

An Interview with Thomas F. Londrigan
Illinois Supreme Court Historic Preservation Commission

Thomas F. Londrigan, a graduate of the University of Illinois in Urbana/Champaign College of Law, has practiced law in Springfield, Illinois since 1962.

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Abstract

Thomas F. Londrigan

Biographical:

Thomas F. Londrigan was born in Springfield, Illinois on May 10, 1937, spent his early life in Springfield. After graduating from Cathedral Boys High School in 1955 he attended and graduated from Notre Dame in 1959 with a degree in Political Science. Londrigan attended and received a law degree from the University of Illinois in Urbana/Champaign College of Law in 1962, and was admitted to the bar that same year. Londrigan worked in the U.S. Attorney's office in Springfield, Illinois from 1963-64, was a Law Clerk for the Fourth District Appellate Court from 1964-66, and has been engaged in the private practice of law in Springfield since 1962. Londrigan and his wife Carol have four children.

Topics Covered:

Parents and family history; growing up on Villa Grove Lane in Springfield, Illinois; father and fellow lawyers at the Ridgely Building; paternal grandfather Thomas; WW2; growing up on Villa Grove Lane in Springfield in the 40s; teenage years; Cathedral High School; reading; extracurricular activities; Korean War and Cold War; Air National Guard service; Notre Dame; political and social views as a young man; 1960 election; conception of generation; Navy Reserves service; starting the swim team at Notre Dame; University of Illinois in Urbana/Champaign College of Law; automotive safety legal work; influential professors and classes; meeting his wife Carol; U.S. Attorney's office work; Judge Omer Poos; Judge Harlington Wood; Law Clerkship with Fourth District Appellate Court; private practice; People vs. Seipel; Jack Weiner; Ninth Floor of the Ridgely Building and the lawyers there; local bar in the 60s; Ray Terrell and Richard Hollis; memories of lawyers and judges; Sherman vs. City of Springfield; early appellate work; running for delegate to the Constitutional Convention of 1969; criminal defense work; I.B.I.; U.S. vs. Nerone, et al.; thoughts on practicing law; Gov. Dan Walker and legal work for the Walker administration; French vs. City of Springfield; Churchill vs. Norfolk & Western Railway Co.; Ogg vs. City of Springfield and Ballweg vs. City of Springfield; Contractor Utility Sales Co. vs. Certain-Teed Corporation; changes in legal work; school desegregation in Springfield; change in the form of government in Springfield; history of segregation in Springfield; sexual abuse cases; May vs. C.I.P.S., and Donaldson, et al. vs. C.I.P.S., et al.; reckless homicide case; Gov. Rod Blagojevich and legal work for the Blagojevich administration; cameras in the courtroom; enhancing the public's awareness of what the judiciary does; bar associations and the judiciary; role of a lawyer in society; politics of the local judiciary; pro bono and philanthropic work; civic engagement; change in bar and legal work; death penalty; cases he struggles with; future of the profession; and his legacy.

Note:

Readers of this oral history should note that this is a transcript of the spoken word, and that it has been edited for clarity and elaboration. The interviewer, interviewee, and editors attempted to preserve the informal, conversational style that is inherent in such historical sources while also editing for clarity and elaboration. The Illinois Supreme Court Historic Preservation Commission is not responsible for the factual accuracy of the oral history, nor for the views expressed therein.

Thomas F. Londrigan: An Oral History

LAW: This is an oral history interview with Thomas F. Londrigan, today's date is June the 18th, 2015. We're in his law office here in Springfield, Illinois. This is our first interview, and we're gonna cover his background. Mr. Londrigan, I thought we would start with, when and where you were born?

LONDRIGAN: I was born at St. John's Hospital, May 10th, 1937.

LAW: Tell me a little bit about your mother and father.¹

LONDRIGAN: Well, let's start with my mom, which is a little simpler story. She grew up in a small town called Plainview, just south of Carlinville, [Illinois] in Macoupin County. It's a large family, her mother's side of the family were from Ireland, their names were McDonald. She married my father in 1935, I believe. Prior to that time he had been married to a lady by the name of Ann Hogan. The way I understand it, it was kind of a shotgun marriage, she was supposed to be pregnant but there was no child born of that marriage, and ten years later they still had no children. She was originally from Chicago and she moved back up to Chicago.

My dad was like thirteen years older than my mother, whose name was Loretta Foster. I shouldn't say her real name because it was actually Bridget Loretta, but she didn't want people, at that time, to know she was Irish. I guess they felt they still had a stigma; at least she did.

LAW: Interesting, now what about your dad?

¹ Joseph and Bridget Londrigan.

LONDRIGAN: My dad was born on August 17, 1894. He gave the address at Springfield High School at the midyear graduation in 1911. He went to city schools here, one of the names was [Albert] Trapp [School], and he was advanced a year in his grade, I'm not sure that they do that anymore, but he was younger than his other classmates and he graduated at midyear. He played football, and was a paper carrier for the northwest end of town and he would run two miles from the northwest end downtown, pick up the papers, and then carry them back to what they used to call "Goose-town"; it's because a lot of the people out there used to raise geese.

LAW: And whereabouts was this?

LONDRIGAN: Northwest end of town, North Walnut [Street], and it was about four or five houses off on the east side of North Walnut; I can't remember the exact street name.

LAW: What was the newspaper?

LONDRIGAN: It was the *Illinois State Journal or Register*. Since it was a morning paper it was probably the *Journal*; they used to have both a morning and evening paper. Later, they had the reputation that the evening paper, the *Register*, was a Democratic paper and V.Y. Dallman, who billed himself as the "Admiral of the Lake Springfield fleet." He lived at Lake Springfield, as a matter-of-fact in the house that is next door to where I live right now.²

LAW: He had a lot to do with the building of the lake, didn't he, and the power plant, I think?

² See, *Illinois State Journal and Register*, January 1, 1965, pgs. 1, 2, for Dallman's obituary.

LONDRIGAN: Well, it was really Willis Spaulding, who was a commissioner and engineer.³

And remember these are times in the depths of our first major [Great] Depression, with thirty percent unemployment. And this was a commission form of government at that time, and after the commissioners got elected they decided, by drawing lots or arguing or voting back and forth, who was gonna be commissioner of streets and who would be commissioner of public property, like the power plant, and so they built a dam to the old Sugar Creek, which eventually would join with the Sangamon River. But they dammed this property and the lake filled up in 1935. This was two years before I was born, and that's where I grew up.

My next door neighbor was the first resident on the lake, the Mayor John W. Kapp, [Jr.] he is the only mayor of Springfield who was elected for four consecutive terms, between 1931 and 1947. He could run again as long as he was healthy, but he had lung cancer and had to resign and nearly died. But he didn't, he continued to visit Florida, and he didn't die until 1977 or [197] '8.⁴ So, they took out his one lung and everybody thought he only had a month or two to live and he lived for twenty more years; he was ninety years old when he died. He had no children, I had no grandfather. He and Carl Amrhein, who had the bakery here, were close friends and he lived just one door down, and they were big promoters of the circus, so whenever the circus came to town all the kids on South 8th Street, where he lived in the winter time, and the kids at Villa Grove, which was the lane we occupied, were invited at his expense to be guests at the circus; that's one of the reasons he was so popular with everybody. But in the midst of the Depression [U.S. President] Franklin [Delano] Roosevelt came here, open-car, and he

³ See, *Illinois State Journal*, August 18, 1965, pg. 9, for Spaulding's obituary.

⁴ See, *State Journal-Register*, December 14, 1978., pg. 55, for Kapp's obituary.

had all sorts of pictures. Now, “Bud” Kapp was a Republican, but he recognized what the C.C.C., Civilian Conservation Corps, and these programs funded with federal dollars, allowed us to do, to build Lake Springfield, all the parks that were around it. They built, this is the irony of it, in addition to the big beach house with the chlorinated water and a separating wall, there was a Bridgeview Beach which was way beyond, then [Route] 66, now 55, the interstate, bridge. They called it the “colored” beach and they would funnel all the black people to the “colored beach”; it was divided. I worked out there through college in the Learn to Swim program for the [American] Red Cross and, also, lifeguarding. The local Lake Police would direct these blacks, “You can’t be admitted here, you have to go across about four or five miles on the other side of the interstate,” at that time Route 66. And they were compliant, that was never a problem; that’s just the way things were done here at that time. I never could understand it and every time I would ask a policeman, “Why do you do that?” They would just say, “That’s what I was told to do.”

LAW: And this is in the 1950s?

LONDRIGAN: Yeah, I was there from 1956 to 1962 when I got out of law school.

LAW: So, back to your dad, Joseph, he grew up around here, attended the local schools, and then I guess at one point he was drafted into the [U.S.] Army?

LONDRIGAN: No, he volunteered, he wanted to be a pilot. And of course, this war had been going on, by that time, about six years, in the trenches, and in the North Atlantic [Ocean]; they had submarines at that time. So he got his training, his flight training and his

gunnery training, in Kelly Field [Annex], at least that's what they called the field at that time.

LAW: This was local?

LONDRIGAN: No, this is in Texas, it's San Antonio, Texas, as a matter-of-fact. And then he was sent back up to Navin Field [now Tiger Stadium], in Detroit, [Michigan] for gunnery training, and he played football for – it was called the Army Air Corps in the First World War, against [Naval Station] Great Lakes [Blue Jackets]. People like George Halas was at Great Lakes. Later a Springfield player, Dutch Sternaman, that most people don't know of, he went to University of Illinois [at Urbana-Champaign], he was, later, half-owner of the [Chicago] Bears [football team], but originally they were called the Decatur Staleys but soon after the war they put together the National Football League.

LAW: Now, was your dad ever sent to France?

LONDRIGAN: No, no the war was over and they weren't sending any more pilots over because they didn't have enough planes. They couldn't manufacture the planes fast enough to ship 'em across.

LAW: Did he continue to fly?

LONDRIGAN: No he didn't. The irony – Art Fitzgerald, who was probably the parallel of Clarence Darrow, here in Illinois, walked out of a meeting with the [U.S.] President in 1899.⁵ Who was the president before Teddy Roosevelt, he was assassinated?

LAW: [William] McKinley.

⁵ See, *Illinois State Journal*, July 17, 1957, pg. 6, for Fitzgerald's obituary.

LONDRIGAN: Yeah,

[00:15]

and my dad was lucky enough to go in with him. They just had dirt roads over to Jacksonville and during that time, and he said to my dad, “Here, I want you to take these pleadings over to, and file them, in Jacksonville, and he handed him the keys to his car. And he was well-regarded at that time, making a lot of money, my dad had never driven a car, he said, “I don’t know how to drive.” And you didn’t have to have a drivers license at that time, so they walked outside. Fitzgerald started up the car and drove it around the square and said, “Now, you see what you gotta do, there’s brakes here and there’s a steering wheel, and goddamn it, what do you do up in those airplanes when you can’t drive a car?” So he didn’t have any explanation, he just took the pleadings over to Jacksonville and filed them.

LAW: I’ve heard that name Art Fitzgerald, now didn’t Jack Weiner, he practiced with Fitzgerald too at one time?

LONDRIGAN: All these people were on the ninth floor of the Ridgely Building, it used to be called the Ridgely Farmers State Bank. During the [Great] Depression it went under and they turned it into a Walgreens [Drugs] and office space, and the ninth floor was where Fitzgerald had his office. It was also where he had four or five other lawyers in there, like [Walter J.] Simhouser and Warren Moyer and, later, Bob Heckenkamp took over that office.⁶ Bob Weiner came along later, he was a cousins of Jack’s and he got his “shingle put out” [this is slang for putting out your law signboard, indicating your practice] before

⁶ See, *Illinois State Journal*, May 12, 1970, pg. 4 for Moyer’s obituary. Also see, *State Journal-Register*, June 13, 2005, pg. 18 for Heckenkamp’s obituary, and January 20, 2015, pg. 13 for Simhauser’s obituary.

you get to Jack's office. They were never very close, and what he would do is get there earlier than Jack 'cause Jack worked at nights and a lot of times didn't show up until later, so there was a confusion and clients got sucked into Bob Weiner's office, and I watched that discussion go on for about seven, eight years while I was over in the Ridgely Building.⁷

LAW: We'll get to them later in our interview because I want to ask you about those lawyers. So, back to your dad, now I think you told me earlier that after the war he attended the Lincoln College of Law?

LONDRIGAN: For a very short time, I think he got credits for his service that he had. I think he enrolled for maybe a semester before he went into the war, and then when he came back he was given credit for working in Art Fitzgerald's office and he signed him in. So, I don't know whether if he ever got a degree, but he passed the bar exam and he became a lawyer I think in, either, 1919 or 1920, but you have that information.⁸

LAW: Okay, do we want to cover any of your other family history? Any memories of, now I know you didn't know him, but any family memories of your dad's dad, Thomas Londrigan?

LONDRIGAN: He was very active in the United Mine Workers [of America]. After my great grandfather died [as the result of a mine explosion] they began to organize the United Mine Workers here in the 1890s, and he became the mayor of a little community down in Macoupin County, Standard City. It may no longer be a town or a village, and then he died at St. Joseph's Home at age sixty-five, two years before I was born.

⁷ See, *State Journal-Register*, October 15, 2003, pg. 13 for Bob Weiner's obituary, and December 26, 1986, Magazine section, pg. 7A, and October 13, 1987, pg. 8, for more on Jack Weiner.

⁸ October 15, 1919.

LAW: Did the family ever pass down any memories of the Mine Wars [Illinois coal mine wars] or anything?

LONDRIGAN: Oh yeah, one of my dad's best friends, when he was coaching and playing semi-pro football, was a policeman, and I can't bring to memory his name right now, except that during the Mine Wars he was attacked and killed by one of the miners. And they have a special award for policemen who die in their service; it's named after him, and I think that would be fairly significant. He was about six feet, at that time, about six feet five and about two hundred and sixty or seventy pounds, so he was a mainstay and could have been a professional, he was a little older then.⁹

LAW: But what about your grandpa, was he involved in the Mine Wars at all? You said he was an organizer?

LONDRIGAN: He was an organizer, and I used to have a bunch of ribbons and things that he was given. Over time my grandmother, before she died, I think it was around 1940, she passed those out to all the grandkids.

LAW: Did he know "Mother" Jones [Mary Harris Jones] at all?

LONDRIGAN: Yeah I knew all about "Mother" Jones because she did a lot of those things, and she was just about the age of my grandmother, the one that died in a fall in 1923.

LAW: Mary?¹⁰

⁹ Sgt. Porter Williams was killed on September 25th, 1932 when a riot ensued between the Progressive Miner Workers of America, and the United Mine Workers of America. For more, see, *State Journal-Register*, September 26, 1999, pg. 13. Also see, *Illinois State Journal*, September 26, 1932, pg. 1. The Springfield Police Department gives the Porter Williams Award for "distinguished acts of bravery or heroism."

¹⁰ Mary Londrigan, Thomas F. Londrigan's great-grandmother.

LONDRIGAN: Yeah. But no, Mother Jones was a hero to that whole project. I think she walked up to or tried to see Theodore Roosevelt, Governor of New York. But I'm sure that my grandmother, well that would actually be my great grandmother, I guess, and her son who would have been Thomas, she [Mother Jones] would come here because our city is the capital of the state. But as to the specifics of that, I'm just catching bits and pieces that older folks, which are gone now, I'd hear in passing.

LAW: Interesting. Okay, so, any, I know you were a young man, but any memories of WWII?

LONDRIGAN: Many.

LAW: What comes to mind when you think of WWII from your own experience?

LONDRIGAN: Pearl Harbor, my dad's younger brothers, several of them were in WWI, but one of his brothers, after the war, became fire chief here, his name was Francis, and the guy over there [referring to a picture of Patrick Londrigan, son of Francis] with the red hair underneath my son [Thomas F. Londrigan Jr.]. Pat just retired, it was his dad that was fire chief.

LAW: That first row, lower right. Okay, Francis Londrigan.

LONDRIGAN: Yeah, and his dad died while he was on the practice field at Sacred Heart-Griffin [High School] in August of about, I don't know, late [19] '60's.¹¹

LAW: So he was an active fellow then, if he was still on the practice field.

LONDRIGAN: Well, his son was with the high school team, school officials went out and got him and told him. He never understood that because his dad was married to another

¹¹ See, *Illinois State Journal*, December 9, 1969, pg. 20 for Francis Londrigan's obituary.

woman who everyone was very fond of. Frank first married at eighteen and at age fifty they didn't have any children and Nola died, and he married another young Irish girl, Marge O'Malley, and then they had four or five kids in a row, all of them had red hair including Pat, when it turned gray.

LAW: But any memories of WWII?

LONDRIGAN: Oh yeah, well, I had two of these uncles that were older, the one that became fire chief was a cook on board a battleship and he saw active duty. Then the youngest one, or the younger one of the two, was thirty-five years old when he went in. He, [Edward W. "Mick" Londrigan] was also a football player. He started out at University of Illinois and had the bad break of his ankle and then went down and played when that healed with the Rolla School of Mines [now Missouri University of Science and Technology] in Missouri. He wouldn't have had to go to war because he was married, he had a child, and he was thirty-five years old, but he went and he won the Silver Star [Medal]; that's probably in a newspaper article that I have.¹² But he would go in in one of these inflatable boats, at night, with others and map, he was one semester away from an engineering degree. He mapped this island that was occupied by the Japanese, near the end of the [war]. I can remember going out to pick him up at the airport and he was in full uniform, he was in a cavalry division. They were in a boat in the South Pacific I don't know, but he had these spurs on and he had all the cavalier insignia. I guess he enlisted in the cavalry because he spent a lot of time with the horses at the fairgrounds when he was here; he is deceased.

¹² See, *Illinois State Journal*, October 5, 1944, pg. 12. Also see, *Illinois State Journal*, October 14, 1972, pg. 5 for his obituary.

LAW: Now what about the home-front, did you participate in any scrap drives or collect grease, or do you remember anything like that, victory gardens?

LONDRIGAN: Oh yeah, we had victory gardens, so did everybody in Villa Grove, I think. And there was an old family that, over where near Crow's Mill School used to be, and now it's a bistro or a bar [Crows Mill Pub]. His name was Toby Brunk, T-O-B-Y B-R-U-N-K, that's a well-known name and most all of them were farmers, but they were also friends. Toby came over, horse-drawn, and plowed up gardens, I don't know what you want to call it but it's the backside, but it's before the slope starts going down to the water.¹³ And my dad had it planted half in potatoes, I guess because he was Irish, and then my mother had all the other, the lettuce, tomatoes and green beans. I remember that they were talking about having exercises for "lights-out," for fear that we might be bombed again; this was after Pearl Harbor.

[00:30]

LAW: Ok, so help me get a sense of what it was like growing up in Springfield, [Illinois], in the [19] '40's, what were young people doing at that time?

LONDRIGAN: Well, if you're a country boy, like I was, you walked about a mile to school, and the school I went to was Hazel Dell [Elementary School] and it was a one-room school with a partition in between. The principal, when I started, Lewis Colclasure, and I don't know how you spell the last name exactly, and Odele Forrester, O-D-E-L-E F-O-R-R-E-S-T-E-R, who just died maybe four or five years ago, and what I learned was that if you listened you heard everything that the first three grades were learning at the same

¹³ Thomas T. Brunk.

time. So she handled that curriculum so that by the time you got out of the third grade you should have had the same information forced at you two or three different times. And then the principal would handle grades four through eight, and Gene Clayton, also a farm background. He had gone to Crow's Mill, as had Louie Colclasure, they were good friends. If it was nice weather we could always talk the principal into playing softball all afternoon and calling it P.E. [Physical Education]. We got no interference from the parents and everybody was very happy. We would walk a mile and a half once a week on Tuesday evenings, to what they called the Centipede Boy's Club. I learned more from the sixth, seventh, and eighth grades as I walked and talked with than I ever learned at home about life and relationships. And I made the mistake of going home for dinner and asking, or telling, my mom and my dad what an eighth grader had said to me, a third grader, my mother dropped her fork on the plate and ran out into the kitchen, and my dad looked at me like, "Where did that come from? Come back in Loretta, he didn't know what he was saying." So that's a hard way to learn. I thought I was going to get an explanation, but I didn't, just shock and dismay.

LAW: Now, do you remember where the Centipede Boy's Club was located?

LONDRIGAN: East Hazel Dell [Lane], I don't have the exact address, but it was Georgina Broida, B-R-O-I-D-A. There's a Broida that used to be a furniture store on South Grand [Avenue], and a lot of our school came from that lane.

LAW: Now, what kind of families were these, were they – tell me about the neighborhood a little bit?

LONDRIGAN: Well I've already told you a little bit about Villa Grove, we had the mayor, former mayor, there. The village baker, it used to be called Holsum Bread. We had the sheriff, who lived in the first house, his name was Harry Eielsen, E-I-L-S-E-N, he was sheriff and he later became mayor after Bud Kapp, and we were all good friends.¹⁴ In fact there's a newspaper article clipping, I don't know if I have it anymore, Harry Eielsen, my dad, Bud Kapp, Carl Amrhein, put on a show with all the kids, and I was the youngest in that group, doing silly things like how far you could throw a ball or races where you're down on your hands and someone is holding your ankles.

Since all of the major picnics were in Villa Grove, because the mayor allowed them to do things in Villa Grove that you wouldn't be able to do elsewhere. We had night lighting, which nobody complained about, we had horseshoe pits, we had a fireplace built out of brick, a big croquet court, not on grass or lawn but on clay, and a couple guys, the Amrheins and the Kapps, would pay for it. So, these big parties would spill over a lot of times because people wanted to go down to the water and swim at night, and there were some episodes that came out of that too because the beer started getting tapped in the afternoon and they probably had other types of liquor going later on; but that doesn't happen anymore in Villa Grove.

LAW: Now, were these Irish families, American families, Italian families, was it ethnically mixed?

LONDRIGAN: No, no, "Goose Town," most of them were Irish or German, but a generation down a lot of these were people that didn't want to be in the city and they wanted to be at the lake. So most of them had the money to invest in their home and raise their family,

¹⁴ Harry Eielson was Sheriff of Sangamon County from 1938-42, and Mayor of Springfield from 1947-51.

not in the city, send them to Hazel Dell and Crow's Mill. On the last day of school that was the big event, we (Hazel Dell) would play Crow's Mill in a softball game. We were the only school that had a field, a softball field, big enough, so it was always played at Hazel Dell.

LAW: Now was this back when the softball was much bigger than it is now?

LONDRIGAN: No, it was really a regular size softball but not fast-pitch.

LAW: Ok, so now, moving on to the [19] '50s, give me an idea of what it was like to be a teenager in the [19] '50s.

LONDRIGAN: I have to confess I was not a typical teenager. I really had no interest in when if ever I drove a car, as long as I could get from one place to the other and read my book or do my homework, or whatever; I always thought it was a waste of time to be driving in a car. So, you're also kind of isolated from what's going on downtown or in public schools. When I was in the seventh grade they opened up a new parish out there because of soldiers and sailors returning from the war and had moved out south and near the lake. And I told my parents, "I do not want to go to Little Flower, it's a parochial school, I'm going to be in the seventh grade at Hazel Dell, I like my teachers, these are all my friends," and it didn't make any difference. They brought me over and here are all these people trying to register their kids, and this is a name that was very important in my life, the principal there was taking the names and my dad was standing behind me, and all these adults registering, so the good nun is asking me these questions and I said, "You know, I don't want to be here, I'm being forced to be here, and I'm not gonna stay here, I'm gonna turn around and leave," and this is embarrassing to her, I'm sure, a seventh

grader telling her all these things. So anyway, I kept getting shoved back over there, and two days later they opened the school and I bring a football and I organize a football game out there, she comes out and breaks that up and, “There’s not gonna be any tackle football,” and that’s what we were doing. She just brutalized me for about the first three months. She took away my [safety] patrol belt which was a big embarrassment, because I didn’t have my homework done, but she and I, now, are the closest of friends, she just celebrated her hundredth and one birthday, and the people who went to school there all fondly remember her.

LAW: Now what was her name?

LONDRIGAN: Sister Pauletta, it was Mary Pauletta then, but it’s P-A-U-L-E-T-T-A, Overbeck, O-V-E-R-B-E-C-K, and she was originally from a little town over south of Danville, called Dieterich. We were all asking where she came from and we had a classmate name John Dietrich, who became a doctor here in town and he’s retired now, but she mentioned his name and she said, “Well, I’ve already told you,” and so we had to do our own independent research over it; but she’s a pistol, and I am one many fans.

LAW: So she kind of brought you around to going to school there?

LONDRIGAN: She brought me around full-circle, I learned the value of discipline and timeliness and loyalty, and so a year later I got my name on some sort of plaque that they used to hang up on the wall, it was called The Pastor’s Leadership Award. But then, all my heroes were like Paul Reynolds, who went directly from the old Cathedral High School to [University of] Notre Dame and was in their starting lineup as a freshman. His

rushing totals were second on the team only to a third-year fullback they had; but Paul would come back as kind of a hero to the high school.

LAW: Cathedral Boys School?

LONDRIGAN: High School.

LAW: High School, okay. Tell me a little bit about that school, which is now I guess SHG [Sacred Heart-Griffin]?

LONDRIGAN: Yes. The Viatorians [Clerics of Saint Viator (CSV)] – this has been going on since WWII, most people are deciding they don't have a vocation and they're not going to give up what you do agree to give up when you go in,

[00:45]

so they took a lot of misfits in, and I'm referring to the time after WWII. Everybody wanted to get married and have a family. We had the Viatorians teaching us and they were very free with knocking people around, and it didn't bother me a whole lot. I didn't get very good grades in high school, all my learning habits I learned while I was in grade school under Sister Pauletta, but what I did do well on were these standardized tests 'cause I liked to read anything I could get my hands on, read rather than drive the car, and my younger brother, when he was a freshman and I was a senior, he had a permit to drive the car so he drove this old jalopy [19] '39 Chevrolet out and I would be his passenger because, I thought, I had something I wanted to do or I wanted to complete, so I didn't start driving a car until I was a senior.

LAW: You mentioned that you were an avid reader, what books from that period have stuck with you, if anything, what were you reading exactly?

LONDRIGAN: Well, more than novels or poetry, I was reading history, and they had given us the texts. And this town, as you know, this town is just steeped in history, you wonder about where [U.S. President Abraham] Lincoln came from and you wonder about the [American] Revolutionary War, and you wonder, being Irish, where you came from and that's really how I got involved in genealogy.

LAW: So it wasn't like you were reading comic books?

LONDRIGAN: What was it, the things that "Dirty Popeye," they call them like eight page [Tijuana] bibles, no, those were being passed around. No, as a matter-of-fact I've got about six or eight Robin Hood books I liked to read, and I had my own small library, most of the books are gone but I still have got five or six on the shelves. I'm about ten years old, but if I thought the book was ahead of people in my class I would label for thirteen or fourteen year olds, and then I would loan these books out, most of them would come back but not always, but I've still got five or six of them, I don't know how they survived all the moving but I still have them.

LAW: Now was this something that you kind of got from your parents, this reading, was there a library in the home, or was this something you picked up on your own?

LONDRIGAN: Oh yeah, my dad was big, he had all of Mark Twain's, all of Robert Lewis Stephenson's writings. What was the Irish guy that got in all the trouble?

LAW: James [Augustine Aloysius] Joyce?

LONDRIGAN: No, not James Joyce, this guy, Oscar Wilde, was a flamboyant, a poet, he was a performer, but he wrote this thing, "Tomorrow he shall swing," and he was talking about someone who was going to the gallows, and I remember my dad reading that to me. Anyways, he was a very controversial, very flamboyant, writer at the turn of the century. He was Irish but he spent all his time in England.

LAW: Okay, so what about extracurricular activities in high school, it was just reading and weren't you involved also in sports, I think you were a swimmer?

