

**COOK COUNTY COURT ORAL HISTORY PROJECT**

**Judge Sidney A. Jones III**

**Interview**

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HST 483: Oral History  
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## Abstract

On Saturday, October 27, 2007, two Loyola University graduate students interviewed Sidney A. Jones III for the Cook County Court Oral History Project. This interview occurred in room 2504 of the Daley Center in Chicago, Illinois. Kelly O'Connor served as the primary interviewer while Laura Malmberg provided secondary support. The goal of the interview was to collect reminiscences from Judge Jones about his experiences as both a lawyer and judge. Jones began the interview discussing his childhood and educational background. His decision to enter law school came after attending his sister's YWCA lecture on institutionalized racism. After twelve years in private practice, Jones became a judge in 1985. Jones discussed his achievements as a judge including his success at reducing the backlog in the courts system.

In the following transcription, we edited Judge Jones's words as little as possible with the exception of including some punctuation for readability and clarity. For long pauses we used "...". For shorter pauses commas sufficed. We left in uhs, uhms, you sees, and other idiosyncratic phrases Jones uses in addition to his repeated words. Words spoken with emphasis are capitalized. In a few areas, words proved undecipherable and are noted as such in brackets. For stuttered words or repeated syllables, we separated the syllables with a hyphen such as po-police. Any uncompleted syllables appear in brackets as an[d]. Any noises or comments made by speakers are in brackets and italicized. Judge Jones's words appear in plain text and the interviewer's words in bold text. For the first sections spoken by each party, we included their name before the text block. For the beginning of subsequent sections, we inserted the speaker's initials. Although our goal of staying true to Judge Jones's speech and experiences may make the transcription somewhat difficult to read, we hope that researchers will appreciate our attempts to preserve the unique speech of Judge Jones.

(0:02)

**Kelly O'Connor:** Today is Saturday, October 27, 2007. We're in the Daley Center Room 2504. My Name is Kelly O'Connor, and along with Laura Malmberg we'll be interviewing today Judge Sidney A. Jones III for the Cook County Oral History Project. Thank you again Judge Jones for agreeing to participate in this project. We greatly appreciate it. Uhm, just to start the questions off very soft, huh, tell us a little about your background, a, where were you born? Are you a native Chicagoan?

**SJ:** I was born and bred in this briar patch [*Interviewers giggle*]. Uh, I grew up uh, I was born on the South Side um in Provident Hospital. I grew up in uh Woodlawn.

(0:47)

**KO:** Okay.

**SJ:** At 66<sup>th</sup> and Ingleside I attended uh Wadsworth Elementary School and Hyde Park High School. And from there I went to the University of Illinois. After which I was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant in the Marine Corps. I was in the Marine Corps for four and a half years, and resigned my commission in the Marine Corps to go to law school. I went to law school at Northwestern University. After that I practiced law for approximately twelve years and then went on the bench for sixteen and a half years. I retired from the bench early to go into a marketing company with my wife.

(1:37)

**KO:** Since you said you were a native Chicagoan and you grew up in the Woodlawn area predominantly, did, what was growing up there like? What kind of neighborhood was it?

**SJ:** Oh...we were one of the first African-American families to integrate our block, but I wasn't really conscious of that. Uh, I mostly remember it as an African-American community, uh a middle-class community, and ...was close enough to my school so that I could walk to school every day.

(2:14)

**KO:** To your grammar school?

**SJ:** Yes, and high school, I mea[n] u-usually I walked to hi, to high school as well. I lived at 66<sup>th</sup> and Ingleside...um, when I . . . let's see I believe that when I was in college, my parents moved from there in to the Prairie Shores uhm development at 90, no at 29<sup>th</sup> and uh King Drive...uhm atop a uh complex of apartment buildings...Yes that's right a they did that when I was in college. And, after...I was in or while I was in law school I got married. And initially my wife and I lived in Lake Meadows which was which was a development slightly south of Prairie Shores. Uh we then bought the building in which I grew up at 6611 Ingleside. It's it's a two flat apartment building and we lived there uh for a time and moved from there to, uhm into Hype Park. From Hyde Park into uhm...uh what's that community called, uh...uh Jackson Park Highlands. And from there my then

wife decided to leave Chicago in general and me in particular so she moved down to Atlanta. And I moved on the North Side for about a year, uh that was at the time that I got on the bench. I guess she felt we could then afford to get divorced [*Interviewers giggle*]. As a matter of fact she said so [*Interviewers giggle*]. Uh, but anyway, an[d] uhm, I found a condominium apartment which I rented for a couple of, for, for three years uh where I now live and then I bought the unit from the owner. And I live there today. And I've been there for or since 1986.

