

## **ILOHI Interview with Choice Edwards**

Friday November 30, 2018

Phone Interview between Indianapolis, IN and Clermont, Florida

Interview by Dr. Michella M. Marino

Transcribed by Ben Baumann

MP3 file, Sony

Choice Edwards=CE

Michella Marino=MM

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MM: [0:00:00] Ok, they are both going, and I will just state for the record then that my name is Michella Marino, and I am interviewing Choice Edwards, and I am in Indianapolis, Indiana, and you are in—is it Clermont, Florida?

CE: It is indeed, Michella.

MM: Ok, and today's date is Friday November 30, 2018, and we are doing a phone audio digital oral history interview. Um, and just so I can also state for the record, I do have your consent to record the interview.

CE: You absolutely do.

MM: Great. Alright, well let's get started. When and where were you born?

CE: I was born uh in Indianapolis, January 20, 1942, and I believe at what was then called General Hospital.

MM: Ok. Um, what were your parents' names?

CE: [0:01:00] My dad was named Elroy Edwards. That was spelled E-L-R-O-Y Edwards, and my mother was Josephine J-well, Josephine Rasdall, R-A-S-D-A-L-L.

MM: D-A-L-L, ok. And where is your family from originally?

CE: Well, my immediate family was right there in Indianapolis, but I think both my maternal and paternal grandparents came from Kentucky.

MM: Ok.

CE: I'm not quite sure where but Paducah I think I've heard and Bowling Green, but I can't really verify that.

MM: Mmhmm. Do you know when they migrated up to Indiana or had they been there for a while or...?

CE: I think that was, I think they were probably the first generation.

MM: Ok, ok. What were your parents' occupations?

CE: My father—well, my mother worked for the Radio Corporation of America, uh, in the [0:02:00] factory, and my father worked for the city of Indianapolis, in the Works Department, I believe it's the Works Department.

MM: Ok. What area of the city do you all live in?

CE: Well, actually uh, we lived on the south side, the near east side, and the near north side. So we uh... When I was in grade school we were in the south side of Indianapolis around fountain square and then when I went to high school we were in the near east side around uh, 30<sup>th</sup> and north western.

MM: Ok. Did you have any siblings or do you have any siblings?

CE: Yes uh, my brother Michael, uh and uh my half-sister Elizabeth.

MM: Ok.

CE: And.

MM: Where do you fall in the ranking there of the siblings?

CE: Uh, I think I am the second oldest. The second oldest. I didn't finish [0:03:00].

MM: Oh I'm sorry.

CE: Have my brother Michael, uh I had a half-brother Elroy, named after my father. And uh, a half-sister, uh Juanita, uh Wanda rather, Wanda. And a half-sister Elizabeth.

MM: Ok, so did all of the kids grow up together, in the same household?

CE: Nope, just my brother Michael and myself. Uh, we had both same parents.

MM: Ok, I see.

CE: Mother and father.

MM: How would you describe your childhood?

CE: My childhood was, pretty joyous. Um, I grew up as I said, early years on the south side around fountain square, and in an integrated neighborhood. [0:04:00] Although the... Um and we got along well with our neighbors. Um, never had any issues of any kind. Uh, we used to go you know fishing in the creek, and playing basketball and football on the salvation army lot, which we thought was as large as a regulation football field. (Both Laugh) But of course it wasn't. So and we were involved in cub scouts, and that was pretty much it. Nice neighborhood, lots of wonderful people, no issues of any kind actually.

MM: Ok.

CE: But it was what you call a low income neighborhood, around fountain square in those days in the mid-50s.

MM: Uh huh, um, who were the most influential people in your childhood?

CE: Well, I suspect, uh my mother was probably more influential than anyone. Because she made sure that we had wonderful Christmas' and an opportunity to visit our, uh relatives. So I think she was most influential, and [0:05:00] uh, I can't, you know a lot of people will say teachers etcetera, but I don't really recall any particular teacher that had an influence on me. In my uh, development years.

MM: Ok. Did your mom work full time when you were growing up as well?

CE: Yes, she sure did. She worked full time as I mentioned for the Radio Corporation of America, full time.

MM: Ok.

CE: So, uh my grandmother, her mother. My maternal grandmother did not, she was unemployed until much of the time, uh she, you know she raised us, was there supervising us.

MM: Yeah.

CE: And obviously she would have some influence.

MM: Sure.

CE: Because of the fact we were with her most of the time.

MM: Mhm um, what understanding if any, did you have about your family's politics as a young child?

CE: As a young child I recall, hearing people talk about the [0:06:00] presidential candidates of the time. And of course it went all over, right over my head.

MM: (Laughs) Right.

CE: But I do know, since my grandfather, my mother's father uh was involved in a union.

MM: Ok.

CE: I think he had some position in a union. Probably no more than a steward I suspect, but as a result of that uh, we were heavily influenced by democrat politics.

MM: So...

CE: At that time.

MM: So you were...(Interrupted)

CE: And labor unions at the labor movement.

MM: Ok. Ok.

CE: And labor unions.

MM: So you were kind of vaguely aware, particularly through the union...

CE: Right.

MM: About politics, but not, you know in any great depth. Ok.

CE: And no great depth at all, I was not a participant of any kind of course, I was not of voting age at the time. But as uh...around uh, dinner table and conversations people would be mentioning, uh political affairs and I was [0:07:00] acutely aware of the fact that uh my grandfather was in fact with a union that it was favorably (laughs) Democratic politics.

MM: Right. So was that something...Did they talk more about union, going, union politics and things like that or do you recall them talking about you know state or national elections?

CE: Uh, national elections for sure, but mostly, yeah but it was mostly, uh supporting, the uh AFL-CIO, whoever they would want to endorse for political offices. Basically, if the union was in favor then my grandparents were in favor. Influenced mostly by my grandfather, who I believe was involved in a union.

MM: Ok. Um what...I'm sorry, I'm not very articulate here today. Um...[0:08:00]

CE: Yes you are, take your time. (Both Laugh)

MM: Um, I know you said you started school in the Fountain Square area, but where did you attend junior high and high school?

CE: Ok, uh and I was of course in grade school before the 1990, 54 uh Brown VS The Topeka Board of Education, ruling that desegregated schools nationwide, but I fell into segregated elementary school.

MM: Ok.

CE: Number 19, as I recall.

MM: Ok.

CE: On the south side and then after 54, I went to Harry E. Wood School for what we call middle school these days.

MM: Ok.

CE: And then, and I went to Shortridge High School from there.

MM: My husband's a teacher at Shortridge High School right now.

CE: Oh great!

MM: Yeah.

CE: I'm in the hall of fame there.

MM: Are you?

CE: Matter of fact. I have a plaque on the wall.

MM: Yeah. I've seen, I've walked by those, I haven't looked closely at them yet.

CE: Yeah. (Laughs)

MM: I've been in a couple times [0:09:00] but, but um...

CE: It was a great school.

MM: Now Shortridge was integrated by the time you went there right?

