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Interview with Charles A. Pounian

Date: 3 September 2003

Location: UIC Historian's Office, 601 S. Morgan St, Chicago, IL.
Present: Charles Pounian, and Dr. Fred W. Beuttler

Fred W. Beuttler: Introduce yourself and we can continue.

Charles Pounian: My name is Charles A. Pounian, P-o-u-n-i-a-n. My friends call me arch.

FWB: Is that Armenian?

CP: Yes it is.

FWB: Okay.

CP: I worked for the Hay Group as a human resources management consultant, essentially in the state and local government, for the last 18 years. Previous to that, I was the Director of Personnel for the City of Chicago for about 25 years. I was in both, the Civil Service Commission when it existed, and then as the first director of personnel under the new personnel ordinance, which took effect in 1976.

FWB: Okay. So in your e-mail, you said that you started with the city in 1953.

CP: Right.

FWB: You were with the Civil Service Commission.

CP: Right.

FWB: Then, you continued until 1976, when the department changed to…

CP: It became the Department of Personnel.

FWB: Okay.

CP: Home rule came into effect in the early 1970's. And the city was able to adopt the personnel ordinance to supersede the state law, governing civil service.

FWB: Okay. Then, you continued through the Bilandic and Byrne administrations.

CP: And then, there was two years of the Washington administration.

FWB: Okay. And that was until about 1985, something like that?

CP: Exactly.

FWB: That gives your background. I'd like to start, in some ways, since you mentioned the connection with the University of Illinois at the Navy Pier campus, why don't you go back? Then we can work into your career in the city.

CP: I served with the United States Army in World War II.

FWB: That was in Europe?

CP: No.

FWB: Or the Pacific?

CP: No. I've got to quickly tell you ahead. I had the least fearful World War II experience of anybody that I knew. After graduating from high school in June, 1944 I enlisted in the army. I served a little bit over two years, the first six months of that at Ripon College in Wisconsin in pre-engineering. Then I did almost four months of infantry basic training at

Fort Hood, Texas, followed by six months at Ohio State University in electrical engineering. And by this time the war was over; then, I was assigned to the 2nd Infantry Division as a cryptographic technician in the signal company, where I spent a good deal of time playing football, softball, and other kinds of things after the war was over. Then, I was discharged in September of 1946. I had never left the United States of America in the Armed Forces.

When I got back home, I wanted to get started in college as quickly as possible. And the University of Illinois at Navy Pier was starting up sometime early in October, because they were having a slow start and I didn't want to waste any time. So I enrolled at the University of Illinois. I had one year at the University of Illinois at Navy Pier. I must say that it was a very good experience. I enjoyed being there. But after a year, I went to Lake Forest College to finish my baccalaureate.

Actually, that was because the Army had sent me to Ripon College for six months and to Ohio State for an additional six months. And I had quite a few credits to start with. They tried to make an engineer out of me and that was not going to work. But I did well enough to get back into Ohio State after my infantry basic. As I said, my experience at the Pier was very good. I met a lot of great people. And actually, the classes there were really quite good, too.

FWB: You talked before we started about some of it, that you had to go to class when they were building the place. What was the pier like in 1946?

CP: Well, it was just a big, long barn. They were making classrooms. You'd be taking a French class and trying to get the right inflections. And there would be a carpenter in the corner, banging away with a hammer (CP and FWB laugh). As I said, it was a good experience.

FWB: And they were good students? Most of them were GI's?

CP: Oh, you had people from 17 years old to 45 or 50 years old, that were going to class.

FWB: They were all kind of mixed together.

CP: Yes. All of the veterans were coming back. They had the GI Bill, including myself. Actually, it was a great time to be in college, especially with the GI Bill taking all of the really serious worry about affordability and everything. It was an incredible program.

FWB: So after that, you went to Lake Forest College. You're from Chicago, I assume.

CP: Right.

FWB: Okay. You're from the north side?

CP: I'm from the north side. That may cause some problems with city government. But that's another story.

FWB: Okay. Well, that's something we need to get into, in terms of where you're from in Chicago.

CP: Yes.

FWB: What neighborhood are you from?

CP: I was raised in Rogers Park. I have lived in Uptown since the early 1950's, actually, from the time before I started working for the city. And I've lived in Uptown ever since.

FWB: Okay. Let's go into after Lake Forest College. You were out in what, about 1950 or 1951?

CP: It was 1949.

FWB: It was 1949.

CP: Right. That's because I had a lot of credits from the courses I took at Ripon and Ohio State.

FWB: Right. That's because you came through. And you finished. What was your degree in? What did you…?

CP: I got a B.S. in psychology.

FWB: Okay. It was psychology.

CP: Then I went to I.I.T. in their psychology program there. I got my master's degree in 1951. I continued on with my Ph.D. work. I started work with the city in 1953 as, the title was personnel examiner. It was developing civil service tests.

FWB: How did you first get connected with the city, and decide to go into city government?

CP: Well, I saw an ad, saying that they were looking for people with appropriate backgrounds to develop civil service examinations. Actually, I rejected it. I didn't think that I really wanted to work for the city. And I started looking around for other kinds of jobs that were available at the time. Everything else that I looked at looked kind of dull. I didn't want to work for an insurance company or whatever. I went back, took another look at the city job, and thought, "Hey. This would be a great place to work for 18 months or so and get something on my resume. Then I could get out and get a different job."

But by the time the 18 months had come and gone, I'd been promoted. And I was having a really good experience, with a really good bunch of people in the Civil Service Commission that I was working with. Then, in 1955, there was sort of a huge kind of turnover in things because Mayor Daley got elected. And the president of the Civil Service Commission had left. Things were sort of up in the air, in terms of what would

happen and how things would be handled from that point on. But I was still working on my PhD. And I thought, "Well, I'll continue on, keep working, and enjoying what I'm doing."

I got promoted again and I became head of the examination program. I stayed on in that until 1960, when I finished my PhD. Just at that time, the person that was the director of personnel for the Civil Service Commission resigned. Much to my surprise, they asked me to take over the spot. So I got promoted to the director of personnel for the Civil Service Commission in March of 1960. It was within a couple of months after I got my PhD. I got it in January of 1960. Those were some very good experiences, running the office, and developing whole series of kinds of concerns about reforming the personnel system.

All through the 1960's and through the early 1970's, a good deal of my attention was devoted to trying to develop some kind of better approach to civil service, which was really very restrictive, and a narrow minded kind of approach to personnel administration that the state law required. It made the assumption that every person that was heading a department in city government was somebody that had to have his behavior extremely restricted. He couldn't make any kind of good administrative decisions.

Early in the 1960's, the Ford Foundation had funded a major project called the Municipal Manpower Commission. It was a national commission. The purpose of that commission was to take a look at city governments across the country and try to come up with some better approach to human resource management for municipalities. The City of Chicago participated in that very, very strongly. And I played a major role in the city's look at that particular kind of activity. Their report, that final report, came out in 1962.

It essentially said that the civil service approaches of the past, which were very restrictive and very limiting, were very much passé. And in the interest of good government, there should be greater administrative control handed to the people that were running different governmental agencies. And still, it was keeping a very strong emphasis on making sure that things were based on merit and not on politics. The central point in the report was that public officials could make decisions that were to the betterment of government when they had the necessary authority coupled with accountability to act.

But we still were very much limited by state statute, in terms of what we could do. We kept making suggestions to the state legislature as to the changes. In fact, I worked on several civic commissions, primarily with the Union League Club and the Civic Federation. I participated in a series of committee meetings with people from those organizations attempting to improve governmental personnel systems, not only for Chicago in particular, but for government in general. The other big thing that happened in the 1960's was the police scandal, the Summerdale Scandal, which took place . . . .

FWB: That was 1960, or 1961.

CP: Or a little bit later than that, maybe?

FWB: I think it was in 1960 or 1961. Yes. At any rate…

CP: Yes. You're right. O.W. Wilson came in at that time and was head of the committee that tried to pick a new superintendent. Low and behold, they picked O.W. Wilson (FWB laughs), which was a very clever maneuver on his part. There was a big push to revamp the police department. And that involved all kinds of personnel kinds of activities. The Civic Federation and the Union League Club were involved in that, trying to get some changes in the state laws, so that the superintendent of police could have more authority and revamp the department.

FWB: That happened just after you came in, as director of personnel.

CP: Right. It was right about that same time. At any rate, I was involved in a lot of those changes and the restructuring of the police department, and also trying to develop better methods of selecting police officers and developing promotion examinations for police officers. I'm trying to compress some of this stuff. And you can ask any questions you want.

