

# Title Page & Abstract

An Interview with Jim Edgar

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

Interview # ISG-A-L-2009-019

Jim Edgar, Illinois Secretary of State from 1981-1990 and governor from 1991-1999, was interviewed on the dates listed below as part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library's *Illinois Statecraft* Oral History project.

## Interview dates & locations:

Session 1: May 21, 2009	Edgar's office on the University of Illinois campus at the Institute of Government and Public Affairs
Session 2: May 22, 2009	Edgar's Urbana office
Session 3: May 28, 2009	Edgar's Urbana office
Session 4: May 29, 2009	Edgar's Urbana office
Session 5: June 9, 2009	Edgar's Urbana office
Session 6: June 10, 2009	Edgar's Urbana office
Session 7: June 15, 2009	Edgar's Urbana office
Session 8: June 22, 2009	Edgar's Urbana office
Sessions 9 & 10: Sept. 2, 2009	Illinois Information Service studio, Springfield, IL
Sessions 11 & 12: Nov. 17, 2009	Edgar's Urbana office
Sessions 13 & 14: April 23, 2010	Edgar's Urbana office
Sessions 15 & 16: May 28, 2010	Edgar's Urbana office
Sessions 17: June 18, 2010	Edgar's Urbana office
Sessions 18 & 19: Aug. 30, 2010	Edgar's Urbana office
Session 20: Sept. 2, 2010	Edgar's Urbana office
Sessions 21 & 22: Sept. 9, 2010	Edgar's Urbana office
Session 23: Nov. 8, 2010	Edgar's Urbana office
Session 24 & 25: Nov. 18, 2010	Edgar's Urbana office
Session 26: Dec. 14, 2010	Edgar's Urbana office

Interview Format: Digital audio / Digital video

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

Technical Support: Videographers Mark Suszko, Greg Lipe and Tony Bateman of the Illinois Information Service, Springfield, IL

Transcription by: Tape Transcription Center, Boston, MA

Edited by: Mike Czaplicki, Jim Edgar Oral History project editor, and Rozanne Flatt, ALPL Volunteer

Total Pages: 1,117 pgs (Vol I) 1-270; (Vol II) 271-516; (Vol III) 517-717; (Vol IV) 718-955; (Vol V) 956-1117 Total Time: (Session 1) 2:36 + (2) 2:31 + (3) 2:50 + (4) 2:32 + (5) 2:33 + (6) 3:11 + (7) 3:11 + (8) 2:30 + (9) 1:36 + (10) 1:52 + (11) 1:36 + (12) 2:06 + (13) 1:56 + (14) 1:52 + (15) 1:34 + (16) 1:18 + (17) 3:00 + (18) 1:00 + (19) 1:56 + (20) 3:10 (21) 1:13 + (22) 2:06 + (23) 2:31 + (24) 1:03 + (25) 2:33 + (26) 2:16 / (Session 1) 2.6 + (2) 2.52 + (3) 2.83 + (4) 2.53 + (5) 2.55 + (6) 3.18 + (7) 3.18 + (8) 2.5 + (9) 1.6 + (10) 1.87 + (11) 1.6 + (12) 2.1 + (13) 1.93 + (14) 1.86 + (15) 1.57 + (16) 1.3 + (17) 3.0 + (18) 1.0 + (19) 1.93 + (20) 3.17 + (21) 1.22 + (22) 2.1 + (23) 2.52 + (24) 1.05 + (25) 2.55 + (26) 2.27 = 56.53 hrs

#### Volume I: Edgar's Early Life and Legislative Career

Session 1: Early childhood through the high school years

Session 2: Years at Wabash College and EIU, legislative internship

Session 3: Work as a legislative staffer through 1973

Session 4: Edgar's run for state legislature in 1974 and 1976

Session 5: Edgar's years in the state legislature, 1977-1978

#### Volume II: From Legislative Liaison to Governor – Road to the Executive Mansion

Session 6: Edgar's years as Gov. Thompson's legislative liaison, 1979-1980

Session 7: Edgar's Secretary of State years, 1981-1982

Session 8: Secretary of State years, cont. 1983-1990

Session 9: 1990 Gubernatorial election campaign – 1 (video)

Session 10: 1990 Gubernatorial election campaign – 2 (video)

#### Volume III: Edgar's First Term – 1991-1994

Session 11: Edgar's transition prior to his inauguration

Session 12: Inauguration, early months, and 1991 budget battle for FY 1992

Session 13: Edgar administration from Fall 1991 thru FY 1993 budget fight

Session 14: Administration from mid-1992 thru 1992 political campaigns

Session 15: Working with the legislature, legislative leaders, and the mansion

Session 16: The administration's response to the Great Flood of 1993

#### Volume IV: Edgar's Second Gubernatorial Campaign & Second Term – 1994-1999

Session 17: 1994 and the second gubernatorial election campaign

Session 18: Republican legislative majority initiatives and higher ed. reforms

Session 19: Chicago school reform and Dept. of Natural Resources reorg.