(4:52)

**KO:** So you've lived all over the Chicago area?

SJ: Oh, well here and there, but chiefly on the South Side. I was only on the North Side for minute.

(5:05)

**KO:** Since you lived predominantly on the South Side do you think that influenced you at all in your decision to become a judge or?

SJ: No, uhm, the mai[n], well first of all yo-you have uh w-we probably should go a step back. My father, of course, always wanted me to go into law 'cause he was a lawyer. I being hard-headed resisted that at every turn, at every er-possibility. And, so I uh developed an interest in law at that time you, you'll, well y-you may not remember but at that time there there existed the draft and I had no intention of going through all the

machinations that people went through to avoid the draft. And I figured that my best experience would be as an officer so when I was in college I was in Navy ROTC. You know why Navy ROTC? Well I quickly-I quickly determined it was the best unit on the campus. It was Navy, Army, and Air Force and I figured the Navy was the best because at the time there was compulsory ROTC and you had to be in it for two years. The fella, the fellas had to be in it for two years. Uhm, well...since everybody was there because they didn't want where they did not want to be, and there was a lot, there was of course a lot of grumbling and everything and I didn't want to be around that uh the Navy ROTC didn't take the uh, uh didn't take that, didn't have a two year program. Uhm, so everybody who was there was there because they wanted to be. And then, uh shortly after that I determined that the uh most squared away midshipmen were those who intended on going into the Marine Corps so I opted to go into the Marine Corps. And, after graduation I was commissioned, uh I went to artillery school I . . .

James F. Henry: I wanted to go get you a cup of coffee but I want to know what you want in it.

SJ: Nothing, just the coffee.

JH: Black, straight-straight black?

SJ: Straight.

JH: Can I get you guys water?

(7:21)

**KO:** I'm good thank you very much.

**Laura Malmberg:** I'm okay.

**JH:** You're good. And then uhm I'll drop it off and then I have to run over to the federal court I'm judging a moot court thing [undecipherable].

**SJ:** Okay, okay. Very good, very good I appreciate the coffee.

**JH:** Everybody of course volunteered but I volunteered at the last [undecipherable] [*Jones says mmhmm*][*Interviewers make noise in agreement*]. So you could, just when you leave just uh just make sure that that door is closed [*Interviewers say okay*]. You can leave my chambers open because I'm coming back this afternoon. So don't worry about locking anything just that the door is closed. Okay?

(7:43)

**LM:** Okay great. Okay, thank you.

(7:44)

**KO:** Okay, thank you.

JH: Black.

SJ: Okay. Uh...so I went to artillery school. I went to, well first of all officer's basic school at Quantico then the artillery school was an Army school which was okay [*All chuckle*]. Uh, uh then I went to Vietnam for thirteen months and then the rest of my time was in Camp Lejeune, North Carolina. Now, my sister, whose name is Roma Stewart, uh was a very able civil rights attorney here in Chicago. Uh, she was just starting law school at Georgetown...and, I would go up to see her from time to time and, even before she was in law school, uh, on weekends. And during the time that she was in law school, uhm, I started, that's when I began toying with the idea because I was interested in exploring my life's options. And so I took the LSAT, and, uh you could tell how enthusiastic I was about going into law school because I only applied for one [*Interviewers chuckle*] when most students apply [*Interviewer says mmhm*] to ten or fifteen, I applied for one, Northwestern uhm under the theory that if I was admitted fine, if I wasn't, hey, I was in the Marine Corps. So, but uhm, with things in this posture, uh, uh, I observed a couple of things. First of all, several uh not several but a number of Marine Corp officers, senior officers, were discussing my career with me in the Marine Corps. And it became obvious to me very soon that they were interested in me, uh not just because I was a good officer, I, uh, I was, but uhm they were interested in African-American officers in the Marine Corps. At that, at that time there were very few, and...uhm, and I, I was sensitive to that and, uh frankly I appreciated the, uh, the concern of the Marine Corps. Uh, I thought that if I stayed in I might even become the first black general in the Marine Corps. That wasn't to be, uh another one made it before I would have made it. So, but anyway, on