LONDRIGAN: Well they didn't have a swim team, but yes I did that on my own. First thing they did was have Brother Drolet, who ran the band, come in and ask how many people liked music, so I raised my hand, anybody that raised their hand got ordered upstairs in the band room and there was a big old sousaphone up there, and they said to me, "Well, you look strong enough that you can tote this around," and I looked at it and thought, "I'll probably learn something that I don't know," 'cause neither my mother or father played a musical instrument; and so I would go up to the band room rather than study-hall. And then in the spring they had us outside marching, and the guy that recruited me, who was also the dean of discipline, he'd walk alongside me, "You're out of tune, you're out of tune, you're out of step, you're out of step," and I'm trying to watch little sheet music, you know, in the fork. I finally put the instrument down and stepped out of it and I said, "Brother I'm not interested in being in the band," I said, "The only reason that they have a band is to play at half-time at the football field, I'm gonna play football," and he didn't know what to say, I thought he was going to penalize me or punish me as the dean of discipline, but he didn't; so that was my adventure with music.

Oh, but they had what they called a variety show and I was involved in that. I had soloed work by the junior year [Wladziu Valentino] Liberace, was a big deal, and I could imitate him pretty well, so they got me a fright wig with dark gray curls. Then I'd write skits, like Cracker Graham's, you probably know the Graham family or who they are, and Cracker was in my class, and so Cracker played Brother George. And then I helped him play V.Y. Dallman. We talked about him earlier, he was the editor of the *Register*, and he wrote poems, always about strolling before oatmeal. So I wrote a poem that Cracker Graham read in shorts, it went, let me see, "I think that I shall never make, a poem lovely as a lake, a lake who on a summer's morn, might be, a sea of diamonds just for me. In spring dear Lady Lake and her cohorts are inviting spots for Bermuda shorts," now Graham is standing up there and reading this in ugly Bermuda shorts, "After hearing this and thinking me daffy, you should get a load of Doc Mahaffey." Doctor Mahaffey was written up by the editor because he was thrown out of the big hotel in Chicago, something Beach, Edgewater, I think. It was right near the water and on the near north side, anyway, it was closed down about thirty years ago, and they threw him out of the hotel because they didn't allow Bermuda shorts.¹⁵

But yeah, I had a lot of fun with music and poetry, but I played football and baseball and CYO [Catholic Youth Organization] basketball, just to keep busy.

Oh, this is historic because it's in what's the *Ripley's Believe It Or Not*. We played Springfield High School in the second round of the high school playoffs in [1955]. I was a senior, and we had a good pitcher, and Springfield High School was our opponent. We were going into the last inning trailing three to one and I had batted in the

¹⁵ See, Illinois State Journal, Feb. 28, 1954, pg. 6.

one run, and I was gonna be, if anyone had gotten on base I was gonna bat fourth the next inning. All of the sudden our pitcher put a couple of people on base and our coach whose name was Finigan, (his brother was playing in the major leagues at that time, Jim Finigan, I think it was Kansas City Athletics at that time.) Springfield High School scored twenty-nine runs in the last inning, so the score was then thirty-two to one; that was the largest known high school one inning score, so they put it in *Ripley's Believe It Or Not*. We went down one, two, three, in our half of the inning and I was left in the on-deck circle, because we went down one, two, three.

I would stand out there and yell in, just for fun, “Don’t worry we’ll get ‘em back, don’t worry we’ll get ‘em back.” We also had a terrible football team, we lost every game. A very dubious honor, I was named honorary captain and most valuable player, and also on some league that they had down here, other schools outside of Springfield that we played at, and I thought about going up to Notre Dame and try to make the team. I talked to a fellow by the name of [Bill “Moose”] Fischer who was an assistant coach, Terry Brennan was the head coach, and they said, “Well, just come up here when you register, and you can’t come here early, they’re all scholarship players.” I probably made the best decision I ever did in my life. I should really settle down and make sure I get the necessary grades to be eligible for any sport.

[01:00]

So I thought I could always change my mind, but anyway, it was important to me that I be in physical condition so I could swim. Now, at that time they were just beginning to organize swimming teams for the YMCA [Young Men’s Christian Association] because they built a new YMCA in the late, middle [19] ‘50s, and to have competitive swimming

I would have to go over to Champaign where Allen Klingel, who was coach for University of Illinois at that time; my younger brother Mike was actually a much better swimmer than I was but they invited me along also. Mike's dead now, but he had the second fastest fifty meter time in the country for twelve and under kids.

LAW: What was his name?

LONDRIGAN: Mike, Michael Joseph, he was also a much better football player than I was. They finally had some good teams. He started quarterback as a fourteen year old freshman, and he's been dead now for fifteen years.

LAW: Yeah that's another part of your family question is, did you have any brothers and sisters? Was it just Michael?

LONDRIGAN: We hadn't had a female born to the family for over eighty years.

LAW: Oh wow.

LONDRIGAN: And we had, I had three boys in a row, so we adopted a little girl.

LAW: You and your wife adopted a girl?

LONDRIGAN: My wife was told that she couldn't have any more children, and so if we even wanted to try we wouldn't get a girl and I wanted her. 'Cause the boys would torment her, she'd call at two o'clock in here every day in tears and say, "I don't know what to do with these kids, they were chasing me around the yard with a snake," and I say, "Just tell 'em that I will meat out the discipline when I get home," and so we'd come in. The first two, this one and my oldest, are fine, the middle child was just a hellion, he just did

anything and everything he wanted, when he wanted to do it, so all the discipline was being meated out to him.

LAW: What about you, did you have any other brothers and sister besides Michael?

LONDRIGAN: No.

LAW: Okay, I just wanted to make sure. Well before we get to Notre Dame, I wanted to ask you a couple of questions. Do you have any memories of the Korean War or the early Cold War? What comes to mind when you think of that, of the Cold War, the 1950s?

LONDRIGAN: Well, I knew some families who had older brothers that were over in Korea. I thought we were very close to war, I thought [U.S. General Douglas] MacArthur wanted to invade China beyond the Yalu River, and I was never one for “boots-on-the-ground,” it didn’t work for England when they came over with their redcoats and rifles and they were just targets for the colonists, and it just makes no sense for us to try to rule the rest of the world. They don’t like us walking around in their world, and they can arm themselves and have armed themselves and know where were going and put IEDs [improvised explosive devices] in our path; that takes me off on an entirely different subject. But I enlisted in the Air National Guard and I was gonna be sent away for training in the fall of 1962, and I had just gone in knowing this was gonna happen and volunteered in Peter Mack’s campaign.¹⁶ I don’t know if you know exactly how that came about, but with each census and every ten years, if you lose population, you lose a seat. So Peter Mack [Jr.], was a [U.S.] Navy flier who flew around the world and they got part of the airport out here devoted to him, well, my wife Carol was his congressional

¹⁶ Peter Mack Jr. was a Congressman from Illinois from 1949-1963.

secretary, and she first came to Springfield in the 1960 election, the [U.S. President John Fitzgerald] Kennedy election, so she knew quite a few people, I didn't know her, I was over at the University of Illinois with Ken Boyle and we were running the Kennedy campaign at the University of Illinois, he was the head of Illini for Kennedy and I was the head of the organizational meetings, whatever he asked me to do, including going door-to-door and that type of campaigning; but Kennedy did come to the University of Illinois and he introduced him.

I knew I was gonna be sent down to basic training, now graduated from law school, looking for a job. At the same time, [Soviet premier Nikita Sergeyevich] Khrushchev was sending his flotilla down to Cuba, and that's when I knew, when I got on the plane, my future wife Carol had driven me out there, and I said, "Well let me know what happens in the election, I might not hear, and watch what happens with this confrontation." I was down there about two weeks, they wouldn't let us read a newspaper, watch TV, so I had no idea what was going on, and I had written her several letters and all of a sudden somebody comes over and sticks a light, I assume it's a flashlight and said, "Airman, you've got an emergency call over at general quarters, get up, get dressed, put on your arm band and get your flash light," and when I went over to take the call he said, "Take it here, on my desk," and then he said, "And then I want to talk to you, after this call." Well, it was Carol, and she was crying, she's telling me she lost a job, and she had no place to go. She had lost her mother when she was four, she lost her father when she was twelve, so she was essentially an orphan for a long time, and I was giving her yes and no answers, "Yes, I understand, well that's too bad," and I said, "Write me," and I thought I was gonna catch shit for a girlfriend callin' up, so I hung up,

and he said, “Was that an emergency call Airman?” And I said, “Well, I’m sure she thought it was sir,” and he laughed and he let me go. Three days later I got my “Dear Tom” letter that she’s going over to Persia, but I wrote all of these follow up letters and different terms and she wrote back and said she’s gonna come back for Christmas; and she’s with us today, that’s about as much as I can say, I try to see her twice a day.

LAW: Okay, okay, on a different subject, well, why don’t we talk about, let’s talk about Notre Dame. Why did you decide to go to Notre Dame and what did you study?

LONDRIGAN: I think I decided on Notre Dame – I was originally an Army fan, Army, Navy were the big teams during WWII, [Felix Anthony] “Doc” Blanchard, “Mr. Inside”, Glenn [Woodward] Davis, “Mr. Outside”, Arnold [Anthony] Galiffa was a quarterback and he was from the same hometown, Donora, Pennsylvania, as Stan [“The Man”] Musial, so I was getting pushed in that direction. And then when I learned a little bit about warfare and what options you had and that you had a commitment to them over a period of time, and I found out it was an engineering curriculum, and I said, “I don’t want to be an engineer, I’m not sure what I want to do right now but I don’t want to take more liberal arts courses.” I got really good grades on the college entrance and they accepted me over there. The one problem that I had with the curriculum was they had a course called number theory where they don’t give you a textbook that you could read and figure out for yourself, they had a little frenetic fat guy that would write real fast on the blackboard, you couldn’t read his writing and you couldn’t follow the system of what he was trying to teach us. The most I got out of that is that you can’t deal with digital one, two, three, four numbers, you have to create a system where you can make calculations--and he goes so fast, he flunked half the class, not me, in the first year, and they were doing it on a very

unfair scale, one out of one hundred. So, he passed me with a seventy-five, and the next time around he flunked me with a fifty; now usually there on a five point system, well this puts you in a big hole. Luckily a good friend of mine, Jim Hilliard, also on the swim team, understood that a little bit better than I did, so. He had more complaints about that class than any, or so I was told by the assistant dean who let me take a course in American History, to make up my failing grade, and it happened to be his course and his name was [Devere T.] Plunkett, Plunkett was the name of a hero in the [1916 Easter Rising] insurrection in Ireland, Joseph Mary Plunkett was his poet's name; so all the other courses were good.¹⁷ I graduated even with the low scores, Cum Laude [with Honors], but not where I wanted to be.

LAW: What was?

LONDRIGAN: Pardon me?

LAW: What was your impression of South Bend, Indiana, how did it compare with Springfield?

LONDRIGAN: At that time it was an industrial area,

[01:15]

Studebaker and Bendix. I wasn't used to broken sidewalks and things that were not kept up; you see that around Springfield now. And a lot of the people that you would see would have a babushka and a long dark coat. There was a lot of Polish local families and people that were doing menial work at the University.

LAW: Were you working at the time?

¹⁷ Joseph Mary Plunkett was a leader of the Easter Uprising, and was executed on May 4, 1916 for his involvement.

LONDRIGAN: No, but I had a full day, we practiced swimming after we had dinner, then we had to be back in the room for room check at nine o'clock, and at eleven o'clock they turned off all the electricity, so you had to make use of the time that you had to do any studying. We were supposed to be up and in front of the chapel three days a week, before seven-thirty, so we didn't sleep-in. We had two days or two nights where we could be out until midnight, usually on the weekends. There were no women on the campus except on weekends, and there were ten guys for every gal over at St. Mary's. They would come over on a bus and you'd be in a big area and as the bus for St. Mary's will leave in fifteen minutes, so the girls I got to know at St. Mary's were the ones from Springfield I knew before they went over there.

LAW: Now, you were in a fraternity too right, or that may have been later?

LONDRIGAN: No.

LAW: That was later, okay.

LONDRIGAN: There was law school fraternities, something like that.

LAW: So how would you describe your political and social outlook as a young man, and at this time?

LONDRIGAN: Well, I guess you could say I was a very active Democrat. I watched what happened during the Depression, I watched a Republican mayor and Republican commissioner build a system that I lived in, of public parks, and during a period of time where – I don't know if you've ever watched *Seabiscuit* or *Cinderella Man*, it's all during

that period, and I can remember those dark days and coming out of them, though.¹⁸ And my dad unsuccessfully ran for State's Attorney at one time, and I asked him, "What's the difference between the Democrats and Republicans?" And he explained it in a way I haven't heard explained, but it all means the same thing, he said, "It's like you're trying to climb a ladder from below and you have somebody above you that's trying to push you down," and I remember that, and I remember instances of it. He was very well thought of, he was on the judicial advisory council, I think he was appointed by Governor [Otto] Kerner, I think he was Assistant Attorney General during the [19] '30s in addition to representing – [the United Mine Workers in the 1920s], he came back in his later years when he had cancer and he only had a year or two to live, and they had trouble, they, the United Mine Workers, had trouble with their attorney here, apparently he had alcohol problems and they asked my dad to come back and serve those two years. And he really wasn't in a condition to drive so I drove him around. And usually you'd be down in the southern part of the state where the coal mines were still in operation; and then he died August 24th, 1970.¹⁹

LAW: So really, your political and social views come out of your family, your family background, I guess; you inherited that?

LONDRIGAN: Well, not in the same way that you'd inherit them genetically, but my major was political science, my minor was history. I confirmed everything that I heard from my father and learned by observation from people that were elected, Harry Eielsen, the sheriff, and Bud Kapp, the mayor, and they were Republicans and we were the best of

¹⁸ *Seabiscuit* (Universal Pictures, 2003); *Cinderella Man* (Universal Pictures, 2005).

¹⁹ See, *Illinois State Journal*, August 25th, 1970, pg. 8 .

friends, and you can make that work if you don't create obstacles or you don't have people that aren't willing to run for office that are making decisions behind the scenes.

LAW: Did you have a conception of being part of a particular generation? Did you think of yourself and people your age as being part of a particular generation, and if so how would you define that generation? Did you think about it in those terms then, or do you think about it, or not at all, in those terms now?

LONDRIGAN: I don't understand it at all, how this system is able to work now, the way the wealth is pyramided and the way the rules are set up, and what happened when all of the financial institutions were given a pass when we had to go through this last period. My middle son was a victim of that, and Morgan Stanley [American financial services company], and he's now living in my basement; so, that's not two. But I got along with all sorts of Republicans growing up, but it has changed because they're not communicating with me the way they did thirty years ago, they bought into what's going on right now. And that, what was the name of that [U.S.] Supreme Court decision that was going to regulate or try to get money out of the political system?

LAW: *Citizens United* [*v. Federal Election Commission*]

LONDRIGAN: Yes, how can you enact legislation – another book that I just read, have I brought it home, it might be there, the guy that got convicted, and he was a lobbyist. He passed out all this money, then he admitted all the things he did wrong.

LAW: “Casino” Jack, “Casino” Jack, I think, or Jack Abramoff?

LONDRIGAN: Yes, I've got his book in, I might have taken it home, but I've got it in on the shelf. And several other Republicans in earlier administrations that say they don't know

why or what the rationale is for doing this except people with more money than sense are making the decisions. Like, well I've got stories I can tell you too about the Koch brothers, because he professes to be a sailor. Did you know he won the America's Cup?

LAW: No.

LONDRIGAN: Well there's a story behind that too. He went back to, he had Buddy Melges, the best sailor in the world sailing the boat that he paid for, and he would sail it across the finish line because it was going downwind, and I financially contributed to it because I knew his skipper. I knew nothing about the Koch brothers until probably five to eight or nine years ago, and I don't know what, at my stage in life that I can do anything about it, except I think I have a responsibility to make a judgment call and my wife, if she could, would vote right with me. And of course she was in a Democratic congressional office, she was there when the Kennedys were there, she remembers the [U.S. President Richard Milhous] Nixon events, and she's voted every time, up until this last election.

LAW: Did you watch the [U.S. President John Fitzgerald] Kennedy debate on television or did you listen to it on the radio?

LONDRIGAN: No I watched it on television, just black and white, you could see that Nixon was sweating, and that became a big issue which I don't think – those klieg lights, or whatever you call 'em, throw off a lot of heat.

LAW: Now, that election was pretty close in Illinois, I think, in 1960.

LONDRIGAN: It was, yeah.

LAW: What do you think happened in 1960 in Illinois, do you think that Kennedy won or was the election stolen, in Illinois?

LONDRIGAN: Oh, well, you always have the possibility of something going on in Chicago where they hold the votes back. I wrote a thesis at Notre Dame about Illinois and how Chicago runs the Democratic Party. I am a Democrat because philosophically I agree with the positions the leadership has taken over the years, I don't agree with what they do in Chicago, in fact it's a burden that people downstate have to pay because they think they can – well for instance this last governor, my god, he was a thug.²⁰ My son worked over there in that office for him, and so when he would come in I would just raise hell with him, “Why are you doing this, why are you doing that? You're not gonna stay for the second term are you?” And he promised me he wouldn't and he didn't. But right now he's representing one of the largest firms in the world, but not as a lawyer; he is a lobbyist and he's carrying the message for whatever their clients are suggesting because he's located here in the capital city. I'm not saying that it is a bad thing, but I would not like to be put in that position because I normally told my clients what I really thought ought to happen and where I'm coming from.

LAW: Well, I asked you if you had a conception of being part of a generation, you talked a little more about politics, but.

LONDRIGAN: I don't know that the catchwords they have for.

LAW: Well, for your generation they're called, one is called the “Silent Generation”.

²⁰ Gov. Rod Blagojevich, was Governor of Illinois from 2003-2009. Blagojevich was impeached in 2009, and in 2012 began a fourteen year prison sentence for crimes committed while Governor, including the solicitation of bribes.

LONDRIGAN: Well I wouldn't call myself silent, but on the other hand I'd agree that what we were doing was recuperating from a disastrous economy and from a World War, and you see neighbors and relatives go off to war in their thirties and forties, my dad tried to get in at age forty-nine; you're just happy it's over with.

LAW: Was your generation similar to your dad's and parent's generation or different?

[01:30]

LONDRIGAN: Well, a lot of things were learned, but not the important things. In WWII, the power of splitting the atom, television, the whole entertainment cycle, travel by airplane. I remember when I qualified for the finals in the *Tribune, Chicago Tribune* swim meet, I was twelve and we had to go up one weekend to qualify and then another weekend to swim, and I said, "If I qualify, can we go up in an airplane?" 'Cause I'd never been in an airplane, and American Airlines were just beginning to fly out of our airport. Do you know where the old airport used to be?

LAW: South of town, I think.

LONDRIGAN: Out southwest, [Charles Augustus "Lucky Lindy"] Lindbergh used to drop the mail off there.

LAW: Lindbergh Field.

LONDRIGAN: Yeah, and all of those names in that community are kind of related around the early [19] '20s and Lindbergh and what was going on.

BEN: There's just thirty seconds.

LAW: Alright, let's just go ahead and stop and change our tape.

[01:31:39]

LAW: So, you talked a little bit about joining the Illinois Air Guard. Talk to me a little bit about that, the Air Guard.

LONDRIGAN: Yeah I was with a couple other lawyers out there, Pat Cadigan, and I were cooks, and we would go there one weekend a month, and we'd cook for the mechanics and the pilots, and then we would spend either one week or two weeks in summer encampments. And one time we were sent down to Atlanta, [Georgia] and the other times we were up at Volk Field [Air National Guard Base] in Wisconsin, north of the Dells. After I was in there for six years, I received offers from the [U.S.] Navy to take a direct commission and go into the NROTC, Naval Reserve Officers Training Corps, I think it was. So, we would then go to places near water, first went to San Francisco, then to San Antonio, then we went to – what's the Kennedy Island near Boston, that they go to

BEN: Chappaquiddick?

LONDRIGAN: Yeah, and we went to Great Lakes, of course, and I got within two years of qualifying for, I think this was 1980 or [19] '81. I had to make a decision, they had a change in the administration and they were gonna send us to St. Louis, Indianapolis, other places, to write wills and do things, and I was in the midst of dealing with all these kids and the adopted little girl and all sorts of caseloads and deadlines, and I think our commanding officer was up in Peoria, I think it was Judge [Richard] Eagleton, at that time, and I said, "I'm not going to be able to go to all these places on weekends," and he says, "Well you only got a year-and-a-half until you qualify," I said, "I owe this to my

clients and my family, I just am not willing to do it.”²¹ So I retired as a rank of full commander, as soon as I got the appointment then I retired and I have no pension, and I have no state pensions. There are people in this community who have spent their life figuring out how many different pensions they can get from public sources and that’s one of the reasons that we have the problems that we do today.

LAW: Now what kind of, exactly what kind of work were you doing with the Navy?

LONDRIGAN: It depends on what they would assign me when I would go in there, what was going on, and they had the research tools and they had stenographers who would type if you had to do a brief, or if you had to abstract something that was technical that was gonna come up at a hearing or court-martial. And they would teach us the uniform code of military justice, which is very different and, at least in part, maybe a misnomer. Ben Miller was my close friend, also, almost a member of our firm, and Mike Costello, his brother-in-law. That didn’t work out and Ben went through the political process, he was elected a Circuit Judge and later was elected to the [Illinois] Supreme Court.²² I’ve been a lifelong sailor, competitive sailor, and Ben, at that time, and to this day is interested in sailing, he had a star boat, which was the same boat I had, an Olympic class two-man sail boat, and his boat got struck by lightning and he turned it in to his insurance company. I know he was on the Supreme Court, whether or not he was chief justice at this time I don’t know. They created an exception, “Well, were not gonna pay this claim because this was an act of God,” and so Ben tells me about that and I said, “Well what’s God got

²¹ Judge Richard Eagleton served as the U.S. Attorney for the Central District of Illinois from 1965-69, and in 1970 was elected a Circuit Judge, he served in that position until 1990. Judge Eagleton also served for 34 years in the U.S. Naval Reserve, and retired as a Captain in the JAG Corps.

²² Justice Ben Miller was appointed a Circuit Court Judge in 1976, and elected to that position in 1978. In 1982, he was elected an Appellate Court Justice, and in 1984 he was elected a Supreme Court Justice. He retired in 2001.

against you, so far?" I said, "That's a random event of nature, he doesn't have you targeted unless you've really pissed him off," so we laughed about that and when they found out who he was they came in and paid the claim.

LAW: Okay, so you, just to be clear, you were representing people in court-martials and in hearings and servicemen, navy men?

LONDRIGAN: No, I was never called on to defend, it was usually they were preparing to go ahead with some violation of the code, so they never asked me to be in a trial type situation that you see on TV.

LAW: *A Few Good Men*.²³

LONDRIGAN: Yes, yeah, *A Few Good Men*.

LAW: Ok, I gotcha, so you're just assisting?

LONDRIGAN: And I enjoyed it. Funny, but true story, normally when we'd go to the Sangamo Club we wouldn't be dressed in uniform when we would have our monthly meetings. When we went up to Peoria to meet, we convened in our dress whites, I think there were more in Peoria than there were down here, a gal comes out to our table and she said, "You see those people peeking out through the kitchen window?" And she said, "They wanted me to ask you if you people were from the *Love Boat*?" Now I don't know if you remember the *Love Boat* [TV show] but it was all about being on a pleasure boat with these guys dressed in white uniforms. That's a joke I don't think anybody would forget, that attended that meeting.

LAW: Okay, so you get out of Notre Dame and you decide to study law.

²³ *A Few Good Men* (Columbia Pictures, 1992).

LONDRIGAN: Let me add one thing which is very dear to me. When I got there, several of the upper classmen had started a swim club and we swam against different collegiate competition, not against the best on the east and west coast but like Loyola [University Chicago], Western Michigan [University], something within a two hundred mile radius, in Indiana, Ohio, and Illinois, and Michigan. Central Michigan [University] was another. And at that time [Edward Walter] Moose Krause was the athletic director at Notre Dame, Moose was an All-American in basketball and All-American in football, and could care less about swimming. He could care less about what was coming down the road, Title IX [Civil Right legislation]. But, we had a fellow by the name of Scannell who was working for his, I think, master's degree in P.E. [Physical Education], and his dad was also in the education department and he did a lot of research to show what we did and why we earned varsity, rather than club status. And it was my senior year and my roommate Dick Nagle and I were voted to be co-captains of the first Notre Dame Varsity Swim Team. I've spent the last five years trying to convince them at Notre Dame that they should award an honorary letter to the people who swam for two or three seasons over there, actually organized the whole thing before I came there and give them an honorary membership in the monogram club. By now, Title IX was in full bloom and they had a women's swim team since early [19] '80s. Isn't that when it came it, early 1980?

LAW: Title IX?

LONDRIGAN: Yeah.

LAW: Title IX? No, I think it goes back even further, I think it goes back to the [19] '60s, I thought.

LONDRIGAN: Oh no.

LAW: No.

LONDRIGAN: That's when I was in school over there. Well I got out in [19] '59.

LAW: I thought Title IX was like part of the Civil Rights Act, [19] '64?

LONDRIGAN: Yeah, I think it was, because it was discriminatory against women and I was all for that happening. But, you know how you tend to forget things, I was wearing a monogram jacket over to watch a basketball game and this young gal in front of me turns around and says, "I really like your jacket, do you know how I could get one," and I said, "First you have to be a member of the monogram club," and she said, "I am a member of the monogram club," and all of the sudden,

[01:45]

I just didn't put her in that category, so I had to apologize and tell her, "Just ask the monogram club to send you a manual and they have those things in there." But that group recently opposed honorary membership to the people that brought monogram level competition to Notre Dame, one of them is in his middle eighties now, he's retired from military service, I think he was a marine, and another one is taking care of his wife as I am. I think he's retired now as an attorney, his name is Mike Connolly. And the head of the monogram club at that time was a woman, and why she thought that this was somehow demeaning or something was gonna be taken away from them. Anyway, she's gone now. But they've got so many other problems over there like volunteer women outside of the system that they have for athletes, come in as tutors, you have to register for that program.

My swim coach died last fall. I've always been close to know him. He had a special place, he was ninety-four, or five years old, and he couldn't get them to do anything.²⁴ But, I really feel that I am a failure in that respect, I can't get an audience and I can't articulate an argument that most people would concede is a simple solution. Yeah, these guys did a lot of work for three years and we didn't give them a monogram, so let's make 'em an honorary member. I think what they were thinking about is: if you're a monogram member you're on a list to get football tickets or basketball tickets, or something, but these people got like one or two or three years left in their normal life expectancy. So that's a battle I am still trying to fight, but I got to admit, it hasn't been a success.

LAW: Yet.

LONDRIGAN: Right, that's the way I should think about it. And I would have spent a lot more time had it not been for what's going on at home or Saint Joe's; it's just hard to go in a lot of different directions at the same time.

LAW: Okay, we got that. So why did you decide to study law?

LONDRIGAN: I think history led me to it. You know, we had that short conversation when I was asking you about law and history, you see people doing things, historically, that if the law and the treaties and things were enacted differently we might not have some of the same problems. I'm trying to finish a book, I'm doing right now, that deals with would-be empires and emperors and it starts out in Ireland and England and that relationship, spills over into this country, and why we call people Indians because we

²⁴ Dennis Stark, Coach from 1958-1985.

thought the world was flat and if we run into land it's got to be India and so we'll call them Indians; and that's still going on in this litigation. You're alright if you have a team called the Black Hawks but don't call them an Indian because they don't think they're Indians, they're American. Amerigo Vespucci changed the name of this continent, our Native tribes are not Indians, and that's such a simple thing to understand and change, for the better; it just doesn't make any sense. Well anyway, I'm off the topic again.

LAW: Well that's alright, it kind of relates to, there was kind of a big dispute over keeping Chief Illiniwek at, where you ultimately went to law school.

LONDRIGAN: Yes, I've got friends that were Chief Illiniwek when I went to law school over there. One of the Forsyths was Chief Illiniwek.²⁵ At least he has a name, and that was the tribal name of the Illini, the Indians, but it was never meant to be demeaning, it was celebratory. I don't know what the position was with the Native American group that asserted that, but I never had any problems when I was over at the University of Illinois; hell, they call the Irish the Fighting Irish, you might as well call them the Fighting Indians.

