

Title Page & Abstract

An Interview with John Schmidt

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

Interview # IST-A-L-2016-042

John Schmidt, who worked on the Adlai Stevenson III 1982 and 1986 gubernatorial campaigns, was interviewed on the dates listed below as part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library's *Illinois Statecraft-Gov. Thompson* Oral History project.

Interview dates & location:

Date: Aug 25 & Oct 3, 2016 Location: J. Schmidt's law office at Mayer Brown, Chicago IL

Interview Format: Digital audio

Interviewer: Mark R. DePue, Director of Oral History

Transcription by: _____

Edited by: _____

Transcript
being processed

Total Pages: _____ Total Time: 2:40 + 1:11 / 2.67 + 1.18 = 3.85 hrs.

Session 1: Early life, Democratic Conventions of 1968 & 1972 and 1982 IL gubernatorial campaign

Session 2: 1986 IL gubernatorial campaign, Richard M. Daley and Navy Pier

Accessioned into the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Archives on December 14, 2016.

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

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Abstract

John Schmidt, *Illinois Statecraft*, IST-A-L-2016-042

Biographical Information Overview of Interview: John Schmidt was born on November 14th, 1943 in Evanston, Illinois, and grew up there. He attended Harvard University, graduating in 1964, and earned a law degree from Harvard Law School in 1967. He then return to Chicago and joined the law firm of Mayer Brown. In 1968 he became involved in the Eugene McCarthy campaign, and during the Democratic convention helped revise the rules that Democrats used to select convention delegates. By 1972, the Democrats' new procedures resulted in a contentious fight the lead-up to their convention in Florida, a fight between two slates of Illinois delegates, one headed by Richard J. Daley and the Chicago Democratic machine, and a counter slate of delegates. John and Wayne Whalen were the legal counsel for the slate of delegates that successfully challenged the Daley delegation.

In 1982 Schmidt served as a legal counsel for Illinois's Democratic candidate for governor, Senator Adlai Stevenson, III. He was not active during the campaign, but when election night ended with only 5,074 votes separating Governor Jim Thompson (the Republican candidate) and Adlai Stevenson, Schmidt was called upon to file a petition for recount. After two months of legal actions between the two campaigns, the Illinois Supreme Court ruled that the original vote count would stand, also stating that Illinois's law on recounts was unconstitutional. Following the election, there were numerous charges of vote fraud, especially in Cook, DuPage and Kankakee Counties. Those charges resulted in the U.S. Attorney for Northern Illinois, Dan Webb, issuing numerous indictments against Cook County officials.

In 1986, Schmidt again served as a legal advisor to Adlai Stevenson, who once again ran against Governor Jim Thompson. When two Lyndon LaRouche backed candidates won as Democrats in the primary (Lieutenant Governor and Secretary of State), Stevenson was forced to run as an independent, on the new Solidarity Party ticket. He lost in the general election in a landslide. Following that election, Schmidt served on Richard M. Daley's transition team, and for a few months as Daley's chief of staff. In 1989 he was appointed as the Chairman of the Board for the newly created Metropolitan Pier and Exposition Authority where he was intimately involved with the renovation of Navy Pier, turning it into a very popular tourist destination.

Subject Headings/Key Words: Adlai Stevenson, III; 1982 Illinois gubernatorial election; vote fraud allegations following 1982 gubernatorial election; 1986 Illinois gubernatorial election; 1968 Democratic Convention in Chicago; 1972 Democratic Convention in Miami Beach; Governor James Thompson; Richard M. Daley; Navy Pier; Lyndon LaRouche

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