

Interview Date: 7/13/05

Subject: Harry Albright; Lawyer, Hinman, Straub, Pigores, Manning, & Tynan, 1955-1957; Lawyer, DeGraff Foy Law Firm, 1958-1968; Staffer, Governor Nelson Rockefeller Administration, 1968-1973; Special Counsel to U.S. Vice President, Rockefeller, 1974-1975; President and Chairman, Dime Savings Bank, 1976-1990; Chairman of Battery Park City Authority, 1990-1996; Trustee, First American Corp., 1992 - ?.

Harry Albright first began working with CSEA during his time with the DeGraff Foy Law Firm and explained how his CSEA experiences helped carry him throughout his career.

In his interview, Albright spoke about getting political sponsorship by delegates and explained how CSEA had enormous political clout in the 1960's and 1970's, not because of designating endorsements, but due to the initiative they took by inviting candidates to speak to the large number of civil service workers that attended member meetings. He also spoke of how CSEA's insurance plan was hugely important for CSEA's growth because no one could compete with the rates they offered, which allowed CSEA to negotiate larger issues such health insurance and sick leave.

Albright also detailed many of his experiences working with the Rockefeller administration. He spoke about grievance procedures and how most were included in contracts, with the exception of Attica, where he detailed how they accomplished better sanitary conditions for corrections officers. Albright mentioned how under the Rockefeller administration, he helped implement the State Health Plan, 5% take-home pay, many civil service bills, and what he called his "greatest accomplishment," which was increasing state employee salaries from "flat across the board" increases to a percentage-based increase. He explained how CSEA helped to change the salary increases and detailed how this legislation was enacted.

Albright spoke in depth about John Kelly and Kelly's efforts to change the special benefits Veterans used to receive when taking civil service exams. Albright also mentioned his role in advocating the Kelly Scholarship.

In addition, Albright described the relationship between CSEA and former Governor Averill Harriman, talked about Joe Lochner and the role Lochner played running CSEA and spoke about former CSEA President Joe Feeley. Albright also attributed CSEA's longevity due the "good leadership" they've had over the years.

Key Words

Article 78

Attica

The Civil Service Leader

Condon-Wadlin Law

Collective Bargaining

Corrections Officers

DeGraff Foy Lawfirm

Department of Motor Vehicles

Garbage Strike

Hinman, Straub, Pigores, Manning, and Tynan Firm

McKinsey Study

Medicaid

Medicare

Medical Society of the State of New York

Mental Hygiene

Mitchell Bill

O'Connell Machine

PERB (Public Employment Relations Board)

Political Subdivisions

The Red Book

Retirement System

Sol, Bendet, & Sol Firm

State Health Insurance Plan

Taylor Law

Terbush & Powell Brokerage Firm

Travelers Insurance

Key People

Sam Aldrich

Arvis Chalmers

Sal Corbin

Governor Mario Cuomo

John DeGraff Sr.

Robert Douglas

Joe Feeley

Irving Flamingbaum

Hank Galpin

Judge Joyce Hansgreen

Governor Averill Harriman

Robert Helsby

George Hinman

John Kelly

Paul Kyer

Joseph Lochner

Al Marshall

Governor Nelson Rockefeller

Governor Alfred Smith

Van Straub

Dr. Frank Tolman

Al Weisberg

CSEA HISTORY PROJECT

HARRY ALBRIGHT INTERVIEW

7/13/05

INTERVIEWER: Harry, I wonder if you'd begin, I mean -- first off, for the record, we're -- we're here on July the 13th of 2005. We're speaking with Harry Albright and, Harry, I wonder if you would just begin by telling us a little bit about your background, how -- tell us about how you came to be associated with CSEA and approximately when that was.

MR. ALBRIGHT: Okay. I'm an Albanian. I grew up in Albany, went to the schools in Albany. I then went in the service when I was eighteen in a program called the ASTP, which was a program like the A-12 and the V-12. The V-12 was for the Navy and I was -- and they gave you an examination for that, a technical examination, and if you had, as I had, poor eyesight, I was ineligible for the Navy but the idea was you were to go to college when you went in the service and get to be an -- and go to -- become an officer and an engineer, of which I was totally unqualified.

At any rate, I went -- when I came out of the service I curiously had written my thesis when I was at Yale on Albany politics and had

learned a great deal about the O'Connell Machine and John Kelly, who I -- was my predecessor and colleague at the DeGraff firm, was a product of the Albany School System and I recall that his -- describing Albany at the time, which was -- really had no industry.

The industry really was pretty much what it is today in the state. Size of the city was about the same as it is today, so Albany has really not grown, as I understand it, particularly since that time but it was an Irish-Catholic Democrat. John Kelly used to tell me that when he was a kid his mother told him if you got lost, just say my name is John Kelly, Irish Catholic Democrat, and you'll get home.

So I wrote my thesis on Albany politics and I did not wish to become, although I was philosophically a Liberal Democrat, a worshiper of Franklin Roosevelt, I did not wish to become a part of that machine, morally and as far as integrity went, so I registered as a Republican because I knew I was weak and what they would do is, the Albany Democrats would

take young lawyers and offer them assistant corporation counsels, assistant DAs, and you got 3- or \$4000 which was a lot of money in those days and it was hard to resist, so I registered as a Republican.

I then ended up in Hinman, Straub, Pigores, Manning & Tynan it was called then, and my father was president of the National Savings Bank and they were the attorneys for the bank and I found that to be a disagreeable relationship for me, embarrassing. My father was president of their largest client and so I would go out with Van Straub for dinner in the evenings and then be the lowest guy on the totem pole taking orders from the secretaries and going into the cellar and carrying Van's cleaning to the cleaners.

So I ended up in the DeGraff firm after about a year or two with the Hinman firm, by chance, and was assigned to two duties. One was I read bar exams for Mr. DeGraff and I was assigned to assist John Kelly at the -- who was then the real Counsel. John DeGraff, Sr. always retained the title of Counsel, but the real

Counsel was John Kelly at the time.

INTERVIEWER: To the CSEA?

MR. ALBRIGHT: To the CSEA and he represented them and I brought and have given to you John's, who I think of very highly and fondly and admiringly -- I have for you his assignment in the so-called Mitchell Bill, which was a bill relating to veterans' preferences. I never knew anything about that.

The time I was there was the time when the State Health Insurance Plan was being negotiated and that was principally by John DeGraff, Sr. and one of my early duties -- earliest duties was to go around the state in various chapters and explain how that plan worked, which was a very vital and still is a very vital part of the membership, I would think, of the Association.

INTERVIEWER: Just -- I want to come back to all of this but just to kind of flesh out your bio a little bit further and briefly, you were with the DeGraff firm for about ten years before you joined the Rockefeller Administration?

MR. ALBRIGHT: Right.

INTERVIEWER: Can you just give us a brief --

MR. ALBRIGHT: We represented -- the law firm, being a local firm, represented the Medical Society of the State of New York and the Homebuilders -- I represented them and I received that assignment essentially through Joe Feily who was the President of the Association. His wife was then an important figure in the Homebuilders and she referred them to me and we represented the CSEA, obviously, and that was perhaps the largest and -- largest retainer we had and the largest and most important client.