Well one of my contentions is that there's been a book put out that suggests that Ireland is the western most island in the Atlantic and that Plato was referring to that island when he wrote of Atlantis. It did not just disappear from the [Atlantic] ocean the way a lot of people have conjectured. In fact, there's a Scandinavian who has written a recent book, that says the island was named Ireland, that's because that's the name the British gave them when they were putting together their would-be empire. But, Atlas was a Greek God, the Atlantic Ocean was named after Atlas and when the Greeks were

²⁵ John Forsyth, 14th Chief Illiniwek, 1957-60, was succeeded by Ben Forsyth, his brother, 1960-63.

referring to Atlanta they linked it to the Atlantic Ocean and those that lived there. They endured hundreds of years, first, they're Hibernians, then they're Irish, then they're Gaelic. Any island tribe can change their name, but the question is should somebody else be able to tell you what your name is, or do you have a right to name your own Ireland. So that's what I've been spending more time on.

I've only got, I think, two active files, now. I'm gonna try to help those people with their problems with hospitals around here, one of them is a lawyer. So, I'm still doing things I hope will be productive, but I don't think any of my three kids have any understanding or interest in the book I'm writing, at least I've given them a few chapters to read and they haven't read 'em. But I'm about finished now, I think in another month or two I'll get that done and hopefully this won't necessarily go to trial.

LAW: So why the U of I law school, why did you pick that particular law school?

LONDRIGAN: Well, I thought I was going to come home to Illinois, I knew it had a better reputation than the Chicago law schools where a lot of folks were gonna go. A possible exception was Northwestern [University].

I always liked where I came from, I live on the lake now, as I think I mentioned, one boy lives in the basement, the other two boys are less than a mile from where I am, they're both on the lake too.

LAW: Close to family.

LONDRIGAN: But I knew about Illinois, I applied to Illinois, and they gave me a scholarship, not because I was Cum Laude but because of the aptitude reflected in standardized tests that they gave me.

LAW: So, try to give me an impression of the U of I law school at that particular time, what strands of legal philosophy were you encountering at the U of I, if any?

LONDRIGAN: Well, the dean was [John E.] Cribbet, he is one of the best teachers of any subject that I've ever had; I enjoyed all the other members of that faculty.²⁶ I grew to really like, Professor Cleary the fella' that wrote the book on evidence. He was from Jacksonville, now there's been several successors, but I think his name is still on the text and it's a thicker text now, but in the courtroom he spoke very slowly and very thoughtfully, his daughter was a very bright girl too, but she wasn't at University of Illinois, I think she went over to Ohio State [University] or someplace like that. His name was [Edward H.] Cleary, *Cleary on Evidence* [originally titled *Handbook of Illinois Evidence*, and updated and re-titled as *Cleary and Graham's Handbook on Illinois Evidence* in the 1980's].²⁷ Vic Stone, I don't remember him for what he taught but he was very precise, easy to understand, and then there was another that nobody understood and they used to call him "The Shadow" because he had "the ability to cloud men's minds," I can't think of his name right now.²⁸

LAW: What did he teach?

LONDRIGAN: Pardon me?

LAW: What did he teach?

²⁶ John Cribbet was a Professor at the University of Illinois from 1947-79, and Dean from 1967-79. Russell N. Sullivan was Dean of the Law School from 1957-1967. For more on Cribbet, see, *University of Illinois Law Review*, Vol. 1978, No. 1, pgs. 1-20. Also see, David A. Myers, "Dean John Edward Cribbet: The Illinois Prophet of Property Law," *Marquette Law Review*, Vol. 95, No. 1 (Fall 2011), pgs. 5-16.

²⁷ For more on Cleary see, *University of Illinois Law Review*, Vol. 1991, No. 2.

²⁸ Victor J. Stone was a Professor at the University of Illinois from 1955-2001. For more on Professor Victor J. Stone, see, *University of Illinois Law Review*, Vol. 1991, No. 3, pgs. 619-637. George Frampton, a.k.a. "The Shadow," was a Professor at the University of Illinois from 1954-1987.

LONDRIGAN: Some type of remedies, it might have been called judicial remedies.

LAW: When you're thinking back to law school did the U of I have any particular legal philosophy? How did they understand the law, what were they teaching you, how were they teaching you to understand the law, or were they just?

[02:00]

LONDRIGAN: The case-book method, they'd assign like four, five cases and then they'd call on you, somebody, individual, to summarize how they briefed the case and then they'd open it to a discussion.

LAW: Did the wider world ever affect me as a law student, or did it affect your law school education?

LONDRIGAN: The wider world?

LAW: Yeah, like, did world events ever impact your law school education; civil rights movement, politics?

LONDRIGAN: I think I told you, in politics, after the work, I was elected the President of the Young Democrats Club after the [1960] election and that was because of the door-to-door work I did. You'd go up, some people would take the literature and throw it at you, other people would start to take it, look at it, and then make you take it back or they'd, "No," wad it up, "You don't need to give this to anybody else," and they'd close the door and leave; because Champaign and Urbana, and I'm not talking about the teachers or faculty, but if you just go door-to-door, it's just deflating and discouraging to have people slam the door in your face and tell you all of those things.

LAW: Was that because it was a Republican city and county?

LONDRIGAN: It is, it is very conservative, but I don't think the faculty is that way but it, traditionally, Champaign County returns are a big Republican plurality in most elections.

LAW: What was the composition of your law school class in terms of race and gender and age?

LONDRIGAN: We had some older people, we had a married couple, one gal was a librarian and another guy, who was her boyfriend. They both had something to do with the library, but during the summer she got arrested for burglary. I think he was some type of accessory. I don't remember names but that really astounded me that somebody in law school would resort to crime in the summer time.

LAW: Rather unusual.

LONDRIGAN: Yeah, but I met some good friends that I often run into on occasion, we go to the same events. One of them, up in Bloomington, who's a real good Lincoln scholar, and he's been down here quite a bit.

LAW: So just a handful of women?

LONDRIGAN: Right, there were very few at that time.

LAW: All white, or was there any minority students?

LONDRIGAN: Yeah but not many, there had been no effort, it looks like, to integrate or give them proportional representation or admission. I think what they did though, is if you didn't do well on the test they may not have even looked. Unless, remember though, they had pictures so you could tell race, that would be easy to take care of. I would hope not, I wasn't aware of that if it was going on.

LAW: Okay, so what were the principles and legal skills that you were learning at the U of I?

LONDRIGAN: Well I think how to read and interpret a case to find out what the main issue was, and how the citations they cite supports the result they reach.

LAW: Do you recall what some of the big constitutional issues were at the time? Did you have any constitutional law classes?

LONDRIGAN: Yes.

LAW: I know it's been a long time.

LONDRIGAN: I'm trying to think of what was going on in those years. I know one of the things that I thought was important, it's not a constitutional issue but it did away with an archaic rule in the law that if there were no privity, between the purchaser and the manufacturer, that you couldn't bring either a tort claim or contractual claim for injury, and I don't remember the name of the Supreme Court opinion, I think it was in like 1962. And then Illinois came down, while I was in law school, with an opinion that essentially said the same thing. It related primarily to automotive safety and the difficulty they had in coping with common law negligence theories is that if there were a defect, if you didn't have privity, you couldn't bring an action, and what they basically did was create a new theory of liability, getting away from contract law. Now, if you market something that is likely to cause injury you're responsible under tort rather than contract law. That's when NHTSA came into play, shortly after that.²⁹

LAW: NHTSA?

LONDRIGAN: National Highway Traffic and Safety Administration.

²⁹ See, *Suvada v. White Motor Co.*, 32 Ill. 2d 612, 210 N.E. 2d 182 (1965).

LAW: Okay.

LONDRIGAN: Which brings me, we may be jumping ahead now, but, that's an area in which I practiced, after I got away from defending murder cases and criminal law, that was probably the earliest cases that I got involved in were automotive safety. And what was going on at that time was that if there was a real safety problem you couldn't defend it, because of a lack of privity, that you had a new obligation to produce, a safe vehicle. NHTSA came into being in that wake and during that period, between 1960 and 1970, and they set safety standards, and the major problem at that time was fuel-fed fires and gasoline tank ruptures, and what Ford [Motor Company] and the rest of them would do is settle those cases if they could get an order of "non-disclosure," "You don't let anybody see this and we'll pay you, and you go your own way and we don't want to hear from you anymore." Well, about five or six of us from different parts of the country got together with founding an organization, which tried to explain that these vehicles are accidents waiting to happen, that they've been proven to be defective, the manufacturer doesn't want their own crash tests and other and other information. This is at the same time that [U.S. President Richard Milhous] Nixon's tapes were a big, big issue about what went on. The Nixon White House kept a log of who the people were, when they were there. Nixon, and I think it was [Harry Robbins "Bob"] Haldeman, Henry Ford III, and [Lido Anthony] Lee Iacocca, who at that time was the head of Ford, rather than Chrysler [Group LLC].

LAW: Or GM [General Motors]?

LONDRIGAN: No, Iacocca was with Ford. And they're talking about the Japanese eating their lunch and, "Don't implement these standards," and they go on and on, and Nixon finishes up, you can hear the scoots across the floor, and he said, "They want us to live

like Indians and you know how they live, dirty, filthy,” and that’s still there to be heard.³⁰ But what they agreed to – it took me a year and a half to get Nixon under subpoena, and his lawyer in New York, we finally served him in New York. Nixon’s lawyer called me up and said, “Look, you call him, he’s gonna say he doesn’t remember anything about that meeting,” he said, “But all of these tapes now are secure and held, and what he’ll do is sign over to you the right to go in and listen to what happened on the tapes,” and that came to pass and we got the White House transcript. The folks I represented were really hurting, they accepted a settlement, and my co-counsel in this organization (NHTSA), national organization. We just disseminated the information and told everybody else how to get access to this if they wanted it. They got a big verdict, I don’t know exactly what in, in Atlanta, the guy from the Atlanta law firm was with me listening to it, and that was early in Nixon’s term, and so when I was trying to catch him I think it was probably after he had left office, but he didn’t want to get back into that, so that’s the accord that was reached.³¹

LAW: Interesting, that’s an interesting story. How did you ever discover that that meeting existed and there was tapes, how did that come about?

LONDRIGAN: There was a manual, or an appointment calendar, that they kept in the office that wasn’t put under lock and key and some people saw this, and all the names of the people that were there, and they said, “Well, what was cooking that time?” Because that’s before Nixon had other things to worry about; and this organization, although they really have done a lot of good over the years. I don’t take on those types of cases anymore, I did maybe in the last ten years, or when Carol was up and around and able to travel with me.

³⁰ See, http://www.nixonlibrary.gov/forresearchers/find/tapes/complete/airbag_488-15.pdf, pg. 44.

³¹ See, *Grimshaw v. Ford Motor Co.*, 119 Cal. App. 3d 757 (1981).

But that organization has done a host of good things, and there are people out there in Washington [D.C.], that either ran NHTSA or another organization, separate and apart, a do-gooder organization.

LAW: Something along the lines of Public Citizen or something, like a [Ralph] Nader organization?

LONDRIGAN: Yeah, Public Citizen is the name, let me see, I know – when I told them I was not gonna take on (Londrigan takes off his microphone and goes over to the bookshelf), I'll take it off, I'll put it back on. Let me see what I've got on the shelf.

LAW: Okay.

LONDRIGAN: I'm in the process of taking things home to where I'm going to work and I assume that's where it is.

LAW: Yeah, okay.

LONDRIGAN: I've got about two-thirds of it moved.

LAW: We'll just, we'll get it later.

LONDRIGAN: Yeah that's right, we've got another session.

LAW: It was, I'm assuming it was some kind of non-profit organization of some kind?

LONDRIGAN: Right, and we didn't want a lot of publicity because then we'd have automotive groups trying to get access to our work product.

LAW: Yeah.

LONDRIGAN: So we kept it low-key.

LAW: Detroit has a lot of power.

LONDRIGAN: Yeah they do, and my son talked me into buying into GM stock when they redeemed it, it went up about three-fold, I actually made some money by investing in GM. He explained to me why this was gonna work and it did. Anyway, I've probably worn you two guys out, I'm willing to go, anything else you need now.

LAW: Well, how about, let me end on this question and then we'll wrap this one up. Who were the influential professors and influential classes for you in law school? Were you drawn to any particular type of law in law school?

LONDRIGAN: Yes, I was attracted to evidence, because you have to make appropriate objections, I knew I wanted to do trial work and I didn't want to waive error into the record. I knew I would probably run into judges who hadn't dealt with these issues before. I wanted to know how to make an offer of proof so I could protect an issue if it needed to be appealed and reviewed by a higher court. And I enjoyed one-on-one with all of the professors that I had, and their answers that they gave to me wasn't always mine, sometimes I had to, or was willing to buy into what they told me, and at other times I would just go out and start researching because it didn't make sense to me. So, I thought it was really important if I was going to be trying jury cases all the time, to at least know as much law as the judge, and if the judge made error to protect that error in the record without raising his ire. And I've found over the years that some of the judges that you will see, they either don't understand, or, are not interested in this, once they make a decision they don't want to take time out at the bench to make a record; those warnings came mostly from Professor Cleary.

LAW: Okay, well Mr. Londrigan I think we'll stop there for today and then we'll come back again and pick up where we left off.

LONDRIGAN: Okay.

[Total Running Time: 02:22:47]

END OF INTERVIEW ONE

BEGINNING OF INTERVIEW TWO

LAW: This is an oral history interview with Thomas Londrigan. Today's date is December 1, 2015. This is our second interview. We're here in his law office, here in Springfield, Illinois, and today we're going to talk about his legal career. Mr. Londrigan, I thought we'd start today with, so you passed the bar in 1962, why did you decide to return to Springfield?

LONDRIGAN: I think because my family, my roots were here, and I had gone out of state, as far away as Indiana, in Notre Dame campus, and I was actually offered a partial scholarship to attend the University of Illinois. And a grade school and high school acquaintance had rented a house while he completed his studies in veterinary medicine, so it was a very easy transition. And I was less than a hundred miles from home on weekends, and I had a younger brother who was playing quarterback for the old Cathedral High School, and I went home on weekends.

LAW: So when you first came back, where were you practicing law? Were you practicing with your dad?

LONDRIGAN: No. Based upon the alert that you gave me before, about other things you're going to touch on, I knew that I had filed for employment, either with a federal judge -- and my senior year over at Illinois, U.S. Attorney General Robert Kennedy had a program where they sent us over to the United States Attorney's Office in Springfield, to assist them, and you got credit for that. You'd be over there maybe two days, Wednesday and Friday, and when I was finished, I was also home. At that time, of course I wasn't married and I went from Notre Dame Irish to the Fighting Illini. At that time they had a real good team.

LAW: So you went right into the U.S. Attorney's Office?

LONDRIGAN: No, that was a course that we were offered. When I left, and I left involuntarily, because I had enlisted in the Air National Guard. And this was a big off-year election. Congressman Peter Mack was running against Paul Findley, a Congressman to the west, from Morgan County.³² He is still alive and kicking, I see him on occasion.

LAW: Findley?

LONDRIGAN: Yes, Paul Findley.³³ Mack carried Sangamon County and Macoupin County, where he was from, with about a 10,000 vote plurality. What had happened at that point is Illinois had lost sufficient voters that they forfeited one of their seats in Congress. The Democrats in Chicago thought Peter Mack was a dispensable Democrat, so they gerrymandered that district, which gave Paul Finley a huge advantage.

I met my wife in that campaign. She was Peter Mack's secretary, and she had come here during the 1960 election, which was a presidential election between Kennedy and the Vice President. I didn't have anything to do. I knew I was going to be sent down to Texas in the middle of the fall, so I went in and volunteered my services to Peter Mack, in that election, and if you go out to the airport even now, you'll see that there's a wing of that devoted just to Peter Mack, who was a Navy flyer during World War II, and when he came back, he flew solo around the world in a goodwill ambassador effort. People in Macoupin and Sangamon still recognize this, but not as far away as Morgan County. In any event, about the week before this election, Carol drove me to the airport

³² Representative Peter Mack served in Congress from 1949-63.

³³ Representative Paul Findley served in Congress from 1961-83.

and there were a bunch coming down from Cook County, they landed, it was a military plane, they picked me up and sent me down there. During this period of time, there was not only an election going on, this is when Khrushchev decided to send his flotilla down and install rockets on the island of Cuba, and so everyone was very anxious about what was going on. But I was totally cut off from communication during that period of time. We couldn't listen to a radio, we couldn't watch TV, we couldn't read newspapers, and finally, after about two weeks, they told me that this was all called off and we shouldn't be concerned about it. In the meantime though, my promised wife Carol, was back in Washington, D.C., without a job but with a lot of friends. After two weeks into training I had a uniformed sergeant come into my room and shine a flashlight at my eyes and say, "Airman, get up, put on your boots, get your flashlight, get your reflector band, it's dark. You have an emergency call and I'll walk you over." So, we went out with the flashlight and everything, and there was a sergeant that was in charge and he said, "Airman, I want you to take this call now, because I want to talk to you when you get off the line."

It turned out to be Carol and she was crying about not having a job. Before coming to Springfield, she was engaged to marry a Persian prince who was in school at Washington. Persia, of course is now Iran. So, here I had this sergeant staring at me and I'm saying, "Yes, I understand, I'm sorry to hear that, you'll get a job, don't worry about that, and I'll write you tomorrow." The sergeant at the desk said, "Airman, was that an emergency call?" And I said, "I'm sure she thought it was, sir," and he laughed and there wasn't anything more to it. Three days later, I get a "dear Tom" letter, explaining that her suitor had asked her again, to get married, and that she was going to do that. So, I then wrote her several letters, to just take her time, and tried to explain the circumstances,

when I couldn't console her more over the telephone. And she wrote me back and said she would visit for Christmas. And it goes on and on, but we got married on August 29th of that coming year, which would have been in 1963.

Now let me go back to what I was going to do after I went through basic training. I was, based upon the fact that I took a class and spent a good deal of time over in Springfield, in the U.S. Attorney's Office, and that I knew the U.S. Attorney, he was also from Peter Mack's hometown. So, my dad wanted me to go with the U.S. Attorney, Ed Phelps, who was a good friend of his, and there was -- this will test my memory.³⁴ There was a fellow that had been there for forty or forty-five years, and he was retiring, and that's why they had a vacancy.³⁵ I can resurrect that name, but I don't have it on the tip of my tongue right now. I was sworn in, in January of 1963.

LAW: So really, working in the U.S. Attorney's Office, that was your first legal position?

LONDRIGAN: Yes. I was sworn in first before the Supreme Court, in October, so I had my license before I got out of service, and I was sworn in as Assistant U.S. Attorney, in January of that year, because of the vacancy created by the fellow, Marks Alexander, that had been there for years and years.

LAW: What kind of work were you doing? Tell me a little bit about the U.S. Attorney's Office at that time.

LONDRIGAN: Well, Ed Phelps was the U.S. Attorney. His first assistant was Leon G. Scroggins, S-C-R-O-G-G-I-N-S. He's the one that I did most of my work for when I was still over at the University of Illinois, in 1961. At that period of time, most of the

³⁴ Edward Phelps served as U.S. Attorney from 1961-65.

³⁵ Marks P. Alexander.

emphasis, as far as a criminal docket, was in the illegal transportation of motor vehicles. J. Edgar Hoover was the head of the FBI at that time and he always used those cases as a device, to justify what the FBI was doing economically and to ask them for an increase in the budget. In other words, if somebody drove a car into St. Louis, that was licensed in Illinois, they made an arrest, they would credit themselves with the value of the automobile,

[00:15]

because it would be sold at auction and the proceeds go to the federal government. The other one was the interstate transportation of women for immoral purposes.

LAW: The Mann Act?

LONDRIGAN: Right. We had a labor leader here at that time, who was notorious. The FBI wanted to get a hold of him; I wanted to get a hold of him. We had all of these women parading in before the grand jury and describing him. They described him by his anatomy, and there was one picture of him standing on his head, in the corner, with not a stitch on but there was no picture of his facial features. But we had two shady gals that looked at that picture and said, "That's Forrest English." He was the head of the Ironworkers during the early 60s.

Probably the most significant case that I tried in the couple of years that I was there, was a flood. We had a huge amount of snowfall. It resulted in a Congressional White Paper called "The Snowmelt Floods of 1961," I believe it was. The Mississippi River overflowed and there was eight to ten feet of water which covered farmland, and this was caused by the fact that we didn't have one day above freezing until the first of

April. Then I went down to see the Cardinal game, and it was 81 degrees in St. Louis for opening day down there, and all of this accumulated snow and ice from the Mississippi Basin just emptied into what used to be a river and ended up a flood. The Corps of Engineers went in there and they used the method that they always do, of pumping sand into the breach. Well, this was a breach like they'd never seen before, it was more like a waterfall, and the flow of that water carried, in suspension, sand, over farmland. And so the farmers got together and sued the federal government, in Federal Court, and the case was tried over in Quincy. I won that case and for a lot of different reasons. Everything just seemed to break our way and we didn't have any of the farmers. I believe we had a six man jury over there, rather than a twelve man jury.

LAW: Do you remember who the federal judge was? Was that [Omer] Poos?³⁶

LONDRIGAN: I think it was. I think it was Poos.

LAW: Any memories of him?

LONDRIGAN: Yes, a lot, both while I was over there and after I came back and went into general practice. Poos was a fair-weather, hale and hearty friend to everybody. He was a storyteller that I would talk to off and on. He was a very, very conservative, rock-ribbed Republican, and after I left the U.S. Attorney's Office, I was representing different interests, in private practice. And I think in one of these cases that you've given me, he was the trial judge, but he died not long after that. He was replaced, by somebody everybody had universal respect for, and that was Harlington Wood Jr.³⁷ He was as fair

³⁶ Judge Omer Poos was a Federal District Judge from 1958-1976.

³⁷ Judge Harlington Wood Jr. was a U.S. District Court Judge from 1973-76, and U.S. Court of Appeals Judge from 1976-2003. For more on Wood, see his autobiography, *An Unmarked Trail: The Odyssey of a Federal Judge* (H.C. Johnson Press: Rockford, Illinois, 2008).

as fair could be. He came from Washington and while I don't know his exact title in Washington, but I think he was high up in the U.S. Attorney General's office. But he was sent out to the West, to mediate a labor dispute that we had with the "Indians." He was the type of guy that can talk to both sides and bring them together, and that's what he did. And when he returned to Petersburg in later years, my partner, Bud Potter, and I, would go visit him over in Petersburg.

LAW: Who did you say your partner was there?

LONDRIGAN: Bud Potter, James R.

LAW: Okay, got it. You would go visit him?

LONDRIGAN: Bud and I would go visit Harlington, because he still had his wits about him, but at this point in time his heart was very fragile. I'm not sure exactly what the disease was that he had, but he was always happy to see old friends after he had retired. He was also the Republican United States Attorney before my boss Ed Phelps. Judge Poos used to appoint him to represent indigents. I wasn't trying this case, but I would come in to watch what was going on during trials, and Harlington was probably six-three or four, he portrayed Lincoln over at New Salem all the time. He was kind of a replacement for an older lawyer around here called G. William Horsley, who also portrayed Lincoln.

Harlington, in one case, would drive up and park in the federal parking lot, and he had one of these little super sporty cars from Europe, a Jaguar or a Maserati or something like that, and he would literally -- and the jurors would peel past him. He would uncoil to get out of that car. He would come out like this reaching and he'd slam the door behind

him. And I prompted Leon to make an argument in this case, which resulted in a conviction. And Harlington is not getting anything for serving in pro bono capacity. He's showing respect for the office that he used to hold and that Poos now held. I said, "Leon, we've got a break here, in one of your defenses you emphasize that this guy didn't have a way to get where he was going, so he was just using this sports car for a while. Didn't have a penny in his pocket and therefore, he shouldn't be prosecuted and spend all these federal dollars to find him forever as a felon." But this was an ironclad rule that J. Edgar Hoover had. So, -- and I've never seen Harlington lose it like this, but Leon on closing argument said, "You know, the law is written to serve everyone. If you have a car that's a wreck, that won't run, and you use a car to get from one side of the river to the other, that person needs your help, that person needs your sympathy. The law isn't written just to protect people that can afford to drive around in foreign sports cars." Knowing all the jury had seen him uncoil from his sports car, Harlington exploded. He jumped up, ran out the courthouse door. Poos is sitting on the bench and Leon says, "Your Honor, I want to suggest that counsel for the defendant has just left the room." He said to the bailiff, "Would you go out, get Mr. Wood, and tell him he needs to come back into the courtroom." They felt sorry for this guy and they acquitted him. That about summarizes everything that I remember as being out of the ordinary, while I was in the U.S. Attorney's office.

LAW: Now I believe you were only there for just about under two years.

LONDRIGAN: Right.

LAW: So, where did you go next?

LONDRIGAN: Well, I made a decision that -- I was being paid \$7,200 a year, and I wanted to get into private practice. Let's see, what year was it? The Democrats had just elected several judges to the 4th District Appellate Court in 1964, which is unusual in this area.

LAW: That's right. That would have been [Harold F.] Trapp and [James] Craven?³⁸

LONDRIGAN: Craven offered me a clerkship, to go to the appellate court, with the understanding that this was not full-time employment and that I could undertake cases that would come out of my office. My office at that time, was my dad, my uncle Jim, James E. Londrigan, and his name was on the door but we weren't in partnership with Jack Weiner.

LAW: We could go two different ways here. Do you want to talk about clerking or do you want to talk about that first office?

LONDRIGAN: Let's talk about clerking very briefly, because I wasn't there for very long. Jim Craven was a friend and for those two years, a benefactor to me in going from full-time federal employment to state employment and the private sector. For two years, or the better part of two years, I would take the briefs that were assigned to him. I would go to his office, not to the appellate court, and he was at 5th and Monroe, and I was on the opposite corner of 5th and Monroe, so I'd just walk over and pick up the briefs and then I would write draft opinions.

[00:30]

³⁸ Justice James C. Craven was an Assistant Attorney General and later was in private practice in Springfield prior to his election to the Appellate Court in 1964. He served in that position until 1981. Justice Harold F. Trapp was elected to the Appellate Court in 1964, and retired from that position in 1986.

It was interesting work, primarily because after I fulfilled my responsibility for reading the briefs, outlining the issues, and suggesting what the result should be, and then give him a draft opinion. For most of the time, he adopted that, with certain specific changes that he wanted. He was never one to say I need this done in five days or two weeks. I just turned it around to him as quickly as I could, to see what changes he'd make or what corrections that he would explain to me. One that we both were agreed on, and I can't give you a citation to that, but it was an interpretation of a statute. It was a criminal statute and it said that the name, address, et cetera, et cetera, shall be included in the complaint or the indictment, as specific as can possibly be done. Well, this was a case where you could look up in the phone book, and they just gave the county, and we talked about this for a while. I said, "Well, this language doesn't require interpretation, it's clear. They made no effort to specify in the indictment. They can still indict him, the statute hasn't run, but we shouldn't," -- well, in any event, he bought into that. Oh he just -- other areas, trial judges, states attorneys, all started writing him letters, saying you're just making our job harder. When in reality, what should have been done is the statute should have been worded differently. At the end of about two years, an attorney from Brunsmann, Beam, Crain and Kenney, Bob Brunsmann, the senior member there, was appointed as his -- let's see, what title did we have?

LAW: Law clerk?

LONDRIGAN: Yeah, that's it. I was looking for a more illustrious title, but it obviously wasn't on the tip of my tongue. Bob was there maybe for two years and then he hired a young woman, who graduated from the University of Illinois. I never met her while she was here. I met her within the last six months. She lives in Kentucky. She became the

Kentucky Trial Lawyers president, and she was also a good friend of that family. When her name -- I've got it around here someplace, I'll give it to you. I just met her recently at a reunion.

LAW: So, I've heard Craven had some pretty lively parties.

