

CSEA HISTORY PROJECT

JOE DOLAN INTERVIEW

7/9/03

INTERVIEWER: Start with your name and how many years you were here and what you do.

MR. DOLAN: All right. My name is Joe Dolan. I started with CSEA in 1965 as the Albany area field representative and left CSEA in 1982 as the executive director.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. Now let me ask you the first question. What's your first recollection of CSEA?

MR. DOLAN: My first recollection of CSEA was the three bowling leagues that I had to join when I was the area field representative in 1965 so I could meet the people. There hadn't been a lot of communication, it seemed to me, between the area field representative and the local chapters at that time. The Albany area was the heart of the Union at that time with membership and so on and (inaudible) percent of the board members were from -- from different State agencies that were located here, so I thought I'd better get out and assimilate a little bit with them, so I joined three bowling leagues, and I can remember days when I went to three or four clam bakes in the same day so I

could get out and meet some of the folks, but that's a lot of what CSEA was about in 1965: bowling leagues and clam bakes.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. Now, some of the big events that you were involved in. I guess the first would be the Taylor Law?

MR. DOLAN: Oh, sure. Sure. Yeah. CSEA was the first major force, political force in the State to endorse the Taylor Law and we're the only employee association or labor organization to endorse it at that time. I had the occasion to meet George Taylor. I took a course at Morton -- the Morton School of Finance and he was the -- the guy that Rocky -- Rockefeller tapped to write the law, so as a result of that association, I sat with him several times. Not to add to what he was doing, because he knew the law and knew what he had to do, which is -- but it gave me a great insight into what the law meant and what different aspects of the law were meant to do, were meant to accomplish.

Prior to the passage of the Taylor Law, Nelson Rockefeller, the Governor at the

time, called together an international symposium on public employee relations in New York City. Harold Wilson was the Prime Minister of Great Britain at the time and he was the major speaker, the banquet speaker. At the banquet we had representatives there from Japan and Germany and, you know, all the major -- major countries. Now that we know it's part of the AEC power base, France.

They appeared to me to be a little naive at the time because -- the Germans said they loved their employees and they would take care of their employees and two years later the streets of Munich were piled high with garbage because the employees didn't show up, but Harold Wilson was a very forceful speaker.

At the time, I remember, he represented the Conservative Party, which was okay, but he pointed out the things that -- that needed to be provided from the law. You either had to provide for a legislative settlement, you had to provide a mechanism to negotiate a settlement or you had to prohibit strikes, one of the three, and I think the Taylor Law was

probably one of the most ominous pieces of legislation that was ever passed. It incorporated all of those provisions.

INTERVIEWER: M-m-m.

MR. DOLAN: And then, of course, the Public Employee Relations Board was formed and then they administered -- they promulgated rules that had to be on file and then we proceeded. The day the law was passed there were probably a hundred petitions filed. The Governor had recognized CSEA as the representative for the entire State work force, one unit, which as we all look back now, we all realize how absurd it was, but it was a kicking off point, but there had to be at least a hundred petitions filed. Some by Council 50 of AFSCME (inaudible) Cramer, who was president of New York City, and then there was a local in Buffalo. I forget who the leadership was there, but there were petitions filed all over the state, which immediately created our relationship with PERB as the major player and we continued to do -- you know, to be the major player for several years.

I remember we had -- we had bargaining

units in 67 of the 68 counties outside of New York City. Or, I'm sorry, 57 of the 58 counties outside of New York City. We didn't have one in Washington County because there was only 40 people. There were more cows there than people, so we kind of put them in with Hamilton County, and then there were 64 cities. I think we were in every city except New York City. Forty percent of the school districts in the State; there were a thousand at the time and we represented the employees in those, so we were kind of the major -- major gang around.

Our first big challenge was that we had to go out and get rededications from all of our members. Our membership card at the time just said they -- folks were applying for membership, so we had to get a new card that said applying for membership and designating CSEA as my bargaining agent. That was a huge job for the staff and they fanned out across the state and, you know, we got the cards and the showing of interest, but through the PERB hearings we ended up with four -- I think four bargaining units, PS&T, operational,

administrative, which was fine.

You know, it -- Bob Helsby was the chairman of PERB at the time. He hit a hell of a golf ball as well as being chairman of PERB. I chatted with him a lot and, you know, they kind of knew what they were doin'. We were around and, you know, we knew what we wanted, but I don't think that anyone ever dreamed that we would end up in one bargaining unit for all State employees. It was just -- there was too much divergent interest -- interest there, so we went through several years with the Taylor Law.