But we represented all kinds of people in the -- in the Legislature, and therefore I became known to the Rockefeller Administration and ultimately had a terrible battle with the Governor, not so much on CSEA matters, but on the Medical Society and that was the implementation of Medicare and Medicaid and Title 18 and Title 19 of the Cormare -- old Cormare's Bill and it became a hot issue and the Medical Society had a great dispute with the

Governor, so at one time I ended up in a significant dispute with Rockefeller and apparently he said to his Counsel then, who was Bob Douglas, if this guy's got so many ideas, why don't we get him on board here and so I ended up as Deputy Secretary to Al Marshall, who was the important figure and really Chief of Staff, and he became really the acting Governor when Rockefeller was away campaigning, so he was an important figure and still is highly knowledgeable and I urge you to, if you can, if he's well enough, to speak to him and he can tell you the genesis of the Taylor Law at the time.

INTERVIEWER: And you held other positions in the Rockefeller Administration?

MR. ALBRIGHT: I ended up after a period of time as Deputy Secretary and Appointments Officer, a job I did not want, but came to discover was very important and far more important than I realized. Do you want that light on? Okay.

VOICE: Actually, while we're on a break here, let me -- I want to put that light

on you a little bit more --

MR. ALBRIGHT: Okay.

INTERVIEWER: -- so --

MR. ALBRIGHT: Okay.

(Pause.)

MR. ALBRIGHT: Am I -- am I too
verbose?

INTERVIEWER: No. Perfect. Right on
the mark.

MR. ALBRIGHT: That -- that flops.
That's the trouble with that.

VOICE: Yeah. Just to get a little
light from this --

MR. ALBRIGHT: Okay. If you want to
move that closer, it's okay with me.

VOICE: (Inaudible.)

MR. ALBRIGHT: Okay.

INTERVIEWER: It seems to be getting a
little brighter out here --

MR. ALBRIGHT: Okay.

INTERVIEWER: Okay.

INTERVIEWER: You were telling us some
of the other positions --

MR. ALBRIGHT: Well, I ended up as

Executive Assistant to the Governor, which was a title that had been occupied by his -- by Sam Aldrich at some earlier time and George Hinman during the early part of his administration, and that gave me a cabinet position and that was at the time Al Marshall had retired as Secretary and Bob Douglas had become Secretary to the Governor.

And then after about a year or so of that assignment I ended up as Superintendent of Banks and then Special Counsel to him when he became Vice President and then I ended up in a completely different role in the latter part -- next part and when I -- just before I was fifty I ended up as president of the Dime Savings Bank and when I retired at age sixty-five after 15 years there I was temporarily -- went back into government in a pro bono kind of capacity as -- appointed by Governor Cuomo as chairman of Battery Park City Authority, and then when I retired from -- I was appointed by the Federal Reserve as Trustee in the BCCI matter as the sole shareholder of the First American

Corporation, which was the largest bank which had to be separated in its ownership, and I was

appointed to that position by Judge Joyce --
Federal Judge Joyce Hansgreen at the behest of
the Federal Reserve, so I've had a variety of
assignments, all of which have been terribly
interesting.

INTERVIEWER: Wonderful. Let's go
back and -- and if you would, tell me a little
bit about the DeGraff Law Firm. Do you know
their origins in representing CSEA?

MR. ALBRIGHT: I don't know it myself,
but my recollection is that the Association at
that time was anything but a union. It was, I
think, essentially an employee pay all insurance
group, and it more or less negotiated with the
various administrations for State salaries and
represented the political subdivisions through
what were called chapters at the time. I don't
know whether they still call them chapters, the
political subdivisions, but the genesis of the
-- the real genesis of the DeGraff relationship
was with a Dr. Tolman, who was I think perhaps
maybe one of the very first presidents of the

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Association.

And that was a time when its genesis

was essentially oriented around the reform of the Civil Service and I don't think that unions were a part of the political subdivisions or the states across the country. They were resented; unions were resented and feared because of their possible political influence and the growth of state and federal governments, state and local governments.

But the Association at that time did conduct discussions and negotiations and my impression is that the largest and most important glue that kept the Association together and its members was its house organ or its communications division, which was then called the Civil Service Leader, and the editor of the Leader, Paul Kyer, was a very significant political force who could buttress the role of Counsel or the President and had a lot of political clout, because all you had to do was put your picture in and there were real personalities who were very important at the delegates' meetings representing large

constituencies and at that time the State was probably -- the Association was probably, I would say, about 125,000 strong and during the

earlier part of -- of various Governors' roles, but principally in the time of -- until Al Smith, the Governor's role was a relatively small one, two-year terms, and the State service was composed of regulatory agencies, banking and insurance, which were important parts of the State Administration, but mostly Corrections and Mental Hygiene. They were the two largest sectors and they had the political clout at delegates' meetings if they stood together to really control the policy and the positions on salaries and the like.

INTERVIEWER: Well, tell me, while you're talking about the delegates' meetings, were those, you know, several day affairs? Were they generally held in Albany --

MR. ALBRIGHT: Yes, they were. Big time fun affairs. There were a lot of drinking and carousing and parties and dances and a lot of fun, but the delegates' meetings, and they were 2- or 300 strong, and they were held, I

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think, as I recall it, in the top -- a huge room in the top floor of the Ten Eyck Hotel, which there were two major hotels in Albany at the

time, the DeWitt Clinton and the Ten Eyck, and both are gone now, but they were really exciting places to be around.

And I used to tell lawyers if you could be on the top floor -- go up to the top of State Street and -- and you could go from the lowest court to the highest court in -- on one street, starting a case in we'll say City Court; then going to the next building in the County Court, which had the Supreme Court of Appeals; then going to the Appellate Division in the County Courthouse Building; then going next door to the highest court, which was in the middle, the Court of Appeals.

And I used to be able to walk up State Street hill and say hello and know everyone by name when I was a young lawyer walking up there. It was a very small town and you knew everyone, the cop on the corner and the like.

INTERVIEWER: The -- just to go back to the delegates' meetings, because I know that

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we -- as we read about the early history of the organization, it seemed that there was a -- an annual dinner that would be held. Was the delegates' meeting an outgrowth of that annual

dinner --

MR. ALBRIGHT: I don't know.

INTERVIEWER: -- a multiple-day affair?

MR. ALBRIGHT: I -- I believe that the annual dinner was a dinner normally that was put on at the end of the delegates' meeting, but the delegates' meetings, when we talked briefly on the telephone the other day setting this meeting up, I can recall that -- a comment that I made that everything that the delegates voted on was determined in resolutions and they would call for all kinds of things, ten percent increases in salary and the like, and almost all of those had to be introduced in legislation, so there was a salary bill or anything of that kind or Corrections -- peace officer status was a very large issue frequently, and -- which meant the ability to carry a gun and that was a bill, and all kinds of -- any kinds of reforms in Civil

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Service Law were always in resolutions passed by the delegates.

And I -- my principal assignment when I first went with John Kelly from the law firm

was to be the parliamentarian and I had to learn backwards and forwards Roberts' Rules of Order because it was a very important role as parliamentarian on how the meeting would be conducted because how you ruled was very important and I learned a great deal from that.