FWB: Yes. I'm going to ask some questions. But it may be better to have a good overview. But if you want to stop at this point, we can go back. I'm interested in some of the transitions that occurred when Daley came in, in 1955. 1955 to 1959 was his first term. And one of the things that Daley did was continue to head the Democratic Party. One of the things, just off hand was, at that point, what percentage of the city jobs that were civil service and ones that were open to political appointment?

CP: I'm hard pressed to give you an exact number. But I would guess that probably…

FWB: What was the percentage?

CP: I want to say like 85%. That includes all of the police and all of the fire, except with a few people that were exempt. The number of exemptions, at that time, was very limited.

FWB: And they were just off of the top.

CP: Yes. At that time, with the police department, it was everybody above the rank of captain. In those days, the captain was the district commander. In the fire department, virtually nobody was exempt.

FWB: Okay. Everybody was under civil service.

CP: That was including the chief fire marshal. The only persons in the fire department that were exempt were the fire commissioner and his secretary. That was about it.

FWB: But it strikes me, I mean, if you supposedly have civil service, you'll still have large parts of city government that are, in some ways, controlled by insiders. The exams are controlled by insiders. You have a heavily Irish police force. And thus, the Irish are more meritorious. Explain that kind of culture there and how that transitions.

CP: I think you've got to take a look at the issue of who's interested in the job, who wants the job, and who hears about the job. I mean, there are all kinds of ways that limit who gets into the system. And obviously, it also has to do with how comfortable people feel after they get into the system, and whether they encourage other people to get in.
FWB: It's, in some ways, self-selected.

CP: Self-selection is a terribly important part of the process. But it's also got to do with the culture of what's going on in the department. Here's the example that I often use. I teach public personnel administration at I.I.T. And I've been doing it forever. The example I always give that demonstrates, I think, this point, is that from 1960 to 1970 in the Chicago Police Department, the percentages of blacks went from about 7% to 7.5% to 15%. These figures might be slightly off, but they're close. During that decade…

FWB: It doubled. Yes.

CP: Yes. But you've got to think in terms of the amount of turnover that took place. It takes time to change the figures. Okay, so the police department was working hard to get more blacks on the department. And the Civil Service Commission was working with the police department, to effect that kind of change. In the police department, we did reasonably well, still significantly below the percentage of blacks in the population, but it was going in the right direction. The percentage of blacks in the fire department, in 1960, was 4%. That wasn't a high figure to begin with. In 1970, the percentage of blacks in the fire department was 3.5%. It wasn't a hospitable place for blacks. And blacks were in segregated fire houses during that whole decade. There was virtually no change in terms of making an adjustment to the issues that were obvious in the 1960's.

FWB: There was some significant expansion in the black population in Chicago.

CP: Oh, absolutely.

FWB: Not by doubling, but there was significant increases in whole neighborhoods in becoming completely black.

CP: There were neighborhoods that were completely black before that.

FWB: Right. But some of the demographic changes, like east and west Rogers Park went, or Garfield Park…

CP: That was not in the 1960's. But take the west side, for example.

FWB: That's what I mean.

CP: There were whole parts on the west side that just…

FWB: It went from White to black in a decade.

CP: Right.

FWB: One of the things, and this is the interest that we have here, is the relationship between the professional services, like civil service, with patronage employees, political employees. And that was a constant issue during the Daley administration. That's where these questions are sort of pointed. And I'd like to know a little bit more further on how the Civil Service Commission actually impacted that, or what stopped it, in the case, for example, of the fire department.

CP: Well, what happened in the fire department was that they didn't get black applicants. There were blacks in the fire department. And they were telling their friends and relatives, "This is not a comfortable place to be. I've got my 15 years in. I'm going to continue on. I'm going to get my pension. And I'm going to get the hell out when the time comes. But you're not going to be treated very well in the fire department." It was as

simple as that. We worked to get black and Latino applicants to apply for the fire department. And we didn't have a whole lot of success.

FWB: The pipeline just sort of dried up.

CP: Yes.
FWB: There was not a lot of applicants.

CP: And we had more success later on, in the 1970's and into the 1980's, obviously. And things were obviously changing, in large measure. But we still had serious kinds of problems, in terms of how people felt when they got into a fire house. They were told that they couldn't eat with other fire fighters, or something like that.

FWB: But that wasn't much of a problem with the police department.

CP: I'm not saying that there wasn't a problem in the police department.

FWB: It wasn't as much.

CP: But there certainly wasn't as much. And the police department was much more receptive. The management of the police department was much more receptive to the idea of trying to integrate the department and get a better mix. First of all, in police work, if you don't have the right kind of diversity in the force, you're going to have trouble applying the law. That's because you're going to be seen as the us against them kind of thing. And I think that in the police department, you had a lot of professional people that understood that. Certainly, O.W. led the way in that regard.

FWB: A lot of it was post Summerdale. It gave the reforms after that point at least one reason for that.

CP: I think that, in our way at the Civil Service Commission, we were starting to work harder and harder at trying to get more people from minority neighborhoods to come in and apply during the entire 1960's, both the police and fire department.

FWB: It's kind of an act of recruiting, to get people to sort of take the exams.

CP: Right. We were very concerned about it because most of the fingers were pointed at the city in general or the politicians. It all seemed to do with the Civil Service Commission. We would meet with different kinds of groups on a regular basis to try and encourage them to come in and apply for the examination. I personally met with groups at City Hall and in the various communities on the south and west sides. We'd place ads in minority newspapers to try and get interest developed.

FWB: In some ways, it was not all that successful, the fire department significantly more so than the police, but still not up to it.

CP: Oh, with the fire department, it was very frustrating. It was extremely frustrating.

FWB: What about after 1970? You were there from 1960 to 1985, really.

CP: Yes. I'm not as up to snuff, in terms of the percentages. But they obviously have changed significantly and they continue to change. I think the percentages in the police department are over 30%, blacks and a good mix of other minorities as well.

FWB: Is the fire department pretty close, or not quite?

CP: The fire department is still behind. But the attitude in the mix is still clearly much better than it was.

FWB: Did this change before Washington's administration?

CP: Sure. It was changing, but more obviously, from the Washington administration on. I obviously haven't had any direct contact with the government since the middle of Washington's first term there. It's clearly gotten better. It doesn't appear to be any kind of a really serious problem now, in terms of recruiting.

FWB: But it strikes me, for me, the perception was rather incremental after 1970. There was not a big major change or any major openness in the police department.

CP: I think that there were all kinds of things that made it better in the fire department, after that time. In both the police and fire department, clearly, things were getting better, more comfortable.

FWB: So the trends were in the right direction.

CP: Oh, absolutely.

FWB: There was the kind of incremental change to grow, as a minority.

CP: I think the thing that was frustrating about it was convincing minorities that strong efforts were being made to improve representation in the city work force. I think the best example is the Hispanic community. You had a huge influx of people coming into the city that were Mexican, Puerto Rican, and other Hispanic groups, in a very short period of time. They didn't understand that you couldn't improve the numbers in the fire departments in the same way that you had an influx of people coming in. The percentages increased from, these are hypothetical, 3% to 15% in a ten year period. You can't expect the numbers to reflect that 15%, because it takes time. You have to have turnover. And you have to be attracting new people who meet the job qualifications to come in to fill the slots that are available.

FWB: I can imagine that the Civil Service Commission, in many ways, does have a conservative break on a lot of the media types of hiring. That's a design, should the merit system…

CP: Well, I think another way to describe the problem is that you went from a situation before the passage of the Civil Rights Act where you could not identify people, in terms of their race, their color, or their national origin. All that you had was a number. Number 737 got a passing score. Number 738 did not. Then, you open up an envelope and find out the person's name. You don't even know at that point whether they are black, white, or whatever. And then, all of a sudden, all of the numbers by race and gender come out at the end. We went from that, to having to identify people by race and gender, and having those kinds of numbers available. Even though the race and gender of candidates wouldn't be involved in the scoring process, you knew what percentage of blacks had applied for an examination, what percentage were successful, and the like. And then, obviously it became involved in all kinds of federal lawsuits and so on.

FWB: When did that come in?

CP: That was in the 1970's.

FWB: Okay. That was in the early 1970's, or after…

CP: Yes. That would have been created in 1972, 1973, or 1974. So that would have been in the Civil Rights Act of 1972. I think that's right. Yes, it was the Civil Rights Act of 1972. When the Civil Rights Act of 1964 was passed, the state and local governments were exempt from Title 7 dealing with employment practices. The assumption was that, because they had civil service systems, there was no problem. That didn't last too long. Everybody recognized that there was a problem. The Equal Employment Opportunity Act of 1972 was the title. I'm sorry, it was not the Civil Rights Act of 1972. When it was passed it changed everything. And overnight, state and local governments became subject to Title 7, and had not been subject to it up to that point. So overnight, all of the work you

had done in the past and all of the eligible lists you had posted were subject to Title 7. And it caused for a good deal of confusion and difficulty.

