Interview with Carter Hendren

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Interview # 1: April 28, 2009

Interviewer: Mark DePue

A Note to the Reader

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DePue: Today is Tuesday, April 28, 2009. My name is Mark DePue. I'm the director of oral history at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library. Today it's my honor and privilege to talk to Carter Hendren. Good afternoon, Carter.

Hendren: Good afternoon.

DePue: We are at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library, decided to do it here. Carter's going to talk to us today about his experiences working with Jim Edgar, especially in a couple of his campaigns. I'm fascinated that you seemed to pick the most challenging campaigns and got much more involved with those. And that's primarily, as I understand it, 1974, 19—

Hendren: Seventy-four was minor. That was when he lost for state representative, but—

DePue: Nineteen eighty-two?

Hendren: Eighty-two was a superb campaign. Lot of fun. Secretary of State, first time out.

DePue: And 1990.

Hendren: Yeah, and that was the great race—great race.

DePue: Let's get started with the basics. Tell me when and where you were born.

Hendren: I was born in July of 1952 in Champaign, Illinois and was raised in Albion, Illinois—southern Illinois. Attended school there—went to Eastern Illinois University.

DePue: Tell me a little about your parents.

Hendren: My father was a high school instructor. He taught agriculture and sciences.

DePue: What was his name?

Hendren: H.C. I'm the third; he's junior.

DePue: H.C.?

Hendren: Yeah. Henry Carter Hendren. I'm the third, he's junior, and his father was, of course, senior.

DePue: Does that mean your first name is really Henry?

Hendren: Yeah, that's why there's an H there. (laughs) You talked about preclusions on the interview? Henry would be one for me. (laughs)

DePue: Well, up to this point, I've been working with Carter.

Hendren: Yeah, that's...

DePue: Hank's not such a bad name.

Hendren: Hank's not a bad name, but there's too many people with Hank. Carter's a fairly distinctive name, and I kind of like that.

DePue: And you say he was teaching high school?

Hendren: He was an agriculture teacher, and then he taught sciences: chemistry and things like that.

DePue: How about your mother?

Hendren: My mom worked for the county sheriff and the county treasurer over a period of time, but I think if you were to ask Mom, she was a homemaker. I had great parents, great parents.

DePue: So the classic childhood for you?

Hendren: Pretty classic except, you know, my town's very small. Edwards County is the fourth-smallest county in the state. The county seat has a population of 2,000 now; back then it was about 1,800. So big buildings and the metropolitan area were not part of my growing up. But good, solid foundations with family, neighborhoods, church-based organizations; that's how I was raised, and I'm glad I was.

DePue: What was your mother's maiden name?

Hendren: Powell.

DePue: And her first name?

Hendren: Bernice.

DePue: Bernice Powell. Just like it sounds?

Hendren: Yeah. And both my parents came from coal-mining families in deep southern Illinois.

DePue: You had mentioned in our pre-interview session—I think I heard this right—your father was a delegate to the Constitutional Convention?

Hendren: Yes, 1969. Yes.

DePue: Tell us just a little bit about that.

Hendren: Well, that's probably where I got started in this business. As you know, there was a referendum, and the voters called for a constitutional convention, or a Con-Con. At that time, you selected two delegates by legislative district, nonpartisan races. Dad had never been openly partisan, although he was born and raised a Democrat; converted to a Republican when Eisenhower was president. That's where I got my first real exposure, although we'd been somewhat involved. But we took counties and cities and villages and plat maps, and we went door-to-door. We had friends and volunteers—no money. In the primary, there were eleven candidates—Dad inished second—and narrowed it down to four. We were from the tiniest county; nobody knew us; had no money; and we ended up finishing first when it was all said and done. So it was great. It was fun, exciting.

DePue: Did I hear that right? You were basically on the stump for your dad?

Hendren: Absolutely, absolutely. I'd give a little speech if I needed to. I was a junior in high school, I think. But most importantly, every weekend, we organized volunteers that went to different towns, went door-to-door. The first door I ever knocked on, I should have stopped. I knocked on the door—it was in Wayne City, Illinois. I had my little spiel down pat: "I'm here for my dad..." The person inside had just passed away, literally, I mean, within minutes, had just passed away, and here's a

guy knocking on the door, asking for a vote. It was not a good start. (laughter) But things seemed to get better.

DePue: Yeah, you got over that.

Hendren: Well, obviously, I wasn't shy or timid, so I went to the next house.

DePue: When you were in high school what were your career ambitions? What were your plans?

Hendren: I got to be honest with you since this is for recorded history. I, like most other teenagers, had no career ambitions, nor plans. My dad had career ambitions for me, in terms of, You will go to college, and you will participate in society. On the other hand, I really didn't care, to be very honest with you. I was a typical teenager in the late sixties.

DePue: Where'd you go to college?

Hendren: Eastern [Illinois University].

DePue: You started there in 1970?

Hendren: No, I went to junior college first, because that's what I could afford. Went to Olney Central for a year and a half.

DePue: How do you spell that?

Hendren: O-l-n-e-y. It's Richland County. Then I went to Eastern. I went in as a second-semester sophomore, majored in political science, and worked on my master's there. I never got my master's, which is one of my great failures, but I have thirty-six or thirty-eight hours; I took my writtens, I wrote my prospectus; the whole nine yards. My concentration was in the legislative process; my prospectus was on partisanship or nonpartisanship of the Constitutional Convention. It would have been a great paper, frankly. But at that time I was, I think, twenty-two years old. I ran into a wall, and just—I was done.

DePue: Let me see if I got the timeline here, then. You graduated from high school in '70. When did you get your undergraduate degree?

Hendren: In '73.

DePue: You got it in three years?

Hendren: Oh, yeah. You could do it then; I took eighteen hours, twenty-one hours.

DePue: And you said when you got to Eastern, you majored in political science.

Hendren: Mm-hmm.

DePue: Why?

Hendren: I enjoyed that. I truly enjoyed the politics. Interaction with people—

DePue: So the start of it was your dad's campaign?

Hendren: I think so. As I mentioned, my mother worked for the sheriff; they were family friends. I walked precincts for that gentleman when I was small, but I really didn't understand what I was doing. As I got into it I liked the interaction with people, the dynamic. Politics is about personalities, and it's about people. All of the technology that we afford ourselves today is wonderful, it really is, and it allows you to communicate maybe more rapidly, but not necessarily more efficiently. I still believe in shoe leather and one-on-one communication in politics. I think that's where it's a lot of fun.

DePue: You described what appealed to you about politics. This might be an unfair question for you, but at that time, how would you define your political leanings, your philosophical leanings?

Hendren: In the early seventies, I was probably, at best, a moderate; maybe even considered a liberal on a few things. Clearly, my age has changed me on that. (laughs) But I wouldn't consider myself a conservative. Remember, this was the Watergate era. There was a lot of—

DePue: This was right after Vietnam, which radicalized so many people of our generation.

Hendren: Yeah. When I was in high school I thought I was destined for Vietnam, like a lot of guys. But the war scaled back. My number didn't get called in the lottery, which I'm fortunate for, frankly.

DePue: You would have been the first year that the lottery applied.

Hendren: Very first year. But like I said, my dad had other plans. (laughter) And that's fine.

DePue: Did you go straight from college into graduate school? You stayed there in Eastern?

Hendren: Stayed straight. Again, it's political science, and I worked part-time.

DePue: What was the brick wall that you ran into?

Hendren: I burned out.

DePue: Just your enthusiasm for it?

Hendren: No, I burned out. I was tired. When you take fifteen to eighteen hours all the time, three semesters, and you're working part-time... In addition to what I've already told you, my father and I managed a peach orchard. That's how I made money in

the summer when I was younger, to pay for schooling and things like that. Ultimately, I bought him out of the orchard, so it was my responsibility. That's a lot of work. As I went to school, of course, I was farther away; made it more difficult to do that, but I still had other jobs. There are only so many hours in the day, and you do kind of burn out. I don't think you should take five or six years to get an undergraduate degree, but I think three years is maybe pushing it a little bit.

DePue: I'm curious—and this is off the track of politics—but you said you managed a peach orchard. Was it large enough that you had to give—

Hendren: Six hundred trees. That's a pretty good size.

DePue: I know peaches is a high-labor... It's not just the time when you're picking them.

Hendren: No, that's the easiest time. Yeah.

DePue: So what did you do for your labor force?

Hendren: I hired kids locally. I think we paid a dollar and a quarter an hour. I fired my first person when I was fifteen or fourteen.

DePue: That business has changed. I bet you kids wouldn't be doing that job today.

Hendren: You couldn't do it today. Plus, the other thing that's changed is your liability laws. I'm not sure we'd let kids out there on ladders nowadays.

DePue: Well, when you decided graduate school had burned you out—

Hendren: (laughs) Yes, that's right.

DePue: —what did you do?

Hendren: My first encounter with Governor Edgar was in 1974. He was a candidate in a Republican primary for state representative. I didn't know Jim Edgar, but one of my professors—I was one of the very, very, very few Republicans in the political science department—he knew I was active and involved, said, "There's a young man that you might want to get involved with, because he's really a good guy, Eastern graduate, who's running for state representative."

So Jim and I met one day in a parking lot by Coleman Hall, very briefly, and he said, "What can you do for me?" And I, you know, "What do you want me to do for you?" I was really a gofer. I ran signs here and walked precincts. There was no title, no portfolio, anything like that. I remember I drove to Danville to deliver some stuff one day; that was probably my longest trip. Went to Mattoon a couple of times for him; walked precincts.

We lost. And it was probably—at least from my perspective, probably not Jim's perspective—one of the best things that ever happened to him. First of all,

once you lose, you don't ever want to be in that position again—which he never was. But it makes you, I think, do some self-evaluation. What can I do better? How do I improve? et cetera. And obviously in Jim's case, things were wonderful after that, so...

DePue: Let's go back to your college professor. Do you recall his name?

Hendren: I don't know. It was either Dr. Hollister, Dr. Connelly, or Dr. Leigh, one of those three.[1] Dr. Hollister was kind of the public law professor. He was the former Democratic county chairman in Union County, Pennsylvania. He was very liberal. Great guy. Dr. Leigh was a local government professor, and he was on my boards. And Dr. Connelly was the head of the department and sitting Democratic county chairman [Coles County]. But they understood there's a two-party system, the Republican Party and the Democrat. That's good; that's healthy. But I can't remember which of those three encouraged me to do this.

DePue: Do you recall any reasons that they gave to you about why Jim Edgar might be a good match for you, beyond just the party affiliation?

Hendren: Eastern graduate, young, and he needed help. So that's all I remember.

DePue: I think you skipped over how much you were being paid to do this.

Hendren: It was one of those pro bono things that... (laughter) And since Jim didn't drink, I didn't even get a beer out of the deal.

DePue: (laughs) Oh, rotten deal. What was the highlight of working on that campaign for you?

Hendren: It was enjoyable. There was no specific, quote-unquote highlight; there really isn't, because it was kind of a below-the-radar... Again, remember the climate: 1974. Watergate. Cynicism abounded. It was not really a fun time to be out there, particularly as a Republican. So that's really what I remember about it. It was more the bad climate.

DePue: Now that I think about the timeline, this was not the general election—

Hendren: The primary.

DePue: —this was the primary. So the stuff in the House and the Senate was going on at that very time, wasn't it?[2]

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[1] Hendren's professors (with dates of service) were Dr. Charles A. Hollister (1967-1979), Dr. Joseph T. Connelly (1958-1989) and Dr. Peter Leigh (1969-2001) http://www.eiu.edu/~polisci/faculty_emeritus.php.

[2] The Senate Select Committee on Presidential Campaign Activities had been at work since early 1973, holding public, televised hearings on the Watergate break-in from May to August of that year. In February 1974, the House Judiciary Committee began its investigation of the grounds for impeaching Richard Nixon. On March 1, 1974, a federal grand jury indicted seven of President Nixon's former aides and named Nixon an unindicted co-

Hendren: As I recall, yeah. It was in the spring of '74—well, the winter of'74—so yeah. It was a very cynical time in our political history.

DePue: What did Governor Edgar tell you about why he wanted to run?

Hendren: I have to be very honest with you. I don't think I even asked. It was just something to do. College kid. And I just liked him. I liked Jim Edgar. To me, he's a very likeable guy, and I was very sad when he didn't win.

DePue: At this time, what were your long-term career goals? Hendren: I didn't know. I was thinking about law school at the time; whether or not I could afford it, frankly. And there was a thing called the Legislative Fellowship Program—

DePue: Which Edgar was a part of.

Hendren: He had been an intern before he started with the general assembly. I do know that on that one, Dr. Hollister was encouraging me strongly to make an application for that program, which I did, and was accepted. I think you get notified in April or May, maybe. So I knew by the spring what I was going to be doing that fall.

DePue: In other words, you would have been notified right after Edgar had lost the primary?

Hendren: Yeah, he lost the primary in March. It would have been in March. I think the interviews for the internship were in some proximity to April. In my recollection, it was like the spring break, something like that.

DePue: I know that Max Coffey—I think also from Charleston—

Hendren: Yes.

DePue: —was the winner of that primary. Do you remember much about Max?

Hendren: Oh yeah, I know Max very well. He went on to state representative, and subsequently went to the state senate and replaced Tom Merritt in the Senate; served there for a period of time—I'm not sure how long Max was in the Senate. And then he became the chairman of the Property Tax Appeals Board. He stayed active in local Coles County politics. I know Max very well; he's a very nice guy.

DePue: So if Edgar's going to lose, Coffey's a good person to be losing to?

Hendren: Well, you don't want to lose to anyone. But again, Max was a fine guy, and he represented the area, I think, honorably. So there's no fair criticism of that. You try your best, and you lose. I'm an avid sports fan; everybody gets excited about the NCAA basketball tournament and I do, too. I fill out all the forms, and I enter

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conspirator. The Illinois primary election was held March 19, 1974.
http://watergate.info/chronology/1974.shtml

the pools. That's every year. Think about politics, particularly four-year terms. It's the NCAA; you get one shot every four years, and it is extraordinarily competitive. So when you get there that adrenaline burst is always available.

DePue: I want you to, fairly quickly now, move us beyond 1974 in your personal career, and what you were doing to keep up with Edgar's career, and then we'll come back to the '82 campaign.

Hendren: Like I said, in '74, I started the Legislative Fellowship Program through Sangamon State [University]. That's a nine-month program on one of the partisan staffs. I was selected by the Senate Republican staff, so I served on that staff during the internship and then was offered a permanent position on their appropriations staff, where I served in 1975 and '76. In 1976, the Republican leader was Bill Harris; he decided to run for Secretary of State against Alan Dixon, and obviously, Alan Dixon won.[3] But Senator Harris, who was a wonderful person—former Senate president needed—ince they had no money—some young person with a lot of energy to drive him, and essentially be with him all the time on the campaign trail. Didn't have money to fly, so you drove. That was how I spent 1976. I drove him. I was kind of his local scheduler, press secretary, advance person, and his driver. And that's how I saw the state of Illinois. It was a great experience.

DePue: Nineteen seventy-six is also the year that Edgar ran again and won this time around.

Hendren: And was successful. He was selling insurance at one point in time. But he would occasionally come to Springfield; I'd see him; we'd chat. He was successful in the '76 race, and then he started serving in the general assembly, of course, January '77. I was in Springfield; he was in Springfield. I'd see him occasionally, you know, around the building and stuff. At the same time, after the '76 race, there was a new Republican leader. Probably because of that [Harris's] campaign, honestly, I was offered a position as his assistant. So that would be in '77 I started that.

DePue: You're talking about in the Illinois Senate?

Hendren: In the Senate, mm-hmm. In the state Senate.

DePue: Is that David Shapiro?[4]

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[3] William C. Harris (May 7, 1921-December 30, 2004) was a Republican from Pontiac, who served in the Illinois House (1955-1961) and Senate (1961-1977). He was Senate president from 1973 to 1975 and minority leader from 1975 to 1977.
Chicago Tribune, January 1, 2005, 27.

[4] In a notable episode of Illinois political drama, Senate Republicans took advantage of the absence of two Democrats from the January 15, 1981 legislative session to elect David C. Shapiro president of the Senate. Governor Thompson presided over the session. In a 4-3 decision, the Illinois Supreme Court overturned Shapiro's election February 9, 1981 and ordered the Senate to hold a new election, which was won by Phil

Hendren: Dave Shapiro, yep. Another wonderful man.

DePue: He wasn't related to the other Shapiro?[5]

Hendren: No, he was not. He was from Amboy, Illinois. He was a dentist by trade, very quiet-spoken; just a genuinely nice, nice person. I worked for him for '77 and '78, and all this time, I would see Representative Edgar occasionally. He'd come over to the office. One of his best friends was the chief of staff—his name was Tim Campbell—who was my immediate boss. He'd come over to see Tim, and when Tim was busy, we'd talk, and just kibitz, if you will. In '78 I was offered a position as the legislative liaison to Governor Thompson for the Senate. It was just something that sounded exciting.

DePue: As the legislative liaison?

Hendren: For the Senate. You had three. You had *the* legislative liaison, which was Zale Glauberman, and then you had two guys that worked the House and one guy that worked the Senate. I had the Senate. And it was fascinating. It was a different perspective on government; see it from a different level, more from the executive branch. Governor Thompson was a fun guy to work for; extremely smart man—extremely smart guy. I did that spring session, and then Senator Shapiro asked me to come back and run the Senate Campaign Committee, which I did. So I ran his legislative campaigns in 1978, and then forever.

DePue: Was it typical in those days that these politicians would reach out and find very young talent like yourself and Edgar to be doing these kinds of important positions?

Hendren: Well, yeah, I think. I think they wanted a lot of energy. I guess they were important positions, but you had to learn the positions. But I don't think it was uncommon at all. There were a lot of young people. The staffs were still emerging. I mean, the partisan staffing wasn't a new concept, but it was still emerging. So we were chock full of young, type-A-personality people.

DePue: Wasn't part of the job—you're the Senate liaison for the Republican governor—to very gently encourage people to vote a particular way?

Hendren: Oh yeah, absolutely. Absolutely. I did that every day. Made some enemies as a result of it. (laughter) I had people who, the year previously, when I worked there, [were] great friends, and they were yelling at me, screaming at me. I had one guy grab me one day by the throat. That's okay.

Rock (D-Oak Park). Shapiro, a Republican from Amboy, first entered the General Assembly as a representative in 1968, and served as Senate minority leader from December 1976 until his death August 1, 1981. *Chicago Tribune*, February 4, February 10 and August 2, 1981, 1.

[5] Following Otto Kerner's elevation to the federal bench in 1968, Samuel H. Shapiro (April 25, 1907-March 16, 1987) served as governor of Illinois from May 21, 1968 to January 13, 1969. Shapiro, who was a Democrat from Kankakee, attempted to win a full term as governor in the 1968 election, but was defeated by Richard B. Ogilvie. *Chicago Tribune*, March 17, 1987, 10.

DePue: I guess that's why I'm curious about this, because I would think your age would work against you in that respect.

Hendren: It probably did. It probably did. But I think you have to temper that with attitude. Look, I understood, I was young, and "yes, sir," "no, sir," without—you know, there's a way to deal with people. And yeah, my age was a problem, because I was very young.

DePue: Were you involved at all in Edgar's 1978 campaign?

Hendren: Other than to say, "I hope you win" and "Congratulations," no. I monitored it, but I was not involved.

DePue: It was just a few months later, April of 1979, that Thompson appoints Edgar as his chief legislative liaison. Did that surprise you?

Hendren: No. It's a great move. From all aspects, it was a great move. As you know, Jim had experience in the Senate through Senator Arrington, and Bob Blair's chief of staff.[6] He'd worked with the NCSL.[7] He had a great legislative perception; he had been through elective politics. He understood—or at that time, I think, he grew to understand it better—government, how to make things happen. He had a particularly superb knowledge of the institution and respect for the institution, which is very important. So I thought it was a great appointment by Governor Thompson, and it was very smart of Jim to accept.

DePue: Were you still, then, in the Senate as the liaison?

Hendren: I came back after the '78 campaigns, and this Mr. Campbell that I referred to took a job as vice president of—it's now Travelers [Insurance]—I think it was Aetna then. Anyway, he moved to Connecticut. I was offered the job as—it was called staff director then—but it's chief of staff now. There's where the age was a bit of a problem. I think I was twenty-seven or twenty-eight. I was the youngest person on the staff, and everybody that worked for me had trained me. So that was a little touchy, but we did fine. We did fine.[8]

DePue: Tell us what, exactly, a chief of staff does for the Senate Republican leader.

Hendren: You manage the professional and non-professional staff, work with all the members and monitor the legislation. It's a partisan staff, so you involve yourself in the partisanship of the legislative process.