In the beginning I used to send a courier up to PERB every day to pick up the petitions that were filed that day. I -- we started certification, decertification files, recognition, the resolutions that came in from all over the state. Our law firm recommended that we write a letter to every local government in the state. There had to be 2000 of them or more in the cities, towns, villages, authorities. We did, demanding recognition.

What the hell. Why not?

INTERVIEWER: Well, it seems to me

that's maybe the point where it became -- where it changed from an Association to a Union.

MR. DOLAN: Yeah. We reached out to -- to Cornell, the (inaudible) School. Cornell was a contract college founded by Stanley Steingut's father, one of the four contract colleges there, and they sent us a couple of folks. Ron Dunham was a professor and Dick Rubin was, I think, maybe an associate or assistant professor at the time, and I ended up calling 'em Dingbat and Robin because they -- they had an understanding of labor law as it applied in the private sector, and a lot of it, you know, has flown over more now than then --

INTERVIEWER: M-m-m.

MR. DOLAN: -- because it was the resistance of public employers' part mainly and we weren't really that familiar with it, so we kind of resisted it too, but they came in and they organized seminars for us and I'll never forget the first one out at Siena College that we had all of the statewide officers there and Joe Feeley was the president and Hazel Abrams was the secretary and other folks from around,

and we probably had 30 or 35 people show up in this area out at Siena and Dick Rubin was, I guess, the bad guy in the good guy/bad guy team.

And well, you've got the Taylor Law. I'll never forget it. You've got the Taylor Law now. What are you gonna do? You gonna go on strike? And I looked over and Hazel Abrams, the tears started running down her face, and I said, boy, are we in trouble. But he scared them into the realization that there was an all new ballgame and an all new attitude had to be developed, and so we just kind of, you know, went along with the law.

And my association with George Taylor had given me some insight, I think, to a position where I could argue with PERB about things, and I did. I caught them twice in misapplication of the law and pointed it out to them so, you know, it was a good -- it was a good -- very good working relationship. We knew all the staff. They knew us.

We went through elections for the operation. We went through elections for the administrative. We went through elections for

the -- oh, the unit for the health workers in the hospitals. We went through election for the PS&T unit. We were successful. Obviously, history will tell you in (inaudible). We weren't successful with the PS&T because of their -- I guess their uniqueness, professional. They resisted being thrown in with or kept in with the other folks, so they left us and formed PEF, another organization now that exists in the state, and so -- but we were on good terms with them.

The -- Joe McDermott who was a very active member of that group ended up being elected as executive vice president, I think. From regional president to executive vice president and then he succeeded the presidency, so out of the PS&T loss came -- we were -- we were given Joe for leadership, in a leadership role, and he became one of the two international vice presidents, you know, for AFSCME.

INTERVIEWER: (Inaudible.)

MR. DOLAN: Yeah. After all the dust settled with the -- not all of the dust but a lot of the dust because we were still being

challenged in a lot of quarters. Not only by AFSCME, but by the Teamsters and the Communication Workers under George Miller and the Communication Workers challenging bridge and structural steel painters. I never -- we were (inaudible) representation maybe for New York State Thruway and (inaudible) I think his name was, a little Irish kid who was a business agent for the bridge and structural steel painters.

So we're going down the bargaining unit list that the Thruway proposed and he gets to bridge painter, tugboat captain and says to the Thruway representative, they full-time employees? Yep, they are. Well, we'll probably keep them in the unit. Well, sure, we should. Well, what do they do in the wintertime?

(Laughter.)

MR. DOLAN: Just a little jocular relief for the day. And of course, then we had an answer what the tugboat captain did in the winter when the river was frozen, the bridge painter did in the winter, you know, but we went through, oh, hundreds, hundreds of representations which called for a new CSEA

actually, and we -- you know, we fared pretty well.

But then Jerry Wirf -- Al Wirf, his brother, represented AFSCME here in the state and I forget the attorney's name but he had an airplane, so they used to fly in and fly out. A little two-seater or three-seater Cessna, whatever it was. But then when it came time for the major challenge and everybody was -- in the AFL-CIO were after us because we were a couple hundred thousand strong, you know, local government and state government, and we were kind of very effective in this state. I thought we were.

There was lobbying and laws and stuff like that. We set the prevailing wage rate in school districts in the state because of the membership that we had in school districts, so we were able to accomplish a lot of things and they knew that and we probably needed them. I wasn't convinced of it when they first approached us and I wasn't the executive director either, but, you know, so they started to come in and sniff around when Ted Wenzel was

president.

The OER director for the state
nicknamed Ted "The Adorable."

(Laughter.)

MR. DOLAN: He said he reminded him of
the Headless Horseman, just shoulders with hair
growing out of it. It wasn't very
complimentary.