CE: It was integrated, I graduated in 1958. Uh and I guess I started there probably in 1955 or 56, and yes it was integrated and again it was...folks got along very very well. I honestly believe that the counselors failed me, because uh I recall I was 16 years of age and counselor called me in and said hey you have enough credits to graduate and I didn't. I said "I wish you'd said, you might want to bring your grades up, you might want to stick around a bit longer, to bring your grades up." (Both Laugh)

MM: Yeah.

CE: But I did not get that kind of guidance.

MM: Yeah, yeah.

CE: I felt. And I suspect, and the same thing holds true [0:10:00] today uh, guidance counselors have too many students.

MM: Yeah.

CE: That they can't really provide very good, in my view...

MM: Right.

CE: Guidance and direction for those students, especially those who probably need that guidance more than others.

MM: Sure, especially when they have so many students, it's really hard to give that individual attention. Um...

CE: Sure.

MM: You know, you mentioned Brown VS Board, which um was ruled on in 1954 and it's my understanding that you know what, that was obviously a hugely monumental case, but it really took a long time for schools across the nation to be desegregated, probably more so in the South, but what was your view? Do you feel like Indianapolis moved along pretty quickly in that or had the process even begun before Brown VS Board here?

CE: As I recall, I felt like that the process had moved along fairly quickly in Indianapolis, because as I recall all the high schools were integrated.

MM: Ok.

CE: I suspect Crispus Attucks High School, which was originally built just for black students, uh was probably not integrated very well or very much at that time [0:11:00] in the mid-50s, right after the supreme court ruling.

MM: Ok.

CE: I think, most other schools...Um Makayla were pretty well integrated.

MM: Ok.

CE: But of course, subsequent there too, back in the 70s, and even in the 80s you know there were suits about desegregation.

MM: Right.

CE: Because, it felt like it was not being as beneficial as it was supposed to. People were not implementing it as much as it should have been.

MM: Right.

CE: And of course, today even folks are re-segregating themselves in schools.

MM: And...

CE: (Inaudible) Housing patterns.

MM: Yeah, yep and I know when in different parts of Indiana that the 70s busing was such a controversy, as well.

CE: Yes.

MM: Yeah.

CE: Right. Mhm exactly. And you know [0:12:00] I served on the school board too and I recall When I was a kid they used to bus me for segregation and then people started complaining, because they were being bused for integration.

MM: Right.

CE: It was okay for segregation, but not to integrate. I thought that was ironic.

MM: (Laughs) To say the least. Um, when you were in school did play any sports or have favorite subjects?

CE: Uh, actually no. I played sports when I was in elementary school. Basketball, baseball, and football. But when I got to high school I did not.

MM: Yeah, ok. Well, as a child and into your teenage years as well. What were your views about the State of Indiana and being a Hoosier?

CE: I was pretty proud of being a Hoosier. I thought the world revolved around Hoosism. (Both Laugh) Uh when people...When I would see people, especially people from the South, uh I

would think boy, poor people they down in the South that's where all the ignorance is. And [0:13:00] I knew no better, I though again, Indianapolis I thought was fairly sophisticated. Of course it uh, when I ask people visiting, even to New York City I thought, you know again that they were not nearly as advanced as we were in Indiana. (Both Laugh) I was a young person then.

MM: Or true Hoosier, whichever uh.

CE: Yeah, exactly.

MM: Um, where, so, I'm sorry can you tell me again what year did you graduate from high school?

CE: 1958.

MM: Okay, and then where did you attend college?

CE: I went to Ohio Central State in Xenia, Ohio. And I attended Indiana, what was called at the time "Indiana University Extension."

MM: Ok. And where was the extension at?

CE: It was in downtown Indianapolis. Uh, [0:14:00] around, close to where the world war memorial is. And uh some buildings the university had rented.

MM: Ok, so did you graduate from Ohio Central or did you finish up at the Indiana Extension?

CE: I did not finish at either one, as matter of fact. Yeah, when I...After my freshman year I thought I knew everything so I didn't go back. (Both Laugh)

MM: Ok. Um, what was your major or what were you studying?

CE: Boy was I mistaken. (Both Laugh)

MM: Well, we all think that when we are 18 or 19 I think.

CE: Yeah.

MM: Uh what was your major or what were you interested in studying?

CE: Uh, pre-dentistry. I thought I would like to be a dentist.

MM: Hm, ok. Um, what then did you do after you left college?

CE: Uh after I left college then I started working actually. Uh, I worked, uh for the Veterans Administration, for [0:15:00] probably a year. And then I worked for the United States Postal Service for I think two years.

MM: Hm, are those jobs that you were interested in sort of pursuing as a career or just sort of happened into you know working them?

CE: I was not interested in terms of pursuing them as a career, just needed...I just needed to have income to go to work.

MM: Sure, sure.

CE: So then, and after the post office I started working for Indiana Bell Telephone Company.

MM: Ok. And you were with them for a while, right?

CE: Um, three or four years.

MM: Ok. Three or four years ok. Um, well did you have [0:16:00] particular career aspirations or what did you want to do for your future?

CE: Well, I wasn't sure actually. I, I will say this I knew I no longer wanted to have a blue collar job. I wanted to have a white collar job. (Laughs) So, and so back in the early 60s I thought working for the telephone company and at this point it was in Yellow Page sales and I said oh I would like to try sales. And so I enjoyed that, but then uh along the line there after a couple of years Makayla I decided to go into the advertising business of a couple of friends of mine.

MM: Ok.

CE: So we started an advertising business Davidson and Party Associates. And that led me to become active in, watching politics again. And as a result of that I was asked if I would like to serve in the Indiana Legislature and I said [0:17:00] "Sure!, why not." (Both Laugh) So, I went from the, from the uh, Veterans Administration in a very short period of time, I think less than two years, to the post office probably a couple of years, then to Indiana Bell Telephone Company. First as a Yellow Page sales person.

MM: Ok.

CE: Then as a communications consultant and in my, in my final position there was at the Director of Urban Affairs.

MM: Ok, well what did that position entail?

CE: It entailed since we had a tremendous...This was the time when cities were uh, there were riots in cities over civil rights etcetera and the telephone company has a tremendous uh, investment all over the community of course, but in urban areas as well and a part of my responsibilities was to formulate scholarships and grants for [0:18:00] organizations that are there to assist the communities.

MM: That sounds really interesting.

CE: Yeah, it didn't last very long however, because I was working for the federal government. (Laughs).

MM: Yeah, right.

CE: So, yeah.



MM: So as you, um entered those new positions and um sort of maturing as a young man in your 20s, in what ways did your awareness of politics evolve then?

CE: Well, I think the civil rights movement. Uh, was the spark, for me, uh I was so proud of the movement and Dr. Martin Luther King that uh I wanted to do what I could, uh as limited as it was. And I was also struck by the fact that I recall fairly vividly, my grandmother, especially cause my grandfather had passed [0:19:00] saying “I just wish Martin would leave things alone.” Uh “He’s a rebel rouser and he’s causing us a whole lot more problems, by this movement.” And I thought, wow! (Laughs) I don’t understand that logic, you know. We need to be as free as everybody else in this country. So that was the impetus I think for me to get involved in politics.

