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## **Interview with Jerome Butler**

8 July 2002

Location: Office of the UIC Historian, 628 UH, 601 S. Morgan, Chicago, IL.  
Present: Jerome Butler and Dr. Robert V. Remini

[Tape begins in the middle of introductory conversation]

Dr. Robert V. Remini: You were going to bring me some names and addresses. Oh, you brought them, some artifacts!

Jerome Butler: I brought some artifacts.

RVR: Oh, that's grand!

JB: Let me get some of the material out here before we start.

RVR: Okay, let me stop this then.

[RVR momentarily shuts off audio recorder]

JB: I thought it would be helpful if I gave you a summary of my professional career during the period I was an employee of the city of Chicago and after I left the city.

RVR: That's wonderful! You're very well organized. Well, go ahead.

JB: My name is Jerome R. Butler. The following is a brief summary of my professional career during the period I was employed by the city of Chicago and after I left the city. After graduating from the University of Illinois in 1952, I worked for several large architectural firms in Chicago until 1960 when I responded to an advertisement in the American Institute of architects Journal seeking applications for the position of assistant city architect with the city of Chicago. The city architect at that time was Paul Gerhardt who had been in that position for approximately forty years and his father has been city

architect before him. Paul Gerhardt was a highly regarded architect who had studied law as well as architecture and during a period of his service with the city held the titles of Building Commissioner as well as city architect. I learned a great deal working with Paul Gerhardt and this experience was very helpful to me in my ongoing career in government.

I served as assistant city architect from 1960 until Paul Gerhardt's death in 1966 when Mayor Richard J. Daley appointed me acting city architect and I served in this title for approximately six months until the Mayor appointed me city architect.

I served as city architect from 1966 until 1979 when Mayor Jane Byrne appointed me Commissioner of Public Works.

I served as Commissioner of Public Works from 1979 until 1985 when Mayor Harold Washington appointed me Commissioner of Aviation and I served in that capacity until my retirement from the city in 1987.

After leaving city government, I opened an architectural consulting practice and once again became involved in one of my favorite projects, Navy Pier on Chicago's lakefront. (In 1976 I had restored Navy Pier's east end buildings for the city as a bicentennial project.) In 1989 the city of Chicago and the State of Illinois formed the Metropolitan Pier and Exposition Authority (MPEA), an independent municipal corporation to run both Navy Pier and McCormick Place. The state also provided a \$150 million Build Illinois grant to fund redevelopment of Navy Pier. MPEA, the new authority, retained my firm as a consultant to assist them in the planning process and the completion of the concept plan, which became the official blueprint for the redevelopment of Navy Pier.

In 1997 I joined the Metropolitan Pier and Exposition Authority as the General Manager of Navy Pier and was in charge of the Pier during the reconstruction process and during its initial years of operation. Today Navy Pier is one of Chicago's greatest attractions, drawing over eight million visitors annually.

Actually, I went to the city with the idea of short-term employment. But it turned out to last about twenty-eight years. I really didn't know anybody in government. I had no political affiliations. I was strictly a professional employee of the city.

RVR: It's probably just as well [laughs].

JB: A short time after I went to work for the city as assistant city architect, I was made aware of a problem on one of our buildings that was under construction. Although this was somewhat of routine matter, it resulted in my first meeting with Mayor Daley and provided me with some valuable lessons that were helpful in my career and future dealings with the Mayor. As I recall, we were building a Ward Yard Building for the Department of Streets and Sanitation. I'll leave out the name of the contractor on this project, if I may.

RVR: Okay [laughs].

JB: He was a small contracting firm that was doing the general contracting on this job. My job superintendent came to me one day and said that the contractor had installed the roof framing system improperly. That's the structural system for the roof. He said that the steel trusses didn't have proper bearing on the brick walls. This could result in a potential failure from a snow load. He also said that the contractor was unwilling to correct his mistake [RVR laughs]. So I asked for a meeting with the contractor. We met at the job site. There was an attorney with the contractor, who I really didn't know at the time.

RVR: You didn't know him as an attorney?

JB: I thought he was the contractor's attorney when we met. He actually turned out to be an assistant corporation counsel for the city of Chicago. So, when I went through the plans and specifications and pointed out the requirements, I pointed out why the contractor was obligated to correct his mistake. Every time I would give him a direction

or refer to something in the specifications, I would be cross-examined by the attorney. “Where does it say that?” “What do you mean that it refers to the American Society for Testing Materials and the Steel Joist Institute?” “All of these references in the specifications, what do they mean?” So I explained it all to the attorney, again, thinking that it was the contractor’s attorney. At the end of the meeting, there was really no conclusion reached that he was going to correct it. A few days later, I was asked to come up to the Mayor’s office. I don’t think until that time I had officially met Mayor Daley.

RVR: You had not?

JB: No. I walked in and introduced myself. He was very cordial. By this time I had heard some rumors that this contractor was a boyhood friend of the Mayor.”

RVR: Oh he was?

JB: Well, people were telling me that he was a close friend of the Mayor.

RVR: Oh, I see.

JB: So we sat down. And in the course of the conversation, the Mayor said, “I understand you’re having some problems on one of the buildings that you’re overseeing the construction of.” I said, “Yes.” He said, “Well, what’s the nature of the problem?” I explained to the Mayor that that it was really a problem that had some potential structural consequences for safety. Our contract documents, plans, and specifications were very clear on what needed to be done and that the contractor was being obstinate and uncooperative. We didn’t direct him to tear it all out. In fact, our structural engineer made a drawing showing him how he could correct it, putting some plates under the bearing of the trusses, etc. At this point the Mayor mentioned the fact that he knew the contractor.