(Laughter.)

MR. DOLAN: Ted led us through the
1974 strike, which we called on Good Friday, and
I just told everybody that when people call in
tomorrow morning and say how effective is the
strike, tell 'em that 85 percent of the State
facilities are closed. Of course, it was
Saturday and Sunday and they were -- but the
prisons were open and we had a couple of our
gents got arrested for refusing to take a picket
line down at like the Auburn Prison and --

But I'd gone out. I'd reached out to
the Teamsters and the Teamster councils across
the state had agreed that they would respect our
picket lines for deliveries. The Communication
Workers, George Miller, said they wouldn't send

any telephone repair people in, so -- I forgot to mention that my father, before me, had been president of the Local 227, the Chemical Workers Union, National Union of Chemical Workers, and I'd listened to his stories all my life about conventions and this and that, strikes, and I remember one time he got arrested for laying down in front of -- on railroad tracks to stop a train load of coal to go into a struck plant, so it kind of -- I kind of had that.

And then through his affiliation I met a lot of the people, you know, that he had done business with and knew, and then in mentioning Joe Dolan to people and asking for help they'd say, are you Joe Dolan's son? Yes, I am, so -- well, being here. You know, I know everybody was -- most of the unions were headquartered here because of the political need to be in the shadow of the Capitol, so we had pretty good success in '74.

Wenzel, of course, got served. I don't know, they painted a -- painted a procedure, a service procedure on the door of the State Of...our building and stuff like this.

All great fodder for the media and --

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

MR. DOLAN: -- and we got fined and we lost our payroll deduction and we had to go out and get -- and we had coupons printed and people had to pay us with the coupons which they did, in great numbers. We lost some money, obviously, but the support was there from the people that we had with us.

And then Jerry come in. Bill McGowan beat Ted for the presidency, and the law firm that we had decided that they were going to be too much of a conflict of interest between -- between representing CSEA and representing the American Medical Association and other folks, so they kind of resigned from -- a great firm, DeGraff, Foy, Holt-Harris and Conboy. Very effective politically in the city and in the state, but they just decided in their wisdom it was time to move on because of the emerging, if you will, CSEA, so they did.

Two of their junior partners left the firm and came with us and became our in-house counsel, so they kind of were involved in the

negotiations with Jerry and they were protracted. I mean we were invited to Washington on several occasions to do things, see this and see that, and Victor Gottbaum had us down in New York City to see his operation in Council 37, DC 37, you know, just to -- you know, I think I went to Michigan, I think to a county, maybe a state convention, of the council out there. I forget the number of the council but, you know, they really tried to show us what went on.

The big difference, as I look back now and -- is there was more member involvement in the AFSCME unions. Most things that were done for the membership at CSEA were done here in Albany and as a result of that most of the activity took place here. And not that people in the hinterlands weren't represented, they were, but they weren't involved in the process and they weren't involved, you know, locally too much in the state process.

But what we did uncover was the fact that we had 57 political bodies out in every county in the state that could affect local

elections and local election of Assemblymen and Senators, they had to come here to do their business here, so we kind of melted altogether.

Jim Featherstonhaugh was one of the in-house counsels and he knew the political system very, very, very well and handled most of our lobbying for us and did a good job with it, in my opinion, as I look back. But, you know, we kind of emerged and we were changing a lot and then, of course, the merger came when Joe was executive vice president and Bill was the president and we got our two seats on the international board and there was an arrangement made for a slow dues increase thing because the culture shock -- what the hell, when I came to work for CSEA the dues was 50 cents a week. We used to sell membership because that's what a pack of cigarettes cost then, 50 cents, so we'd give 'em a pack of cigarettes. I can remember one of our organizers, Jack Pender, that was his pitch, and it worked.

And also we went from 50 cents a week, which was like 6.50 a year or a mo...yeah, 6.50 a week, whatever it was. And then, you know,

here they were gonna be confronted with this huge dues increase because it was per capita to pay the international and yada, yada, yada, so we kind of rolled that in over a two- or three-year period. I don't remember exactly what the figures were, but in the end the affiliation happened and we attended the international convention in Orange County, California.

Where the hell was the other one?

There was another one that we went to as delegates for the first time, and I -- it excited our people, you know, to be part of this huge international organization so, you know, things kind of settled in.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah. And who was head of AFSCME at that point?

MR. DOLAN: International?

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

MR. DOLAN: Jerry.

INTERVIEWER: Jerry --

MR. DOLAN: Jerry and Bill. Bill was the executive secretary-treasurer and Jerry was the international president.

