

Title Page & Abstract

An Interview with Ken Zehnder

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

Interview # ISG-A-L-2011-025

Ken Zehnder, who worked in a variety of positions for Jim Edgar while Edgar served as Illinois Secretary of State and then Governor, was interviewed on the date listed below as part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library's *Illinois Statecraft* Oral History project.

Interview dates & location:

Date: June 20, 2011 Location: Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library, Springfield

Date: July 12, 2011 Location: Anvil Club in East Dundee, Illinois

Interview Format: Digital audio

Interviewer: Mark R. DePue, Director of Oral History, ALPL

Transcription by: Audio Transcription Center, Boston, MA

Edited by: Rozanne Flatt, ALPL Volunteer

Total Pages: 37 + 28 = 65 Total Time: 2:14 + 1:42 / 2.23 + 1.7 hrs = 3.93 hrs

Session 1: Early life through his work with Secretary of State Edgar to 1990

Session 2: Zehnder's work in the Gov. Edgar administration, 1991 through 1998

Accessioned into the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Archives on December 20th, 2011

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

© 2011 Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library

Abstract

Ken Zehnder, *Illinois Statecraft*, ISG-A-L-2011-025

Biographical Information Overview of Interview: Kenneth E. Zehnder was born on February 5th, 1950 in Beaver Falls, Pennsylvania, and grew up in York, Pennsylvania where his father worked as a chemical engineer. The family moved to Aurora, Illinois in 1967, and following high school, Ken attended Western Illinois University, graduating in 1972. After working in a variety of jobs, he found employment with Horace Mann Insurance Company in Springfield, Illinois, and soon became involved in local Republican politics. In 1980 Zehnder helped run George H.W. Bush's unsuccessful presidential primary bid in central Illinois. He then worked in Congressman Paul Findley's campaign before being selected as the traveling aid for newly appointed Secretary of State Jim Edgar.

Zehnder spent the next eighteen years working for Edgar in a variety of positions. For most of Edgar's tenure as Secretary of State, Zehnder worked as Edgar's scheduler, often as an additional duty. Following Edgar's election as governor in 1990, Zehnder became the assistant to the Governor for Boards and Commissions, staying in that job for four years. Following Edgar's reelection, he moved to the Department of Revenue, and soon was named its director. He spent the next four years modernizing the department's procedures. When George Ryan became governor in 1999, Zehnder moved to the private sector, eventually working at Northern Illinois University in the Office of Governmental Relations.

Subject Headings/Key Words: Governor Jim Edgar; duties as travel aid for Secretary of State Jim Edgar; duties as scheduler for Sec. of State Jim Edgar; George H. W. Bush; Congressman Paul Findley; Assistant to the Governor for Boards and Commissions; process of making appointments to Boards & Commissions; director of IL Department of Revenue; Aurora, Illinois; Mike Lawrence; Joan Walters; Brenda Edgar; patronage in Illinois

Note to the Reader: Readers of the oral history memoir should bear in mind that this is a transcript of the spoken word, and that the interviewer, interviewee and editor sought to preserve the informal, conversational style that is inherent in such historical sources. The Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library is not responsible for the factual accuracy of the memoir, nor for the views expressed therein. We leave these for the reader to judge.

COPYRIGHT

The following material can be used for educational and other non-commercial purposes without the written permission of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library. "Fair use" criteria of Section 107 of the Copyright Act of 1976 must be followed. These materials are not to be deposited in other repositories, nor used for resale or commercial purposes without the authorization from the Audio-Visual Curator at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library, 112 N. 6th Street, Springfield, Illinois 62701. Telephone (217) 785-7955