

Title Page & Abstract

An Interview with Nancy (Shlaes) deGrazia

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

Interview # ISW-A-L-2008-004

Nancy (Shlaes) deGrazia, an Assistant to the Governor in the Dan Walker administration (1973-1977) and afterward wife of Victor deGrazia, Walker's closest political advisor, was interviewed on the date listed below as part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library's *Illinois Statecraft* Oral History project.

Interview dates & location:

Date: January 10, 2008 Location: deGrazia residence in Long Grove, Illinois

Interview Format: Digital audio

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

Transcription by: Tape Transcription Center, Boston MA

Edited by: Rozanne Flatt, ALPL volunteer

Total Pages: 65 (Original), 64 (Redacted) Total Time: 2 hr, 18 min / 2.3 hrs

Accessioned into the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Archives on Jan 28, 2008.

The interview is archived at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library in Springfield, Illinois.

Redacted version of the audio file created on 2/19/2008. Redacted version of the transcript created on 4/29/2009. Redactions to be removed on January 1, 2020 per the request of Nancy deGrazia.

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Abstract

Nancy (Shlaes) deGrazia, *Illinois Statecraft*, ISW-A-L-2008-004

Biographical Information Overview of Interview: Nancy (Shlaes) deGrazia was born on April 16, 1937 in Maplewood, New Jersey. She attended Smith College in Northampton, Massachusetts for two years, then came to Chicago in 1956, graduating from the University of Chicago in 1959. In 1956 she was hired by Victor deGrazia to work on the Adlai Stevenson presidential campaign. She married Jared Shlaes in 1957. Throughout the 1960s she worked in various organizations and political causes, hired by Mr. deGrazia for each. These included the Democratic Federation of Illinois and the Department of Public Aid during the time when Arnold Maremont served as its chairman. During these years she worked primarily as a secretary, but gradually took on greater responsibilities.

When Victor deGrazia, Walker's chief political advisor, formally became Dan Walker's gubernatorial campaign director in 1972, Nancy was hired as the Executive Director, essentially the office manager. During the Walker administration from 1973 to 1977, she served as an Assistant to the Governor, working as his liaison with several financial and regulatory agencies, including Banks and Trusts, Savings and Loans, and financial institutions. Additionally, she served as the office manager as well as managing the governor's mansion. During this time, she continued to live in the Chicago area, flying down to Springfield daily. Shortly after Walker's defeat for reelection in 1976, Nancy, now divorced, began a relationship with Victor deGrazia, and the two married in early 1977, and lived in Long Grove, Illinois until Victor's death in 2005. During that time, Victor ran a successful consulting firm, advising on jury selection and trial issues.

Topics Covered: Abner Mikva; Victor deGrazia; Adlai Stevenson II; Arnold Maremont; Dan Walker; Democratic Federation of Illinois; Committee on Illinois Government; William Goldberg; David Green; Mort Kaplan; Norton Kay; Paul Simon; Richard Ogilvie; Mayor Richard J. Daley; Chicago machine politics; Mary Lee Leahy; zero-based budgeting; Roberta (Dowse) Walker; Roberta (Nelson) Walker; Jerry Shlaes; Robin deGrazia; Machiavelli

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

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