INTERVIEWER: So largely the agenda that you had to follow as an attorney representing the organization flowed directly from the will of the delegates at --

MR. ALBRIGHT: Exactly.

INTERVIEWER: -- their meeting.

MR. ALBRIGHT: And the resolutions they passed, and frequently you would go to them with proposals. For example -- two examples higher -- I think highly significant. One was a so-called McKinsey study on salaries and these would start with meetings with the Division of the Budget and the Budget Director, which was essentially a -- only had and I still think has

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only about six or eight exempt positions for the Director of the Division of the Budget, and so it was -- it was a really Civil Service professional group and over the many years of Democratic administrations, the salary increases

that had been approved, modest as they were for employees, was -- caused a compression because they were flat \$300 across the board, \$400 across the board, and this is a typical Democratic approach that everyone would be treated equally.

Well, as a result it compressed all the salaries at the top so that deputies were sometimes earning as much, or even more, than the commissioners, and so when Rockefeller came in he decided that he couldn't adequately recruit commissioners, couldn't pay them enough, so he came through his representatives to me and said: How would you like to have a significant accordian where everybody gets a significant percentage increase, that the percentages will be the highest for commissioners? Well, this is heresy with most -- but I explained to people that if we went to this deal that there'd be a

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lot of room for promotion upwards and right now we're -- the senior staff were compressed.

Now the significance of this is that the -- the Association consisted of politically the clout and control was in the numbers of

people who were represented by Corrections and Mental Hygiene, and as a result of that they had to go along and approve of it, and I remember going to some very tough Correction Officers and saying what do you think of this, and they almost knocked me across the room when I first explained that it would mean a commissioner would get a significantly higher percentage than across the board, but when they saw that it -- that they -- that the real costs of a salary increase are for the members and the commissioners would only be about two percent of the whole of the budget meetings, they saw the wisdom of that, so I considered this a huge, huge -- the -- and large issue for the Association Correction officers and the political side of things to see the wisdom of this, and it never could have happened in the Legislature without the support of the CSEA and

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it never could have -- and it took a lot of guts on the part of the Governor to propose it, but it came from a study by McKinsey and company.

INTERVIEWER: What kind of -- you're talking about the fact that you needed to go out and had to sell this, so what kind of give-and-

take was there between you as a Counsel to the organization and the leadership and then down to the rank and file. How did that work?

MR. ALBRIGHT: Well, it worked in the following manner. Leading up to a salary negotiation with the State, the Executive Director of the Association, who at that time was a man by the name of Joe Lochner, and Joe and a group of his staff and salaried people, and studies would be made and they would do comparative outside studies with private industry and submit those to the Civil Service Department and the Division -- there was a man by the name of Kelly who ran that, the Division of Classification, and I think that guy --

INTERVIEWER: Class and Comp.

MR. ALBRIGHT: Class and Comp. It was in the Civil Service Department at the time and

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they made a study and made a recommendation as to what would be called for, so the preliminary discussions with the Division of the Budget and the staff, internal staff, before it ever got to the delegates.

Then when the delegates convened,

that's when they had this huge array of people out in -- in the audience, and you could tell really what was -- whether you were receiving approval or disapproval just by looking at the audience and seeing whether they were with you or against you, and I started to tell you that I learned so much in this process.

For example, I remember I was being pilloried at one time for not introducing a bill and the bill -- I remember what the bill was. We had something like 80, 90 resolutions, and each of these had to be -- had an introductory number in the Senate and the Assembly and the like, and I would produce this list which the delegates had and there was a bill or resolution that was introduced every year that provided that the Governor would not have a veto power, through the Division of the Budget, of

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reclassifications and reallocations by the Civil Service when they would take a group and approve them.

For example, when I was Superintendent of Banks, I was astonished to discover after we got approval of a reclassification for examiners, to have it turned down by the

Division of the Budget, and I thought this was very brutal. But anyway I had this bill and I had not introduced it and I remember reacting to this man. He was a small guy, Sam I've forgotten his name, and I remember him standing in the middle with a little microphone on the angle and I got angry and I said don't -- Sam, don't you realize that the Governor will veto any bill that takes away his own powers?

And then Sam -- I had the group with me as it were. John Kelly had been missing and I had been a significant factor in -- in controlling the debate through Roberts' Rules, and I remember Sam said, How much do we pay your law firm? This is a democracy. I mean I'm paraphrasing. I don't know what his exact words were. And he said, And you went to Yale and

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then you went to Law School and you come from this fancy law firm and we pay you big money and you're telling me that you decided that you wouldn't bother to introduce the bill as a result of delegates' actions because you knew better? Who do you think -- and I saw this sea of disapproval suddenly and the good-will which

I had which was about this thing drifting off and I remember that I got up and I -- everyone -- Sam was about the same size as I was and I was really hot, I was younger, and I remember people saying to me they thought I was gonna go down and hit him, and I remember I saw this disappearance of all the good-will I had and he was absolutely right in criticizing me, and I walked down and reached for him and I took his hand and said, Sam, you're absolutely right. I'm sorry.

And he supported me no matter what I would say from then on and I had political support and this is how frequently you were able to get delegate support and votes for things that you were -- I was urging implementation of the McKinsey Bill. I was urging certain things

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and later on we had this -- this so-called five percent take-home pay when the State ran out of money and I remember -- I think it came from a man by the name of Galvin, who worked on the staff of the Association and was a studier of -- and he pointed out that changes in the Retirement Law were not paid for until the next year. The bill came in a year late.

At that time the employees were not contributing or contributing, I think, towards their retirement and it varied vastly but the average was certainly over eight or nine or ten percent and the Governor had explained to the Association that he didn't have any money and he couldn't pass it and he'd run out of dough and the Legislature didn't have any money, and so we said to him, How would you like to give us an 8.5 percent increase and it would cost you less than that and you wouldn't have to pay for it this year at all, and that's merely by reducing the contribution by 5 percent and with the tax -- taxes relating and the tax free and so forth, and he leapt at the idea and we sold it in 15 minutes.

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INTERVIEWER: This is Rockefeller?

MR. ALBRIGHT: Rockefeller.

INTERVIEWER: M-m-m. Very interesting.

MR. ALBRIGHT: But at the beginning of Rockefeller's Administration it was not a happy relationship because as most new administrations came in, they wanted to replace people with

their own people and we took the position that they were going too far with taking people who were in exempt in the labor class, in the construction indus...across the board and putting Republicans in there, so we started ragging in the CSEA, ragging Rockefeller, and I'm sure it's true today, but the CSEA by its numbers then had enormous clout politically.

For example, in Islip we could literally designate who the Assemblyman would be from Islip because there were so many Civil Service employees working in the hospital. It was a huge hospital and this was true in Upstate New York and Saranac and all kinds of places where Correction and -- we could dele...we had a lot of political clout and we -- in addition to

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that we had this newspaper, and newspapers in capital cities are very important.

That's why your role in -- in terms of -- of public relations has got to be so fascinating to you and you're -- because The Times Union, then there was The Knickerbocker News and The Times Union. The people who read those newspapers were the Civil Service residents of Albany, but the Legislature, and

that was the only time they -- this small capital city could influence by going to the Legislature and their famous authors. First there was Arvis Chalmers and then -- who was the other man who has written so many -- so much -- Kennedy. He was then covering the CSEA and I knew him then, covering the Civil Service meetings and Arvis Chalmers and what he wrote, and the role of Counsel, therefore, was a huge role and the other side of it was political.