FWB: What was some of the impact of that change and the attitudes around the Civil Service Commission? In some ways, you had the difficulty, sort of redoing the numbers, and now actually having a more significant amount of work.

CP: Well, when you say redoing the numbers, what do you mean?

FWB: Well, how was the process implemented? I'm not quite sure on that.

CP: Well, it wasn't a question of implementing a process. It was a question of saying that the law said what we were doing was legal and permissible.

FWB: That was up to that point.

CP: That was Tuesday. And on Wednesday, the law said that you had to defend whatever processes you had engaged in during the past, and come up with numbers that would indicate that either you had adverse impact or you didn't. And if you did have it, you had certain kinds of problems.

FWB: So, you had to redo the numbers. Right?

CP: It was not to redo the numbers so much, but just to start to become aware of the numbers.

FWB: It was classified by race and such.

CP: Yes. And of course, there were a lot of the mechanisms that we needed to have, in order to see if there was a problem or if there wasn't a problem. Of course, the Justice Department came in with arbitrary kinds of ways of deciding whether there was adverse

impact. Then, they came up with this 80% rule that indicated that the selection ratio of any minority group had to be at least 80% of the selection of the White males. There's nothing scientific about that, obviously.

FWB: That was a political number that was put on, rather than something that was scientific.

CP: I'm not sure that I was following political as much as recognizing that they needed to have some kind of standard, against which they could say, "We're going to devote a lot of attention to this case and no attention to that case." But there was a serious problem in terms of the attitude on the part of the Justice Department in this question during the Nixon administration. The attitude was, "We have set the law and the rules up in such a way, as no one can really be safe in terms of what the standards are and how you relate to them. We can pretty much pick and choose who we're going to decide to make an example of."

People from the Justice Department said it that directly. When you go into a meeting where you're trying to get background, the guy who's the head of the Civil Rights Division of the Department of Justice stood up and said, "Yes, we can pretty much decide who we're going to bring a case against, to make an example of." It's just too bad that there wasn't a better way of doing that. It shouldn't have been an adversarial relationship. We should have worked together to solve the problem.

FWB: It seems like that some of those numbers would be useful to defend civil service in 1968, 1969, and 1970, when you had, I would imagine, enormous political pressure, taking the percentage of blacks, for example.

CP: Well, we definitely were increasing the percentage of blacks significantly in the police department.

FWB: But it was significantly slower than public opinion wanted. Right?

CP: Absolutely. I mean, that's a given. There was no way, overnight, that you could get the numbers to come out right (that is, match the percentages in the city work force with the percentages in a rapidly changing city population), unless you fired a bunch of people on your force and hired a bunch of other people. You had people in the 1940's and 1950's when the percentages by race in the city's population were radically different that were going to make a career out of being in the police department. And they weren't going to retire until the 1970's and 1980's.

FWB: Yes. I would imagine that the Civil Service Commission was sort of on the point for a lot of political pressure and a lot of opposition, especially racial minorities. How was the Civil Service Commission, in some ways, insulated from some of that political pressure? How was it in the late 1960's, primarily?

CP: You mean how were they insulated from it?

FWB: Or was it? What was your perception of it? How did you have to respond? Or did you?

CP: Well, we responded by developing positive recruitment programs and trying to get information out through minority communities that we wanted people to come forward and make the application for examination. And we worked very hard at making sure our examinations were job related and were valid.

FWB: How did you work with Daley, bringing it back to Daley? When did you first meet him, at least going up to 1972 and 1973, during the 1950's and 1960's with Daley?

CP: Well, when I got appointed as director of personnel of the Civil Service Commission, Dolores Sheehan was the president of the Civil Service Commission at the time. She was very close to Daley. She and her brother were very close to the Daley family. At any rate, she recommended me and she appointed me. But she made sure that Mayor Daley would agree to it. And I met him at that time.

FWB: That was 1960?

CP: That was 1960. Right.

FWB: So you really didn't have too much dealing at all? You had never met him before that point?

CP: I'm not sure if I'd met him before then or not. I don't really remember.

FWB: But it wasn't like you were working closely with him? You didn't have any contact with him?

CP: I obviously knew a lot of people on his staff at that time, before 1960, because we had to go through all kinds of issues relative to hiring and the like, that required communication with the mayor's office. And that was very often done through the president of the Civil Service Commission. But we'd get involved in it as well, the professional people on staff.

FWB: So, describe how you first met Mayor Daley, if you remember.

CP: Well, I remember meeting him when I was appointed as director of personnel for the Civil Service Commission. I was going up to his office with Dolores Sheehan, who was the president of the Civil Service Commission. I probably spent 15 minutes with him. He asked me a series of questions. It was all pro forma, because apparently he had already agreed that I would be a logical person. I think it was a question of whether or not he felt comfortable with my professional background, and whether or not I was somebody that could be trusted and honest, in terms of my dealings with the public and with public officials.

FWB: That's one of the things that's different in the historiography on Daley, that's in the various biographies on Daley. I'm talking about this emphasis more on machine type patronage positions, rather than what it appeared that Daley did in the late 1950's and early 1960's, bringing in, in many ways, a new type of city employees that were primarily from professional backgrounds.

CP: He had a tremendous emphasis, as anybody could tell, in every department, making sure that they were professional people, that were either the head of the department, or they were in key positions to make sure that the departments were run properly. And probably the best example is Carl Chatters coming in as comptroller. I mean, he was probably one of the top municipal finance guys in the country. He was just a great guy and a marvelous person to work with. He just made sure that everything ran well. And Daley trusted him completely.

FWB: That's one of the things that a lot of the history, on Daley and the Daley administration, that is emphasized. And that is things that were not of a professional nature.

CP: Right. And it's not fair.

FWB: You talked about the comptroller. Are there any examples of that, not just in your department, but among individuals that you worked with?

CP: You mean other people?

FWB: Yes. I'm referring to other people.

CP: Well, there were a whole series of people. I think of the engineers in the Department of Public Works. There were people like George DeMent, Milton Pikarsky, Marshall Suloway in charge of engineering. There were a whole range of people that were just top flight engineers. And obviously, they had some political sensitivity. But they also

understood that their job was to be good engineers. And they were. There was Dick Pavia in the Water Department, another example of a professional in a top job. He ended up being the Water Department Commissioner. Jerry Butler was the city architect. Who else can I think of? Of course, we've already mentioned O.W. Wilson, and the fact that he picked somebody like that to take over that department.

When I started working with the city, the police commissioner's office was right next to the mayor's office. It was on the fifth floor. And when O.W. Wilson came in, he insisted that he move out, and the mayor agreed to that. The mayor, I think, understood that the department had to be de-politicized, and it had to be taken out, obviously not completely, because that's not a possibility. But it had to be given a different look, a more professional look. And in a way, I really felt sorry for Tim O'Connor, who was the police commissioner, the title changed to superintendent when O.W. Wilson came in. O'Connor was, I think, a decent person. And he wanted to do the right thing and do it right. But the culture of the department really needed a major overhaul. It took somebody like O.W. Wilson to come in and really shake things up.

FWB: You saw it. Once you had the civil service system set up, it was not supposed to be open to the kind of manipulation and corruption that was there prior to Summerdale that sort of led to that.

CP: Excuse me. Let's back up and talk about what you mean by manipulation and corruption that was there.

FWB: Okay. Was there?

CP: You mean in the police department?

FWB: Yes. And how did civil service fit in with that? That's because you were part of the reforms afterwards, to sort of change the hiring process, and to change the promotion process, presumably. Right?

CP: Well, I was involved in the promotion process from 1953 on. And we tried to develop the best kinds of selection procedures that we could.

FWB: You mean that you could, in view of the culture that was present?

CP: Well, that was always factor. But we just wanted to make sure that everything we did was job related and valid.

FWB: Was there quite a bit of resistance on the part of…?

CP: No there wasn't, not at all. The state law required that an efficiency mark be part of the promotional process. Clearly, different captains, the district commanders, would have an impact on who would really have a good chance of getting promoted based on efficiency marks. And the scores were given from 0 to 100. So, they would tend to fall around a medium point, around 85. Almost everybody in the department would get a score of between 83 and 87, except there would be a few stars that get 95's and 97's. And if that weighted as 30% of the promotion process, clearly, somebody that was getting the high mark would have a distinct advantage over somebody who was getting an 85 or something. So, whether that was political in the broadest sense, or political in the sense of the district man that wanted to take care of a friend or relative, that's a whole another issue.