LONDRIGAN: Well, maybe. I don't think he was a big drinker or hell-raiser, I'd never seen that, but he was always in a good mood. For instance, Mike Costello, who was one of our original lawyers, together with Ben Miller, when we were trying to get an independent law firm going, several years ago, before Craven moved out to, I think it's Washington, he was specially appointed to administer a matter that Mike was handling then. Mike was kind of the brunt of the recent bar association dinner that they had, because he's now eighty-one years old and he's still practicing on his own. Deadlines mean nothing to Mike. So he keeps getting called in and nobody wants to give him any grief, so they're always opening a door for him. Craven, before he had left Illinois, called Mike in, "Mike, you've broken every rule that we have here. We want to give you full opportunity to say what you're going to say before we reach our final result." And he says, "I'm going to give you thirty more days and if we don't have a response within thirty days, your cause is going to be stricken." I don't even know what forum that was, because I think it was kind of a get together, let's try and take these into a different forum, where we can just negotiate these things and get them done. But Mike never complied and Judge Craven never took action against him. Judge Craven was a very, very compassionate guy, a good family member, so I don't know about the "wild parties," except he always seemed to have a good time no matter what he was doing.

LAW: Well, I guess I meant more to say that there was a good deal of camaraderie amongst the justices and the clerks of the 4th District at that particular time.

LONDRIGAN: Yes. He, like Harlington Wood -- I saw Harlington upset one time and act out of character, but I never saw that with Judge Craven. His son, Don, was also over here for several years, and Craven was here, shortly after he left the bench, for a year or two.

LAW: And did you come to know any of the other justices while you were clerking?

LONDRIGAN: Sam Smith, he's from the north end of Macoupin County, and he was senior judge, I think, when Craven went on.³⁹ Then there was a judge from Jacksonville, who has just fairly recently went off the bench and then died about a couple of years ago.

LAW: Would that have been Green, Frederick Green, or Harold Trapp?

LONDRIGAN: No. He was over at --

LAW: Trapp?

LONDRIGAN: No. I knew Trapp, but not well. This is a guy from Lincoln.

LAW: I think that's Trapp.

LONDRIGAN: Okay, Trapp was over there for many years, but let me talk to some people about that and I'll get back with you.

LAW: Okay. So at the time you were there, you dealt mainly just with Craven.

³⁹ Judge Samuel O. Smith became a Circuit Judge in 1957 and served in that position until 1964. In 1960 he was appointed to the Appellate Court, and served in that position while still serving as a Circuit Judge. In 1964 he was elected a Justice of the Appellate Court and retired from that position in 1974.

LONDRIGAN: The time I was there, what?

LAW: You were just dealing mostly just with Justice Craven.

LONDRIGAN: Right. Then he would go into session with the other two members and they'd agree on it. I think they all caught their own ration of backlash with that one case, because it affected so many layers in the justice system. In their mind, it made their job a little bit harder.

LAW: So in around 1966, then you went into private practice.

LONDRIGAN: Yes, that's right, I think. No, I'll take that back. This again, explains how thoughtful and compassionate Judge Craven was. When he told me he was going to have Bob Brunzman come over, he already had a job lined up with me, as legal counsel for the Department of Children and Family -- they've changed that name several times -- Child and Family Service. Again, a part-time job.

LAW: Had you been working while you were clerking?

LONDRIGAN: Yes. Matter of fact, Judge Craven called me over and said, "I went to lunch with, this Judge Leonard Hoffman." He was from suburban Chicago, and it was a murder trial, and my client had been diagnosed as being drug dependent and uncontrollable. She was taking all sorts of different medications from different doctors, and I had them in a box, and was prepared to offer testimony from her treating physician, as to the effect that this had on her.

She took a gun and fired it. I think she shot him in the head, between the eyes, and the defense was temporary insanity, and he wouldn't allow me to bring in this type of

evidence in a murder case. So I said, "Could I be heard outside the presence of the jury?" He said, "All right, take the jury," and his later perception was that if I didn't work for Jim Craven, he would have found me in contempt of court and thrown me in jail. So, Craven contacted me shortly after that and told me what he had to say, and I explained I was just trying to make a record. She was found guilty of manslaughter.

LAW: This was that Seipel murder case?⁴⁰

LONDRIGAN: Yes.

LAW: Judge [Leonard] Hoffman?⁴¹

LONDRIGAN: Yes, absolutely.

LAW: I was reading a little bit about that case, and was it unusual for them to bring in a Judge from so far away, to hear a murder case?

LONDRIGAN: Yes it was, and I'm not sure of the reason, it's nobody else down here. I mean, these are families -- for instance, her family was a guy that used to race in all the Indianapolis 500s. He had a tavern out at the north end of town and was somehow connected with that. I've still got pictures of the family, and they were a close family, her brother and a couple of sisters. She was in withdrawal, because she didn't have

⁴⁰ See, *People v. Seipel*, 108 Ill. App. 2d 384 (4th Dist. App. Court, 1969). Also see, *Illinois State Journal*, October 25, 1966, pg. 1, October 28, 1966, pg. 21, November 2, 1966, pg. 29, November 3, 1966, pg. 17, March 28, 1967, pg. 13, March 30, 1967, pg. 19, March 31, 1967, pg. 21, April 2, 1967, pg. 1, 2, May 27, 1967, pg. 13, and May 30, 1967, pg. 11.

⁴¹ Judge Leonard Hoffman became the County Judge of Grundy County in 1950, and a Circuit Judge in 1957. From 1959-1964 he served on the Appellate Court while still serving as a Circuit Judge. He retired in 1984.

access to these drugs. She was shaking all the time that she was in the courtroom. I really don't know what happened to her or with the family after she was released.⁴²

LAW: So it seemed like as soon as you got into private practice, you were doing a lot of criminal work.

[00:45]

LONDRIGAN: And that's primarily because if the case was going to go to trial, they came in to see Jack Weiner, because that's what he held himself out to be. He practiced divorce law and he practiced criminal law, and so he dealt with a lot of people including murder defendants.

LAW: Tell me more about Jack Weiner.

LONDRIGAN: All right. You see where that round table with the books on it is located?

LAW: Mm-hmm.

LONDRIGAN: He had a desk there. He had chairs out in here. He really only saw clients after seven o'clock at night and they would park outside the window. One of the times, I was seated behind my desk, and people came in and said, "Come on, you're going to have to leave, we're to see Mr. Weiner," and I said, "Not in this office you aren't, at least until I leave." Well, I shooed them out and back into the reception area but what I said to Jack was, "You see how open this window is?"

LAW: Ah-huh.

⁴² See, *Seipel v. State Employees' Retirement System*, 8 Ill. App. 3d 182 (4th Dist. App. Court, 1972), and *Seipel v. State Employees' Retirement System*, 29 Ill. App. 3d 71 (4th Dist. App. Court, 1975).

LONDRIGAN: Cars would drive through here and cars would park there, and I didn't care if he used all the rooms to see these people at night, and he always got paid in cash, not in checks. I said, "Jack, the people you're dealing with are accused murderers, are criminals, and have spouses or girlfriends, and there's a lot of emotion tied to that." Now, he had that -- I didn't need to do that. He had an exercise bike here and cars would drive through here, in the darkness. I said Jack, "You're going to have a client, I know there aren't many of them that got sent to jail when you represented them." I said, "You're going to have disgruntled women and their husbands or their boyfriends, and they're going to come through here, see you on that bicycle, and they're going to shoot you down!" And so he built this wall out here, which is beginning to fall apart, and then he put these blinds on here so that they wouldn't be able to see him when he was riding on his exercise bicycle. He was a fun guy to be around. He had at least two girlfriends; one of them is still alive, I see her periodically, one who lived way, way out in the northwest end of the county, and another one that lived way, way out, on a farm in the northeast end of the county. He was up all night, driving back and forth, that's why he was never here in the morning. He just did his work after it got dark or in the summertime, he had these blinds closed. He asked me to try a number of cases. One of them, he was sitting in the audience, and I pointed that out to the jury. A young man, attractive fellow, he had a conflict. He represented the alternate, would-be defendant, criminal defendant, and I had a young man who had never been in trouble before, and as we were presenting this matter to the jury, he wanted to see what was going on, so he was sitting in the second row. Later on, his client came in and I brought out the fact that his client originally was a defendant. The guy was beaten to death with a beer bottle. I don't

know why the beer bottle didn't break, but it did not. The sheriff was on the witness stand, or his deputy, and I asked him if they ever took fingerprints, lifted off the bottle, which was the murder weapon, and he said, "No." I said, "Did you ever try to get an example of Mr. Weiner's client, who's seated in the front row here," because the testimony placed that in his hand at this time of a fight outside the tavern. Jack didn't care though. His client got off and eventually, my client did too.

LAW: This is the Miles case, in the mid-'70s?

LONDRIGAN: It's the right vintage. I don't remember the name. What's the first name?

LAW: Murval, Murval Miles, for the slaying of James Shoemaker?⁴³

LONDRIGAN: That may well be it. It's just that I don't remember their names. Was it a beating with a beer bottle?

LAW: I think it's the same one, because here in the newspaper article it says, "Fickas fingerprints never were taken. He said his fingers are permanently curled from severe cuts. [Assistant State's Attorney James] Grohne asked him if that was the reason why his prints were not taken and Fickas' said it was." It also says, "Londrigan suggested Fickas told that story because it was the only way he could explain his fingerprints being on the bottle." Anyways, so Jack had been -- him and your father had worked together for a long period of time?

LONDRIGAN: Well, let me give you what that period was. My dad was with the United Mineworkers, I think I told you that.

LAW: Right.

⁴³ See, *State Journal Register*, August 22, 1975, pg. 63, and August 23, 1975, pg. 28.

LONDRIGAN: Up until 1930, his younger brother, Jim, did all the office work during that period of time. So, where are we now?

LAW: Okay, so this would have been when everybody was down at the Ridgley Building, I think?

LONDRIGAN: Yes, 9th floor.

LAW: And so I'm guessing Jack had an office down there and came to know your dad and your uncle when they all worked there?

LONDRIGAN: I think I mentioned it to you the last time. The 9th floor in the Ridgley Building, as soon as you get out, you would see A.M. Fitzgerald, all the way down to Bob Heckenkamp, when he came later, after the war.

LAW: Right.

LONDRIGAN: Then you turn the corner and at the end of that corridor, there was Londrigan & Londrigan, and J.H. Weiner, and then Jack's young cousin, Bob moved two-thirds of the way down that corridor and hung a sign out, like Robert Weiner. A lot of people thought they were going down to see Weiner, and he would be there during the day and Jack would not be there during the day. So Bob got a lot of Jack's clients by mistake. Then we moved over here, I think it was 1972 probably, that's pretty close, and we invited Bob to occupy one of the offices out here, out of courtesy, and he was here for about a year, on that front corner.

LAW: Bob Weiner?

LONDRIGAN: He was here, because Bob called me in on a number of cases too, cases that he wouldn't or didn't try, and it would make it more convenient to him if he were to be here. Well, he ended up joint venturing that pink building over here, just across the street, and Craig Randle became a partner in our firm and he took over Bob's corner office.

LAW: So tell me about those names you mentioned; Fitzgerald, Heckenkamp, the Weiners. Those are pretty well-known criminal lawyers at the time. What are your memories of each one of those? Fitzgerald, we'll start with Fitzgerald.

LONDRIGAN: I always relished coming up to the 9th floor, because I was likely to see Arthur Fitzgerald. My dad was very, very close to him. It's ironic, but when my father came home from World War I, I told you the story about going into his office.

LAW: Right, uh-huh.

LONDRIGAN: Okay. So, Art Fitzgerald represented my dad's first wife.

LAW: Interesting.

LONDRIGAN: And later, when Art was going through a divorce, my dad represented his wife, and they remained fast friends. Art Fitzgerald's parents came from Ireland, after our Civil War. They did not come in the famine. Most of the Fitz that you see, Fitzgerald, are part of the French Norman component of the Irish population that were introduced around the year 1200, and they all intermarried. They had no real love for the English and their claim to the thrones. Anyway, Art Fitzgerald went to the University of Michigan and was a top sprinter and was the quarterback when Michigan's football team

was the Big Ten Champion. Art had a brother who was also a lawyer and a poet, and he had a very progressive disease, and he died around 1930.⁴⁴ He had a son though,

[01:00]

Robert Fitzgerald, who went to Springfield High School, I think he was captain of the football team, and its quarterback.⁴⁵ He ended up on the East Coast, teaching in college. I think I might have told you this before too, that he translated all the Greek classic literature, he with another -- Dudley Fitz, and Robert Fitzgerald, together are the ones that translated all that classic Greek language. He ended up marrying one of his students. He may have died fifteen years ago or so, but I've got a book at home that gives all that history. But he had to watch his father die slowly. His father committed suicide.

LAW: Art Fitzgerald?

LONDRIGAN: No. I think his name was Robert also. He took a car and drove it into a dead-end street. We used to have a Concordia Seminary, a brick building, that was at the end of an east-west street. He killed himself, because he knew he had an incurable disease. He was a lawyer and he was truly Art's closest relative. I think it had a lot to do with Art also getting into the bottle. He'd often go into a courtroom drunk, but drunk or sober, he was better than anybody else that would be on the other side. He knew that and the Judges around here knew that, and he had been through the divorce and the death of his brother. And then for a long period of time he was off the bottle, and that includes the time that he represented Orville Hodge, and that was in 1956 and '57, and I think it was the summer of '56 that he died suddenly. I'm not sure what the cause of death was but it

⁴⁴ For Robert E. Fitzgerald's obituary, see, *Illinois State Journal*, January 28, 1929, pg. 1.

⁴⁵ For more on Robert S. Fitzgerald, see, *State Journal-Register*, October 12, 2010, pg. 6. Also see, <http://sangamoncountyhistory.org/wp/?p=434>

was sudden. The Irish group here in town, I believe they called us the [Sons of Erin], Art Fitzgerald was the first Sons of Erin, they formed that, I think in the early '50s, or maybe it was right after the war.⁴⁶

LAW: I was doing a little bit of research on Jack, and I saw that he was the first public defender in Sangamon County.⁴⁷

LONDRIGAN: I didn't know that.

LAW: I thought that was interesting.

LONDRIGAN: He probably got them all acquitted, so he lost his job.

LAW: So I mean, --

LONDRIGAN: Or left them to earn some money.

LAW: So at that particular time, the early '60s, if you needed a criminal defense lawyer, the 9th floor of the Ridgley Building would have been where you would have gone.

LONDRIGAN: Yeah, I think that's a fair statement.

LAW: Who were the other -- and this wouldn't just include criminal law, but who were the other sort of prominent lawyers in the community at that particular time, when you first started practicing?

⁴⁶ Orville Hodge, State Auditor of Illinois, was involved in an embezzlement scandal, and sent to the Menard Penitentiary in 1956 for a sentence of twelve-fifteen years. See, *Illinois State Journal*, August 14, 1956, pg. 1, 2, August 19, pg. 52, and August 22, pg. 1, 3. For Arthur M. Fitzgerald's obituary, see, *Illinois State Journal*, July 17, 1957, pg. 1, 3.

⁴⁷ See, *Illinois State Journal*, October 28, 1949, pg. 35.

LONDRIGAN: Well, I mentioned Brunzman, Beam, Kenney and, oh the guy that used to write all the music and skits for the bar event which they just had like two or three weeks ago. Crain, John Crain. Then there was Gillespie, Burke and Gillespie.

LAW: Now, were they in the Ridgley Building, do you remember?

LONDRIGAN: No, I remember them being over on, 7th Street. I think it was 7th Street, just north of Monroe, and on the west side of the street.

LAW: Do you remember any other prominent lawyers at that time?

LONDRIGAN: Al Newkirk, who was defense lawyer, civil cases, several of them, some of them we have here. George Gillespie and Bob Gillespie, they were both in the same firm. Well, give me some names that you've got.

LAW: Giffin & Winning.

LONDRIGAN: Giffin, Winning, Lindner & Newkirk, that was a big firm. That's Al Newkirk, that I just mentioned, was in that firm.

LAW: Brown, Hay & Stephens?

LONDRIGAN: Yes. There were two Stephens over there.

LAW: Harvey and Bob?

LONDRIGAN: Yep. Harvey came into bankruptcy court one time, and I was over there because Bud asked me to go, and I started cross examining him, because he decided that he was going to testify in bankruptcy proceedings over there. And I asked him a bunch of questions that I didn't think he could answer, simply because I didn't learn before I went in there, and he turns and said, "Your Honor, I want to assert the Fifth

Amendment.” I thought what the hell? I never go into bankruptcy, I’m not trying to put him in jail. I just asked him questions that he didn’t want to have answered, and they abandoned the whole proceedings and then he answered it or it got resolved, because I didn’t have any more part in it. But it just surprised me, that he thought I was trying to talk him into something that would be a criminal offense. But he didn’t really try cases, and he had a younger brother they used to call “Chug,” that was his nickname, “Chug” Stephens, and he was just my age, I think, a good friend of [Hugh] “Cracker” Graham [III], I’d known him since high school, never did a lot, but Harvey was senior to him and he’s the one who was taking his father’s place in that firm.

LAW: I think there was another firm, which is now called Sorling Northrup, but it may have had a different name then.

LONDRIGAN: It used to be Sorling, Catron and Harden. [John] Harden was the youngest and he got, it was some type of mental impairment, and he used to wander over -- I used to go to Hazel Dell School out at the lake, and he lived a couple of lanes down, and he quit going down to what we used to call the Illinois Building, and we’d see him walking around, and he had young children. I don’t know that they had it diagnosed as Alzheimer’s, but he died a relatively young man. [B.] Lacey Catron, who was friends with my family, and I knew Lou, who was their oldest boy, and they had a couple of younger daughters, and Lacey died, probably when he was forty-five or so. So, Sorling was there forever. It wasn’t just Sorling, Catron and Harden. Now they’ve got a list as long as your arm, and one of those at one time was Bud Potter. Bud then left that firm and went with a couple of bankers here in town and I would talk to him all the time. He’s a very bright guy. He knows things I don’t know, for instance like banking.

LAW: Right, right.

LONDRIGAN: I don't know anything about accounting. I don't know the difference between a plus and a minus, much less a debit or credit. And I said, "You don't want to have just one client. You need to have a firm that will represent those clients." He eventually -- well, when we came over here in 1972, I think we'd been together for about two years, so he and I were probably in the Ridgley Building. That's when we were talking with Mike and Ben. Ben Miller was in a small firm.⁴⁸ I'm trying to think of the older guy, Harold Olsen. Ben was the young lawyer in a firm that one defense lawyer had been in for forty or fifty years, and he's the one I told you about, that his sail boat got struck with lightning, and he said the defense was an act of God.

LAW: Right, right.

LONDRIGAN: But you probably have it listed. It's just a two-man firm, Olsen and Miller. He didn't live more than two or three years after Ben opened his own practice.

LAW: Would you say most lawyers at that time were general practice attorneys?

LONDRIGAN: I think the majority, yes.

LAW: And was the local bar politically and socially engaged with the community?

[01:15]

LONDRIGAN: Not as much as they are now. The bar association itself resurrected, just a couple of weeks ago, what we used to do on an annual basis and, you know I got asked, I guess because of my age, about the history of Thanksgiving Day hikes. Those originated,

⁴⁸ Olsen, Cantrill & Miller.

I told the reporter, in 1965. There was one attorney before that, that used to begin Thanksgiving Day hikes from Washington Park, out to a farm. I think it was Earl Hodges. Then, we used to have services in the church of choice, of the widow or widower, if anyone died, and everyone was invited, and the bar association would send out notices of that.

BELZER: About fifteen minutes.

LAW: But were there lawyers in town that did exclusively, political work?

LONDRIGAN: Yeah, I'll give you one, he's still alive and a client of mine, Bill Feurer, F-E-U-R-E-R, not the same as Imy Feuer, who was a judge here for years.⁴⁹ He went to University of Illinois. He, I think was in the governor's office when Otto Kerner was governor. He's never been a trial lawyer but he was someone that everybody respected and universally trusted, so I think most of the time he was an individual practitioner. He was a lawyer's lawyer that, if you needed something you didn't know anything about, you could go to him and he could point it out to you, where you should go or who you should see, or who your client should see.

LAW: I guess the way that I've had it told to me by another attorney was that there were lawyers in town that worked exclusively in state government, and they'd get shuffled around as administrations would change. And then there was also lawyers that practiced but were also engaged in local politics.

⁴⁹ For more on Bill Feurer, see, https://www.illinois.gov/alplm/library/collections/oralhistory/illinoisstatecraft/general/Documents/FeurerWil/Feurer_Wil_4FNL.pdf. I.J. Feuer was appointed an Associate Circuit Judge in 1971, and served in that capacity until 1979.

LONDRIGAN: Well I think there's a big difference. I think if a lawyer understands the law and the implications of unfair application of certain rules that ought to be changed, amended or stricken down, you have to do that to protect your client or to protect the type of people that you represent. For instance, some of the things that I have over here, deal with what went on with the insurance industry thirty years ago. They would appear to create a loss by inflating claims. In other words, there was a nickname for it, claims not yet reported or something, and I've got it in some of this material here, but what they would do is report a reserve as if it were a paid claim. In other words, we know this is out there, we'll assign it a value. If we want to raise the rates what do we do? We put all these imaginary claims, which have not been made, and group them together, and raise the rates. And they got by with this for like twenty, twenty-five years. So, it was more of a business decision that was peculiar to the insurance industry, that relates primarily to motor vehicles, and at that time, a lot of the cases that I was involved in were related to motor vehicle safety. This may interest you because it deals with some of those. I'm not going to say anything, so I'm just going to walk over and bring this. I didn't have this when we met.

LAW: An obelisk?

LONDRIGAN: Well, if you read what it says, but it's very heavy. That is when I told AIEG, which is Attorneys Information and Exchange Group, and it's after I subpoenaed Richard Nixon, in the Ford matter, I think that we talked about the last time.

LAW: Yeah, yeah.

LONDRIGAN: It's also when I was informed, for the first time, that my wife had Alzheimer's disease, and it was also at the time that I decided I'm not going to take on any more major cases and fulfill my responsibility to her, as primary caregiver. That's where I came from this morning, was visiting her at St. Joseph's, but this goes all the way back to the subpoena that I got served on former president --

LAW: Oh, we can leave it there, that's fine. So this would be, I guess what you're getting at is this is sort of a form of lobbying almost.

LONDRIGAN: Well, what I'm --

LAW: Or advocacy may be a better word.

LONDRIGAN: What we were trying to do at that time is show that the then president at that time, Nixon, and all the people that attended a certain meeting, were caught on the White House recording.

LAW: Right, right.

LONDRIGAN: And when we listened to that, and you can listen to that or anybody can now, because of what happened. I believe that right now, the automobiles that we drive are safer than they ever have been; a bunch of these cases. For instance, windshields popping out, seatbelts that cause internal injury because they aren't designed properly, gasoline tanks that invade the passenger compartment and explode. They passed off any serious or realistic fix to that problem five years after the conversation in the White House. So what we did, we formed this organization, to instruct anybody that wants to become a member, do not settle your cases early if you have a clear cut case, because they will ask you for a protective order, so no one else can find out what they found in

their investigation. And we were able to put an end to that and then form our own database down in Alabama, and everyone shared their discovery information. Everybody that was in this organization would send what they got in discovery and it would be indexed, so that if someone else had a failure, they would be able to go to... So they finally, about early '90s, began to really make major design changes in their vehicles, that eliminated a lot of these injuries. What they were doing before is... my god, we don't want what we gave to this guy, or what he found on his own, to be put in other people's hands. So they would pay them a lot of money to have the judge enter an order that you can't distribute this discovery matter to other victims who find themselves in similar situations.

BELZER: Four minutes.

LONDRIGAN: So anyway, a good friend of mine, Jim Gilbert, I wasn't aware of this, when they had their annual meeting in New Orleans, and I had told them that, for the reason I gave before, that I was not going to undertake cases that were going to take eight, nine, or ten years.

LAW: Right, right.

LONDRIGAN: And so he designed that goodbye present to me.

LAW: Ben, why don't we just stop that and put in a new tape.

BELZER: Okay.

LAW: Raymond Terrell.⁵⁰

⁵⁰ Raymond Terrell was State's Attorney of Sangamon County from 1960-68, and a Circuit Judge from 1983-91.

LONDRIGAN: Yes. Everybody liked Ray Terrell. He had a bunch of assistants over there that were really good guys and yet, he had several over there that didn't get along with the defense bar. I used to write the skits for the bar dinner and one of them involved three prosecutors that were always fussing with the public defenders, and they were all reporting to the State's Attorney at that time. We got into this before, but we had them go report to the State's Attorney and he'd say, "I'm Inman." Well, Art Inman, I think is maybe up in Peoria now. "I'm Eichmann," the German, Eichmann, you know, and they're all giving the heil Hitler, and the last one is "I'm Steigmann." Well, Steigmann is on the appellate court bench now. He didn't think that was really very funny at all, but I saw him over at the University of Illinois reunion and he was in a good mood. That goes back in history, when Hollis, Richard Hollis, was the State's Attorney.⁵¹

LAW: Any memories of him? I think you had argued some cases against him in court.

LONDRIGAN: Yes. Hollis reminded me a lot of Hitler, that's how that skit was presented, that they're all going to do whatever Hollis tells them to do. Hollis was quiet, he didn't try many cases as State's Attorney. He got some people, including the Inman, Eichmann, Steigmann, who were good trial lawyers, and they used to have imaginary problems with each other. John Casey, for years, was a good friend of mine, a good Republican, and I might have told you this the last time, he was hard of hearing. So, Art Inman, who was one of the three henchmen, is yelling at him on the elevator. As he's going down he says, "Art, I'm tuning you out." Unless you shouted at him, he wouldn't hear you anyway, so he just dialed him down as the doors closed.

⁵¹ Richard Hollis was State's Attorney of Sangamon County from 1968-72.

LAW: I believe you managed the campaign of the fellow that ran against Hollis in '68. Do you have any memories of that campaign for State's Attorney?

LONDRIGAN: The one that I remember helping was George Kenney, when he ran for county treasurer, against -- we put up a big dollar bill on a billboard and put his picture inside Washington's elliptical framing and we said, "Let George do it." I'm trying to...

LAW: That would have been Robert Brodt.

LONDRIGAN: No.

LAW: In '68, that's the one I'm asking about.

LONDRIGAN: She was the wife of a lawyer here in town, who held another office. I want to say Ostermeier but it isn't Ostermeier its Oblinger. The two of them, both were lawyers, and I think George Kenney ran in about 1970.⁵²

LAW: We can look it up. Okay, Hollis was also in charge of the Paul Powell investigation. Do you have any memories of the Paul Powell incident?

LONDRIGAN: My dad represented the banker from Chicago, the Southmorr Bank. I think it was Ed Hintz, I think it was H-I-N-T-Z, and Art Fitzgerald, represented Orville Hodges. Fitzgerald represented Orville Hodge, up until the time he died, and I think he died before Hodge pleaded guilty. Art Fitzgerald would have never pleaded guilty. My dad represented Ed Hintz, as I mentioned, who was head of the South -- what it is, I think you wrote it down, Southmorr Bank?

LAW: Mm-hmm.

⁵² George Kenney ran against Josephine Oblinger for County Clerk in 1966.

LONDRIGAN: Yeah. Hintz handled a lot of his transactions through that bank. And everybody thought that we would have a democratic governor in that election but it did not work out that way. That's when Stratton was elected the first time.⁵³ Nineteen fifty-six was when all of this happened. Everybody thought Kerner, at that time, was going to be the candidate for governor, but they named Judge Austin from up in Cook County and he got beat pretty good, it wasn't very close, and then Stratton was the governor, for two terms.

LAW: What about Paul Powell, any memories of Paul Powell?

