

Title Page & Abstract

An Interview with Dee Runaas

Part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library
Education is Key--Civics Education Oral History project

Interview #ECE-A-L-2020-010

Dee Runaas, a civics educator, was interviewed on the date listed below as part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library's *Education is Key—Civics Education* Oral History project.

Interview dates & location:

Date: January 24, 2020 Location: Chicago, Illinois

Interview Format: Digital audio

Interviewer: Philip Pogue, ALPL volunteer

Transcription by: _____

Edited by: _____

Total Pages: _____ Total Time: 1:21/1.35 hrs

Accessioned into the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Archives on August 6, 2020.

The interview(s) is/are archived at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library in Springfield, Illinois.

Interview being
processed

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Abstract

Dee Runaas, Civics Education, ECE-A-L-2020-010

Biographical Information Overview of Interview: Dee Runaas was born in Monroe, Wisconsin. She grew up in Albany, Wisconsin, and graduated from high school in 1976. She attended college at Wisconsin Platteville, University of Wisconsin Milwaukee, and the University of North Carolina Charlotte. She also studied abroad in England. She graduated from University of North Carolina Charlotte with a political science major. Runaas had a variety of jobs, including working in a textile plant in Hong Kong, being a paralegal in Janesville, Wisconsin, 22 years with the State Bar Association of Wisconsin, and working for the Constitutional Rights Foundation, including the role of Project Director. She is still active in working with schools on civics education.

Runaas discussed how a non-profit civics organization developed in 1974 served teachers and students with Civic Education projects. Although the focus of the project was with high schools in Chicagoland, some activities went downstate. Types of projects for teachers included Summer Institutes for a More Perfect Union and Supreme Court Summer Institute partnered with Chicago Kent Law School. Student activities included Illinois Youth Summit, Black History Month Workshops, Equal Justice Under the Law, and Mock Trials. In addition, the Constitutional Rights Foundation Chicago was a participant in the Illinois Civics Mission Coalition, which looked at ways to increase student interest in civics education. This eventually led to the creation of Democracy High Schools and later the Legislative Civics Education Task Force, which made recommendations for a required Civics Semester Course in Illinois High Schools.

Subject Headings/Key Words: Constitutional Rights Foundation Chicago (CRFC); Civics Education; middle school education; high school education; Illinois Civics Mission Coalition; Democracy High Schools; Chicago Kent Law School; John Marshall Law; news literacy; controversial subjects

notes 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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