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[6] W. Robert Blair (R-Park Forest) was Speaker of the Illinois House of Representatives from 1971-1975. Governor Edgar served on Blair's staff from 1972-1973.

[7] Governor Edgar served as the director of state service for the National Conference of State Legislatures from 1975-76. *Illinois Issues* (January 1981), 34.

[8] Minority Leader Shapiro named Hendren the Senate Republican staff director effective November 8, 1978. *Illinois Issues* (January 1979), 32.

DePue: Since you're talking about this being partisan, were your own political views crystallizing at this time, or changing at all?

Hendren: I think the answer to that is yes. I'm not sure I could give you a specific example, but I think it does change, and I think that's a natural phenomenon. As you learn more about a particular subject or entity, you should, and most people would change their perspective at least somewhat.

DePue: Edgar wasn't that long at being legislative liaison. I guess two years; that's a long time in most people's lives.

Hendren: In that world, it's a long time. It's a tough job.

DePue: Nineteen eighty-one: Alan Dixon steps down as Secretary of State, and Thompson appoints Edgar as his replacement. So he's moving into one of the choicest political plums in Illinois politics, and he gets it by appointment. Surprised?

Hendren: Yes. Thrilled, but surprised. I don't want to belabor this, but as the director of legislative affairs for the governor and my position in the legislature, we worked quite closely together on legislation/politics. In 1979, I think we had five or six special sessions: one on Chicago school reform, one on the transit crisis, one on—I forget what it was—some kind of funding problem. I think we had six special sessions. Jim was intricately involved in all of them, as I was, so we really worked closely together and with his staff.[9] He told me that he'd met with the governor; he was going for the appointment and was hopeful.

There were three people that were at least considered to be vying for this position. One was George Ryan, who was close to Governor Thompson, and at that time was speaker of the House. The other was Pate Philip—who subsequently became my boss—who was the DuPage [County] Republican chairman and a significant player. I can't remember if Pate was the leader of the Senate then or not, I can't remember to be honest with you. No, Doc was still there. I think Senator Shapiro was still there.

DePue: He was the Senate minority leader in the '81-'82 session.

Hendren: He [Philip] started in late '81, though, because when Pate became leader, it's within the same timeframe that I left, which is unfortunate, because he's a great guy to work for, wonderful person. But anyway, I thought, That's pretty stiff competition for a kid from Charleston, (laughter) and particularly coming off the governor's own staff. But again, I think Governor Thompson—very shrewd, very perceptive; he understood Illinois. Here he had a young, smart guy with a great

[9] Governor Thompson called the General Assembly into three special sessions during the 1979 calendar year: January 5-6, 1979, to consider a measure replacing the legislative pay raise passed in November 1978 with raises phased in over three years; August 1979, to accept or override Governor Thompson's amendatory veto of a school and local funding package that was funded by an increase in corporate income tax; and September 1979, to consider a comprehensive transportation funding measure. *Chicago Tribune*, January 7, August 3 and August 30, 1979.

future; and then he had two other guys who were wonderful people, but had their own careers and were obviously older, been around a little bit longer. And Jim told me—

DePue: They had their own political base, too.

Hendren: Exactly. Both of them. Jim told me one time he wanted to be everyone's number-two choice. And I'll never forget that because boy, he was right, and that's exactly what happened. Governor Thompson appointed him, and I think there were a lot of people that were like, Whoa, who is this guy? I think Jim showed them pretty quickly who this guy was.

DePue: What was his rationale for being everyone's number two?

Hendren: Because if there's three of you, and you're everyone else's number two, then George Ryan was Pate Philip's number three, and Pate Philip was George Ryan's number three. (laughter) That means you're next in line. You're next in line. I thought it was a great statement.

DePue: From what I've read, probably the toughest competition, or the one who would have the hardest time accepting it, would have been George Ryan.

Hendren: Oh, I think that's absolutely true. I worked for Pate for fifteen years, and he never talked about it. I don't think it was a burning desire for him. His name was clearly on the table, but George, if my memory serves me correctly, actively pursued it and didn't get it.

DePue: Do you have any insight in what Thompson was thinking when he selected Edgar?

Hendren: I do not.

DePue: Contrast the personalities between Thompson and Edgar.

Hendren: Oh boy. Well, Governor Thompson was a very gregarious—I don't know—clearly a type-A personality. Jim was perceived to be a little more timid, a little more laid-back, which, I think, is true. Both are generally very friendly, nice people that deeply care about people around them. They're sincere about their personal friends and their families. That's probably as good of a contrast as I can give you.

DePue: This is a bit of a step back, but it occurred to me that there's so many stories about Jim Thompson and the way he worked with the legislature and the press. Since you were there as a liaison in the legislature, I wonder if you can elaborate on his style of doing things.

Hendren: His style was very direct. He would walk up to the third floor and go into Phil Rock's office or Tom Hynes's office or Pate Philips's office or George Ryan—

whomever—sit down, and pretty much try to command meetings. He had many meetings in legislative leaders' offices. He moved throughout the building a lot; that was just his style. To contrast that with Jim: Jim was more structured, and he would occasionally meet in the legislative leader's office, but it was not as frequent, and it was usually a very significant item that would cause that. He had frequent meetings in his office with the legislators and legislative leaders.

DePue: Was Thompson known to even go on the floor of the legislature when they were in session?

Hendren: Yes, he had done that, but it's not common. It's just not common. Thompson's also known for bringing a bottle of Scotch, (laughter) and, of course, Jim didn't bring a bottle of Scotch; he may have brought a bottle of Diet Pepsi. And there's nothing wrong with that. Sit down, put the bottle down, and say, "Okay, guys, let's work on our problems." Same thing happens with coffee; it just sounds more dramatic with whiskey.

DePue: Which approach do you think was more effective in working with the legislature?

Hendren: Good question. I don't know that I can answer that. While they were in office, they both had their share of difficulties over time with various legislators, whether it be a leader or a rank-and-file member. Both of them, though, after they left office, became, like, idolized, and they both stayed in communication with guys in Springfield. They were both effective, I think, is the key.

DePue: If you look at the bookends, though, the stark contrast: Here, you have Dan Walker before Thompson, and he had an atrocious reputation.

Hendren: Yeah, he had no legislative presence.

DePue: And George Ryan obviously had a good rapport with them, but then you've got Rod Blagojevich, who I think it would be fair to say—

Hendren: Is a disaster.

DePue: Practically no relationship.

Hendren: Virtually no relationship with the legislature. Yeah.

DePue: I've gotten a little bit off track, so let's get back to 1982. Edgar's been in the Secretary of State position for just a little while, and now he has to run for office. Did he approach you in terms of getting involved with the campaign?

Hendren: Oh yeah. Jim and I spoke about his campaign for election right after he was appointed. I mean, literally; I don't know if it was the same day or the next day. And we talked frequently during that period of time when I was in the Senate and he was Secretary of State about his impending election. I didn't agree to do that campaign, though, until August or September of '81. My boss, Senator Shapiro,

was failing from a fatal disease, and it just was not appropriate to leave at that time. It just wasn't. It wasn't the right thing to do. But unfortunately, the disease prevailed, there was a shift in leadership in the Senate, and Senator Philip asked me to stay.

I really wanted to run a statewide campaign; that's what it comes down to. I knew Jim Edgar, I liked Jim Edgar, I respected Jim Edgar; but I really wanted to do a statewide campaign. In 1978 and 1980, I was responsible for the Senate Campaign Committee for the state Senate races. I enjoyed them, I liked them, they were fun; but I wanted to do a statewide campaign, because it's different. It is a whole different ballgame. And this was an opportunity to do it at a very young age, a very young age. So I did.

I remember the first time I met Jim in Chicago when I had agreed to do this. We went to the Blackhawk and had a steak dinner. But I remember he picked me up on, I think it was Randolph Street, and he had the security guards and the black car, and they drove us there, and they sat... I mean, for a young—it was like, "Wow, this is..."

DePue: That's all the trappings of the Secretary of State.

Hendren: That's the trappings of the Secretary of State, right. That's about it, too. (laughter) But we talked a lot about building an organization and a political operation, if you will, that would elect him Secretary of State, keep him Secretary of State as long as he wanted, and be ready to run for the office of governor when and if that opportunity should ever become available. This was well thought out.

DePue: So right out of the blocks, he's talking about governor.

Hendren: Well, pretty close to it. Sure, we talked about it. And frankly, I think any candidate that's honest with himself would talk about it. They aspire upwards. In any career, people want to move up. And clearly, the office of governor is a move up.

DePue: Did he talk about any aspirations beyond that?

Hendren: Nope.

DePue: Not senator, not president?

Hendren: Nope. We talked about U.S. senator a few times, and we talked about U.S. senator when there was a lot of pressure on him to seek that office. And we talked about U.S. senator when he decided not to seek his third term as governor. I think once he became a chief executive officer, it's more difficult to become a legislative officer. They're different functions. It's hard, when you're used to making decisions and seeing actual results; versus the legislature that deals more in conceptual—and they have great ideas, but then it's the executive branch that implements those ideas. It's a difficult transition.

DePue: Which do you think was more compatible with Edgar in terms of his talents, in terms of his own abilities: the legislative side or the executive side?

Hendren: I think he was superior at both, but the executive branch of government fit him perfectly, and I think he was a superb chief executive.

DePue: Do you recall when Edgar publicly declared to run for Secretary of State?

Hendren: I don't recall exactly, but I know they did an inaugural ceremony for him in the House chambers in 1981 when he was appointed, and I don't think there was any doubt that he was going to seek the office. The question was, Can he survive a primary? There was a lot of speculation at that time that Rep. George Ryan would seek that office. Of course, in 1982, Governor Ryan became Governor Thompson's running mate, and Jim did not have a primary for Secretary of State. But he didn't have a primary because he worked not to have a primary; and he worked very hard. I mean, he was going all the time.

DePue: Worked not to have a primary?

Hendren: In other words, he became visible. He made sure the office ran, and ran efficiently; he was all over the state. And he had some ideas, particularly the DUI, which everybody talks about.

DePue: What were the campaign issues, the platform that Edgar ran on? I'm sure you talked about that a lot in his early months.

Hendren: We talked about that. In terms of the office, his slogan was something to the effect of, He can make a difference, or He will make a difference—something like that. But the purpose there was to contrast and to show that you have a young, new generation of politician that is working hard to do different things, and hopefully better things, for the people. He pushed through the DUI legislation in the spring of 1981. I vividly remember the debate on that. I know it sounds silly now, but a .08 was controversial.[10]

DePue: It was 1.0 before that time?

Hendren: Mm-hmm. It was a controversial piece of legislation. Jim benefited because he was at the threshold of a national movement. *Newsweek* did some major stories on it; I think some other publications did. There was a growing interest in the tragedy of drunk driving. Mothers Against Drunk Driving [MADD] became a national organization. They got a lot of national attention—I want to say *60 Minutes* and all those kind of [tv] shows. Jim had a sincere, deep belief that this was the right thing to do.

[10] The Illinois legislature did pass a stronger drunk-driving law backed by Edgar in spring 1981, which increased penalties for refusing a breathalyzer test and eliminated an offender's option for a second breath test. However, despite several attempts over the years, the legislature did not pass a law lowering the blood-alcohol standard from .1 to .08 until May 7, 1997. *Chicago Tribune*, May 8, 1997, 1.

He also understood that it required tough enforcement because 1.0 is pretty tough if you have tough judges, right? Then, you had what was called the Administrative Hearings Division in the Secretary of State's office. You have hearing offices, and I'm not being critical at all, but you get a DWI—[Driving While Intoxicated] it used to be called—and you'd maybe get slapped on the wrist a little bit, no big deal. Well, all of a sudden, there was a new guy in town, and that's not what happened. You had to go through alcohol rehab and all those courses, and people were getting suspended licenses and restricted licenses. I know it sounds like it was a very popular issue, and maybe it was, but I had some very hostile phone calls from people. If a guy needed a license to maintain his employment and stuff, I can understand that they were emotional. But if it's your third, fourth, or fifth offense, then maybe they better get some help.

DePue: People were calling you as the campaign director?

Hendren: No, no, no. Oh, I had calls from political people. "They'll never vote for you." "Okay, okay, I'm sorry. They'll never vote for us—that's life." That was Jim's attitude: this is the right thing to do. He persisted in it, and he made sure that his administrative staff in his agencies did that. They had a court watch program around the state that monitored what these judges were doing, so it was like, Hello, we're here; we're watching. That was probably the main substantive issue.

But the real issue in that campaign was honesty and integrity. That was really what that campaign was about. You had a young guy. When he came in there, it was considered a partisan office. He didn't clean house; He kept the people that knew what they were doing, knew how to manage those departments.

DePue: But didn't he stumble onto some controversy, some corruption?

Hendren: He stumbled onto some corruption, (snaps fingers) and he got rid of it instantaneously.

DePue: And what was that?

Hendren: I want to say it was something with selling driver's licenses.

DePue: (laughs) Very similar to those of us who know the George Ryan story.

Hendren: Yeah, I don't remember the specifics. What I do remember, though, is what I think the voters remembered; it was a problem, it was unethical, and he corrected it. And he did it without partisan bias; he just did it. There was a lot of speculation among the media that when he took that office—this is before RUTAN, remember; it was considered a patronage haven—he would just basically fire everybody.[11] He didn't do that. If you wanted to stay, you wanted to work hard,

[11] *Rutan v. Republican Party of Illinois*, 497 U.S. 62 (1990). By a 5-4 vote, the decision extended the rule of *Elrod v. Burns*, 427 U.S. 347 (1976) and *Branti v. Finkel*, 445 U.S. 507 (1980), determining "that promotions,

and you wanted to do a good job, then you had a job. That was unique in those days. Again, different time, different culture. That race really became a contrast of a young, honest person with high integrity, who was doing a good job, against a sitting incumbent state treasurer, nice guy.

DePue: Jerry Cosentino.

Hendren: Cosentino. He had ran and won statewide. He was from Bridgeview. He had a trucking company; some people might suggest there were some inherent conflicts there, being Secretary of State, in charge of licensing. That was probably suggested a few times. We also introduced the issue of mandatory auto insurance.

DePue: Introduced; so it wasn't a fact of life?

Hendren: It was not law at the time, but it was an issue that we were going to pursue. And ultimately in 1983, it was introduced in the legislature and passed, mandatory auto insurance. It is now very common, and people go, What do you mean, we didn't have mandatory insurance?

DePue: But weren't you getting just as much pushback from some entrenched interests, many people with Republican Party leanings, about insurance as well?

Hendren: Sure.

DePue: But more so on the .08?

Hendren: Yeah. Controversial issues.

DePue: What was the nature of the resistance you got? What were the arguments you were hearing against .08?

Hendren: People will lose their jobs. It's too severe punishment. To lose your license for three, six, or twelve months is too severe. They only had a couple of beers. They were only .1 over—or whatever it would be mathematically. That was the argument. It was a change in culture. It was literally a tidal shift in the attitude toward how you deal with those that violate that statute. Jim, while he was sympathetic, was not going to bend or yield or cave in because a political person called him and said, "Hey, my brother-in-law needs help." No.

DePue: Were you in total agreement with him on that?

Hendren: Not always. Not always. Sometimes I'd say, "Give the guy a break. He needs his license. Give him a three-month license." But I tried to stay out of that, too, as much as I could. There is an administrative process, and let that process work.

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transfers, and recalls after layoffs based on political affiliation or support are an impermissible infringement on the First Amendment rights of public employees." Justice Brennan wrote the majority opinion.

DePue: Tell us about the strategy that you and Edgar devised.

Hendren: The strategy was to develop a volunteer network, an organization, throughout the state, and to be everywhere there was a public gathering. I take a lot of pride in the fact that if you had a tea party for five people, then you should set six plates. But we had people everywhere. Did not—do not—did not miss parades, festivals, functions, nothing. Chamber of Commerce meetings, those kinds of things; we'd try to have a representative at everything. Football games, somebody would at least sit and park the car with a sign. I mean, we tried everything you can imagine. (laughs)

But I think the most important thing was we targeted about 1,500 precincts around the state; each county had a coordinator, and in the metropolitan area, each township had a coordinator. We asked them if they don't do anything else, walk these precincts with our literature—for Jim Edgar, nobody else. Walk these precincts. These were the precincts where the vote deviation was significant, and one would say these were where the independent voters resided. That was a high priority.

When I would go out and talk to the coordinators and the chairman, my point was, If a volunteer comes in the office and says, "What can I do?" don't sit them at a table and say, "Well, lick stamps." Say, "Here's a map, here's literature, and I want you to work every house between Maple Street and the railroad, and Oak Street and the school." Give them a specific assignment, and they'll do it. It's a task. They will perform that task. But don't say, "Well, I don't need anything today." Always have something for people to do. So we did that, and I think that was important. But Jim worked very hard in that race. His family worked very hard in that race. And we ended up winning. I think it was 250,000 votes, which was considered a landslide, because that was the year Governor Thompson won by 5,400 votes, or something like that.[12]

DePue: I wanted to ask you about that.

Hendren: It was a long night. There was not a lot of celebration. Don Rose was our media consultant; he's a Chicago political entity. There was five or six of us election night, and when it was all over, it's like, Well, we won. There were no champagne corks or anything like that, but that was because there was real concern that, My gosh, Governor Thompson may have lost; which no one expected.

DePue: You mentioned that Secretary of State was an old haven for patronage positions, and as you described it, he didn't play that game as much as his predecessors had?

Hendren: I can't speak to his predecessors. And patronage was okay. Legally, it was okay, and sure, people were hired sometimes because of political affiliation. But they

[12] In the 1982 race for governor, Republican Jim Thompson defeated Democrat Adlai Stevenson, 1,816,101-1,811,027; a margin of 5,074 votes.

had to be qualified; they had to pass a test. And in my mind, management should follow the direction of their boss anyway.

DePue: Part of that equation, though, is once you've got people in the Secretary of State [office], it was also viewed as a place to find people to work your campaigns.

Hendren: Mm-hmm. We had a lot of volunteers from the Secretary of State's office. Absolutely.

DePue: You're smiling. No hesitation at all on that?

Hendren: No hesitation at all. It was perfectly legitimate. If they were an employee and they were going to volunteer in the campaign, they did so voluntarily, and they did it after work hours and on weekends. And they were not forced or coerced or rewarded or punished, but they were all over the place on the weekends. That, I absolutely know. They were doing parades, and would be manning phone banks and other things.

DePue: Let's go back. You mentioned a little bit about the political climate in the governor's race. Of course, 1980 was a landslide election for Reagan, who became president of the United States. Nineteen eighty-two, as I recall—some pretty tough economic times.

Hendren: High unemployment rates, very high interest rates; double-digit in both.[13] Actually, I think high teens at a period of time. It was tough. The economic situation was very tough. Governor Thompson, of course, was running against Adlai Stevenson—a pretty good opponent. (laughs)

DePue: No problem with the name recognition for Adlai Stevenson.

Hendren: No problem with name recognition. I think the traditional Democrat base, to a large extent, rallied behind Stevenson. There was a difficulty in motivating the Republican base—when a political party loses, you first need to look at your own base. (laughs) And that happened in 1982; not nearly as dramatically as in '74. But the climate was very, very tough, and it made it hard to break through. It's difficult for a Secretary of State anyway, because it's not the most visible office. So you don't get the headlines on the front page of the *Tribune* unless it's bad news. (laughter) But you try to get in the State and City section and those kinds of things. You try to create media where at all possible.

Again, Jim was just very diligent. He was very focused, very driven. He had the support of his wife and family. He was out all the time. I mean, a typical day would be a few meetings, a few phone calls, a speech for lunch, a radio interview,

[13] The national annual average unemployment rate in 1982 was 9.7 percent. The unemployment rate in Illinois at the time of the November election was 12.7 percent. The 1982 annualized federal funds rate was 12.24 percent. Bureau of Labor Statistics, http://www.bls.gov/lau/#tables, and Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System, http://www.federalreserve.gov/releases/h15/data/Annual/H15_FF_O.txt.

hopefully a talk show, a newspaper interview, photo ops, a brief interview, off to another interview—media kind of shot; a dinner meeting, usually a speech. If it was really a good day, we would get Chicago TV. Those were far and few between, but it occasionally happened.

DePue: You mentioned before that he worked every venue. There's a couple of places that you would think, Okay, I'd be wasting my time. The black community is not going to vote for me; the Hispanic community probably is not going to vote for me. Did you guys deliberately target some of that to try to make some inroads?

Hendren: Some of that, but a lot of that was in messaging, too. Sure, Jim went into some of the African-American churches. We didn't work as hard on the Hispanic demographic as we did in subsequent years, because they weren't as organized, frankly, and more diverse. But yeah, Jim went to churches, and we had every kind of outreach that we could imagine. We had Barbers for Edgar. We had Hairdressers for Edgar. And guess what? Jim's barber sent a letter to every barber in the state of Illinois and said, "You know what? I know this guy, and he's a good young man. I trust him, and he's honest."