In the negotiations with the State, its relationship with the Leader, its relationship with the president of the Association and how much he relied upon the Counsel, and all of these were intermingled with

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the huge political clout that the Association had.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. You talk about the political clout, being able to choose who the Assemblyman might be in a particular place. How much was that wielded directly because a lot of what I've read in the research was that particularly with the statewide offices, the posi...the organization didn't actually take a

stand on endorsing a candidate for Governor or a statewide office --

MR. ALBRIGHT: No, they did not.

INTERVIEWER: -- but put the candidates, give the candidates a platform to present their views to the membership --

MR. ALBRIGHT: They would at their meetings invite 'em to speak. They were given a platform but they did not endorse. That's correct.

You want to remember the tradition of the Association at that time was a Civil Service reform group that didn't dirty its hands with politics. It was Civil Service and it was anti-political as it were, so that -- but it -- and I

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don't think it exercised -- the Association exercised its control over Assemblymen and so forth, but I never went and spoke at a chapter meeting anyplace that the local Assemblyman or Senator wasn't present and making nice talk to the employees, particularly where they were in a segregated small containment where they were -- if they took a position against someone or for someone, it could make the difference between -- but there were very little of what I would call

open endorsement. It was quite subtle.

INTERVIEWER: Well, you -- you talk about the fact that you would take your marching orders as Counsel from the delegates and then have to go and draft legislation and try to --

MR. ALBRIGHT: Right.

INTERVIEWER: -- move it through the legislative process. Clearly in the legislative process there's often a lot of give and take and sometimes you have to compromise. How did you then feed back and get instructions on how to proceed if you weren't gonna get the whole loaf?

MR. ALBRIGHT: Well, it depended. If it was a Civil Service bill, as such, I remember

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I had a bill that no one thought I could ever pass and it had something to do with noncompetitive. After five continuous years of service they couldn't bounce you from that position. You had so-called tenure. And the Legislature and the Administration did not choose to lose the ability to appoint exempt positions in any degree, but occasionally the Legislature would -- would, so in response to your question I would have very little latitude

if it was a clear-cut resolution.

The one I cited earlier, the elimination of the veto power of the Division of the Budget. No, that either had to go exactly the way, but if it were a salary negotiation, then you would negotiate that, like the McKinsey Study, the five percent, and you would go back to the delegates when they met and they would either approve or not approve what was essentially a compromise, so it depended on the nature of the legislation.

INTERVIEWER: One of the -- one of the things that comes to mind the way you're describing this here and from what I've heard

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from others is that there is almost like a dichotomy of the organization; that there was a certain rigidity that the delegates would be offering resolutions and saying this is what must be done or should be done --

MR. ALBRIGHT: Right.

INTERVIEWER: But by the same token there seems to be a lot of flexibility within the organization to try to adapt to changing circumstances.

MR. ALBRIGHT: I think there was -- I

would go along with your premise except "a lot."
It's a phrase I don't think that -- if it was
ambiguous and different, it had to go back to
the delegates and they really had the control,
and that's why the relationship between Counsel
and having the good-will of correction officers,
I remember that occasionally I was not in sync
with the role, myself, of the law firm on
certain issues. I thought we should be doing
something differently, but my relationship had
to do with the editor of the Civil Service
Leader, the president of the Association, the
small key staff around the president, just the

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way it is, I'm sure, today in any organization,
whether you're talking about the White House or
you're talking about Albany and the Executive
Chamber, or you're talking about the CSEA.

INTERVIEWER: How much of the
Legislation that you would introduce was
specific to the State employees and how much
might affect political subdivisions?

MR. ALBRIGHT: Well, it took me a long
time to grasp that the political subdivisions
were, because they were so dispersed but also so

large in numbers and when we had large chapters, like Irving Flamingbaum's name comes to mind, that was Nassau County, and there there was really collective bargaining as -- in you'd go down to meet with the County Executive and you'd practically have pickets going up around and you'd hit 'em with resolutions and -- but I couldn't guess how much in the way of resolutions. Most of the activity as I recall it related to the State, but since Civil Service reforms all affected the political subdivisions and things like retirement matters were so-called death gamble, which was a constant

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theme of all the delegates, whether they were contributing too much or too little to the Retirement System, whether it was collecting too much, whether it was overfunded, those issues related to everyone in the State, the political subdivisions in the State, but if it related to, say, salaries, that was where the drama came, it seemed to me, and the flexibility that you referred to.

But coming back to the delegates for political sponsorship and survival, the one thing you couldn't do was you couldn't be a

company union, which was the charge constantly by competitors, the AFofL-CIO, which was then AFSCME, which was a small competitor at the time, that the CSEA was a company union.

And it was a huge debate which continually raged and then culminated when the Taylor Law came in and the Association actually changed, after my time, and became a real union member and part of a larger tradition.

And the significance of that was the difference between eliminating management and having various segments of collective bargaining

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in a collective bargaining contract. There was no collective bargaining rite, there were no grievance procedures. Grievance procedures were traditionally included in -- in contracts, grievance procedures, and collective bargaining contracts included grievance procedures.

And I remember one of the grievance procedures that was set up by Rockefeller under an Executive Order. I love to talk about that because it was so fascinating to me.

INTERVIEWER: Well, tell me a little more about that.

MR. ALBRIGHT: Well, Sal Corbin was then an Assistant Counsel and the Administration had been at war with the Rockefeller Administration and Dr. Tolman was then the Secretary to the Governor, and the war had to do with continuously criticizing the Administration for politicizing and firing and appointing too many people in the Highway Department, which was Transportation, which was a fairly significant size at the time, probably ranking not terribly far below Corrections and the Division of Mental Hygiene. The Health Department was small,

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regulatory agencies were small but important as hell in terms of State services in conservation and the like, but they were not large political forces the way Corrections and -- but anyway, this ended up with a -- an awareness on the part of the members that they had no rights to complain. It was all rigid under Civil Service.

And Corbin had been a collective bargaining lawyer on the outside but labor unions and he didn't think of grievance procedures in any way except as part of the collective bargaining contract, and I remember trying to convince him that we ought to have a

minimal agreement that an employee could file a complaint if he was aggrieved and so it was very simple and direct but hugely effective, in my opinion at least, a hugely effective grievance procedure.

The first thing an employee did who was aggrieved was to file a complaint against his supervisor, and the second thing -- then it went to the second stage which was the supervisor had to say yes or no, and then it was reviewed by the Commissioner.

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So if an -- because human nature is what it is, if you have a complaint and you have a grievance against someone, there's always a little bit of right or wrong on both sides and no one -- no supervisor likes to have his or her record subjected to scrutiny at the second level, so employees would file grievances and they'd all be settled because no one -- they worked it out and it was very rare that you'd ever have to go to the Commissioner.

Attica was one exception in the Correction Department. Some of the correction officers had told me about the problems they had

at Attica, so we filed a grievance, and it had to do with sanitary conditions for correction officers on the posts around Attica, and I can still remember it as if it were yesterday, and it was so effective and we won it, and it had to do with the fact that there was a tough Irishman by the name of McGuinness who was then in charge of Corrections, and you want to remember Corrections was then a very tough place.