one trip up to Washington I attended a YWCA seminar that at which my sister was a panelist. And, she uh her her topic at the panel discussion was institutionalized racism and her discussion sparked a great deal of comment. And I found myself right in the middle of it all, uh talking and speaking out and everything else. And, I got quite stimulated by it all and at that moment I determined that when I got ba[ck], as soon as I got back I was going to send a comment down to the Marine Corps, a letter resigning my commission and sending my \$100 deposit to Northwestern Law School, which I did. And, uh, you have to normally allow, er, you have to normally allow ninet[y], that's usually a ninety-day process and this was in July and law school was starting in September and so I had to also ask the commandant to waive that requirement which he did, and so I, I was grateful for that. Uhm and when I checked out of the Marine Corps I had to be interviewed, I had to have my exit interview with the division commanding general, uh I'm going into this for a reason, uh, it was General Ryan and he asked me where I was going. I said, "Well I'm going to Northwestern Law School." He said, "Well when you get there, look up uh Bill Chamberlain. Now he's a professor there and he and I were lieutenants together on Tarawa." So, now that was an island campaign in World War II you see. Uhm, so when I got to the law school, uh immediately after registration, I of course checked in with the Colonel. Eh he was, he's a retired, he was a retired colonel and uh he and I developed a very, very close, warm friendship. Uh, the students loved him, uh, he was he was uh, the epitome of a retired Marine Corps officer. He walked around, he-he marched around, he never walked anywhere, he marched and he always had a close cut hair-haircut [*Interviewers chuckle*] and everything. And, and the wonder of it is that here we are on a college campus, even though the law school was

removed from the main college it's still essentially a college campus, in the midst of all the anti-Vietnam War uh sentiment, but the students loved him. Uh, he made no secret of the fact that he was a retired Marine officer. Uh, he thought that it was poor national policy to be in Vietnam, so I guess the students loved him for that. But uh on other matters, uh particularly the administration, the law school administration's uhm relationships with its black students and its efforts to get more in, he was very active and interested in that for which reason the black law students appreciated him in particular. Uhm, so after law school I uh, well while in law school . . . in my first year I was an aldermanic secretary to Alderman Fred Hubbard...who was involved in some illegal activ[ity], uh who was convicted of some illegal activity, I forget what it was because I wasn't that, I wasn't that closely affiliated with him. Uh, it was a position that that he allowed me to have and I did some work for him, but uh my main job was to get through law school. After that I became a, uh a law clerk in the, oh, uh Corporations Counsel's office of the city of Chicago. I was assigned to the Building and Housing division and here I thought this would be excellent for me because it would be my chance to get back at these terrible slumlords, you know, because I would have a chance to prosecute in the Building Court under Supreme Court rule 711. But when I started doing that I began to observe who was in the Building Courts and who were not in the Building Courts as defendants. And uh, uhm mo[st] the overwhelming number of the defendants were owners of one of two-flat and three-flat apartment buildings. I never once saw, uh, I never once saw a person who I regarded as a big-time slumlord in the Building Court. And I rapidly came to my own conclusion that this was not a serious effort to maintain buildings in Chicago. Uh, uh maybe there was some serious effort at maintaining

buildings and neighborhoods in Chicago, but this was not it because it was such an abysmal failure all the way around. Uh, uh at least I, at least that's what I saw from my perspective. Uhm . . . and that's not to say that it was not an honest attempt to maintain buildings and housing. Perhaps it was. I, I make no judgment on that. I just saw it all as very much of a mandate approach, uh because it was handled strictly from an ordinance violation perspective and there was, there was uh I I could, I determined that there were just so many more factors involved than simply you're violating an ordinance. I also thought that many of the ordinance violations were picayune in nature. Uh, u-u-uh, I can't begin to tell you of the, it's uh of the seemingly high number of elderly couples who were hauled into Building Court because they have a torn screen in a window, uh things like that. Of course, there was a special court for the demolition of buildings, but uh to me it was a wonder that every building wouldn't drift inexorably into that building. So, uh whata-whatever preservation of neighborhoods there was going to be this was not going to be anything approaching a total answer. I didn't quite know what a total answer would be but this was not it. After that uhm, uh I-I was, I was with the city for a year and a close friend of mine in law school was a law clerk with Judge Ellis Reid. Uh he was who, of course, was not a judge at the time, but uh he was at the firm McCoy, Ming & Black which was at the time the oldest continuously existing black law firm in the country. And uh, and many judges came out of that including Judge Leighton who's being interviewed down the hall right now as we speak. Uh, uh Chauncey Eskridge came from that office. Uh, Loring Moore who was one of the early black judges in the Chicago area came from there. Wa[s], it used to be Moore, Ming & Leighton then Judge Leighton went on the bench it became, no Judge Moore went on the bench and it became