People used to laugh at me for doing that stuff, but you know what? It makes a difference, because if all things are equal and I have somebody like my barber who I like—and that barber says to me, "He's a pretty good kid, he's a nice young man"—if all things are equal, then that's who I'm going to vote for. If nothing else is going to change that, then I'm going to say, Okay, I trust Bill or Joe or whomever. I trust my barber; I trust my hairdresser; I trust my mechanic, my insurance agent, whatever—real estate agent. We mailed them all. The Illinois Education Association endorsed us; we worked very hard, particularly with their driver's education programs and their teachers. They were vigilant, they worked precincts, they gave us money, they sent letters. We had librarians for Edgar. So our outreach—I think rather than approaching it demographically, we tried to approach it from professions, occupations, and those kinds of things, to try to get into a variety of communities.

DePue: You mentioned Barbers for Edgar. Were there Hairdressers for Edgar?

Hendren: Yeah, yeah.

DePue: Brenda's hairdresser or...?

Hendren: I don't know who signed the hairdressers, to be honest with you. Jim's barber signed his, the guy from Charleston, whose name I don't remember now. Again, we tried everything. (laughs) Jim would probably remember—he got really mad at me because I spent ten thousand dollars on the data to compile the target precinct list. He wasn't real happy with that, because ten thousand dollars was a lot of money in that race, and I didn't ask him; I just did it. But my theory was always, You don't want to wake up the day after election having lost by fifty thousand votes and not have done a precinct organization, because then you

would never forgive yourself. Now, if you wake up the day after election and you won by a million, Well, I didn't need that. Okay, but I still won. Right? That was always my theory.

DePue: You're running at the same time you've got two very high-profile candidates at the governor level; one of them, obviously Thompson, is a very flamboyant campaigner as well, considered still as maybe the master campaigner. Then you've got Jim Edgar's style. Talk about Jim Edgar's style compared to Thompson, who's out there with boots and flannel shirts and looking like the regular guy.

Hendren: Jim was more proper, and you didn't see him quite as relaxed as you did Governor Thompson. Jim was not the orator that Governor Thompson was. But they rarely appeared on the same stage, and if they did, Governor Thompson always had the major speech; maybe Jim was doing an introduction or something like that. But Jim was learning. He became a better speaker as time went on. And he's always been, in my judgment, a pretty good candidate in terms of one-on-one, but he still is more reserved. You know, Thompson would come up and grab your hand, put his arm around you and you'd think, Golly, I've known this guy forever. Jim is more likely to say, "Hi, how are you?" Good eye contact, always. "Hi, how are you?" shake hands, and be on his way. So, a stylistic difference. But Thompson clearly was more dynamic in that regard.

DePue: Well, you're his campaign manager. What kind of coaching were you giving Edgar in terms of his style and how he was perceived by the public?

Hendren: I don't think we really gave him any except, Lighten up; loosen up; just smile. That's pretty much it. And he did that.

DePue: So he responded positively to that kind of criticism?

Hendren: Oh, yeah. Jim did not mind being—I guess criticized would be the proper word—critiqued is maybe a better word. No, absolutely not.

DePue: In any campaign the big challenge is finding the money to run the campaign. How did you do that? How did he do that?

Hendren: We had fundraisers all over the place. Our big fundraisers were called—I think it's proper to say now—employee fundraisers. They weren't all employees, but a lot of the employees sold tickets. We had one in Chicago every year and one in Springfield every year.

DePue: How exactly did that work?

Hendren: Well, they sold tickets on their own time. They were supposed to sell tickets on their own time.

DePue: Tickets to what?

Hendren: Fundraiser.

DePue: What was the fundraiser?

Hendren: It was Citizens for Edgar. I mean, it was a fundraiser for Edgar. Then we would have golf outings in the summer, spring and fall; cocktail parties and receptions on a constant basis. Fundraising—very difficult, all the time. All the time, it was very difficult. And then, of course, most of that money goes for television advertising, so (snaps fingers) it's gone, like in an instant.

DePue: Well, those kinds of rules on fundraising have changed dramatically since then.

Hendren: Yes. Yes, they have. (laughs) We worked the business community. Harold Smith was the state party chairman. He tried to introduce Jim to a lot of the business guys in Chicago, which was helpful long-term. And there were other people up there: organizations, entities, that he had known. I mentioned the IEA at one time. They were a very good fundraising source for us.

DePue: Illinois Education Association.

Hendren: Mm-hmm.

DePue: Were you directly involved in the fundraising side?

Hendren: Mm-hmm.

DePue: Were you making cold calls, things like that.

Hendren: No, I'd never make a cold call, but I would answer questions; I'd go meet with people that had questions.

DePue: How about the Governor himself? How directly involved was he in the fundraising side?

Hendren: Jim was interested in how much money was raised, but he did not like fundraising, which is not at all unusual. Most candidates don't like fundraising. It's the worst part of politics, without question.

DePue: Was he the one who was picking up the phone, though, to talk to—

Hendren: No, he wasn't good with that. He would meet. He was okay with going to meetings and saying, We need X thousands of dollars to run a commercial or advertising. I think he only made one or two fundraising calls in his career.

DePue: Is that because he was philosophically opposed to it, or he wasn't comfortable with it, or...?

Hendren: That's a question I would defer to Jim. I would guess that he's just not comfortable with it. I think it's very hard to solicit money. It really is. It's not fun at all. It's not at all fun.

DePue: Running a campaign like this, there's a price to be paid. I assume, now you're on the payroll.

Hendren: I'm on his campaign payroll.

DePue: Were you married at this time?

Hendren: I was then. (laughter)

DePue: Have some kids as well?

Hendren: Yeah, yeah, mm-hmm. It's hard on the family, to answer your question—very hard on the family. You're gone a lot; your hours are twelve to eighteen hours a day, seven days a week, particularly the last three months. It is grueling. The secretary of state's race in some ways was worse because you didn't have the kind of staff and support statewide, but in some ways, it was better. It was a statewide race, but it was still smaller than a gubernatorial.

DePue: Satisfying for you, though, to work that campaign?

Hendren: Yes. Loved it. Loved it. It was fun. The best thing about politics is the people that you meet. You meet some fascinating characters around the state, from just the good ol' boys and political junkies, to businessmen and almost celebrity-type guys. So it's very rewarding. It's also very hard when you lose. I mean, I've been on both sides, and after you expend that much energy and that much emotion, and then you come up a little bit short, it's really tough on you.

DePue: When you're on the winning side, it's rather intoxicating at the end of the process?

Hendren: You are so exhausted when it's all over; you're numb, frankly. After the '90 campaign—and of course, we were victorious—I went back to chief of staff in the legislature; literally, I was just numb for about three weeks. Everybody said, Boy, you should just be on cloud nine, and I was like, I'm just glad to be here. (laughter) But to get there, it's adrenaline. I mean, you're just all the time. No stop.

DePue: Did you have much of a television campaign or—

Hendren: In '90?

DePue: —in print media? No, this would have been 1982.

Hendren: Eighty-two? Yeah, we had a television campaign, limited radio, and I think we did three, maybe four spots. I don't have those spots, but they were the much more traditional kind of introductory, biographical spots. We had one very dramatic DUI spot, though, where we used the *Newsweek* front page; we had police cars and sirens and the lights going off at night to dramatize the importance of the DUI issue. I can't remember how many gross rating points we ran at that time, and I can't even remember how long we were on TV, but we weren't on very long. Maybe a month.

DePue: Gross rating points?

Hendren: Gross rating points. It's a measurement of how extensive your marketing is.

DePue: Did either candidate go negative?

Hendren: (pause) No. Not in a traditional sort of way, no. Ours was a contrast of a young, honest person of high integrity who was doing a good job—a capable guy, I guess—honest would be the key word—versus the old school, been around a long time, kind of the Chicago guy. You know, older. We tried to contrast. Every chance we could put them together, we'd put them together. The contrast was amazing.

DePue: Did Daley come up in the equation? Of course, Richard J. is long dead by this time.

Hendren: Right, and I think—who was Mayor? Byrne was the Mayor, is that right?

DePue: Could be.

As I recall—I could be wrong on this—but one of the reasons that Stevenson did better is because Washington was on the ticket.

Hendren: Harold won in—nope, Harold won—

DePue: And it wouldn't make sense, because the city elections were off cycle.

Hendren: Yeah, he was either on the ballot in '81 or '83, but I think it was 1983, because Jim and I went to the White Sox opener; it was Election Day in Chicago, and it was wild. I just remember that. Sox played the Orioles, got beat, and Harold Washington won the primary, I guess it would be called, for Mayor. So that would have been '83. I'm pretty certain that's right.[14]

DePue: I almost lost track of where we were. Tell me about election night.

Hendren: Eighty-two?

[14] Democrat Harold Washington defeated Republican Bernard Epton in the mayoral general election held April 12, 1983, becoming Chicago's first black mayor. The White Sox lost their home opener to the Baltimore Orioles, 10-8. *Chicago Tribune*, April 13, 1983.

DePue: Yeah.

Hendren: It was wonderful, because we won; but it was full of apprehension because we didn't know what was going to happen with Governor Thompson. We knew all of his staff, worked with all of his staff; they were our friends. The initial returns looked like he was going to lose. So our excitement was tempered because of our concern for what was going to happen with the governor's race, and it stayed that way for several days. (laughs)

DePue: How much bigger a margin did you guys win than Governor Thompson?

Hendren: I think our final total was 250,000.

DePue: So a much larger margin.

Hendren: Yeah.

DePue: What was the difference?

Hendren: I think that the fact that a young, new face... I think he brought the issues out; he identified himself well; people liked him. He was a handsome, young man. He was doing a good job; he was running an honest and an effective office. He appealed to what would later become [known] as the soccer mom; he appealed to that independent voter, particularly in the suburbs; and he was not considered threatening by the mainstream Democrats. He was not threatening among any of the Chicago voters. I think we ended up getting about 30% in the city, which was pretty good. Jim did well in suburban Cook County, which is critical for Republicans—collar counties—and then he did very well downstate.

DePue: In terms of what was different between Thompson and Edgar, what demographics were we pulling better in?

Hendren: The independents would clearly be the biggest difference. Governor Thompson—remember, he was seeking his third term, and as you're governor and make tough decisions, you make enemies. And he ran into that. In the early fall, Jim and I were meeting one day, and he said, "Boy, I'm getting a lot of negatives about Governor Thompson." I said, "Man, I am, too. I get calls all the time." So we decided I was going to go meet with Bob Kjellander, who was his campaign manager, and Jim was going to meet with the governor, because they talked on a—I wouldn't say frequent, but a regular basis.

I met with Bob and said, "Bob; man, I'm hearing nothing but really negative things. Not a lot of signs." I mean, it was indicators, just indicators. He went through their polling, and he felt pretty comfortable. When Jim talked to Governor Thompson, Thompson basically said the same thing: Our polling shows that everything is okay. Bailey and Deardorff were their campaign consultants, and they said everything was fine. And literally, it was no more than a week—it may have been just a couple of days—where the *Sun-Times* came out with a big

headline, "Stevenson Leads Thompson" by like, seventeen points. It was a headline to that effect; what it said exactly, I can't remember. But at that point—it was right around Labor Day—panic kind of set in. It was actually good that it happened to Governor Thompson, because, boy, they kicked it in high gear overnight. (laughter) Of course, it was a different race, but...

DePue: Big victory, then.

Hendren: Yes.

DePue: You've already told us your reaction afterwards: just kind of exhaustion, and who can blame you? What did you do in the next couple years after that race?

Hendren: I went back to the Secretary of State's office. I was an assistant to Jim when I was on the governmental payroll: basically politics, patronage, and the legislative office. Directly responsible for none; kind of oversee or involved with all of them. I sat through all the meetings with all the agency heads and all the bureaucrats. It's okay. I'm not a person that likes bureaucracy, so part of it wasn't real exciting for me.

DePue: Would you be his chief political advisor then, in kind of an unofficial capacity?

Hendren: I guess in an unofficial capacity, yeah.

DePue: Just the kind of person all of the entrenched bureaucrats are suspicious of.

Hendren: Yeah, they just loved me. (laughter) I'm not a guy that likes three-hour meetings, okay? Yeah, let's go. I did that, and then—I can't remember exactly when, but it was sometime in the late spring, early summer of '83—Jim was approached by Senator Percy and I was approached by other people; they wanted Jim to be the campaign chairman, and they wanted me to run the campaign. I said no two or three times; I can't remember. Because again, I'd done my statewide campaign; I kind of wanted to stay low for a little bit. Ultimately, though, Jim and I talked about it, and he agreed to be the campaign chairman for Senator Percy and suggested it might be a good idea if I was the (laughs) campaign manager for Senator Percy. He didn't make me do it, don't misunderstand. But I flew out to DC; met with Senator Percy and his staff and his consultants; and, what the heck, I decided to do it. So from the fall of '83 through all of '84, I ran Senator Percy's campaign. He had a primary campaign and then, of course, a general that he did not prevail in.

DePue: Who was his candidate in the primary?

Hendren: Tom Corcoran. He's a congressman.

DePue: Why did he have a candidate in the primary?

Hendren: Tom represented the conservative branch of the party, and Senator Percy was seeking his fourth term, which is hard to do anyway. He'd had a tough race six years previously: Alex Seith in 1978—that was a very close race.[15] So he knew he would have a primary. And Corcoran was tough. Corcoran actually worked with Jim on the staff. He worked with Arrington, he was a member of Congress, and a young, bright, articulate person. He was a formidable opponent.

DePue: What was it about the conservative base of the Republican Party that was dissatisfied with Chuck Percy?

Hendren: They didn't like the fact that he had voted against two of Nixon's Supreme Court nominees. Their names, I can't remember. They just thought he was liberal, and I'm not really sure why, because I don't think Chuck Percy was a liberal. He was not a right-wing conservative. I think Chuck Percy represented the moderate wing of the Republican Party.

DePue: As I recall, he got on the wrong side in terms of conservatives on the issue of Middle East policy, as well?

Hendren: Well, certain conservatives.

DePue: Sale of AWACS?[16]

Hendren: Oh, yeah, absolutely. But I'm not sure I'd call those the Republican conservatives. Ultimately, that was what beat him, because he had a very balanced policy toward the Middle East; a lot of the people who support Israel regardless, didn't like that, and it caused him some difficulty.

DePue: How would you describe Charles Percy as a person and as a candidate?

Hendren: As a person: absolutely a wonderful human being. It surprised me, because I didn't know Percy before this. Friendly, sincere, always ask about your family—and cared. I mean, you can tell when somebody asks and cares versus not. Hardworking. Just a really, really nice guy.

As a candidate, he was a very good candidate, but one problem that was a significant hurdle for Senator Percy was a hearing impairment; a hearing impairment for a candidate is a problem. Because of electronics and all this stuff, a hearing aid is difficult to use. And large crowds... It was a bit of an impairment

[15] In a race marked by sharp poll swings and heated advertising, Charles Percy defeated Democratic challenger Alex Seith, 1,698,711-1,448,187. U.S. House, 1979, Clerk of the House of Representatives, *Statistics of the Congressional Election of November 7, 1978*, 96th Cong., 1st sess. http://clerk.house.gov/member_info/electionInfo/1978election.pdf

[16] An Airborne Warning and Control System is an advanced aircraft-mounted radar, which dramatically enhances the war-fighting capabilities of a nation's air force. In October 1981, President Reagan pushed through a controversial sale of these aircraft to Saudi Arabia, despite Israel's opposition. As chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, Senator Percy served as the proposal's floor manager. *Chicago Tribune*, October 29, 1981.

that caused some people to think that he didn't know them, didn't care to know them. I mean, it was a problem.

But he was a good candidate. He worked tirelessly. Chuck Percy had a work ethic maybe like no one else I've ever worked with. Six o'clock in the morning to midnight, all the time, and always maintained a very positive demeanor. He was always optimistic; he always felt good. I never heard him one time criticize another human being. Never once. A legitimate disagreement, that's fine, but I never heard him say a bad word about a human being, period. Just was not the way he was made. Great guy.

DePue: From what we've already talked about, there were a lot of negatives going around in that particular campaign. What was Paul Simon's camp saying about Chuck Percy?

Hendren: I'm not sure it was Simon's camp, although I'm convinced that they were involved with it. The underground was—they did the chameleon ad. The guy—what was his name? He was subsequently convicted in California of an election fraud. Golan. Michael Golan. Michael Golan ran independent expenditures in Illinois. At one time, Senator Percy had six independent expenditures against him. And we believe—remember, your reporting laws were a little different back then—Michael Golan was behind all of those, and it was driven by Senator Percy's Middle Eastern positions. They were just outrageous charges, ridiculous charges, but we had to fight them all off. It was radio; it was television. I mean, it was brutal. And we didn't prevail, obviously. But I believe it was two years later—maybe four, but I think two years later—he was convicted, essentially for the same thing, in California, where he got involved in, I think, Alan Cranston's Senate race out there. And I think he did a little time in the big house, but I'm not certain of that. I lost track of him after the race.

DePue: What was your campaign, Percy's campaign, in terms of how they were portraying Paul Simon?

Hendren: We portrayed Simon as a big government, big spender, and he didn't support federal balanced budget amendments, all of which were true. We tried to contrast Senator Percy with: he's delivered; he's been here when the state's needed him; and we had all kinds of examples of equipment sales overseas, or federal grants and projects and programs. We did an ad about a building in Springfield that he had built. The Elgin street sweeper; the Elgin Company sold a lot of those to Saudi Arabia, which I thought was kind ironic. (laughter) And the PPG glass factory at that time in Decatur.

We tried to use those as wedge factors because it was the kind of economic development issue that hopefully would help. Senator Simon, of course, was very strong downstate, so we tried to use those as wedge factors. I think we lost by

84,000 votes.[17] It was a knock-em-down... It was a fun race. Unfortunately, we didn't prevail. But Paul Simon and Chuck Percy didn't get nasty with one another in person. They had too much respect for one another. They might disagree, but they would disagree in an agreeable fashion. It was not like the politics of today.

DePue: My guess is that in the senatorial race versus the last race you had run, which was a race for Illinois Secretary of State, you've got a lot more money to work with.I Is that correct?

Hendren: Yes. In the aggregate, yeah. A lot more TV. That was really my introduction to more extensive polling. And all of a sudden, you go to a meeting, and there used to be three or four of us there; now there's like twenty people; and you've got a media consultant and a general consultant and a polling consultant, and all kinds of stuff like that, (laughs) which was new to me. That was a whole new experience. It became valuable as a learning tool, particularly as we get to the '90 campaign.

Bill Rosing was a general consultant—a great guy, a very smart guy. He's out of New York; back then, he was DC. But the main guys I worked with were Bob Teeter—a pollster and a general consultant—and his pollster, a guy by the name of Fred Steeper. Teeter was offered deputy chief of staff to George H. Bush, but turned it down; he's now deceased, unfortunately. but a very good guy, very, very smart guy. Taught me a lot. You just sat in a room and listened to these guys, because they'd been involved in politics for thirty or forty years. I was thirty years old when I did the Percy campaign. So just to be in—

DePue: That's my question. You had all of these people who have had an incredible amount of experience and bring talents to the table, and here's this young upstart, thirty years old, running the campaign?

Hendren: Mm-hmm. Roger Ailes was our TV guy. You know Roger Ailes? Runs Fox News.

DePue: Yeah.

Hendren: Great guy. Funniest guy I believe I've ever met.

DePue: Was that typical, the dynamics of campaigns, though, that you've got people like yourself or—?

Hendren: Usually your campaign managers burn out; (laughs) most people do one, maybe two, statewide, and they're done. So your consultants, though, by definition, are kind of senior advisors. They were very used to having younger people that they dealt with as campaign managers or directors. These guys were great to work

[17] Percy lost the 1984 race to Simon by 89,126 votes. U.S. House, 1985, Clerk of the House of Representatives, *Statistics of the Presidential and Congressional Election of November 6, 1984*, 99th Cong., 1st sess. http://clerk.house.gov/member_info/electionInfo/1984election.pdf

with. They truly were good to work with. Now, we disagreed, and we had numerous phone conferences. It essentially was a democracy. You know, I think we should run these ads, and we'd all talk about them, and four say this and two say that; okay, the four prevail.

DePue: Doesn't the senator get to have the final vote on that?

Hendren: No. Chuck Percy delegated. He would raise questions and ask questions, and he always was involved in the decision-making, but he deferred to his people, particularly when he knew there was discussion and a feeling or belief by that group what direction to go. That's the direction he went.