But the testing process, the development of test items, in those days it was always a written test. And then, there ~~it~~ was a seniority score that was based on state law. That was kind of an archaic, narrow minded kind of process, too, that we couldn't do much about. But all of the testing part of it was very much on the up and up. It was done with anonymous scoring, it was done with IBM machines that did the scoring, and all of that kind of thing.

FWB: But there was that 30% that was open?

CP: Yes. In effect, it really isn't 30% because of the range of scores between them. The typical score was 85. And it would end up with the top score as 95 or something like that. You would talk about a range of scores that was 10, but it was weighted 30%. So it ended up being a 3 point margin on the final score. You still could maybe surpass that, if you did extremely well on the written examination and your seniority score was not an issue and so on.

FWB: I'm just trying to see how that process worked for you, pre and post Summerdale.

CP: But the scoring was all done anonymously. You had to identify it by a number. And a number was not known until an envelope was opened up after the scoring took place.

FWB: Okay. Well, I sort of stopped you at about the summer of post Summerdale and post the Ford Foundation Study. That's where I sort of stopped you and went back.

CP: We're sort of all over the place.

FWB: That's all right. We can put it back together. So, continue your story after…

CP: Well, at any rate, just talking about the civil service reform stuff. With the Constitutional Convention, I want to say, the election took place in 1969, I think.

FWB: Then, in 1970, was the vote.

CP: There were 2 major things that came out of that, that affected my life significantly. One was granting the home rule powers for the city of Chicago, as well as other municipalities across the state of a certain size. And that resulted in Mayor Daley re-activating the home rule commission.

FWB: Explain that.

CP: Well, the new constitution said that cities of a certain size, obviously including Chicago, would have home rule power, where they could pass ordinances that would affect the way that they administered government without having to go to the state government. We would go. One time, the legislature met, I think, in the odd years. My line was that we worked very hard at the even numbered years to develop legislation to present to the legislature that they would turn down in the odd numbered years.

FWB: Then they'd have to do the process all over again.

CP: Right. I spent 10 years of my life, butting my head against the whole system. And we couldn't change anything. The home rule changed all of that. I think that the constitution went into effect, I think, in 1971.

FWB: Yes. It was 1970 or 1971. Late 1970, I thought it was.

CP: I want to say 1971. But in 1972, Mayor Daley reconstituted the Home Rule Commission in the city of Chicago, to decide what kinds of changes the city of Chicago should make, relative to the new power that it had. Part of that was taking a look at personnel systems. Let me back up a little bit. Almost at the same time that the constitution was being considered, they changed the whole process. I was asked to serve on a national committee by the National Civil Service League, which was the leading reform group that had made changes in the civil service laws in the 19th century.

They had promulgated a model law that was designed to help. First of all, state governments changed their civil service systems, to try and make it as useful and functional as possible. And then, apply that law, not only to state governments, but also made it available to municipal governments. And I was asked to be on the Model Law Review Committee and I was chosen as the chairman of that committee. We developed a model law that was issued in 1971. I think that's right. It might have been 1970, either 1970 or 1971. Then, it was re-issued again in 1971 or 1972.

The timing of it couldn't have been better, because all of this came together at the same time. It didn't reflect just my views, but it reflected the views of professional people

from across the country. There were all kinds of hearings that took place. So, I sort of had a running start, in terms of making suggestions for changes. And when the Home Rule came into effect in Chicago, I was able to work with that commission and work with the experts that that commission had brought in that developed change for the city of Chicago.

We were able to develop a new personnel ordinance that was considered in 1975. It was passed in 1975 and went into effect on January 1, 1976. It abolished the Civil Service Commission. It created the department of personnel with a personnel board that had very limited powers. I mean powers relative to certain kinds of disciplinary actions that were taken. They were put very much in an advisory role. The director of personnel reported directly to the mayor.

FWB: Before that point, you weren't reporting directly to the mayor.

CP: No. I would report to the Civil Service Commission.
FWB: Okay. And that was an appointed body?

CP: Yes. It was 3 people, not more than 2 of which could belong to the same political party, and that kind of thing.

FWB: You mean 2 Democrats and 1 Republican.

CP: Right.

FWB: They were appointed by the mayor or by the state?

CP: They were appointed by the mayor.

FWB: So, the Civil Service Commission had 2 Democrats and 1 Republican, appointed by the mayor. So there was that sort of layer between you and the mayor.

CP: Right.

FWB: I don't know too much about that, because that's not my background. So, I don't know too much about the Civil Service Commission at that level. Who were these people and how long did they serve?

CP: The way it was set up, I'm digging into my memory bank here.

FWB: That's all right.

CP: When the Civil Service Commission was set up in 1895, the mayor served for 2 year terms. And the Civil Service Commission was set up so that members of that commission would serve for 3 years, with a new person being selected every year. The concept was that they would serve beyond the term of office beyond the present mayor.

FWB: They needed some continuity in there.

CP: There was not only continuity, but also some freedom of action, so that a new mayor couldn't come in and all of a sudden change everything. They had to be in office for a while to have appointed all 3 of the Civil Service Commission. Now, when they changed the term of the mayor from 2 years to 4 years, they didn't go back and change the term for the Civil Service Commission. So, they still had 3 year terms and a 4 year term for the mayor. So they didn't think to clean that up.

FWB: Was that an oversight or a way to increase mayoral control?

CP: No. Well, I don't know. I forget exactly when the 4 year term of mayor came into effect. But it was before my time. I had nothing to do with it (CP and FWB laugh).

FWB: Okay.

CP: My hands are clean. At any rate, there was still the issue of having not more than 2 of the same political party, so the thought being that there was at least some balance. Do you want the names of those who were the Civil Service Commissioners?

FWB: Yes. I mean, were they very close in supervision of your position? Or were they more appointees, generally? Were they paid? I mean, how much day to day power did they have?

CP: They had a fair amount of power. The guy that was the president of the Civil Service Commission that went out was Bill Cahill, who was a close friend of the mayor's. One of the other 2 commissioners was Quentin Goodwin, who was black and was a south side politician. He was a real decent guy.

FWB: This was a part time position?

CP: This was a part time position. But they were paid. I forget exactly how much. They weren't paid a lot.

FWB: They weren't paid a lot. But it was a part time position.

CP: They were paid something.

FWB: And as you said, it was like a political appointment.

CP: The third commissioner was Reginald Dubois, who was a former alderman from the far south side, the Roseland community. Is that the 9th Ward?

FWB: Yes. It's something like that.

CP: Whatever. It's the 9th or the 10th Ward.

FWB: I mean, one could look at it and see the professional person was south and was under there, as the director of personnel, underneath a politically appointed board. The reform in 1976, or what changed in 1976, was now directly lost to that layer of pure politics, in some ways, not quite pure.

CP: Well, I would put it a different way. People that did not have a professional background and didn't have that kind of approach, maybe I'd better stop there (CP and FWB laugh). You know, you would have people making decisions that were based on emotions and on their own background that really had no relevance to the mission of city government. You talk about good government and making sure that the departments had the tools that they needed. If there was an issue of somebody that was clearly somebody that the city didn't need, you shouldn't have because they've done something that was really inconsistent with the purpose of their job and they ought to get rid of them. There was always that thought. "Well, let's give them one more chance." Well, how many times should we give them one more chance?

FWB: Well, you don't need to name names or anything, or the period. But do you have some examples of how, what seemed to be political influence from the top, influenced the civil service system? Give me some example.

CP: It was just somebody that had done something that indicated they were totally unfit for the job. Somebody committed some act that was really terrible, maybe punched out their supervisor, or something like that. They really didn't belong on the job. There was always that thought on the part of the commissioners, "Well, we ought to give them one more chance and see if it can work out."

FWB: You mean sort of non-professional?

CP: Yes. And it was not that you didn't want to. There were times that you needed to understand what the issues were, and maybe somebody did deserve another chance. But it was only in the context of whether they really could perform the job, and whether the

money that was being spent to keep someone on the job was giving the city some value. If it wasn't giving the city some value, that person shouldn't be working.

FWB: Right. So, how was the change, after the change in ordinance with home rule, after 1976?

CP: Oh, it was dramatic. I had a whole different relationship. Actually, it was sort of a gradual change, even before that. But I definitely had more contact with the key people in the mayor's office, and more access to the mayor, if and when I needed it.

FWB: So, after home rule was put in, the commission actually did the implementation of it. So, it was a three to four year process, before January of 1976? It was a gradual thing, in anticipation for this change.