Session 20: Staff reorganization and Illinois school reform

Session 21: Human Services reorganization, reforms, and initiatives

Session 22: Dept. of Children and Family Services and MSI controversy

#### Volume V: Edgar as Private Citizen

Session 23: Edgar's last year in office in 1998 and transition to new life

Session 24: Adjusting to life as a private citizen

Session 25: Decision points; the 2002 gubernatorial, 2004 Senate, and 2006 gubernatorial elections

Session 26: Views of Blagojevich, Quinn, ALPLM, and concluding questions

Accessioned into the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Archives on October 11, 2012.

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

© 2010 Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library

## Abstract

### Governor Jim Edgar, *Illinois Statecraft*, ISG-A-L-2009-019

**Biographical Information Overview of Interview:** Jim Edgar was born on July 22nd, 1946 in Vinita, Oklahoma to Cecil and Betty Edgar. Cecil moved the family to Charleston, Illinois in 1949, but died in a car accident when Jim was seven. At an early age, Jim developed a passion for history and politics, and ran for a series of offices in whatever school he attended. Following his graduation for Charleston High School, he spent one year at Wabash College in Indiana, then transferred to Eastern Illinois University in Charleston, where he graduated in 1968. By that time, he had also married Brenda Smith, a fellow student.

He immediately went to work as a legislative intern for the Illinois Senate Republicans, and spent the next two years working as an aid to the powerful Senate President Pro-Tem, W. Russell Arrington. In 1974 he ran unsuccessfully for the Illinois House, but won election for that seat in 1976. Shortly after his reelection in 1978, Governor Jim Thompson selected Edgar to be his legislative liaison. Following the 1980 election, Governor Thompson appointed Edgar to serve as Secretary of State, the position vacated by Alan Dixon, who was headed to the U.S. Senate. For the next ten years Edgar served as Secretary of State, winning two elections and implementing significant legislation, including DUI laws and driver's insurance legislation.

In 1990 Edgar ran for governor against Democrat Neil Hartigan, the state's Attorney General. He won a very close election, only to face a \$1 billion deficit in the midst of a national recession. Edgar's first three years in office were focused on restoring the state to fiscal health, and in 1993 to the Great Flood that socked much of the Midwest. He easily won reelection in 1994 against Dawn Clark Netsch, and focused his second term on educational reform (both for Chicago and for state funding of Illinois schools), on reorganizing portions of the state government, and on improvements to the state's human services programs. He decided not to run for reelection in 1998, and instead became a Distinguished Fellow at the Institute for Government and Public Affairs at the University of Illinois. He continued to play a prominent role in Illinois politics thereafter, becoming one of the state's most respected elder statesmen.

**Subject Headings/Key Words:** Gov. Jim Edgar; Gov. Jim Thompson; Senator W. Russell Arrington; Gov. Richard Ogilvie; Eastern Illinois University; Cutback Amendment; Jim Edgar as Secretary of State; DUI legislation in Illinois; auto insurance legislation; 1990 Illinois gubernatorial election; Neil Hartigan; Illinois budget battles of 1991 and 1992; Mike Lawrence; Joan Walters; Kirk Dillard; Jim Reilly; Gene Reineke; Al Grosboll; Flood of 1993; ERA fight in Illinois; 1994 gubernatorial election; Dawn Clark Netsch; Mike Madigan; Phil Rock; James ‘Pate’ Philip; George Ryan; Lee Daniels; Chicago Education Reform; Illinois Education Reform; creation of the Dept. of Human Services and of the Dept. of Natural Resources; Gov. Rod Blagojevich; Management Services of Illinois (MSI) scandal; Jim Edgar Panther Creek; Gov. Pat Quinn; Mike McCormick

**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**