The whole idea was to incarcerate and to remove people from communities, so we had

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Attica and other prisons, Dannemora. They were all isolated and removed. They were like fortresses and they -- in Attica the Correctional system would come to the union and complain and say, The problem is we have no sanitary conditions -- no facilities to go to the bathroom when we're up on -- and we can't leave, and so we have slop buckets and we have to go to the bathroom with windows and throw the slop bucket against the side when we're through and I remember getting the testimony before McGuinness and we produced these people who would say, Yes, the Chaplain's Office and the Family had a -- had a place right outside where their

children were out playing and we'd have to throw feces off the side of the -- of the prison, and the argument was it would cost the State a lot of money to put up water and McGuinness said, I've heard enough. That's it. We're gonna get the money from the Division of the Budget and he decided in our favor.

So there were areas where lawyers could help the staff and employees and be not a company union and a political group to support

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and there were Article 78 proceedings where you could sue and those were -- those became the special expertise of the DeGraff firm.

INTERVIEWER: Interesting.

VOICE: Coming up on 45 minutes on this tape.

INTERVIEWER: -- on the tape or --

VOICE: You've got 15 more minutes on this tape --

INTERVIEWER: Okay to keep going for right now or do you need --

MR. ALBRIGHT: Whatever you want.

INTERVIEWER: It's up to you.

MR. ALBRIGHT: Let's go.

INTERVIEWER: The -- tell me a little bit about the insurance program that -- that CSEA had. How important was that to the effectiveness of the organization in building its membership?

MR. ALBRIGHT: I don't really know the history of it, but I know that it was hugely important; that the insurance was so cheap, term insurance, that no one really could compete against it and it was the commissioners and

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everybody belonged to the CSEA, for the insurance if nothing else, which gave it huge numbers, and I think was the real reason why it was -- why it was so important.

INTERVIEWER: How did -- how did it work? Were there insurance agents who went out and sold membership in order to get the insurance and --

MR. ALBRIGHT: I don't really recall what -- well, it was a Travelers, and there was a firm in Schenectady, a brokerage firm, TerBush & Powell. I don't know whether they still represented --

INTERVIEWER: Yes.

MR. ALBRIGHT: They do.

INTERVIEWER: A different incarnation
but same company --

MR. ALBRIGHT: Same company. And that
was a big client to them and to Travelers it was
a huge client and, as I told you, it had a
fascinating -- I did know a little bit of the
background of why the Travelers was so effective
and competitive, because the employees, highly
democratic, the delegates would want to have it,

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the insurance program, thrown open for
negotiation and competitive bidding, which I
thought was very worthwhile but no one could bid
against the Travelers.

And the reason was the origins of
group insurance were in the early part of that
century, when there were many groups like the
Elks and so forth, that developed employee
payroll, group insurance, but it was absolutely
essential that you had to have new members
coming in because if you had everybody who was
getting old, they'd all have to be paid off
because everyone's gonna die, everyone. You,
me, everyone's gonna die, so sooner or later --
and if you don't have money coming in to support

the plan, so the State at the time, or the Insurance Department, enunciated a policy that said essentially that you couldn't just offer this very cheap insurance. You had to charge enough so that if you didn't have new membership you'd be able to pay up, so they had minimum rates and they established money.

As time went on the minimum rates became the floor and no one could compete

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against the minimum rates, but as they were newly established by -- by law, so that Travelers had a right and they had, because the CSEA had continuous new membership which was stable, they had a very worthwhile effective program.

So I think that the insurance, when I was there, was hugely important for the CSEA's growth and negotiating larger issues, like health insurance and number of days of sick leave and the like. This was made possible by virtue of the numbers, and as I described, the politics of it were subtle, not as endorsement prone and so I think my impression was that the Counsel's Office had a -- was not as influential in that political sense as it was after I left

there, and that would be because they could negotiate with the Governor for an endorsement and then take it back and hope that they could -- they're operating within the context of the -- but they became, I'm sure, a huge political factor.

INTERVIEWER: You referenced when we first began talking that one of the first

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projects you worked on when you came to the DeGraff firm was the State Insurance Program --

MR. ALBRIGHT: Health Insurance.

INTERVIEWER: -- the Health Insurance Program. I wonder if you'd talk a little bit more about that.

MR. ALBRIGHT: Well, I really don't know that much about where the Health Insurance Plan stands now, but the State Health Plan, it was always striking to me --

(Sound of bell chiming.)

INTERVIEWER: I guess that's a logical point for a break anyway.

MR. ALBRIGHT: Okay. Good.

(Laughter.)

MR. ALBRIGHT: It could be terribly

important. There was a trooper by the name of Donahue and he used to be one of the most effective public speakers I ever heard and he would have that whole Association in the palm of his hand and he could pass anything and there was a man from Downstate in a small -- a small group by the name of Sol Bendet and Sol was perhaps the most effective in-fighter and

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toughest guy and if he was with you and supporting you, you knew your back was provided 'cause he was tough.

And there were a lot of personalities that would make the President cringe, as it were, because he would lose control by the effectiveness of a speaker or by the toughness of the speaker and so they would have these constant board of directors' meetings and they'd last all night, and like most boards of directors they would go on and on and they'd have a cocktail hour beforehand, and as I told you, Joe Feily used to operate with a pitcher of martinis. It looked like water, and he'd keep going, and I remember my wife saying to me, You're spending a 90-hour work week trying to get a 35-hour work week for State employees. It

didn't seem quite right to her, you know?

INTERVIEWER: Where would they actually hold the board of directors' meetings? Was that also at the Ten Eyck?

MR. ALBRIGHT: No. In the beginning it was -- actually, they were held in -- on Elk Street in a restaurant in the basement. What

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was it --

INTERVIEWER: The 21, you mean?

MR. ALBRIGHT: No, not -- no, this was --

INTERVIEWER: Anthony's.

MR. ALBRIGHT: No, it was not Anthony's. It was a -- a restaurant down the street. It had a large basement floor; it was large enough to hold the delegates.

INTERVIEWER: Has --

MR. ALBRIGHT: They'd have a dinner. They'd have dinner and drinks and then the meeting and they would last to 11, 11:30, 12, 1:00, all meetings.

INTERVIEWER: This was -- and the officers for CSEA at that time were 17 Elk?

MR. ALBRIGHT: Well, they were --

first of all, when I first went with the Association it was an old radio station and had a glass front on it and I then was able to convince Joe Feily, who was the President, that we had to have larger space and they built a new building. And I don't think I was ever -- maybe I was --

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INTERVIEWER: That was 33 Elk.
Actually I believe they entered it in '67.

MR. ALBRIGHT: I may have been there just briefly because I remember Feily wanted to keep the -- in the President's office at the time a copy of the old -- the old fireplace, so there was a fireplace in the corner of his office. And then he was succeeded by a man named Dr. Wenzel, wasn't he?

INTERVIEWER: Ted Wenzel.

MR. ALBRIGHT: Ted Wenzel, and I don't know how long he lasted.

INTERVIEWER: He was about nine or ten years as President.

