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CSEA INTERVIEW

of

RETIREE SAM MOGAVERO

May 12, 2009

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MOGAVERO

(Discussion off the record.)

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MS. ASECIO: Okay. So we can start talking about -- we touched on the purpose of this, right, already.

MR. MOGAVERO: Yeah.

MS. ASECIO: It's for the CSEA 100th History Project. So if you can keep in mind when you answer, what we're trying to do is give members a greater understanding of what it was like throughout the forties and fifties and sixties during the times when they don't have any memory or really know much about the CSEA history or what it really took to get the union to where it is right now, so if you can keep that in mind throughout the questions that would be great, and try to give -- I mean whatever knowledge you have that you think would help CSEA members better understand what CSEA is and what it was and how it came to be where it is now.

MR. MOGAVERO: Well, actually, you know, I mean before you even start --

MS. ASECIO: M-m h-m-m.

MR. MOGAVERO: What CSEA tried to erode was the fact that all the jobs that are now

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CSEA were originally hand-off jobs, payoff for CSEA helping me get elected as a mayor -- get elected in the public office and there was no security whether you were a good worker or if you

5 were a slacker or if you were just a politician's
6 follower.

7 MS. ASECIO: M-m h-m-m.

8 MR. MOGAVERO: So what CSEA did is
9 they established a system where faithful,
10 continuous service was being recognized and paid
11 for or blessed with.

12 MS. ASECIO: Okay. What did you do
13 for CSEA -- or what did you do for your job?

14 MR. MOGAVERO: I was a building
15 custodian. I did custodial work and bus driver,
16 yeah.

17 MS. ASECIO: For who?

18 MR. MOGAVERO: For Lake Shore
19 Central System, Angola, New York.

20 MS. ASECIO: Can you say that all
21 together?

22 MR. MOGAVERO: Yes. My original --
23 my reason for being involved in CSEA --

24 MS. ASECIO: M-m h-m-m.

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1 MR. MOGAVERO: -- is that I
2 experienced something in the beginning of my work
3 with CSEA at Lake Shore -- it's Lake Shore
4 Schools -- when I was intimidated by the
5 appearance of a business manager at Lake Shore
6 Central Schools.

7 And should I proceed to tell what
8 happened?

MOGAVERO

9 MS. ASENCIO: Sure. And one thing
10 that I wanted to keep -- remind you of is that
11 when you're talking, just look at me 'cause that's
12 the -- the reason why we're doing it is not
13 because I need you to look at me.

14 MR. MOGAVERO: I understand.

15 MS. ASENCIO: It's because I want it
16 to look comfortable in the camera shot.

17 MR. MOGAVERO: Oh, I see.

18 MS. ASENCIO: But you looking at me
19 is just set up perfectly, okay? So try -- I mean
20 you can still look down and look around, but for
21 the most part try to remember to keep looking up.
22 Don't tell an entire story with your eyes down.
23 That would be very helpful.

24 Okay. So, yes, please tell that

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1 story about how you got involved in CSEA and why.

2 MR. MOGAVERO: I had been -- okay,
3 I'll start. I was a newly-hired employee for Lake
4 Shore Central Schools in Angola and I was having a
5 conversation with a so-called building custodian
6 when the business manager for Lake Shore Central
7 Schools entered the building and he immediately
8 told me that we'd better get out of the hallway
9 because the business manager was coming in and it
10 would possibly do away with the possibility of a
11 few pennies increase in wages that year.

12 So I decided that -- I felt that it

MOGAVERO

13 was not the right place to be working, so I
14 thought it's time that maybe I should do something
15 about it, so somehow I got in touch with Henry
16 Gadula (phonetic) who was an organizer for CSEA in
17 our particular area. Henry was from Silver Creek,
18 New York.

19 MS. ASENCIO: So your jobs were
20 potentially threatened at this point?

21 MR. MOGAVERO: Well, not the job.
22 The job wasn't threatened, but the possibility of
23 a few pennies increase in wages for the next year.

24 MS. ASENCIO: Oh, I see, so you may

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1 not have gotten your raises.

2 MR. MOGAVERO: Yes, because, you
3 know, he had seen us talking in the hall.

4 MS. ASENCIO: Oh, dear.

5 MR. MOGAVERO: Yes. So we did end
6 that and in no time at all I organized the
7 employees of Lake Shore Central School, being the
8 custodial and the bus drivers and we became
9 members of CSEA. In turn --

10 MS. ASENCIO: What was that process
11 like, once you got in touch with the organizer?
12 What did you have to do?

13 MR. MOGAVERO: We -- what we had to
14 do is we had to distribute signature cards amongst
15 the employees requesting the right to have Civil
16 Service Employees Association be our bargaining

MOGAVERO

17 agent for benefits and without any problem upon
18 the first submission the application was accepted,
19 so from that point on Henry influenced me to
20 continue and to contact outlying schools in Erie
21 County.

22 MS. ASECIO: So did you get any
23 push-back from the school district? was there
24 tension --

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1 MR. MOGAVERO: No, there was --
2 there was -- fortunately it was accepted readily
3 by the school board on the first presentation.