INTERVIEWER: Jerry Wirf.

MR. DOLAN: Jerry Wirf, sorry.

INTERVIEWER: Wirf.

MR. DOLAN: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

MR. DOLAN: Yep. And McEntee -- no, Jerry McEntee came in quick...shortly after that.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

MR. DOLAN: I think Jerry did. He was from out of Pennsylvania, I believe. Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: M-m h-m-m.

MR. DOLAN: And he came in -- he came in right after that. I couldn't -- I can't really give you exact dates or times for that.

(Simultaneous conversations.)

INTERVIEWER: (Continuing) each of these guys from your point of view.

MR. DOLAN: Yes. Yep.

INTERVIEWER: Okay.

MR. DOLAN: So the Taylor Law was huge, of course, for us, for the Union, and then the -- the '74 strike was huge for a step. We had other strikes in local government. In 1975

we had a strike in Dutchess County, the first local government to strike. We followed that with a strike in Orange County. Successful, both of them.

INTERVIEWER: M-m h-m-m.

MR. DOLAN: We fought IBM actually. That's when I found out where the corporate structure really worked in this state. We had trouble in Broome County, county union. We had trouble in Dutchess County. We had trouble in Ulster County. They were all controlled by IBM. They controlled the board. They had a bunch of -- they owned the budget directors, the county legislature, so that really told me what we had -- what we had to do, but they -- we were growing.

We went -- I left the field -- field representative position in, I don't know, '69 or somewhere around there and -- '70, maybe. I don't remember, and I became director of local government and may have been 9000 members, and when I left in '82 we had like 95,000 members and bargaining units in every major -- every big, you know, 80 percent of the population of

the state is within 20 miles of the Thruway or an interstate, so we knew where we had to go to get -- to get the numbers and we did. Worked out well.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah. Now you gave us a pretty candid picture of Wenzel. I want to get your candid opinions or pictures of McGowan and McDermott.

MR. DOLAN: Yeah. I didn't -- for some reason Joe, of course, was a leader -- a leader in the state. He worked for DOT as an engineer, I think, so he -- his activities were all pretty much with the State employees. At that time we had contracts negotiated for State employees, so the administration of those contracts was pretty much his bag and my counterpart at the time was a guy by the name of Jack Carey, John Carey, who was like director of state operations for the Union.

So I really didn't have a lot to do or say to Joe or with him in his executive vice president role. I didn't work for him as president, so my relationship was really not, you know, not that much.

Bill, on the other hand, being a different kind of person altogether, in my opinion --

INTERVIEWER: M-m-m.

MR. DOLAN: -- came in and we had staff meetings every morning that we participated in, so I always felt I was a part of the team, you know, that were settin' policy.

Taylor, George Taylor, kind of left me -- one time I went to a seminar and in my comments -- he asked for comments at the end of the seminar and I commented that some people came here for answers. I came here for ideas and I got them, and that's what brought us together because I got a note from him that said, can I use that, and I said yes.

And, of course, when the Taylor Law contract came up he had be -- had my name, but he said to me there's three things that you gotta realize in a labor union.

One has -- one is that there have to be people to lead it. There have to be people to advise it and there have to be people to manage it because it's big business and you do

need advice, but most of all you need leadership. So I kind of approached it from that angle. I was relegated to a position of manage...in management to run the county division and take things upstairs.

Bill was very open to that process, very open. Wenzel had been open to it before him, but with Ted it was, oh, I don't know, more of a political consideration, I suppose, than practical. And Ted, I think Ted had been the Director of School Finance for the State Education Department and Assistant Executive Director of the New York State Teachers' Association, and I don't really think that his career prepared him.

You know, when he came to CSEA it was a part-time job and Jimmy Feeley before him was -- used to come in lunch time and sign his mail and go home --

INTERVIEWER: Oh-h-h.

MR. DOLAN: -- or go wherever he went. Ted was part-time but he's the one that decided that he couldn't do it on a part-time basis and he became the first full-time president for the

Union, so we used to meet with him and he talked about MBO as management by objectives and, you know, things that were a little out of the ordinary for the folks that were here, that were out carousing with prospective members around the state, telling stories and screamin' at people.

And here we sit down with this state educator and he wants us to run that Union as by objective and everybody's saying, you know, what the hell. What the hell is he talkin' about? But then he went.

But Bill was -- Bill was good. Bill was a street fighter, a cigar-smokin' street fighter and knew the working people because he was one himself. And you know, you gotta -- to know them you gotta be one, and he was, and he resisted his advisors. I seen him do it from time to time. Took a great deal of advice under consideration from everybody and you would see your idea surface, which was great stuff.