RVR: This is Daley?

JB: Yes. I said, "I understand that you've known the contractor for a number of years." He said, "Jerry, I want to tell you one thing. You're new with the city. Looking at your credentials, I think it was a good choice the city made. I think you'll have a long and successful career with the city. But remember this. You're going to find all kinds of people who come up to you and say, 'I'm a close, personal friend of the Mayor. I grew up with the mayor. You'd better check with the mayor because he's a friend of mind.'" He said, "You're going to hear all kinds of things. Remember this. If they're really a friend of mine, they're going to want to do what's right. So all you have to do is stick to your guns, be fair, and represent the city of Chicago the best you can." So, that initial meeting really gave me a solid foundation under my feet regarding my future career with the city. It was a minor thing. But on the other hand, it spoke volumes to me about the Mayor and my role. Another interesting point is that from that point on, I had a direct relationship with the Mayor. I went to the mayor for any major problems that came up that I thought he ought to be aware of. I didn't have to go through anybody else to meet with the mayor.

RVR: This was when you were architect?

JB: This was when I was assistant city architect.

RVR: Even when you were assistant? You didn't have to go through Gerhardt?

JB: Well, Paul Gerhardt grew to be a very close friend. Whenever I went to the Mayor, I advised him on most of the things that I went to the mayor on. Of course, after I became city architect, this direct contact was one of the great things about working for Mayor Daley. I subsequently worked for Mayors Bilandic, Byrne, and Washington. I was in all of their cabinets. Daley had this thing. Maybe it was unusual. I thought it was a very good way to get business done and to give confidence to the people that were working for you. You had a direct relationship. There was no in between. Several of the subsequent Mayors have had layers of administration. With Daley, it was direct, one on one.

RVR: No wonder he got things done.

JB: So there was no confusion.

RVR: Were you on a first name basis with him?

JB: No. I called him Mayor Daley.

RVR: You did call him Mayor Daley? He called you Jerry?

JB: Right.

RVR: But you never called him Dick or anything else?

JB: Right.

RVR: Okay.

JB: So that was how it all started. As time went on, I would have some major things that would evolve, like influence from aldermen. For example, trying to get major changes made on contracts that involved millions of dollars. I was able to just stand my ground on it. There was one time that Gerhardt was out of town. He might have taken the vacation purposely to leave me with a hot potato [RVR laughs]. But it was something that one of the influential aldermen came to me about and tried to persuade me to make a change. I wouldn't change. George DeMent, who was then the Commissioner of Public Works, contacted me after that. He wanted to know what the basis of my decision was. I told him and I'm sure he informed the Mayor, because I'm sure that the Alderman went to the Mayor. So, it started off on a very solid foundation. I was able to make decisions based on the merit of each issue as it came up. So that was the start.

During the period I was acting city architect, the city had a number of architectural groups in different agencies around the city. One was in the Bureau of Engineering. Another one was in aviation. They were spread out. I suggested to the

Mayor that we consolidate all of these architectural groups into one Bureau of architecture. It was actually called the Bureau of Architecture and Building Maintenance back in those days. We split off the building maintenance and made a separate bureau of that in subsequent reorganizations. I was the acting city architect for a considerable period of time. I don't remember exactly how long.

RVR: It was? I was just about to ask you.

JB: I was going to say somewhere around six months to a year.

RVR: Did they have a search?

JB: No, not to my knowledge.

RVR: Why didn't they appoint you immediately?

JB: Mayor Daley had a tendency to do that with appointments. He would appoint a person acting. Then some of them stayed in that acting capacity level for a long time.

RVR: Was it to see how they worked out?

JB: I believe that was the case. But one day, the Mayor approached me. He said, "Jerry, wouldn't it be nice if the city architect lived in the city?" Of course, at that time I was living in Glenview. There was no city ordinance at the time that required residency. And I said, "Yes Mayor, I think that would be a wise thing." So we sold our house in Glenview and moved to Chicago. Shortly after that, in a matter of months, I was appointed the city architect [JB and RVR laugh].

RVR: Now this was before the ordinance?

JB: Yes.



RVR: But he liked to have his people living in Chicago?

JB: Right. So that's how I finally arrived at the role of city architect. Then, as I said, I felt that my main mission in that role was to raise the standards of municipal architecture, which around the country was pretty deplorable. So we set out to build the bureau and get really qualified people. We interviewed the cream of the crop coming out of colleges. I remember that a number of our people came from the University of Illinois. We finally had a thoroughly professional office that was probably equal or better than any architectural firm in the city of Chicago.

RVR: Really?

JB: As city architect, I was responsible for the design and construction of all municipal buildings including new libraries, health centers, police area headquarters and the police academy, fire stations, senior citizen centers, mass transit stations, incinerator plants, airport terminals and related facilities, community service centers, riverfront parks, Navy Pier's redevelopment and other capital projects. Many of these projects received local and national design awards from the American Institute of Architects and other professional organizations and made a positive impact on the communities in which they were located. Off all these projects, I believe the project closest to Mayor Daley's heart was Navy Pier.

RVR: The university being there, you mean?