LONDRIGAN: Yes, as a matter of fact, we put on a skit at the bar exam and all this money was in a shoebox, and they called over -- I think we talked about this before, but a young Judge Bill Chamberlain who had worked over in the governor's office, and I think also worked for Powell in the house of representatives. He went over and orchestrated everything, at great risk to himself, because he served on the bench. Everybody liked him, but he just went over, into the hotel room, supervised everything, I think he used to work for Powell, when he was Speaker of the House of Representative. Nobody said a word bad about him, because they knew he was such a straight arrow. And then he died prematurely, just two or three years later.⁵⁴

LAW: I just wanted to ask you about a couple of other lawyers. I know you practiced, for a little while, with John Curren. We haven't talked about him at all.

⁵³ Gov. William Stratton was governor from 1953-61. Richard B. Austin, a Chicago Superior Court Judge, was the Democratic candidate for Governor in 1956.

⁵⁴ Former Legal Advisor to Gov. Otto Kerner, and Secretary of State, William Chamberlain was elected a Circuit Court Judge in 1964 and served until his death in 1972.

LONDRIGAN: No. I grew up with John Curren's family, and particularly his youngest daughter. I dated her during high school and a few times after that, her name was Cecilia. There was a tavern, Sunset Inn, it's still there, you'll find motorcycles all the way around it, but all the lawyers used to stop at the Sunset Inn. In the back, they had little cabins where people that were on the road, Route 66, could stop, come in. The barroom itself was very small. Right off to the side were a bunch of slot machines. Not only John Curren would come in there, Warren Moyer, his top assistant, and several other attorneys, including my dad and my mom, and they were all good friends with a fellow by the name of Bob H-E-F-F-E-R-N-A-N and his wife Eleanor Heffernan. During nice weather, they would go out back and bet on horseshoes for money. Then I remember they used to – resent that I didn't want to be there. There were many other places that I'd rather be. They'd give me a handful of quarters and let me go play the slot machines, and that's better than watching them throw horseshoes. But it was just a place everybody knew about and everybody had been there, maybe only once or twice, but they wanted to see what it was like. Now, that same building is out there, but they have modern, prefab little places set up and a huge pink elephant with a martini. It's in front of a big, big storage area, and it's no longer on the highway, it's on the pavement that used to be 66, headed south to St. Louis. Walt Simhauser would also stop there sometimes.

LAW: He practiced with Heckenkamp didn't he?

LONDRIGAN: Yes.

LAW: They sort of took over after John was gone, and Fitzgerald?

LONDRIGAN: I think Simhauser was probably senior there. Also, I think Warren Moyer was in that office, and Bob Heckenkamp during that time.

LAW: Any memories of Bob?

LONDRIGAN: Yeah. When I was senior in law school, I decided to spend part of my summer at the University of Wisconsin. At that time, all the guys in the Big Ten schools had jobs. I did two part-time; as a lifeguard for the city and teacher for the Red Cross. So, what I wanted to do is lighten my load in the final year, knowing that what I wanted to do is come back over to Springfield, in the federal program that was set up, for all the different reasons I gave you earlier. It was so different up at Lake Mendota. You walk up Bascom Hill and that's where the law school was, and to the south, that's where the stadium was, but along the waterfront, there were all either sorority or -- well, the boys weren't there, but all those buildings, sorority or fraternity, were filled up with young women, and not women from Wisconsin, but women that came up from the South. They would entertain, they would rotate between these buildings, like SAE. There were all women in there, and would hire a band and they would cook all this food, so you didn't have to go into a pub. And I'd never seen anything quite like that. They had a place called Hoofers, which used to be riding stables, so you could get a horse and you could ride around Lake Mendota.

[01:45]

They had changed Hoofers into what essentially was a yacht club. There weren't any horses there when I was there but there were plenty of boats. I was only up there for six weeks, but it was really different than anything I expected, and when I say different I

mean better, simply because it was -- at that time, you could drink at eighteen, which you could now, but in Illinois, you had to be twenty-one, and they actually had taps in the basement, where they would roll in the keg of beer and then tap it. So, when I saw that, I began to wonder, what do they do on the East Coast, if this is what goes on in the Big Ten. It all came as a big surprise to me.

LAW: Was Bob Heckenkamp associated with that in some way? I'm not sure I'm following you.

LONDRIGAN: Bob Heckenkamp gave me -- I was in law school at that time. He gave me a project and I went through -- this was an automotive collision case.

LAW: Okay.

LONDRIGAN: I think I wrote the pleadings, the initial pleadings, and then all these things that he should look for. He settled the case without trying it and then he gave me a few hundred dollars for doing the preliminary work, when I was up in Wisconsin.

LAW: Okay, I see, so he funded your trip to Wisconsin.

LONDRIGAN: It worked out that way, yeah.

LAW: Okay. I kind of wanted to ask you about some of the judges in Springfield at that time. Any memories of Creel Douglas?⁵⁵

LONDRIGAN: Yes. He tried to avoid any tough decisions that he would have to make. He wanted to be everybody's friend. He was not a character that was either your friend or your enemy. He tried his best to give each side a little bit and sometimes they would

⁵⁵ Creel Douglass was elected a Probate Judge in 1950, and then a Circuit Judge in 1957. He was retained under the new Judicial Article in 1964 and again in 1970. He resigned in 1971.

be frustrated with that, but they were never mad at Creel, because he was always smiling and very gentlemanly to everybody that came in front of him. But he avoided any really big cases or controversies. He found a way, when they all got together, to say I don't know, I don't feel comfortable hearing that type of case.

LAW: DeWitt Crow?⁵⁶

LONDRIGAN: DeWitt Crow, in 1947, ran against my father for circuit court. My dad had a lot of friends in the 7th Circuit, which goes all the way down almost to St. Louis. It goes Scott, Green, and Jersey Counties, Macoupin, Morgan, Sangamon, but he's dead now. The County Chairman at that time was Conrad Noll. His youngest son, Jon, was my favorite butterflyer when I was coaching at the Illinois Country Club in the summer of 1956. He is still living, and has a son that works over in the courthouse; I'm not sure what his job is. The Noll family is well known. Conrad Noll was Chairman of Sangamon County Republicans and also a good friend with my dad and what he told him was you really didn't have a chance in that race. We kept all the Democrats left over there, at their desks throughout election day, with the understanding that the people would vote a Republican ticket, we sent them out to vote and call it a day. It was kind of interesting. It's a story my dad would tell over and over again, but he was the Republican County Chairman in 1947.

LAW: Did your dad then have animosity towards Crow?

LONDRIGAN: No. Crow was an older man who wasn't interested in either creating or resolving controversy. He was waiting for his pension. One of the jokes at this year's

⁵⁶ DeWitt Crow was first elected a Circuit Judge in 1947, he retired in 1964.

skit, put on by the bar association, dealt with the Swami routine that they used to do, where Johnny Carson would hold the envelope up to his head. “What is a requirement for Judges in Sangamon County?” And the response was, after he gave it considerable thought, “A degree from SHG.” All those guys over there went to that high school and they’re all buddies and they’re all about the same age. So that drew a few laughs.

LAW: There’s a couple magistrates I wanted to ask you about, and I think one of them, you were really close to. His name was Patrick Cadigan.⁵⁷

LONDRIGAN: Yes. He married a very close friend of Carol and mine. We used to have a dinner group, where maybe eight or nine couples would rotate between homes. It would be a Mexican dinner, it would be an Italian dinner, and you were supposed to dress appropriately.

LAW: Right.

LONDRIGAN: Pat Cadigan was a year ahead of me. His son is here in town, he’s a CPA. He was not a trial lawyer. I think he was a Democrat, although I don’t remember him being that active in politics. I think he worked for Gillespie, Burke & Gillespie most of the time. But he was a year ahead of me all the way through school, and he went to University of Illinois too.

LAW: What about Richard Cadigin?⁵⁸

⁵⁷ Patrick Cadigan was a Magistrate Judge from 1965-1968. Prior to becoming a judge, he served as a parliamentarian for the Illinois Senate, and after being a judge he served as an aide to House Minority Leader T. Arthur McGlooin. He was later elected to and served as President of the Springfield Park District. He died in September of 1996.

⁵⁸ Richard Cadigin became a Magistrate Judge in 1970, and continued to serve as an Associate Judge until his election as a Circuit Judge in 1978. He retired in July, 1995.

LONDRIGAN: He just died a few years ago. He was on the bench for most of the time. He was a year or two older than I was. He was a good friend with all of these Republicans, although he was a Democrat.

LAW: Would you consider this to be a Republican county?

LONDRIGAN: Yes, traditionally, until the Depression and Roosevelt ran. And then I think there was, when there was probably the Kennedy election in 1960. The problem during those years was that the center of Democratic power was in Chicago, and a lot of downstate Democrats with good cause didn't trust people in authority in Chicago, and unless you had a really good ticket downstate, you were penalized by the impression that people had -- that they didn't get a square count in Chicago. That was the big issue. They only won by a few votes. Kennedy only carried Cook County by a few votes, a few hundred votes. Chicago always had the habit of holding back on ballots being brought in, when really, they should be collected first, rather than spread out across the hinterlands. So, as a matter of fact, I majored in political science, with a minor in history, and that's what I wrote my thesis about, was all the mistakes that had been made in Chicago, and how everyone else downstate, Democrats and Republicans, had to live with those mistakes.

LAW: So you wouldn't characterize Sangamon County as being...sort of having a Republican machine? Is it different from Chicago?

LONDRIGAN: I think the Republican administrations down here and in Sangamon County, didn't have all the problems with credibility that they did in Chicago, and I think that hurt, even if you had a good candidate. That was a burden that any Democratic

candidate had to carry, so that's why those elections of individual Democrats are few and far between, because they really didn't have an organization down here. I couldn't begin

[02:00]

to name all the people who, for short periods of time, were supposed to be chairmen of the party down here. That only happened when there was a landslide vote, and you had to be close to a Chicago Democrat to get what you wanted in that election.

LAW: Okay, a couple of other judges. Well, I guess he would have been a magistrate first, in the '60s; Jerry Rhodes.⁵⁹

LONDRIGAN: Jerry Rhodes was originally a clarinet player in the University of Illinois band, and went to the Rose Bowl. Let's see, he's older than I was, so some time --

LAW: In the '50s?

LONDRIGAN: -- in the '50s, probably '55 or '56. Whenever the University of Illinois was in the Rose Bowl.⁶⁰

LAW: Right, okay, back in the old days.

LONDRIGAN: Yeah.

LAW: Any memories of him as a magistrate or as a judge?

LONDRIGAN: He was fair. I don't even know if he was a Democrat or a Republican. I remember the only custody case that I had ever been in was in front of him. I was representing a doctor friend of mine, whose wife had become a very militant and active in

⁵⁹ Jerry Rhodes was a Magistrate Judge from 1965-71, then became an Associate Judge, was appointed a Circuit Judge in 1981, and elected in 1982. He retired from the bench in 1987.

⁶⁰ The U of I went to the Rose Bowl in 1952 and beat Stanford, 40-7.

politics and in what was going on in Springfield, and he had to almost give up his practice to pick the kids up at school in the evening, because she had better things to do. And she called in a witness that was well known to the women's groups throughout the country that was in a wheelchair, and she was on her death bed. And he didn't say anything, I didn't say anything, but I think he kind of resented that, and so he had the courage to take the custody away from the mother and giving them to an eye doctor, a specialist. But most of the time, Judge Rhodes got along with everybody.

LAW: Harvey Beam.⁶¹

LONDRIGAN: Harvey Beam used to be a grade school teacher. He was part of Brunsman, Beam, Crain and Kenney. He was a lot like the grade school teacher I had when I went to Hazel Dell. He grew up on a farm. He didn't have an enemy in the world. I think he was a Democrat but I'm not sure. He was not a guy that was upfront, and I think he did mostly wills and probate and things like that, non-controversial things.

LAW: Simon Freedman.⁶²

LONDRIGAN: Si Freedman, the only comment I have about him is he stayed too long on the bench. I would go over to get things signed and he was almost always asleep, sitting behind his desk, and I felt I was impinging by knocking on the side of a door that was open, and waking him, but he never took offense.

⁶¹ Harvey Beam was first elected a Circuit Judge in 1970, by a slim margin of 102 votes. Beam, running as a Democrat, defeated Jay Waldo Ackerman, running as a Republican, for the judgeship. After the election a lawsuit was filed in the Sangamon County Circuit Court demanding a recount by Ackerman. The suit was later dropped when Ackerman was appointed to the Circuit Court to fill the vacancy created by the retirement of Creel Douglass in 1971. Beam was retained in 1976 and retired in 1982.

⁶² Simon Friedman was appointed as Circuit Judge in 1972, filling the vacancy created by the death of Judge William Chamberlain. He was elected to that position in 1974, and served until 1990.

LAW: J. Waldo Ackerman.⁶³

LONDRIGAN: Wally was everybody's friend, even when he got on the federal bench.

You wouldn't know his politics unless you asked the right question, but he was a Republican state's attorney, and he wasn't on the federal bench that long, as I remember it. He was over there; I think right after Omer Poos wasn't he?

LAW: I think he replaced [Harlington] Wood [Jr.].

LONDRIGAN: Okay.

LAW: And then I think he passed away in the early '80s, and then [Richard] Mills took over.

LONDRIGAN: Yeah. He was a good guy.

LAW: What about Byron Koch?⁶⁴

LONDRIGAN: I really haven't had many things in front of him.

LAW: Howard Lee White?⁶⁵

LONDRIGAN: Where was he from?

LAW: I don't think he was from Sangamon County, but I think he sometimes heard cases here.

He wasn't a resident judge or anything.

⁶³ Judge Wally Ackerman was State's Attorney of Sangamon County from 1956-1960. He ran against Harvey Beam in 1970 to fill a vacancy created by the death of Circuit Judge Clem Smith; Ackerman lost by 102 votes. In 1971 he was appointed to fill the vacancy created by the retirement of Creel Douglass. In 1976 he was appointed a Federal District Judge and served in that position until his death in 1984.

⁶⁴ Judge Byron Koch was appointed the County Judge of Scott County in 1950, and served in that position until he became an Associate Judge in 1964 under the new Judicial Article. He then became a Circuit Judge under the Constitution of 1970, and served in that position until 1978. He was recalled in 1980.

⁶⁵ Howard Lee White was elected the County Judge of Jersey County in 1962, became an Associate Circuit Judge under the new Judicial Article in 1964, and then was elected a Circuit Judge in 1966. He was retained in 1972 and 1978 and retired in 1984.

LONDRIGAN: He probably came from --

LAW: I want to say Girard, but I don't know for sure.

LONDRIGAN: Yes, south of there.

LAW: Yeah.

LONDRIGAN: I don't have any feelings about him one way or the other.

LAW: Paul Verticchio?⁶⁶

LONDRIGAN: I really liked Verticchio.

LAW: Verticchio, yes that's correct, I'm sorry.

LONDRIGAN: He had a son that was also named Paul, I think, that practiced with him.

Once he left the bench, and most of the cases I tried in front of him were ones that me and my client were happy with, but once he got off the bench, I asked him to get involved in a class action that we had and he really didn't do anything except use his credentials and friendship, and the fact that this was venued down in Macoupin County. But, in every case where he was judge, I think he ruled in my favor. He was well liked; he got along with Republicans and Democrats, whoever was in front of him.

LAW: What about John B. Wright or Frances Bergen?⁶⁷

LONDRIGAN: No, I don't have any recollection of either one.

⁶⁶ Paul Verticchio was elected a Circuit Court Judge in 1964, and retained in 1970. He retired in 1976. Prior to being elected Circuit Judge, he had served as Macoupin County State's Attorney from 1956-1964.

⁶⁷ John B. Wright was first elected a County Judge for Morgan County in 1958, became an Associate Circuit Judge under the new Judicial Article of 1964, and then was elected a Circuit Judge in 1972. He retired in 1978. Francis J. Bergen was first elected a County Judge in 1950 in Macoupin County, and became an Associate Circuit Judge under the new Judicial Article in 1964. He retired in 1975.

LAW: So, do you recall the first appellate work that you did? Would that have been that Sherman case?⁶⁸

LONDRIGAN: Let me see.

LAW: It's the one involving the young boy that was paralyzed, out at Lake Springfield, from diving.

LONDRIGAN: Yes.

LAW: I think that may have originally been your father's case.

LONDRIGAN: No.

LAW: No?

LONDRIGAN: He was involved in it and that was the case, I think, where my second son, Patrick Joseph, was born, and I was called out of the courthouse. My dad sat with me all through that case, but I tried it. I put on every witness, made the opening, made a closing and rebuttal. I understood that case because that's where I lived in the summertime. I was an instructor for the Sangamon County and Red Cross, Learn to Swim program. I went through all these small communities, these buses would come in, and I was the head lifeguard out there.

So, when they built Lake Springfield they made a big, big mistake. The first thing they did was to build a dyke out there, with a walk, a board, a two-by-four, or several linked together. It was about a quarter to a third of a mile long, and they did that because

⁶⁸ See, *Sherman v. City of Springfield*, 111 Ill. App. 2d 391 (4th Dist. App. Court, 1969). Also see, *Sherman v. City of Springfield*, 77 Ill. App. 2d 195 (4th Dist. App. Court, 1966). Also see, *Illinois State Journal*, August 26, 1965, pg. 47, August 28, pg. 15, and November 25, pg. 20.

they thought the lake water was contaminated or dirty. So what did they do? They went in, in shallow water, where it would be about more than waist high, maybe armpits or in-between, and a lot of the people would take a run out into the water, so they couldn't go any further, and then they'd dive. Well, they strung this pipe in the shallow water and it was chlorinated water that they were pumping in there, and the force of the pump would blow the sand away from the pipe, which was about this size, and often referred to as the big fat pipe. We had all sorts of first aid sheets that we would fill out for people that had problems with that pipe. It's usually scuffing their ankle or they'd sink in a sinkhole, where it had been washed away. But it turned out, we took samples of the water that was in that area, the contained area, and it was always worse, because of the huge number of people, and this is mostly before swimming pool in your backyard and air conditioning throughout your house, so there were four and five thousand people during that period of time, that would come out, sit on a blanket until they go into the water.

LAW: Ah-huh.

LONDRIGAN: So, I had been a witness, this was after I was a lawyer too, of a drowning that was out there. I explained that whole thing and how it happened, so when this happened, I was just the logical person to bring this young kid to -- I think he was sixteen maybe. And what he did was run into the water, dive beneath the water, in about three feet of water, and collide with this pipe, which I explain, as I'm explaining to you now, shouldn't have been there in the first place. It served no useful purpose. And I'm going to tell this to the mayor also, that dyke needs to be taken out of there. There need be no lifeguards. All you've got to do is what they did over at what they used to call the

“nigger beach.” They had uniform policemen out there that would direct a car full of blacks that came out to go swimming, over to this little place. It would be right beyond the big area they have devoted over there, to boats. I’m not sure what they call it.

LAW: Bridgeview Park?

LONDRIGAN: What?

LAW: Bridgeview Park?

LONDRIGAN: Well, Bridgeview Park is there also, but there’s also a big area where they

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pump gas and they also have places they rent, for people that drive up from the South. But you go further down and there’s -- I’m not sure if you know the geography of this, but Sugar Creek is coming up from the south and Lick Creek is coming over here from the west. It meets on the east side. You would still be in the Sugar Creek area and that area of course, wasn’t impounded, they didn’t treat it, but that’s where all the problems came when they had runoff. One of the judges up there now, and I’m trying to think. Leptospirosis, Judge [Patrick] Kelly got leptospirosis, because I think they ran several miles and then they dove in the lake.

LAW: Right.

LONDRIGAN: Well, you’re getting the flood that comes off of the fields, they’re filled with horseshit, cow shit, different chemicals that they use on it, and right now, the

cleanest water is in the two big areas, and they've tried to eliminate runoff from the fields.

LAW: Well, I guess the only thing I could say on this Sherman case is I read that it went up on appeal twice, so there was ultimately two trials, and although it was heard in the 4th District, in the opinion that I have, the opinion was written by [Joseph H.] Goldenhersh, who was down in the 5th District.⁶⁹

LONDRIGAN: Well, during that period, I think I was a clerk for the 4th District Appellate Court, or I had recently been, but at the time this was filed, I think I was. So it got transferred eventually, up to the 3rd District, up north of Chicago, north and west of Chicago.

LAW: The second opinion was written by Justice [Thomas J.] Moran.⁷⁰

LONDRIGAN: Right.

LAW: And you were affirmed on the second one, and I think that may have had something to do with -- well, the first opinion had basically told the trial judge in the next trial, to do things a bit differently in terms of testimony and things that were introduced. That's my understanding.

LONDRIGAN: Yeah, the judge in that case was one we had talked about earlier.

LAW: Was that Chamberlain?

⁶⁹ Justice Joseph H. Goldenhersh was an Appellate Court Justice from 1964-70, and a Supreme Court Justice from 1970-87.

⁷⁰ Justice Thomas J. Moran was State's Attorney of Lake County from 1956-58, a Probate Judge for Lake County from 1958-61, a Circuit Court Judge in the Nineteenth Judicial Circuit from 1961-64, an Appellate Court Justice for the Second District from 1964-76, and a Supreme Court Justice from 1976-92.

LONDRIGAN: Chamberlain. He ruled against me on about everything in the case and good sense, he said, "You know, I've been reversed before, but I've never been reversed on every issue that was in the case." So, he laughed about that but really, the way he handled the case, if I were on the jury, there wouldn't be any way that I could explain it away.

LAW: Now, was that your first appellate work?

LONDRIGAN: Of any significance, yes.

LAW: So what are your memories of that, giving that oral argument and sort of being on the other side; not being the clerk or working with the justices and reading the briefs, but writing the briefs and presenting the argument. Did you feel like you were prepared? Was that what you thought it would be? Did you take to it like a duck to water, I mean what was...?

LONDRIGAN: Well, I felt I was right on every one of these issues and I didn't want to rely just on one, because I think he had made up his mind that this is something that's related to the liability of the community in which I reside. So he just, in a very nice way, went down the way and just ruled against me, bang bang, all the way. I wouldn't let anybody else touch that, because I made the record and I understood what I had to do to preserve those records. But it was a big help, because it was an important issue in the community, and the bad thing that came out of it is they didn't read into this, anything that means we can't continue to operate the way we did. We can't make people pay, at that time I think it was a dollar and a quarter, to gain admission, and then have things that may injure them, may kill them, and then blame somebody else or some other thing. That

kid, sixteen, I don't think he lived to be thirty. He was immediately -- he didn't lose consciousness, but he was immediately paralyzed. And they were arguing, you know, well that pipe couldn't have done it. Well, what could have done it? I mean, it was obvious that he hit something hard and there wasn't anything hard and unyielding except that pipe that stretched the length of the beach. You want to get from the water's edge to the safety ropes, you've got to pass over that. You could see the bubbles coming up, but he didn't know what they were. If I went out there, I could dive in because I would stay at or near the surface. I know what's down there. Here's a kid from out of state, he goes out and dives down into the water and he hits his head up here, it drives his chin down and compressive fracture in the cervical vertebrae. And there's nothing else that could have done it.

LAW: Do you think it was the judge's influence in his rulings, that steered the jury against you the first time?

LONDRIGAN: Oh, sure. They looked, as the judge, unless the judge makes a fool of himself, but they feel a burden that's on their shoulders. They feel relief when the judge acts like he knows what they ought to do, and that's what he did, is I don't want a judgment against the city while I'm on the bench here, and so he just ruled against me all the time, so there wasn't really any evidence that the jury could rely on to make a finding.

LAW: Well, I did want to ask you about a few more things and then I think we'll break for today. I saw that you were involved in a race to become a delegate to the constitutional convention?⁷¹

⁷¹ See, *Illinois State Journal*, July 1, 1969, pg. 4.

LONDRIGAN: That's the one and only time that I ran for office.⁷²

LAW: Talk to me a little bit about that.

LONDRIGAN: Well, the last constitutional convention we had was in 1870.

LAW: Right.

LONDRIGAN: And if someone hadn't plugged Abraham Lincoln, he would have been around, you know to have a steady influence on what this ought to do. Instead, there were a lot of people then, and a hundred years later, in 1969 or 1970, powerful interval, that an election won't cure. It will probably be another hundred years before we have a constitutional convention. So, I decided, since they were going to elect two from this district, that I would run. Well, there were twelve candidates and they had a runoff, because they were going to elect two. I came in third in the election, in the primary, and a lot of the people who finished up there, like Ken Cole, were friends of mine, and they did what they could to support me, including Oblinger.

LAW: Okay.

LONDRIGAN: He supported me, because I was against the branch banking, which was unconstitutional under the 1870 Constitution, and I didn't think big banks should be the ones that we should rely on. And it's sort of like the same argument that we're facing right now. So, he endorsed me and he also raised some funds for me, and as it went along, I went everyplace and talked to everyone.

[02:30]

⁷² Londrigan also ran for the County Board in 1972, see, *Illinois State Journal*, April 1, 1972, pg. 10.

I began to figure this will be a close election. They'll elect two from the four and it's going to turn on one thing: turnout. The ones I know in the city of Springfield, which is probably basically democratic, and the ones I don't know, that till the fields in Morgan County and here, and go to country schools like I did, if it rains and they can't get into the field, people inside the city of Springfield will cast the majority of the votes and I'll win. On the other hand, if it's really nice weather, the farmers will be in the field, to bring in the crop, and they won't take the time to vote in a special election. I lost that election on a bright and sunny day, I think by about seven hundred votes. I finished third, as I had finished before, and I just never had an inclination to represent a political party, although I've always been a Democrat, and I would just practice law and help my fellow lawyers like John Casey. He was a Republican. That's one case that they don't have in here. That's where, Christmas week, we got an acquittal for a couple of sixteen-year-old high-schoolers, that were charged with felonies by a newly formed Illinois Bureau of Investigation.

LAW: Oh, yes.

LONDRIGAN: The Bureau of Investigation, was a joke.

LAW: This would have been Christmastime, 1970?⁷³

LONDRIGAN: Early December, yeah, mid-December maybe, yeah.

LAW: And you got them acquitted. So you were -- now Casey, was he a public defender at the time?

⁷³ See, *Illinois State Journal*, December 16, 1970, pg. 13, December 17, pg. 21, December 18, pg. 6, December 19, pg. 15, December 22, pg. 9.

LONDRIGAN: Yes, and his client, while he was a public defender, was convicted.⁷⁴ I don't know whether John pled him or if he was found guilty, but that meant that he would go to jail for five years, without parole, a first offense for a sixteen year-old. They were taking him to trial a second time, because of a phony arrest that they set up. They used to call that a "turkey sale." They would test out the quality, and then would -- and this is the I.B.I., the Illinois Bureau of Investigation. They'd take these high school kids and say we really like this, this time we'll give you \$5,000 if you bring us more. Now, those weeds that grew along the hedges were subsidized by the United States Government during World War II. They were hemp plants. We had an University of Illinois professor come over and explain that these plants were subsidized by the Federal Government, because we were afraid we were going to be cut off from our supply of hemp during World War II, because at that time most of the hemp was coming from the South Seas and the Pacific.

LAW: So this was the material they were using in these turkey buys, came from these ditches?

LONDRIGAN: Yeah. They went out and the one kid who was the dumbest, and he was the one that I was representing, got poison ivy because he wore sandals harvesting the hemp. He got it so bad he ended up in the hospital and they took what they harvested and put it in an oven in one of their houses, and then put it in plastic bags. They accepted the money or maybe it was \$500 rather than \$5,000. Whatever it was, it made it a felony under the new Illinois statute and they were immediately arrested, and the one that was convicted on the "turkey sale," his name was -- it's a funny name. I think he was impaired mentally, not because of the hemp; but the University of Illinois professor came

⁷⁴ See, *Illinois State Journal*, September 30, 1970, pg. 16, October 6, pg. 13, December 11, pg. 15.

down and explained all of these weeds were popular because of tetrahydrocannabinol, or its THC content. This weed has virtually none. You would have to smoke fifty of these before you would even approach the amount that's in one cultivated marijuana cigarette. The jury heard all that testimony and then they were instructed that this was the second offense, and I was also for John's client, I was also representing him at that time, and the jury just wouldn't do that. It was life imprisonment, imposed by statute on the second. Now I'm curious because of what's going on in Denver. They're apparently putting it in food now.

