

# Title Page & Abstract

An Interview with Prof. Ronald Smith

Part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library  
*Illinois Statecraft-Pension Crisis* Oral History project

Interview # ISC-A-L-2016-022

Ronald Smith, a delegate to the 1969 Constitutional Convention (Con Con) representing Chicago, was interviewed 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: Apr 25, 2016      Location: John Marshall Law School, Chicago, IL

Interview Format: Digital audio

Interviewer: Philip Pogue, ALPL volunteer

Transcription by: \_\_\_\_\_

Edited by: \_\_\_\_\_

Total Pages: \_\_\_\_\_      Total Time: 1:19 / 1.32 hrs.

Transcript  
being processed

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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## Abstract

### Prof. Ronald Smith, Illinois Statecraft, ISC-A-L-2016-022

**Biographical Information Overview of Interview:** Ronald Smith was born in Chicago, Illinois in December, 1933. He graduated of Fenwick High School in Oak Park, Illinois in 1951, and earned a BA degree from Loyola University in 1955, majoring in English Literature and Speech. He later attended Loyola Law School, where he earned a law degree in 1965. Ronald served with the US Navy as a naval aviator from 1956 to 1962, serving on the USS Wasp. He also later did a Reserve duty tour at Glenview Naval Air Station from 1962-67. While on Reserve Duty, Ronald transferred to the Judge Advocate General's Office. He was also a Navy Judge for Court Martials and retired as a Lt. Commander in 1977. Upon graduating from Law School, Smith was a law clerk to Justice John V. McCormick of the Illinois Appellate Court. Ron then was an attorney for the Santa Fe Railway, and in 1968 he joined the faculty at the John Marshall Law School in Chicago where he continues to this day. In 1969 he was elected to serve as a delegate to the Illinois Constitutional Convention, representing the Independent Voters of Illinois for Chicago. He served on a committee helping to craft the Executive Article. Smith also served on Governor elect Daniel Walker's Transition Task Force in 1972-73. In addition, he has been a member of the State of Illinois Ethics Board and was an administrative law judge for the Illinois Civil Service Commission.

This interview covers the period of the State Constitutional Convention in 1969 to 1970, which led to Illinois voters approving the Illinois State Constitution in 1970. In particular, Smith discusses the topics discussed in the Executive Committee and the call for the Pension Clause question as an amendment rather than being assigned to Committee for a more detailed review. Smith discussed the make-up of the convention delegates and the role of the important independent block delegates. He also covers several of the major topics of the convention: flat tax, veto power of the governor, home rule, elected or appointed executive offices, banking laws, single or cumulative districts, and election or appointment of judge. John passed away on October 19, 2018.

**Subject Headings/Key Words:** election of the delegates to the IL Constitutional Convention (Con Con); Independent Voters of Illinois at 1969 Con Con; Con Con Executive Article Committee; debate on the Pension Clause at Con Con; delegate relationships at Con Con

**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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