McCoy, Ming & Leighton. And then Leighton went on the bench it became McCoy, Ming & Black. And uh Ellis Reid became a judge, Sophia Hall became a judge, Sidney Jones became a judge [*Jones laughs a bit*], uh al-a lot of judges came out of that office. Uh, so those of us who remain are very proud of our affiliation with that office. Uhm, anyway I had a chance to be a law clerk in that office and I worked mostly with Ellis Reid, who at the time was a special prosecutor in the Hanrahan prosecution uhm under Barnabus Sears and uh, uh Howard Savage was part of that team who ulti[mately] who was a uh fine, very fine criminal lawyer of the day. He ultimately became a judge himself and there were two other lawyers on that team who I don't recall. But uh, it was very interesting for me to follow along, uh with that prosecution. Uh, I was involved in a number of other uh civil and criminal cases that uh Judge Reid handled as a lawyer and got involved in many of the other matters that were handled by, uh some of the other lawyers and, and there I, I uh, uhm... Thank you for not getting Starbucks.

JH: Nope. Premium roast [undecipherable].

SJ: Did you know that there was a poll done by a panel of coffee experts? They they evaluated McDonald's, Starbucks, Dunkin' Donuts, and somebody else's and all of them agreed that McDonald's was the best and Starbucks was the worst. Now I was surprised when they found McDonald's the best 'cause I hadn't had it in a long time, but I was not surprised about the Starbucks 'cause Starbuck's is nasty [*Interviewers laugh*]. It really is. I I don- I don't know why. Do yo-y'all like Starbucks?

(20:14)

LM: Uhm, I don't drink very much coffee. And when I do I usually make it myself, so I don't usually go...

JH: [Undecipherable] I've got to run. So, I'll see ya.

SJ: Okay. Thank you.

JH: Thank you very much.

SJ: Mmhm.

JH: My chambers will be open if you wanna use the bathroom.

SJ: Thank you.

(20:26)

KO: Thank you.

SJ: Uhm, uh, when I'm in Starbucks it's not to drink coffee. Okay, we were talking about McCoy, Ming & Black [*Interviewers laugh*] one, okay resume, oh you had that on, okay. Uh one of the, uh things that I really appreciated about McCoy, Ming & Black is that I learned professionalism. A lawyer is an advocate for the lawyer's client. It does not

MATTER what your personal political views are. I learned that from uh, chiefly from uh al- from a lawyer named Aldus Mitchell, uh who was very active in the NAACP in Chicago. Aldus represented uhm, the board of election commissioners. He also represented many different and uh, and and a variety of uh candidates in nominating petition challenges. Uh, most of them were for the, a candidate supported by the regular Democratic Party. Some of them were not and it didn't matter. As a law student I was visiting the courts one day and visited um uh, don't you dare, don't you dare tell anybody I forgot this woman's name but it'll come back. She was one of the early black woman judges and uh she, she was in the uhm, her name will probably come to me sooner or later. Uhm, but she had a very rich history in her life. Uhm, uh she was involved in the United Nations, all kinds of things, and she was in the uh, Forcible Detainer Courts for a long time. Edith, Edith Sampson. And Aldus Mitchell was arguing a case in front of her very vigorously for a landlord and while, eh which he pre-he prevailed. And while he was drawing up the order some other case came up and Judge Sampson said, "MADAM, you need a lawyer. Mr. Mitchell represent this lawyer, repre-represent this woman." "Oh judge you can't do-jus don't do that to me." "Oh you represent her." So he finished writing his order, the case was passed, he took her into the interview room, talked with her for a little bit, came out and JUST AS VIGOROUSLY [*Jones taps finger on table*] argued her case against her landlord who was represented by a lawyer and won. So, oh, oh, uh that affected me and my uh, willingness to accept people uh as clients regardless of what [*cell phone rings*], excuse me. To accept uh, uhm to accept as a client anyone regardless of my own personal political views. Uhm, uh I represented an organization candidate in a nominating petition case against a who-who who gave me the job of