LAW: Have you participated in that kind of legal work? What are your thoughts on Colorado and Washington and Oregon, I mean did you ever think you'd see something like that happen?

LONDRIGAN: I think it should be regulated. I think that periodically, they ought to take the THC content, because people put that in their mouth or start smoking it, not knowing what the strength of THC is. Everybody does it differently, I guess, but I don't think somebody should get intoxicated on that and then drive a car. That doesn't make any more sense than alcohol. So you've got two extremes; we're going to produce as much as you want, we're going to make it as powerful as we can, and others that abide by whatever the rules are in Colorado, or the West Coast will not be guilty of a crime. There are a lot worse things out there, mind altering drugs, that they ought to concentrate on. This whole Illinois Bureau of Investigation was just a load of crap bought into by our legislators. The things they did made no sense whatsoever, and that's why we got that verdict right before Christmas. Most of the jurors on there were women, and I think: there, but for the grace of God, they could be my children.

LAW: So I take it the I.B.I. didn't last very long after that?

LONDRIGAN: No, and it shouldn't have. I see that in one of these other cases. It's the one where they were suing others, or charging them criminally, for running gambling here.⁷⁵

LAW: That was a federal case.

LONDRIGAN: It was a federal case, that probably should not have been a federal case. They were fighting with the Illinois Bureau of Investigation. This was their case, because there was an interstate relationship here and a lot of these names are still around here.

LAW: Before we get into it, let me just ask generally, do you think there was a large amount of organized gambling and racketeering in this area then, and before?

LONDRIGAN: No. I think I was appointed, I don't think I was hired, to represent a fellow from Chicago by the name of Rube Helfer, and I got a laugh out of the jury when I asked why he was in this, I think it was a basement or some type of temporary structure, or something that they all used, and what he did to aid in this. Of course, he said I was trying to sell jewelry there. They asked me if I would answer the door if somebody knocked, and so they reversed his conviction and about five others. I don't know what happened to the other five. Helfer, the one I represented, I only asked him one question, "You told me that you would bet on baseball games." "Yes." "Well, do you have an idea here in Springfield, whether the winds are blowing out in Wrigley Field?" He laughed and everybody laughed, but he got convicted. But didn't they ultimately reverse all these convictions?

⁷⁵ See, *U.S. v. Nerone, et al.*, 563 F. 2d 836 (7th Cir. 1977).

LAW: I believe so.⁷⁶

LONDRIGAN: Yeah. But this was because the Feds were jealous of the I.B.I. If there's any gambling going on in Springfield, that's our baby, not the Feds. Everybody was down on the Illinois Bureau of Investigation by this time.

BELZER: Fifteen minutes.

LAW: So you seem to be suggesting that bookmaking and gambling, it just wasn't a big problem, is that the right way to put it? It was overblown?

LONDRIGAN: There's one paragraph in there and I think it's directly taken from the

[02:45]

constitution, and that is that it has to have an effect upon interstate commerce. This is just penny ante gambling in a basement. We had a priest from down around Dieterich, Illinois, that came and must have been up there and known all these defendants. I don't know whether he was betting or not, but he happened to be the priest that gave us our only daughter, Genevieve, the first girl in our family in over eighty years. I had boys, my dad had boys and brothers, and his younger daughter was the last one who was born, and she was born in like '06. But there were a lot of names mentioned at trial that are known around Springfield, as gamblers. That's like stomping into a western town, and they're playing cards around the table, the federal government comes in and arrests those people. But they did succeed, and I don't know how the Illinois Bureau met its demise, but it

⁷⁶ The racketeering and conspiracy charges were reversed for all the defendants. Six of the defendants' convictions for operating an illegal gambling business were affirmed, three were not; and the extortion convictions for five of the defendants were affirmed as well. One defendant's conviction for using a deadly weapon in a forcible assault against a federal officer was also affirmed.

occurred right during this period, and I'm not sure how they went about it. I think they fired the Italian fellow, who used to write me all the time. He was very amiable.

LAW: Greco?

LONDRIGAN: Not Greco.

LAW: Seppi?

LONDRIGAN: No, those were guys that were in and out of the basement. I'm talking about the head of the Illinois I.B.I. You ought to Google that, because they'll probably tell you the full story of what happened to him. He just ran the I.B.I. into the ground.

LAW: So was the director of the I.B.I., was he involved in some kind of illegal activity or something, or no?

LONDRIGAN: I can't say that, but I suspect misjudgment. I'm referring about the harvesting and the high school kids, setting up a turkey sale, giving them \$500, getting them indicted for a felony with a sentence of life imprisonment. He had to know or should have known, that this is not a high THC marijuana, and what's he doing? He's getting a feather in his cap for putting kids in jail for fifty years, which is what his object in this case was.

LAW: It seems like a pretty stiff sentence.

LONDRIGAN: Anyway, this priest that would come up, and he'd hiss at the judge, when the judge would make a ruling that he thought was wrong. I thought the judge was going to arrest him and put him away but he didn't.

LAW: Okay, well Mr. Londrigan, we've had you here for quite a while. We may have to break and pick up where we're at later, get into more of this appellate work. How about we end today with this question: After going to law school and after coming back home to Springfield and practicing law as a U.S. Attorney and in private practice, doing a lot of this criminal work, and also some civil work, did you find that the practice of law was what you thought it would be before you went to law school?

LONDRIGAN: That has to be a qualified answer. Sometimes yes and sometimes no, but overall, yes, I think most of the people in Sangamon County, and some of the people that occupied judicial positions up in Chicago, do a real service of guidance to prosecutors and to those that may be prosecuted by what they did do and not do. I'm very satisfied with what role was dealt me as far as who I represented and the causes that I represented. I would not choose another profession. For instance, I had a brother that was a CPA, and I don't today, know the difference between a debit and a credit. I have relied upon the people that I've worked with and for me, to write checks and to communicate, handle emails. Right now, I only have a temporary secretary, and I'm in the process of writing a book, which has nothing to do about the law enforcement. So I still have a full plate, but I'm very convinced and happy that I am where I am, relative to my family. All our three boys live less than a half mile walking distance from where we are. So, the future is a difficult thing to predict, but I'm going to continue to do what I think best and keep active, rather than just disappearing from the scene. Now, I may decide that I'm not going to accept any major cases. I may decide to not ask for another year, until I find out better, what's going on with everybody at home.

LAW: Well, Mr. Londrigan, let's break there for today, and we can pick up where we're at next time.

LONDRIGAN: Now, you said again, we –

[Total Running Time, 02:53:51]

END OF INTERVIEW TWO

BEGINNING OF INTERVIEW THREE

LAW: This is an oral history interview with Thomas Londrigan. Today's date is March the 29th, 2016. This is our third interview. We are in his law office here in Springfield, Illinois, or soon to be old law office. We are going to continue talking about his legal career. Mr. Londrigan, I thought I would start today with a couple of the cases that you had for the [Dan] Walker administration. I thought I might start that with how did you come to be associated with the Walker administration, how did you --any memories of that?

LONDRIGAN: Well, you are testing my memory as far as who tied me together with Governor Walker. It was an attorney in Chicago, who I just re-united with at our fifty year anniversary. We were the same age, and he told me that he wanted me to meet the Governor, and he had a private charter airplane that--and I had other things that I committed to do for clients and family, and I declined that. So, I never really saw the Governor after that. I always dealt with his personal attorney, and represented him in cases that might be pending down state here in Sangamon County in the Seventh Circuit. I say I saw him again at that reunion, and we had a few choice words.

The irony of this is after he left office I was on the other side of litigation with him in some big problem in downstate Illinois. I don't know whether it was related to criminal problems, but it was something that he had done that I didn't think was appropriate, and it was right in the midst of all of those things going on. I have forgotten who it was in the primary that ran against Walker.

LAW: The first time?

LONDRIGAN: Yes.

LAW: I think it was Paul Simon.

LONDRIGAN: Yes, and that's, that's who I preferred; and it was just amazing that this guy, he was the predecessor to Donald Trump, he was walking throughout the State of Illinois, and he got a lot of coverage for that; and Paul Simon didn't have an enemy in the world. He is kind of like the Republican's candidate, Governor of Ohio, [John] Kasich, he does what he says he is going to do rather than trying to exploit himself in different situations so he will get the news coverage. So, anyway ask what you want about the litigation, and it will probably bring back to me the issues.

LAW: Okay. Well, the first one I thought was the one involving Governor Walker and the State Board of Elections.⁷⁷

LONDRIGAN: Okay. Wasn't there another component to that?

LAW: Well -

LONDRIGAN: That they tried to keep off the ballot.

LAW: Well, I believe how it started was the State Board was wanting some information about a committee that was taking care of some campaign debt of the Governor's, and he didn't want to release that information. It was the All Illinois Democratic Committee, and then this sort of snowballed into a challenge of the constitutionality of the Board itself. The Governor differed on how the Board resolved ties, if there was a tie vote.⁷⁸

LONDRIGAN: Well, I haven't spent time with that opinion. Tell me what the final decision was. I assume that the Board was determined to be constitutional, because I remember

⁷⁷ See, *Walker v. State Board of Elections*, 65 Ill. 2d 543 (1976). Also see, *State Journal Register*, July 7, 1975, pg. 7, July 8, pg. 3, July 18, pg. 3, July 30, pg. 117, September 25, pg. 1, 2, October 3, pg. 13, October 4, pg. 44, January 23, 1976, pg. 3, March 5, pg. 4, and November 15, pg. 1. And, Al Manning, "State Board of Election," *Illinois Issues* (March 1977), pgs. 12-13. For further context, see, Ron Michaelson Oral History, Interview One, 42 min in: <http://www.illinois.gov/alplm/library/collections/oralhistory/illinoisstatecraft/general/Pages/MichaelsonRon.aspx>.

⁷⁸ Another contentious issue focused on how appointments were made to the Board.

appearing before them later on an issue where a former Assistant United States Attorney from down in the east side, in East St. Louis, was challenged because of the number of, that he had on his petition, and he was Tennessee Williams' brother, and a former U.S. Attorney, and he actually got in front of the Commission and called himself as a witness --we used to call him Mississippi Williams because he spent his time outside Illinois rather than his brother in Tennessee. He called himself as a witness, and he took the oath, and began to answer his own questions. He would get out of his chair, and turn around, and face that empty chair, and then ask a question, and then he would go over, and sit down, and answer it. So, he asked himself a convoluted question, went over and sat down and said, "I really don't understand that question, would you mind asking it again?" And got up in response to his own question; and the Chairman of the Board, and I can't remember who it was, he was from Chicago and just came unglued. That was the end of that challenge. I think that's something that occurred in the Governor's race, but it may have been four years later. I know it was later than the initial proceedings which went up to court.

LAW: This case took place in '75 and '76.

LONDRIGAN: Yes, he was '72, wasn't he, elected in '72?

LAW: That's right, that's right. It all kind of was initiated by the Better Government Association, this case that I was referring to. Do you have any memories at all of the State Board of Elections case?

LONDRIGAN: I really didn't do much of anything on that case. I can't tell you exactly who --we had clerks that would come through there. I know Ken Vuylsteke, who later became the Missouri Trial Lawyers President, and who we see on occasion, were probably the ones

that were billing out by the hour. I very seldom over the last fifty years have done anything by the hour. It would be delegated to somebody else. Almost all of the cases that I took in were on the contingency that this case would be won, and I would ultimately be paid. That didn't always work out, but over time our records indicate that the cases that were contingent brought in a higher rate per hour than what the rest of the firm was billing.

LAW: So, this other lawyer, Chester Kamin from Jenner & Block, he would have done most of the work on this particular case?

LONDRIGAN: I know Jenner & Block, but I don't recognize that name.

LAW: Okay.

LONDRIGAN: So, I had very little to do with by the hour, and you don't get paid in political issues contingent fees because there really isn't any recovery except for the candidate.

LAW: What about this other one involving the Environmental Protection Agency, *People ex rel. William J. Scott versus Riesling, Individual and as Director of the EPA?*⁷⁹

LONDRIGAN: Yes, I think that case, was it over in Federal Court in front of Judge Ackerman?

LAW: No, this was--well, the opinion I am looking at is Illinois Supreme Court. It had to do with whether or not the Attorney General had to handle all legal matters, whether or not he was supposed to handle legal matters for the EPA. It was a dispute over -

LONDRIGAN: Again I am sure that that was by the hour, and my name was on this because I was senior and first man on the firm, but I did very little billing, if any, for my efforts in that case, but we had a lot of lawyers here at that time -

LAW: So -

LONDRIGAN: --I probably did some work on it.

⁷⁹ See, 65 Ill. 2d 485 (1976). Also see, *State Journal Register*, November 9, 1976, pg. 6, and December 4, pg. 1.

LAW: So, an example of the case then you are talking about would be like the Donna Jo French case?⁸⁰

LONDRIGAN: Well, yes, that was a contingent case.

LAW: Okay.

LONDRIGAN: That went up to the Supreme Court, and they reversed it, and sent it back for a rehearing. The rationale that they used is that I tried to reconstruct the accident and that it wasn't appropriate. Well, the purpose of what I did in taking the photographs is to show that as they went under a viaduct, you couldn't see over the crest of the hill. That there were barricades there until it was too late, and you had to make a sudden change in reaction. And we tried that over, and I think it was settled the second time around.

LAW: Two trials.

LONDRIGAN: She was a very beautiful girl that, I believe, was a passenger, and she was seriously burned and scarred when the car caught fire. She lived here for a few years longer, and I am not sure whether she is still a resident. I don't think so.

LAW: I guess another example of that would be the *Churchill vs. the Norfolk & Western Railway Company*?⁸¹

LONDRIGAN: That was a very early case. Ironically it happened to be on an election night, and one of the passengers ran all or part of the polling procedures and the counting of ballots, and it was late at night, and he was given a ride home.⁸² I believe one of the reasons he couldn't exit the car when it stalled on the tracks was that he wasn't familiar with seat

⁸⁰ See, *French v. City of Springfield*, 5 Ill. App. 3d 368 (Fourth Dist. App. Court, 1972) and *French v. City of Springfield*, 65 Ill. 2d 74 (1976). Also see, *State Journal Register*, July 1, 1970, pg. 9, January 16, 1974, pg. 17, and March 15, 1977, pg. 17.

⁸¹ See, 73 Ill. 2d 127 (1978). Also see, *State Journal Register*, July 17, 1973, pg. 1, January 27, 1978, pg. 13, and October 6, 1978, pg. 3.

⁸² The accident took place on March 17, 1970.

belts. In any event he couldn't get out of the car. The driver jumped out of the car and free. The history of this is that there has been a siding [side track where box cars were stored] there for years, and that the school district wrote letters to the railroad, which came into evidence in that case, alleging that there had nearly been a collision between school busses full of children

[00:15]

because the siding again would block the view of bus drivers. There was also problems with the mechanism itself. It is supposed to give you, I think it is, oh, like fifty seconds warning, and then it would trigger the lights, and bells, and whistles, and alert a school bus or a car being driven to know that although they maybe couldn't see it, it was coming. And we took some measurements, and those bells and whistles weren't activated always at the distance that the regulations required. With the documentation and letters that we had the jury decided that case in our favor. The defendants appealed that case, is that what --was there a written opinion? Well, then they probably tracked pretty much the same thing I mentioned to you.

LAW: There was something unique that I found is that the Court ruled against Mrs. Churchill, and then I think one of the Justices died, and so they reheard it, and then ruled for her. I wasn't able to find the original opinion, but I was able to find the latter one. Justice [James A.] Dooley.

LONDRIGAN: So, in other words, they allowed a petition for rehearing?

LAW: I don't think it was a rehearing. They--I guess it was a rehearing. Dooley died shortly after writing that decision, and the Court subsequently agreed to rehear the case but anyways.

LONDRIGAN: It is hard to understand what the defense was or if there was any defense at all in that case. Who was it, which judge died?

LAW: Justice James Dooley.

LONDRIGAN: Oh, okay. He was from Chicago. He was a big time plaintiff's lawyer, and he kind of denigrated anybody else who was in his field who didn't think the same way he did about cases. There was an old song at that time called Hang Down Your Head Tom Dooley, Hang Down Your Head and Cry (*Tom Dooley*). Well, I used to write parodies to that and put Jim in the place of Tom. He was very arrogant, and I don't think he had many friends on that Court because he was an Irish Catholic plaintiff's lawyer from Cook County and Chicago. Now, I am a lot of those things too, but I am not from Chicago, a different place that thinks in different ways.

LAW: I gather that the main issue for him was whether or not the Public Utilities Act allowed punitive damages when somebody was killed, and he was basically saying it would only be allowed if they were injured.

LONDRIGAN: So, he thinks that if the person was killed, that destroyed a statutory cause of action. Yes, and I am sure that's why when all of the rest of the judges on that case took a look at it, they couldn't buy into it.

LAW: There is pretty sharply worded dissent by Justice Ryan in it.

LONDRIGAN: Another Irish man from Chicago, isn't it?

LAW: Well, no, I believe he was from the Ottawa area.⁸³

LONDRIGAN: That's closer to Chicago than it is here.

LAW: Howard Ryan. Anyways, so I am getting the impression then that in the 70s you are moving away from criminal work and more to these tort cases, civil work?

⁸³ Tonica, Illinois.

LONDRIGAN: That's right. When I came out of the U.S. Attorney's Office I really had no following. Bud Potter and I later started a firm, and it was to be Londrigan, Potter, Miller & Costello. Mike Costello is Ben Miller's brother-in-law. It ended up that Ben had always handled defense cases. So, there wouldn't be any diversity here. So, Mike was the first partner we had. It became Londrigan, Potter & Costello. So, Ben became a Circuit Judge. He became an Appellate Court Judge, and then he became a Supreme Court Judge, and always a friend. I've spent most of my casual life away from this office racing sailboats, me and the rest of the family, and Ben got a Star boat. This was while he was on the Supreme Court, and a storm came in and all of the boats at the Island Bay Yacht Club were either on the hoist, on the trailer, or tethered to the dock. His was at the dock. I am not even sure he was there that day. Well, a bolt of lightning came down, grounded itself through the metal mass to the bottom of the boat, blew out a hole in its bottom, and I was talking to Ben about it the next day. He said, "Well, you know what my insurance company told me?" That's what Ben did, he represented insurance companies before he went on the bench. He said, "Their defense was that it was an Act of God." And I said, "Don't you know how silly that sounds?" When they found out who he was, they paid the claim. So, I still see Ben once in awhile when he comes back into town, and I think he has a sailboat still, only he sails in different seas and different ports. We don't get to see him very often. On the other hand, I run into Mike Costello, his brother-in-law, every time I take a walk down towards the Springfield Clinic. Anyway I have gotten you far afield from where you want to go.

LAW: Well, this would be actually a good opportunity to talk about a case that you were involved in, and it involved a couple deaths that occurred from, I guess you could say

it is a sailboat accident out on Lake Springfield. A couple cases came out of this. I guess you represented multiple parties. I think you know where I am going, the Ogg and Ballweg cases.⁸⁴

LONDRIGAN: Yes.

LAW: Maybe we talk about that one.

LONDRIGAN: Yes, I can remember when they called me on this case. It was in the late 70s, and I was just coming back from Nassau and a regatta, with a lot of the people that I knew from here, like a lawyer that's still alive named [Alfred H.] Greening [Jr.], and he had a son who was sailing, and I sailed both with and against him, and when we came back into Florida, I got this long distance call about what happened up there.⁸⁵ I said, "Well, have the referring lawyer and the would be plaintiff make an appointment, and I will be up there next week." The first problem was that the electric lines that crossed the shallow areas of the lake was below the minimum standards. And you take a guy that really hadn't been on a pontoon boat before, and they have got their hands full trying to control that boat. In this case a novice sailor had two girls, young women, that were sitting in the middle of the boat, which is a trampoline of stretched canvas within four corners. This boat is all metal except for that canvas. So, when it made contact, the electricity left the lines and followed the path to ground, and not only electrified the boat, but electrified the waters for a radius of seventy-five feet. This is an estimate, of the electrified circle around the boat. The two girls jumped into the water because of sparks that were flying overhead. They were immediately electrocuted. The owner of the boat was petrified,

⁸⁴ See, *Ogg v. City of Springfield*, 121 Ill. App. 3d 25 (Fourth Dist. App. Court, 1984) and *Ballweg v. City of Springfield*, 114 Ill. 2d 107 (1986). Also see, *State Journal Register*, June 26, 1982, pg. 11, June 27, pg. 8, August 28, pg. 12, October 13, pg. 12, and August 31, 1983, pg. 10.

⁸⁵ The accident occurred on August 13, 1978.

while sitting in the middle of the canvas surface so that he wasn't in the path to ground. Eventually rescuers were able to move the boat away. I think Lake Police came over, threw a line or something to break that contact. So, the first case was against the city -

LAW: Right.

LONDRIGAN: --for not being compliant with the height of these wires that they strung over water. What is unique about this situation was that those boats can float and sail in twelve inches of water. They have fins like this, and if you move the bar, it lifts the fins up out of the water, and it makes a path to ground a lot less likely. But the city paid that claim. The operator of the sailboat really had no experience, but he wasn't fearful. He didn't see the lines; and if he did see the lines, he might have assumed that they were telephone lines, and you can't estimate the height of a line relative to a pole or a mast in this case. But he developed a disease that began with this experience, you want to call it an accident, it was actually almost a fireworks display, and so he had this overactive bowel, and there is a better medical name for it than that. He was represented by a lawyer from Chicago as I remember it.

The parents of the two girls came to see me because I explained to them what the Hobie Cat was. You know who Hobie Alter is? He is the one that invented the Hobie Cat. He lived in California. It is a boat that is designed to sail up onto California beaches off the ocean. The only way that Hobie Cats would ever run aground across or into or get grounded into power lines are if they are in a parking lot or someplace away from water. But these boats were designed to be California beach boats, and you just come in, it is very light, you pull both the pontoons up, tie it off; but Hobie decided that he was going to expand his market to the Midwest. In so doing

[00:30]

there are all these large lakes, and small lakes, and reservoirs all through the Midwest over which high powered electric lines pass. None of the people that were on that boat understood the significance of that, but Hobie Alter did; and I will give you an aside, and you will be able to look this up on your own. Hobie Alter was the father of probably the most beautiful girl then in Hollywood, Bo Derek, she had the title role in the movie *Ten* or--she was in several movies after that also. But Hobie actually came to Springfield to testify to the safety of the Hobie Cat. He got asked more questions about his daughter than he did about his boat. But he was very serious, and I understand he later made design changes by putting in insulated blocks so a lightning strike or contact with overhead power lines would not have a path to ground. It would be broken by those blocks. It would not conduct electricity. They did other things including warnings about overhead lines. One of the things that I think sank his ship was the fact that Hobie Cats, although they had five percent of the sailboat market just for his pontoon boats normally on the ocean or beaches along the ocean. But ninety-five percent of the electrocutions caused by sailboats were caused by the Hobie Cat. Did that case go to the Supreme Court? I never understood what any of the defenses were to this, how they could say that there was no evidence to support the verdicts, or that there was some impropriety, or some evidence that got in. Both cases went up to the Supreme Court, and both of verdicts were won by the Plaintiff.

LAW: Just waiting to see if you had anything else you wanted to add. I think the second case, Ballweg, it had a larger award.

LONDRIGAN: Well, I think that --wasn't it Donna Ballweg?

LAW: That's correct.

LONDRIGAN: I think it is because they heard the horror stories that occurred before, the other people dying, and we weren't allowed to get into that in the first couple of cases. There might have been a reference to individuals, but in this case the parents came in and testified about what her future would be like, what her past included, and we had already won the first two cases. So, I don't really understand what they thought their defense was at that point. But they took it to a jury, and it also went to the Supreme Court, and was affirmed.

LAW: Okay. Another one from this time period was this *Contractor Utility Sales Company vs. Certain-Teed Corporation*, a contract case.⁸⁶

LONDRIGAN: Yes. That had to be tried twice.

LAW: I guess I wanted to ask how this case came to you, do you remember?

LONDRIGAN: Because I knew the president of his own company, and it was 1974 or '5 that Alabama played Notre Dame in the Sugar Bowl, and Alabama was ranked number one, and Ron Lance was a great salesman, a true hailed fellow, well met.⁸⁷ He would come in here and tell stories, and he kept pestering me about what Alabama was going to do to Notre Dame, and I said, "You have got to put your money where your mouth is," and he was a big time gambler. So, at that time, and this was a lot of money at the time. I bet him \$5,000, no points, in that game, and Notre Dame won because of a field goal that was kicked by Bob Thomas, who later became a member of the Illinois Supreme Court. First he went to the Chicago Bears. I think he is probably retired now because I haven't looked at the line-up of the Supreme Court recently, but somebody told me that he had

⁸⁶ See, 748 F. 2d 1151 (7th Cir. 1984). Also see, *Contractor Utility Sales Company vs. Certain-Teed Corporation*, 638 F. 2d 1061 (7th Cir. 1981).

⁸⁷ December 31, 1973.

retired.

Competitors in this rural water market were suppliers like Lance. In order to make some of these fields south and west of here produce they would have to irrigate. Lance produced the gaskets or integrated the gaskets with the pipe. He did not actually manufacture this pipe in litigation. All of the companies that were bidding on these federally funded projects were great buddies of his, just because of who he was. They would let him know what the low price was in the pvc pipe market, and this would go right up say until midnight before the bids were opened, and Lance would end up getting the low bid because he was willing to make the low bid rather than bid on it. So, there was a decision that was made by Certain-Teed that they were going to take him out of the market, and they did a good job of it. They raised the price of Certain-Teed pipe and destroyed his access from other bidders, and essentially shut the door on him because he was driving the pipe prices down in their market.

Lance was one of the best witnesses that I have ever put on the stand. Everybody likes him. Everybody believes him. Everybody trusts him. So, Certain-Teed sent its--I don't think he was the company executive. He was Certain-Teed's person responsible to testify. We had a young witness from the University of Chicago that calculated Lance's losses since this market change occurred. I think his testimony was that it was between nine and ten million dollars. The jury came back in with a verdict for nine million dollars. Now, I can't explain what the rationale in the Seventh Circuit Court of opinion was because it simply didn't make any sense to me. So, they sent it back for a new trial; and he won again but with a much smaller verdict of three million dollars. It went back up, and this time the Seventh Circuit didn't do anything about it because they figured

they keep sending it back, and because of what Certain-Teed did, and because everybody trusted and liked Ron Lance, they figured the result would be the same or worse. So, Certain-Teed ended up paying him the three million dollars. Ron has two sons, I think, that still live around here. He had a very beautiful daughter that got married right after she graduated from high school here.

LAW: Did you have to travel out of state for this case?

LONDRIGAN: No.

LAW: So, this was in Illinois?

LONDRIGAN: Yes.

LAW: Up in Chicago?

LONDRIGAN: No, it was tried in Federal Court here.

LAW: Okay.

LONDRIGAN: Because there was diversity of citizenship.

LAW: Okay. I wanted to ask you a couple other questions. So, I found this interesting article about when Harvey, Judge Harvey Beam retired. This is in 1982, and he made an interesting comment, and I just kind of wanted to see what your response was. He is being asked about the law, the changes that he has seen up and to that point, and he says, this is 1982, "The volume (of cases) has at least doubled since I came here. There has been an explosion in civil lawsuits. People were more prone to bring legal actions in the past ten years than they were in the previous ten years. There has been a big increase in product liability and malpractice lawsuits. Civil rights litigation has grown. Part of the reason for more litigation is that more laws now govern a larger population than twelve years ago." He also says that, "They (We) have seen a lot of increase in most

facets of criminal activity.” “Thus,” he says, “the legislature has enlarged the different types of crimes. Traffic cases have increased (the most). But divorces, small claims, misdemeanors, and felonies have increased too.”⁸⁸ So, he is describing that the volume of cases has increased. Thinking back to the early 80s was that a fair assessment up to that point?