MM: Were you involved in various civil rights organizations in Indianapolis or part of activist movements?

CE: Yes uh, I was active in the, as matter of fact, I was Vice President of the State NAACP Youth Council.

MM: Wow.

CE: At one time, for um, you know before I even went over to Ohio Central State. So I was involved in the NAACP, Youth Council, um and I think that was it. At that time. Oh and I attended the national convention, the 50<sup>th</sup> NAACP National Convention in New York City. [0:20:03] Uh where we had some youth behind Martin Luther King as he was addressing the convention there...

MM: Oh wow.

CE: That was a thrill for me.

MM: I bet, could you tell me more about that experience?

CE: Well uh, uh I don’t remember a whole lot actually. But it was my first time uh, to visit New York City and I was just amazed at the city itself, and also uh there was some controversy going on that I didn’t quite pick up on, because uh I was you know 17, 18 years of age. Something I didn’t quite pick on, but I guess there was some kind of a communist element or something that was, that uh leaders of ACP were trying to squash at the time. And I didn’t really fully understand it, but I just remember the experience of being there and so many people were pushing to [0:21:00] uh, people African ancestry to uh, have equality in the country.

MM: Sure. Was that the first you had heard Dr. King speak live or in person?

CE: In person yes. First and only unfortunately.

MM: Yeah, yeah. Well, that’s really that’s really amazing. Um, well how... You said you grew up in a family, you said had leanings towards the Democratic Party. Now I understand you ran as a Republican for the legislature. So how did you um, sort of switch parties in that process.

CE: Well, as I mentioned Makayla um, I was involved in advertising and one of our clients, actually both of our clients one was a Democrat Party and one was a Republican Party. They

were asking us to do some work for them. As a result, uh I guess I came to the attention of Keith Bulen who was the [0:22:00] chair at the time and Noel Allen who was a vice and I think they took (Inaudible) me and they, they said “Would you like to run for the state legislature?” And I said “Why should I?” And they said “Because we are going to win.” (Both Laugh) And I said “Touche!” “Sold!” (Both Laugh)

MM: Yeah.

CE: So that’s how I became involved as a Republican, they uh prior to that time uh, I think I was probably registered as a Democrat. I don’t actually recall. Um, but I said “Yes.” “Absolutely.” Um, because I thought given the fact that uh, the Civil Rights Movement was underfoot and making progress I well maybe I can in some small way contribute.

MM: Well, I know keep...

CE: Cause I felt like, you know people used to say, well if you’re a Republican you’re an [0:23:00] Uncle Tom, if you happen to be an American of African ancestry. But I also felt, I felt the way to change a party is probably better to be done within than without. So I felt, if I want any changes, positive changes for the Republican Party to make the tent larger it’s better for me to be on the inside.

MM: That’s really interesting. Um, oh Keith Bulen was sort of a very powerful figure within the Republican politics. How well did you know him at that point?

CE: Well, pretty well uh, I got to know Keith pretty well uh, just from a political standpoint. Not so much from a personal standpoint. Uh, but I thought he was a great leader, uh young up and commoner in the Republican Party. Not only state wise, but even nationally. Uh, so I had some respect for him and also of Noel Allen as well. Truthfully, everybody that I...Most of...I would say 90% of the people that I met [0:24:00] when I was involved in Republican politics in Indiana were outstanding individuals. Uh, just uh wholesome people.

MM: I, so I’m a little bit unsure of the timeline here if you would help me piece this together.

CE: Ok.

MM: Um, how then did you get involved with the Indiana Housing Authority or was it the Indiana branch sort of the Federal Housing Authority?

CE: Indiana Branch of the Federal Housing Authority.

MM: Ok.

CE: HUD, H-U...United States Department of Housing and Urban Development. Yeah, I uh, I moved over there from the telephone company in 1970.

MM: Ok.

CE: So, as a result. I had to resign from state legislature.

MM: Ok, that’s what prompted that. Ok.

CE: [0:25:00] Yeah, and that was uh, that was uh little problematic, because as I recall the legislature at that time was 51 Republican, 49 Democrat in the House. So by me resigning it made it very, very close.

MM: Yeah. Um, well we'll come back to that here in in just a couple of minutes. When if at all, did you get married?

CE: Uh, we got married October 29, 1963.

MM: 1963 and what was your wife's name?

CE: Judy.

MM: Judy ok and how did you all meet?

CE: Well, she would tell you I chased her through the halls at Shortridge High School. (Both Laugh)

MM: Do you have a different version? (Both Laugh)

CE: No, that's pretty accurate. (Both Laugh) We met in high school, I think I was probably either 15 or 16 and she was 14. So, we met in high school and got, got married in 63'...

MM: Ok, and did you have children?

CE: And still married.

MM: Oh, well congratulations, you must have just come upon [0:26:00] an anniversary last month then.

CE: Yes.

MM: Um, did you have children?

CE: Yes, we have two children oldest is Kelly, uh K-E-L-L-I, uh and she was 1966 and our son Cary 1969.

MM: Ok.

CE: I sent you a bio, I don't know if you received it or not.

MM: I did, yes so I know some of the answers to these questions, but I do want to get them on record as well. Um...

CE: I understand.

MM: How did your family influence your career in anyway?

CE: Actually, I don't think my family influence my career in one iota. Um, I just don't recall any particular influence from my, from my family. As a matter of fact, I wish I had more and the reason for that is, [0:27:00] I had two aunts who were teachers and I cannot ever recall one conversation with either of them that insisted you got to college and you finish. I don't recall one

instance of that. And that has always disappointed me. Because I graduated when I was 16 years of age, only because the counselor said “Hey, you have enough credits to graduate!”

MM: Right.

CE: And I should of have, I wish I had the wisdom to say well looking at my GPA, maybe I oughta stay a while and bring that up. Maybe I can get a scholarship someplace.

MM: Sure.

CE: That did not occur. So I, I just wish that they had been more uh, helpful and more encouraging to insist that uh, everybody in the family go to college and complete their education.

MM: Did...

CE: So I don't think I had much of an influence from family as actually. I think most [0:28:00] my, my major influences, uh came from, motivational speakers.

MM: Oh, really like who?

CE: Yeah. Uh, Zig Ziglar, uh comes to mind, uh Denis Waitley, uh (Inaudible), you know, the authors like that I, you know would read positive mental attitude books, that was always very helpful, cause I considered Jesus to be a motivational speaker as well.

MM: Sure. Probably the most well-known I'd say.

CE: Yeah, exactly.

MM: Um, well did...

CE: Most of my, I think most of my influence came from, came from within me.

MM: Ok.

CE: And gendered by the works of uh, of motivational speakers.