So I was delighted with his leadership right through 1982 when I left to go on to other things with my high blood pressure and high

cholesterol.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah. Well, you saw a lot of --

(Laughter.)

MR. DOLAN: Everything. Everything else that this racket could get you.

INTERVIEWER: You saw quite a shift in (inaudible) from --

MR. DOLAN: I surely did.

INTERVIEWER: -- from CSEA, in your career with CSEA --

MR. DOLAN: Yep.

INTERVIEWER: -- to the finish because it went -- really, like I said before, Association to Union really.

MR. DOLAN: Right.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

MR. DOLAN: Also, another major factor was Rocky going to Washington. Rockefeller went to Washington as Vice President and then -- and then his vice -- I forget, who the hell -- I can't remember the guy's name now, but great guy was Lieutenant Governor.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

MR. DOLAN: He came in just for an interim period --

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

MR. DOLAN: -- and then -- I mean Rockefeller was a Republicrat. Rockefeller built the Mall and Rockefeller built the interstate and, you know, our major cities: Utica, 13 percent unemployment; Buffalo, 17; Binghamton, 12, 14. Here in the Capital District our unemployment was like 2.3, because everybody that wanted to work could -- all the tradespeople, you know, working, and he knew that and he was a favorite of the unions for that reason and he was a good man to do business with.

Paul Douglas, Bobby Douglas was his secretary, and Al Marshall who went on to go to the Empire State Building Corporation that they own, the Rockefeller's own. We go over and say what's gonna happen this year and they'd say, well, give us 5000 people in the Capital Park for a demonstration. That'll get the Governor's attention and then we'll -- you know, we'll be able to talk to him about salary increases and

stuff like that, so we did, you know.

And we had one streaker at one time when McGowan was president and I happened to be on good terms with the mayor, so I picked up the phone in McGowan's office and he said come and pick him up and bring his clothes.

(Laughter.)

MR. DOLAN: So he got back on his bus and went back to Pilgrim State Hospital (laughter) down in Long Island, as an attendant, not as an inmate; not as a --

INTERVIEWER: Isn't that where Danny worked?

MR. DOLAN: Yeah. Well, he was on the Island now but I don't know whether it was Pilgrim State or not. It might have been.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

MR. DOLAN: But the gal at that time was Betty Duffy who was the president there and Betty became regional president and she was a two-fisted, hard-drinkin' labor leader. Boy, was she tough.

INTERVIEWER: I know.

MR. DOLAN: But, you know, good. A

good leader, so you know, when we went from -- Malcolm Wilson was the Lieutenant Governor. When we went from Rocky, when he went to Washington, to Malcolm who he knew, kind of, that he was an interim --

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

MR. DOLAN: You know, interim governor, and it was hard to talk to him because he really didn't want to pay much attention, so we -- we kind of, you know, put it in neutral for six months or whatever it was.

And then McGowan, and Carey, Hugh Carey and I happened to get together at the invitation of some folks and then CSEA became Carey's special effort association. That's what the Governor called us, but we had some good times under Hugh Carey.

Started out bumpy because New York City was in financial bankruptcy. Yonkers was in bankruptcy, so he had to create a mini-MAC, mini-MACs to save Yonkers and a MAC, Big MAC to save New York City, so we had some tough times in the beginning, but he had a budget director by the name of Bob Morgato who went on to Time

Warner, a great job when he left, demanding cutbacks in, you know, the State work force, to balance the budget. You know, we just kind of said, Bob, you know, you haven't been around long but -- but what are you gonna do to reduce your end of the fulcrum here?

What about management? How you gonna -- how much you gonna give back there before we go to our people and say you have to sacrifice? He got the message and things cooled off, but the relationship with Carey grew and became excellent over his terms as Governor. We did well with our contracts and our negotiations and, you know, when he needed some help someplace with something we were able to understand and then we did it for him, so that was not a difficult transaction, the transition, because Rockefeller was a big spender.

Big spender. He built the University out here. Took Albany Country Club away from the elite of the area and built the University and rolled up all the fairways and all the greens and moved 'em outside the city. He -- and he had a guy, I was trying to think of the

Chancellor's name, who Wenzel and I met with one day to talk about the role of CSEA and the University, bald-headed fella I can make out. I can't think of his name.

He looked right across the table at Wenzel and he said, let me tell you somethin'. He said Nelson Rockefeller has told me to make the University System of the State of New York the best system in the world and he said I don't intend to let anybody or anything stand in my way and he excused himself and left the room and never came back.

