groomsman. I was up in front. That's all I can I remember.

DePue: This relationship between the two of them must have developed very quickly, then, after they first met.

Sunderman: Oh, it did. It did.

DePue: Did Jim approach that like he did politics--serious?

Sunderman: Yes. He got very serious very quickly about it.

DePue: Do you recall when their son, Brad, was born? It was the tail end of '67?

Sunderman: I do remember that.

DePue: What was Jim's mood at that time?

Sunderman: Kind of overwhelmed, I think. They were living in a nasty little mobile home court not far from the old high school. I remember we would go over to visit, and we changed diapers. I remember changing Brad's diapers. It was this little tiny trailer. It was pretty basic. And Jim was working, going to school. Resources were a little tight.

DePue: How well did you know Jim's mother?

Sunderman: Frankly, reasonably well. She, as I indicated, lost her husband when she was quite young. She raised three boys by herself. She was the bread and butter, the earner; she worked. And she was one of the early working mothers. Most of our mothers were at home and not employed outside of the home. Betty got a job. She was working at the agriculture farm service agency.

DePue: Yeah, I'm trying to remember the acronym. AS...

Sunderman: ASES.

DePue: Was she there, oftentimes, when you went over to the house?

Sunderman: Oh, yeah. If she wasn't working, she was at home. Watching the store.

DePue: Well, I know from talking to Fred that they also put up college students in that same household.

Sunderman: They did. They had college boarders upstairs. She rented out rooms.

DePue: Any recollections of that? It must have made for a lively household!

Sunderman: I don't have much recollection of the boarders that were there. They were so much older than we were at that point in time that we had virtually no interaction at all.

DePue: Was he living on campus during the time he was going to school? Was he living at home at that time?

Sunderman: Yes. And when you say living at home, he was not living in the home where they kept boarders. When they re-built Lincoln Street to two lanes, they moved the house—literally moved it to another location. Shortly thereafter, Betty built a new home, a little ranch house on Van Buren. It must have been just three bedrooms; hers, Fred's, and Jim's. Tom, I think, was long gone by then. And I think Jim lived in that house with his mother, on Van Buren.

DePue: So this would have been until he got married, obviously. We do know that in Jim's senior year, this same professor Joe Connelly, who factored in in ninth grade, was important to him in his later years in college and helped him land this internship over at the state legislature.

Sunderman: He did. Joe and Jim, although politically opposite, were good friends and had a healthy respect for each another.

DePue: Did you have any encounters with Professor Connelly while you were in college?

Sunderman: I didn't have any classes with him. I would see him around campus. We were friends; I would always visit with him. I think I may have stuck my head in his office down at Coleman Hall from time to time.

DePue: (laughs) I feel like I'm jumping around quite a bit, but you graduated from college; you've gone into the military; and now you're going to law school, I assume, once you come back to this local area. Where did you go to law school?

Sunderman: University of Illinois.

DePue: How closely in those years and beyond have you followed Jim's career?

Sunderman: Pretty closely. I'm trying to think. The only political campaign of his that I recall not having any input at all was his first run, his first political campaign.

DePue: That would have been in 1974.

Sunderman: Yeah. And I was out of law school by '74. I don't know what I was involved in that limited my activities. I was here in Charleston practicing law, but I don't remember what—I didn't have a real active part.

DePue: Were you surprised at all when you found out that he had serious political ambitions?

Sunderman: Not in the slightest. Not by then.

DePue: Do you think he had had those ambitions for a long time—just hadn't wanted to express them so clearly?

Sunderman: I think perhaps that's true, but I think the stint in Springfield with that...

DePue: W. Russell Arrington.

Sunderman: Yes. W. Russell Arrington. He was a remarkable fellow. I think he took Jim under his wing and was very helpful.

DePue: Just to put a marker on here, we probably should mention that Arrington was at that point in time President of the Senate. He was the senior ranking member of the Illinois Senate, at a time when the Republicans controlled the Senate. No longer. Did you help out with his '76 campaign?

Sunderman: Yeah, I did. I don't recall specifically what I did. I obviously gave money.

DePue: You were living and practicing in Charleston at the time?

Sunderman: Yes. We may have had a little fundraising cocktail party for him. Certainly attended some. Bought lots of tickets. Wrote some letters.

DePue: You said "we." Were you married by this time?

Sunderman: I got married in 1976.

DePue: Your wife's name?