MM: Uh huh, um, [0:29:00] did your... Would you say that your career or your experiences influenced your family in terms of education or in terms of moving around for different jobs? Did that affect your family in any way?

CE: I believe so, I... You know my daughter, we insisted that they go to college and my son did not. Uh, but my daughter did. And since then of course, both their children uh, are going to college. And my grandson, one of my daughter's son's played football at the University of Kentucky for four years.

MM: Oh, wow.

CE: And uh, congratulated now he and his girlfriend have an apparel business that they started and they are doing fairly well. But you know, still small.

MM: Sure.

CE: And he intends to play professional football with the new Football Alliance of America, I guess it's called. So, yes I think as a result of me saying, saying to my children you, you [0:30:00] have to go to college, you have to get a degree and probably, probably have to get an advanced degree. But I would preach that.

MM: Yeah.

CE: Absolutely positively with, you know preach that cause I, I suspect I would have been much further professionally in my own professional career had I completed my undergraduate degree at least.

MM: Sure, sure. Ok, well, I was gonna ask about the shaping of your political outlook, but you sort of already addressed that through getting involved with civil rights. Um, so maybe my next question would be as you initially became involved in politics what were key issues or legislation that you championed or fought against?

CE: I think uh, I wanted (Laughs), this goes back a long time I can't recall very sharply Makayla, but I wanted to do something for uh, people who were uh [0:31:00] addicted to drugs and also for, to do whatever I could to uh stop recidivism, so I knew...I think I sponsored or at least signed on to legislation that would help uh, those who were incarcerated and folks under the influence of narcotics.

MM: Sure, was that an issue that you had seen in Indianapolis or just things you had read about or?

CE: Um, mostly things I had read about, didn't see a whole lot in Indianapolis personally, but mostly things that were probably topical at the time.

MM: Sure.

CE: Nationally.

MM: Well, who were your national political heroes as you were sort of entering politics?

CE: Well, (Inaudible) Brookson a Republican United States Senator from Massachusetts, uh whose name I now can't recall, but uh Senator Brook was because he [0:32:00] was Republican, and uh several Republican office voters. I remember uh gentleman named Blackwell, who was a mayor in of the Michigan cities and I think most of them really were black Republicans, because I think they felt the same way I did that uh, we need to have two, at least two political parties. I happen to be no party affiliated right now and have been for several years, but at least I thought that we should have at least in those days a two political parties that were excepting of Americans from African ancestry. Not just the Democratic Party...

MM: Sure.

CE: As we've seen those days, uh the Democrats don't work for our vote, because they know were gonna get it. And the Republicans don't work for our vote, cause [0:33:00] they know they're not going to get it. So, I thought that if we can change that dynamic so that both parties have to work for our vote we'd be far better off.

MM: Sure.

CE: So, uh national Republicans that were office holders I think were my role models at that time. Are people I inspired to be, like.

MM: Was there anyone at the state or local level that you admired as you were sort of entering the Republican Party?

CE: Yes, Judge Rufus Kuykendall. He was uh Republican and I admired him.

MM: Ok.

CE: I can't tell you exactly why, other than the fact that he was uh classy, a classy gentleman, uh well educated and uh a Republican (Both Laugh).

MM: Right. Um, so as Bulen uh [0:34:00] and Allen approached you to run for state government, did you have a campaign or how did that process work for you?

CE: Yes, well in those days, we ran as a delegation from the entire Marion County area.

MM: Ok.

CE: There were 15 of us and we ran as a team.

MM: Ok.

CE: This and I think, the year after I left the legislature, I think we went to single member districts, which I was always in favor of anyway.

MM: Why...Why was...Why did you like that idea better?

CE: Well, I knew it would be the death nail for my political career in the legislature, because as uh American of African ancestry and a Republican uh in a district, which I live it was all Democrats. So I knew I would not stand close to a chance. But, I just liked the principle of [0:35:00] one man, one vote and uh single member district rather than to have as the case been with us, 15 people for running all together, just the principle of the thing.

MM: In what area did you live in at that point in the city?

CE: I lived on, at that point I lived on East 34<sup>th</sup> Street about 4600.

MM: Ok.

CE: East 34<sup>th</sup> Street, I don't know what they call that area right now, forest manner maybe.

MM: Yeah, I think I've heard that yeah. Um, ok so, as a, I guess as a delegation you wouldn't have had like a main opponent. Were you familiar of, with the Democrats that were running? Against sort of a Republican ticket or?

CE: Uh, I knew them but, I did not know them well. And of course I consider them to be the enemy. (Both Laugh). So I did not collaborate with them or meet with them. Uh, you know we were on the opposite side of the aisle. So, uh I really did not.

MM: Well, what was most important to you as a candidate then for, the State House of Representatives? [0:36:00]

CE: Getting elected.

MM: Well, how did you get that message out to the public, that you so wanted to be elected?

CE: Well, yeah uh, I was pretty effective at stuff speeches going around and giving uh, speeches. Uh, and just basically just talking about the team. You know the 15 member team and what we planned to do to, keep the progress growing and going in Marion County. That you know in 1970, we passed Unigov and that was one of the, crown jewels of our efforts.

MM: Ok, well we'll get back to Unigov here in a second, certainly. Um, what was you know as your entering state politics, what was that like for your family? Your wife Judy and it looked like Kelli would have just been three years old [0:37:00] and right about the time your son was born. How did that affect them?

CE: Well, uh honestly I think they were probably in awe. (Both Laugh) That I was in the state legislature. Uh, but my daughter was very small and uh of course and my wife accompanied me to many many of the campaign stops. So, she had become steeped in it, as a participant. Going to the rallies and uh and applauding not really expressing much more than that. But I should tell people as another candidate, who was a candidate for judge at the time and I have forgotten his name, but he used to say all the time, because he was a candidate for judge. If you have any doubt about my judgment just take a look at my wife. So I borrowed that and [0:38:00] I would say the same thing. (Both Laugh)

MM: That's a great line.

CE: Take a look at my beautiful wife. (Laughs)

MM: That's funny. Well, what was your very first election date like? How did you feel?

CE: I felt uh, this is really interesting. I felt wow, I can't believe it I was in all of myself. The interesting thing to is that, I was delivering newspapers that day, you know the day after and I opened up the newspaper and there is said I had been elected. Me among several others of course.

MM: Sure.

CE: But, the whole listing was there. But at that particular time, as I mentioned I was working in advertising and the income Makayla just wasn't there, so I'm looking for other sources of income and I just happened to stumble upon the Indianapolis Star or the Indianapolis News, Indianapolis Star, looking for supervisors [0:39:00] of newspaper delivery young men and women. And so I, that's what I was doing that particular day uh when, the day after I was elected, while out delivering newspaper and happened to open it up and there it was. Hey! I've been elected.

MM: (Laughs) Wow.

CE: And there I was delivering newspapers.

MM: Right, right. I suppose that felt like you were kind of on your way up then to.

CE: Yes.

MM: To do something neat.

CE: Right.