CP: Oh, in making that change? Yes.

FWB: So you did have much more access to the mayor in anticipation of the reform?

CP: Right. And obviously, coming up with the final product, the personnel ordinance itself, that took very, very close interaction with the mayor's office. The resemblance between the personnel ordinance and that model law that I worked on with the National Civil Service League was extremely close.

FWB: You were on the Model Law Committee.

CP: Yes.

FWB: And you were heavily involved in the ordinance.

CP: Right. And just as an aside, have you contacted Allen Hartman. He was the executive director of the Home Rule Commission. He was the executive director. He's a judge. That's Allen Hartman, H-a-r-t-m-a-n. I think his first name is A-l-l-e-n.

FWB: A-l-l-e-n?

CP: Yes. I'm pretty sure that he's an appellate court judge and he's still active.

FWB: He was the head of the Civil Service Commission?

CP: He was the Executive Director of the Home Rule Commission. So, he would not only have been concerned with the personnel ordinance, but also with financial management and other aspects of city government.

FWB: Yes. He would have been with everything else.

CP: And he would have worked very closely with the mayor and the mayor's office to affect it. So he might be someone you want to check out.

FWB: How the procedure is going at this point is that Michael Daley is sending out some letters. And those individuals are contacting us. I don't know if Allen Hartman has been contacted or not, though.

CP: He may not have.

FWB: Yes. He may not have. Some of it, the more immediate task, is to focus on the relationship with Mayor Daley.

CP: Well, the fact that Mayor Daley would have picked Hartman to be the executive director of the Home Rule Commission tells you something.

FWB: Yes. It tells something very important.

CP: I want to say that Allen was the first deputy corporation counsel at the time he got picked for that job. That may not be correct. But I'm pretty sure that's right.

FWB: Okay. He was the first deputy corporation counsel before that point.

CP: Yes. I'm pretty sure that's right.

FWB: That would make a little sense.

CP: Yes.

FWB: Hold on just a moment (FWB changes the video tape).

(end of video tape one)

CP: They were not understanding some of the issues.

FWB: That's for a smoother operation, when you're dealing with professional people, rather than…

CP: Yes. The communications just come out wrong a lot of times.

FWB: Yes. Now, you talked about fire and police. What were the other major areas of city employees that were under civil service?

CP: Well, there were a full range of city jobs. You know, there were clerical jobs and the other professional jobs. We were always concerned about recruiting for nurses, engineers, and bacteriologists.

FWB: This was at the county, the hospital? Or no?

CP: No. The county had their own system. They still have their own system.

FWB: They still have their own system. Yes, that's what I was wondering. I'm just clarifying. Okay, there were nurses.

CP: I help re-write the ordinance for the county government after I left city government.

FWB: That's a different environment over there, significantly.

CP: Yes.

FWB: Do you have any comments as to how different and how it differently it functioned?

CP: Why don't we just stick with the city?

FWB: Okay. We can go off record for some of it.

CP: You know, I was part of that system for a long time. I'd go nuts with the fact that they had really competent that were running departments and they were afraid to give them some additional responsibility. I just didn't understand it.

FWB: Did the mayor bristle quite a bit at the civil service restrictions? Or did he see it as a very useful system to protect from the sort of political influence?

CP: I don't think that he bristled. That certainly wouldn't be accurate. I think his major concern was to make sure that there was sufficient flexibility in the system, so that things would get done. That was always the problem. The so-called reformers, that would try to make sure that the system was as pure as the driven snow, they would fail to understand the need to make things happen. The most important thing was not making sure the civil service system was working, as the state law required it to be, when they wrote it in 1895.

The most important thing was to make sure that city government worked; that it provided quality service to the public efficiently and effectively. Now, you wanted to make sure that people were being hired on the basis of merit, as they were going through this process. But that was all to support the fact that you wanted to make sure that the police and the fire were doing what they were supposed to be doing, that the water was coming out of the pipes at the right end, and all of the rest of it (laughs).

FWB: Right. I mean, you could see the mayor's attitude, especially if we see the mayor as an administrative reformer, in many ways, bringing in professional people. Whereas beforehand, there were far more political appointments. You could see that the mayor would use the civil service system, in many ways, to protect professional people against aldermen pushing their own people in specific areas. And it struck me that the mayor's attitude was somewhat positive.

CP: Yes. Let me throw in one thing right here before I forget. In all of the time that I was in the position of responsibility with the Civil Service Commission and with the department of personnel, Mayor Daley never, ever forced anybody to come to work at the Civil Service Commission. He never told me who to hire. He just wanted me to run the place correctly. I say that unequivocally.

FWB: That was one of things that I was waiting to hear.

CP: The feeling, obviously, on the part of the mayor and on the part of his key political operatives, people like Tom Donovan, was that it was totally hands off with the Civil Service Commission and totally hands off in the department of personnel. There had to

be complete trust and certainty that nobody in that department could be labeled as a political operative. The only people that had any kind of political agenda at all, if they had one, were the commissioners. But when we classified jobs, when we developed examinations, the feeling was very strong that we didn't want anybody that had the label of a political operative doing any of those things.

FWB: That seemed to be, at least the history of talking to many of the professional people here, and in this part of the project, that the mayor was very careful about giving. There was a very strong separation between political appointees/political operatives and the professional people in the city departments.

CP: I'll give you a story. I won't use names. An alderman, who was in a very strong position of authority, called me up and said, "I've got somebody in my ward that has an interest in personnel administration and he's qualified. Would you have a spot for him?" And my response was, "Send him in and we'll see." We were looking to hire people as personnel examiners, classifiers, and so on. The gentleman came in. I looked at his credentials. And it looked like he was qualified, based on what I saw. I put him through the process, where he had to be interviewed by unit heads, and things like that. And I did not tell anybody where he came from. The person was obviously qualified and was a good fit. We hired him.

A month or two went by. This new employee came into my office and said, "Alderman X said that I had to work for him politically." And I said, "No you don't." He said, "Well, what do I do?" I said, "Well, you go back and tell Alderman X that you can't work politically, and if you work politically, you're going to be fired from this office." A certain amount of time went by and I got a phone call from the alderman. I went and saw him at his office. I told him that it wasn't going to happen and that it wasn't going to work politically. He told me how he had other city employees that were working politically for him, they still worked for the city, and so on. I said, "Well, it's just not going to happen." I suddenly realized that he was starting to change the subject and that he was backing off. We spent half an hour talking about everything under the sun, except this employee.

And that was the end of the conversation. It just sort of all ended. That guy turned out to be an extremely good employee. He left the city eventually and he went out west. He became the director of classification and compensation in one of the large states out west. He was a good guy. I still have contact with him actually, from time to time. It's primarily due to the fact that he's a Cubs fan, too (CP and FWB laugh). That's what is important, in terms of keeping people on that they be Cubs fans.

FWB: It's part of the criteria for the job.

CP: Right.

FWB: That's one of the stories that's common throughout, I mean prior to Daley coming in, but up until Michael Shakman. You would have a whole number of people calling in sick on election day, that kind of story of…

CP: Well, this sort of reminds me of a different story. When we had large examinations on a Saturday, running the Civil Service Commission, we would hire city employees to come in and act as proctors. They were city employees, or in some cases, they were teachers from the public school system. A fair amount of these were city employees that wanted to use it to take time off, so they could take a vacation, work politically, or whatever. Very often, we had somebody who was a precinct captain, who would turn out to be extremely good proctors at examinations. And of course, they were all supervisors. You got to know some of these people from different departments via that route.

FWB: Okay. Let's go after the year 1976. You really had become the director of personnel in this new department. What was the last year like? This was your first year in a new position with direct, working, access to the mayor. And then, he passed away in December of that year. What was the last year like of the mayor's life, working with him, much more closely than before?

CP: Well, it was very satisfying. It was very good. I loved working for the guy. You knew exactly where you stood on things. But you didn't know exactly what he wanted all of the time. Sometimes he was mysterious about what he wanted. But you found out eventually. And when he told you something that was direct and clear, there was no doubt about what it was, and there was no changing. You could take it to the bank that that's the way it was going to be.

And that made working very nice, when you could feel comfortable on the ground that you're dealing with. And you could serve him better, because you had the kind of results that he wanted to get. Just so there's no misunderstanding by what I mean by that, he wanted to make sure that things got done right. And if he had a new program he was putting into effect, he wanted to make sure that the personnel department was supporting that and giving it the right kind of attention.

FWB: So, talk about the transition then, after the mayor died, to Bilandic, and then Byrne. How did personnel work in those 2 administrations?