JB: No. This was after the university had left. Navy Pier sat empty for many years. The buildings were falling apart. In the ballroom at the east end, the roof had fallen down to the floor. It was really in a deplorable state. The restoration of the Pier's East end buildings would be one of the projects that the Mayor said would be one of the bi-centennial achievements for the city of Chicago. That was to restore the east end of Navy Pier. They city didn't have the money to do the entire pier at that time. So we restored the

ballroom and the east end buildings. We started having entertainment programs in the ballroom, along with concerts and various types of other events for the public.

I served on the Mayor's Landmark Commission with a number of prominent people. One of them was Ruth Garbey. Ruth had been a reporter for the Sun Times. She was married to a very prominent architect, who was with Schmidt, Gardner, and Erikson. They were one of the big hospital architects in the country. Ruth had a passion over Navy Pier being closed to the public. One day she went over there with some of her friends, including the press, with some giant bolt cutters. There was a chain on the front gate of Navy Pier. She proceeded to cut the chain [JB and RVR laugh]. But there was a growing concern, led by people like Ruth Garbey that Navy Pier was a potential gem for the city of Chicago on the lakefront. And it was a crime to keep it closed. After the shipping left and after the University of Illinois left, the pier had been converted to so many different uses. Then, with the deterioration of time, it was really in bad shape. So, in 1976, we unveiled the new east end of the Pier. The Christian Radic, a ship from Norway, came to visit. People were lined up the whole length of the pier, which is five eighths of a mile. They were about six abreast, to tour the ship and to tour the east end of the Pier. There was a fantastic outpouring of interest in the new Pier and the new revised ballroom at the east end. In 1977 the American Institute of architects awarded the city of Chicago, the Bureau of Architecture, and myself, an honor award for the restoration of the Navy Pier. It was one of the first national awards that the professional organization had given for restoration.

RVR: But it wasn't the entire Pier?

JB: No, as I said the city restored Navy Pier's east end complex of three masonry buildings, including the Grand Ballroom in 1976. When the Pier was originally built it was called Municipal Pier Number Two and it was both a commercial and recreational pier as envisioned by Daniel Burnham in his 1909 Plan of Chicago. The east end was designed for recreation uses and the remainder of the Pier including the half-mile long sheds and the head house at the shoreline were the commercial part of the Pier.

Mayor Richard J. Daley decided to restore the East End Recreation Complex as a bicentennial project in 1976 in order to return these historical buildings to the public for their use and enjoyment. The redevelopment of the remainder of the Pier was deferred until a later time when numerous studies and public input determined the appropriate uses for the Pier and funding became available. It was not until 1989, however, that Mayor Richard M. Daley and Governor James R. Thompson reached an agreement to create the Metropolitan Pier and Exposition Authority (MPEA) to manage both Navy Pier and McCormick Place. An important part of that agreement was that the state provided a \$150 million Build Illinois grant to the new authority to redevelop Navy Pier. The Mayor appointed John Schmidt as chairman of the new authority. Schmidt was a prominent attorney who had been the Mayor's chief of staff when he was first elected. Governor Thompson appointed James Riley as the executive director of the authority. At that time I had retired from the city and had established an architectural consulting practice. Schmidt and Reilly contacted me and expressed an interest in my doing consulting work for the authority and said that my past experience as city architect, restoring the Pier's east end buildings, would be very helpful to them in the redevelopment of the entire Pier. We undertook a comprehensive public planning process that resulted in a concept plan that became the official blueprint for the redevelopment of Navy Pier as a multi-use, recreation, exhibition, and entertainment complex on Chicago's lakefront. A concept that is consistent with Daniel Burnham's 1909 Plan of Chicago as well as Richard J. Daley's vision for the Pier as a great asset for the city.

RVR: The man had vision, I've always said. Tell me, did you have anything at all to do or any knowledge of the planning that went into the building of this campus? Or were you part of the decision to place it on the near west side?

JB: No. I think the Department of Public Works' only involvement was in the transportation planning aspect of it. In other words, we were designing and building the rapid transit stations and figuring out how people were going to get there. The city's planning department was the agency that was more directly involved in planning of it. Public Works was the design and construction agency for the city of Chicago. Then you

had the planning department. There was a certain degree of overlap. See, I started in 1960. When was the campus opened?

RVR: It opened in 1965.

JB: Well, I know. They had selected the site and had gone through a lot of controversy on that part of it.

RVR: Oh yes, right. Well, that was from 1961 on.

JB: In 1964, we opened the transit station at Peoria and Congress. Then I think we completed the Halsted Street station.

RVR: Did you? I was going to ask that. You mean to say that there was no station? Was there any "L?"

JB: Marshall Suloway, my predecessor as Commissioner of Public Works, would be better able to answer your question regarding the transit service that served the area before the construction of the new campus. Although Marshall did not join the city until 1964, he previously worked for the Illinois Department of Transportation and was directly involved in the Congress Street Expressway Project. To the best of my knowledge there was existing rapid transit serving the campus area, however the Congress Street Expressway with its rapid transit system and stations in the middle of the expressway, replaced the existing system in that area. Congress Street Expressway was really the prototype for putting a transit system in the middle of an expressway and was the gem of the idea that was followed through on all of the other expressway projects.

RVR: Right. Tell me more about your relation to Mayor Daley. The one anecdote that you told me, or the initial experience that you had, was a very good one. That tells you a great deal about his character and his style as he was running his administration. Can you

comment further on your impressions of him, what he was like? Did you ever see him angry? Did you ever experience any of the explosions that sometimes happened?