MM: Um, okay well what...So you find out you've been elected then. What were you thinking as you walked into the statehouse that first day?

CE: Wow, um I think I'm the least...I think I am...I think I am in a leadership position in this city now, uh but I think I was thinking, and I'm going to do the best that I can, uh even though I didn't have a clue what to do. (Both Laugh)

MM: Well, how then did you learn the ends and outs of state politics?

CE: Well, really just being around the party and the politicians we had, as I mentioned [0:40:00] the people that I served with from Marion County were all excellent human beings. Well educated, intelligent people and I just really learned from them. They mentored me.

MM: Do you recall any specific legislators or state senators that you know served as mentors, as you settled into the general assembly?

CE: I think uh, first of all Doc Bowen, Speaker of the House sort of took me under his wing um, he took a liking to me and I did to him as well. So uh, who obviously became governor, uh Doc Bowen and then I think Ned Lamkin was a mentor. Uh, George Rubin, he was state senator and I think I learned from George and Ned [0:41:00], Lamkin uh principally, these you know...George is an attorney and Ned is a physician so, you know how could you go wrong listening to what they have to say.

MM: Right, right. Um, how well were you in contact with your constituents, I mean were you aware of their sort of needs and wants? Or what was that contact like?

CE: Yes, uh, I would get an inquiry, uh do this, do that, uh information please from constituents of the entire time. One thing though, I humorously, my telephone number at that particular time was the exchange was I think 5-4-7-0-0-0-0 and I went to a meeting (Laughs)...and I went to a meeting and a woman was complaining about something and I said to her "I will check that out, please give me a call", [0:42:01] gave her my phone number, never heard from her Makayla.

MM: Huh.

CE: I saw her subsequently and she said and this is at a public meeting, and she said "You don't do X-Y-Z", and I said "What do you mean?" She said "I asked you..." and she mentioned what it was that she asked, which I don't recall "and you gave me and I asked you for your phone number and you gave me 5-4-7-0-0-0-0!" (Both Laugh) I said "Well, did you call it?" and she said "No." She didn't even try and that was my actual telephone number and she thought I was blowing her off.



MM (Laughs) That's funny.

CE: So, yeah I had...I had interactions with constituents, all this time.

MM: (Laughs) Did you have a particular way that you communicated or interacted with them, such as you know, uh sending out newsletters or uh holding you know little town hall meetings or things like that?

CE: No, this is...This is the primitive days of legislature (Laughs) so we didn't have anything quite as sophisticated as that. I suspect [0:43:00] uh you know they have staffs, and you know they have all kinds of communication these days.

MM: Yeah.

CE: Very little of that that I can recall.

MM: Sure. Would you remember the first bill you sponsored, or if not the first bill an important bill?

CE: No, I do not.

MM: (Both Laugh) Ok. Um, what was the regular interaction amongst assembly members like?

CE: Uh, serious to jovial. Uh, you know we would be very serious about some things, uh I can recall that Keith Bulen has the uh chair, chairman of the Republican of the county, with in order to show some lobbyist his power with that certain things be done, and I can recall (Inaudible) on some issue, [0:40:02] and I can't recall exactly what it was, but he wanted the delegation to vote a certain way and stupid me I did not...I did not follow that, and I don't think that I don't think I suffered as a result of it, because obviously my tenure in the legislature was pretty short, but I suspect had I been up for continuing the legislature, he'd probably brought that back to me (Both Laugh). So it went from very serious kinds of things to jovial, we had, you know I believe to quote uh the philosopher Mencia if you ain't laughing you ain't living (Both Laugh). So, I believe in you know in having laughter and uh trying to ease tensions uh with laughter so we would often and you are taking me back of course 50 years.

MM: Sure.

CE: But, we would often uh, you know just have uh, time for laughter and people, people should never discount that. I think its bonding and often through laughter you can really teach people something [0:45:00] that will stay with them a lot longer, than if you do it in a strident manner.

MM: I absolutely agree. Uh, what were interactions like between the majority and the minority parties then?

CE: Nothing like today, I can tell you that (Both Laugh). Nothing like today in national politics, we actually worked together. We actually worked together. I remember Bernie White, who was a Democrat from South Bend. Uh he and I uh, we didn't sponsor any legislation as I can recall, but we got a long very well. You know we would go out and have drinks together, have lunch together, it was uh, it was uh, it was in fact a, a jovial uh fellowship, of in those days.

MM: Wow, yeah, I imagine that is very different from today.

CE: Yes. I don't know how it is in the state legislature in uh, Indiana these days, but I'm just saying I know how [0:46:00] it is in the national legislature if you will, congress.

MM: Right. Um, what differences if any, were there between members of the house and members of the senate? Was there much interaction there?

CE: Oh, yeah we, but not nearly as much, you know we did have our caucuses, where we met together, but you know the senate was more imperial.

MM: And what exactly do you mean by that?

CE: (Both Laugh) They're a little snooty. They seemed to be a little more snooty, I guess because you know had been elected by more people than they and you know didn't have to go out and campaign every two years. So.

MM: Sure, sure.

CE: And I didn't understand the workings of the legislature very well. Uh, even then of course, even while I was serving there because, because it was pretty rapid fire, uh things were coming at you pretty fast and being uh neophyte, uh I'm trying to learn my way around and uh do whatever I can to be effective, [0:47:01] but uh with limited power very limited power, as freshman of course

MM: Right. What was your relationship like with your seatmate?

CE: Oh, uh, I'm trying to think of, I'm trying to think if John, John Hart was my seatmate or not, I can't recall, if not he was very close by.

MM: Uh, I think actually I should be able to see that, um, it looks like you sat by Fay one side and Lapar on the other.

CE: Oh, okay. (Inaudible) with Fay, you know we were, we got along very well. Her husband seemed to be more of an influence on her and even on her vote in the legislature than she was. As I recall he was an executive with an airline I recall and I think... [0:48:00] I hope this is not being unfair, but it seemed to me that she would sort of tend to, go whatever way he wanted to go, rather than what her own internal guidance was, uh and I don't recall my other seat mate very well honestly.

MM: Huh, but you just mentioned a name was this uh um a friendship you had formed in the legislature?

CE: Yes, well no she was in a delegation with me.

MM: Ah, ok. Yeah.

CE: Wilma Fay.

MM: No, the person you mentioned before that, you said you couldn't recall if they were uh seatmate or not.

CE: John C. Hart.

MM: Yeah, uh huh.

CE: Yeah, he was also in the Marion County delegation.

MM: Okay, gotcha.

CE: And he was sort of uh, a mentor as well, although John was a freshman. I think he had probably been around the legislature uh before, because he was a home builder and became the national President of the Home Builders Association. Uh, and I think he was an influence, [0:49:00] because I think he knew his way around the legislature.

MM: Okay yeah, so he kind of helped show you the ropes, as well.

CE: Yes.

MM: Um, you know again I know it's been a long time, but can you walk me through the process of sort of generating a bill, do you remember the steps and what that looked like?