Sunderman: Judith.

DePue: What was her maiden name?

Sunderman: Williams.

DePue: Where is she from?

Sunderman: It's kind of an odd story, really. When I got out of law school and came back to Charleston, I taught for a couple of years at Eastern in the School of Business, what we call business law. I did it part-time at night. And it was (unintelligible) and I did it (unintelligible).

DePue: Uh-oh. I need to have your microphone back up. Let's pause here.

(break in recording)

Sunderman: It was a nice gig. Taught Tuesday and Thursday nights. Started out with twenty students on the third floor of Blair Hall, and about three years later, finished teaching one hundred and some in an auditorium class. By then you'd go home and your voice was shot. You were shot. You had to have girlfriends help you grade the multi-choice test. It got to be a real chore. But, I digress. I met my wife, in that class. She looked familiar, and it turned out she was a girl who grew up just about three blocks from my house to the south. So, small world.

DePue: And a typical small town story, too.

Sunderman: Yes. We were married in 1976.

DePue: And he won re-election—

Sunderman: No.

DePue: He won election for the first time in '76. Won re-election in '78. Did you participate in that campaign at all?

Sunderman: Yes. Again, I wasn't on the committee, I wasn't in the forefront. But I certainly participated, you bet, and lent financial support.

DePue: It wasn't too long after that, that Governor Thompson selected him to be his legislative liaison. Did that move surprise you?

Sunderman: It did. It did surprise me. I mean, I was delighted, I was pleased; I thought it was a real vote of confidence from Thompson. I guess I was surprised it was offered, but not particularly surprised he took it. I mean, I think it was a great opportunity for him.

DePue: Before that time, or at that time, if you were to predict or project what kind of a political career Jim would have, how far do you think it would have gone?

Sunderman: We could have gone just as far as it ultimately did. It would have taken a longer time, I think. Knowing now what we know about many of the Thompson protégés—some of the bright stars of the Thompson administration who moved on up—we shouldn't be surprised at all. I expected Jim to ultimately be very successful in politics. I think Governor Thompson moved him along.

DePue: And he obviously saw a lot of talent in him

Sunderman: He saw a lot of talent and a lot of integrity. And he liked both aspects, I think.

DePue: It wasn't that much longer—two years later—that Alan Dixon won the Senate seat and moved out of being secretary of state, and Thompson then had an opportunity to fill Dixon's seat. That would have been in January of 1981. Were you surprised at that?

Sunderman: At the time, yes. Yes. Delighted, but surprised. It was an incredible vote of confidence by the governor in Jim, and well-deserved. At that time, the secretary of state's office, in many respects, was the most powerful in the state: certainly had the largest staff and the most immediate impact on citizens of the state. It was very impressive that Jim was selected.

DePue: Did you start to reconsider the calculus for his career by that time?

Sunderman: Yeah. No doubt about it.

DePue: Your involvement in the '82 and the '86 campaigns that then-Secretary of State Edgar would have had for re-election?

Sunderman: Was limited to the local area. I always wanted to—and

I think it was expected—to write some checks and to attend some fundraisers. I think we may have had, in our home, some kind of a function, or we may have co-joined someone, I'm not quite sure. But certainly, we were very supportive.

DePue: Was it the same kind of involvement for his gubernatorial campaigns?

Sunderman: Yes.

DePue: From the time that he became secretary of state all the way up to the present, how would you characterize the nature of the relationship you and your wife have had with the Edgars?

Sunderman: It's a personal relationship. It's a warm relationship. A respectful relationship. It's one that I think Jim's comfortable with because he knows I'm never going to ask him for anything. Don't want an appointment for anything. Don't ask that anything happen. We just enjoy each other's company. And I still needle him from time to time. (laughs)

DePue: How closely does he stay connected with the Charleston community?

Sunderman: Very much so, in many ways. He still comes here for his dental appointments, he used to come here for his medical appointments—he doesn't anymore—and he has a number of friends here. So, he comes back frequently. Well, I shouldn't say frequently anymore, because he's spread pretty thin, but he'll be in Charleston three times a year, four times a year.

DePue: Do you go to each other's children's weddings and those kinds of activities?

Sunderman: My two children: neither one have gotten married. We went to Brad's wedding because he was married in Springfield.

DePue: While Jim was governor?

Sunderman: Yeah, at the Baptist church right across the street from the governor's mansion—or nearly across the street. I don't remember the daughter's wedding.