4 MS. ASECIO: Was that because of
5 the reputation that CSEA had?

6 MR. MOGAVERO: Very possibly. Very
7 -- well, upon our -- when I think back it was
8 because of the fact that there were not the
9 tremendous requests for benefits as there are
10 today. We requested recognition of seniority and
11 recognition of the fact that there would possibly
12 be a fixed wage scale, where prior to that it was
13 more at the will of the school boards, and I
14 continued to, on my own time, to go throughout
15 Erie County and I helped to recruit 13 school
16 districts.

17 MS. ASECIO: What was that like
18 when you took the time on your own to do that? I
19 mean obviously it was nights and some -- it
20 was --

MOGAVERO

21 MR. MOGAVERO: Some nights and
22 Saturday mornings, Saturday mornings, and I
23 distributed the applications at which time they
24 were notified that the employees were considering

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1 joining me and I truthfully didn't experience too
2 much resistance from the School Boards because I
3 think they probably looked at the fact that it
4 would possibly establish a continuity of employees
5 because of the fact that there was gonna be some
6 job insurance and possibly a constant wage
7 increase to try to live up to the necessities of
8 the standard of living.

9 MS. ASENCIO: M-m h-m-m. So at that
10 time when you were bargaining with CSEA for
11 certain benefits, was that considered new
12 territory, what you were doing, or was it --

13 MR. MOGAVERO: Yes, it was.
14 Definitely, that was new territory because the
15 employees prior to that, the employees that were
16 working for School Districts, were hired at the
17 whim of someone on the School Board.

18 MS. ASENCIO: And then how did that
19 change?

20 MR. MOGAVERO: That changed because,
21 as an example, if you and I had hired as employees
22 of the School Board and there was a change in the
23 administration, that we were not let go because
24 the new administration would bring in some of

1 their friends. We became a perpetual part of the
2 School District service employees.

3 MS. ASENCIO: M-m h-m-m. Okay. So
4 between your -- so you were basically at the whim
5 of the School Board.

6 MR. MOGAVERO: Prior to.

7 MS. ASENCIO: Prior to. And what
8 was it like interacting with your -- who would be
9 your direct supervisor, your manager, outside of
10 the School Board in your position?

11 MR. MOGAVERO: Some schools had what
12 they would call a lead cleaner who was in charge,
13 who would make suggestions to someone on the
14 School Board relative to what -- possibly what you
15 or I were doing on the job.

16 MS. ASENCIO: Okay. But so there
17 wasn't any direct management person?

18 MR. MOGAVERO: No, not a really
19 established head person, no.

20 MS. ASENCIO: I see. Did that
21 change?

22 MR. MOGAVERO: Yes, because then
23 there became titlement positions. There was the
24 head custodian and there were cleaners that were

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1 established.

MOGAVERO

2 MS. ASECIO: And what did that do?

3 MR. MOGAVERO: That gave the average
4 person security of knowing each and every day what
5 their duties were when they reported to work,
6 where prior to that we were at the whims of
7 whoever was in charge of the building.

8 MS. ASECIO: I see, and that was
9 considered a breakthrough for your school
10 districts. So you then took that and went to
11 other school districts?

12 MR. MOGAVERO: Yes.

13 MS. ASECIO: Tried to get the same
14 structure. Can you tell me about that process?
15 About --

16 MR. MOGAVERO: Yes.

17 MS. ASECIO: I mean -- first of
18 all, why did you decide that you would take this
19 time on the weekends and take this time, of your
20 personal time? What inside you -- what spoke to
21 you? What were you thinking? Why did you think
22 it was necessary to go out and help others?

23 MR. MOGAVERO: I have to say that I
24 always felt that I was a little more gifted than

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1 the next person and I would like to have them try
2 to get some, if not all, of what I have.

3 MS. ASECIO: Gifted in what
4 respect?

5 MR. MOGAVERO: well, there is an old
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MOGAVERO

6 proverb that says do good and forget about it. Do
7 some harm and your heart will always haunt you.
8 And if -- and I always felt that someone out there
9 was doing something that was getting less for
10 doing the same thing than myself, and that
11 shouldn't be so.

12 MS. ASENCIO: So you felt a
13 responsibility or an obligation to help others?

14 MR. MOGAVERO: I remember feeling
15 that, you know, that like I stated a little
16 earlier, you know, if you do good you can forget
17 it. But if you don't try, it has some sense of
18 haunt in your life.

19 MS. ASENCIO: So you wanted to pass
20 along what you had learned and the skills that you
21 had learned through the union --

22 MR. MOGAVERO: That's right.

23 MS. ASENCIO: -- to more people?

24 MR. MOGAVERO: Everything. Well,

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1 primarily it comes about because I come from a
2 large family. We were nine children and we always
3 passed on what we had to the younger and it's just
4 an instinct that I have that if I've got
5 something, I should share it with somebody.

6 MS. ASENCIO: Kind of like what
7 you're doing right now.

8 MR. MOGAVERO: Yes.

9 MS. ASENCIO: You're sharing --

MOGAVERO

10 MR. MOGAVERO: I'm doing the same --
11 I've done the same thing with the fire company. I
12 joined the fire company because I think that I
13 could be of service to somebody in dire need who
14 couldn't help themselves at that particular time.