CE: I cannot (Both Laugh). I would have to back to my civics class and figure out how a bill becomes a law. It has been a long time.

MM: Well, you were only in one session.

CE: I kind of recall... Yeah we... First of all the legislative, I think it's called the "legislative council" in those days. Would help to draft the legislation that you wanted and they would do some research on it, then that piece of legislation, uh would be introduced and be assigned to a committee, of the house or the senate as the case may be and then that would be voted on [0:50:00] and come out to the floor for uh, for uh final vote. Those are the steps that I recall, but I am close to 77 years of age so. (Both Laugh)

MM: That's pretty good recall I'd say. Um, how did you garner support for your legislation?

CE: Uh again as a freshman, I was a complete fat, I would just talk to individual legislators as I recall, but I had no grand plan and those who were my mentors uh in terms of garnering support, I don't recall much that I got from them in that aspect.

MM: Ok. Um, did you have sense of how people would vote prior to actual voting?

CE: Yes, but there were times when you would be surprised [0:50:00], but yes typically we would have a sense.

MM: And is that because you would go to a caucus or just knowing...

CE: Yes.

MM: From backroom sort of conversations about topics. [0:51:00]

CE: In my...In my instance it was from the caucuses.

MM: Uh huh, ok.

CE: From the caucus.

MM: Ok. Well, what were the values of the Republican Party during your time as a legislator?

CE: As a legislator, the values were self-reliance, uh you know being able to uh make it on your own, if you will, uh and mostly self-reliance, uh and, I was not involved too much with the thinking at least about taxation policy etc. My whole thing was just, you know being able...And I think this was the influence of uh positive motivation and motivational speakers and books. Uh that you can...Whatever the mind the ability of man can conceive, it can achieve. Can conceive and believe it can achieve and so that was, [0:52:00] that's what I was getting from the Republicans at that time.

MM: Uh huh, and how did that play into your ideas with civil rights? Or how did you use that to further civil rights, if at all?

CE: Well, I think the same thing, but sometimes it put me at odds with other...With some people in the civil rights movement. Anytime I would espouse about uh, you know making it on your own so to speak, I would get pushback. When people say well, you know you talk about pulling yourself up by your boot straps, but if you don't have any boots, you don't have any straps. And so, yeah I would get push back from people about that, you know we...You talk about uh getting ahead, [0:53:00] but if you don't, if you don't get a quality education how are you going to get ahead.

MM: Right.

CE: And I realized that there are...That affects more people than the few people who succeed despite having uh a not very auspicious education,

MM: Right.

CE: But the majority do not.

MM: Uh huh, so how would you reconcile or how would you address that when someone would say that?

CE: Well, essentially I frankly just kept, kept uh, the same mantra you know, uh if you can, if you believe it you can achieve it.

MM: Ok.

CE: You know just keep working, keep plugging, never give up.

MM: Mhm, ok. During your tenure what roles did party leadership play?

CE: Oh uh pretty strong role. As I mentioned, you know, you didn't want cross party leadership, because uh, they could come back and hurt you. [0:54:00] (Both Laugh) If you wanted to continue in politics.

MM: Sure.

CE: So, yes uh party leadership uh, was important and they would exercise their power when uh they felt like it was important to do that as I mentioned for Keith to appease the lobbyists to show the power, in turns of being about to control the votes for the Marion County delegation. He would say okay, maybe something completely innocuous I'm going to ask them to vote so and so. And I think on one of those occasions I didn't do as he said and...Uh there may have been one or two others did the same thing, but it was not uh really critical vote of any kind other than to show that he had, he had the leadership of the delegation. In his pocket if he will.

MM: Right, well what did you think of Doc Bowen as speaker of the house?

CE: Uh, I revere Doc Bowen. I thought he...I thought the man was fair, uh he uh he just did a fantastic job as speaker my, [0:55:01] only uh observation of uh speaker was Doc Bowen and uh, I thought he was fair, I thought anytime I would asked for something he would give it to me I can recall. (Inaudible) Anything I did ask, but uh, he was a fair a fair man. He was a fair man. And obviously a bright man, very bright man, because he became, you know one of the, uh cabinet officers.

MM: Right.

CE: Uh bright man and a fair man.

MM: Ok. Uh, we've talked about this in a couple different moments throughout the interview, but in what ways if any did national issues affect legislation in the general assembly or operations of the general assembly, or maybe when I say...Maybe I want to say that how did you know the social, political turmoil of the 60s and 70s [0:56:00] uh trickle down into the general assembly? If at all.

CE: I can recall one thing that uh, that I regret. Uh, and that is Doris Doorbecker and I can't recall if Doris was a senator or a house member, she was a house member. Doris Doorbecker, uh during the session that I was in had a visitor from South Africa and, I started to get up and take...Doris introduced the young lady that she was visiting and she was from South Africa and I started to get up and say I welcome this young lady from South Africa, but I do not welcome apartheid in South Africa (Laughs). And I didn't do it. And I regret that to this day. Cause I didn't want to, well I guess I shouldn't say embarrass, because if you are involved in an apartheid that should be an embarrassing thing for you, if you're a purveyor of that.

MM: Sure.

CE: But, I didn't, I should of made a point, I had an opportunity to make a point, to demonstrate that [0:57:00] uh apartheid is not good and not acceptable and I failed to do that. So, that's about the only thing that I recall uh, from a national standpoint or international standpoint in this case that that I recall that one instance stuck with me to this day. The other thing was, when it comes

to integration, every member of the general assembly, apparently received an invitation to join the Columbia Club in Indianapolis. And I received that invitation, I did not realize, that the Columbia Club was, segregated and so I got a call from somebody I think it was Nolan Allen's thing. I told her, "I got an invitation to join the Columbia Club." She said "Well, is it wired?" And I wasn't quite sure what she meant and I said "What do you mean wired?" She said "Well, is it going to be approved?" I said "I don't know, I got the invitations so I think I'm going to send it in." Which I had not done. The only point was uh, I don't know if that would have been an incident [0:58:00] (Inaudible) or not, had I made the application then turned down, and then had a stink over it, but I, I never sent the application in to join the Columbia Club. But interesting enough, you know of course it's been integrated now for several years, but at that time apparently it was not and everybody received an invitation and not, silly me I just thought I would send mine in to, but I didn't.

MM: Right, How did it... (Interrupted)

CE: Maybe you don't want to do that.

MM: Well, how not sure what I want to ask her, but like not how did that make you feel, but did you, you know you're in the state legislature and yet still being discriminated against.

CE: Yep.

MM: How did you deal with that I guess?

CE: You know I felt like wow. I can't, as you might imagine I felt like I can't believe this.

MM: Yeah.

CE: I'm being told [0:59:00]. You know I have been elected by the people to represent them, but I have been told that I cannot join a private club because I am not white. I just felt like is this real?

MM: Yeah.

CE: But then I realized well this is the 1960s.

MM: Wow.

CE: So.

