

Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library  
*Illinois Statecraft* Oral History Project

Interview Outline

**A note to the Interviewer:** This outline is designed to provide a start point for developing an interview outline. It should be tailored to a specific interview subject. Often, Statecraft interviews are best organized chronologically, around job changes, elections and major political battles, but they should also focus on the major themes and issues that define the interviewee's political career. A list of potential themes or subjects is listed below for your review. Also provided is an interview outline for your use. We recommend you add and deleting to this outline as appropriate for your interview subject. The outline is in no way meant to limit those questions you should ask during the course of the interview. You are strongly encouraged to thoroughly pursue those questions and issues that emerge during the interview.

1) Constitutional reform:

1970 Constitutional Convention

Redistricting

Cut-back Amendment

Equal Rights Amendment

Electronic voting

Call for new Constitutional Convention?

2) Education

Educational funding

IL Teachers Union(s) [IEA and IFT]

Teachers Retirement System

3) Environment

EPA

4) The Economy & Revenues

Adoption of the state Income Tax

Recession of late 1970s

Gas prices

Budget process

DOT building projects

*Build Illinois*

Regulation of the power companies circa 1996?

## Illinois Statecraft Interview Outline

Telecommunications regulation and de-regulation

Gambling and gaming regulations

### 5) Social Services

Americans with Disabilities Act

### 6) Ethics Reform

Chicago machine politics

Shakman decree

Hiring and Rutan decision

'License for bribe' scandal

2002-'03 ethics reform

Ongoing ethics reforms

### 7) Veterans Affairs

### 8) Social Issues

Abortion

Gun control

Marriage & Divorce

Gay rights

### 9) Administration & governance

Selection of Judges

Technological innovation & governance

Department consolidation

Privatization of Government agencies/programs/services

### 10) Crime & security legislation

**Introductory Information:** State at the beginning of the interview:

- Interviewer's name (State your name)
- Date and place of the interview
- Name of the person being interviewed
- "This interview is part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library's *Illinois Statecraft* Oral History project"

## I. Background information

### A. Parent's background?

## Illinois Statecraft Interview Outline

1. Father

2. Mother

B. How family came to settle in Illinois?

C. Other siblings & immediate family?

### II. Growing up:

A. Family life

B. School(s)?

C. Religious activities?

D. Holidays?

E. Interests / activities / hobbies?

F. Extracurricular activities?

G. Career aspirations?

### III. Life beyond high school.

A. Finding a job or choosing a college?

1. Your major in college?

2. Post-graduate education?

B. How you met your spouse.

### IV. Early career.

### V. Family life.

## Illinois Statecraft Interview Outline

### VI. How you became involved in (politics/lobbying/journalism, etc)

- A. Your decision to enter politics/lobbying/journalism, etc.
- B. Your political philosophy/beliefs.
- C. Individual(s) or events that helped shape those views.

### VII. Political career.

Recommend that this portion of the interview – the heart of the interview – be organized chronologically, based on the interviewee’s political career.

#### Campaigns:

Main theme & issues?

Opponent?

Strategy?

Controversies during the campaign?

Election results?

The challenges of fund-raising?

The impact on your family life?

Your relationship with the media?

### VIII. The decision to retire:

### IX. Life after the political arena:

IX. Concluding questions: (Ask reflective comments that get the subject to look back on his/her entire career. Some examples, below.)

- A. The accomplishment(s) for which you are most proud?
- B. Your most exhilarating moment?
- C. Your most disappointing failure (in the public arena.)

## Illinois Statecraft Interview Outline

- D. Your most painful experience?
- E. How your views have evolved / been strengthened over your career?
- F. What do you would want to be remembered for.
- H. Closing comments.