

Title Page & Abstract

An Interview with Stephen Schnorf

Part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library
Illinois Statecraft – Pension Crisis in Illinois Oral History project

Interview # ISC-A-L-2016-029

Stephen Schnorf, former Director of the Budget for Governors Jim Edgar and George Ryan, was interviewed about his perspective on Illinois public pension system on the date listed below as part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library's *Illinois Statecraft – Pension Crisis in Illinois* Oral History project.

Interview dates & location:

Date: May 18, 2016 Location: Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library,
Springfield, Illinois

Interview Format: Digital audio

Interviewer: Philip Pogue, ALPL volunteer

Transcription by: _____

Edited by: _____

Interview being
processed

Total Pages: _____ Total Time: 1:26 / 1.43 hrs.

Accessioned into the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Archives on May 8, 2019.

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

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Stephen Schnorf, *Illinois Statecraft*, ISC-A-L-2016-029

Biographical Information Overview of Interview: Stephen Schnorf was born in Charleston, Illinois in November, 1944. He grew up there and graduated from Charleston High School in 1962. Schnorf earned both his BS (1966) and MA degrees (1973) from Eastern Illinois University. Encouraged by his mother, he pursued a career in education and began teaching history at Robinson High School. After three years in the classroom he moved to the field of non-profit organizations. From 1981 to 1990 he worked for the Illinois Secretary of State's office. He worked for the Illinois Central Management Services from 1991 to 1994, and again in 2002, which included an assignment as Director. In 1994, Schnorf became Director of Policy, serving there until 1997 in work that involved oversight of state agencies. In 1997 he became Governor Jim Edgar's budget director, and stayed in that post for Governor George Ryan as well. After retiring from the State, Steve worked for a private investment company and also served as a board member for the Center of Tax and Budget Accountability. Steve's work included oversight of a \$50 Billion state budget, negotiator with state labor unions, manager of state procurements, involvement on infrastructure projects, and reviewer of employee health contracts.

Schnorf discusses Illinois's financial conditions from 1981 to 2015. Topics covered include the COLA language adopted in 1989, elimination of state taxes on retirement income, pension reforms of 1995 sponsored by Governor Edgar, early retirement plans, bond sales, various pension enhancements, and budgeting for pensions. He specifically discussed efforts by Governor Edgar to deal with improving state worker compensation and pension benefits along with meaningful pension reform. This pension reform included setting a schedule for state pension payments. Also discussed were the root causes of the pension crisis and the efforts to try to make meaningful improvements and reforms to the systems. Finally, Schnorf talks about the Illinois Supreme Court cases involving state insurance and Senate Bill 1 Pension Reform bill of 2013.

Subject Headings/Key Words: Illinois pension system, 1981-2015; 1995 Illinois pension reform (pension ramp); pensions and early retirement incentives; pensions and bond sales; causes of Illinois's pension crisis; Illinois budget planning and pension investments; Illinois Senate Bill 1 of 2013

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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