MM: Well you just...Literally my next question was did you ever feel you were treated differently based upon your race during your time in the general assembly maybe other than that instance?

CE: No, no other time.

MM: What does the public not know about the general assembly or how it operates?

CE: I suspect everything. [1:00:00] (Both Laugh) And I say that not in just really, but so few of us (Interrupted).

MM: Yep.

CE: Are involved in politics that we don't have a clue. I listen to people talking about constantly talking about as an example Makayla, the congress and then they say "And the senate." I have to tell people well the congress is two houses. (Both Laugh) One's the house and one's the senate.

MM: Right.

CE: That makes up the congress. There's not the congress and then the senate. Uh, people just don't know and since we, I guess we stopped teaching civics in class and in schools anymore. That people don't know how government works. Even at the local level. I mean I, when I go to a city council meeting and uh, very few people come unless there is one issue and then they come for that one issue, don't know how the process at the city council supposed to operate. You know when they can say something. They don't know anything about the process at all and its exacerbated by going to the county council meetings, which you know I attend some of those, [1:01:00] uh by I never attend the legislature here in Florida, but people don't know anything about government, all they know is what they see on television, when they hear somebody talking about an issue.

MM: Right.

CE: But in terms of being intimately uh, in uh, knowledgeable they don't, so I would say everything.

MM: Right. (Both Laugh) I mean I think you're pretty accurate on that, especially at the state level um,

CE: Yes.

MM: More so even than the national, but I think, I think you're exactly right there.

CE: Yep.

MM: Um, do you recall any particular controversial legislative issues, during your session in the legislature?

CE: Only, no only the uh Unigov, only because you know there was pushback, especially from the minority community Democrats about that I don't recall much, you know I just don't [1:02:00]...I suspect had I returned to the legislature I'd have a more seasoned memory. (Laughs)

MM: Sure, sure. Uh well, what do you recall about um, the process of getting Unigov through, did you play any role in that?

CE: Uh, just to support it that's all. Just to support it.

MM: Ok.

CE: I thought it was good I, you know when you, when you listen uh Dick Luger explaining why he thinks it's important uh, it made sense to me, uh, cause they explained to me and I could see it

that the core of, of Marion county was becoming you know less and less prosperous. So we sort of had uh, we had uh, doughnut with a whole in the middle, and influence was in the surrounding townships. So, the ideas was, [1:03:00] to make the whole thing prosperous by having a Danish if you will, and for making it better for development to occur, uh it made sense to me at that time.

MM: Ok. What was your proudest moment as a legislator?

CE: Absolutely nothing comes to mind. (Both Laugh)

MM: Maybe just being a legislator in itself.

CE: Yeah, that I think, well yes I would say that for sure. I think being a legislator, representing my family, myself, you know my wife and children, uh and also being uh being an American of African ancestry that's elected to the legislature and this is the 1960s. You there's been of course I am trying to recall how many Americans of African ancestry were public officials back in the 1960s, there weren't nearly as many as of course there are today.

MM: No.

CE: And so I think that was something to be proud of. [1:04:00]

MM: Certainly, absolutely.

CE: Yep.

MM: I know you served on several different committees, but I saw that you were the ranking member of the Welfare and Social Security Committee. How did you get that as a freshman legislator?

CE: Uh, I think Doc Bowen, just uh liked me and I guess he wanted me to have uh profile, uh in the legislature. I suspect he thought I was probably coming back, uh but uh I think just the generosity of Doc Bowen.

MM: Ok. And then the whole reason we have been in touch her is because you served on the constitutional revision commission, how did you come to get that appointment?

CE: I have to confess, Otis R. Bowen, he (Both Laugh) I was one of his appointees. [1:05:01]

MM: Ok, uh huh. And what do you recall about this commission?

CE: I don't recall much of it, meeting a couple of times and I don't recall much of the committee work that was done and I don't recall much of it at all, just a couple of meetings at the state house that I recall and I think when we finally made our recommendations, uh but other than that's pretty fuzzy to be honest with you.

MM: Well, I think that was the commission though that looked at some pretty important topics, um because I think that was the one, where you all were assessing whether there could be two terms for the governor, um filling legislative vacancies in the governor and lieutenant governor to run jointly, so there certainly were some interesting things under consideration.



CE: Yep. Yes, they were again I just uh, don't recall,

MM: Oh yeah, it's been 50 years (Both Laugh) I understand, I understand. Um, what in your opinion is the most important work of the Indiana General Assembly?

CE: Hmm, the most important work, to [1:06:00] do no harm and to do good. (Laughs) I guess like the (Inaudible) do no harm. And to do good, uh and to uh to listen to constituents, to listen to experts, uh and to, have that help formulate your opinions about any change in legislation or any proposed legislation.

MM: Ok. So you mentioned earlier, that you left the general assembly to go work for HUD can you tell me a little bit about how that came to be and what that looked like for you?

CE: Yes, I uh, actually was working for the telephone company at the time and they asked me to stay on [1:07:00] because they sort of promised me if you stay around, uh we think we have you on a career path that you can become a VP. But for some reason I thought, I sure would like to learn something about housing. And so I thought well maybe I can learn what I want about housing and, and I'll be happy with that that will be my career, I've maybe becoming a housing real estate developer like John Hart who was uh in our delegation. So, John told me, if you really want to learn housing, probably the best place is over at the Federal Housing Administration. And he said they happen to have an opening right now and they're looking for someone. And I said "Oh really!" So, I talked to the uh, gentleman I think his name was E. (Inaudible) Coy who was the Director of The Federal Housing Administration in Indianapolis at the time [1:08:00] and I said "I understand you are looking for someone" and I think they were probably looking for a minority. And so that was the impetus for me, going there and applying, to the civil service commission to, to have get the job.

MM: Ok, then,

CE: In competition with other people of course.

MM: Sure, um, so then did you have to resign your seat?

CE: Yes, I did.

MM: Ok. And you were in the last session before the change where they um, uh went to yearly sessions right? So, you served the 1969 session and then,

CE: Right.

MM: Ok, and then maybe that took place in 71'. [1:09:00]

CE: Well, wait a minute I'm trying to think of this, I thought we, I thought we had uh, yeah that's correct yeah.

MM: Ok.

CE: Yes, Indiana only had, only served one session in two years.

MM: Right, right.

CE: Now I guess they are serving once every year.

MM: Right, yeah.

CE: Yep.

MM: Yep.

CE: That's the way it is in Florida, yes.

MM: Ok. Ok.

CE: That's correct.

MM: Ok. Um, how would you summarize your time as a state legislator?

CE: Brief. (Both Laugh)

MM: True.

CE: I think brief, but none the less rewarding and also I think it set me up, to do other things.

MM: Ok.

CE: In my life. It opened doors for me.

MM: So, how long did you or... What career path did you follow then? What doors were opened for you?

CE: Well uh, becoming, [1:010:00] started working at HUD and I moved up the chain there, I started as special assistant to the Director of the Federal Housing Administration Office and I moved up to being the deputy director and then finally I became the director in Pittsburgh, based on my track record in Indianapolis.