JB: Well, I guess I was blessed with a job that would prominently bring him good news [RVR laughs]. He would be dedicating buildings. He'd snip the ribbon, come out and give a speech, pat everybody on the back, and tell them that they did a good job. He'd talk to the communities. We did a lot of fire station, police stations, and police area headquarters, which had court facilities. We designed and built health centers, senior citizen centers, incinerator plants, and transit facilities. We built the CTA extensions.

RVR: You did nothing with this university?

JB: As I said, to my knowledge our Department of Public Works involvement was the design and construction of the transit system serving the new university.

RVR: Did you have anything to do with the selection of Skidmore?

JB: No.

RVR: Okay. I just thought I'd ask. So you only saw Daley then when he was...

JB: Well, I came to work in 1960. They were just building the Daley Center at that time. So I had some involvement in that. But as I said, my dealings with Daley included listening to his ideas, his thoughts on redevelopment of the city and Navy Pier, and overseeing the projects in his capital improvements program.

RVR: Well, can you comment further about those ideas and what he had to say that impressed you as being special?

JB: I believe one of the things that impressed me most about Mayor Daley was that he was truly a man of the people. One of his top priorities as Mayor was to improve the

delivery of city services to all of the neighborhoods and to all of the people of Chicago. When you look at the city's capital improvement program during his administration and the emphasis that was placed on constructing new facilities for every city department, you get a clear picture of the Mayor's priorities. As the city architect, I had the opportunity and responsibility for the design and construction of these new facilities. new police, fire, health, senior, community service, library, streets and sanitation, and transit facilities were completed in neighborhoods throughout the city. All designed to improve the delivery of city services. Of course the Mayor always came to dedications of these new buildings and gave a talk. Usually there was a band, refreshments, etc. and there was always a large community attendance. Many of these facilities such as branch libraries and community service centers were strategically located in order to become an anchor and have a positive impact on the communities in which they were located. the city's central business district experienced a boom in high-rise office building construction during the Daley administration. I brought along a book of photographs of the city's skyline that illustrates this phenomenal growth. These are views of the skyline that were taken before, during, and after the period when Richard J. Daley was Mayor.

RVR: Okay, that'll be very good.

JB: I found Daley very easy to deal with. There was a kind of personal relationship that started and became closer as time went on. But when I was appointed city architect it was like you were being sworn in as President of the United States [RVR laughs]. He had your family there.

RVR: Oh, wasn't that nice?

JB: You took an oath. You signed documents. You felt like, "I didn't realize that this job was quite as important as this [JB and RVR laugh].

RVR: That's wonderful!

JB: After this, he took us to lunch at the Yacht Club.

RVR: Really?

JB: From that point on, it became “How’s your family? How are the kids?” In addition to the government business, there was a personal relationship.

RVR: He really had a special style, didn’t he, to have something like this and then take you to lunch?

JB: Yes.

RVR: That’s what I’m getting at, that I want to hear more about. That’s wonderful.

JB: [Referring to the book] Well, I’m not going to give you this one [laughs].

RVR: No, I wouldn’t think so [laughs]!

JB: But I’ve got some others that I will give you.

RVR: Well, I will say it shows a picture of Mayor Daley swearing in. There’s a very young Jerome Butler, with his wife, children, and mother.

JB: Right. My father had worked for the city. He was the bridge engineer for the city. So, I grew up in a professional family. My father said that I’d never be an engineer because I was never that good with math. But he kind of helped steer me into the architectural profession. My father was dead at the time that I was appointed city architect. But my mother came down from Madison, Wisconsin. It was a big event. And I think that was typical of everybody that the Mayor appointed to his cabinet.

RVR: What’s the other picture you have there? Don’t you have another picture there?

JB: Oh, I have some others, yes.

RVR: We might as well take a look at them.

[JB and RVR begin looking at pictures that JB brought with him]

JB: This one was after Daley died. The state appointed a committee to look into commissioning an artist to do a full bronze figure of Daley in the capitol rotunda. Have you seen this?

RVR: No I haven't. I know of it but I haven't seen it.

JB: Well, this is the program for the dedication. It was the dedication of the Mayor Daley Memorial Statue in Springfield. I'll leave this with you.

RVR: It has a picture, does it?

JB: It has a picture of the mayor.

RVR: But not the full one?

JB: No. That's the bronze statue.

RVR: That's the full-length bronze statue.

JB: This was on the back page. There was a public act in Springfield creating the Richard J. Daley Memorial Statue Committee. They had a number of state senators and people on that. Then, the committee appointed an Arts Advisory Committee to recommend professional artists for the full commission, to review the work of the artists, and to



submit samples to the committee of various artists' work. I was the chair of this subcommittee.

RVR: They have a bust, I think.

JB: The artist who was selected for this work was a professor of art at the University of Illinois downstate campus. He's retired now. Peter Fagan was the artist.

RVR: Yes, I see his name.

JB: I worked with him. One of the things we did at the time was that I asked Frank Sullivan, the Mayor's press secretary and his staff to pull together a couple of books for me, which I brought along today. One of them was a series of photographs of Mayor Daley throughout his career. Now you probably have most of these photos already.

RVR: I'm not sure that we do.

JB: If you don't, what I'd like to do is leave this with you.

RVR: Would you please?