MR. ALBRIGHT: Right.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah. Now tell me a little bit about Joe Feily. What kind of man was he?

MR. ALBRIGHT: He was a remarkably warm, friendly guy who was very proud of his Irish routes, being Joe Feily, and I remember it was a lawyer in Albany who he used to get burned up at named Dan McNamee because he went to Holy Cross with him but he went to Yale Law

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School, and he always referred to the fact that he went to Yale and he never referred to the fact that he went to Holy Cross. But Joe was a heavy smoker, a heavy drinker, and he died too early of a heart attack and I was very fond of him. He was very kind to me and he was kind of an easy-going guy and could be influenced by anyone who would appeal to his warm, good nature.

And the people who really ran the Association were a small handful. Force -- political force was Sol Bendet representing the New York City area kind of, and Joe and he, I think, worked in the Motor Vehicle Department and that gave him his Albany base and in those days the President of the Association could normally survive and stay as President as long as he wanted and I remember that Paul Kyer and I

tried to convince Joe that he should step aside and have a successor and I think he did resign and I don't think he was ever happy with us or him for resigning -- resigning.

INTERVIEWER: How did you become President back in those days?

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MR. ALBRIGHT: He taught me more about -- I don't know.

INTERVIEWER: -- coming out of the -- the board of directors and building the --

MR. ALBRIGHT: Well, in the case of Wenzel -- in the case of Wenzel it was his friendship with Paul Kyer, as I recall, and I described the huge importance of the Civil Service Leader as -- for example, I had a column on the legislative process and he used to put my picture in and run this column and he used to rag me about -- if I was late getting the column together and we had to do -- have memorandums explaining every bill, introductions, and go -- so it was a big deal with Kyer, who died also fairly young, and then the Association, I think, broke its relationship with Finkelstein who was the publisher of the Leader, and was always behind the scenes, never played a direct role.

INTERVIEWER: Can you tell -- tell me a little bit more about Kyer because he was not employed by the Association. He was running the --

MR. ALBRIGHT: He was the editor of

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the Civil Service Leader but he controlled the pictures and the coverage. Well, he was the editor and he ran it and it came out every week and it went to every home and so if he put the picture of the Governor in or Lieutenant Governor or Republicans or the Democrats or whoever, he was important.

INTERVIEWER: This was going to all of the CSEA members.

MR. ALBRIGHT: Right.

INTERVIEWER: A statewide --

MR. ALBRIGHT: If you belonged to CSEA you got the Leader.

INTERVIEWER: Interesting. Tell me what -- you had mentioned earlier Frank Tolman. Did you ever meet Frank Tolman?

MR. ALBRIGHT: No. I knew his son who was a minister and I think fairly wealthy. I don't -- his widow, Tolman's son's widow is

still living but I remember -- later in his life he retired doing what he was doing and became a minister. He was a friend of my sister's and her husband who are still living in Albany, in their late eighties.

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INTERVIEWER: Tell me, when you first came to represent CSEA was Averill Harriman the Governor at that time?

MR. ALBRIGHT: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: What was the relationship like between the Association and Governor Harriman?

MR. ALBRIGHT: Well, compared with its relationship with -- Governor Harriman's personality was somewhat stiff and not -- not -- and he was not as actively engaged as I recall Rockefeller was with the Association and with labor unions and with all kinds of issues. It was not a -- he operated, I think, principally through the Civil Service Department and the Division of the Budget, but I never remember when I came in working for -- Kelly was still active and I was just kind of a kid carrying his briefcase, and I was a (inaudible) as Associate Counsel but called Counsel because the law firm

wanted to get a technically, highly-qualified person, Civil Service oriented, and I remember bringing and having a succes...bringing an Article 78 proceeding and surprised everyone

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that I won and I still remember what the case was about.

It was a man by the name of Weisberg and he used to send me when I lived in Albany all, for 10 or 20 years, roses on the day we won this case and it was an oral examination and when Al Weisberg came to me and said they had not followed the rules on the examination process and when I -- he told me about it he discovered -- I discovered that he was absolutely right. I mean there was no question that he -- the examiners had not followed principles of good -- of the announcement of the examination, and I brought -- what made it difficult, and Al Weisberg who was then working for the Department of Motor Vehicles, had the most pronounced and difficult stutter of any man I've ever known and he came in to me and said, H-h-harry, I wanted to t-t-t-tell you about this oral examination, and everyone thought there was

no chance of winning it.

INTERVIEWER: I see.

MR. ALBRIGHT: And I won the case. It was before a Supreme Court Judge Bookstein and

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he threw the case out and Weisberg won it and was appointed and became the highest-ranking, I think, public servant, civil servant, in the Division and -- but in this process time had gone on and I was the -- they hadn't -- they took time replacing John when he -- they didn't know whether he was gonna recover and he was ill for a long time and so, as a result, I became ipso facto the understudy who just owned the account, as it were, and so that's how it worked out that I became their -- and I remember my father not thinking much of my duties being a Civil Service lawyer as it were. He thought I should be more professionally organized, but as I described to you, the enjoyment of representing employees and this was a golden era for what we accomplished.

There was the State Health Plan that was implemented and came in, the five percent take home pay, many Civil Service bills, and the Administration. But most significant was in

salaries. The State employees during my time changed from getting minuscule salary improvements to significant salary improvements

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and so I think that Rockefeller was a very, very popular Governor with the Civil Service.

INTERVIEWER: Well, you mentioned that he had gotten off to a rocky start at the beginning of his Administration --

MR. ALBRIGHT: He did indeed.

INTERVIEWER: How did that change?

MR. ALBRIGHT: I remember we were going down to a meeting with the Governor and Dr. Tomin. It was held in a fan...the Gotham Hotel in New York City in a fancy, fancy -- we drove down. John DeGraff came down and we all went in and had this meeting and decided that -- that was the time when we worked the grievance procedure out so there were pieces on the table left to reverse the antagonism and I think Rockefeller said we would look at the appointments and the use of the -- but it was principally the drum beat in the Civil Service Leader criticizing the Administration for the appointments of all these political people,

Republicans, in the Highway Department that brought the meeting about.

So it was, I think, political --

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political damage. It was a rocky beginning.

INTERVIEWER: I think that even as we look at some of the later years of the Rockefeller Administration it doesn't appear from the coverage in the Leader that there was necessarily a warmer relationship. It seemed -- it still seemed to be quite adversarial which seems interesting in retrospect because as you describe it, the Rockefeller years really did bring an awful lot of improvements to the working conditions particularly of the State employees.

MR. ALBRIGHT: I don't understand that. I think that the Civil Service Leader and they had to always be worried about being -- accused of being in the pocket of the Administration, so I think that -- that -- and from the point of view of the employees he was certainly not perfect, but it was a golden period of accomplishment, I think.

INTERVIEWER: Do you remember some -- some specific --

MR. ALBRIGHT: Actually, I think that the Harriman Administration was the time when

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the Health Insurance Plan had been worked out and I think that Rockefeller benefited --

INTERVIEWER: M-m h-m-m.

MR. ALBRIGHT: -- from that. One of the things that I've always felt that makes housing so difficult as a political force for good is that now it takes so long to get anything built that a Governor or political leader is out of office by the time the job gets completed and they never can snip the ribbon and -- but in those times when you had a salary improvement it was instantaneous gratification.