DePue: We talked a little bit about the election night for 1982. Let's talk about this election night.

Hendren: It was a bummer. (laughs) But it was—

DePue: Were you confident going in? What was the thought going in?

Hendren: No, going in, it was a parallel to 1990, nip and tuck, right down to the wire. Everybody knew it was going to be close. The tracking polls had it,one day, two points; one day, three points; up, down. We knew Reagan was going to do well because the second debate changed the dynamics of the presidential race nationally.

That's when he said, "I won't criticize you for your age and inexperience..." That was Roger Ailes's line.

DePue: The classic line, yeah.

Hendren: Ailes told me that was coming. That was maybe my most memorable experience, working with Roger Ailes. You remember the coon dog spot in the Kentucky race? Mitch McConnell's race? That was the year Mitch McConnell was elected, and the spot that won all the national attention was what they called the coon dog spot.[18] It was hilarious. You'll have to look in your archives and find it. It was a great spot. Anyway, that night was very long, and we didn't really know who won until about two or three in the morning. Senator Percy went to bed. I woke him up. I told him at about 2:30 in the morning that we'd lost. He said, "Okay, I thank everybody for their help" and went back to bed. Got up the next morning and said, "We'll do a press conference so I can officially concede." He called Senator Simon that night. I mean, he was a gentleman. I don't want to say it was the grand era of politics—I don't want to suggest that at all—but it was different. There was a different level of respect for opponents, and victors and the non-victors. They had mutual respect for one another, Simon and Percy did. And I think philosophically, they weren't terribly far apart on a lot of issues, either.

[18] The ad was run during the 1984 campaign. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bcpuhiIDx3Q

DePue: I lost my train of thought here. How did you take that defeat?

Hendren: I don't like to lose anything. (laughter) I don't like to lose at checkers. It bothered me. It bothered me a great deal, because I think you always look back and say, What if? What if we would have done this? And I will tell you to this day, the two things that stand out to me are: One, a contested primary from the right wing of the party that cost us two and a half, three million dollars. Monumental difference in the long outcome of that campaign. Same thing happened in 2002 to the Republicans, and in 2006. I can draw direct parallels to those. You exhaust your resources, and you are wounded going into the general. It has happened too frequently in my mind.

The second thing I remember the most—and again, I was thirty years old, and maybe I thought I had all the answers—one of those debates we had concerned airing TV spots. We did not get, in my mind, favorable... The press liked Paul Simon, and rightfully so. He was a media guy. He was a newspaper reporter. We didn't get a lot of fair shakes. He brought in David Axelrod to run his campaign in August. Well, he [Axelrod] was the political reporter for the *Tribune*, so he had access to Percy's questionnaires, interviews; the whole thing. I like David; he's a nice guy. Of course, he's in DC now.[19]

But that gave him an edge, particularly with the *Tribune* and the metropolitan papers. There was some give and take in that campaign. I can't remember the specific issues very well, but I do know that we took a lot of criticism for the tone of our advertising. You got to remember, we have six independent negative expenditures against us, so we're fighting back, and they're criticizing us for the tone. Nobody would investigate Michael Golan; where's this money coming from; who's responsible for it? Illinois had not at that time experienced any independent expenditures, so it was brand new.

But I do remember this. Our last wave of advertising—and I'm big on history—I go back and say, Okay, when we were doing good, what were we doing? What was our messaging when we were doing good? There was a time when we were beating Paul Simon by five or six points. What were we doing? Compare that to, Where have we slipped? Who do we need to get back? Is it suburban voters; is it downstate voters; are they independent voters? Where are they? Who are they; where are they? Well, if you do that analysis, what you came back with and said was economics: balanced federal budget, spending, taxes. Percy was more conservative than Simon. Polling numbers said voters agree with Percy. We had run our initial advertising on those messages. When the *Tribune* reported on those spots, they gave those spots favorable reviews, fair and balanced.

They wanted to come back with a set of spots to close the campaign that were on the same issues, only they looked different—different graphics, different

[19] Axelrod later became the chief political advisor to President Barack Obama.

text—essentially the same message. Myself and Fred Steeper, who was a pollster, argued feverishly against doing it. Why do we do it? We have the same message, and I have the *Tribune* and the *Sun-Times* and other media that said these were fair and balanced political ads. It was a fair attack on Paul Simon. I lost that argument, and we went with—I remember the spot. It had like a piece of graph paper, and it was a more high-tech commercial. But boy, they criticized those spots. (laughs) They thought they were a little over-the-top, a little too biting, a little too negative. I think that harmed us. I will never forget it. It sounds trivial, but when you got 3.5 million people or so voting and you lose by 85,000, I only needed 43,000 people to switch votes.

DePue: What was the percentage vote, then, that you lost?

Hendren: I think it would be like 51.5, 48.5, something like that.

DePue: So pretty darn close.

Hendren: Oh yeah, yeah.

DePue: You've begun to describe this already, but looking back at it, I'm sure you second-guess yourself, and the campaign does as well. What's the assessment this far out for why you lost?

Hendren: Why Senator Percy lost?

DePue: Why Percy lost.

Hendren: I think the public wanted a change. I think ultimately, when it all stacked up, three terms in a state like Illinois—at that time, not a red, not a blue state—very competitive state. Three terms; controversial issues constantly; you're not in the state, which I think makes a difference—you're in DC most of the time. And Paul Simon: you can't say anything bad about Paul Simon. He was a decent guy, a very nice man, and people liked him. What did Simon serve? Two terms? And then got out. DePue: And a presidential campaign thrown in there.

Hendren: Right, but if I were to look back historically, I'd say it was just three terms. The fourth is just too much uphill to fight.

DePue: Where did you go after that campaign?

Hendren: I went back to the Secretary of State's office. My dad used to say, "I'm the only guy that keeps the phone number in pencil." (laughter)

DePue: You're smiling here, too, when you say it.

Hendren: Jim was the campaign chairman, so he was involved in many of these meetings, or some of these meetings. The one good thing that came out of that was Jim had an opportunity to meet a lot of people that we had not really met yet, particularly

from the financial world and the business community of Chicago. It's pretty extensive. If you're going to run for higher office later on, you need to get to know all these guys. That's just the way things are.

I went back there, and it just wasn't very exciting. I mean, when you go from sitting there next to the guy who talks about the SALT II treaty and nuclear proliferation and who's going to be on the United States Supreme Court and all this stuff, and you come back—and there's no disrespect to license plate training—but it just wasn't my thing. It just wasn't that exciting. And so I was a little bored. I get a phone call. One of these guys that had worked in the Percy campaign said, "You know, there's a thing called GOPAC. Pete DuPont's the chairman. I want to send you the game plan. I want you to read it, and if you're interested, call me, and we'll see where..." So he sent this two-hundred-page document to me, and I read it. It was kind of intriguing. In my mind, I was saying, This is really a decision; do I want to do politics, or do I want to stay more in public service? I mean, so far in my life, I've had the advantage of being able to be political but also stay involved in public policy. To me, this represented the possibility that that could change and just become political. Plus, I had no desire at all to ever move to Washington, DC, period. None.

DePue: This might be a good place to set the parameters for our first interview here, because my gut tells me we're into this an hour and a half. I'd love to hear more about GOPAC. I think that's an important chapter in your life, and it's an important piece of history. So what I would propose to you here is we talk through that '86 campaign, especially GOPAC, and leave 1990 for our next session.

Hendren: That'd be fine. That'd be fine.

DePue: Having said 1986, were you at all involved with Edgar's 1986 campaign?

Hendren: Only in conversations with Jim. Bob Hickman ran the campaign. He had been our finance director in the '82 campaign. But I talked to Jim occasionally. And the '86 campaign just wasn't a challenge. The LaRouche—

DePue: It was kind of a bizarre year, wasn't it?

Hendren: Yeah, the LaRouche factor. I will tell you this: when I decided to do the GOPAC thing, I told Jim that if he decided he wanted to run for governor and he wanted me to run the campaign, I would be back—whatever year, whatever time, just tell me. That's kind of how we left it. We parted ways, and I did the GOPAC thing, which was a great learning experience for me and subsequently played a role in the '90 campaign. But I did the GOPAC thing. Governor DuPont [of Delaware] decided he was going to run for president in '88, so he stepped down, gradually started stepping back, and Newt Gingrich, who was then just an unknown congressman outside of his own territory in Republican circles, became the chairman. GOPAC was a national political organization.

DePue: What did GOPAC stand for?

Hendren: That's the acronym. Action Committee.

DePue: GOP[20] Action—

Hendren: GOP Action Committee, I guess. It was there when I got there, (laughs) and I don't know the answer to that. Our mission was to identify fifty congressional districts around the country that the Republican Party could be competitive in at the grassroots—legislative level, state level—in the hopes of recruiting subsequent victors, or candidates, to run for Congress. It had never been tried before. We went into areas that were dominated by the Democratic Party. We went into areas that had not elected Republicans since Reconstruction. Most of our districts were in the South. We had a couple in Michigan, one in Massachusetts, but overall, they were Texas, Mississippi, Arkansas, Georgia, and big-time in Florida. We elected—Andrew was his first name; I can't remember his last name. He became the Senate President of Florida.[21] Six of our alumni class subsequently—this was several years ago—became Members of Congress. But we went in trying to elect sheriffs, state reps, state senators, county assessors, county clerks, county treasurers—whatever. Because when you try to get someone to run for Congress, where do you go? You go to the elected officials, and you say, Who's won here? The problem was in these districts, while the demographics were changing, the party had nobody to come off the bench.

DePue: So the analogy I think you mentioned before is you're building a farm team for the Republican Party.

Hendren: Absolutely. We picked congressional districts based on certain election outcomes—it was subjective, obviously—but we also did them based on the type of—like industry and population movements. For instance, we had districts in Austin, Texas. Now, the congressman at that time had been there like thirty years. But Austin, Texas is a university community. IBM, a lot of the new high-tech industries were moving into Texas. Population was just exploding. You're going to have a new congressional seat there. Texas actually was going to get five. So the point there is: let's elect some state reps, and we get some state reps, then we'll have some guys that may be in a position to run for Congress. And that happened—Florida, Texas, all over. It was exciting. Plus, working with Gingrich was fascinating. He's a brilliant guy, and it was fascinating.

DePue: Do you remember your first encounter with Gingrich?

Hendren: He came over to the office, they introduced him. Pete DuPont was still going to be the national chairman, and Gingrich was going to be kind of the political chairman.

[20] GOP, for Grand Old Party, has long been the nickname for the Republican Party.
[21] Probably Ander Crenshaw.

DePue: But he was in Congress by then.

Hendren: He was a member of Congress. We all knew he would become the chairman. He didn't know me; I didn't know him. We met and got along right off the bat. He wanted a national organization so he could go around the country and speak, get known, use it a little bit as a springboard, which he did a magnificent job of, frankly. So I did that for two years, and it was quite exciting.

DePue: What impressed you about Gingrich?

Hendren: First of all, he's a very intense guy. I mean, very intense. Extremely well-read, Ph.D. in history. He's a visionary. I don't know how else to say it. He just was always trying to think outside the box. For every problem, there's a solution; he was always trying to find that solution. He wanted to do things differently, and still today, he wants to approach things differently. The old system doesn't work? Then let's try something else. He's not afraid of change; he's not afraid to buck the people of his own political party or his own philosophy. He's a big thinker. Nineteen eighty-six, we had a meeting in Denver, probably six or eight of us he invited to this meeting. None of us really knew why we were going. (laughs) It was a two-day meeting. He said, "The purpose of this meeting is, we're going to devise a strategy for the Republican control of the Congress." And I said, "In what millennium?" (laughter)

DePue: Yeah, that had been a while, hadn't it?

Hendren: Yeah. And he said, "I want to do it in…"—I think he said '88. Something like that. Very close proximity. Went around the room and tried to get everybody's opinion. I told him I thought he was crazy; you can't do it that quickly. But again, it's the way he thinks. It's out of the box. It's visionary, long-term. Of course, in 1994, it happened, and it was under his leadership.

DePue: Was his intellect primarily engaged with political strategy, or was it a philosophical approach?

Hendren: Both, both. He was more driven by the philosophical approach, and was a very substantive-oriented guy; he would be a guy in a campaign who would not be good at the technical level of the campaign, but very good at the strategic level of a campaign. In other words, let him come up with the ideas, but someone else needs to implement, follow through. Just an absolutely brilliant guy, and a very nice guy. Just a very nice guy. You go sit down, have a beer with him. He's a military kid, so he'd been all over the world. He liked to drink German beer. He walked every morning, so we used to walk. That's how we did some of our business; I'd meet him, and we'd just walk. He could walk very fast, by the way. (laughs) But he's a very nice guy.

DePue: Where were you doing these walks? Was this in Washington—

Hendren: DC. Yeah. I commuted for this job. I only did it for two years, and the biggest reason was just the travel, the physical abuse that you... It's just terrible.

DePue: What exactly was your role in GOPAC?

Hendren: Executive Director. I ran it.

DePue: You ran it?

Hendren: Mm-hmm.

DePue: And what did the executive director do, then?

Hendren: They ran the organization. They were responsible for the—I think we had fourteen or fifteen staff, five or six consultants. Your most fundamental responsibility is raising the money to keep the organization viable and sustainable. But we had a very good direct mail program, very efficient, so we had a fairly good and predicted cash flow. We had two fundraisers that were responsible for the large-dollar contributors to this national PAC. I don't know how many we ended up with. I think our goal was one hundred at ten thousand [dollars] apiece. Businessmen, entrepreneur types who were interested in the future of the Republican Party. We would meet with them on a quarterly basis—meetings and charts and graphs, and all this kind of stuff.

DePue: What was the relationship with the Reagan White House?

Hendren: To the extent there was one, it was good; but there really wasn't one. They didn't really care what we were doing.

DePue: They didn't?

Hendren: No. Mitch Daniels, who's now the governor, was in the Reagan White House.[22] I had lunch with him a couple times, and he knew what we were doing. It was really a political operation; there was really no governmental impact, no governmental involvement whatsoever.

DePue: But I would certainly think the Reagan administration was interested in what your goal was, which was to deliver a Republican Congress.

Hendren: If they were, I had no conversations with anybody in the Reagan administration, except Mitch, who was on the staff. Never did they say, What can we do to help, or anything like that. We worked very closely with the Republican Congressional Campaign Committee. They were interested in what we were doing, where we were doing it, and how successful we were.

[22] In the Reagan White House, Daniels was in the Office of Management and Budget. At the time of this interview he was the Governor of Indiana.

DePue: Was Bob Michel one of those?

Hendren: Bob Michel was the minority leader, but he wasn't the chairman of the committee. I can't remember who the chairman was. The executive director was Joe Gaylord.

DePue: Gaylord?

Hendren: Uh-huh. Who, when he left there, became a very successful political consultant. Their number-two guy is now a pollster; he does polling. You see him on TV every now and then, but I can't remember his name. They were very interested. We met with them on a fairly regular basis. You know, Money coming in okay? Where you guys at? We were governed by different state laws. We were not a national PAC [Political Action Committee]; we were not a federally regulated PAC. When we made a contribution in Texas, we were a Texas GOPAC. So we set up a committee in Texas; we had to follow all of the Texas laws and all their filings. Michigan the same way, Florida the same way, et cetera.

DePue: How successful do you think GOPAC was during this era?

Hendren: I think GOPAC was extremely successful. If my memory is right, we were involved in sixty-six contested races, and we won, I believe, thirty-four, thirty-five of them, something like—about 50 percent.

DePue: Would this have been '88? Eighty-six?

Hendren: No, this would have been the '86 election. Remember, we're in territory where Republicans were not competitive. Our first goal was to become competitive. We did that and we won at least half of them. So that was good. Now, we did have one race in Arkansas where our guy got 12 percent, (laughter) and we were running against a guy who had been in jail. (laughter) So that's a little embarrassing. I think we got 12 percent, and we got beat by the third-party candidate. But it was exciting. We had great guys, hard workers. Most of our work was in Texas and Florida, though, and I think it's proved to be successful.

DePue: It's 1994, of course, when the Republicans, after a long hiatus, won control of Congress.

Hendren: Right.

DePue: Would that have happened without the work of GOPAC in the mid-, late eighties?

Hendren: Yeah, I believe it would have, because I think that '94 was a national movement. Yes, it would have happened. Yes.

DePue: Even if GOPAC had not existed before?

Hendren: Yeah. I could say that GOPAC was integral to that, but that wouldn't be true, just wouldn't be true. Ninety-four was a movement. I mean, it was a movement. It wasn't about structure, organization, or what's in place.

DePue: I guess the reason I ask that is because it's the same guy. It's Newt Gingrich who's oftentimes credited for Contract with America in 1994.

Hendren: Mm-hmm. He should get credit for Contract with America, because it was his idea.

DePue: And you had already talked about the importance of that farm team that was being developed in the late eighties, but again, you just don't see any direct connection?

Hendren: I think the other thing—and again, I left in '86 and came back to be chief of staff in Illinois—but Newt changed the direction of GOPAC after '86 to become a think tank research tool. To the extent GOPAC was involved in the '94 phenomenon, it was as much because of the idea process. Because he did tapes; they went everywhere, across the country. He would record ideas and thoughts and processes, et cetera. It got a lot of people involved, and I think that would probably have an impact on the '94 phenomenon. But I think the one cycle, in and of itself, exclusively, no, it didn't have a...

DePue: What did you think about Gingrich's eventual demise? He becomes the speaker of the House, and then a few years later, he's kind of pushed out.

Hendren: I was unhappy. He was pushed out, but I think the media treated him unfairly. He learned a lesson the hard way that Bill Clinton was pretty good with the press, too. He took on Clinton, and Clinton won, is kind of the bottom line.

DePue: How do you think the media treated him unfairly, though?

Hendren: Oh, I think they made him out to be kind of callous and uncaring. I don't think that's at all true with Newt, not at all true. You remember when Newt said, "If we got to shut down government, we'll shut it down?" All of a sudden, it's like he's unplugging the defibrillators. That wasn't what he was saying. What he was saying was, government had grown too big; it's gone too fast; we're going to slow it down. That's not how it was portrayed.

DePue: What caused you to finally come back to Illinois?

Hendren: It was more personal than anything. You can't sustain a job like that by commuting. It was terrible. I'd leave early on Tuesday and get back late on Thursday or Friday—because I also did all the political stuff, too. It was just grueling. And I don't like to travel anyway. (laughter) My predecessor in the Senate—successor and predecessor, I guess—was offered a position of director of revenue, and he wanted to take that. That was a good career move. So he called me one day in Washington and said, "Would you be interested?" I said, "Well, let's have a cup of coffee," and we had a cup of coffee. Then, Senator Philip, who

was the leader, called me and said, "Would you be interested?" and I said, "Yeah, we'll meet when I'm back." And it just happened. But it was the right time to transition, and it was a perfect opportunity back here for me. Lucky.

DePue: And the opportunity that you're coming back to is what?

Hendren: Chief of staff.

DePue: Chief of staff for Pate Philip.

Hendren: Senate Republicans, uh-huh.

DePue: Well, here's a mystery that's—maybe it's only a mystery to me. James "Pate" Philip—where did the Pate come from?

Hendren: Peyton. That's his middle name. And I don't know why, "Pate" has been with him forever; just, instead of calling him "James" or "Jim," and nobody liked "Peyton," so they called him "Pate."

DePue: Maybe I'm remembering wrong, but I usually see "Pate" in quotation marks.

Hendren: Yeah, you do, and I don't know why that's like that. I really don't. That's a good question. I don't know.

DePue: Tell us a little bit about Pate Philip. You mentioned him before, but in terms of his leadership style and as minority leader in the Senate.

Hendren: The two people that I've enjoyed working with and for the most are Jim Edgar and Pate Philip. They're very different people. But Pate Philip is not a hands-on guy; a good delegator—maybe a little bit differently than Jim. Pate will say, "This is what I want; this is my overall goal. Go do it. If you have a problem, come and see me." He stayed out of your way; just didn't get in your way at all. He always said with the legislative campaigns, "My job is to raise you the money; your job is to win." It's a great, great way to work.

The best thing, though, about Pate—I mean, I love the guy like a relative; I just love the guy—is you never, ever doubted where he was. If he had an opinion and you wanted to know his opinion, he would tell you. He didn't care if he was politically correct or anything else. I think we sorely miss leaders like that right now, because he just said what he thought. That got him in some difficulty sometimes with the press, but he is not one of these terribly aware guys. Absolutely a wonderful guy to work for, because you had clear instructions.