JB: I talked to one of the ladies up in the library when I was over here for the commemoration ceremony that you spoke at.

RVR: It was probably Nancy John

JB: Yes. She mentioned that I had these. Oh, here, I gave you the wrong book. These are twin books. This is the one that has the skylines of the city of Chicago. If you notice in the beginning of the book, these photos are before Daley. First you have the Daley Center. Beyond that, it gets into, I don't know if there's a date on these. Okay, it's 1957. This was taken in 1952. So that was just before he became Mayor. And here you're

looking down Lake Shore Drive at the Palmolive Building. Here you're looking down the river.

RVR: This is after Daley?

JB: No. This is 1957. This is two years after he became Mayor.

RVR: When did he become...?

JB: It was 1955.

RVR: He became mayor in 1955?

JB: Right. This is after, just after it. So this is looking down Michigan Avenue. There's the Tribune Tower. I don't know if Navy Pier shows in the picture. I guess it doesn't in that. Now here's another 1957 shot.

RVR: That's Merchandise Mart.

JB: No, that's the concert hall on Wacker Drive. You know, the one that...

RVR: Oh, you mean the Lyric Opera House?

JB: Yes. This is, I think, on LaSalle Street.

RVR: This is 1964. In 1964, you've got the Twin Towers of Marina city. You've got some new buildings springing up. And here's a shot in 1977. Let's see. The Mayor died in 1976, right?

RVR: It was 1976 or 1974.

JB: I think it was 1976.

RVR: I'd have to check my notes.

JB: Here's a view of the skyline. You see the new Standard Oil Building, the Continental Insurance Building. I think it's here. You see the Sears Tower. You see a lot of these new buildings that have sprung up on the skyline in 1977. These are all 1977.

RVR: Some of these we do have.

JB: Yes, these are all 1977.

RVR: Well, thank you. You're lending this to us. You want it back after we finish?

JB: Yes, when I talked to Nancy John, she said, "We'd like to go through your pictures to see if we don't have them. And if we don't have them, we'll reproduce them." This is like a pictorial history of the Daley Years. Here's the early family shots.

RVR: Oh, those are wonderful!

JB: And I'd be surprised if the family hasn't given you most of these.

RVR: Well, they're going to. They haven't yet.

JB: Here's the wedding of one of his daughters. This is, I think, young Richard, the current mayor.

RVR: Is that Richard?

JB: Yes. There's some in here that are kind of interesting. I don't know if I'm speaking into the microphone.

RVR: Oh, I know I'm not [laughs]!

JB: Is it picking me up?

RVR: See, I have an associate who usually takes care of these things. He's very good about these pictures and such. He's down in Springfield now. He couldn't be with us.

JB: Well anyway, this obviously was a post-election after he won. I don't know which election it was. Here he is with his son Richard. That's Richard M.

RVR: That looks like John. That's Richard M?

JB: Yes. He's with Mrs. Daley. I've marked some of these. This is with Pat O'Brien at the St. Patrick's Day Parade [RVR laughs]. This is at Navy Pier at one of the folk festivals, talking to one of the vendors. This is a great compassionate picture, I thought, of the mayor taking the time to talk to an elderly woman at the fair. Here's the Christmas tree. This is some sort of stamp commemoration with a little child. Here he is again with Richard. This is a little girl visiting his office on some commemorative trip. There's lots of pictures with kids. This is apparently after he died. Here he is. I've got a lot of pictures of the mayor with shovels and things, you know. I haven't been able to go through all of them yet. This is at one of our dedications where he's wearing one of the contractors' hard hats. This was, I think, the Daley Center construction. This is the dedication of the Standard Oil Building. There he is with John Swearinger, the chairman. This is a picture I had on my wall in my office at city hall for many years. I had a huge version on the wall.

RVR: Where is he standing?

JB: I think he's on the roof of the Daley Center, overlooking the city. Here's the St. Patrick's Day Parade. Here he is in the Stockyards area in the early days, riding a horse.

RVR: [Laughs] I would never imagine him on a horse.

JB: This is at one of the trade shows, I'm sure, throwing a baseball will Bill Veck. He was then the head of the White Sox. Here he is with Hamilton, the movie star. Here's Ed Graybeck, the head of the Plumber's Union. St. Patrick's Day was a big event in this town. Here he sits with Harry and Bess Truman, John Kennedy, and I think that's the head of the F.B.I. What's his name?

RVR: Oh, not J. Edgar Hoover?

JB: Yes. I believe so. And that's one of the Daley boys. I don't know which one. Here he is with Johnson. Here he is with Ford. Here he is with Queen Elizabeth and Phillip and, I guess, with the Daley family. Yes, that's the Daley family.

RVR: Oh yes. He would bring them in.

JB: Here is Anwar Sadat.

RVR: You don't know who that is?

JB: Yes, that's Percy. He used to be one of the State Senators.

RVR: Oh, Chuck Percy! Of course!

JB: Here he is with Cecil Partee and Mohammed Ali, the fighter. Here he is with Dr. Martin Luther King. Here's the Pope. And this is the man that took his place, Michael Bilandic. There he is with Carter. I'm not sure what the occasion was for that one. These are a series of pictures. Now these were done to help the artist capture the man in bronze. That's the reason these photos were assembled in this book. But it turned out to be kind of a history of the mayor. Here's a very pensive photograph of him with his hat on. I have to tell you a cute story. When I was working with the artist on this, I was looking at one

of his little models of the statue. And he had the Mayor's pants kind of ruffled looking. I said, "You know, I never saw Mayor Daley when he didn't have a sharp crease in his pants."