15 MS. ASENCIO: M-m h-m-m.

16 MR. MOGAVERO: And the good Lord has
17 made me able to do it for the past 59 years.

18 MS. ASENCIO: So what -- what year
19 was it that you had participated in organizing
20 your school district when you were working there
21 and when did that all come about?

22 MR. MOGAVERO: Fifty...oh, Lord,
23 '58 -- I get --

24 MS. ASENCIO: Was it the fifties,

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1 the sixties?

2 MR. MOGAVERO: In the fifties.

3 MS. ASENCIO: It was in the fifties?

4 MR. MOGAVERO: I got the dates in
5 the other room.

6 MS. ASENCIO: Oh, they don't have to
7 be exact. We just want an idea.

8 MR. MOGAVERO: The early fifties.

9 MS. ASENCIO: The early fifties,
10 okay. In the early fifties, what were your
11 relationships on the job like with your
12 co-workers?

13 MR. MOGAVERO: I became the

MOGAVERO

14 representative for all of their labor problems in
15 the school and in turn then I was responsible for
16 establishing a County Division in CSEA because
17 every chapter at that time never had a school
18 district person on their board and I became a
19 member of that board and they granted me the one
20 position, yeah.

21 MS. ASENCIO: Wow, can you talk a
22 little bit about that? How the county -- I mean
23 Mr. -- I hear your nickname is "Mr. Local
24 Government".

14

1 MR. MOGAVERO: Yes, because I --
2 like I say I became so involved in school
3 districts that I helped to set up some of their
4 negotiations; then in turn Henry consummated their
5 contract.

6 MS. ASENCIO: So you got that title
7 because of your involvement in the school
8 district?

9 MR. MOGAVERO: Yes. And because of
10 the fact that I took the time to go on Saturdays
11 throughout the state and organize schools, yeah.
12 went all the way down to the Island.

13 MS. ASENCIO: Can you tell me about
14 your adventures doing that?

15 MR. MOGAVERO: What transpired was I
16 would make contact with someone in the particular
17 school districts throughout the state and find out

MOGAVERO

18 what their working conditions were and I had a
19 committee that was made up of one other person
20 from this area and a representative from each one
21 of the school districts in the separate parts of
22 the state.

23 And what we would do is we would set
24 up a meeting on Saturday mornings, either in the

15

1 school -- one of the school buildings or in
2 another building so that we could formulate a
3 means of getting more people signed up and in turn
4 I was able to sign up practically all of the New
5 York state.

6 MS. ASENCIO: And how did your
7 family take to you doing all of that? Were they
8 very supportive? Did they understand?

9 MR. MOGAVERO: Oh, my wife is worth
10 an angel. She never, never complained or said why
11 are you spending so much time. She understood
12 right from the start that that was part of my
13 nature. Do good and forget it.

14 MS. ASENCIO: Great. And then what
15 kind of big changes did you see over the years
16 with CSEA throughout your time? I mean you've
17 been involved basically since the fifties. What
18 were some of the big pivotal moments that you
19 remember as being very important to pass along and
20 to commemorate for members to come?

21 MR. MOGAVERO: Like I stated earlier

MOGAVERO

22 in our conversation, then I became active in the
23 statewide union board and I had occasion where I
24 was elected as statewide chairman of the County

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1 Division and at that time we had a meeting
2 scheduled one Saturday morning during the time
3 that the field staff members of CSEA were
4 negotiating their first labor contract and upon
5 arriving in Albany the field staff members were
6 picketing 12 Elk Street, which was our CSEA
7 headquarters, and I refused to have any of the
8 members cross the picket line, board members cross
9 the picket line.

10 Ted Wenzel was president and he
11 almost had a heart attack because he said you're
12 gonna hold up all the business of the local, the
13 union. It was a local union then, and I refused.
14 I said find some other place and we'll conduct the
15 business, at which time he proceeded to rent the
16 church up the street, on Elk Street, so that we
17 could conduct the business that Saturday morning.

18 And it was, in turn, I feel
19 responsible for consummating this field staff
20 contract and the next time that an occasion like
21 that arose was when we were having a statewide
22 convention for the employees and we were in a
23 meeting room in Buffalo and Ted had opened the
24 convention and the members were standing at the

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MOGAVERO

1 microphone.

2 There were four microphones. It
3 seemed that the people in charge of the
4 microphones were finding it convenient for them to
5 constantly move -- there were four microphones and
6 you could see people lined up; people with state
7 questions and people with county questions
8 relative to their employment.

9 And it seemed as though that the
10 people in charge of the microphones had been
11 tutored that the County Division was somewhat of a
12 foster child so they would go possibly from
13 microphone one to microphone two because the first
14 person standing near the microphone was a county
15 person, so they would jump to a state person and I
16 decided that I wasn't gonna put up with that any
17 more.

18 So I asked the County Division to
19 caucus in the hall. Ted Wenzel almost had a heart
20 attack but I -- I'll never forget it. He said you
21 can't do this to a meeting like this. I said,
22 Ted, I got something else we got to take care of.