CP: Well, the Bilandic years were pretty much the same as the Daley years, in a lot of ways, because you were dealing with essentially the same people. There was Tom Donovan, Ed Bedore, and those kind of folks.

FWB: So, there was a large amount of continuity?

CP: Yes. And the expectations were very much the same. Bilandic was obviously a different kind of person than Daley was. But he was obviously concerned about making sure that things went well. He clearly did not have the same kind of force and personality that Mayor Daley had. But he was a decent guy and was someone that was good to work for.

FWB: So he was quite a bit different personality wise. But he was not a strong visionary.

CP: He had a sense that people like Tom Donovan and Ed Bedore were playing key roles, as he did under Daley. But it was obviously deeper and stronger than it was under Daley.

FWB: Now, what about Donovan? Describe Donovan, what his position was, and how you interacted with Donovan.

CP: The reason I'm smiling is that Tom Donovan is one of the great success stories in city government. I don't know if you know how he came into city government.

FWB: No.

CP: He was a glazier at the Chicago Park District. He was a tradesman. He was from the 11th Ward. Daley apparently decided to bring him over as an administrative aid. I think it was in streets and sanitation or maybe water. I'm not even sure. I think it was streets and sanitation. He brought him over as an administrative aid, where he had to take a cut in pay, for this new opportunity to become some kind of administrative aid. He had a high school education when he came over. One of the things I'm extremely proud of was the excellent tuition reimbursement program that we got in under Mayor Daley, under the Civil Service Commission.

FWB: I don't know about that one. When did that happen?

CP: It was in the 1960's.

FWB: It was in the 1960's. For a city employee, you could presumably

CP: It was just an outstanding program. You could take virtually any course that, in any way, might enhance your ability as a city employee. It was really very liberal, in terms of the courses you could take.

FWB: The city would pay complete 100% reimbursement?

CP: If you got an "A" on the course, you got 100% reimbursement. If you got any other acceptable grade, you'd get a 75% reimbursement. You could go to the University of Chicago. Or you could go wherever. I should say the University of Illinois at Chicago, shouldn't I? I'm sorry.

FWB: (laughs) I'm a graduate of the University of Chicago.

CP: I'm trying to show you the range and costs.

FWB: The city would pay 100% for an "A," and 75% for a "B" or a "C."

CP: Right.

FWB: And presumably, there was nothing else.

CP: Right. And Tom Donovan got into that program. I forget how long it took him to get his undergraduate degree. But it was like 7 or 8 years.

FWB: He was going part time.

CP: Yes. It was all part time. He was working long hours at the city. When I was teaching in the master's program at I.I.T., he went into that program. He was one of my students there.

FWB: Oh, okay. Now, were you teaching sort of at adjunct levels?

CP: Yes. I still am. The program, I think, started in 1967. I was there. I started then. And I have been teaching as an adjunct ever since.

FWB: Okay. And you're a permanent adjunct.

CP: There are no retirement benefits. I'm sticking it out.

FWB: I teach adjunct, too, occasionally, at some other spots. I was just wondering how that worked.

CP: But he then got his MPA from I.I.T. And the rest is history. After Byrne got elected, he left, and he went to work at the Board of Trade. Before he knew it, he was the chief honcho at the Board of Trade. Now that he's out of there, he's apparently doing good work at some other kind of business enterprise. I'm not even sure what that is. But he was a very decent guy. I liked him.

FWB: He was seen as one of the chief patronage people.

CP: Yes. He was running and deciding issues on patronage all the time, sure, in addition to having other responsibilities. But I never had any problem working with him.

FWB: I mean, you were separate enough, even though you were in personnel.

CP: Yes. He would be one of the people that was reinforcing the concept that the people that work in the department of personnel had to be in a different category. And they had to be people that were not involved politically. He supported it completely.

FWB: So let's go back to Byrne. What transitions took place when Byrne came in, that you saw?

CP: I'm not sure that I want the red light on (looking at the camera). It changed significantly. It was just a good deal more difficult to work with Byrne as mayor.

FWB: I wouldn't imagine that she had too huge of an effect on your office. Or did it?

CP: What do you mean, in what sense?

FWB: Well, I mean major changes. You were civil service, you were supposed to be. Or did it? Was that in 1978, I want to say? That was during late Bilandic?

CP: Well, she became mayor in 1979.

FWB: Right. Shakman was 1978?

CP: Oh no. Shakman started before that. Shakman One, which was limiting the firing of people. I don't want to say that you'll have to go back and check. But it certainly was before 1975.

FWB: Okay. The second one was 1977, or 1978. Right?

CP: Shakman Two, was in 1978, or 1977. It was something like that. Again, I'd have to check the dates. Then, with Shakman Two, was the hiring.

FWB: Shakman One was hiring and Shakman Two was firing. Shakman One was still while the mayor was in place.

CP: Yes.

FWB: It was while the mayor was there.

CP: Yes.

FWB: The one I was thinking of was Shakman Two, with the hiring. That I thought, I was pretty sure, was with Bilandic.

CP: Yes. I think it was before Byrne came in.

FWB: Before we go into Byrne, what was the effect of Shakman One on your office, and how that was perceived in the mayor's office?

CP: Shakman One, in terms of how it impacted us, was extremely limited. It really put a limitation on people, heads of departments, and most of the mayor's office, making sure that they weren't trying to squeeze anybody out.

FWB: It didn't strike me as it would have a major effect on you, because civil service is supposed…

CP: I think you have to look at all of this stuff as just a continuum of things that were happening, from the 1960's through the 1970's and so on, as just a flow of change that was improving the quality of the selection process of the kinds of techniques we were applying. It was putting political pressure on the system to make it better. Unfortunately, at the same time, it also put pressure to complicate the system significantly and to put more paper into it.

FWB: There were more checks.

CP: Yes. The thing that frustrates me now, at this stage in my life, looking back, is that I just wish that they could correct the system now and straighten out. There's no reason why they can't. They should go back and re-visit the Shakman provisions and come up with a better system that puts greater accountability on the department heads and their process, and make sure that the department personnel is really playing a supportive, consultative role, in terms of helping them pick the right people and so on.

FWB: Right. So Shakman Two didn't have a significant impact on you, either. Or did it?

CP: Well, it did to a certain extent. Actually, it didn't really impact until the Washington administration, when the provisions were developed.

FWB: Okay. So you had the decree first, then you had a several year flag.

CP: It was looking over your shoulder type of stuff. But then, the Washington administration agreed to hiring provisions. And of course, I was there at that time. So I was participating in that, too.

FWB: So that was when a lot of that was implemented. Right? I mean, during the first couple of years.

CP: Right. That was in 1984, I think.

FWB: That was a six year gap, in some ways.

CP: Yes. But the fact that it was there, I think, affected behavior.

FWB: All right. So, go back to some of the stuff that you want to talk about, at least on the record, of the Byrne administration.

CP: Well, there's a lot of stuff that I want to talk about, but I won't (laughs).

FWB: Well, it's up to you. It's also something that you can edit out afterwards, too, if you decide.

CP: No. It's just that it was difficult to leave her office knowing exactly what she was going to support and not support, and what she wanted to do or not do. Let me give you one example that I think will tell you the whole story. There was a city council meeting on a given day. And there was nothing on the agenda, it seemed to me, that would affect my life in any way, or that there was any reason for me to be there to see what was going on. It was going to be a lot of routine stuff that didn't affect me. And I had a meeting with the American Society for Public Administration and Professional Groups. It was a

luncheon meeting and it was going to be a fairly long meeting. It didn't break up until 2:30 and I didn't get back to the office until 3:00.

When I got back to the office, I must have had 50 phone calls on my desk, which was extremely unusual. I started sorting through them and getting some sense that a fair amount of them were from different kinds of media people, you know, radio, television, newspapers, and so on. I started making some inquiries to find out what was going on. It turned out, on that day, with the city council, there was a motion to wave the usual procedures and to consider a special motion to abolish the merit system provisions of a personnel ordinance. There was a motion to, what's the technical term? They were able to waive the usual procedure and go directly into a vote. And they voted to abolish the personnel system. I had no idea that it was going to be brought up. I wasn't told anything about it.

FWB: Did that come out of Byrne's office, presumably?

CP: Let me carry on (laughs).

FWB: Okay. I'm sorry to interrupt.

