

Title Page & Abstract

An Interview with William Feurer

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

Interview # IS-A-L-2011-065

William Feurer, an assistant to the governor during the Otto Kerner administration, 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: Dec 16, 2011 Location: Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library

Date: Jan 24, 2012 Location: Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library

Date: Feb 1, 2012 Location: Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library

Interview Format: Digital audio

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

Transcription by: Audio Transcription Center, Boston, MA

Edited by: Betty Workman, Rozanne Flatt, ALPL Volunteers

Total Pages: 135 Total Time: 2:09 + 1:57 + 2:28 / 2.15 + 1.95 + 2.47 = 6.57 hrs

Session 1: Early life & initial work as an assistant to Gov. Otto Kerner

Session 2: Assistant to Gov. Otto Kerner thru 1965

Session 3: Otto Kerner's second administration, Kerner Commission & his corruption trial

Accessioned into the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Archives on February 3, 2012.

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

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Abstract

William Feurer, *Illinois Statecraft*, IS-A-L-2011-065

Biographical Information Overview of Interview: William E. Feurer was born on August 5th, 1934 in Chicago, Illinois, and grew up in a variety of communities, mostly in south Chicago suburbs, and graduated from high school in 1952. He began college at Rice University in Texas on a Navy ROTC scholarship, and then transferred to the University of Missouri due to its excellent journalism school. Upon graduation he spent three years in the navy, then began working as a journalist for United Press International, first in Chicago, then in Springfield, Illinois as a statehouse reporter. In 1963 Feurer was initially hired by the Governor Otto Kerner (Democrat) administration as an assistant press secretary. For the next five years Feurer worked as an assistant to the governor, spending much of his time as a speech writer and aide. Feurer discussed the many accomplishments Kerner had in reforming Illinois's government, including significant executive branch reorganization initiatives, judicial reorganization, mental health and public aid reform, major upgrades to the state's transportation grid, and significant additions to the state's system of colleges and universities.

Feurer also briefly discussed Kerner's work on the National Commission on Civil Disorders (Kerner Commission), which published its findings in 1968, his resignation in 1968 due to his appointment to the Seventh U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, and his indictment and eventual conviction for corruption charges in February, 1973. Feurer attended law school at the University of Illinois when Kerner left office, and eventually went into private practice. He believes that Kerner was unjustly convicted due in part to an inept defense.

Subject Headings/Key Words: Governor Otto Kerner; University of Missouri School of Journalism; service as a Navy officer; U.S. Naval Reserve; United Press International reporter; Chris Vlahoplus; Theodore Isaacs; Paul Powell; Charles Percy; Richard J. Daley; National Commission on Civil Disorders (Kerner Commission); Seventh U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals; *Kerner: The Conflict of Intangible Rights*; President Lyndon Johnson; General William Westmoreland; W. Russell Arrington; Helena Kerner; Marjorie Everett;

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