So I said to Ted after about 15 minutes, I don't think he's comin' back. We probably should leave, and he did. He built the University centered here and there's like 11 of 'em across the state. We represented all of the employees so, you know, it was a great, a great thing for us.

INTERVIEWER: But to go from Rocky to Carey wasn't hard because they both had the same support of labor, for labor and labor, support of labor, so things, you know, things worked out well as far as I was concerned.

And then Mario -- when Mario ran he was a favorite of CSEA's and we endorsed him. Actually, probably were one of the major reasons why he ran for Governor, because we met with him. He had been Secretary of State so we kind of knew him a little and I think we might have convinced him to run, actually, and the day after election we were all sitting in Bill McGowan's office and -- not all of us.

He and I and Featherstonhaugh and a couple of other folks and the Governor walked over from the Capitol and came up to Bill's office and sat down with us and thanked us all, so the relationship there was excellent, I'm telling you. I mean not -- you know, they didn't give the State away to us --

INTERVIEWER: No.

MR. DOLAN: -- but they were there and a lot of things happened, a lot of employee improvement programs in place, assistance program. A lot of money was put aside for -- for -- to better the workplace, outside of, you know, the usual. Health insurances, retirement and salary. There were a lot of programs that

were built --

INTERVIEWER: (Inaudible.)

MR. DOLAN: Yeah, I mean to do things like that. There were administrative procedures created to avoid firing, to precede arbitration if we had to go to arbitration, so there was a lot, a lot done, and I think we did a lot of it with the help of AFSCME who, of course, had the International experience, you know, along those lines. There was always a regional office here.

Steve, I forget his name, was kind of the man at the time. I don't know whether he's still around or not, but -- so the marriage took place when it -- when it should have --

INTERVIEWER: M-m-m.

MR. DOLAN: -- in my opinion, because we needed -- we needed to do a lot of things that we -- we hadn't been done -- done before and, of course, it enabled the dues increase and so gave us a lot of staff support from the International; allowed the Union itself, CSEA, to increase their staff. Our county division ranks quadrupled, more than that, so we needed to get out and treat our county folks with a

little more attention. We were able to do that, so the marriage came, I think, at a time when it should have and when it was needed.

INTERVIEWER: Was that Steve Montasno --

MR. DOLAN: No.

INTERVIEWER: The AFSCME --

MR. DOLAN: No. I think --

INTERVIEWER: And later on as an area director.

MR. DOLAN: I think it was -- I'd like to say it was a Jewish name but I can't --

INTERVIEWER: (Inaudible)?

MR. DOLAN: Yeah, (inaudible), yeah. Is he still around?

INTERVIEWER: Yeah, he's head of our Retiree Department.

MR. DOLAN: Oh, good. Tell him I said hello. He and I had some frank conversations (laughter) about policy and about what we were -- things, what was gonna happen around town. Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Any other -- you talked about Betty Duffy as one of the regional --

MR. DOLAN: Colorful.

INTERVIEWER: Colorful. Any other people in the region, head of regions that you remember in particular or in general that --

MR. DOLAN: Well, I knew them all. You know, we had Bob Lattimer in western New York, now has been succeeded by Floyd Trippey, I guess. From what I understand, Floyd knew her when she was -- I don't know what the hell she was but, no, I -- I got to know Bob pretty well. I used to travel. We -- we represented Erie County and school districts in Buffalo and -- the City of Buffalo actually, itself, so, you know, I got to meet all of these folks.

And then Syracuse, we represented Onondaga County and Jimmy, regional president there, and I -- you know, we became friends.

Of course here in the Capital District, it was kind of overshadowed. The region was overshadowed by the fact that we were here and that's one of the reasons the office concept was created so that they could take the local affairs out of this building.

Let's see, Pat Mashioli was regional

president, I think, down in Region 3. I can't remember who it was before him. But I had to know them all because I traveled in Nassau and Suffolk County. We represented both county employees and Hempstead, North Hempstead and Oyster Bay, the three huge towns in Nassau County. We represented -- oh, I have a lot of stories that we won't relate here but --

INTERVIEWER: Okay. This is just for CSEA.

MR. DOLAN: Oh, no, no, no. I would not do that. (Laughter.) Well, my first visit to the town of Hempstead, Ralph Natali was the town president, and the sanitation men were on strike, so down I go. The Lone Ranger. I mean like nobody ever wanted to travel with me for some reason. They didn't know what the hell was goin' on and neither did I, but I was -- at least I was brazen enough to go and jump in.

So I go down to talk to Ralph, make an appearance, you know, a showing. CSEA's here and we're behind you, this and that. I also learned that they had the first desalinization plant in New York State. They were takin' the

salt out of Long Island Sound water for -- and this is 30 years ago now.