He also encouraged you. I think this is one of the misnomers—a lot of people think Pate didn't engage or didn't care. He did care. He cared a lot about government; he cared a lot about this state—and still does—but he wanted you to engage him. He wanted to argue. He's a Marine. His attitude is, If I wanted a bunch of guys that would say Yes, sir, No, sir; I'd hire those people. I want people

that if they think I'm wrong, will tell me. I had some fascinating conversations with him privately. That's the way you do it: you close the door, and you have conversations—this is right or wrong or whatever—and when you leave, you do what you're told, because I worked for him, and that's the way it was.

DePue: Did you win some of those conversations?

Hendren: Yeah, I won some—and I lost some. (laughter)

DePue: Any in particular that stick with you?

Hendren: No, no, no, no.

DePue: I think with that, then, we'll just close for today and entice whoever's listening to this to check into part two, when we'll talk about the 1990 campaign for Jim Edgar.

Hendren: Okay.

DePue: Thank you very much, Carter.

Hendren: All right.

(end of interview #1 - #2 continues)

Interview with Carter Hendren

ISG-A-L-2009-013.02

Interview # 2: May 7, 2009

Interviewer: Mark DePue

A Note to the Reader

This transcript is based on an interview recorded by the ALPL Oral History Program. Readers are reminded that the interview of record is the original video or audio file, and are encouraged to listen to portions of the original recording to get a better sense of the interviewee's personality and state of mind. The interview has been transcribed in near-verbatim format, then edited for clarity and readability, and reviewed by the interviewee. For many interviews, the ALPL Oral History Program retains substantial files with further information about the interviewee and the interview itself. Please contact us for information about accessing these materials.

DePue: Today is Thursday, May 7, 2009. My name is Mark DePue; I'm the director of oral history at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library. Today we are doing part two of the interview with Carter Hendren, who was the campaign manager for Jim Edgar in a couple of his most difficult and most important election campaigns. Last time, we talked about your early life and took it all the way up through your experience working as chief of staff for James "Pate" Philip, the Illinois Senate minority leader.

So we're up to 1990 now, and want to hear about that campaign in quite a bit of detail. I want to warn you, Carter, as I mentioned before, I had the opportunity to meet with Governor Edgar yesterday, and know firsthand that as far as he is concerned, the 1990 campaign, if you're a political science major or you like the politics of things, is a great campaign to study because it was a squeaker all the way to the end. It was touch-and-go for the entire campaign, and it was just kind of the classic campaign in Illinois—

Hendren: Textbook.

DePue: —to study. So, having—

Hendren: Absolutely right.

DePue: —said all that, I want to start with the primary campaign first. Now, I know that the secretary of state announced his campaign pretty early. He had been notified by Governor Thompson a couple years before that time, and Thompson basically told him that he wasn't going to run again; Thompson was going to have fourteen years when 1990 came up, and as far as he was concerned, it was Jim Edgar's turn.

Hendren: I believe it was in July or August of '89, wasn't it, that—

DePue: Summer of '89—Governor Thompson informs Edgar.

Hendren: We did the statewide fly-around in a DC-9. It was quite a day.

DePue: Was it right after Thompson told him?

Hendren: Very shortly. Everybody knew Jim was interested in governor, but you had other people that were also being talked about. It was kind of similar to the rest of the campaign: it was an offensive effort. We had a DC-9. We started in Charleston, Illinois, and we went to the Metro-East; we went to the Carbondale area; we went to Quincy, Springfield, Peoria, Rockford, then to Rock Island.[23] Big crowds at every venue, bands playing—it was a little bit of the old politics and the new politics combined. A lot of exposure. It was a good day. It was a good day.

DePue: At what point in time did Edgar start talking to you about his intentions and really getting down to the nuts and bolts of planning for that particular campaign?

Hendren: Well, (laughs) we talked about his intentions in 1981, (laughter) and I still believe that's one reason he was successful, because he was laser focused on his goal. And that's absolutely to his credit. You cannot wake up one morning and say, "I want to be governor next year." That's part of the problem with some of these candidates, in my judgment. But in terms of the Thompson transition, there was speculation that Governor Thompson would not run again— '87, '88, '89. It became fairly obvious during the '89 session—tax increases and all kinds of stuff. Jim was talking about it then, but Jim was always in a position where he was always planning. I went on the fly-around with him, not as his campaign manager, but as a historic follower. I hadn't agreed to do the campaign at that point, although I knew I would. (laughter)

DePue: Had he not asked you?

Hendren: Oh yeah, we'd talked about it. I said, "I don't know." You know, I was getting older... I'd told him before, "Anytime, anywhere—tell me." But I was starting to get older. That really does physically take a lot out of you.

[23] Metro-East is the region composed of the suburbs lying east of St. Louis, in Illinois.

DePue: Okay, let's back up just a second here, Carter. "Older"—how old were you at that time?

Hendren: Oh gosh. In 1989, I would have been thirty-seven years old. (laughter)

DePue: Oh, an old man!

Hendren: I was an old man. But you feel like an old man after a campaign. And you knew—you just knew—that the '90 campaign was going to be an absolute knock-down drag-out. You know you're going to end up with highly qualified, well-respected candidates on both sides, and it's going to be an absolute knock-down drag-out. That was an exciting feature to that campaign.

DePue: Would it be fair to say, going into that, you knew this would consume your life for the next year and a half?

Hendren: Yeah. Oh yeah.

DePue: Well, let me ask this most indelicate question. There were several years you were doing the GOPAC thing and flying back and forth between DC and Springfield, and that certainly put a strain on your marriage.

Hendren: Mm-hmm.

DePue: Where was your marriage at this time?

Hendren: Oh, it was fine—at least, I thought so. (laughs) It was fine. My former wife was extremely supportive, very helpful. I mean, no criticism from me. Your time is gone, so you tend to get distant; but absolutely, I would never say that she was not supportive.

DePue: So there were no reservations on your part because of that?

Hendren: Nope. No, sir. None whatsoever.

DePue: When did you say, "Okay, Mr. Secretary, I will be your campaign manager"?

Hendren: It was shortly after that fly-around. He knew I was going to do it. I knew I was going to do it. I started September 1, actually, Labor Day, of '89, because Mike Lawrence and I drove down by Carbondale. I think it's Crab Orchard, Little Grassy.[24] We had kind of a mini-retreat down there to talk about the campaign and stuff. I believe that was the right time.

DePue: Who else was on board already at that time? You mentioned Mike.

Hendren: That was the one issue that Jim and I had to resolve. Mike Lawrence was the press secretary. We all knew that. We knew he would transition from the state

[24] Two lakes located ten miles outside of Carbondale, Illinois.

payroll to the political payroll—never a doubt about that. Jim had agreed to hire Mike Belletire, but we talked before he hired Mike to be the research director. Mike Belletire's one of the smartest guys in government, truly is. That was a great steal. He worked for Governor Thompson for many years—social services and other agencies. So I knew he was going to start. But that was essentially it when we started.

We talked at length about staff. I knew who I wanted for scheduling; I knew who I wanted, at least for some guys, in the field operation. We knew what we were going to do for fundraising. We still had to make decisions on media consultant and polling. Those are not decisions made by a single person; the candidate ultimately makes the final decision. There has to be a comfort level there. We had a pretty good idea what direction we were going with all of those. But in September of '89, there was myself and Belletire in an office over here on Third Street by the tracks, and every time a train would go by, the whole building would shake.[25] There were two little bitty internal offices, and that was it.

DePue: Did you start right from the beginning in a paid position?

Hendren: Yeah, yeah. For the governor's race, yeah.

DePue: I'm curious, were you paid fairly well? Are those positions typically paid well?

Hendren: I'm trying to remember. That was not an issue, and I think Jim would tell you that was never an issue, with me. I think I asked for an adjustment—an upward adjustment, obviously—from my salary as chief of staff, but it wasn't extraordinary. I think I was making, on an annual basis, eighty-five to ninety thousand, something like that. I thought it was a pretty good salary—still do—but I earned it. (laughter)

DePue: I'm sure you did. You're working sixteen- to eighteen-hour days seven days a week, I would guess.

Hendren: Pretty much. Everything's cyclical, so early, it's a lot of time. But it's like everything else. You go through the holiday season; it lets down a little bit. Weekends were bad. I worked every Saturday. Really, the Sundays, you don't work until toward the end, like from July on. So April, May, work wasn't too bad.

DePue: Who was working harder, the campaign staff and the campaign manager or the candidate himself?

Hendren: I don't know. I can't answer that, because no one can appreciate how hard it is for a candidate. It truly is, because they have other things on their mind. They've always got to be on; they've always got to be prepared for a public appearance or a microphone to get stuck under their face; always have to smile; always have to handshake. I didn't have to do that. I could come on Sunday in blue jeans or

[25] Springfield, Illinois.

shorts, and if I didn't want to talk to somebody, I didn't talk to somebody. (laughter) In terms of hours: probably about the same.

DePue: Where were the finances at the time that the campaign started?

Hendren: In Chicago. You mean, where were we in terms of dollars?

DePue: Yes.

Hendren: I'm not sure how much we had to start with. I don't know. I honestly don't know; I can't remember.

DePue: Had he been building up his war chest?

Hendren: Oh yeah, a little bit, a little bit. I don't think we had more than a couple of million dollars—maybe 2.5, even—but I'm speculating there. It's easy enough to check.

DePue: At the beginning of the campaign, then, what's the overriding concern?

Hendren: Overriding concern early in the campaign was to get everybody on board to set up the mechanism to raise the money. Raise the money, because then you have to begin delivering the message. That was the overall concern. The purpose of the money is to deliver your message via electronic. That's what it's all about.

DePue: Electronic? Radio and—

Hendren: TV and radio, mm-hmm.

DePue: Not so much the written press?

Hendren: The written press was important. It was more important then than it is today. There was no Internet, obviously. So yeah, the written press was very important, and Mike's background was with the print media. But the electronic is really where you've got your message because that's your thirty-second opportunity to present your credentials. And that was really a high priority.

DePue: But in the fall of 1989, that's months and months away, I would think.

Hendren: Oh yeah, it is, so you got to earn media. You absolutely cannot forget that every place that the candidate goes, he should get radio, if available; TV, if available; newspaper, if available—period. There should be no place where he is not out there, visible, and his message should be succinct and focused: leadership, honesty, trust. What do you want to remember about Jim Edgar? Our campaign slogan, *Let the Future Begin*, was a little bit of a... Some of us—I won't say all of us—were quite nervous about a fourteen-year Republican legacy absolutely being a big-time negative for us. And frankly, polling data said it was. Nothing we could do about that—that is a fact—so we tried to turn it a little bit, if you will.

Jim was young, good-looking, new ideas, kind of a new face, although he'd been secretary of state. We turned it a little bit.

DePue: I want to focus quite a bit on the primary campaign. You had two candidates on the ballot against you, Steven Baer and Dr. Robert Marshall. I would assume you folks were much more concerned about Baer.

Hendren: Yeah.

DePue: Tell me about Baer as a candidate.

Hendren: Baer came from what I would define as the extreme conservative side of the party. No one really knew him, but he was young, attractive, a good speaker and fairly dynamic. He had the ability to organize and build—through a lot of the fundamentalist churches and pro-life groups—a decent grassroots organization. Volunteer telephone banks and publications in various areas, like Madison County and all that kind... Steve was a nice guy. He was a credible candidate, there's no doubt about that. Dr. Marshall, we paid absolutely no attention to.

Our problem in the primary wasn't Steve Baer. We knew we were going to win the primary. The problem in the primary was at what cost. That is really a two-fold story. One is, what's it going to cost us to win this? And it doesn't matter—if we get 51 percent, we win; but we're expected to get 80; we're expected to get 85. So at the same time, he had to control expectation, which is a very difficult thing to do. Who is this guy? Who is this upstart? Well, Edgar's been elected secretary of state twice; he should just annihilate this guy.

The irony was, we were the only Republican that had a primary. We put an enormous amount of time trying to put a statewide ticket together, and then we were the only one that ended up with a primary. (laughs) I've always been bothered by that. But we tried everything possible to talk Baer out of running. Henry Hyde was our last best shot. Henry Hyde's a former congressman, a great human being. He's now deceased. He was a national leader of the pro-life movement, and he was for Jim Edgar. Jim, Henry, Steve Baer and I had a meeting, and Congressman Hyde really, really pleaded with Baer not to run because of what it could do down the road. It could be divisive for the party; divisive for our ability to win. And obviously we didn't prevail, so we had to go win the race. But there were a lot of people that thought, This is no big deal. My goal was to hold him under 40 percent. I think other people who had been through the '86 campaign thought, Aw, if he gets 15 or 20 percent, he'll be lucky. No, no. The Republican Party tends to have a lot of conservatives. They're going to vote.

DePue: They're ideologically motivated.

Hendren: Ideologically motivated to vote. They may like Jim—and I think they did; they may respect Jim—and I know they did; but they didn't agree with him on a couple of issues; therefore, they're going to vote their ideology. I had a number of people say, I'm going to vote for Baer in the primary, but obviously I'm there in

the general. Don't worry about the general. A lot of people said that. And I said, "Oh, okay." I was never worried about winning or losing the primary, but I was worried about how do you manage expectations? I think we did a pretty good job. I went back to the '84 Percy race where Tom Corcoran—he came out of a more established Republican conservative wing of the party, whereas Baer came out of a more religious conservative wing of the party. But I think Corcoran got, I don't know, 37, 38 percent, and Baer got 35 percent, something like that.

DePue: He got 34 percent, at least with 94 percent of the vote counted. Hendren: So that would be considered pretty substantial. But for a Republican to win in Illinois—I know we're a blue state now, but even then, Illinois was a highly competitive state that, if you look at local elections, leans Democratic. I mean, your local elections—municipal, county, et cetera—lean Democratic. The general assembly at this point, except for a two-year period, had been pretty well dominated by the Democrats for the previous decade plus. So Illinois wasn't by any stretch of the imagination a Republican haven, but it was a very competitive state. And our concern was, If we spend a lot of money, our negatives go up; and we take a really nasty frontal assault from this guy, it will really damage us in the general election. That's what we were trying to manage.

DePue: I want to take some time to have you lay out in some detail Edgar's positions on various issues while we're still talking about the primary campaign, because maybe that's where they're especially crystallized, or you have to be a little bit more deliberate in laying those things out. The first one is the tax issue. What was Baer's position, what was Edgar's position, and why?

Hendren: Governor Thompson and the general assembly had imposed a temporary income tax increase of one-half of 1 percent in 1989. That expired in '91, so the new governor would have to deal with this. Jim made it very clear early on that he would support the continuation of that rate, so the tax rate would stay the same, 3 percent. DePue: And 4.8 for corporations.

Hendren: Yeah, the ratio. Baer and many of the conservatives said, Oh, you're for a tax increase. It's an interesting dilemma, because it's really not an increase from today's rate, if you will, but it's an increase from the previous rate. Made it complicated for them to explain, at least in my opinion, because we were able to say, We're for the existing tax rate, period.

The other thing we found out, although we found this out more in the general [election] in focus groups and polling data, but primarily focus groups: people didn't believe a politician who would say, "I'm going to lower your taxes." Hartigan made a huge mistake when he went down that path.

DePue: We'll get to Hartigan pretty quickly enough. How much was Ogilvie's experience in the—

Hendren: None.

DePue: —1972 campaign?

Hendren: I heard that every day of the campaign. I think Jim would agree. I would argue today, and I would argue, and did argue, in 1989 and 1990 that the income tax did not cost Dick Ogilvie the gubernatorial election. Other things might have. EPA and what was viewed in 1972 as intrusion on private property was every bit as controversial as the income tax—absolutely as controversial.[26] There were other things, just within attitude and behavior, if you will. Dick Ogilvie, while a magnificent governor, wasn't the most personable guy in the world. He'd been wounded in the war and couldn't smile well; he had some guys around him that were kind of tough. In 1972 he was running against the first true populist that Illinois had seen in modern political times, Dan Walker. The contrast was just stark. It was quite amazing. So I don't believe that. And if you go back to '89, I don't think anyone who voted for the temporary income tax in '89 was defeated in 1990.

DePue: So you're saying that that never factored into Edgar's decision-making process; that he had no doubts that he could say he was for the surcharge, to retain that, and still win the election.

Hendren: If it factored in, I'm not aware of it, because every time I spoke to him about it, he thought it was necessary and important. Remember, half of that money went to public education, and half of that money went to local governments on that half-percent increase. Both of those had true, direct, immediate needs. Now, organizationally, we immediately went after educators, teachers—and we ended up with a teachers' union endorsement—but we also spoke to superintendents and the other people involved in education. One of the first committees that we put together on a statewide basis was Mayors for Edgar, and this was one of the things that helped attract them to Jim's candidacy.

DePue: Saying that you're for retaining the surcharge was only half of the tax issue, though, for Edgar, was it not?

Hendren: Yes, because we proposed—and I don't know when in the timeline, but I know we talked about it very early and polled it very early—the property tax limitation proposal, or caps, as they became known as. It became obvious—and you didn't have to spend a lot of money, you had to just talk to some people, particularly in suburban Cook County or in the collar counties—that property tax rates were just skyrocketing—I mean, skyrocketing. And of course, Illinois has more units of local government and special districts than any state in the nation. It's about nine thousand, I think, or some ridiculous number. Virtually all of them have tax levies. It's kind of an isolated process; no one understands it; it's very

[26] The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency was a recent creation in 1972, having been created less than two years earlier, in December 1970. Illinois anticipated this development in the summer of 1970, when it became the first state in the U.S. to establish a state-level EPA. Illinois Environmental Protection Agency, "History of the Illinois EPA," http://www.epa.state.il.us/about/history.html.

complicated. Most of your money goes for education and then the support of your municipal or county government. But people don't pay attention to their bills.

We found out, just in talking to people and in polling data, that this was a huge problem. And it wasn't that they were irresponsible in paying the tax. They understood that they needed to support their local schools and their local government. The issue was the rates were going up 5, 10, 15, 30, 40 percent, and it was causing some real heartache and some hardship.

So it made sense to impose limitations. You can only go up so much, and if you exceed that amount, let the public make that decision. Put it to referendum. Why not let the voters decide? I think that's a fair question. So the bill was structured through adjusted cost of living or something like that—there's an acronym for it—or 5 percent. Very popular in suburban Cook County and the collar counties. Not as popular downstate. It was an issue, but it wasn't as burning. You might talk to a homeowner in Cook County or collar counties—you might be talking three or four thousand dollars a year differential, if you capped versus what their rates have been; whereas downstate, it might be two-hundred or three-hundred dollars. So it's a little bit different.

DePue: Why aren't urban Chicago voters part of that dialogue or discussion?

Hendren: That's up to Chicago, and that would cause problems. First of all, it wouldn't be real—it's a home-rule unit, so a home-rule unit can do pretty much what they want to anyway. And frankly from a political angle, that wasn't where our value came, okay? Our value came in suburban Cook County and the collar counties.

DePue: The next broad area of issues would be the social issues. You've touched on abortion a little bit. I know at that time, in 1990, the Department of Children and Family Services had a horrendous reputation nationwide. We'd earned a terrible reputation nationwide. But let's start with abortion. Where do you think Edgar's position on abortion came from? What was his reasoning on that?

Hendren: He is far better to answer that question than I am. I sat through a lot of meetings where various people explained their positions, and I think that's one critical thing about Governor Edgar: he always wanted to hear every aspect of an issue; even if he knew, or believed going in, that he didn't agree with it, he wanted to hear all aspects, kind of absorb things. How he formed those opinions, I really don't know, but he was considered pro-choice. I think he thought that the mother had the right, at least for the first trimester, to make decisions about her own body. But I would obviously defer to him on that.

I know that we had a lady by the name of Rene Thayler—at that time, she was a Democrat; I think she's now converted—from the North Shore who was our point person as our Women for Edgar coordinator and committee statewide. She was very, very much pro-choice; introduced him to a lot of those groups and people out there moving in those circles. I know she participated in some of the

meetings to help formulate his opinion. But that's one where it's not really a political judgment; it's a personal thing. I think that's how he came to it. A lot of people were surprised because he's a downstate Republican Baptist. (laughter)

DePue: With the emphasis on Baptist for this particular issue.

Hendren: Yeah, although Jim will point out quickly, "I'm an American Baptist." That's what he will say.

DePue: Not a Southern Baptist.

Hendren: Not a Southern Baptist. But yeah, that was a problem with some of the base. Of course, coming from the legislature, I had a little different perspective: my belief was that this was always going to be resolved not by the legislature, by a chief executive, but by the courts and the medical profession. I used to try to convince guys, Just calm down. What's really important here is to have somebody that will win. That was my message always: we got to win. (laughs)

DePue: So since the Supreme Court had ruled that that was constitutionally protected, then it was taken out of the state realm?

Hendren: Yeah.

DePue: A couple other issues on the social side of things were child welfare, which I have already touched on, and education: his position on those, and maybe as they contrasted to Baer's.