DePue: Elizabeth's.

Sunderman: Elizabeth's wedding.

DePue: Are there any stories about those years, the last twenty or so years, and the relationship you have that stay with you, that you can share?

Sunderman: Yes. I remember one because I got snookered into it and I'm not sure I should have done it. I was driving down Route 57, going to a hearing in Salem, and my phone rang, and it was a lady that worked for the governor. I can't remember her name now, I should. I knew her. We'd visited over the years

She says, "Hey, we found you. Hold on, the governor wants to talk to you." I said, "Fine." So he was on the phone, and he said, "Will you do me a favor?" I said, "I don't know. What now?" He says, "I want you to go on the Judicial Inquiry Board." And I said, "What is that?" And he says, "Well, some board that disciplines bad judges." I said, "Why me?" He says, "Well, I knew you'd do a good job." I said, "All right. I'll do it." So, I did.

It's interesting; Jim's relationship with the judiciary was always sort of askance. I don't want to say he doesn't like lawyers and judges, that's not exactly fair. But I think he's somewhat skeptical of the third branch of government, particularly in light of some of the members of the Supreme Court who have been less than stellar in their ethics. This goes clear back to the days of the two that were prosecuted. Do you remember Klingbiel and Solfisburg?[10]

DePue: Oh, in the late '60's.

Sunderman: In the late '60's. And then Otto Kerner's issues; and Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, Heiple, who got into a problem.[11] And it was in response to the Heiple issue that Jim got a constitutional amendment through that reconfigured the judicial commission and added two public members to a body that had been only populated by judges.[12] So he asked that I go on the inquiry board, which is a group nobody's ever heard of before. It's become a little more popular now. It receives complaints against judges, investigates judges, and if it finds that there's a reason to do so, files a complaint that the court's commission ultimately resolves. I know you're familiar with the system. So I did that.

I was on the board for eight years. In fact, I was chairman for about seven and a half of them. It was interesting because he was dissatisfied with the court's commission and its institutionalization of just judges disciplining the judges. He wanted a downstate perspective on the inquiry board, and when I got there, I was it. I was the only down-stater there was. The board was very diverse, but no one from downstate was on the board.

I have to say this for Jim: he appointed me, and I never heard again. He never said, "How's it going?" Well, he would ask how's it going, but he would never say, "Hey, do this, do that." He was strictly hands-off, as you would expect him to be. But, he wanted that, I think, kind of small town, downstate presence on that board.

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[10] In a major 1969 scandal, Roy Solfisburg and Ray Klingbiel were forced to resign their posts as justices of the Illinois Supreme Court following revelations each had accepted stock from Theodore Isaacs, general counsel of the Civic Center Bank and Trust Company, ahead of their ruling to dismiss charges against Isaacs. Solfisburg was chief justice at the time, and Klingbiel had been a former chief justice. Kenneth A. Manaster, *Illinois Justice: The Scandal of 1969 and the Rise of John Paul Stevens* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001).

[11] James D. Heiple was chief justice of the Illinois Supreme Court from 1990 to 2000. He was censured following a Judicial Inquiry Board investigation of charges he had abused his position to avoid traffic tickets in a series of traffic stops in 1996. In 1997, a state legislative committee investigated several additional allegations against Heiple. Although labeling Heiple's conduct as "mean spirited and demeaning to the court," "imperious," and "arrogant," the committee, in an 8-2 vote, did not recommend impeachment. *Chicago Tribune*, May 16, 1997.

[12] On November 3, 1998, nearly 80 percent of Illinois voters approved the constitutional amendment. *Chicago Tribune*, November 8, 1998.

DePue: He was governor for eight years. You said you were on this board for seven years, so pretty much the entire time he was in office?

Sunderman: No, actually not. I went off in '06, went on in '98 shortly before his second term expired. So I lived through the Ryan administration and part of the Blagojevich administration. (laughs)

DePue: Yeah, there's a lot of history there. (laughs)

Sunderman: Oh, yes.

DePue: Let's go ahead and finish this up with just a couple of general questions for you.

Sunderman: Let me interrupt you if I can. You asked about stories from Jim's younger married days, and I was telling you about this mobile home they lived in. They really did not have much money. I'll never forget that Brenda fell victim to some guy who sold them a vacuum cleaner, a very expensive and elaborate vacuum cleaner that they could no more afford than I could afford a new Rolls Royce.