23 Well, the outcome of it was that we
24 established the rule that you would be recognized

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1 by your position at the microphone and there'd be

MOGAVERO
2 no one superceding your position and we
3 established that ruling in the union.
4 MS. ASECIO: Wait a minute. I'm
5 just going to make one little adjustment.
6 (Pause.) All right. we're back in business.
7 Let's see. Oh, okay. So the big
8 changes that you saw, we just talked about, were
9 youryou witness to the restructuring of CSEA?
10 MR. MOGAVERO: Yes. I served with
11 Victor Costa on that committee when we
12 completely --
13 MS. ASECIO: On which committee, if
14 you can start that again?
15 MR. MOGAVERO: The Constitution and
16 By-laws Committee of CSEA. We --
17 MS. ASECIO: Can you start over
18 again? Say that full thing again so it's not
19 broken into parts?
20 MR. MOGAVERO: I was appointed as a
21 member of the group that was responsible for
22 reviewing the existing constitution and by-laws of
23 the union and we were one representative from each
24 of the areas. Henry -- rather Victor Costa was

19

1 chairman and we were responsible for re-wording
2 and re-writing the constitution of the Civil
3 Service Employees for the State of New York.

4 MS. ASECIO: In what year?

5 MR. MOGAVERO: I truthfully couldn't

6 tell you. I'd have to look in my book. I would
7 have to look in my book truthfully.
8 MS. ASECIO: Okay.
9 MR. MOGAVERO: Like I say, there's
10 so much stuff in there that -- and I refer to the
11 book and it's very ironic how I have it, which I
12 would like to tell you. We were having a region
13 meeting in Central New York and the photographer
14 and the reporter, who would be doing a job similar
15 to what you're doing for each meeting, and I saw
16 him walking down the hall in the motel where I was
17 staying and I asked him where he was headed for.
18 He said I'm trying to find a room.
19 They lost my reservation. So I said to him, well,
20 I says, just put your bag on the bed there, I
21 says. I've got two beds in my room and we
22 established a very close-knit friendship. And
23 when the Leader was released from reporting for
24 CSEA he called me and told me that he had a

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1 tremendous amount of photos and he would like me
2 to have them and I was blessed with all the photos
3 that probably would have been just tossed into a
4 wastebasket, which I have in my possession, of
5 CSEA.

6 MS. ASECIO: That's very nice.
7 That's good to know. It's a resource.

8 Then during that time of
9 restructuring what were the major challenges in

MOGAVERO

10 the State?

11 MR. MOGAVERO: We -- if I recall
12 correctly, we established guidelines for
13 representation from each of the areas throughout
14 the state and they, in turn, followed the
15 constitution to establish their local
16 constitutions, which today governs the State of
17 New York.

18 MS. ASENCIO: What was the reason
19 for it?

20 MR. MOGAVERO: The original
21 constitution and by-laws was very primitive. It
22 didn't really have any specific references as to
23 duties and establishment of offices. It became
24 constitutional.

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1 MS. ASENCIO: And also what kind of
2 benefits did that bring to the union once it was
3 done?

4 MR. MOGAVERO: It gave the members
5 of each and every region the security that the
6 executive body elected by them would be their
7 representative group in the statewide constitution
8 business.

9 MS. ASENCIO: And then also in the
10 restructuring of the region, in creating the
11 region, you were there for that as well, right?

12 MR. MOGAVERO: Yes.

13 MS. ASENCIO: Was that part of this

MOGAVERO

14 project as well?

15 MR. MOGAVERO: Yes.

16 MS. ASENCIO: Can you talk about
17 actually drawing the lines and creating the
18 regions?

19 MR. MOGAVERO: Well --

20 MS. ASENCIO: How did you decide?

21 MR. MOGAVERO: There were
22 originally -- am I moving too much?

23 MS. ASENCIO: No.

24 MR. MOGAVERO: There were originally

22

1 some guidelines so we made a few changes in
2 boundaries, but these remained primarily the
3 original. But what we did is we put it in a
4 written, governing Bible.

5 MS. ASENCIO: Which -- do you recall
6 around which decade or which time period this was?
7 Was this the seventies, was it the sixties, was it
8 later on in your time or earlier?

9 MR. MOGAVERO: I would say -- God, I
10 could look in the book and I could tell you. I
11 got it right in the other room.

12 MS. ASENCIO: Oh, yeah? What are
13 some of the other things that you have in there?

14 MR. MOGAVERO: That big red book.

15 MS. ASENCIO: The big red book? Go
16 ahead and get your things and we'll talk about
17 them.

18 MOGAVERO
MR. MOGAVERO: will I disrupt --
19 MS. ASENCIO: Oh, you should --
20 yeah. Let me just -- all right.
21 So what do you have there? (Pause.)
22 Can you hold it up a little bit?
23 very well. that's perfect. what is
24 that?