Hendren: First of all, DCFS had just daily problems. And it went back to, I think her name was Kennedy. I believe she was the director under Walker. Jess McDonald became the director, good director. I think he was retained under Jim, but I can't remember, to be honest with you.

DePue: For a while, Mary Lou Leahy was director of DCFS, for Walker, at least.

Hendren: For Walker, yeah. That's got to be one of the most difficult agencies to manage that there is, and clearly, there were problems with management. I think it will always be debated whether it was bad management decisions or the lack of resources that caused those troubles. Now, to the specifics of this, I would defer—and this happened frequently—to Mike Belletire, who was our issues coordinator, issues director, and again, as I mentioned earlier, just a brilliant guy. But he spent enormous hours with all of the groups—whether it be social service issues or transportation issues or education issues—unbelievable amounts of time with these groups to find out what they wanted, basically.

DePue: Was part of the stump speech, or part of the message Edgar's delivering, that the state needed to increase funding to DCFS and to mental health and some other areas?

Hendren: I don't know that he said it like that. I think Jim always said, "We have to take care of our needs, our basic problems. We have a responsibility to that." I don't recall him ever singling out in a stump speech those things specifically.

DePue: How about on the educational issue?

Hendren: Jim's always been involved in that and had a good relationship with the IEA. They didn't like our property tax cap idea at all; they really disliked that. On the other hand, they admired him for his support of continuing the existing tax rate, the surcharge; where Hartigan was opposed to the continuation of the surcharge. Jim said all along, "We need to have better, more equitable funding for the poorer districts. The formula needs to be revised. We need to take our reliance off of property taxes." He said that consistently, even past the '94 campaign into '96, '97, when he proposed his income tax increase.

DePue: Was there much difference, as you recall, between Baer and Edgar on education?

Hendren: Oh, Steve would be more for—like, the home-schoolers were for him. He was anti-union, anti-association in this case.

DePue: More local control?

Hendren: He would say, "I want more local control, and I want reforms," but I don't know that they could ever define what reforms were. They'd be for abolishing tenure, those kinds of things, I would assume.

DePue: Another broad category here—at least my broad category—is law and order issues, especially coming out of the Thompson years, when there were a lot of prisons built and Class X (ten) felonies were filling those prisons up. What was Edgar's message on law and order issues?

Hendren: He's tough on law and order. He demonstrated that with what was perceived as his tough—and I think rightfully so—administration of the DUI statute: you commit a violation, you're punished. He was pro-gun; he was pro-hunter. And I recall he said, "If we have to build more prisons, we'll build more prisons. Enforce the law." After Jim Thompson, there's not much you can do. Class X and all that stuff. I mean, he's a prosecutor.

DePue: I probably said that wrong. "Class X" instead of "class ten"?

Hendren: Yeah. Class X felony, yeah.

DePue: So March twentieth comes. What was the attitude of the campaign going into March twentieth?

Hendren: Like I stated earlier, we were confident we were going to win, as long as people show up to vote. There was a motivational issue, and March is a terrible time—although not nearly as bad as February—to get people to vote, because the

weather's always an uncertainty; not a lot of activity on the ballot. But we were optimistic. We didn't want a primary, let's put it that way. We got a primary, so let's make the best of it. Let's test our field organization, let's test our scheduling. It's a good opportunity for Jim to engage in a high-profile situation that deals with issues that he had not dealt with.

One of the concerns that I think Governor Edgar had—I know I had, and the other members—was he had been secretary of state since 1981. While he had been around government and obviously was involved, he'd really not dealt with DCFS; he'd not dealt with public aid; he'd not dealt with higher education or elementary education in a real direct way. So how he dealt with those issues was a concern. Had a lot of briefings. I mean, I didn't go to them—only those that I had to. (laughter) That's why you have the Mike Belletires and the Mike Lawrences of the world; and you bring in people from the outside that are experts in their area to brief up on those issues.

But I think we tried to make the primary: we didn't want it; we got it, so let's make the best of it. And I think we did. We learned some things about our field operation; we learned some things about our candidate; we learned some things about raising money. So all in all, it wasn't a bad experience; although today, if you would ask me, I would say I would rather not have had that race.

DePue: I'm going to read you a quote from the *Tribune* the day after the—

Hendren: Okay. (laughs)

DePue: —primary election. And the results at that time—the votes weren't entirely in, but it was pretty darn close. Sixty percent for Edgar, and Baer polled 34 percent. And here's what the *Tribune* said: "Edgar failed to achieve the landslide over conservative Steven Baer that he wanted, to avoid potential repercussions in his fall campaign." Your response to that? I guess you've kind of responded to that already.

Hendren: Yeah. What I told Jim—and he didn't like it—but if we hold him under 40 percent, at least for me, and I think in the real world, that will be successful. You're basically saying, if you want to bring this down to the bottom line, I have a Republican who is, by their definition, pro-abortion, pro-tax, versus a Republican who is anti-abortion, anti-tax; low turnout primary; and I've got to keep what you would consider to be the Republican, the conservative, under 40 percent. I think that's successful. And that's how they tried to spin the race.

DePue: "They" being?

Hendren: So yeah, I remember the *Tribune*. "They" meaning the conservative wing of the party.

DePue: Well, the *Tribune* seemed to buy in on that, that anything over 30 percent would be something of a bad thing for Edgar.

Hendren: Yeah. I don't remember what the public polling was saying at this time. It was a lot different then, because you didn't have a poll every day, and I'm not sure there were even that many. I don't ever—and never have, never will—put a lot of reliance on primary polling, because I don't know who's going to vote in the primary. But yeah, I remember that. And they were absolutely right. It was difficult to control expectations.

DePue: Once you got past the primary, you knew your candidate in the general election was Neil Hartigan. Did he have a primary?

Hendren: No, not that I recall. If he did, it was a second-tier candidate.

DePue: Tell us about Hartigan as an opponent.

Hendren: Neil Hartigan: lieutenant governor; attorney general; articulate; nice guy; been around; elective experience; ward committeeman; well-known; at one point in his career, particularly when he was initially aligned with Paul Simon, he was the new leader of the Democratic Party in Illinois. We knew it was going to be tough.

DePue: A good campaigner?

Hendren: A decent campaigner, yeah. We knew that it was going to be tough and that the Democrats wanted this office back. They wanted this office back. So yeah, we knew it was going to be a battle.

DePue: Let's put this in the context of what's going on in the country at that time, both politically and economically, because those things factor in as well: nineteen ninety, middle of George [H. W.] Bush's term.

Hendren: Nineteen ninety, wasn't a good year. There was a lot of frustration from DC, as I recall. I don't remember the unemployment rates; I don't remember the interest rates. Had we had the "Read My Lips" speech?[27]

DePue: Mm-hmm.

Hendren: We'd had the "Read My Lips" speech in '88; had the "Read My Lips" that was modified (laughs) in '89. So there was some—

DePue: For those who might be listening fifty years from now: "Read My Lips"—George Bush says—

[27] The national annual average unemployment rate in 1990 was 5.6 percent. The unemployment rate in Illinois at the time of the November election was 6.3 percent. The 1990 annualized federal funds rate was 8.1 percent. Bureau of Labor Statistics, http://www.bls.gov/lau/#tables, and Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System, http://www.federalreserve.gov/releases/h15/data/Annual/H15_FF_O.txt.
George H.W. Bush, "1988 Republican National Convention Acceptance Address," http://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/georgehbush1988rnc.htm

Hendren: "I will never raise taxes. Read my lips: no new taxes." So there was a cynicism among the general public about elected officials. And it was problematic. Bush, in '88, carried Illinois. Bush came in to do a fundraiser for Jim. Gentleman; great guy. Nice man, nice man. But he wasn't the most popular guy in the world. (laughs) I don't remember the economic conditions, I really don't.

DePue: It obviously turned south towards the end of Bush's term, but just at the end of his term. I think it was softening a little bit about the time the campaign would have been heating up.

Hendren: Probably. I don't know.

DePue: The main themes and issues in the campaign itself?

Hendren: Again, our slogan was, Let the Future Begin. Jim had tremendous awareness on polling data. He had a six-to-one favorable-to-unfavorable ratio, which is really outstanding. Now, because everybody was bragging about that, (laughs) I said, "If, at the end of this, you are two to one, I will be amazed." And I remember his expression was, Oh, no, no, no. I think we were one and a half to one, something like that, when it was all said and done. The key was, Hartigan was one to one or slightly inverted. That's what we had to do: they had to like us more than him. They didn't have to love us, but they had to like us more than him; and that's essentially what you try to do. It was trust; it was honesty; it was leadership. We were building a reputation of a guy who, based on his secretary of state experience, ran a good shop; who said what he meant; was not afraid of taking tough and controversial positions; and was just kind of a fresh face, again, to the cynicism of the era.

Hartigan, on the other hand, in the early seventies, late sixties, was viewed as the up-and-coming new face of the Democratic Party; closely aligned with the Democratic Party of Chicago; fiftieth ward committeeman; closely aligned with the old mayor Daley; an insider in the political world of the Democratic politics. So we wanted to contrast those two.

And working against that fourteen-year thing. That fourteen-year thing was a problem. It wasn't something that you lose 20 percent of your voters with, but in a race like this, you're talking about margins; and if that is a real issue with 2 or 3 or 4 or 5 percent, then you've got a problem.

DePue: This is a phrase that Hartigan used himself during the campaign: "This is an Illinois that is in trouble"—I'm quoting something that I saw in the paper—"an Illinois that is in trouble, and there's not a dime's worth of difference between Jim Thompson and Jim Edgar." How did Jim respond to that? How did you guys respond to that?

Hendren: We just continued to talk about our issues. Governor Thompson's numbers were not good at this time. That, I remember. I think his approval rating was in the mid- to high-thirties, maybe low-forties. His numbers were not good. We were

nervous about a real strong connection there. On the other hand, how do you avoid it? Jim Thompson appointed him; he worked for Jim Thompson; he had been an independent officeholder since 1981. And that was our message: judge Jim on his record. That was how we were responding to that. Honesty, integrity, trust, straightforward, straight talk; those were the general themes.

DePue: And how did you portray Neil Hartigan?

Hendren: Insider, been around a long time, Chicago base, ward committeeman, out of touch.

DePue: I was going to say, all of that before "out of touch" is not necessarily a bad thing, at least in Chicago minds.

Hendren: Maybe in the fifty wards of Chicago, but remember, our race was as follows: we wanted to get between 27 and 32 percent of the votes in the city of Chicago. That's an ambitious goal. We needed to get 56–60 percent in suburban Cook County. The cumulative area of the collar counties: we needed about 65–67 percent in DuPage; we needed high fifties in Lake; we needed seventies in McHenry; and we needed mid-fifties in Will. And we got them. Our message was to those people. Our message was property tax caps, which played very well out there, and the integrity argument.

As this campaign evolved, you'll see that we went after Hartigan very hard on some of his past allegiances; the S&L scandal. We went after Hartigan very hard on what I will define as, and he would say inappropriately, his lack of doing a good job. What was the one we did, the TV commercial—drug forfeiture. I think we say in our commercial that he collected less than 1 percent of what was available out there in collection of the drug forfeiture statute, which the attorney general is empowered to enforce. And then he increased his personal staff by—you'll see it in the spots, so I don't want to state the numbers—an ungodly proportion and cut back on actual in-courtroom prosecutors. He lived in Springfield in a house that had a swimming pool—kind of a luxury home. It was the out-of-touch versus the sincere, direct, honest approach. So that's how we did it.

DePue: You talk about the collar counties and Chicago; how you wanted to place in the various counties up there. I don't know that you told me what you guys thought you needed to get for downstate Illinois.

Hendren: Oh, downstate. First, we needed to carry it. But I think there's a misnomer out there: Oh, we'll get 57, 58 percent downstate. I think we ended up with about 52 percent, 51.5 downstate. Downstate includes the city of Rockford, city of Rock Island, city of Peoria, the Metro-East area, and everything downstate, in the deep southern part of the state. Those are all pretty hardcore Democrat areas, so you're going to lose a lot of that. But I think we ended up with about 51.5 or 52 percent,

which was our goal. He was a down-stater, and we used that; there's an ad to that affect.

DePue: What are the disadvantages of a downstate Republican running in the Chicago area, especially?

Hendren: They think you're going to forget them. They think there's a parochialism. You have to introduce and reintroduce yourself to not only the media, and understand Chicago issues because it's the economic engine of this state. So you have to understand those issues. And I think the biggest challenge from a political standpoint was introducing and working with the potential contributors. They had to be comfortable that the leader in state government was somebody that understood the city of Chicago: understood its unique problems; its unique needs; and some of its unique features, like O'Hare Field, as an example—extremely important to the business community. And Jim did that.

DePue: They would also say McCormick Place.

Hendren: Absolutely. Yeah, they would.

DePue: And wasn't the expansion of McCormick Place one of the issues at the time, for Chicago, at least?

Hendren: I thought that was in '89, the expansion.

DePue: I could be wrong, because the construction was going on in the early nineties, so it probably was something that the Thompson administration dealt with.

Hendren: I'm almost certain that happened under the Thompson administration; but again, I don't want to intentionally get involved in revisionist history. (laughs)

DePue: Yes, neither one of us.

Tell me about the campaign's organization. In our previous discussion, you made some interesting—to me, fascinating—contrasts between running that '82 campaign for secretary of state and then being involved in the Charles Percy campaign a few years later. How did the Jim Edgar campaign in 1990 fit into those two worlds?

Hendren: It was an expansion of the '82 campaign for secretary of state. We divided the ninety-six downstate counties into six or seven regions, and each region had a staffer. In the metropolitan area, we had a coordinator for the city, three coordinators for the suburban area, and then three, as I recall, for the collar counties. Their responsibility was to build the local organization. It starts with working with the existing party structure; but candidly, the existing party structure, while it was more effective in 1990 than it is today, was still ineffective with the exception of a handful of areas.

The easy way to do it was: we went to a county chairman; we got or asked for a coordinator, what we call our Edgar coordinator for x county or township. That coordinator was then responsible for essentially the following: I want groups in each county. I want Farmers for Edgar if appropriate. I want Teachers for Edgar; I want Pharmacists for Edgar; Realtors for Edgar. You name it, I want them. I want to know everything that's happening in that county—festivals, parades, et cetera. Because if the candidate can't be there, I want it covered; if I can't cover it with the candidate, we will attempt to cover it with a member of the family or a surrogate or our lieutenant governor.

In terms of time, there was more time spent on scheduling than anything. That was absolutely mind-boggling, because the number of requests that come in for a candidate for governor is just—it will overwhelm you. And we responded to all of them. Whether or not we had somebody, an "official from the campaign" in all of them, I can't say that we did that. But we wanted people at the county level that could go and speak to a business group on behalf of, at that time, the secretary of state. We had a very extensive network.

They were also asked to walk precincts, and they were given lists of precincts to walk. I think I mentioned this before: If someone walks in the office and wants to volunteer, have something for them to do. This was a result of the '82 race.

Betty Edgar, who I didn't mention in the '82 race, is Jim's mother—absolutely one of the nicest ladies you will ever meet in your life. She moved to Springfield. She was watching the kids while he and Brenda campaigned. She came into the office almost every day that she could.

And then we had a lady by the name of McGaw(??), Mrs. McGaw(??), and she brought in her friends—this started in the '82 campaign, and apparently they did it in '84—but in '86, it became an absolute operation. They would bring lunches, and we would have thirty and forty people in there. They'd come in at nine in the morning; they'd leave at three in the afternoon. It became a social club. The campaign office we had over on Cook Street had a huge open area, and it had tables the whole length. They'd sit in there day after day after day; they took a spoon and put like a half a cup or a quarter of a cup of popcorn in a plastic bag and sealed it and then stapled... I mean, it was an assembly line. Henry Ford would have been proud. (laughter) Those went into Citizens for Edgar bags, and those went out to the field for parades and things like that. And if not popcorn—which was donated by a wonderful gentleman from Effingham; I can't remember his name—it was a Tootsie Roll. Tootsie Rolls were our staple in '82 for parades and festivals and things like that.

And if they didn't do something like that in those counties, when somebody walked in, I wanted them to say: Walk from Maple Street to Cherry Street; that's a targeted area. I know we talked about this in the '82 campaign. Similar kind of thing. Put up a yard sign. Put on a bumper sticker. Just whatever you can do to get them to participate.

DePue: Back in the '72 campaign when Walker was running for governor and did the walk around the state, he energized quite a bit of buzz and got a lot of new people involved in politics at the time. got people excited. And of course, this last presidential election, Barack Obama proved to be the absolute master at bringing new people in. Where was Jim Edgar in that? You've described a lot of enthusiasm. Was he the kind who could draw new people to the campaigns?

Hendren: We had new and different people in the campaign, but not at the magnitude of a Walker and clearly not at the magnitude of an Obama. Again, the techniques that Obama has, the technologies that the president has available, are pretty immense. We constantly worked college campuses and the youth and young professionals, but not to the extent that... I wouldn't call it successful. I would not say it was unsuccessful, but it wasn't what we wanted.

DePue: I think you might have a different perception of your success in penetrating some traditionally Democratic strongholds, especially in the Chicago area; I'm thinking about the black community and the Hispanic community and the Jewish community up there. Talk about the strategy in approaching those communities.

Hendren: In each of those, there was a plan and a strategy. Remember, Harold Washington[28] had been mayor of Chicago. There was still Judge Shapinchet(??); was that his name?

DePue: Washington had been elected in 1987, and then shortly thereafter, later that year, he passed away suddenly.[29]

Hendren: Yeah, he was elected to his second term.

DePue: Correct.

Hendren: He was elected in '83. And he passed away. And there was still the Harold Washington Party out there, though, that was anti-establishment. It was not the—

DePue: Anti-Democratic establishment?

Hendren: Yes. Pardon me, yes. I was gong to clarify that. (laughs) We worked with a number of those people that were involved in their community, concerned about their community, and were clearly not Republicans, but nor were they hardcore organizational Democrats. That created what we now call, and I think most people would agree, wedge factors. We know we're not going to carry the Twenty-First Ward—I understand that—but if we can get 15 percent instead of 10, or 20 instead of 8, those numbers become fairly significant in a close statewide race.

With less magnitude, but the same, to the Hispanic population—a growing population, one that was different. Because you really have three: you have the

[28] Washington was an African-American.
[29] Harold Washington died of a heart attack on November 25, 1987. *Chicago Tribune*, November 26, 1987, 1.

Mexican population, Cuban population, and the Puerto Rican population. What you'll find when you look at the demographics, then or now, is the Puerto Rican population has less registration. The Mexican population has the largest, very active. Socially conservative—they were born and raised as real Roman Catholic, so we have issues to talk about. Their great entrepreneurial—their heritage. I mean, they work hard, and they run businesses. And then the Cuban population, which is extremely entrepreneurial. So you have to approach each of those differently. We had Arabelle Rosalas, I believe, and she worked the Hispanic population aggressively. Jim worked it aggressively. Chamber of commerce meetings, parades...

DePue: So he didn't shy away from hitting this community?

Hendren: No, absolutely not. Because their interest in government and their interest in having an honest, decent, direct person was just as great as it was for a person in DuPage County.

And the Jewish constituency. I mentioned her name earlier, Rene Thayler; while she was chairman/co-chairman of our Women for Edgar committee, she was also the head of the Jewish outreach or operation. She took him to a lot of temples, introduced him to a lot of people. There weren't many issues that were very specific. I mean, we didn't talk about the state of Israel or anything like that. They tend to be very Democratic, I understand that. Rogers Park, Evanston, Fiftieth Ward, Forty-Ninth Ward—again, it was a wedge factor. And here's a good, decent, young man. It helped us; it absolutely helped us.

DePue: I have to figure out how to phrase this delicately, and maybe there is no way to phrase this delicately.

Hendren: Okay. (laughs)

DePue: You go into some of these black communities and Hispanic communities especially, where there is some resentment that lingers because of what Mike Lawrence has described as Hartigan had supported a white candidate against Harold Washington in the '87 city mayoral campaign.

Hendren: He'd supported Vrdolyak against Washington, absolutely.[30] It's not—

DePue: And how much of the strategy was geared around...hoping that the turnout would be low in those communities?

Hendren: A lot of it. Absolutely. Mike's statement's absolutely right. We wanted to remind people that our opponent was a member of the Democratic Central Committee

[30] At the time of his unsuccessful run for mayor against Harold Washington in 1987, Edward Vrdolyak had been Tenth Ward alderman since 1972 and was the Cook County Democratic chairman. He did not run for reelection to his council seat in 1987, and he resigned his chairmanship in June to join the Republican Party. *Chicago Tribune*, January 28 and June 18, 1987.

party organization and had not supported Harold Washington for mayor either time he ran. There is no delicate way to ask that, and I don't think there's anything wrong with it, because it's a fact. It's an absolute fact. We reminded people, and our surrogates reminded them more frequently.