[00:45]

LONDRIGAN: Well, I think so, I wouldn't quarrel with that. Harvey Beam was originally a school teacher. That's from the firm we talked about before, Brunzman, Beam, Crane & Kenny. He didn't have an enemy in the world. He used to be the principal out at Hazel Dell grade school, and that's long before I went through there. So, he is right in the sense that you have railroad crossings, you have many, many more engines, and wheels, and brakes, and other, “safety systems.” When really there weren't anything like seat belts; and if a car broke down, it was usually going like thirty so or more miles per hour. One of the other cases that you have in there I tried in Colorado with a good friend of mine. It was a windshield pop out case where the person was ejected, and broke his neck, and became a quadriplegic.⁸⁹ And a lot of people didn't understand that it wasn't good for windshields to pop out. They think, you know, I get scarred up, I might get facial scars. But actually it is a laminated type of glass, which is designed to cushion and not eject a person because the statistics show that people that are ejected in accidents are much worse off than people who remain in the vehicle. I can testify to that because as a passenger I have been in that position.

LAW: Okay. I want to fast forward about eight years to when Judge Simon Friedman

⁸⁸ See, *State Journal Register*, November 21, 1982, pg. 8, 9.

⁸⁹ See, *Miller v. Solaglas California, Inc.*, 870 P. 2d 559 (Colo. App. 1993).

resigned, or retired I should say.

LONDRIGAN: Yes.

LAW: He had another interesting quote. It says in this article, this is 1990, “Over the years

Friedman has seen many changes in the law. Quote, ‘I think the practice of law itself has changed. It appears to me it is getting away from being a profession and becoming a business.’ For example, Friedman says more lawyers are advertising, a formerly prohibited practice. The law itself is much more complicated, Friedman says. Formerly a lawyer could competently handle a general law practice. Quote, ‘Today you better specialize. You can't handle everything.’⁹⁰

LONDRIGAN: Well, my dad said sort of the same thing to me. He practiced general law. He tried all sorts of cases, but it was his brother, James E. Londrigan, that handled all of the by the hour stuff, wills, probate, things where you normally don't hurt the other, except in the pocketbook; and he told me that he would never want to specialize, and that the law was becoming so precise in certain areas that to keep up you would have to concentrate in that area, and then you would lose perspective about all of the other things that laws are supposed to protect. I think generally that was the feeling. My dad was in World War I, and attempted to get back into World War II, and he was very different than some of the other lawyers. He felt lucky to have a brother that could do the type of work that he had no interest in. Then he realized that everybody else was doing and specializing in different things, and that he really couldn't keep up with the way he would like to practice law. He confessed that to me.

On the other hand, I saw that there was no more good that could be done working against the insurance industry, the automotive industry, and any industry that takes

⁹⁰ See, *State Journal Register*, September 27, 1990, pg. 1.

advantage of people not in the know, and at the same time holding themselves out to be experts in their fields, which they aren't.

I was very much against any type of advertising because I thought most lawyers don't handle the type of work I do. Let them decide who they should send this client to, and who would do the best job for them, but it has become a zoo now. Anyway, I am not fearful of escaping what's going on now, the commerciality of who you should see, or who you should talk to, on television, on radio, and in telephone books. So, there isn't anything I can do about that. And so I decided in 2003 when my wife was diagnosed with Alzheimer's, and I realized I can't continue to operate at the level at which I practiced to accept these cases that will sometimes last eight, nine, or almost twenty years, as in the Taylorville case. And so I, today I am spending my time with you. I am also, have spent it with my wife, Carol, at St. Joseph's home, and that's where I will return after we are through here today. But you have got other stuff and other lawyers history to preserve.

LAW: I wanted to ask you a couple questions about some historic events that occurred in Springfield. The first one, do you remember the school desegregation case –

LONDRIGAN: Yes.

LAW: --in the 70s? I was wondering if that impacted you in any way, because you had children that were of school age, and do you have any memories of that case?⁹¹

LONDRIGAN: Well, theoretically bussing makes sense. Practically I don't think it worked out the way that supporters hoped it would. For instance, among all of the leaders in the integration and bussing cases it was probably Mary Jo Potter, who is Bud Potter's wife, and the whole program didn't work because I don't think the people being bussed or the people that weren't being bussed understood it, but when you ask yourself what's the

⁹¹ See, *McPherson v. School District 186, Springfield Ill.*, 426 F. Supp. 173 (1976).

alternative? And what a lot of this has happened is that people that could afford it were sending their kids to parochial schools. (phone rings, interview paused)

LAW: You were telling me about the desegregation case and how it impacted you -

LONDRIGAN: Well -

LAW: --and your family?

LONDRIGAN: --I think it had a detrimental effect at this point in time because a lot of people are sending their kids to parochial schools, that they really haven't funded. I have funded a couple of projects for Sacred Heart-Griffin, not for my family. I have to take care of my own family, but for children, presumably Catholic children or good "football players," that want to go out there because it is a new school, and there had been some people with real money, or that could promote and raise real money like the Green family, but that really can't go on forever. These small parishes can't afford to have kindergarten, first, second, third, fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh and eighth grade because their parishioners can't afford that burden. They are learning the hard way that one by one. And I tried to tell Catholic parishioners that they should have a school board of their own, and that the time that you want to send a child to a school of your faith is not kindergarten. It is not until they get in the seventh and eighth grade when they go places, and do things, and have access to things that senior teachers, whether they be nuns or they be brothers. One exception, was my grade school teacher, Sister Pauletta. She is a hundred and one years old, and she contacts me all of the time, but she can't teach anymore, and the parishes can't afford to pay a living wage to teachers that they have to recruit. So, they should set up a separate system for junior high schools, maybe seventh and eighth grades.

I was on their board in the early 1980s, and I tried to explain this to Sacred Heart-

Griffin. They didn't buy into it, and the parishes are dropping off now. One by one they are closing their schools because the people that live there can't afford to keep up with government subsidized schools. So, that's learning a hard way. A lot of the kids are going to have to go to a public school rather than one that their parents would like them to go to, or one that they would like to go to. So, it has come full circle, I think, since bussing had started. That's also true of what's going on now with the governor and the legislature.

[01:00]

Those issues are easy to anticipate. They are also easy to just inflate out of imagination as to what you can do to run a program or a government into the ground where they won't even be able to pay their obligations on things like pensions. So, you have got me pretty far afield with asking about bussing, but my history goes back to the Depression years. I was born 1937. My next door neighbor was the then mayor, John W. "Buddy" Kapp. The next door neighbor to him was Carl Amrhein, who owned Amrhein's Bakery Holsum Bread. The sheriff was the first house in the lane. I am talking about Villa Grove, and his name was Harry Eielson. He was a great athlete at Springfield High, and eventually was the mayor here. Bud Kapp was the only mayor that was elected to four consecutive terms between 1931 during the Depression through 1947. When he resigned, he had entertained Franklin Roosevelt in an open parade here. We were building Lake Springfield. We were dedicating places like --what's the name of our poet laureate here, Lindsay, Vachel Lindsay Bridge, the Spaulding Dam, the beach houses, and the whole community of parks that surrounded our new lake during the Depression. And then with the wars end, Morgan Kapp was a big fan of Batista before we had the Castro brothers. They used to visit him, and he used to be down in Florida all of the time. And when the circus came to

town in Springfield, Bud knew all of those circus people because he spent time in Sarasota, and in Florida, and he would take children from Eighth Street, because that's where he would live in the wintertime when he was mayor, and then he would come out to the lake, but it is so different now. Campaigns are personal, and if you are a Democrat or you are a Republican, you are an enemy, and you can't work together with each other. The closest one is probably the current mayor, whose grandfather came out from under Nazi Austria, and I got a chance to meet, talk to him before he died. But now it's the people like Trump that are maniacs and have their own notion, in their own mind, about the miracles that they can work, the walls that they can build, and still nobody talks about bridges.

LAW: Let me ask you about another event. Remember in the 1980s when they changed the form of government -

LONDRIGAN: Yes.

LAW: --in Springfield? Any memories of that, or the case--

LONDRIGAN: Yes.

LAW: --or thoughts on that?⁹²

LONDRIGAN: We originally had a commission form of government here, which I thought was awkward because of the fact that you didn't vote for candidates for a specific office. In other words, the top ones for four different commission offices would meet with the mayor and decide amongst themselves who was going to do what. Luckily Commissioner Spaulding was an engineer, but we had a crazy Irish man later by the name of Percy Darling, and for fun Bud Kapp would write short speeches that he could give over the radio, and one of them made Darling a laughing stock when he said, "You elect me, I am

⁹² See, *McNeil v. City of Springfield*, 658 F. Supp. 1015 (1987).

going to be the commissioner of streets, and I will make them shine like the jewels on the crown of the Queen of Shebay,"--Queen of Sheba, of course, but after that he always wore striped shirts.

So, my mind had been poisoned about how the Commission form of government worked; but in reality and looking back on it, it worked very well. Percy Darling's son, Owen Darling, was one of the best commissioners we had, he was also Commissioner of Streets. I was concerned about the new form of government coming in, but in reality it works right if you have the right people there that listen and are willing to compromise for the public welfare rather than their vision of what tomorrow should be.

LAW: One of the underlying issues in both of those, whether the desegregation or the change in the form of government, was segregation in Springfield. I just wondered what your thoughts were. Has that changed in any great deal since you were a young man?

LONDRIGAN: Do you remember the history? I know you wouldn't remember it because I don't remember either, of the race riots in 1908, '7 and '8? My dad was in school then, and most of the blacks were in one community over by the railroad or the railroad tracks. There has been a lot written about that in the past. My oldest son's wife together with another girl, when they were in grade school, so this has been about fifteen, twenty years ago, resurrected that history and achieved an award. So, if ever I have a question about the riots here in Springfield, I ask her. But out of the riots here in Springfield came --what was the organization that was spawned by the riot?

LAW: NAACP.

LONDRIGAN: Yes, NAACP, and if you learn by history and if you participated in history and you relayed it on to other generations, you can see that the good that was wrought, and

you can see the evil that was spawned. We have done a good job here in this community of doing both. It really wasn't because of the lawyers so much as it was the politics of the hour and whether they were looking forward or looking over their shoulder. So, I am happy to be where I am. I wouldn't leave the community unless they ran me out on a rail. There was some of that, I think, that used to go on around here too.

LAW: Let me ask you about a couple other cases. This is kind of, probably a tough one to talk about, but I did want to ask you about it. Do you remember the case involving the boys that were abused by the Methodist preacher? Any memories of that case?⁹³

LONDRIGAN: The one that I had was a Catholic priest.

LAW: Okay.

LONDRIGAN: And for awhile he was at my grade school parish, Little Flower, a big, rough looking guy.

LAW: Was this the one where the claims came out a lot later?

LONDRIGAN: Might have come out because of the other case I had that was down in southern Christian County, I think it was, along the border down there. He would invite the kids over and show them pornographic literature and everything, and the diocese here gave me the no, no, you can't see that, and I said, "I am not doing this to destroy the diocese. I am doing it to put an end to what you know is going on here and what I know is going on here. This doesn't have anything to do with ministry." So, apparently they talked to somebody and gave me access to those records. Then they immediately settled the case rather than take it to trial. It is those that think they can always win a lawsuit because of who they are, or because of their political affiliations, or the good they have done in the past, and then get by with some of the things that we have been talking about today. You

⁹³ See, *State Journal Register*, September 2, 1989, pg. 30.

never want to pay or accept hush money, and that's what I think the Catholic Church did in Massachusetts, and in other places, and also was going on under our nose here. And there was some type of TV or internet operation going on over, a county over between here and Petersburg. And they could put him to jail if the things that he said didn't happen were going on here. I think finally they bought him out too. Finally he was silenced.

LAW: Do you think that they have addressed the underlying problem, the local church?

LONDRIGAN: These are just my thoughts. They are not documented. These two World Wars took a lot of good young men, made them soldiers, reminds me of an old World War I song, *How 'Ya Gonna Keep 'Em Down On The Farm (After They've Seen Paree)*. Well, Bud Kapp was in the first World War too, and he used to tell me about the goings on in Paris when they went, and they have been going on for centuries; but a lot of the kids that went over there for the first time weren't ready for the exposure that they got at the end of the war, a war which only lasted eighteen months. When they came back from World War II, it was even more magnified because there were more

[01:15]

young men involved that wanted to do things worthwhile in the world, and they couldn't imagine themselves giving up the right to be married, to raise children, to establish your own business, to live where you want to with your family, and end up instead with the cast-offs. I am talking about after the war in the 40s. All of the sudden these people who couldn't make it, and I am not saying all of them, but that's where they would go because they would be sheltered, they would be taken care of. They would be given things to do. They would be educated further. It just got out of hand. It is very hard to ask a young man who was a soldier to take a vow of voluntary poverty, perpetual

chastity, and perfect obedience, and remain obedient to rules that weren't made in Heaven, but instead grew out of this post war problem that was never addressed by the church until it became a public issue.

I went to church yesterday at St. Joseph's Home. I used to serve mass there. My grandfather died there. I got in trouble with the hundred and one year old nun because I went over there and didn't know my Latin. I was merely trying to help Father Casimir Toliusis, who was truly a saint. He raised bees. Every other month he would give me a quart to take home to my mom. He ended up a pastor down in Macoupin County, and he was truly a Christian. He only died like fifteen or twenty years ago, but they had tributes to him at St. Joseph's. You mix the good with the bad, and you hope that the good preserve something like Christianity; and in politics you mix the good with the bad in the hopes that someone with realistic ideas about what governance involves are elected in free elections. That's about as much as I can say today, I think. I need to go out and see how she is doing.

LAW: Okay.

[Total Running Time: 01:19:09]

END OF INTERVIEW THREE

BEGINNING OF INTERVIEW FOUR

LAW: This is an oral history interview with Thomas Londrigan. Today's date is May the 17th, 2016. This is our fourth interview. We are going to continue talking about his legal career. Mr. Londrigan, I thought today I would start with the CIPS case. Do you remember --what do you remember about that case?

LONDRIGAN: Well, there were a couple of cases. So, do you have the name of the Plaintiff?

LAW: Okay, let's start with Erica May by and through her mother and next friend, Brenda May. Chad Hryhorysak, a minor, by and through his mother and next friend, Pam.⁹⁴ They filed a complaint against C.I.P.S. and Hanson Engineers, "for damages allegedly caused by coal tar left in a partially destroyed underground storage tanks at a coal gasification plant in Taylorville."

LONDRIGAN: All right.

LAW: So, do you have any memories of this particular case?

LONDRIGAN: Yeah, I lived with that almost ten years. This first was discussed publicly in the media during an election, and the issue that was being created is these parents over there were seeing a very unusual amount, in terms of numbers, of this coal gasification related disease. This had been established pretty well in the literature, and also been corroborated by studies that were done by the State of Illinois, which compared the number of these childhood cancer cases to other communities. I wasn't the first attorney to look at this case. It became a public issue in a race for, I think it was representative in the lower House. That candidate lost the election, and so this issue was unresolved and

⁹⁴ See, *May v. C.I.P.S. Co.*, 260 Ill. App. 3d 41 (5th Dist. App. Court, 1994). Also see, *Donaldson et al. v. C.I.P.S. Co. et al.*, 313 Ill. App. 3d 1061 (5th Dist. App. Court, 2000; and, *Donaldson et al. v. C.I.P.S. Co. et al.*, 199 Ill. 2d (2002). And, *State Journal Register*, April 21, 2002, pg. 11.

continued to linger. He happened to have an investigating job with another law firm here in Springfield that's changed its name a number of times based upon the lawyers that came and went in and out of that firm. They withdrew from the case when I agreed to come in and represent those families.

LAW: Is that Michael Metnick?

LONDRIGAN: Yes. Mike has had problems, physical problems. He has been very ill the last few years. And I think it was that time he was just feeling the impact of what it would take to prosecute this civil action through ten or so years. This was an important case not only to the entities that were involved here, it was an important case throughout the United States because these same exposures were caused by coal tar plants, which in the advent of electric power in lieu of burning coal tar you no longer had the little old man going from light to light. They had a song about that around World War II. "You leave the nights a little brighter wherever he would go, the old lamp lighter from long, long ago."⁹⁵ That at one time, probably not in your time, but it was a very popular song; and they were looking backward to how these parks were illuminated during that period of time. No one knew at that time the types of problems that exposure to coal tar could have. So, it didn't become an issue until later generations of people in places like Taylorville and their Manners Park. Probably wasn't anyone in Christian County that knew that there used to be a gas plant there in Manners Park.

LAW: Then it also, it was a very long trial, four months, seventy-seven witnesses. Was that maybe one of the longest trials you ever had?

LONDRIGAN: It was the longest trial. I mean we heard motions all of the way through the summer. Then there were motions by the defendant for summary judgment, which were

⁹⁵ The Old Lamp-Lighter, 1946.

denied, and that all occurred, I believe, in October. Then in November we began to pick a jury. Obviously the motions for summary judgment were denied by the Court, and we began the very difficult time to pick people from Christian County voter list to serve on juries and find out their background, and whether or not they had taken a position one way or the other on this political issue. So, it took us a month to pick a jury.

LAW: What exactly was the political issue?

LONDRIGAN: The young man, the investigator in Mike Metnick's firm that was explaining this issue and the risks to the public to go into what they call remediation mode, they really hadn't done this around the country before. And the way they did it was absolutely the wrong way, and that's to dig up this abandoned and what had been covered for years. The only consideration that they were giving at that time was to whether or not it was contaminating the water. And since the gasification plant was in a position that it could not infect or cause problems with the drinking water and that was pretty much water flows downhill. There really weren't any areas, any towns that were dependent upon water that passed through this plant. So, we didn't take that position initially or at any time during the trial. Our main basis was what the legislature had done in looking at the data that was collected in their cancer registry. This doesn't just focus on coal tar. There was something like 145 or 150 separate carcinogens mixed together in the coal tar, and until it was unearthed it was buried and had no way to contaminate the community. I think it became a cause célèbre because so many of these plants were located around the country, and how are they going to remediate them when they are being told, "Get this off my ground. Get this out of my community.?" So, there was no way for them to defend the information that the cancer registry had compiled.

This is one of the few cases that I have tried where each judge that had to rule on intermediate stages or motions to dismiss, ruled with the families. It is the same thing with the motions for summary judgment. The motions at the end of our case and end of theirs were each denied by the trial judge, his post trial motions. When I say his, I shouldn't say that because they had twenty-five different lawyers on one side of the table. They all didn't sit there at one time. They rotated in and out of our presence. Either they were there to put on a specific witness, or to cross-examine a specific witness, or to argue certain motions that went on and on.

I can't tell you exactly how I ran across our witness, which is liberally quoted in the appeal. She was a very active and respected woman, probably around age forty. Since that time she has been called upon to speak or to give testimony in disputes throughout the country. The reason she got interested in this subject is her mother used to be a beautician and worked with coal tar hair dye, which would turn your hair black if it was getting gray, and she did her study independent of what was being done here in Illinois by the cancer registry. So, she added a human and a professorial approach because there were many, many, many carcinogens, and this is what I think probably impressed the judges and the jurors the most. That you just don't take these separate carcinogens and add them together. This was a witch's brew of many different carcinogens which made the level of that mixture out shine, out calculate any attempt to just add them together. They had a multiplier effect when you

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mix these separate carcinogens. That was scientifically established.

LAW: This is Dr. Harlee Sue Strauss we are talking about or Dr. Shira Kramer?

LONDRIGAN: Shira Kramer, and Shira was much in demand after this case, and of course because of her experience with her mother's death, and all of the research that she had done, and the type of scrutiny that she was subjected to when she gave testimony in Christian County. Shortly after this, maybe ten years later, they had a movie that I think paralleled this very closely. I am not sure exactly what was going on, but it was in California, and there was a gal out there that became a hero by approaching some of these toxic polluters, so they made a movie about it.

LAW: Erin Brockovich?⁹⁶

LONDRIGAN: Yes.

LAW: Had you ever, had you ever gone up against that many lawyers before?

LONDRIGAN: No.

LAW: So that was unusual?

LONDRIGAN: It was --you never knew who was going to walk in the door each day. It depended upon whether or not they were directed to go out and interview witnesses, or do research, or prepare motions to dismiss, and so they had to plan ahead. It is kind of like a football coach, and you are going to try to use the amount of people that you have, and if running a fresh team in everyday is going to win the day...that's their strategy.

The other thing while you are researching, the trial judge--the jury was out for three or four days, and I had to go out to Colorado. I was involved in another case out there. So I learned by long distance the jury's verdict, and it was out for a long time, and there were a couple of people on that jury who were not our friends. And I think they were out about four days, and obviously as far as the amount, a compromised verdict; but when we went up to defend the verdict on appeal, all three Appellate Court Judges voted

⁹⁶ Universal Pictures, 2000.

for us. And when they further appealed to the Illinois Supreme Court, and it was argued by both sides, and all seven judges on the Supreme Court voted for us. That was, I think that came down what, 2001 or '02?

LAW: Opinion filed in February of '02. So, it really was a long case.

LONDRIGAN: It was. You wonder how much good that case has done other than Erin Brockovich or her ilk in different counties. What I think what they quit doing is trying to remediate these sites because they were stirring up a witch's brew, and it didn't do them any good. They lost a lot of money by doing it the way they did, and I think they just walked away from it and said, "Let another generation decide what to do with this mess that we made over a hundred years ago." So, you don't see many of these cases floating around now.

LAW: Another case I wanted to ask you about was this wrongful death lawsuit against Brandon Hurst.⁹⁷

LONDRIGAN: Brandon Hurst was the least culpable of all of the parties that were named in this case. He pled guilty to a criminal offense and was sentenced, I think, to three or four years. I haven't been able to follow up with where he is or what he is doing. I know his lawyer, and we have talked about it. He was probably the least culpable even though he was charged with a felony.

LAW: Do you want to--I know this was a wrongful death case, but it had a lot to do with driving under the influence. Do you want to speak to that?

LONDRIGAN: He was driving under the influence of co-employees who were not thinking of his best interest. Usually if you are a friend and you see someone that has had too much to drink, you try to help them. And I never could understand, as drunk as he was

⁹⁷ See, *State Journal Register*, June 17, 2001, pg. 9, and, March 1, 2005, pg. 11.

and proved to be, when they took his blood alcohol, everybody that testified said he was drunk and could hardly walk, and one of his superiors at the automobile dealers...we didn't have a Green Family Auto where they are located all over, I think the main office was in Taylorville again, a coincidence.⁹⁸ He had to go home, it was either Lincoln or a small town north of here, might have been Williamsville, and he got crossed up at an interchange, one which was pointing an arrow to Decatur, and one of them that was pointing an arrow to Jacksonville. He got tangled up with those directions, and he turned the way that he wanted to go, which was the wrong way down the cloverleaf. So, then he drives against the opposing lane of traffic all of the way back to exit, at the beginning of the lake. I don't know the number of that, but that's where it happened where 66 turns north near the power plant. And these college kids were traveling south but on the same stretch of highway, which only should have people following the right direction. But he was so out of it he didn't even have enough sense to pull off to the side or turn. He must have passed fifteen to twenty cars going the opposite way on a four lane highway until he ran into these kids, who were coming down from Minnesota to do volunteer work during the Easter vacation. This was a small Lutheran college, in Northfield, the same community where Jesse James' career was ended. Jesse drove up there to take care of a bank, and they shot up his band so badly that he was lucky to get back to Missouri. But St. Olaf is a really well taught and respected Lutheran school in the Midwest. Ironically the kid that was driving this was a twin from the State of New York. His girlfriend, was killed in the accident. Her father went to the same Lutheran school and was a Lutheran minister. Another young man from Minnesota had a pre-existing disease, and let's see, we had another young girl from East St. Louis. What

⁹⁸ Landmark Automotive.

happened was the Catholic twin from New York was in the passing lane next to a truck. As he came around that curve all of a sudden he sees two headlights coming right at him. There is no way that he can go to the right or the left, and there are pyramided columns that are supporting another road that goes over to Lake Shore Drive. So, he tried to get the truck to move over and kind of sideswiped the truck, but the other kid by now was asleep and heading towards him, they hit him head-on, and I think three ended up dying.

This was St. Patrick's Day, or at least it was after midnight. Ironically I happened to be--I didn't get many breakfasts at home this year, and I went to a place where I knew they opened early like at 7:00, 7:30, and next to me was seated the lawyers for the young man who ended up in the penitentiary. We talked about him. And I said, "Isn't it ironic that this is St. Patrick's Day, and we are discussing it," and he said, "Well, that's why I came in here, St. Patrick's Day, I didn't think I would run into you." So, he did his best to represent his client, but the whole load fell to his shoulders, rather than where it should.

So, eventually they had a settlement conference, and I had made a demand for the policy limits of the automobile dealer. That was ten million dollars. I had a younger cousin that was seated next to me at the settlement table, and he keeps tugging at me and telling me that he has friends, and we just need to lower our demand. And I said, "I am not going to do that. I am representing five families here. One of them has lawyers from Chicago. We are not going to reduce the demand." And so eventually we were paid

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the limits, and I took out all of the families that were there for their offspring, whether they lived or whether they died, and we went down and had dinner at--what's the old restaurant there on Sixth and Monroe, Maldaner's, Maldaner's. Periodically I have heard from several of them. One of the mothers has a service, not-for-profit service for people that have personal problems, either disease ridden or accident related, but it was an adventure that I wouldn't like to live through again because you relive with the family what they went through. So, you must have another one there. We can talk together.

LAW: The last case I have for you is this one, and it involved Governor Blagojevich over, it was a dispute over whether or not he had to release some information because of a Freedom of Information Act request, the FOIA lawsuit. It was between the Better Government Association and Governor Blagojevich.⁹⁹

LONDRIGAN: All right. Where was that venued?

LAW: Down here. It eventually was appealed to the Fourth District Appellate Court.

LONDRIGAN: This is a longer story, but my youngest son has the same name as I do, decided that he would be, would become active in politics, and he ran for office twice, once for State's Attorney, and I think the other one was for a seat in the State Senate. This is a Republican county. It is ironic because when he came back here and he decided he wanted to be in politics, he was the only aide, or whatever that position was called in the 90s, and one time he called me and he said, "They were overworking me over here, but I am doing all of the work for the Senate in writing the synopsis of all of the bills." And so I thought at that time he was probably going to be in either law, or he is going to go into politics. He called me one time, and he said, "I am doing

⁹⁹ See, *Better Government Association v. Blagojevich*, 386 Ill. App. 3d 808 (4th Dist. App. Court, 2008). Also see, *State Journal Register*, January 10, 2008, pg. 9.

work for this young black Senator we have from Chicago, and dad, you should come over and listen to him sometime because I think you would like what he had to say.” So, I put that in the back of my mind, but that event never did happen. What did happen is that when our current President was still in the State Senate and he was thinking for running for higher office. He wrote Tom directly and said, “I would like to meet you down there. I am making some plans, and would you join me for a game of golf.” So, Tom told me about that, and I said, “Well, did you play golf with him?” He said, “No, I was too busy. I told him that I didn't, I wasn't available to play golf, and that I didn't have golf clubs.” Then when he, of course, ran for the President, Tom had shifted his ideas more toward possibly being a lawyer even if he was burdened with my name, and all of the sudden --what is our subject?

LAW: Governor Blagojevich.