23

1 MR. MOGAVERO: This is a plaque that
2 I received from the executive board of the
3 statewide -- I'm sorry. I forgot to look at you.
4 MS. ASENCIO: Start all over again.
5 MR. MOGAVERO: This is a plaque that
6 I received in 2008 from Danny Donohue for service
7 in CSEA at the statewide convention.
8 MS. ASENCIO: Where was that, if you
9 recall?
10 MR. MOGAVERO: Oh, my God -- that
11 was held in --
12 MS. ASENCIO: Was that Rochester?
13 Was it in --
14 MR. MOGAVERO: No, that was beyond
15 there.
16 MS. ASENCIO: Was it in Washington,
17 D.C.?
18 MR. MOGAVERO: No, it was beyond
19 that. My mind is --
20 MS. ASENCIO: The one in New York or
21 was it the one in Washington, D.C.

MOGAVERO

22 MR. MOGAVERO: Syracuse, wasn't it?

23 MS. ASECIO: Was it in Buffalo?

24 MR. MOGAVERO: No.

24

1 MS. ASECIO: Buffalo, right? It
2 was in Rochester, right?

3 MR. MOGAVERO: No, it was a little
4 beyond that. Oh, my Lord.

5 MS. ASECIO: Don't worry about it.
6 Just keep telling me about the award.

7 MR. MOGAVERO: Yeah.

8 MS. ASECIO: So what does that
9 signify?

10 MR. MOGAVERO: It signifies service,
11 for length of service in CSEA.

12 MS. ASECIO: How many years have
13 you --

14 MR. MOGAVERO: How many years have
15 I -- I have had approximately 56 years.

16 MS. ASECIO: And how many --so to
17 commemorate 56 years of service.

18 MR. MOGAVERO: Yes.

19 MS. ASECIO: Wow. And how many
20 years have you been serving in CSEA up till now?
21 So that's 67 years? Your total? Wow. That's
22 amazing. That's great. What else do you have
23 there?

24 MR. MOGAVERO: This is a memorabilia

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1 from the County Division that we received in 1976
2 at our statewide convention. I have quite a few
3 of these and it would take an entire 24 hours to
4 probably go through them, so we'll only have a
5 chosen few.

6 MS. ASENCIO: I see, and what memory
7 do you have that's attached to that commemorative
8 piece?

9 MR. MOGAVERO: I was -- well, I was
10 very happy to receive it at that time. It was
11 something that was passed to each of the people in
12 attendance there and at the time I was still a
13 representative on the board.

14 MS. ASENCIO: And is that something
15 that you cherish?

16 MR. MOGAVERO: Yes, anything that's
17 relative to CSEA is near and dear to my heart.

18 MS. ASENCIO: What else do you have
19 there?

20 MR. MOGAVERO: This is a jacket that
21 we used in a protest march in Washington, D.C.

22 MS. ASENCIO: A protest march?

23 MR. MOGAVERO: A protest march at
24 that time for recognition for labor.

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1 MS. ASENCIO: Oh, I see.

2 MR. MOGAVERO: Yeah.

MOGAVERO

3 MS. ASECIO: It was in 200...

4 MR. MOGAVERO: When we first
5 got into AFSCME, in our beginning of AFSCME.

6 MS. ASECIO: M-m h-m-m. Okay.
7 what year was that? Was it 2000-something?

8 MR. MOGAVERO: Oh, quite a way back.

9 MS. ASECIO: Oh, I see. Was that
10 where you cataloged -- that red book there? Is
11 that how you cataloged all your --

12 MR. MOGAVERO: This particular item
13 here -- Can you see it, Honey?

14 MS. ASECIO: M-m h-m-m.

15 MR. MOGAVERO: It was given to me by
16 Joe Ferlano who was the information service
17 personnel manager for New York State Retirement
18 System, and it's dated March 11th of 1972 and it
19 states that I have been president of 20 separate
20 school districts and I am submitting this request
21 for 20 copies of each of the following information
22 circulars printed by your office and I did -- I
23 received the copies to distribute to each one of
24 my people in my district.

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1 MS. ASECIO: What would that be?

2 MR. MOGAVERO: This was given to me
3 in 1974 by then -- It says: As one of the
4 Governor's last official acts. He finally signed
5 the pledge taken last spring at the Concord, so I
6 am dashing these out to you quick while they are

MOGAVERO

7 still of moment. Happy Holiday to you and yours
8 and with continued success and good health to the
9 New Year and that's dated 12/23/74 and it's --
10 MS. ASECIO: And who are the men in
11 the picture? Who have you got there?
12 MR. MOGAVERO: The Governor and that
13 is at the Concord. Oh, I can't think of his name.
14 MS. ASECIO: Oh, no worry.
15 MR. MOGAVERO: This is a picture of
16 our attorney at the time and he was the president
17 of the New York Chapter, and myself.
18 These are numerous officers of
19 school districts, people that I helped to organize
20 getting contracts, getting work contracts.
21 This is the officers of Erie
22 Chapter, Erie Local Chapter at the time and which
23 I was a member and approximately two-thirds of
24 these people are deceased today.

28

1 MS. ASECIO: Are you in that
2 picture?
3 MR. MOGAVERO: Yes.
4 MS. ASECIO: Can you point yourself
5 out? Where are you?
6 MR. MOGAVERO: That was during the
7 time when we were having our local --
8 MS. ASECIO: Tell the people behind
9 the camera. Tell the audience that's you and --
10 MR. MOGAVERO: This is a picture of

MOGAVERO

11 me, the second from the end, and I'm bearded
12 because I was a participant in our local
13 centennial. This is one of our executive board
14 meetings.