DePue: Did you know at the time, or did you think at the time, Okay, this is going to translate into, not votes for Edgar, but not coming out to vote at all?

Hendren: That was always in the thought process. It may not have been in Jim's thought process; it was clearly in my thought process. We also engaged Operation LEAP.[31]

DePue: Operation LEAP?

Hendren: LEAP, which was an acronym. But just basically, honest elections. The other backdrop here that no one remembers is that in 1988, there was an extremely aggressive ballot security program that was enforced by the United States attorney—that would be Dan Webb. He was still there. So we announced a very aggressive ballot security program with the essential message being, You vote fraudulently, you will be arrested, and you will go to jail. And that is true. Unfortunately, they don't do that anymore, but they should. (laughter)

DePue: That was certainly a buzz in this last election.

Hendren: Yes. In 1990, if you wanted to vote absentee, there was a process. Nobody objects to that. And you could check credentials; you could check voters at the polls if you had people there. We credentialed, I don't know, three or four thousand people to be visible on election day. We made sure that the United States attorney's office was visible in the precincts. We made sure that there was some media attention drawn to voter fraud. You're in the city of Chicago. This is about history. Let's be honest. Absolutely, they're going to steal votes. They're good at it. They're very good at it. So yeah, we made that a high priority. The bottom line was: if we tell somebody, :If you vote fraudulently, you'll be arrested." If they don't vote, that's their problem. They shouldn't vote anyway. Some people call that voter suppression. I'm not sure I agree with that terminology, but okay.

DePue: Yeah, that was the term I was trying to avoid when I asked the question.

Hendren: Yeah, I know. I know that.

DePue: Let's talk about Jim Edgar's personal campaign style. But before I go there, maybe I'll ask you this one: in the approach of this whole campaign, was he more pragmatic or principled in his approach—

Hendren: Pragmatic.

[31] LEAP, acronym for Legal Elections in All Precincts

DePue: Okay.

Hendren: He's both, but he was very pragmatic. He is today very pragmatic. The bottom line: Governor Edgar was focused on winning this election. I used the term earlier, laser focused, and that is absolutely true. Could not have a candidate more engaged in a campaign than he was, in terms of, I am focused on what I have to do to win. Great.

DePue: Then let's move on to the issue of his campaign style.

Hendren: His campaign style was a little bit like his perceived personality: a little reserved, but sincere. He was not a gregarious campaigner. I think Hartigan was a slap-'em-on-the-back kind of guy; let's have a shot of whiskey. That's not Jim Edgar. He was not an Alan Dixon who knew everybody by their first name and laughed loudly, and again, the slap-'em-on-the-back. That was not Jim Edgar. He was polite but not aggressive. You won't see too many pictures where Jim's shaking a hand with his arm around somebody. You'll see a few, but not too many. Shook hands and moved on. He was not considered a great orator by any stretch of the imagination. He was a good speaker, but he was not a great orator. He's not going to motivate thousands of people to take to the streets or something like that. So is that what you're getting at, the style?

DePue: Yeah. In part, he's the heir to Jim Thompson's reign.

Hendren: Jim Thompson was the best campaigner I have ever seen. I have never seen a person that is better. He was just a marvel to watch in a parade or on the stump. He was magnificent.

DePue: One of the things that you hear criticism about Edgar's style of campaigning is he was always impeccably dressed, and that tended to give the impression that he was more reserved, as you've already talked about. Was that a conscious decision on his part?

Hendren: Yeah, he was... When you say "impeccably dressed," he wore Dockers[32]—

DePue: He wasn't the kind of guy who would wear a work shirt walking down the middle of the parade.

Hendren: No, but he wore Dockers and collared—what I call golf shirts. I'm not sure what the... I'm not a stylish sort of guy. But he wore collared shirts and Dockers pants most of the time, and then dark suits when he had dinner meetings or speeches. I've always thought that was interesting that people would read that as being a little standoffish. He's running for the highest office in the state of Illinois. He should be respectful to that office. He wants to present himself in the most positive light possible. I never did understand—you're right, people, did say, "Oh, he is standoffish because he's..."—they used to kid me all the time because I'm

[32] Dockers is a popular brand of trousers more casual than suit trousers but more formal than blue jeans.

kind of a slob—but that "Jim's hair is never out of place." Okay, what's wrong with that? Is there anything wrong with that? He keeps his hair neat. That's fine. Some of the criticisms about that were just people reaching, in my judgment.

DePue: What kind of coaching was he getting from the campaign staff, from you in particular, or the people who were working the media?

Hendren: He got coaching from all of us, but Lawrence mostly. But the guy we haven't talked about here who was critical in this campaign, absolutely critical in this campaign, was a guy by the name of Don Sipple, who was our media—

DePue: S-i-p-p-l-e?

Hendren: Uh-huh. Strategic Communications, I think, was the name of his company. It was out of DC. He's now out of California. He did Ashcroft,[33] both [President] Bushes—and a wealth of experience. He was a wonderful guy, because he came in his blue jeans and a California-style attitude. He was substantively very strong, but he was experienced; he had Jim's confidence. And he was the guy that we wanted talking to Jim about style, presentation, delivery. That was not my field whatsoever. We've talked about it, but Don Sipple is the guy that really tried to deliver the messages. He did the '94 campaign for Jim, too. He's clearly a forgotten part of history in terms of the Edgar campaign. He came up with the theme. He kind of tied it all together for us. He was a brilliant guy.

DePue: The thing that you talked about before. What was the slogan?

Hendren: Let the Future Begin. We positioned Jim as an honest, hardworking elected official—he's going to tell it like it is—versus a guy who has been involved,; institutional guy; doesn't want to ruffle the feathers; Chicago Democrat organization; handpicked. That's a contrast, a significant contrast.

DePue: I hope to have an opportunity to interview Neil Hartigan in this process as well. But let's talk about negative campaigning. From your perception, who started it first; and how negative was Edgar willing to get?

Hendren: (sighs) Who fired the first shot? I don't know who fired the first shot. And let me say this, in all due respect to anybody that's… Negative is in the eye of the beholder. Negative, to me, is personal, scandalous, and untrue attacks. With that definition, we had no negatives, because it was all accurate. It also was never personal. Their campaign got personal toward the end. But who started it? I really can't tell you, Mark. We were not going to back off, I'll guarantee you that.

We knew after the primary, in terms of our media, we were going to start early. By today's standards, I think we started around June with our first wave of television. In 1990, that was very early. Today it wouldn't be considered early. Blagojevich, with unlimited resources, was on the air almost immediately.

[33] United States Attorney General, from 2001 until 2005, appointed by President George W. Bush.

In '94, I remember being involved in a conversation, (snaps fingers) Go quickly, go immediately at Netsch. Identify her right out of the box. But we did a similar thing in '90. We wanted to identify and reinforce Jim, particularly downstate. We did a ninety-second spot; it was entitled "Homecoming," and it was a lot of interviews. We did a picnic, literally held a picnic in Charleston, and a camera crew and Sipple went around and interviewed all these guys.

DePue: A ninety-second ad?

Hendren: Ninety seconds. Unheard of.[34]

DePue: That's forever.

Hendren: Yeah, it is. But the whole goal there—and it was very costly—really identify him as the person we want them to know and the person that he is, because we know our opponents are going to try to redefine him in their vision. That's fine; that's part of politics. But again, I can't really answer your question on who fired the first shot. I tried to remember at one point... We didn't go what would be considered negative until Labor Day. Prior to that, we had "Homecoming"; we had "Leader"; we had "Education"; we had "Straight Shooter"; we had all those spots that were substantive. They were either about education or his personal life. Our first mano a mano[35] was called "Hazel," (laughs) but it was on the Apollo Savings and Loan Scandal; Mr. Hartigan sat on that board; that board defaulted; thousands of people were harmed. It's life; it's documented.[36]

DePue: When I was interviewing Lawrence, he described a pre-debate, a press conference with both Hartigan and Edgar; they weren't debating each other, they were making statements at the same venue. That perhaps that was the time when some in the campaign were trying to convince Edgar to go a little bit stronger and address some of the things that Hartigan was saying about his campaign.[37] Do you recall that at all?

Hendren: No. I do remember arguing, along with others, to go a little harder, to start being more definitive on the attorney general, but I don't remember when that was. I really don't.

DePue: Before we spend some time talking about the two debates that he had, I want to talk about the financing of this thing. How was that going, and what was the strategy for raising the money in the first place?

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[34] Most TV commercials are 20, 30 or 60 seconds long

[35] Mano a mano, in Spanish literally hand to hand, as in male combat.

[36] As a 28-year-old attorney, Hartigan had served on Apollo Savings & Loan Association of Chicago's board of directors for sixteen months; resigning a few weeks before the bank collapsed in 1968. See *Chicago Tribune*, September 7, 1990, for the Edgar campaign's resurrection of the scandal.

[37] See Mike Lawrence, interview by Mark DePue, April 1, 1990, Interview #3, transcript, Jim Edgar Oral History Project, Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library, Springfield, IL, 24-26.

Hendren: Raising money—I know I mentioned this previously—is the worst part of any campaign. It is the hardest thing to do. It is the most difficult thing for a candidate to do. Bob Hickman was our finance director. He was based out of Chicago. He had a couple of people who worked for him. Our fundraising was done in a very traditional way. Again, because of his experience... Well, I shouldn't say traditional. We had four co-chairmen on our finance committee.

But let me go back. Another person whose name drops from history here was our original finance chairman, Karl Bays, who was the head of American Hospital Supply in Evanston. He was a great guy, wonderful guy. We worked very hard to convince him to be Jim's finance chairman. He was a player in Chicago, if that's the right way to phrase it. And when I say that, I mean, everybody knew him and respected him in the money community. We made trips to his office, and it worked; he finally agreed to be the chairman. We set our first fundraiser—I don't remember when—sometime, I want to say, in February, but I don't know exactly. Big fundraiser, going to raise a lot of money. very traditional. It was at the Hyatt downtown.

On the morning of the fundraiser, he had a massive heart attack and passed away.[38] It was really tragic, because he was in his fifties—great guy. But we were confronted with a real dilemma. We lost our finance chairman on the day of the event. The hotel had already done the decorations. I was in the hotel, and they had balloons and all this stuff. We cancelled it, which was out of respect—obviously was the right thing to do—and subsequently rescheduled it, but it wasn't nearly as fabulous. But that's kind of how our finance started. (laughs) We didn't get off to the greatest start in the world.

But in kind of the strange ways how politics work, Karl and others had suggested that we needed to introduce Jim to a variety of business interests in Chicago. You have the legal community and the manufacturing community; you have the retail community; you have the suburban area; you have downtown. The suggestion was, and I don't know if Karl made that actual suggestion, but what we ended up doing was four co-chairmen. I can't remember all their names. I know we met two or three times. When you ask someone to do something, the first challenge is: make sure it's doable. If you give them a goal, make sure it's attainable. So we tried to break this down into attainable goals.

Bob Weise is an example—I think his name was Bob—president of AT&T, or Ameritech at the time—one of the telecommunications carriers. He was one of them. There were other guys who—again, I can't remember the names, so I shouldn't say. But they each had responsibilities. Now, that involved just making cold phone calls. You know, I need money for Governor Edgar; five thousand, one thousand, two thousand. Small events in people's homes—cocktail parties—not so much dinners, but cocktail parties. These were all over the state. One reason that scheduling was such a nightmare, because someone would want to

[38] Karl D. Bays died November 6, 1989. *Chicago Tribune*, November 12, 1989.

have one on Thursday in Madison County at five in the afternoon, and at six o'clock, they wanted to be in Rockford. It's very difficult to schedule. And then we had big events. We had a big fundraiser in Springfield; we had a couple of big fundraisers in Chicago which were smaller-dollar, larger crowds.

DePue: Dinners, or speaking engagements for Edgar?

Hendren: These would have been—I wouldn't say dinners—cocktails and hors d'oeuvres type things where people can mill around and meet. Our big fundraiser, though, came in late spring—it might have been a little bit later than that—when President Bush came in.[39] I mean, he's a headliner; raises a lot of money. It's amazing. Guys want to be in that front row (laughs) to see the president of the United States.

DePue: And will pay to do that.

Hendren: And will pay to do that. That's right. That's okay. But money was always difficult. It was like pulling teeth all the time.

DePue: What were the rules of the game at that time?

Hendren: Rules of the game was there were no limitations. You had your pre-election and your A1 filing, which is essentially today as it was then—a little tighter now than it was then, but not a lot.[40] No limitations on corporations; no limitations on amount. So if a guy gave you ten thousand, you could go back the next day and try to get another ten.

DePue: You mentioned that the teachers' union, IEU, I think it is—

Hendren: IEA.

DePue: IEA, I'm sorry.

Hendren: Yeah, they were helpful in—

DePue: In terms of money as well as support?

Hendren: I'm trying to remember how much. Honestly, Mark, I can't remember. I remember seeing the bills come in, and I could tell them what bills to pay and what bills not to pay. (laughter) It was a cash flow nightmare, because you have a media plan and you have a schedule; you have your cash flow; and you have your fixed expenses. There were times I didn't issue checks; we didn't pay people a couple times for two or three days. That's not an easy thing to do, but you do it,

[39] Bush appeared at the fundraising event June 7, 1990. *Chicago Tribune*, June 7, 1990.
[40] Currently, campaign committees receiving any form of contribution greater than $500 thirty days before the general election (and a longer period before a general primary) must file Schedule A-1 with the Illinois State Board of Elections within two business days of receiving such a contribution. http://www.elections.il.gov/campaigndisclosure/ScheduleA1.aspx

because your checks to TV and radio stations have to be out. They get the money before anything happened. Checks are coming in; they're being processed; they're being batched. It is a nightmare. Your bank account just continually goes down and comes up. (makes a noise) Like that.

DePue: (laughs) How many paid staff did you have, roughly?

Hendren: Oh, I would say twenty-five. Twenty-five to thirty, in that range.

DePue: And how many did you have contracts with to support the campaign?

Hendren: We had contracts with Sipple—media.

DePue: The media consultant?

Hendren: He was media. We had contracts with Market Strategies out of Detroit, which was Bob Teeter. And he was both a general campaign adviser and a pollster.[41] His pollster, the actual pollster, was a guy by the name of Fred Steeper, who is still one of the masters of the game. He is just a genius on analyzing numbers. He really is good. When you say, "If you get 26 percent in Chicago instead of 29, you're going to have to do this in DuPage and this..." (snaps fingers) he could do it just like that. I mean, almost instantaneously. He was a great guy and fun to be around—just a brilliant guy. But those were the principal contract employees. I don't recall any others.

DePue: Did Edgar have a good sense of those kinds of numbers as well. Is he the kind—

Hendren: Oh yeah, oh yeah.

DePue: —who paid attention to those things?

Hendren: Yeah. I won't say it was a negative, but one of the concerns was he overemphasized polls. When a poll came out and he was ahead or behind, it really bothered him. I remember one night a poll came out and he was behind—this is about a week or so before the election—and we just decided not to tell him about it, (laughs) because he was making a speech and it would affect him. We told him immediately afterwards because we did tracking polls the last three weeks, so you can adjust your media. And literally, it was like this. It was—

DePue: Up and down, huh?

Hendren: Literally, it looked like a wavy line. One day, it'd be tied; one day we'd be up two, down two—to the point where you kind of looked at the calendar and go, "Well, we should be in an upswing here about Monday." (laughter)

[41] Teeter worked in various capacities for four presidents as well as several governors and senators.

DePue: How did Edgar respond to the criticism? Is he the kind of politician who was thin-skinned?

Hendren: Oh, he's not thin-skinned. He would challenge you always. I think that's one thing about Jim that—just for purposes of documentation—if you had a meeting with Jim and he didn't ask you a question that you could not answer, it wasn't a good meeting. You could prepare all you want, and I guarantee you he will ask you a question that you cannot answer. He just had that ability. He also welcomed all sides of an issue, all perspectives, and he wanted your opinion—but he might argue back. Some would say that's thin-skinned, if you engage. Belletire and I first talked to him on an airplane to Carbondale about property tax limits, and he bit back: "Oh, we can't do that. That's not responsible. Local governments have to survive. The teachers won't like it; the schools won't like it; the mayors won't like it." Boom. (unintelligible) You got to have something on this ad. His initial reaction was negative, but the more you understood it, you talked about it, it became: You know, that's okay, that makes sense.

DePue: How about his response to the media; the editorials, the attacks from the other side? Was he thick-skinned in that respect?

Hendren: He didn't like it. I wouldn't say he was thin-skinned, but he didn't like it—nor does anybody. He didn't like his character or his integrity ever being challenged; for that, I don't blame him. If you disagree on an issue, that's one thing. You can disagree with him on the surcharge, as an example, or abortion, as an example. He was pretty thick-skinned on that. But if it came down to his integrity, his honesty, that bothered him. I wouldn't say he's thin-skinned, but he would fight back pretty aggressively on that stuff.

DePue: We're getting up to the point where we can talk about the really fun stuff—

Hendren: Okay. (laughs)

DePue: —in those debates. Going into the debate—I think I can get this roughly correct, and you can make some corrections here—Hartigan's strategy, Hartigan's message, was that he's linking Edgar as many times as he can directly to Thompson and to fourteen years of Republican administration. He's talking about: No, I don't want to keep the surcharge, we don't want to raise income taxes; he's talking about doing other things to improve the position of the state; and I think in some cases, he was talking about cutting up to twenty-five hundred state jobs to help balance the books. So that's his message going into the debate.

Hendren: Two percent was his message.

DePue: Two percent reduction?

Hendren: I still remember him doing this. "All we have to do is cut 2 percent."

DePue: Kind of like the old peace sign, 2 percent, huh?

Hendren: Yeah. And he made, in my judgment, a tactical error when he published the manner in which he would do that. We read that report very closely. (laughs)

DePue: What were the negotiations in terms of where and when and how many debates?

Hendren: I did those, and I was obnoxious and dilatory. The League of Women Voters hated me—and that's fine. That was my job.

DePue: (laughs) You were okay with that.

Hendren: Absolutely. Didn't bother me a bit. They were wonderful people, by the way, if they happen to listen. We wanted fewer debates; we wanted a more traditional approach and format. And we agreed that the big debate was the WLS debate, the *Tribune*-WLS. I think it's *Tribune*-WLS.[42]

DePue: That's October fourth. That was the first formal debate.

Hendren: Yeah. That was the big one. It was in Chicago. We didn't do badly, but we didn't perform terribly well. He was briefed for a day and a half before. A lot of intensity coming into that one. We brought in Paula Wolff, and you had Mike Belletire, who I've mentioned, Mike Lawrence. Paula Wolff came in. She had been a top adviser, and was at the time a top adviser to Governor Thompson. Brilliant lady, very smart lady. Joan Walters who, of course, was essentially running the secretary of state's office for him at the time. Had really good people. And then on specific issues we brought in people that really knew that.

That's what I remember, pretty much—drinking coffee all day, smoking cigarettes, sitting in the back of the room... Sipple was there. Our concern was more, What are your sound bites? We can talk about education all day. You're going to have thirty seconds to respond or a minute and a half to answer. These are the points you need to make. That was really our focus. I think Jim wanted to understand the very comprehensive nature of a lot of these issues, but he also understood, I have to get it down so that people understand it.

But that was a tough debate, and negotiating that debate... Bill Filan was Mr. Hartigan's manager. Bill Filan remains today one of my best friends. We used to go from those debate meetings and go have a cup of coffee, or occasionally have a beer. (laughter) I like that kind of politics, when you can fight one another all day, but you're still friends. You never make it personal, in other words. And Bill did a great job on that campaign, in my opinion.

DePue: You went into that debate, as I understand it, pretty much even in the polls.

Hendren: Pretty close to it as I recall. Again, I'm not really sure what the public polling was saying. Our polls—we did internal polls—we were pretty much ahead most of the time, but it was a soft lead. We were holding our base, which was a real concern.

[42] WLS radio is a Chicago clear-channel station affiliated with *The Chicago Tribune*.

You could see the Democrat vote slipping away from... Early on, we were getting a lot of Democrat votes—people who said they were Democrats and said they were going to vote for Edgar. You knew those were going to go away when this became… The goal was, for a Republican: hold your base as best you can, and you got to really do well among independent voters. That was the number that you really focused on. And we did well. We were normally within the margin of error ahead in our internal polling, but your margin of error, you could be anything. You could be up three, down three, whatever.

But I think in early October, everybody knew this thing was going to come right down to the wire. And I think the pressure, or some of the intensity, at least, at the staff level, and I'm certain at the candidate level, was, Don't make any mistakes. Don't make any mistakes that could really mess you up.