RVR: Yes, he was well dressed, always.

JB: So he said, "I'll correct that." So, you can see, the bronze statue looks like he just stepped out of the tailor's shop.

RVR: Is it true that he was always well dressed?

JB: He was always well dressed. Except for a few occasions, at his home up in Michigan.

RVR: You went there?

JB: Only on a few occasions at his home in Michigan or at his house in Bridgeport.

RVR: You went to his house?

JB: The mayor would occasionally, if you were meeting with him on some subject, say to you, "Let's go to lunch." You'd jump in the car and you'd end up out in Bridgeport [RVR laughs]. Mrs. Daley would serve the lunch.

RVR: See, now I thought that he never brought business to his home.

JB: Well, I don't know how many people he did that with. I don't think that I was anything special.

RVR: Do you know of any committees or individuals meeting on public business in the house? That was private. That was personal. That was his other life that he protected.

JB: That, in general, is true.

[END OF SIDE 1]

RVR: What can you tell me about the house in Bridgeport?

JB: Well, it was a modest bungalow on Lowe Avenue. He had added on in the back to expand it for the family. The basement was a finished basement where he had kind of a large family room and a fireplace. It was very modest.

RVR: It's a one story.

JB: Yes, one story, right.

RVR: Do you know how many rooms?

JB: I really don't know how many rooms.

RVR: Well, that's not important.

JB: I suspect with that addition in the back, it probably had four or five bedrooms. To raise a family that size, you'd need that. But I think that was the place where he was very comfortable. Then on the weekends, he'd go up to the Grand Beach home. Again, it was a very modest home. It had a fair amount of property around it.

RVR: It did?

JB: It was built right near a bluff overlooking the water.

RVR: It was one story?

JB: It was a two-story home.

RVR: It was a two-story home. It was wood?

JB: It was frame construction. I think it was stucco, as I recall. I think he expanded the property and acquired another house, which I think one of the boys and his family took over. So he had kind of a little compound there. But again, when you'd go up there, he was totally informal. And my reasons for going there were not to discuss city business. There was usually a reason that he wanted to ask me some questions about the house or the property.

RVR: In Michigan?

JB: This was in Michigan.

RVR: I see.

JB: I didn't go up there on city time. This was on weekends or holidays. At that time, the lake level was at one of the all-time lows. Properties were eroding and houses were falling into the lake. His house, which was way up on this bluff, was in kind of a precarious situation. The lake would scour out the sand at the toe of the bluff. And big chunks would fall off. So he asked me about that problem. That was one of the things that he asked about. And many of his neighbors were losing their houses. There were unscrupulous contractors that were suggesting that they put in fill. The fill was mostly sand and dirt. It would get washed out in the next storm. So, I gave him some advice. I talked to a friend at the Corps of Engineers on what they used to stabilize the bluffs. I helped him get a contractor from Holland, Michigan to come in and do some work. Now, there may have been a few times when I went up there related to something on city business. But I don't think he brought city hall to Grand Beach, Michigan, unless there was some strong reason that he wanted to. I think the times that I visited with him in the



Bridgeport home were more of convenience for the mayor. It was because he wanted to get something discussed, but he wanted to go home and have lunch [laughs].

RVR: Right. He's the Mayor. He can do what he wants. Did he go to Michigan every weekend, do you think?

JB: I don't know. I think in the summer, he did it a lot. I think he was up there during some of the periods, like when he was recuperating from that slight stroke. There were periods of recuperation when he kind of wanted to be quiet and get away for a while. He would go up during those periods. But as you know, better than I do, he was a very family oriented person.

RVR: I learned that, yes.

JB: The family business was private business.

RVR: And they're still a very private family. And that's why somebody like me as an outsider, is trying to learn more about him and the family, for scholarly purposes. And I think that because they're giving his papers to the library indicates their willingness to cooperate, to a certain extent.

JB: Well, there are certain examples of that. I'll tell you this only to illustrate how they're concerned about private matters. When Daley was concerned about losing his house in Michigan, due to the lake erosion, I told you that I talked with a friend at the Corps of Engineers who'd made some recommendations. I did some investigating about contractors. He hired a contractor from Holland, Michigan to do the work. The contractor hired a trucking firm to haul stone from a quarry.

To make a long story short, after doing the work and installing the new sea wall, it stabilized the bluff and the contractor put in rip rap or heavy rock behind the wall. Well, the press somehow got a hold of this that Daley was doing some big improvements on his property in Michigan. One day I came into my office and the press were there waiting for

me in my reception room. They wanted to know if I had done anything for Mayor Daley on his property in Michigan. I said, "I gave him advice, counsel, and recommendations on stabilizing the seawall because his house and many of his neighbors were being jeopardized by the low level of the lake, etc." They asked, "Well, did you do this on city time?" I said, "No I didn't. I went up there on several weekends." They said, "Well, did you charge him for your advice?" I said, "No. If the editor of your paper asked you for some advice and counsel that you could give him that you had some expertise on, would you charge him for you work?" And they said, "No." I didn't know it at the time. But they had a team of reporters go up to Holland, Michigan at the same moment to visit the contractor. They had another team of reporters go to the trucking firm that did the rock hauling. They came in at the same time hoping to get contradictory stories. Well, the funny part about it was that everybody told the truth. Everybody told the same story. And the Mayor had paid for every dime that went into that right out of his own pocket. There were no favors done. Nobody did him a favor. It's not that somebody didn't ask to do a favor. But the Mayor said, "Absolutely not. I want to pay the going rate for the stone and everything."