15 I can go on and on. Do you want me
16 to go on?

17 MS. ASECIO: Sure. Are there any
18 pictures in there that are connected to any big
19 moments in CSEA history that you want to bring
20 forward?

21 As you thumb through, if you see any
22 that remind you of anything that you think that
23 members should know about the history.

24 MR. MOGAVERO: Yes. Oh, my God.

29

1 what was Jim's name? He was killed in an
2 automobile accident. These are photos of the
3 original CSEA office for Erie Chapter, and -- Jim,
4 oh God. Jim Powers was our field representative at
5 the time and Jim had been negotiating the contract
6 quite late one night, and on his way home got in
7 an automobile accident that resulted in his
8 demise.

9 This is in the process of reviewing
10 a school contract, Bob Young who has passed away,
11 and this is a field staff member.

12 This is a photo of Joe Dolan who was
13 our adviser in CSEA. He was in charge of the
14 County Division as an adviser. He was hired by

MOGAVERO

15 CSEA, paid employee.

16 These are members of the Erie County
17 Sewer Authority.

18 This is an executive board meeting
19 of the Erie -- I beg your pardon. It's an
20 installation dinner 19...June 12 of 1970.

21 MS. ASECIO: And what is that photo
22 on the right, of the bus?

23 MR. MOGAVERO: This photo of -- this
24 bus was a bus that CSEA had that was used by field

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1 staff to go out and support people who were having
2 problems in negotiating contracts. Field staff
3 used it so that they could be on the scene with
4 supplies and even overnight preparedness.

5 These are the Chapter President, Bob
6 Young; this young man was a field staff member.

7 This is a Local installation dinner.
8 Yeah.

9 MS. ASECIO: Do you want to hold
10 off a minute? We're doing fine on audio but I can
11 see the audio level. Okay.

12 MR. MOGAVERO: This is an
13 installation dinner. This is tragic. He
14 committed suicide.

15 MS. ASECIO: Oh, you might not want
16 to talk about that.

17 MR. MOGAVERO: Yeah.

18 MS. ASECIO: See if we can go

MOGAVERO

19 through those and find some more events of CSEA
20 history.

21 MR. MOGAVERO: There's quite a stack
22 of photos.

23 Signing contracts. He was one of
24 the members that traveled around the state with me

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1 when we were organizing school districts.

2 MS. ASENCIO: M-m h-m-m. So that's
3 a photo of the people involved with organizing the
4 school districts?

5 MR. MOGAVERO: Yes. He was from
6 Niagara Falls, Niagara Falls, he was with the Erie
7 County and this was Bill -- Bob, Bob. Oh, my God.
8 My names might -- maybe I can catch it right away
9 in the back here. Bob Lattimer. Bob Lattimer, he
10 was our representative and he also was a president
11 of CSEA.

12 These are members of Erie Chapter
13 and some statewide members. In the far corner is
14 Ted Wenzel, who was the president, and Bob was
15 president of our Erie Unit, New York.

16 These are all pictures of
17 negotiations and meetings, really too numerous to
18 go into detail.

19 MS. ASENCIO: M-m h-m-m.

20 MR. MOGAVERO: Another seating.
21 This was a commendation that we gave to the field
22 staff man and I was in the process of raising a

MOGAVERO

23 beard for the bicentennial. That is Joe Dolan,
24 Bob Young who is deceased.

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1 MS. ASECIO: Is that you in the
2 beard?

3 MR. MOGAVERO: Yes. Incidentally, I
4 won first prize.

5 MS. ASECIO: M-m-m-m.

6 MR. MOGAVERO: And this is a Chapter
7 meeting. We were Chapters in those days, and
8 again we have field staff members. Bob Young, who
9 was our field man. This is also part of that
10 particular meeting. Again --

11 MS. ASECIO: So what are you
12 thinking? How do you feel when you look through
13 this album?

14 MR. MOGAVERO: I feel extra gifted
15 that the good Lord has still given me days in this
16 world because so many of these people have passed
17 away, including my beautiful wife who put up with
18 all my disappearances on weekends.

19 MS. ASECIO: But as you reflect on
20 this do you think it was all worthwhile?

21 MR. MOGAVERO: Definitely. I
22 definitely -- I feel that I think I have served a
23 little bit of what the good Lord wanted me to do.
24 Again I refer to my old saying, do good and forget

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MOGAVERO

1 it.

2 These are meetings, different
3 meetings, installation dinners.

4 MS. ASECIO: So if you had to pass
5 on some bit of knowledge to upcoming activists
6 from all the time that you spent with CSEA, what
7 would you want them to know? What do you think is
8 most important from moving the union to the
9 future?

10 MR. MOGAVERO: Always try to find
11 something that you can make better that
12 probably no one has ever noticed or looked or
13 tried to find. Search. Again my old saying, do
14 good and forget it. Never stop trying to do good.

15 MS. ASECIO: M-m h-m-m.

16 MR. MOGAVERO: I think the good
17 Lord --

18 MS. ASECIO: So what would you say?
19 What would you say to the young activists who say
20 I don't have time? What would you say to them
21 about what you've learned?