MM: Ok, well how long were you in Indianapolis, with HUD in Indianapolis before you moved to Pittsburgh?

CE: From 1970 until 1991.

MM: Oh wow, okay.

CE: There 21 years in Indianapolis, then went to Pittsburgh, then South Carolina.

MM: Okay, and how long were you in Pittsburgh?

CE: I was in Pittsburgh for four years. [1:011:00]

MM: Okay, okay.

CE: Four and a half, four and a half years approximately.

MM: And then to Columbia, South Carolina?

CE: Yes, for two.

MM: For two and then to Florida?

CE: Yes, I retired then, retired when I was 55.

MM: Oh wow.

CE: Still a young, young, young wet behind the...Still wet behind the ears young person.

MM: Oh, that's the best type of retirement to have I think.

CE: (Laughs)

MM: Well, what have you been doing during your retirement?

CE: Well uh, I have uh been volunteering my time. Uh, I uh, well first of all I have been...I was Chairman of the Superintendent Search Committee here in Lake County Florida. Lake County, Florida had an elected Superintendent of Education and having served on the school board before. I thought gee whiz, why would you have that position elected, rather than having a professional? So, uh, some people were looking at changing that. So they wanted...So they did change that [1:012:00] and wanted to search for a superintendent, so they elected me the chair of that uh committee. So we, for the first time in years we searched and found a uh professional Superintendent of Education for Lake County schools.

MM: Wow.

CE: There also been...I served uh, on uh the city I live in, Clermont, I served, on the Beautification Parks and Recreation Committee, uh beautification Committee. Uh, I was a docent for the historic village, which is uh a small village here in Clermont that has uh some historic houses and a school library here and I've been a tour guide for that. I've also been, [1:013:00] uh chairman of the Whisla Coochie Long Term Care Ombudsman Program, which is like a five county area in Central Florida that I was chairman of and now I am serving as one of three at large members of the Florida Long Term Care Ombudsmen Council. Basically what that means is the Ombudsmen visit, assisted living facilities like nursing homes etcetera, make sure that residents are being treated with dignity and respect. And that there civil rights are not being abused. So we visit those nursing homes, and check on that and if we have complaints, we investigate those as well. So I did that, I did that for five years and then for two years I was not doing that. I thought five years was enough and then the state called me and said "We would like to have you be one of our three at large member, would you do that?" I said "Well, sure." (Both Laugh) So, I've done that now for two and a half years. [1:014:00]

MM: Goodness.

CE: And I started uh philosophers club here in Clermont. That's one (Inaudible) started soon after we invaded uh Iraq. I uh started a philosophers club, because I wanted an outlet to be able to discuss political things and philosophical things. So I started this club in 2003 and it's been going ever since then.

MM: Wow.

CE: So we, we meet... We used to meet twice a month, now we meet once a month and we any subject... Its more, its more uh street philosophy, other than other philosophies. More street philosophy, we get together like going to a beauty shop or a barber shop I guess and we just talk any number of issues.

MM: Well, there's certainly plenty to talk about. So. (Laughs)

CE: Absolutely, I've done that and uh I've also been at uh in Orange County, which is where Orlando is. I'm a 20 west of Orlando.

MM: Ok.

CE: But also been an Orange County Senior Ambassador.

MM: Well, you were staying busy. Sorry go ahead.

CE: Yep. [1:15:00] And also uh, I've volunteered, used to volunteer with Seniors Versus Crime, which is a program out of the State Attorney General's Office. And we investigate attempted frauds and frauds perpetrated on senior citizens and recuperate money for them.

MM: Sure, wow. You are certainly yeah, giving back to the community and keeping busy.

CE: Yes and I've done volunteer, all my, you know really all my life, uh you know several commissions and boards I've served on in Indianapolis, Pittsburgh, and also Columbia, South Carolina.

MM: Wow.

CE: And I write a ton of letters, opinion letters to the newspapers.

MM: Well, that will keep you busy too certainly. Um, well I know you haven't lived in Indiana for a while, but you were certainly for what close to 50 years, is that right? [1:016:07]

CE: Yes, exactly.

MM: Yeah, so how has the state [1:16:00] changed over the course of your life time or at least your lifetime living in Indiana?

CE: It's become, first of all its expansive now, I remember when we had you know the township surround Center Township, of now it's one mega polis it seems to me. Uh, it's just expansive now. Used to be when you, there was actually country you could drive into, I mean a rural area, a rural area. (Laughs) You drive from uh, you know from Washington Township to you know Carl as an example, well there was a lot of greenspace between there. Uh, I suspect now it's very very little greenspace now. The community has just grown tremendously and it's become much more sophisticated, than it was. Uh, and uh it's still a great, great place to live. I just can't quite take the cold anymore. [1:017:01]

MM: (Laughs) I understand that.

CE: Cold weather. (Laughs)

MM: Again you know, you served in 1969, but were in Indianapolis uh into the 90s, so did you have any since of how the general assembly changed or were you paying attention I guess?

CE: I wasn't really paying attention, but I do know this just because of technology, uh it has changed I suspect uh the Legislative Council, as it was called then probably has more staff. I think, I believe the individual legislators have some staff now, where as we did not have.

MM: Yeah.

CE: But I think the individual legislators have staff. I don't know if they have individual offices or not. We had no offices, we just met on, you know on the floor of the house. Uh, I don't know now if they have individual offices or not. They do in Florida.

MM: [1:018:00] Yeah. I think they do have pretty small offices over there, they they condensed the floors I think at least around the senate um to be a little bit smaller, than they have smaller offices, so.

CE: Yeah. So that plus the fact that you said of course now they meet every year. So I think that, it's just become much...It's become a much more...Like everything in life it evolves and it becomes a much more sophisticated operation.

MM: Well, my final question is, in your opinion what if any enduring qualities do Hoosiers still have or hold dear?

CE: I think uh, a quest for, good education, uh I'm pretty sure this is not just Indianapolis, but the entire state a quest for good health care. [1:019:00] And uh, I think, I hope this is true, a desire to have a much more diverse and integrated society.

MM: Ok. Well, I think we've covered a lot of topics here. Is there anything I haven't asked or any topic that you want to talk about that we haven't gone over?

CE: Uh, I think that is, you covered everything and done a tremendous job. (Both Laugh)

MM: Well, thank you. Well, it has been a pleasure talking with you today and I really appreciate you taking the time out of what I think is still a very busy schedule to, uh chat with me.

CE: Well thank you Makayla I appreciate the opportunity and you've done a magnificent job.

MM: Oh thank you so much and I will make sure to get those forms in the mail to you in the next day or so and then I will just watch for them to be mailed back.

CE: Sounds like a winner.

MM: Okay, well thank you. (Interrupted)

CE: Have an outstanding day!

MM: You do the... You do the same, thank you so much Choice!

CE: Buh bye.

MM: Bye. [1:19:57] (Recording Stops)