So as it came out, all the papers had to print were these big pictures of the property looking at it from the lake. It was Daley's Compound, or whatever it was called [RVR laughs]. They couldn't say a bad word about it. But afterwards, one of the mayor's sons called me. He asked why did I talk to the press? That was family business. I said, "Well, I'm sorry that you feel that way. But I felt it was the best defense to tell the truth because there was nothing wrong that was done. Everything was done above board. I had nothing to be ashamed of."

RVR: They came to you. You didn't go to them.

JB: Yes. But anyway, that was the last that was said on it. There's another example that I can think of. And that's the book that Frank Sullivan wrote. Frank was the Press Secretary that followed Earl Bush, who was the Mayor's original Press Secretary. When Frank had originally come to work for Mayor Daley, Mayor Daley invited him to come and be the Press Secretary for the Police Department. Now, the police department, in

those days, was having all kinds of problems. Those were kind of turbulent periods of time when Sullivan was over there. Later, Earl Bush resigned and Daley appointed Sullivan as his press secretary. Then after the Mayor died, Sullivan went into a public relations practice. He then wrote the book called "Legend." I think that was the title of the book. Do you have a collection of all these books that have been written about the mayor?

RVR: No. The library does.

JB: Well, there are a number of them that have been written. Some of them are kind of frivolous. Royko wrote one with his own form of humor. It was a negative type thing. More recently, there was "American Pharaoh" that came out.

RVR: Right, I know that one.

JB: There was a program that I participated in. It reviewed that and pointed out some of the inconsistencies of the American Pharaoh Book. That book was more on the political side of the Mayor. It didn't touch really on the administrative side.

RVR: No. The family wasn't even approached.

JB: Anyway, Sullivan's book was, I think, the only real factual one. Mayor Byrne wrote one after she left office. But Frank's book was too frank [JB and RVR laugh].

RVR: Oh?

JB: I mean, I think he touched on some raw nerves on the political relationship between Jane Byrne and the Mayor. She had a close, working relationship with the Mayor. So he touched on some things that were not appreciated by the family. I think that subsequent to that, Frank was kind of ostracized from any direct dealings with the Daley family. So be forewarned [laughs].

RVR: Is he on your list that he gave me?

JB: No. I didn't put him on the list. But I'll add him to the list. I don't know his number.

RVR: He would be an important man. He might not have been invited because of the people who were invited, that list was drawn up by the Daley family, as I understand. I was not involved.

JB: I'll add it to the list.

RVR: And Earl Bush is still alive. We've interviewed him once.

JB: Have you?

RVR: Yes. Well, this has been most interesting, I must say.

JB: I also have some additional material on various projects completed during Mayor Daley's administration.

RVR: You're given me this material or you're lending it?

JB: I'm giving you this material.

RVR: Yes, that's good to have.

JB: Here's the central area police headquarters when O. W. Wilson came in. We re-did the headquarters. We built a communications center. We worked with O. W. Wilson in the reorganization of the police department and built a series of area headquarters, which were never built before, after Wilson came in. We started with the area four police headquarters, then area six, and then the police training academy. The city never had a

police training academy until Wilson came in. Here's the fire department. They never had a fire academy until Daley came in. They built a new fire academy.

RVR: See, now that's all very essential.

JB: Of course, we also built a number of new fire stations and health centers. There was the Garfield Community Service Center, the Uptown Health Center, and the Claude Holman Health Center. These are all the King Service Center. Here are libraries [counting], about seven of them. Here's the Illinois Regional Library for the Blind.

RVR: You certainly did keep a very good record of your work.

JB: These are all public libraries and transportation facilities. Here's the O'Hare International Terminal. Here's the Kennedy and Dan Ryan Expressways and the expressway system. Here are rapid transit stations. Here's the parking garage at O'Hare and Kimball Transit Station, and Central Park Transit Station. Here are urban landscaping and beautification projects. The Mayor was very much involved, as is his son, in beautifying the city. So he created urban beautification awards. Every year, they would give plaques to different people who had won awards. So we did a number of different things. We built the expressways and there was some surplus land. So we built little expressway parks on that surplus land, wherever possible. And we built the first parks that were along the south bank of the Chicago River, the river front parks. Here's Pullman Park, play lots, and Chinatown Park. Here's the Navy Pier redevelopment. These are really urban projects. Here's the streets and sanitation facilities, the southwest incinerator. Here's the northwest incinerator, which was the first incinerator plant that made steam and sold it back to the surrounding industrial area. So these were kind of environmental projects that addressed what to do with the garbage besides putting it in landfill. Here's a description of neighborhood service centers, police court facilities, health centers, libraries, fire stations, refuse processing and incineration plants, and transportation. Here's also recreation and beautification projects, Navy Pier, and State Street Mall. And here's a list of awards. These were some of the awards from the

American Institute of Architects, U.S. Department of Housing, Design and Environment Magazine, the U.S. Department of Transportation, American Institute of Steel Construction, American Bar Association, and Illinois Council of American Institute of Architecture.

RVR: You're giving me these?

JB: I'm giving you these.

RVR: Well, I can read it then.