22 MR. MOGAVERO: They don't have time.
23 Just for a moment hesitate and think of some of
24 the non-really essential things that you're doing

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1 or have done, that maybe you could have done
2 something to help someone who didn't have enough

3 will power to help themselves.
4 MS. ASENCIO: And why is that
5 important?
6 MR. MOGAVERO: It's important
7 because you're instilling possibly the desire
8 that, God, I took part in something and I helped
9 somebody. Maybe I should do it a little more
10 often.
11 MS. ASENCIO: And who does that end
12 up helping? Does it help community, family?
13 MR. MOGAVERO: It helps practically
14 everyone you come in contact because be it help
15 that you have given for work or be it just handing
16 a hand to someone who's stumbled, it's always be
17 reaching to help.
18 MS. ASENCIO: So it's everybody's
19 connected.
20 MR. MOGAVERO: Everybody. If we all
21 had our hands ready to help the next person, we
22 would have such a beautiful world to live in.
23 MS. ASENCIO: And you tried to live
24 your life in such a way.

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1 MR. MOGAVERO: I do. I try very
2 hard and I still -- and I honestly believe and I
3 thank the good Lord, you know. I'm a great
4 believer that as long as I keep doing that he will
5 possibly give me the help to continue.
6 MS. ASENCIO: As a retiree -- what

7 changed when you became a retiree from when you
8 were doing this while you were working and while
9 you were a member? What was the difference
10 between being a member, being a retiree?

11 MR. MOGAVERO: Upon retiring I
12 thought that I would lessen my activities in CSEA
13 but it seems as though the desire to help someone
14 still exists in me, perhaps not as strong, but I
15 feel that I have to do something to keep myself
16 going and that is to try to help and that's what
17 makes me active in CSEA and the fire company --

18 MS. ASENCIO: So you care --

19 MR. MOGAVERO: -- as well as my
20 church.

21 MS. ASENCIO: So you care about the
22 future of the union.

23 MR. MOGAVERO: Yes, that's right.

24 MS. ASENCIO: What would you say

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1 about how you care about the future of the union?
2 What are your hopes for the future of the union?

3 MR. MOGAVERO: Knowing the benefits
4 that I derived by originally joining CSEA and, in
5 turn, passing that desire on to someone else by
6 recruiting them that I have been somewhat
7 responsible in the growth and permanence of CSEA
8 and the original Retiree Local.

9 MS. ASENCIO: And what are your
10 hopes for the future? Do you hope that continues?

MOGAVERO

11 MR. MOGAVERO: I hope and pray that
12 it does not become too commercialized, that the
13 welfare and the needs of the individual member is
14 never cast aside because the individuality is the
15 mainstay of the union.

16 MS. ASECIO: What makes CSEA
17 unique? Actually, keep looking through. Let's
18 look at some more of those pictures and maybe you
19 can answer -- as you're looking through, why don't
20 you answer what makes CSEA --

21 MR. MOGAVERO: Looking at the
22 photos, there is so much generalization in the
23 activity of the average member that it is unique
24 that CSEA has grown with a less militant officer

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1 jurisdiction.

2 MS. ASECIO: So can you talk a
3 little bit about the growth of CSEA? I mean
4 you've -- you were there from the fifties and
5 you've seen a lot of growth over time. I mean how
6 did that happen? How did it grow? What do you
7 attribute the success of CSEA's growth to?

8 MR. MOGAVERO: I think that CSEA's
9 growth -- I attribute it to the fact that it kept
10 setting an example for people that felt that they
11 were nonexistent in their particular field of work
12 and there was someone at some place that they
13 could turn to for some salvation and help and
14 betterment of their daily life in their work.

MOGAVERO

15 MS. ASENCIO: And that was the
16 common theme throughout the history?

17 MR. MOGAVERO: That's right, and the
18 continuance of that feeling if it's kept alive
19 will be the perpetual root for CSEA.

20 MS. ASENCIO: And the security of
21 the future?

22 MR. MOGAVERO: That's right.
23 Definitely, definitely. They will be able to.
24 Being as Government has decided that they are

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1 going to shrink the number of personnel conducting
2 their business, it's very important that CSEA
3 remains active and fertile.

4 MS. ASENCIO: So are you speaking
5 about the -- I mean I'm sure that this happened
6 over many times in history, but --

7 MR. MOGAVERO: Yes.

8 MS. ASENCIO: -- the recent events
9 of the lay-off threat --

10 MR. MOGAVERO: Yes.

11 MS. ASENCIO: -- and the proposals,
12 what are your thoughts on that and do you -- I
13 mean you just spoke of the persistence of CSEA and
14 the need for it and the -- these are the tough
15 times, right?

16 MR. MOGAVERO: Without members
17 seeing to it that the continuance of CSEA be one
18 of their prime goals is the only way that there is

19 the possibility that their income and their
20 livelihood will be protected. Changing times are
21 very, very rash.

22 MS. ASENCIO: M-m h-m-m. Changing
23 times can be rough.

24 MR. MOGAVERO: Yes.

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1 MS. ASENCIO: And that's what gets
2 you through it.