But, the deal was that they would get twenty-five dollars off the purchase price of this vacuum cleaner for every demonstration that they could arrange. I remember, I don't know how many of them I attended, where this poor salesman showed up at some apartment, scattered all over town, with a bunch of guys drinking beer, watching him suck air our of pillows, vacuum up—I think we paid for the vacuum cleaner in a concerted effort. Every son-of-a-gun we knew had to donate a couple of hours for a vacuum cleaner demonstration. I think that guy went all over campus. They must have gotten that thing free by the time we were finished. (laughter)

DePue: Did he sell any more vacuum cleaners?

Sunderman: Not that I knew of. We weren't interested in buying one. We were just interested in getting twenty-five dollars off of Brenda's. I'm sorry I digress.

DePue: No, that's a great story. I'm going to finish up with a general question, as I mentioned before. From your perspective—a life-long resident of Charleston, resident of the state of Illinois, and also a close friend—what do you think of the Edgar administration, of his accomplishments as governor?

Sunderman: I can't say enough about what the people of the State of Illinois received from his administration. I think he was an excellent governor. He inherited some difficult financial circumstances. He put the state of Illinois' budget in order, and in fact finished his term with a surplus. He accomplished a great deal in many ways that the people of the state didn't see, in the form of organization and re-organization of various administrative functions in the government. He managed to put a great deal more money into higher education, and education

in general, in our state than we'd been able to have available. He brought a level of integrity to state government that we certainly have never seen since and rarely saw before. We were very fortunate to have him as governor for eight years.

DePue: What was it about his character that made him successful?

Sunderman: A number of things, but primarily he is a man of really significant and profound integrity. He is one of the straightest shooters, if I can use that term, of any man I've ever known. He is attentive. He's thoughtful. And he does what he believes is best, sometimes when other people strongly disagree, but he can do it in a way that people will understand him; they may not agree with him, but they understand why he's doing what he's doing. That's a great talent. I think he'll be known in history as an excellent governor.

DePue: Looking back at his many accomplishments, not just as governor, but also including the secretary of state years, is there one that really sticks out that you're proud to say, "That's my friend?"

Sunderman: I'm not sure I can find one accomplishment. One accomplishment that we haven't talked about is that he has a wonderful family: two great kids, great-grandchildren, a wife that is a wonderful woman. That's an accomplishment for any man. As governor, I think his greatest accomplishment may have been a feeling, for all of us in the state of Illinois, that we had good government. A feeling and a confidence in every one of us that things were being attended to honestly and responsibly. I think that's an accomplishment that we really respect in this day and age.

DePue: If he would have come to you in 1998, and maybe he did, and 2006, what were your aspirations for him politically beyond that point?

Sunderman: He did. He did talk to me. And my aspirations for him were: Go for it. Run. Be the governor. I think you can do it. I think you can get elected. It's going to be difficult.

DePue: This is 1998 we're talking about?

Sunderman: Yeah. But later on he had an opportunity, after he completed his second term as governor, to return to the political arena. Was that '06?

DePue: That was '06.

Sunderman: Yeah. We talked about that. And he gave considerable thought to running in '06. I wanted him to. I thought the state needed him, the country needed him. But I understood that he had some reservations and I understand why he didn't run. I respect him for it and it's probably the best thing.

DePue: Once he had a term or so under his belt as a very successful governor, one, did he have national ambitions, and two, did you think that he would be up for that?

Sunderman: Oh, I think he thought about that. I think many people in his position would give that thought. I think ultimately Jim decided he wasn't going to make that commitment for any kind of national presence. Again, he had personal considerations that prevailed.

DePue: Health, and, I would imagine, Brenda's concerns.

Sunderman: Jim and I each had our little cardiac episodes. I had mine about a year before he had his. Both of those events were life changing for both of us. He is careful with himself. He takes good care of himself. But his wife and family members legitimately had concerns about his health, as they should.

DePue: Any final comments, then?

Sunderman: No, I don't have any final comments. I'm glad that somebody's making the effort to record, if that's the right term, for posterity the legacy of Jim's administration, while some of us are still alive to be able to do it. I'm pleased that you're doing this.

DePue: Thank you very much. It's certainly been a pleasure talking to you and everybody associated with his administration. I'm always surprised the things I learn when I sit down to talk to folks. Thank you very much, Tony.

Sunderman: You're welcome.

(end of interview)