CP: It just so happened that I had an appointment to see the mayor with the corporation counsel, about an hour after I got back to the office. I made a few phone calls to some of the media people to find out what was going on exactly. I had also talked to some other people who had been at the meeting. So, I had a pretty good idea of what had happened. I didn't know exactly why. I presumed that I knew what the mayor's role in this was, but I didn't know for sure. I went into that meeting with the mayor. We started to get into the meeting and I said, "Mayor, I've got to raise an issue before we get into this other thing. I understand that the city council, in effect, abolished the personnel system this afternoon. I just want to tell you that I personally am very opposed to what happened, and that I have to speak out against it. I wanted you to know how I felt and what I was going to do before I did it."

She looked at me with a straight face and said, "Arch, I don't know how that happened. I had nothing to do with it. And if you feel that you need to talk out against it, you do what you have to do." I said, "Thank you, mayor." And we went on and did our other business. Then I went back to my office and started to answer all of the phone calls. I started to talk to reporters, the whole bit, I told them I thought it was something that was a terrible blow to city government, and that it was just something that shouldn't happen. Of course, the Civic Federation, the Chamber of Commerce, and everybody were up in arms about the whole thing. I talked to some of those folks.

Three or four days later, the mayor vetoed the ordinance that had been passed. So, it went back to status quo. And it was like nothing had happened. She clearly played a role in the ordinance passing. She clearly, obviously signed the veto. It blew my mind as to how that would happen and I wouldn't know about it. I didn't participate in any of the discussions on it. And the whole thing was stupid. It didn't make any sense at all. It didn't make any sense politically. But it was clearly a decision that said, "We need to get more patronage positions. So let's do away with that one. That will give us more freedom to do things."

FWB: Then she looked like a reformer by vetoing this, to eliminate…

CP: I think it was transparent as to what was going on.

FWB: Yes. It seemed pretty obvious. It also seemed dumb.

CP: Yes. But there were other things that were like that.

FWB: I mean, that never would have happened under Daley, absolutely.

CP: No.

FWB: You knew what the council was going to do and you were informed if anything was going to affect your position.

CP: Yes.

FWB: I mean, that was firing from the hip, but also manipulating things significantly.

CP: Right. I can remember when she was first elected. Her transition guy talked to me. She saw me later in the transition and she said, "Arch, I just want you to know that I want you to stay on. We're going to get the brightest and the best. It's going to be a good place to work. You're going to like working here." I knew her from the fact that she'd been a city employee before. I was at a number of meetings with her, when she was working Urban Opportunities Commission, and so on. Anyway, it was different working for her.

FWB: How close did you perceive her before the mayor passed away? How close did she work with the mayor, at least from your perspective?

CP: Well, I'm probably not the best person to ask about that. I didn't see that she had any kind of major impact on human resource issues, if that's what you're asking.

FWB: Yes. That's some of what I'm asking. I mean, she sort of took herself as heir apparent. That's how she perceived it. I've got some photographs that she's with the mayor on a few occasions. You worked with him clearly. But she sort of assumed the mantle, in some ways, that she was the rightful successor.

CP: The Kennedy mystique was sort of hanging around her, too, and all of the rest of it. But she was not somebody that I ever felt comfortable with. Actually, I was kind of pleased in the way that she seemed to start out. There are a whole bunch of other stories. But I think that's the best example.

FWB: It seems to me that she sifted more towards the patronage side.

CP: Well, let me throw out one other one.

FWB: All right.

CP: As long as we're going to have a chance to maybe…

FWB: Yes. You can edit it, if you like.

CP: As long as I was with the Civil Service Commission or the department of personnel, police and fire selection were out of bounds from any kind of political consideration. I was sitting in my office one day, when Byrne was the mayor. I got this report that there were significant numbers of people coming down to City Hall to apply for firefighter positions. And this was something that I knew nothing about. And I got this call from people on the staff. There were people coming to floor three and a half. There was what was called a vault floor, between the third and fourth floors. There were vaults that were designed to protect the information. But between it, there were certain kinds of office space.

We had some office space in there. But also, the patronage guy had some office space. And they were taking applications for fire fighters on floor three and a half. There was a fire fighter list that was up. This was all during the time of the potential fire strike and all of the rest of it. They were taking these applications for fire fighters. And apparently, the word went out to the 50 committeemen. "Send in x number of candidates for fire fighters. We're going to hire some fire fighters." Well, I went and saw the mayor. And I told her, "You can't do this. It's clearly illegal. And from your vantage point, it shouldn't make any sense."

I sort of explained the whole thing to her and they put the kibosh on it. But they told the committeemen to send in people. They were going to hire these temporary fire fighters and political operatives, or at least political referrals, and they were going to put them to work. I later saw her political guy. He was kind of upset with me. He said, "Arch, why did block that?" He then said, "I only wanted half of the jobs. What's your problem?" It was that kind of thing. Why couldn't they figure out beforehand that that

was a stupid thing to do? And of course, it was in all of the newspapers and it was getting publicity. And they had to look like they were a bunch of fools.

FWB: All right. So go to the transition after that, from Byrne to Washington.

CP: That was an interesting time in my life, I'd have to say. I had to make a decision to whether I wanted to be part of it or not. I sort of transitioned into it, I don't know, through some kind of inner pressure, some kind of feeling on my part. First of all, in the last couple of weeks in the Byrne administration, she tried to push through a whole bunch of appointments, which she felt could not be touched because of Shakman. And I took the position that I wasn't going to approve any appointments that she was trying to push through. I'm sure that that was not received too happily on her part. But I sort of expected that she would fire me. But she didn't.

I did everything I could to make the transition for Harold Washington as smooth as I could. I worked very closely with Bill Ware, who was the chief of staff, the transition guy, to make the transition as smooth as it could be. I got encouragement from some people to walk away from him and them saying, "Don't do that." Again, I won't name any names. But I decided that if I was going to survive 4 years of Jane Byrne, I wasn't going to walk away from the first black mayor of Chicago. And I'd do everything I could to help him out.

At the beginning, I think my relationship with Bill Ware, with the chief of staff, and with the mayor was extremely good. I mean, the mayor put out a press release, saying how glad he was that I was there, he was going to appoint me, and that that was the right thing to do. And that worked out reasonably well, at least for a while. Unfortunately, about a year after Washington was sworn in, Bill Ware died and a new chief of staff came in, whom I didn't see eye to eye with.

FWB: Yes. You hinted at that in your e-mail. You decided, or it was decided that it was time.

CP: Well, they fired me (CP and FWB laugh). I'm sure that I would have felt sometime anyway. But they saw fit to fire me. And that was fine. There was one matter that came up, not too long after I left. One of the television channels asked me for an interview, about a report that Pierre de Vise had given. Does that name mean anything to you?

FWB: Vaguely.

CP: He was an urbanologist.

FWB: Oh, right.

CP: I think he might have been at the University of Illinois for a while.

FWB: Yes. I think so.

CP: But he was at Roosevelt at the time, I think, this happened. And he came out with some kind of report, indicating that the quality of the people Washington had appointed was poorer than it should have been, because he was putting too much emphasis on hiring blacks. In my mind, in looking at his report, the de Vise's Report was just full of holes. It didn't make any sense. Without asking anybody in the Washington administration, they had fired me a few months before. I went on television and told them that the de Vise's Report was full of holes and didn't make any sense. It was unfair criticism of the Washington administration.

Harold Washington called me up, I think, that night. He asked me if I'd give him a memo, describing in greater detail, on what I based it. I sent him a memo. I certainly didn't hold any malice towards him. I hoped that he was going to be a great mayor. I'm a Chicagoan. But at any rate, I was glad to do it. I wanted things to work out well for the department of personnel in the kinds of things that they were doing. I think they made a lot of mistakes. But then, I wasn't part of it. So there was not much I could do about it.

FWB: You were out of city government, by that point.

CP: Yes.

FWB: You were in the consulting firm?

CP: Right. As soon as I got fired at the city, the Hay Group offered me office space. They were, in effect, saying that they would help me with whatever transition I was going to go through. And they told me right out that they wanted me to come to work with them. I looked around for two or three months and decided to go with the Hay Group. It was a good fit. And obviously, it was a good fit because I've been there for 18 years.

FWB: We're coming up to the end of time, in some ways. We've been talking for a couple of hours, almost. Give me some last sort of memorable things about Daley himself. Let's come back to there. Give me your perceptions of how worked, some of the best stories that you had in working with him.

CP: Well, there's one story that comes to mind. The huge federal jobs program was taking place in the late 1960's and early 1970's. We needed to take applications for some federally supported jobs. Our offices then, were on the 11th floor of city hall. And we had no idea how many people were going to be interested in the job announcement when we made it. We came up with this announcement, "Come up to the 11th floor of city hall and make an application." Some people started trickling in at the beginning of the day, then some more, and then some more. Then we had trouble controlling the crowds. All of a sudden, the whole 11th floor was packed with people that were looking for jobs. They started the line down the stairs. It went down to the 10th floor, then the 9th floor, then the 8th floor, then the 7th floor, and then the 6th floor. And it finally hit the 5th floor (laughs).

