

# Title Page & Abstract

An Interview with Barbara Flynn Currie

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

Interview # ISL-A-L-2014-049

Barbara Flynn Currie, who has represented the Hyde Park district of Chicago in the IL House of Representatives, and since 1997 as the Majority Leader in the House, was interviewed on the date listed below as part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library's *Illinois Statecraft-Legislators* Oral History project.

Interview dates & location:

Session 1: Dec 16, 2014 Location: Rep. Currie's legislative office in Chicago, IL

Session 2&3: Jan 27 & Feb 24, 2015 Location: Rep. Currie's office in the state capitol

Session 4: Sep 10, 2015 Location: Speaker's Offices in Bilandic Building, Chicago

Session 5: Mar 23, 2016 Location: Speaker's Offices in Bilandic Building, Chicago

Session 6: Apr 1, 2019 Location: Currie home in Chicago, IL

Session 7: Apr 15, 2019 Location: Currie home in Chicago, IL

Session 8: Apr 16, 2019 Location: Currie home in Chicago, IL

Session 9: Jun 17, 2019 Location: Currie home in Chicago, IL

Session 10: Jun 18, 2019 Location: Currie home in Chicago, IL

Interview Format: Digital audio

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

Transcription by: \_\_\_\_\_

Edited by: \_\_\_\_\_

Transcript  
being processed

Total Pages: \_\_\_\_\_ Total Time: 1:51(1) + 1:40(2) + 1:12(3) + 1:35(4) + 1:54(5) + 1:58(6) + 1:53(7) + 2:09(8) + 1:32(9) + 1:57(10) / 1.85(1) + 1.67(2) + 1.2(3) + 1.58(4) + 1.9(5) + 1.97(6) + 1.88(7) + 2.15(8) + 1.53(9) + 1.95(10) = 17.68 hrs.

Session 1: Early life thru her election to the IL House of Representatives in 1978

Session 2: Early years in the Illinois State House of Representatives

Session 3: ERA fight in Illinois from 1978 to June 1982

Session 4: IL House during the early 1980s and Thompson administration

Session 5: IL House during the late 1980s and more on the Thompson administration

Session 6: RUTAN, 1990 redistricting and the Gov. Jim Edgar administration

Session 7: Policy positions in 1990s, redistricting & Gov. George Ryan administration

Session 8: The Gov. Rod Blagojevich administration and IL Senator Barack Obama

Session 9: Blagojevich impeachment, redistricting and Gov. Pat Quinn administration

Session 10: Gov. Bruce Rauner, retirement and reflections on Gov. J.B. Pritzker

Accessioned into the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Archives on August 6, 2019.

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

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## Abstract

### Barbara Flynn Currie, *Illinois Statecraft*, ISL-A-L-2014-049

**Biographical Information Overview of Interview:** Barbara Flynn was born on May 4th, 1940 in Lacrosse, Wisconsin, and grew up in South Chicago, Illinois. She attended the University (of Chicago) High School, graduating in 1958. She enrolled in the University of Chicago that same year, then married David Park Currie in her sophomore year and left school for several years while David worked on his law degree and legal career. They eventually returned to Chicago, and Barbara earned a B.A. in 1968 and a master's degree in 1973. From 1965 to 1969 she also served as vice president of the Chicago League of Women Voters. From 1974 to 1977 she worked at the National Opinion Research Center.

In 1978 she won her first political race, running as a Democrat in the 24th district for the Illinois House of Representatives. She served continuously in the Illinois House from that time through the 2018 legislative year, even as her Hyde Park (Chicago) neighborhood changed from one district to another over the decades. She has held a variety of key committee assignments, including serving on the Appropriations II, Revenue, and Social Service committees, plus the Legislative Advisory Committee on Public Aid. Currie consistently fought for progressive causes during her time in the Illinois House. In the 1993-1994 term she moved into a leadership role, becoming an Assistant Majority Leader. In 1995-1996, when the Republicans were in the majority, she was an assistant minority leader. In 1997, with the Democrats back in the majority, she became the House Majority Leader. She was the first woman to hold that title in the Illinois House, a position she held until her retirement. Through most of her tenure, Michael Madigan has been the Speaker of the House.

The interviews cover Currie's career in the House up through her retirement, and also include her reflections on the first legislative term for Governor J.B. Pritzker. Leader Currie was in charge of redistricting following both the 2000 and 2010 census. Speaker Madigan also selected her to chair the Investigative Committee which led to the impeachment of Gov.

Blagojevich. During the interview, Currie reflected on every governor from Gov. Jim Thompson in 1977 to Gov. J.B. Pritzker in 2019.

**Subject Headings/Key Words:** Governor Jim Thompson; Equal Rights Amendment fight in Illinois; Cutback Amendment; Speaker Mike Madigan; Minority Leader Lee Daniels; George Ryan; South Chicago, Illinois; David Park Currie; Carol Moseley Braun; Richard J. Daley; Illinois fiscal and taxing legislation; Gov. Jim Edgar; Gov. George Ryan; 2000 redistricting; Gov. Rod Blagojevich; 2010 redistricting; Blagojevich impeachment; Gov. Pat Quinn; Gov. Bruce Rauner

**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.

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