LONDRIGAN: Yes, yes, that's a tongue twister. But it was bandied around a lot. When he got elected, Tom went over there and started working for Blagojevich, much to my dismay because I had him in my office at this time. We actually had tried a small case, which was lost over in Taylorville, Christian County, and I did not like Blagojevich. He is a lot like Trump except that Trump started up high, and Blagojevich started at the bottom. So, when Tom was working in the Governor's office, he suggested that they come down with this issue and let me argue it. I did not take on the argument on behalf of the Governor because I didn't agree with what the Governor was doing. I didn't agree with things that he had to say. My position in front of Judge Kelly is this all emanates out of Chicago. He is being charged up there in Chicago. I have no position to take on his behalf down here, except that the venue should be shifted from here to Chicago so we don't have

inconsistent results. Well, they wouldn't do that because this was a big political bone that a lot of them wanted to gnaw on for a long time, and then I wanted no part of. So, the powers that be decided that the best way to handle this appeal is to set it in front of the university students, law students over at the University of Illinois. So, I went over to argue the issues that I had raised, that this is an issue that should be tried and venued in federal court in Chicago. So, the first question that I was asked came from an old friend of mine, oftentimes an adversary, Judge Steigmann, and he said, "Who is his lawyers, who are his lawyers in Chicago?" I said, "I have no idea. I don't know the firm name. I am not in communication with them. I only know that I had one call. And I asked them what was the status of the case in Chicago? And he didn't give me an answer, and he didn't respond in writing." Judge Steigmann must have asked me fifteen times after that who his lawyers were in Chicago. He knew who they were or could find out who they were quickly, and of course, I had no answer for him. By the way, I don't quarrel with what happened to him up in Chicago. I have some regret that the people that handled the case down here didn't send that up to Chicago. That way they would find out who those lawyers were.

LAW: Any memories over the issue of secrecy of the subpoenas and whether or not they should be exempt, that particular issue?

LONDRIGAN: Was there an order like that up by Chicago?

LAW: Well, from what I am reading that was a big issue in the case was these FOIA requests were submitted, and the Governor said basically that the information they wanted was exempt from FOIA.

LONDRIGAN: When you say the Governor, you are talking about a friend now that's in the

penitentiary. I don't know. I didn't follow that closely. I wasn't consulted on that because both my son and the Governor knew I was no friend of things that he had done.

LAW: Yes, this opinion was sent out in November of 2008. So, it kind of came out right as everything was coming out over the Senate seat, which eventually resulted in his imprisonment.

LONDRIGAN: Where was this venued? In other words, are we talking about a trial court or in the Appellate Court in '08?

LAW: Appellate Court, Fourth District.

LONDRIGAN: So, that's a case that I argued that I knew very little about because the only issue that I had raised is that it was in the wrong venue.

LAW: Okay. So, one of the other attorneys would have handled the issues involving the secrecy of the information that was requested through FOIA?

LONDRIGAN: No. I think what I did and said was the only thing, only issue before the court and the only one that I knew anything about.

LAW: Okay. Okay. I just kind of wanted to ask you some general questions. Move away from cases and ask some, well, actually I think I will start with the philosophical questions. What are your thoughts on cameras in the courtroom?

LONDRIGAN: I think that's factually a case

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that has to be decided on what's going on in the community, in the courtroom. There is some discretion there that is left with the judge. I was fascinated. I was injured at the time and also on crutches or in a leg cast when this occurred, and it was a daily news event about them chasing one of my favorite football players down California highways. And

so, since I was a football fan and I thought I would understand it if I watched what was going on, I was taking time off from the office and continuing cases because it was hard for me to drive or hard for me to walk from place to place, and I learned a lot in terms of what not to do and what had to be done, and I thought that the defense developed this if it don't fit, you must acquit, and that they were able to get by with that. Now, I haven't watched the sequel that just came out because I have been doing other things, but I understand it has had good reviews. I think where there is high emotional levels that could end up with things happening outside the courtroom, demonstrations and violence, and that has to be addressed to the sound discretion of the judge. There comes a certain point where the public's need to know should come through specific and timely disclosures by the media, not something that could incite people that think they know what should be done and really don't because they don't know the full story.

LAW: As a lawyer what are the best means to enhance the public's awareness of the judiciary and what the judiciary does?

LONDRIGAN: Well, we have publications that are sent to most or all offices, and I think the majority of offices that handle trials and appeals will have access to them. There is a newspaper, I think it is a weekly, comes out that keeps you abreast of things that are happening in Chicago. In down state I think, attention is lacking because you simply don't have the number of reporters that can spend all day in following a case in the courtroom unless it is something that, merits concern outside the city or county in which the venue is set. In other words, I am not for editorials that predetermine what should happen to a defendant, whether it be in civil or criminal court.

LAW: Are you a member of any bar associations, and what is the nature of the relationship

between bar associations and the judiciary in your area?

LONDRIGAN: Well, I probably am not an expert in the last ten years or so, and there have been changes. One of the jokes they had at the last bar dinner was Carmack revisited, they place a sealed envelope to your brow, and they give you the answer, then they will ask you what the question was. “What does it take to become a judge in Sangamon County?” And the answer that they gave would be, “A graduate of SHG.” It drew a big laugh, and when you looked around and saw who occupied those positions, I don't think Kelly was, although he has a good Irish name. I think Kelly probably went to Springfield.

Oldtimers used to have a bar skit, and I used to help write those, and I still have got some of the lines that were exchanged during, which kind of captured what was going on the last twelve years, twelve months from after the prior bar skit. And we had John Crain, a very talented musician here who would put together the music, but those were fun times. Right now they are doing a very good job of setting up continuing legal education where you can be here for part of a day or a dinner or a lunch, and they will invite guests that most of the lawyers would like to hear. Some of them are judges in higher appellate courts, once in awhile a Supreme Court judge, federal court judge. So, I think that these organizations are more progressive, more educational, probably not more laughable than the earlier ones, which took picks on whoever made the biggest faux pas over the last several months.

LAW: What is the role of the judiciary in society? What is the role of a lawyer in society?

LONDRIGAN: Well, a judge is just a lawyer with a long, black robe. Most of them that are handed the long, black robe have been successful lawyers who are trusted and not

overstayed their welcome either because of health or personal problems that may have affected their ability to serve. And repeat that question again, lest I leave something behind.

LAW: The role of the judiciary and role of the lawyer in society.

LONDRIGAN: I believe that a lawyer in society has an obligation to become politically involved, not because it is your law partner, or your son, or your cousin that is running for a particular office, but to understand what that person has done in the past to make this community a better place to live.

LAW: So, I guess connected with that then would be what are the politics of the local judiciary?

LONDRIGAN: Is that here?

LAW: Yes.

LONDRIGAN: There are currently and have been for some time members of a down state Republican Party. Sometimes their primary battles were more difficult than the election to office.

LAW: Now, is that a new phenomenon, or has it been like that since you first started out?

LONDRIGAN: Well, I will give you an example when I first started out. Chicago is what Chicago was, and what Chicago is today. We would have a much stronger Democratic Party down state if it was not for the mistakes that are based upon Chicago political power. We talked the last session about when we had non-partisan elections for the city, and you ran based upon who you are, what your record is, what you have done for your neighbors. And you sought both Democratic and Republican power brokers and precinct committeemen and women to support you based upon what you stand for, and what you have done, or what you will be able to do in the future to correct directions that may have

caused difficulties in neighborhoods or in administrative offices. It was easy to run if you were a good guy. We talked about people like Percy Darling, and Mayor John W. Kapp, Willis Spaulding, all that lived in the generation of Springfield's wandering poet Vachel Lindsay.

LAW: So -

LONDRIGAN: He had his bridge as his tribute,

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and by this time, or about this time he committed suicide.

LAW: So, are you saying then that judges don't run for office in that same manner any more? How do they get elected today?

LONDRIGAN: You hope that your avowed party, say Republican, continues to support your candidacy and is not compromised by prior office holders that try to control succession to their office.

LAW: What are the benefits of doing pro bono work? Have you been engaged in any other kind of philanthropic work beyond pro bono work, and have you been involved in pro bono work, which I am sure you have been?

LONDRIGAN: What I--I think of pro bono not just that you aren't getting paid, but that you would do something for a token amount -

LAW: Right.

LONDRIGAN: --simply because it would be better for the community. When I came back here and worked in United States Attorney's Office, I lived about three blocks away from my office in a basement apartment with my one and only wife and mother who was expecting her first child. Every night, almost every night since she had been alone all day

and was no longer working or contributing to the family, she was depressed. She had worked in government in Washington, and she had worked, I think I might have mentioned this, she worked as a receptionist for the Department of Aeronautics, and she was told, "You can't come to work looking like this. You were pregnant," and this took a big toll from her. Now, you can imagine this happening fifty years later and the situation that we have today. She never worked a day again in her life because it changed her whole notion about what her contribution would be to her family. Would it be as a mother or would it have to do with income and fighting a battle that you can't fire me because I happen to be coming an expectant mother? So, things have changed so much that you are really living in a different environment where you can count on almost always, some type of war in another part of the globe, and so that so much money is being spent that you worry about the future, not your future, but the future of your offspring. And many of these people who are elected to office had no one in their family who were going to these far away places with American boots to put our stamp of our government apparently in their psyche, but I don't think we make any friends by doing this. Now we are talking about all of the diseases that exist and how we are going to combat them. Instead we have spent over, I think it was 3.9 trillion dollars on our escapade into the Middle East after 9/11. And I think everyone that is on a lower social level, or lower economic level, think that everything is slanted against them, that there is no future not only for them but for their offspring. And I don't hear those type of arguments being made by any of the candidates that were running for office this year. You just can't magically make this a land of bread and honey. Neither can you make it-- let me put it this way. Our greatest blessing as a country is that we are surrounded by two

huge bodies of water that make it very, very difficult except by ballistic missiles that can travel thousands of miles, and I think this has a really depressing attitude on turnout, because these people don't understand. They think that if you have a black candidate for office, that they should resurrect these different anti-groups, and they get so parochialized it is like one village going against the other. I really would like to be able to sit in the corner and listen to Ryan address Trump and find out what the consensus is on both parties so the people won't say they are all terrible no matter what we do. We are not going to go. Those are the people that are at the very bottom, and they have lost hope because they haven't been able to progress as their parents and children thought they should. So, what you would like to see is an honest discussion about what we are going to try to do when we get in office, how we are going to back away from these foreign adventures, and how it is going to be a better life in the future. I don't see either side doing a good job. I have fun listening to Bernie, but this, from here on out it is going to be how much mud we can throw on each other. I don't think people at the bottom want to get involved in this. They are all the same to them. They haven't done anything for us.

LAW: Mr. Londrigan, we are getting pretty far afield. Did you want to talk about philanthropic work that you have been engaged in or pro bono work?

LONDRIGAN: Pro bono work only recently. I raised hundreds of thousands of dollars for SHG about whom I was very critical a short time ago. If you go out there, you will see a lot of steps that take you to the athletic field, and then there is this bronze plaque which has Carol's image and my image there that kind of talk about that. I have also given individual scholarships because it costs so much to go there and let the nuns decide who warrants attendance, and then what I will get periodically is a thank you note from the

student that comes there. Then there is a parish that I live in which I have reduced significantly recently because of the cost of taking care of Carol at St. Joseph's Home, and for the last ten years or so I have gradually been withdrawing myself from the practice of law and becoming her primary caregiver. So, I am right at the point now where I have to decide what, if anything, I should be doing in the future. I have an adopted daughter who had become pregnant, got married, lost everything, and she is bipolar. I have that obligation. I think since her mother died--there were problems between the two of them--I think I might be able to resolve that. Her first born is asking for help. He is in college. He is my grandson by marriage, and I am also looking at what I can do based upon income that I had ten years ago that's no longer there, and how I can allocate it among--I have got like six kids that are going into college now. None of which am I in a position anymore to do for them what I had done for them in the past. So, this is the end of a trail for me, and one that I am asking myself all of the questions that you just started to ask me today, and I really haven't come to the realization of how, and when and how, I ought to do all of these things, meet all of these obligations.

LAW: Another aspect of this is, and this would be throughout your life, what are your memories of the various civic organizations that you have been involved in?

LONDRIGAN: Well, I was the president of the Junior Football League. I was the coach of the YMCA swim team, which won several awards.

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I was there for three years. We won three of the age divisions in the state finals, and we defeated a team up in the Quad Cities that hadn't lost in twelve years. I was--now had two children and a father who had terminal cancer, and so I never was a very active

member of this very controversial group here in town. It is called the ABC Club.

LAW: Yes.

LONDRIGAN: We have got friends, I think one of my sons, but more of my, people of my own age would go out to the state fair, plan all year for that, but finally I had to quit because they used to have the meetings on Thursday at noon, and I had friends that would show up for that Thursday noon not in any condition to do anybody any good and remain intoxicated through the weekend. So, I decided I am not going to go that route. I probably haven't eaten ten lunches unless there is something that you have to go to. I don't believe in lunch. I get a good breakfast, and then I have dinner. So, if you accustom yourself to that, then you don't have to worry about when I started about three martini lunches, and a lot of the people that were in decision making positions, and I am not talking about judges, I am talking about people who hire and fire. It has been a big problem down through the years. I even thought, and I don't think that I even thought for awhile that one of my children was going that direction.

LAW: Okay, I just want to ask you some--okay, so how has the bar in Springfield changed over time? How has legal work changed over time? How has trial work changed over time? Maybe start with how the bar has changed over time. So, remember when I first asked you the composition of the local bar when you first came, first started practicing? What's the composition today? How has it changed over these last fifty years?

LONDRIGAN: Well, you have got two sectors. You have lawyers who are working for a government, and lawyers that are working for a firm. We had some very, very large firms at that time, and because we are the State capitol we have always had a lot of lawyers that are employed by the State. Some are elected to or appointed to official positions either in

federal or in state courts. Then you have specialists that only worked in probate. You had those that we discussed before that defended criminal cases. Most of my life as I have explained it to you has been representing individual clients in tort actions. Some of them, of course, settle right away up front. Others are with you for years. Right now I think that it varies a lot. I think there are even more people who had or have a license to practice law that have decided that unless they have a father, or an uncle, or an elected officer that's going to take them under their wing and find them a job--what I think has aided this is there is much more available continuing legal education that even if you have a lawyer with a license if he is attending or interested in what other areas of the law are about, it is pretty easy for him to get that by attending CLE or requesting to get disks and find out who these people are. I really don't understand Chicago. So much of that that I have talked to with lawyers even though they are approaching my age they still have got a job on the side, and they still have commitments to the people that got them where they are, and they still have connections with judge A, but not judge B, and that's the way decisions are made if you are going to refer someone to somebody else, but I have never really made a study of Chicago. I just had friends that are lawyers in Chicago talk to me about how things get done up there. They used to have a backlog for six years from the time a suit was filed before it ever gets to trial. I think there has been some reforms there.

LAW: So, is the bar larger or smaller? Is it more diverse, less diverse? Is it more specialized?

Have the offices moved away from downtown?

LONDRIGAN: Well, the answer to the last one is yes. They all used to be in the Illinois Building, or the Ridgely Building, or the United Mine Workers Building so they could walk back and forth to the courthouse. I remember I was in the ninth floor of the Ridgely

Building with my first born son, and the whole building started to--oh, my God, it was going to collapse. I left my dad there and I grabbed my son by the wrist, and ran down the stairs, and got out on the street, and we had an earthquake here at that time. It emanated up from the, not San Andreas, but the fault down in southern Illinois. I think it has become more of a let's get out of downtown as far as location of lawyers are concerned, get a running start to get home, or go to the bistro, wherever they are going to meet somebody. I will give you an example. Both my son and I went over to the Illinois Building. Even though we knew the law firm that was handling Carol's estate had moved over to what used to be a bank there. My son, that's where he practiced law too, but Sorling's office was originally in the Illinois Building, and they have moved over to the new building. We moved where we are, I think it was 1970 or early 70s, '71, '72 from that nine story building where the Weiners, and the Fitzgeralds, and the Heckenkamp, and the Londrigan were all located. So, I don't see many of them going into satellite communities where you don't see commercial areas, and it might be zoning. But it takes me just about twenty minutes to drive in from the lake. Even quicker than that if you get up early and it is still dark and they don't have the speed traps set up. Now, other than migration what were the other changes that you were talking about?

LAW: Is it more diverse? Is it more specialized?

LONDRIGAN: Oh, becoming more specialized since even before I started to practice. That's what my dad would tell me. I really don't like what they are doing now. He would refer it all to his younger brother, James E. Londrigan, and he would crack the books, and that's the way they would do it then. We had wall to wall books that were there, and he was very patient. He was a teacher before he became a lawyer, and he was a big help to my

dad. I don't think my dad liked to read extensively a lot. I enjoy that more than he did. That was his complaint that everybody used to do a little bit of everything, and everybody knew each other, and went to the same places before for breakfast or after for libation. He said you are just going to have to specialize. I didn't make an effort to specialize other than I wanted to be on the battlefield, not in an office. That gave me the chance-- regardless of which side, it is not a crusade. It was listening to people's story, and seeing if you think you could convince other people she wasn't, he wasn't treated fairly. Like-- and I never had that role, but if anybody had asked me including the State's Attorney, I would say you are looking at the wrong reasons why this accident happened. I think he got something like a ten year sentence, got out maybe in five or six years. I don't know whether he has a family left. I know he was married and had a child the night he was going home.

LAW: Is it more of a business and less of a profession, and what do you think about advertising?

LONDRIGAN: Well, I don't know--from the very outset I have been against advertising. I have seen a lot of it that is just absolutely misstatements. The other thing I noticed is everybody started doing that at the same time, and even if you would put something in

[01:30]

the telephone book in the yellow pages back there that said what you did, and who you were, and your telephone numbers, there are other people that would do other things like inventing numbers of what they had done and huge--I thought I didn't have those expenses when I started. I don't think it is fair to people that have to look through and decide who these people are based on what they advertise themselves to be.

LAW: What I am--what I am trying to understand better is how the local bar and legal work has

changed over the last fifty years. We have talked about a few things. Offices aren't as concentrated downtown, legal work has become more specialized. Anything else we should add?

LONDRIGAN: Did I talk to you before about the ambulance chase?

LAW: I don't think so, no.

LONDRIGAN: Well, we used to have a big all day party that would start in Washington Park, and there would be an ambulance there, and the ambulance (siren sound) and pull away, and of course none of us could catch the ambulance, but there were people of different ages and different sex. And one of the lawyers, who is no longer with us, was down in Florida or off the coast of Florida in Key West, is supposed to compete with each other. Nobody is supposed to drop dead. Nobody did drop dead. Nobody caught the ambulance. But he waves to me and says, "Don't pass, don't pass," and I said, "Well, why? This is supposed to be a race. It is the ambulance chase." He says, "Just look ahead," and there was this young, blond girl running ahead of us, and he said, "You will miss all this if you just keep running on past." So, he kept me there for oh, maybe thirty-five or forty seconds, and I eventually finished the race, and they had libation, non-alcohol, just fruit juice.

We don't have an ambulance chase anymore. Maybe somebody thought it was demeaning, but I know there is one lawyer down in Key West who still has fond memories, but he isn't able to practice up here anymore or decided not to. He wasn't banned. He just decided that he liked it down south.

LAW: Okay, I have a death penalty section.

LONDRIGAN: A what?

LAW: A death penalty section, there has been traumatic changes in the death penalty. In fact, I think since you have been practicing it has been abolished twice, once the first time by the Supreme Court, and the second time by our General Assembly. Did you ever try any capital cases?

LONDRIGAN: Well, I tried capital cases where it was being asked for, but never to my recollection ever had a judge and a jury who carried out a sentence, a death sentence. No, I have never been for death.

LAW: What were your thoughts at the time on the moratorium?

LONDRIGAN: Well, there is so many different variations, and they are always changing. It is when you see these things go awry, and instead of mercy they are dispensing unbelievable pain. Some people belong behind bars forever, and it may be because they no longer have control over how they treat anyone else. It may be just something that occurred later in life because of too many knocks in the head from wherever you got them. I always have been against death penalties.

LAW: Was that because of your--why? Why have you always been against it?

LONDRIGAN: I don't think it is within our prerogative to take the life of another simply because that's just the best and quickest way to take him out of a community. And so often people have been convicted unjustly. Sometimes, not always, they forget about them usually, but sometimes they made a mistake. I don't know why people feel more secure if you have a death penalty. The people that do the things that these people do, that are charged with these offenses, are normally impaired or make a very, very low score when you take their ability to determine between right and wrong. I will give you an example. I have lived with this history now for just over a hundred years. I am

a devoted historian to the island of Ireland, and we are now in the one hundred year celebration, at least a few days ago, of when the rising occurred. There was a song that was written based on earlier poem that had been written by one of the several that were at the Dublin Post Office when the rising occurred. He was following directions that he should be there. In the meantime he was supposed to be married that weekend. His would-be bride was with child, and they kept him in a place called Kilmainham Gaol, and he was alone, and I think there were about five others who were teachers and poets, not men that go around carrying weapons and threatening neighbors with insurrection.¹⁰⁰ And they were going to take him out in front of a firing squad without a trial, without a hearing, and they do grant him one concession, and that is to marry his betrothed and his forthcoming supposedly bride, first born child, and he wrote this poem that was later set to music in later years. It became popular throughout Ireland. They called her into a chapel. It was still dark, and they wanted to get it out of the way before sunrise, and see if I can remember it. "As we gather in the chapel of Old Kilmainham Gaol, I think about these last few weeks a will they say we failed. Oh, Grace,"--that was her name, she was British rather than Irish--, "just hold me in your arms and let this moment linger. They will take me out at dawn, and I will die. With all my love I place this wedding ring upon your finger. I will write some words upon the wall that everyone will know that he loves so much,"--I can't remember the rest of the lyrics, but they take him out, and they shoot him, and she bears the child. And he had written a poem before that about blood on the rose, and what he had written on the wall that I couldn't remember was, "he loves so much that he could see his blood

¹⁰⁰ Joseph Mary Plunkett and Grace Gifford.

upon the rose.”¹⁰¹ He was talking about Christ shedding his blood, and that it was related to the color of the flower at the earlier poem. So, I am sure what he had written was the same poem that he had written before. And they then took him out. No one knows whose bullet killed him. There were five there with rifles, and they did to him what they did to the other five who were not militants. They were all teachers and poets.

[01:45]

So, I think organizations, governments, militia, circumstances don't act as the equivalent of a power of one, or three, or five during war time to take someone without bringing them before trial, hear what their testimony is, what they did, and why they did it. It is abused, and I think it should be taken away. There are other ways we can police society and reform people who have done the wrong things and putting them in a circumstance where they are not just awaiting a firing squad or an electric chair. Oh, you look at the New Testament, and there is all sorts of quotes that you would come up with.

LAW: Are there any cases that you have been involved in that you struggle with today?

LONDRIGAN: You mean because I still have an open file on them?

LAW: That you struggle with the outcome, or that you still think about, that you haven't been able to forget, or do you just once they are over, they are over, and you move on?

LONDRIGAN: No, I live with all these cases whether I win or lose. You always think could I have done something a little differently that would have allowed me to get to the same place over the same period of time. I don't think that could ever happen in Taylorville and

¹⁰¹ See, Joseph Mary Plunkett, "I See His Blood Upon the Rose," in *The Circle and the Sword* (Maunsel & Co., Dublin, Ireland: 1911), and the song, "Grace," written by Sean and Frank O'Meara (1985).

in Manners Park because I don't believe there was any thought on the other side that they were ever going to win because of the political power that they had, and they were remediating a site, not creating a site, but not aware of what they were doing. There are cases that I have won that if I had to do it over again, I would probably do it differently for different reasons. There are problems--I am trying to think of the case that I think I should have won and didn't, and they were all prosecuted in federal court. There was one that ended up in a hung jury that I had to try again, and I tried it very differently the second time. There was an older very funny Irish gal that was probably close to seventy years old, and John Curren, who used to be State's Attorney, he knew her, and he asked if I would try that case with him and for her, and I did. And the defendant was a young twenty-eight year old employee of the newspaper. He went through a red light, and made a turn into the passenger way and struck, knocked this gal down. We had to acknowledge that she was an alcoholic. Her response was that this was early in the day, and she hadn't had anything to drink, and there is nothing, any arrest charges or anything brought against her. There is a ticket given to him, and his defense was that when he was making the turn, and sometimes this happens, the sun is coming right down the street, and as you change your position that you are in with respect to your windshield you are looking right into that sun. Anyway he seriously injured her, but she was able to get up and back and on her feet. We had a hung jury. It was eleven to one: eleven for the defendant, and one for the plaintiff. They got deeply into her problem with drinking, and it so happened it was right downtown. And as she was going across north to south, it was down there by the Fifth Street. They used to call it oh, they had different names for it, but all sorts of taverns down there. There is a tavern behind her, and she is walking across the street towards the

tavern on the other side. Well, they used those two arguments to convince the eleven that she got what she deserved, or she was the one responsible for the accident. I talked to her, and she called me on the phone all of the time. So, I got to know her pretty well. So, I took this up in voir dire. I said, "I represent this lady, this is her name. She lives in a certain place. She does part-time work downtown. She is an alcoholic." Then I qualified them. "If there is no evidence that she had anything to drink on this date, would you use the fact that she is an admitted alcoholic to deny her recovery?" And all of them answered the way I hoped they would, and so we re-tried the case. I knew and liked the young guy that was driving the car. I mean I would see him all of the time because he was a reporter, and I said, "Well, as you started to make the turn before you got up there, was anybody crossing?" He said, "Well, I really wasn't looking." He said, "There was other traffic going around." He said, "By the time I turned and started to,"--the same story he told before--and I said, "And you continued on through the crosswalk knowing you were blind, and you couldn't see whether or not there was a pedestrian in there?" And he didn't know what to say, and I can't remember exactly what he did say, but they were only out like twenty minutes, a half an hour, and they came back in. I learned because those are the things that should have been done in the first trial, and that sits on you particularly if you talk to her, and she was an interesting gal to talk to. She had outlived her husband, friend, I think a couple of children, and she was a good friend of John Curren's also. So, if you make a mistake, or if you lose a case you think you should win, I always tried to find out why. There were two over in Taylorville that were against me, and they were going to declare a hung jury, or they had a replacement--she had an excuse. She had to get off there. All of the news media people were talking to her. "Well,

how would you have voted in this case?” She said, “Well, if I stayed there, I’d of denied any recovery,” and then she made the remark, “But there is some people in there that feel very strongly about it.” When I heard that on the radio, I thought well, this might end up as a hung jury. And they finally decided it about, it took them about a week. So, I never got the chance to talk to that gal about why she was against him, but she apparently was the hold out, not the other guy that they discharged. Well -

LAW: Okay. I just have two questions. The first one is what does the future of the profession hold? Where do you think it is going?

LONDRIGAN: I think because of the very nature of the profession it has to be what we look toward to ensure constitutional rights, to ensure access to information. There is a basic justice that at least a group of people can reach back in their own experience and memory, family and people that were very hard to deal with, crippling injuries, and in the process that we have now those truths can be flushed out. But the judiciary's powers should not be limited, and the role of politicians, whether they be in another branch of government, should not be a basis for denying justice in disputes. They cannot be resolved by confrontation and retribution. We just can't allow us to regress into the wild west and old south's use of hangman's knots with hoods over their head. That behavior should be punished by a justice system and not ignored.

[02:00]

LAW: What do you want to be remembered for? What is your legacy? This has to do with your legal career.

LONDRIGAN: Representing the little guy. That about says it. I did very little in the field of work by the hour. In fact, our firm had a big discussion back in the 90s, and I just didn't

like billing clients that I knew didn't have much of any money and hoping that they were going to pay me. So, I was always willing to wait until the end of litigation when there was, or would be money available to the clients, and I never had a client who complained at the end of successful litigation. I would say that there are those in our office who could point out that I may go a year or more without bringing in any money, and so I did a five year study, and it was determined that the rate billed for other attorneys in the office was \$250 an hour. So, we kept a record for like four or five years, and it ended up that I brought in about twice that amount of money by not billing the clients in cases where I did not bill the clients until we had a successful result.

LAW: Mr. Londrigan, that's all that I have for you unless there is anything else that you would like to add to this oral history? Any final words, anything you want to add?

LONDRIGAN: Speak now or forever hold your peace.

LAW: Okay.

LONDRIGAN: No, you have been very courteous. I hope you have much success in talking to people that both tried the type of cases that I've tried and that also worked by the hour to get a result for their clients because I am paying by the hour now to look at all of the alternatives that are involved in my wife's death. I have got four children of my own and nine grandchildren that are in college, and I think it has worked pretty well.

[Total Running Time: 02:04:25]

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