DePue: Grade Edgar's performance at that debate.

Hendren: The WLS debate, I'd give him a B-minus or C. He didn't do that well. He had a little bit of a deer-in-the-headlights look to him. There's, I don't know, three or four million people watching. The lights were intense. We knew that was going to happen, and we'd talked about it. Jim has heavy eyebrows, he tends to blink a lot, and it looked like he was very uncomfortable, which I think he was, but it exacerbated the situation. Hartigan was more cavalier, more relaxed. He did a better job. But I don't think it harmed us, frankly.

DePue: So you give Hartigan the first debate?

Hendren: I'd give the edge to Hartigan, yeah.

DePue: October eighteenth is the second debate. Tell us about that one.

Hendren: That's the one in the Senate chambers?

DePue: I'm not sure where that occurred.

Hendren: I believe that was in the Capitol building. Performance was better. If I'm not mistaken, Mark, it was conducted in the state senate chambers in Springfield. I'm not 100 percent positive of that. I know the building got extraordinarily warm that evening, and the attorney general's face got redder and redder as the heat went up.

DePue: Who won that debate?

Hendren: I think that was a draw or slightly to Jim.

DePue: How did he respond to the debates afterwards? Did he feel down after that first debate?

Hendren: Yes, he wasn't happy with them.

DePue: And what did he do in response to that performance?

Hendren: In my recollection, he did better the second time. I think you learn. He'd never been in a situation like that. Of course, you could argue that neither had Hartigan. But we were glad they were over. That was kind of the way we approached them: they're over, they're done with. Now, we're going to work hard. We've got a good structure; we've got a good organization; we've got a good message; so that's going to carry us home. I was glad they were over with. The League of the Women Voters debate was just endless negotiations because I kind of took the position, I don't care. We don't have to debate. I don't really give a damn.

DePue: Did you go into the discussion about the debates with, "the less, the better," from your perspective?

Hendren: Yes.

DePue: Was Hartigan's camp trying to do the opposite?

Hendren: No, I don't think they felt "the more, the merrier," but they would have accepted more debates.

DePue: We're in the home stretch now, October eighteenth to election day itself in early November. What are the controversies that start coming up?

Hendren: We'd started the S&L advertising, his role in the Savings and Loan scandal. I told you we mentioned his drug forfeiture, his increase in his personal staff, his decrease in enforcement. We had a spot called "Smoke and Mirrors" that you'll see on that tape, where we talked about essentially just the integrity side of it. When a candidate went around and said they were going to cut taxes, people didn't believe that.

We did some focus groups in August, September, where we tested actual messages and their actual voices. We tested the message with a neutral voice, and then we tested their actual spots, what they were actually saying, with taped messages. And while Attorney General Hartigan had pretty good messages, the messenger was wrong. They didn't believe him. While Jim's message wasn't overwhelmingly accepted, they believed him. And when you say to somebody, "It's deceitful to tell people that you're going to lower their taxes. Politicians aren't going to lower the taxes," people would nod. There was some cynicism nationally and in Illinois about what politicians say about taxes, so we took the side, We're not going to lie to you. You may not like what we say, but we're not going to lie to you.

But when Mr. Hartigan did "only got to cut 2 percent" and he put out a report, This is How I'm Going to Do It, among those was he was going to repeal the sales tax break on farm machinery, and repeal the sales tax break on fertilizer for farmers. We were immediately on that. We were on the borders, both to the west and to the east. We call it the Route One trip, going from Danville all the way

down. Press releases: we put Jim on a tractor. You got John Deere manufacturing in Rock Island, you got Caterpillar in Peoria. And it really started turning. You can't do this. You're going to cost these people a lot of money, or they're going to go to another state to buy their equipment—which is true. On a two-hundred thousand dollar piece of equipment, a 5 percent sales tax break is significant, so you're going to go ten miles across the river and get that John Deere, or a Case, or whatever it would be. So a major part of the controversy was the message, and it was the honesty.

And Hartigan had a tendency to change position on issues. This was driven home toward the end of the campaign, the last week in particular—his flip-flopping. He changed positions. And Jim even got to the point where we had him—we did a press conference, I think it was in McHenry County, it may have been Lake County—where he flipped pancakes, and that was the picture. (laughter) That was hard to do. It was very difficult to do, because Jim was not a guy who really liked the staged, acting side of campaigns. But we had him—he's left-handed—flipping pancakes. You'll see in the tape, we cut some spots with Professor Irwin Corey, the flip-flop spots, and it anchored our message about his flip-flopping on a variety of issues. Dr. Corey looked like a crazy professor, and it was a funny spot. I think we only ran it three times. We ran it Monday Night Football, the Bears game; I can't remember the big show that was on—it was primetime. It was purely for reaching a lot of people because it had millions of viewers. But it took off. It kind of got a life of its own. There's a little jingle. You'll get a kick out of the spot. We cut like seven or eight of them.

DePue: You're referring to a cassette tape you gave me that we need to get digitized, and then we certainly intend to get up and include with the rest of the interview so people can see what these campaign ads were actually like.

Hendren: Right.

DePue: What's the mood of the campaign; what's the mood of your candidate going into the last week?

Hendren: It was intense. It was very, very intense. Everybody was nervous. Jim was very nervous, as anybody would be. I was nervous. Nobody was sleeping. We were all drinking way too much coffee, smoking way too many cigarettes. But at that point you focus on what you got to get done to win. What we had to get done to win was continue to put that message out there, continue to make him and his family and our surrogates available all over the state, make sure we had the money to run those last five days of television, and make sure that our organizations in the various counties were doing exactly what they'd worked almost a year to get done. I've been through a lot of campaigns so, was I nervous? Yeah, I didn't want him to lose. But I had another job to go to; some of these guys didn't. (laughter) But the bottom line was,, this was what we've worked for, we all knew it was coming to this. So in county X or county Y get your voters out, work those

precincts, get those signs up, make those phone calls, talk to your surrogate, to the group…

I think it also should be mentioned if no one has yet: we had a tremendous lieutenant governor candidate in Bob Kustra. He was aggressive; he was articulate. He went right after Hartigan. He was a bulldog. And he was everywhere. All candidates for lieutenant governor, I will argue, complain about the campaign. I met with Bob—I think Jim asked me to meet with him every week or every two weeks. Bob was a state senator and I came from the Senate staff, so we had a good relationship. But he was a magnificent campaigner. The deal was, if Jim can't go to the event then we would make the decision who we would defer it to; and frequently, if not most of the time, it was Bob.

The other person who was an absolute dynamo on the campaign trail was Brenda Edgar. If you could get Brenda Edgar to go to a meet… She was magnificent. She was just as sincere as you could be. She cared about her husband; it came across like you could not believe how sincere, because she believed it. She just was an honest person. So she was our ace in the hole, she truly was, down the stretch. And then his son, Brad. People probably don't talk about Brad Edgar too much. Brad's a successful businessman down in Colorado. But he was a young college kid at this time.

DePue: I think he was about twenty, twenty-one.

Hendren: He was, a junior, I want to say, in college, or maybe he was a senior. But I'll tell you, he was wonderful. He did the county fair circuit; he did a lot of the party events in the fall. He was magnificent. Great kid, number one, but he cared about his dad. He was a good public speaker. So we had a lot of things going for us down the stretch.

DePue: Was Brenda as ambitious for her husband as Jim was for his own political career?

Hendren: No, I don't think you could say that. You could say that Brenda wanted her husband to win because he wanted to win. I think Brenda, if he hadn't won, would have said, "Okay, that's what the Lord intended, and we'll move on." But she was passionate about him winning because she knew that's what her husband wanted. They make a great couple. They truly are a great couple.

But that last week you got your tracking polls you get every night or very early in the morning. You got your TV out there. This is when all the experts come out, the last three weeks of the campaign: Well, you should do this, and you should do this. At this point, if you are well-organized, you are essentially in your zone. And now, it's a question of implementing what you've tried to do.

Our biggest decision at the end was what TV, by market, do we run at the end of the campaign? In those days, you had to make your adjustments by noon on Friday. We had a conference call: we had Bob Teeter, Don Sipple, myself, Mike Lawrence. I think there were others on the call, but I don't remember who. It

started, I think, at five o'clock in the morning on the Friday before the election, and finally—I think it was like eleven o'clock our time—just a few minutes before we had to make the draw of what spots. In other words, what TV commercials are we going to run in the Peoria market to close this thing out? What spots are we going to run in Chicago, and at what rates and what frequency?

I think it was Channel 5 that went to La Salle-Peru, and found that they were paying a bounty for tearing down Edgar signs; they would return these signs to a local tavern, and they would pay them money to tear the—

DePue: "They" being who in this case?

Hendren: I'm not sure who "they" were. The suggestion was it was people who objected to Jim's hard stand on DUI. We never made any accusations that it was anyone else. But we cut a spot on that and aired it, because it brought everything back to focus. Here's a guy who's being punished for being honest; here's a guy who's being punished for doing the right thing. And it reminded people of his fight on DUI. That spot ran in a lot of places downstate. It was only on for a couple weeks. You'll see it on the reel. We cut it out at the mansion in Rochester—boom—did it overnight.

Our field staff found out about this. They were the ones calling around saying, Hey, are you guys... We had meetings all the time with scheduling and stuff, and part of those were, What are you hearing out there? What's going on? One of the guys said, "Hey, I'm being told they're tearing our signs down." "Well, that's not unusual." "Yeah, but they're putting a bounty on them in La Salle-Peru." "I heard that in Quincy." "I heard that in..." And all of a sudden, it's like, Oh, we've got a problem out there. (laughter) But again, we turned it a little bit, and that helped us.

Channel 5 went down there, did an investigative report, and aired it on Chicago TV, so it started getting a lot of attention. It was pretty good. But anyway, we made the last rotation changes and buy changes on Friday at noon. Then it was just simply getting on the telephone and saying, You've got forty-eight hours. Give it all you got. And we won.

DePue: Take us into that election night. Paint a picture for us of election night. Where were y'all? What was the mood?

Hendren: We were at the Hyatt [Hotel]. The mood was subdued, because everybody knew it was going to be a long night.

DePue: Hyatt in Chicago, I guess.

Hendren: In Chicago, yeah. People knew it was going to be a long night. We were optimistic, but not by any stretch of the imagination confident. We were all ready for a big victory celebration. We hoped it would happen for live news coverage. Election results came in slower back then. But there was a cloud, a little bit,

because everybody knew that this could go the other way. It was by no means guaranteed.

I don't know what floor of the Hyatt we were on. We had three or four rooms that we wouldn't let anybody back to, but in those rooms, Jim and Mike, some of the campaign staff, myself, and the pollster. That's the guy I wanted to be with, (laughs) the pollster.

DePue: The pollster.

Hendren: Yeah, because he was looking at election results by precinct, by county, so he knew exactly where we were.

DePue: For the numbers crunchers, the ultimate one is the pollster: if you guys were going to win, it was hinged on what; and if you guys were going to lose, it was hinged on what?

Hendren: It was what we did in the city versus what we did in the suburbs. That's essentially what it came down to. In other words, we had to do 65, 67 percent or better in DuPage County. I think we did 68. I think we carried DuPage County by almost 100,000 votes. We lost the city by about 400,000 votes, as I recall. Well, you just start eating away at that plurality. But Fred was able to say, "We're going to do about 29 percent in the city; we're going to exceed our expectations in suburban Cook; we're going to exceed our expectations in DuPage.I If the turnout stays at this rate, we're going to win."

DePue: What were you hearing about the turnout for Chicago, especially?

Hendren: You never get good numbers. You hear all day—and to this day—this happened in this ward, and this happened in this precinct. We heard turnout was essentially a traditional turnout. There was not a big spike, nor was there a great depression of votes city-wide. We had our people out in the precincts. There had been some media attention to voter fraud, and it would appear that that slowed any potential fraud down, not that I would suggest anybody from Chicago would ever be involved with that. (laughter)

DePue: Going back to Chicago and the reputation Chicago politics has, the city machine always had the reputation that they could turn the vote out. That was the benefit of having that machine in the first place.

Hendren: Yeah, that's true.

DePue: And you're describing a scenario where maybe they didn't turn the vote out. Was it that the machine was less enthusiastic about Hartigan than they would traditionally be for a Democratic candidate?

Hendren: I don't know that they were less enthusiastic. I think we met them in the precincts, at least in certain parts of the city. Normally, Republicans don't really contest, so

that probably surprised them a little bit. But they have the ability to turn out the vote, there's no question about that. Those captains know... For a Republican, we're better if the polls are open from 6:00 in the morning till noon, because if you look at tracking polls it always gets closer as the day goes on. That is absolute fact. But a lot of that is because of those good precinct captains, and those guys work hard. Those Democratic captains were good. By three o'clock, they knew who had voted, who had not voted, and they sent their people out to get them. When the seven-to-three shift got off in your manufacturing sections, like in Cal City down in the South Side and other places, they had people there to take them right from work to the polls.[43]

I always got nervous after three o'clock, because that was when their guys were getting off of work; they hadn't voted yet. Our suburban voters had voted. They voted before they went to commute in. So that always made me very nervous. They tried to deliver for Hartigan, and they did a pretty good job. He carried the city overwhelmingly, but not to the magnitude that they wanted.

DePue: What was the word when it started to become clear to people that Edgar was going to pull this thing out?

Hendren: Fred told me that we were going to win—

DePue: This is Fred Steeper?

Hendren: Fred Steeper. We were waiting on the final numbers from DuPage; McLean County still had some votes out; and there were some votes out in Will County. Matter of fact, I sent a guy—put him in a car and sent him—Get down to Joliet, because they're going to try to steal some votes in Joliet. He was in a car, and heard it on the radio that Hartigan had conceded. I felt really badly but (laughter) I sent him there anyway. He still reminds me of that today.

But Fred said we're going to win, and the numbers look good. The media started saying, It looks like Edgar's sustaining his lead. I was kind of isolated in a room. But my recollection was—Mike would know this much better than I; I was glad it was over—I think Mr. Hartigan called Jim to concede, and to me, that's when it was final. That's when you knew, It's over; it's done; thank God.

DePue: And the time of the night that occurred?

Hendren: Oh, it was very late. It was 10:30, 11 o'clock at night, maybe even later.

DePue: I think it might have been even later than that.

Hendren: Yeah, it might have been later. Bill Filan and I had exchanged numbers, but I never had an opportunity—I'm not sure how—I guess maybe Bill could have given Mr. Hartigan Edgar's number. But in the room, he [Edgar] was on the

[43] Calumet City

phone with Hartigan. He was elated, Brenda was elated, and we were all elated. But yeah, that's a moment I'll probably always remember. Pretty neat, pretty neat.

DePue: That all those months and the couple years you'd devoted of your life...

Hendren: You go through kind of a psychological thing, where it's almost a letdown afterwards. You're just like, God. And my father had passed away September 4, 1990, and he was a Jim Edgar guy. He traveled. I always said, "We will carry my little county down there with a higher percentage than any county in the state, guarantee you." We did that in '82, we did that in '90, and it's because of Dad. People knew him, they liked him, and he was known regionally. But he had passed away in September, and one of the last things he told me was, "Get up there and help that boy get elected." So for me, there was a real personal kind of a satisfaction. There was closure, I guess, is the right way to say it. Because that was a motivation for me that last sixty days.

DePue: Compare that feeling versus the feeling you had when Percy lost.

Hendren: Oh, absolutely the opposite, because on election night in '84, it was devastating. We lost by eighty-five thousand. I think Jim won by eighty-four thousand, so essentially the same.[44]

DePue: That's not many in a big state like Illinois.

Hendren: No, no, that's a nail-biter. Senator Percy's race really bothered me. It was just because I really, really admire—and still do[45]—Chuck Percy. And again, it's all that work; it all comes down... It's like losing the NCAA basketball championship. The difference was, you can come back the next year and win that championship; you don't ever have this opportunity again.

DePue: Losing at the buzzer, no less.

Hendren: Losing at the buzzer, yeah. But I would much rather be in the 1990 scenario, (laughter) obviously. But there was a big celebration and they had the balloons and the confetti and all that stuff. That stuff, I didn't care about. I went back to my room and called my mom—that's what I did—because she was real concerned that Jim win; so she was the first person I wanted to tell he won, officially.

DePue: You've done a wonderful job of laying out this campaign. We've been at it for close to two hours, and it's just zoomed by because it's so fascinating to hear these stories. As the governor himself said, this is a classic campaign worthy of study. What didn't I give you a chance to talk about in this campaign?

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[44] Percy lost the 1984 race to Simon by 89,126 votes, while Edgar defeated Hartigan by 83,909 votes. *Chicago Sun-Times*, April 26, 1993; U.S. House, 1985, Clerk of the House of Representatives, *Statistics of the Presidential and Congressional Election of November 6, 1984*, 99th Cong., 1st sess. http://clerk.house.gov/member_info/electionInfo/1984election.pdf

[45] At the time of this interview Percy was still alive. He died on September 17, 2011.

Hendren: Oh boy, I don't know. I think we've talked about everything. I really think, Mark, we've pretty much covered everything. I do think that even today there's a lot of emphasis on the high-tech approach to politics—Internet, computer, direct mail—with the exception of Internet, we had all of that, too. Carl Rove was our direct mail guy.

DePue: Back in '90.

Hendren: Nineteen ninety, yeah. You never think enough or appreciate enough the role of a volunteer. I think that's as applicable today as it was in 1990, that little old ladies, as we call them... But the other thing that we did that we didn't talk about: our money went to electronic media, we did a little bit of print. One thing we asked our coordinators to do was, Get four of you, fifty dollars apiece, and buy us a full-page ad in your local newspaper. Everywhere we went, we took pictures. We had a couple of hundred in-kind contributions of full-page newspaper ads in the smaller papers with local people. My dad did one: "I know this guy." That's all he had to say, "I know this guy, and I trust him." Boom. That's the kind of validation that we were looking for. We did that all over the state.

I had a lady—Shirley Christopoulos was her name—she used to come in the office at—again, this was before the Internet—at four in the morning. And we started to think it was radio actualities. Every day, we would get Jim once or twice, usually once, and we would cut a spot, a sentence: "Governor Edgar today said..." (laughter) and he would... She then had to feed that to radio stations one at a time. I think the first time she did it, she got eight people to take it. The last week, I think it was 126 stations that were taking them. She had to do these individually, feed them individually. I felt badly for her, but again, she'd start at four in the morning. But that was kind of innovative in those days, because it was free advertising; it was a way to control the message.

There was just a lot of little things like that. I think in a race this close those intangibles can never be underestimated because, who knows, if we hadn't have worked that many precincts, or if we hadn't have put up that many signs or passed out that much popcorn... Who knows what the value of that is? You just never know. It's the intangibles that I think a lot of people forget, and they tend to go to the bigger issues that drove the mass part of the campaign. But other than that, I think we've covered everything.

DePue: Give me your assessment of the campaign that Edgar ran, of your candidate.

Hendren: Him personally?

DePue: Mm-hmm.

Hendren: He was a good candidate. He was a good candidate. He's more engaged than a Chuck Percy, in terms of his personal schedule. We met every Sunday from the first of July, middle of July—all the field staff, all the scheduling staff—we'd meet every Sunday evening. We'd start, and we'd go through the next week, and

then we'd go through all the pendings, and then we'd go region by region all surrogate. Occasionally Jim would come to those meetings. I guess is what's different than some other candidates—his input was valuable. He knew the state; and so for him sitting there saying, "I think we ought to go here and then go there," it made sense. It's almost like having another staff guy. I don't mean that to be a criticism of him. He was a good candidate. But he also was a good governor, and he got better. Just like a candidate, he got better as the campaign went on, in my judgment.

DePue: The thing you're most proud of in terms of being in that campaign, then?

Hendren: We won. (laughs) No, I think it's considered to have been a well-organized, well-run, hard-nosed traditional campaign, and we prevailed; so I think overall, that would be what I'm proudest of. But like everything in politics, you make good acquaintances, great memories. You can't buy that anyplace, you know. So that's the best thing about politics.

DePue: How would you rate the Hartigan campaign?

Hendren: I thought they ran a good campaign.

DePue: A worthy opponent?

Hendren: Oh, absolutely. Absolutely.

DePue: And that's why it's a classic, then.

Hendren: Yeah, absolutely. I have nothing but high regard for his campaign and for the attorney general. He did a good job; we just eked him out.

DePue: As I said before, this has been a lot of fun for me to hear these stories; and I think it's not just fun, but it's important history to get captured as well, so I really appreciate your taking the time out of your busy schedule. Any final comments for us?

Hendren: Nope. (laughter) That's my bit of history right there.

DePue: Thank you very much.

Hendren: Okay.

(end of interviews)