INTERVIEWER: Do you remember some specific instances of interaction between Nelson Rockefeller and State employees?

MR. ALBRIGHT: Yes, the one that I mentioned, he -- almost on the table when -- agreed to the five percent take-home pay. He liked the idea and he had no problem understanding what it was about.

INTERVIEWER: That was -- that was basically the reduction in the pension

contributions?

MR. ALBRIGHT: Yes, and it ended up a

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proposal. It won't cost you any money this year that will produce about a -- produce about a seven and a half percent average return and will only be a five percent -- five percent reduction in the contribution of the employees which the State would pick up, agree to pick up. And I think that he agreed to that right on the tab...almost on the table.

INTERVIEWER: Now, how did -- what was the genesis of that proposal?

MR. ALBRIGHT: It was a -- as I recall, I mentioned earlier, I think that the idea came from Hank Galpin, who was in charge of the salary research and he came to me with the idea and I couldn't believe it was so ideal. There was no money in the till and the fact that it was delayed in its cost for a year made it absolutely a gemmy idea.

INTERVIEWER: M-m h-m-m.

MR. ALBRIGHT: And I give Hank the credit for that idea and the Governor and the people around him for picking up on it, but I don't think -- it was normally most of the

salary adjustments had been worked out by the

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Division of the Budget and we cleared them with -- Norman Hurd would clear them with the Governor and I'd be in his office with a group and he'd call up and say, this is what we propose to do. It is okay? And that would be it.

But -- so negotiations weren't one-on-one except in this particular case that I can recall.

INTERVIEWER: And do you remember any other instances of Governor Rockefeller actually being out and about among State workers, any kind of personal interaction?

MR. ALBRIGHT: What do you mean?

INTERVIEWER: Where he might have actually had one-on-one contacts with specific State workers?

MR. ALBRIGHT: No, I can't. I can't. He came to the Civil Service dinner and was acclaimed and so forth and was -- no, I can't. I don't remember him -- he was not prone to going out and visiting divisions or departments in the State. He operated principally out of

his office.

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INTERVIEWER: But he -- he certainly grasped the idea that there was a need to address certain issues with the -- the State work force.

MR. ALBRIGHT: Right. Well, he came to this need to attract people and he then commissioned the McKinsey Study and I think that we became a responsible group to him when we were able to get the political support of the delegates to what everyone in the Legislature had considered to be an impossibility because it proposed more for the boss and the deputies than the guy down the line. But in internal costs to the State, the real costs were for the increases for everyone.

INTERVIEWER: Tell me a little bit more about John Kelly. Describe him as a person and your relationship with him.

MR. ALBRIGHT: Well, he was the -- he became a partner in the firm when I first came there and he had been, as you will discover by reading the letters between he and his wife Vicky, he had been a student at Cornell when he went into the service in the ROTC and then went

all through the Africa campaign where he received the highest medals and was recommended and approved for the Congressional Medal of Honor, and turned down by the Eisenhower headquarters but approved by Patton. He was in the First Division.

Then he was sent to England and was wounded on the first day of Normandy and returned back, thought that he would not survive, so he -- and he was recovering from wounds in his leg and had probably the first surgery, plastic surgery, that came around right after World War II and was all through law school where he was an excellent student and editor-in-chief of the Cornell Quarterly.

And he -- he was just a wonderful guy and very warm and hard-working and never -- never talked about his -- to me, to his war injuries, had a limp, lived life to the fullest, didn't save any money, had a beautiful big Buick convertible. I remember he toured around and large family out in -- lived in Loudonville, lived it up and I would have done the same had I been through what he had been through, but he

was an invalid and recovering for two or three years.

INTERVIEWER: How interesting. You referenced -- did you have a role in setting up the Kelly scholarship?

MR. ALBRIGHT: I was an advocate of it and was so upset when he died, and as I described, the law firm was not particularly sympathetic to the creation of this fund because they thought it reflected adversely on the law firm not being supportive and not taking care of its own, as it were, and I knew that John had died.

He had lived it up as a result of his war -- he was -- he died of what was called malignant hypertension, which was high blood pressure, at a very early age, and I think it was early forties, and then shortly thereafter his wife had a cerebral accident and died, so Jimmy Kelly and all of the five Kelly kids -- I really worried and I remember going to people who were friends in the Corrections Department and delegates and it was opened and agreed upon as a deduction from the employee payroll, which

was another very significant part of -- payroll deduction was a matter that grew -- but that started, I think, a little bit with the payroll deduction for the insurance payment so the Association became an important place for mechanical collection of dues and operated closely within the State and with the political subdivisions in its putting together many of the -- and I would just guess that many of these relationships still exist and are important clues which means that the Association's powerful position and largeness in AFSCME is an important ingredient, even though it's operating now as a union in collective bargaining under the Taylor Law.

INTERVIEWER: To go back to Jimmy Kelly for a moment, you had talked about the fact that he was involved in the effort to --

MR. ALBRIGHT: Not Jimmy.

INTERVIEWER: Oh, I'm sorry.

MR. ALBRIGHT: John.

INTERVIEWER: John Kelly -- to have preferential hiring --

MR. ALBRIGHT: Right.

INTERVIEWER: -- for veterans in the aftermath of World War II, but that wasn't actually a position that CSEA took up and at some point thereafter he was representing CSEA.

MR. ALBRIGHT: Well, that's not accurate.

INTERVIEWER: Okay.

MR. ALBRIGHT: I think that the Association, which was started with Civil Service reform, was seeking to get a moderation of the special benefits that veterans got on -- when they took -- my understanding was that the existing law was that if you were a veteran you went up to the top, whether -- wherever you came out on the Civil Service exam, and Kelly's -- and the Association wanted something which was not -- not to eliminate it but to change it around a little bit, and that's described in -- if you've ever read that book I can find it, tell you where it is -- oh, here it is. I think it's (pause) the Mitchell Bill.

When he arrived in Albany, John immediately became involved in a controversy over the Mitchell Bill or Amendment No. 5, a

constitutional amendment on the November ballot, that would have the effect of preventing an expansion of preferences, for veterans preferences, under the New York State Civil Service Law.

John Kelly supported the amendment which brought fire from elements of various groups, including the disabled and there is material here that quotes the text of Kelly's position on the bill and the present constitutional preference for veterans I consider is basically unsound for two reasons:

First, the scales are weighted much too heavily in favor of the veteran, whether disabled or nondisabled. Any disabled veteran who takes or passes a competitive examination with the minimum passing mark automatically goes to the top of the eligible list, so this was a moderation of that which, given the background of the Association -- I knew nothing about this. This happened before my time. But John was accused of being hired for this purpose, being a veteran, and a highly distinguished war veteran, which he denied vigorously but I'm sure it was

in the back of the minds of everybody; that he was an ideal person. No one could point a finger at John.

INTERVIEWER: Can you tell me -- you also mentioned Joe Lochner. Can you tell us about him and his role in directing the organization?

MR. ALBRIGHT: I think you told me that his son is still working for the Association?