3 MR. MOGAVERO: That's right. In
4 fact --

5 MS. ASENCIO: What did you say gets
6 you through it?

7 MR. MOGAVERO: What gets you through
8 it is the fact that you have the brotherhood and
9 the number of people and you're not one. You're
10 one of many.

11 MS. ASENCIO: It's the strength?

12 MR. MOGAVERO: Yeah.

13 MS. ASENCIO: And CSEA has shown
14 strength throughout the years?

15 MR. MOGAVERO: Yes.

16 MS. ASENCIO: Amazing strength,
17 right?

18 MR. MOGAVERO: They have.

19 MS. ASENCIO: M-m h-m-m.

20 MR. MOGAVERO: They have. Time and
21 time again in memory when we were first growing, I
22 believe that few of us ever dreamed that it would

MOGAVERO

23 attain national recognition. Yeah. We started up
24 in New York State and we're throughout the entire

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1 United States --

2 MS. ASECIO: With the AFSCME
3 affiliation.

4 MR. MOGAVERO: -- with AFSCME
5 affiliate, yes, and our officers are officers -- I
6 feel so proud that I was an officer when Mary
7 Sullivan, Danny Donohue -- oh, my God -- Maureen
8 Malone, all became officers in the national AFSCME
9 union board.

10 MS. ASECIO: M-m h-m-m.

11 MR. MOGAVERO: I recruited them.

12 MS. ASECIO: That's an amazing
13 thing.

14 MR. MOGAVERO: Yep. I remember when
15 Danny Donohue came from -- the girls. If Mary
16 Sullivan was sittin' here right now she would tell
17 you, time and again, that she remembers the first
18 time she attended one of my meetings, yeah. Yeah,
19 all lovely people, lovely people.

20 MS. ASECIO: My last question to
21 you as we wrap this up is actually how did the
22 times end up shaping CSEA? How did that -- is
23 it -- did the times actually shape CSEA or would
24 you say it was more the people? Do you think it's

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MOGAVERO

1 very much -- I mean how do you think the times now
2 shape CSEA as opposed to how they shaped CSEA in
3 the past?

4 MR. MOGAVERO: The only thing that
5 at times is questionable in my mind is the
6 possibility of the growth of CSEA might be
7 overtaken so that the thought of protecting
8 individuals may possibly be erased with the
9 thought of generalization protection.

10 In other words --

11 MS. ASENCIO: Business type.

12 MR. MOGAVERO: -- that CSEA should
13 not make it possible for the organization to
14 become commercialized and not really responsible
15 individually for the good and welfare of the
16 general and individual membership.

17 MS. ASENCIO: But back then did
18 certain events in U.S. history shape the CSEA or
19 affect CSEA in any way? Political climate, you
20 know, things that were going on, wars, just an
21 overall sense of either openness or --

22 MR. MOGAVERO: Well, in that
23 particular field relative to possible
24 certifications of benefits was that being a member

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1 of CSEA and being called to serve in the war
2 service was one of the items, the main item, that
3 protected your position if the good Lord willing

MOGAVERO

4 that you came back able to work and go back on
5 your job. It was protected because of the fact
6 that you were a member and that was part of the
7 contracts, that you --

8 MS. ASECIO: Oh. So during war
9 time --

10 MR. MOGAVERO: Yes. You had --

11 MS. ASECIO: So, for example, what
12 kind of war did you witness? Did you witness that
13 as being a benefit?

14 MR. MOGAVERO: Yes, I did. I was --

15 MS. ASECIO: And was that -- did
16 you serve in any?

17 MR. MOGAVERO: World war II. World
18 war II, that was prior to me being --

19 MS. ASECIO: In the union?

20 MR. MOGAVERO: -- in the union, yes.

21 MS. ASECIO: But you did serve in a
22 war so you --

23 MR. MOGAVERO: Yes.

24 MS. ASECIO: -- connected to that.

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1 MR. MOGAVERO: Yes. World war II, I
2 did, yes.

3 MS. ASECIO: But from
4 there forward --

5 MR. MOGAVERO: There was no holding
6 as far as your job was concerned. You left and if
7 they wanted you when you came back, all well and

MOGAVERO

8 good, but you had no security, where membership in
9 the union did certify the fact that you had a job
10 to come back to. Seniority accumulated while you
11 were gone.

12 MS. ASECIO: And that was all in
13 your contract?

14 MR. MOGAVERO: Yeah. Military leave
15 kept your job open for you when you came back.

16 MS. ASECIO: Wow.

17 MR. MOGAVERO: Yeah.

18 MS. ASECIO: That was wonderful to
19 know. That was -- especially during the
20 tumultuous times, you know, the Korean war, the
21 Viet Nam war. And did you know people? Did you
22 have friends who benefited from that and it saved
23 their families or did you know people, any of
24 those wars that --

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1 MR. MOGAVERO: Yes. Some of the
2 local residents that were working in the steel
3 plant that had also some connection with the union
4 because they had dual employment had some
5 protection from it.

6 MS. ASECIO: Okay. Great. Well, I
7 think that's my last question and we're actually
8 running out of battery power.

9 (At this time the interview of
10 Retiree Sam Mogavero was concluded.)

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MOGAVERO

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