My phone rang. It was the mayor. He would refer to me as Doc. He said, "Is this Doc? Is there any way that we take these applications to some other location?" He didn't say, "God damn it (FWB laughs)!" He said, "Is there any other way we could take these applications?" I said, "Yes, mayor. We'll see to it and that'll be done by tomorrow." We set up an arrangement so that we were taking applications at 6 locations. They were

remote locations throughout the city, which we should have done in the first place. But we had no idea how many thousands of people were going to be interested in jobs. It's the sad kind of bureaucratic info. It worked for everything else. Why wouldn't it work for this (FWB laughs)?

FWB: That's a good one. Are there any other stories like that, any anecdotes of the mayor? This was something that the mayor could be furious about. But he was sort of quietly saying, "Do it…"

CP: He told me. I got a clear, direct message. But it was said in such a way that I had to come to the conclusion. He wasn't going to say, "You're messing up city hall. Stop doing this dumb thing that you're doing. Do it a different way." His voice would drop. And the softer his voice got, the more serious he was. You had to pay closer attention to what he was saying by his voice dropping. That meant that he was saying something and you'd better listen to him real good (laughs).

FWB: All right. Are there any other stories that are similar to that?

CP: I think that probably wraps it up. I really enjoyed working for him. He was a straight shooter and a decent guy. I think you had to go through some sort of apprenticeship, so they understood who you were, whether they could really trust you or not, and whether you were going to be an honorable person, in terms of how you would deal with them. And once I got through that…

FWB: It was a smooth professional relationship.

CP: Right.

FWB: It was for 25 years or so.

CP: Yes. Being a north sider and all, it took a little time.

FWB: There was a little ribbing there. All right. Well, thank you very much for quite a bit of very important background on the administration and how the administration functions, and the differences between patronage and professional employees.

CP: I hope that it helped. I have very great admiration for him. When he came in at the first, I was not all sure how it was going to impact on my life. I really thought that I would not last and that I would be going somewhere else. But much to my surprise…

FWB: I'm out of battery. Hold on just a second (FWB stops to change the camera battery). There we go.

CP: When he came into office, I was absolutely certain that I would be leaving city government, that the civil service commission would be gutted, and all of the rest of it.

FWB: So, you assumed that it was going to be gutted?

CP: Yes. I think that was the gist and the general feeling of all the people that were on the staff at the time.

FWB: And Mayor Kennelly ran a pretty tight ship. Right?

CP: A tight ship?

FWB: Not so much tight, but at least it was clean.

CP: Well, it all depends on how you define clean. I just had the feeling that he really didn't have a tight rein on everything. I don't think he had the feeling that he knew everything that was going on.

FWB: You mean out of touch, Kennelly.

CP: Yes. And the head of the Civil Service Commission was a real decent guy. I've got to say that because he hired me (FWB laughs). His major concern was making sure that anybody and everybody working for city government was going to be coming through a civil service examination. One of my major concerns, and this was one that developed over time, was that I wanted to make sure that there was a good strong merit system, but that the Mayor had enough latitude in making key appointments to be responsible and accountable for the programs of city government I mean, if you had strictly enforced the 1895 state law on civil service, the mayor would not have the ability to appoint anybody, except his department heads and a handful of other employees. I just don't see how that's a kind of system that could work. You really don't want to have a political system that's working in such a way that the political leadership can't have an impact on city government. A new department head comes in and he or she can't hire his or her own deputies? I mean, it doesn't make any sense. And the way the system was set up, as it came out underneath the personnel ordinances, there were a very small percentage of people that could be appointed. But at least it was enough that you could have a sense that…

FWB: It comes out to three or four in each department, rather than just "*unknown words*."

CP: Yes. It's the top 2 or 3% in the whole city government. Think about it. That's not a whole lot.

FWB: Yes. But you have to have that flexibility to run the city.

CP: Exactly. And the civil service system was set up so that it was just the department head, which would be exempt

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FWB: But you had tiny little departments back then.

CP: Yes. Well, when I started working for the city, the fire commissioner was the only person in the fire department that was exempt.

FWB: Yes. He couldn't really man his own department.

CP: Now, it's a good deal different than that. But it's enough so that whoever is the head of the fire department can be held accountable for what goes on.

FWB: Before that, it couldn't really, in large part.

CP: No. It really couldn't be sure.

FWB: It couldn't be sure. So, Kennelly was seen as an out of touch individual that, because of him, there were limitations in the civil service system. But, as it came in, when Daley came in, there was the assumption that he was going to go and gut civil service merit. And he didn't.

CP: Yes. He didn't. In some cases, he slowed down the examination process, so the number of temporaries went up slightly, and maybe even significantly. But it was not so much that it exceeded a great number.

FWB: So he didn't bypass it through temporary employees.

CP: Well, there were temporary employees.

FWB: Right.

CP: I don't want to say that it was completely non-temps. That's not true. There were temporary employees. There were patronage employees. But it never exceeded about 15 to 20%, somewhere in that range. But even so, a large number of those so called temporary employees were people that were professionally appointed by key people in

the departments. And I was a temporary appointee from about 1957 until the first ordinance was passed. I mean, until I got appointed politically by the mayor.

FWB: Oh, so you were technically a temporary employee.

CP: Yes. I was all of that time.

FWB: It wasn't an exempt position.

CP: Right. The chief administrative officer of the Civil Service Commission was supposed to be a civil service appointee.

FWB: I mean, you have to have a political appointee, you know, someone who is under the…

CP: You need someone who is accountable to the mayor.

FWB: Yes. So, looking at it on the surface, it struck you as kind of a way around the civil service system. But what you were saying was that it was very clearly…

CP: It was a way to make government work.

FWB: You had to make it work in some ways because, otherwise, the mayor wouldn't have any control over.

CP: Right.

FWB: I mean, you wouldn't be serving the pleasure of the mayor. He would just be there.

CP: A lot of the temporary employees were no so called. If somebody was an epidemiologist in the health department, he was a temporary appointment. But it was

somebody that had all of the professional credentials to be an epidemiologist. Or somebody that was the chief design engineer for bridges in the City of Chicago, he was a temporary employee, but he was a bridge engineer.

FWB: Right. And the reason that you had to do that was because of the limitations were way too overly rigid and narrow restrictions on civil service.

CP: Right. If the head of the Public Works Department wanted to go out and get an engineer, the whole idea of having a nationwide search with examinations, when he probably had three or four people that he knew were qualified, he wanted to interview them and put them to work. What happened was that the Department of Public Works would find somebody, go to the mayor's office, and say, "We want this guy hired temporarily. These are his credentials." The guy would be approved and put to work.

FWB: So there were ways to do it. So you would have temporary employees, in your case...

CP: And there were other temporary employees, that were laborers on trucks, who were obviously appointed because some committeeman said, "I want this guy to go to work."

FWB: Right. So you did have that little bit. But you're saying that it was a reasonably small percentage at that level. That was where patronage would come in, at the laborer level. The top level was all professional, even though you were doing the temporary thing.

CP: Yes. And this is not to say that the Democratic Party didn't have control over the county, the forest preserve, the park district, and all of these other places. I had nothing to do with any of those things.

FWB: Those were outside. Yes.

CP: I don't know how that worked.

FWB: Yes. That was a separate system.

CP: That was something I didn't have any control over.

FWB: So civil service was, just for you, just for the city, not the park district.

CP: Well, for a long time, it was also for the non-teaching employees for the board of education.

FWB: Okay. I was going to ask about them, the janitors, the secretaries, and the technicians there.

CP: Right.

FWB: Then, it came back to the CPS?

CP: When the ordinance was passed, that automatically ended the relationship with the board of education and the city, which was a good thing, by the way. It's a dumb kind of system to have.

FWB: Yes. There are stories about that. My father was a school administrator.

CP: Was he a principal?

FWB: Yes. But he was not in Chicago. He wouldn't go into Chicago because he wouldn't have control over the janitor of his building.

CP: In a way, the engineer custodian that was in charge of a major building had more authority than the principal of the school had.

FWB: Yes. That's why he didn't want to work in the city. So he stayed with a suburban school, where he would have control over the janitor. And he would have control over that building.

CP: Thank God, that's been changed.

FWB: All right. Well, that's helpful.

CP: It was a couple of hours, wasn't it?

FWB: Yes. It was a couple of hours. But you've been very helpful with letting us see how it worked on the inside.

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