INTERVIEWER: Oh.

MR. DOLAN: -- before it was ever dreamed of. The only time I ever heard about it before that was on the ships in the Navy when we used to have to make our own water and they had a huge contingent from Japan there and Ralph is saying we don't know what to do.

I said what are you talkin' about? He said, well, Ralph Kayso, who went on to be I think a congressman and then a judge, he was his brother-in-law and he was the town supervisor and he said Ralph wants us to call the strike off while the, you know, while the Japanese are here to look at our desalinization plant.

And I said, well, tell him you'll call it off. What, he said? You know you long it took us to get these guys to go out on strike. They didn't want to go out on strike. They're all cousins of everybody; everybody knows everybody.

I said, well, I didn't say, you know, call off the strike, you gotta let me finish,

with a settlement. Why don't you and I go see Ralph, so we did, and we settled this -- we settled the package that day and we called off the strike and the Japanese never had to know, you know, that we were having these kind of problems.

INTERVIEWER: And he's what you got.

MR. DOLAN: Yeah, exactly. Yeah. Oh, there were a lot of -- I had a collective bargaining specialist that worked for me that was down in the town of Union controlled by IBM negotiating a contract at one time and he called me up and he said I want to buy some beer for the boys before the meeting tonight, and I said fine 'cause they were going to go over and picket a town board meeting. I said, fine, go ahead.

So, I don't know, a week or so later -- I used to meet with him every Monday, my troops, and how'd that work out? He said, oh, good. I got ten cans a case -- ten cases of canned beer. Canned beer? Why the hell didn't you get a couple of kegs? Oh, no, he said. We took all the empty cans over and we sat outside

and were throwing them against the outside
(laughter) of the building while the meetin' was
goin' on. I said, oh, wonderful idea.
Wonderful idea.

And they were meetin' down in Suffolk
County one time and I used to meet with them
every morning. I had six collective bargaining
specialists they call 'em. They'd come in every
Monday morning and I was criticized for that,
for bringin' them in every week, but we sat down
every week and we shared experiences, shared
stories and to this day I still think it was the
best thing that we ever did, that I ever did,
because they worked together as a team and if
one was havin' trouble, they'd talk about it and
ideas would come up and percolate up.

One of them was negotiating a contract
in Westchester -- in Suffolk, Suffolk County one
time. Expense account, I see four dozen
doughnuts. I said what the hell is this? He
said, well, the negotiator for the county, every
day would come in to the meeting with four dozen
doughnuts and say, okay, well, we can all have
our coffee and doughnuts. And he said every

goddamn time we ask for somethin', we demanded somethin', he had a big picture of Rockefeller on the wall and he said, he wouldn't do that.

So I said how can we do that here if he wouldn't do it, so he said I went out one morning and we went in and ate all of the doughnuts before the meeting started. He and his team ate every doughnut that was in the boxes.

(Laughter.)

MR. DOLAN: And he said we turned Rockefeller's picture over (laughter) and in comes the county team with their county spokesman. They all go up to the doughnut boxes and no doughnuts. But they they saw Rocky's picture turned over and so the whole attitude changed. You know, it was very hard to -- very, very difficult to convince people in any conventional way that these politicians who had run their local governments for years, whether it was a town or a city or, you know.

I had another fella, little Italian guy, who was tough as nails and I went to a meeting with him and just sat to watch and

listen and the board of supervisors were all sitting up in their chamber, you know, as if they were running a meeting and we were sitting down on the floor at a table like we were on trial and the chairman says, well, we'll start -- can we start the negotiations?

And my man said, yeah, we'll start as soon as you get down off that goddamn perch and get down here and sit down with us.

(Laughter.)

MR. DOLAN: They were aghast, you know, this little imp who dared --

INTERVIEWER: M-m-m.

MR. DOLAN: -- you know, but they did. They came down. So, you know, we had some good times. We had -- it's funny. We had some laughs and some good times along the way. Not to minimize the difficulty that, you know, there were bad -- sometimes -- they were all bad times and difficult, but there was time for some laughs every once in a while and I had the reputation of organizing some of the best Christmas parties this union ever had.

They're gone now, but when we had them

they were dynamite.

INTERVIEWER: (Inaudible.)

MR. DOLAN: Oh, we do, yeah. Why is the Christmas party on Thursday night? I said are you married? Yes. Do you have children? Yes. I said, well, do you want to come in here on Friday morning and suffer, your head hangover, or should we have the party on Friday and you can stay home on Saturday and you can abuse your wife and kids?

(Laughter.)

MR. DOLAN: Oh, good idea, Joe. I said thank you very much, so we'd have our Christmas parties on Thursday nights.