Well, John -- Joe was the man who ran the Association and he was principally oriented at that time to machines that made payroll deductions, the cards that made the Association function, so he was a key administrator. But he also played a major role on State proposals and working together and staffing up the salary committee and the like.

INTERVIEWER: What kind of person was he?

MR. ALBRIGHT: Tough, able.

INTERVIEWER: What kind of staffing did the Association have at that time, do you recall? What kind of things did they do?

MR. ALBRIGHT: Well, the whole basement floor was IBM machines, cards, punch cards in those days, as I recall, and that was a really huge responsibility because the Association's funding came from collecting payroll deductions and the like in insurance, so every card had to be different and all these had to be distributed and so it was a high administrative responsibility for Joe, just running the Association, but everyone else worked for Joe there. The only person who didn't, as it were, work for Joe or was on his staff, was the Counsel and the -- who worked for the DeGraff firm, and the Civil Service Leader editor.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. The -- do you recall when you went to work for the Rockefeller Administration? Was it pre-Taylor Law or right after --

MR. ALBRIGHT: It was pre-Taylor Law.

INTERVIEWER: It wasn't pre-Taylor Law? Do you --

MR. ALBRIGHT: I think the first day I was there was the beginning of the garbage

strike.

INTERVIEWER: Which was about '65?

MR. ALBRIGHT: I don't know. I've got -- I've got a resume of the garbage strike that I did.

INTERVIEWER: M-m h-m-m.

MR. ALBRIGHT: So I could tell you exactly, but I don't --

INTERVIEWER: Okay. That isn't important. You know, we could certainly look it up.

What was -- what was your perception when you went to work for the Administration? How did that change your perspective --

MR. ALBRIGHT: Well, I had an agreement that I would not have anything to do with negotiations with CSEA; that I'd been recused, and it was a very difficult period because I felt I knew a lot about this and had strong views, but I was not really party to it. It was negotiated exclusively by Al Marshall, the secretary, and then the newly organized PERB, when PERB was set up, and you might remember who was the man who was the first

director of PERB?

INTERVIEWER: Robert Helsby?

MR. ALBRIGHT: Helsby. Helsby was out in -- operating out of the Division of Civil Service and was not within the Executive Chamber, so he -- he had the responsibility to establishing the basic premises of collective bargaining for the exempt and leader class and the like.

But my impression is that the Taylor Law was -- although a lot of people complained about it, the political subdivisions, has been extremely successful over the years in avoiding disastrous strikes.

INTERVIEWER: Was that -- was that a real concern? Was that -- when you were with the CSEA was that ever really an issue that would come up; that that might be a way to leverage the Association's position?

MR. ALBRIGHT: Strikes?

INTERVIEWER: To go on strike, yeah.

MR. ALBRIGHT: Well, the -- the strike was for...forbidden by the Condon-Wadlin Law and it was a Draconian law which -- and New York

City operated completely outside of this, so the Association did not tend to operate, as I recall it, with the thought of a str...calling a strike to enforce its subtle political influence that could end the ragging of an Administration, the issuing of releases and saying you're bums.

INTERVIEWER: Basically using the Court of Public Opinion --

MR. ALBRIGHT: Right.

INTERVIEWER: -- and internal pressure.

MR. ALBRIGHT: Right.

INTERVIEWER: And tell me a little bit more --

VOICE: -- sirens -- back on the air.

VOICE: Okay.

INTERVIEWER: Anything else on your list --

VOICE: No.

INTERVIEWER: Well, just tell me a little bit more about the internal debate during your time within CSEA vers...of the idea of an Association versus the Union. It seems that that's something that for a long time occupied a

lot of the thinking of the organization on how

will it proceed.

MR. ALBRIGHT: I don't think it did.

INTERVIEWER: Okay.

MR. ALBRIGHT: Not particularly in my time. Then the -- the Association considered itself above it all. Above -- better than a union, and actually was a small contending group that was more aggressive and didn't know how to get things done, which was not true at all but -- far more aggressive.

So I don't think that -- that joining a union was a significant thought at that time. When I was in the Rockefeller Administration I know that Rockefeller thought that it was inevitable the CSEA would be a part of a union, particularly after the Taylor Law, and my recollection is that he was personally -- I didn't participate in this but he was personally -- he had a classmate from -- from Dartmouth who was a -- oriented towards organized labor, Vic Perella, and Vic was always trying to negotiate a relationship between some friendly union so that the Association could move through the

transition smoothly and not be too aggressive

from the point of view of Governor -- I think the time that the thought -- that the Rockefeller Administration had about unions was the big bad boy was the Teamsters and the Teamsters had relationships with large groups in New York City so that the Administration, after the garbage strike, was terribly concerned, I think, about relationships with strikes. It was the Administration that was largely concerned about that rather than the Association.

INTERVIEWER: Interesting.

MR. ALBRIGHT: I'm not sure that I'm right, but I think that's -- I think that's about where it was.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. I've asked this of other people, and based upon your experiences with the Association over many years, why do you think this is an Association that's been able to last for close to a hundred years?

MR. ALBRIGHT: I -- I have not -- I'm not au current about where it stands now, but it had a running start over everyone else. It had certain fundamental constituencies, it seemed to

me, ranging from insurance and the need for collective bargaining and -- I think that that's

the reason and I think it's probably had pretty good leadership from its various presidents, lawyers, and my impression is that the over-significant role of the law firm and the attorneys has been diminished and that the relationships that existed are somewhat different but that in fact that the base of the organization, payroll deductions, being referred to now as the Union, representing and articulating the views of its employees through grievances and other matters has been effective and has meant that people are satisfied with what they've got at not too great a cost.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. And for you personally, some of the experiences, how did they carry through to your later career?

MR. ALBRIGHT: Well, my wife says I was always a bleeding heart liberal and I've had different roles and I've concluded in my own life and in antiquity having had terrible bouts -- I've had two bypass operations, colon cancer and all kinds of things, have caused me to think

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back and believing that people make the difference.

I used to -- I really resented the idea of being the appointments officer because I really thought that that was a political job in the State Administration. I think back over my life and I enjoyed the most public service. I describe to people that when you -- the ambit of your curiosity is so different.

If you're working for a banking department as a superintendent you tend to think in banking matters, but when you're in the Governor's Office you think of everything in the State, so I was a parochial lawyer in Albany, New York and I got to know the whole state of New York. I traveled all around and I started that with the CSEA and I learned a lot about the state and how wonderful the State employees really were, in my opinion, and how much good they do.

And I was appalled, for example, when I heard the President say, you know, something about anti-government programs but we'd have to be for Medicare. This is a government program

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administered by civil servants and it's the most effective program we've ever had, so I was a dedicated believer and started that way with --

I started working with the CSEA on the value of people and personalities and leadership.

It's described to me that during the post-Depression period was the golden era of Civil Service in New York State because they had such incredible talent, people who couldn't get a job anyplace else, would have been high mucky-mucks anyplace else, went to work for the State and came through the merit system and rose up and in New York City and New York State we were the leaders.

We had the resources in every area. We were the leaders of banking, Civil Service reform, insurance and everything else, and I don't think that's quite as true, but I don't think that anyone can kind of catch up with us. We're up there now and I think the CSEA is probably up there now, right where they ought to be.

(Conclusion of interview of Harry Albright.)