JB: These awards lead to the recognition of the city's architectural group as one of the prominent public architects in the country. So we found ourselves giving a lot of information to other cities as a result of that publicity.

RVR: Well, thank you very much for this. This will be very interesting to us.

JB: Here is additional material on Navy Pier, a project that was close to the mayor's heart. So here's a picture of the mayor and Marshall Suloway. These are various articles, including Paul Gap, who was a very noted architectural critic. These are just examples that I pulled out of the Public Works Magazine. This was an article by Milton Pikarsky, who is now deceased. He was the Commissioner of Public Works prior to Suloway. These were some of the things he pointed out that were unique about Chicago's transportation planning, including the transit systems down the center of the highways.

RVR: That's important!

JB: Here's the Mayor dedicating the Northwest Incinerator that made steam from refuse and sold it to the industrial park. This is a little article on the expressways.

RVR: That'll be very interesting! Thank you.

JB: I'm trying to see if this mentions the station that serves the campus. Here's the one I was looking for [reading an article]. "The development of the University of Illinois Circle Campus created the need for a centrally located rapid transit station to serve thousands of students."

RVR: Right. I can read the rest of it. That's wonderful.

JB: That's the water works. He built the Central District Filtration Plant that supplies water to half of the city. Here's John Kennedy dedicating the airport. Here is one just showing the waterfront. Then here is something I did working with John Ward, who was back then the city's purchasing agent. We were having a lot of discontent from minorities, who felt they weren't getting their fair share of jobs. The federal government had some programs. But we came up with a "Canvassing Program for Equality" that gave a credit to contractors in the bidding process, if they had more man hours performed by minorities on the construction project. That influenced who would be receiving the contract. This was published in Time Magazine. It caught on around the country in other cities. But that was a unique thing that Chicago did to increase minority participation on construction jobs.

RVR: Right. Okay, well, thank you very much for all of this.

JB: This is more than you ever wanted [laughs]. Here's my flyer and my resume.

RVR: Well, I thank you very much for all of this and the pictures.

JB: Let me look into my bag here.

RVR: See if there's anything else [laughs] that you want to lend us or give us.

JB: Let's see what I have here. I grabbed some miscellaneous photos at the last minute. This was the Soldier's Field Stadium Committee. Here's the Chicago Beautiful Committee, where the mayor would give awards to citizens for building a beautiful garden. This is the dedication of the new police academy. This is Marshall Suloway, with the mayor and me. This is Jim Rockford, who is on your list. He became acting police commissioner. That was the Haymarket Statue. Do you remember it?

RVR: Right. I remember it, yes.

JB: They relocated it.

RVR: I know. They had to.

JB: It was relocated to the courtyard in the center of the police academy. What is that? Oh, Ira Bach, who was city's planning commissioner...

RVR: Is that Ira?

JB: Yes. I'm not sure when this was done. But they renamed Wacker Drive Ira Bach Way [JB and RVR laugh].

RVR: It didn't take?

JB: Well, it's still there. The signs are still there.

RVR: Okay.

JB: This is Marshall Holleb, who was a very prominent attorney and a friend of Ira's. He was very involved with city affairs. This is John Wilson, who started the first big art show at Navy Pier.



RVR: That's him?

JB: Yes. This is Joe Casserly, who became my successor as city architect. This is Mrs. Bach. This is Fred Fine. He was in the Mayor's cabinet. I don't know if that photo was taken after Daley's death. I don't know the timing of it.

RVR: Are you lending these to us?

JB: You have this, I think, in the book.

RVR: In the book, it may be a different picture with Pat O'Brien.

JB: I don't know the year of these things. This is the problem.

RVR: That's okay. Well, do you want to lend them to us, and then we'll give them back to you?

JB: If you think there will be some special thing. This one was on Navy Pier.

RVR: Well, let me borrow them then. When I have the time I can go over them.

JB: The only other thing I've got is this book on Navy Pier. This I don't want to give you because it's sort of a memento. My staff gave me this copy. But I put together this book when I was in my last year with Navy Pier. I stepped down as general manager and I hired an author to do it.

RVR: Oh, that would be very interesting. Can we borrow this?

JB: You can buy this at the Navy Pier book store. But you might want to make a note of it. It's called, "Navy Pier: A Chicago Landmark" by Douglas Bukowski. I believe this is a good pictorial history of Navy Pier.

RVR: Oh, he was a student of mine.

JB: Was he?

RVR: That's Bukowski. He's a graduate. Yes, we can get it.

JB: Probably some of the other bookstores downtown handle it. I know they handle it at Barbara's Bookstore at Navy Pier.

RVR: Well, thank you very much. We can get hold of that. Well again, many thanks for everything. Oh, you have more?

JB: Well, there's only one other thing I wanted to say. I've talked to Michael Daley of this bronze bust I have of the Mayor. When he was working on this commission for the statue in the state rotunda in Springfield, the artist did a number of studies in bronze. I've obtained one of the final studies, which is identical to the bust part of the bronze full figure located in the Rotunda in Springfield. Anyway, I've mentioned this to Michael. Michael said that he was going to bring it up to the university.

RVR: Right. He did mention it.

JB: No. I talked to the artist Peter Fagan and he said, "I'd be more than willing to donate it to the University of Illinois Campus." I believe this bust would be an important addition to the Richard J. Daley Library.

\*\*\*\*\*END OF INTERVIEW\*\*\*\*\*