INTERVIEWER: M-m-m.

MR. DOLAN: Half the people wouldn't show up the next day. The half that did were walkin' around here holdin' their heads all day, so it was fine with me. What the hell.

INTERVIEWER: Makes a nice Christmas.

MR. DOLAN: No, we had some good times and I enjoyed it. I left and went up to -- Hugh Carey and I were -- became personal friends, so I left and became Commissioner of the Department

of Corrections. It was time to go.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah. Well, it was certainly an interesting period in CSEA's history.

MR. DOLAN: Oh, yeah. Yeah. We had -- really, an absolute transition. Absolute transition.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah. Nice picture.

MR. DOLAN: From bowling and clam bakes, they still have them and they still did that --

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

MR. DOLAN: -- but they had more educational seminars and attended more regional meetings for educational purposes, you know, in the end, which is good. It allows the people to feel they're a part and they become more of a part of the Union.

INTERVIEWER: So you would -- if you had advice for people today based on your experience with CSEA then, what would you tell them.

MR. DOLAN: Go Teamster.

(Laughter.)

MR. DOLAN: Just kidding. I mean -- I don't -- fortunately, a lot of the folks that are here were folks that came here when I was here, so I don't -- I'm not a stranger when I come in the building, and I knew Danny like -- he was a motor vehicle operator.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

MR. DOLAN: And, you know, so it's nice to come in and chat with them. I follow -- when I get the newsletter, the AFSCME newsletter, pay my dues. I don't really have -- have any advice. Just, you know, stay -- support your Union. That's about it because they never go anyplace without taking their members, thank goodness.

INTERVIEWER: Do you have anything more?

MR. DOLAN: (Inaudible).

INTERVIEWER: I think we got a lot of great stuff.

INTERVIEWER: That was good.

MR. DOLAN: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Thank you very much.

MR. DOLAN: No, no. I didn't get a

chance to go through -- I got some still pictures --

INTERVIEWER: Oh.

MR. DOLAN: -- in case you might want them.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah, I think Steve would want those.

MR. DOLAN: Yeah, yeah. Rockefeller, if I could find the one with Rocky and I taken -- geez, I don't know how many years ago, and then there's Hugh Carey and, you know --

INTERVIEWER: Because eventually some --

MR. DOLAN: Who's the first black Congresswoman --

INTERVIEWER: Oh --

MR. DOLAN: -- from New York, Shirley Chisholm?

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

MR. DOLAN: She's the one that convinced me that I should form -- that we should form a committee, a women's committee for the Union, so I think about 1974 I went to Wenzel and I said we had a young lady by the

name of June Scott who was the board rep from the Department of State.

INTERVIEWER: M-m h-m-m.

MR. DOLAN: Forceful, knew what she was doin', but did it in a nice way so we appointed her as chairman of the Women's Committee, ad hoc Women's Committee, and then of course that Women's Committee has now grown --

INTERVIEWER: Yeah. Yeah, very important.

MR. DOLAN: Huge, huge. But we started that and I was proud of that, but Shirley Chisholm, it was a conversation with her that convinced me that we should, you know, that we should do that and, you know, these little hints came out of women's places in the Union and things like that.

INTERVIEWER: That was good.

MR. DOLAN: Yeah, yeah, that was good, and we -- we recognized folks that were, you know, that would provide leadership in certain areas and we identified them through ad hoc committees or permanent committees or temporary committees. And if they worked and succeeded

then they became permanent, a permanent part of the organization.

Local governments recreated Social Service Committees and Probation Department Committees because they were the leaders. I mean they were -- not to belittle anybody else, but they were like the educated folks and they were willing to step up because they were aware of social ills and things that needed to be done, and they -- and they always were willing to step up to the plate for us. So we -- we kind of started tuning people in.

I'm sure that they're tuned in more routinely now than they were then but --

INTERVIEWER: Oh, yeah, but, I mean, you have to start someplace.

MR. DOLAN: Yeah.

(Simultaneous conversation.)

MR. DOLAN: Yeah, I enjoyed it.

INTERVIEWER: Good. It was good talking to you.

MR. DOLAN: Yes. Oh, no, it's my pleasure. My pleasure. Okay?

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: You find these pictures,
you want to just send --

MR. DOLAN: Yeah.

(Whereupon, the interview of Joe Dolan
was concluded.)

C E R T I F I C A T E

I, JEANNE M. CARPENTIER, do hereby certify that the preceding is a true and accurate transcription of the taped proceedings held in the above-entitled matter to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Sworn to before me this

_____ day of _____

My commission expires