knocking off all their people, uh al-all of his opponents. Uh, and we almost got all of them. Uhm, but in that same, in that same session I also, uhm I also got to represent people who were part of the independent movement and in each case the sole determining factor was the payment of an attorney's fee you see. Because when you pay a lawyer an attorney's fee you are hiring a professional, you're not hiring a conscience. And that taught me a great deal, all that experience taught me a great deal about the, about what I view as the proper role of a lawyer in society, because if uhm ev-even the most strident criminal lawyers uh, you'll never get one to say that he approves of criminal activity. But yet the lawyer is an advocate for his client, you see. So uhm, uh, so anyway and progressing as a lawyer, uh I handled a wide variety of cases, civil and criminal, a number of civil rights cases and became uh active in the Cook County Bar Association, which is the association of uh mostly black lawyers in the Chicago area, black lawyers and judges. In 1983 I became the president of the Cook County Bar Association and...before actually let me go one step back. Before that I was uh-uh the Cook County Bar Association had a, uh a number of public hearings having to do with police misconduct which is a perennial issue in our community. Uhm, if you were interviewing uh Judge Pincham right now, he would probably tell you that one day does not go by when somebody doesn't call him complaining about some police officer. But uhm, uhm at this time the, uh a there were uhm a police officer was killed by two brothers...I forget the name of the brothers, um maybe the Williams's, I don't know. But, uhm there was a uh a drastic dragnet manhunt and during this manhunt police officers just invaded the homes of many, many people in the black community with very little cause or very little thought to whether uh uhm it would lead to the apprehension of the offenders. And, so in

response to all that we conducted a number of, uh of public hearings uh including asking the uh w-we asked for the Commissioner of Police and the State's Attorney and uh and people to appear, which of course they didn't. Uh but uh I was the uh counsel for uhm for that, that for that commission, it was established by the Cook County Bar. After that I became the president, and while president uh of course when you are president of the Bar Association you have to attend lots of different functions. Well, I did uh meal functions, that is dinners and banquets and things like, things of that nature. And, in a series of them I found myself seated on the dais next to Justice Dan Ward. And, uh he and I uh had a number of discussions about what I thought about court administration, uh the law in general thing, things like that. And one day i[t]-i, the thought occurred to me you know maybe I should become a judge. So uh maybe I should, maybe I shouldn't. Well, uh I looked at it just like I looked a-uh remember how I told you about my attitude about going into law school? Well, I wrote my, I wrote a letter to the three justices of the uhm Supreme Court of Cook County uhm, who at the time were Ward, uh Seymour Simon,...who was the third...I forget who that third one was. But uhm I wrote the letter expressing my desire and availability and after that I promptly forgot about it. And my law practice was beginning to improve because uh I was getting uh public interest cases an[d] uh public cases, I was representing the CTA and things like that. Uh all that was, was really part of the benefits of the Harold Washington administration uhm because things were opening up for African-American lawyers in terms of getting their fair share of public business. I didn't get a huge amount of it or I wasn't getting huge amount of it, but it was developing. And uh all of a sudden I got a call from Justice Ward who said, "I'm going to nominate you." Now I had not expected that of him. Uh, it was widely the



belief at the time that the friend of black lawyers on the Supreme Court was Seymour Simon. And my thought was that if I was gonna be appointed that was the probable way. Certainly not Dan Ward. He had his own agenda, he had his own people who uhm, uhm to whom he owed allegiance and I was therefore surprised when he said he was going to nominate me. So, uh and humbled uh by the way uh because I know he had to, he had to pass up some of his own people to get to me. Uhm some people said well he did it because he wanted to be sure, uh this was his retention year and he wanted to be sure he'd get a good black vote. But, uh, uh my thinking was well come on now there...the retention of a Supreme Court judge is never in question. Uh, no Supreme Court Judge running for retention has ever come close to not being retained and uhm, so he could have done that or not done it, it wouldn't have made an one iota of difference in his retention. Uh, so I was appointed, and th-that's how I became a judge. Uh, did you want to explore anything else about that process, before I go on?

**(31:13)**

**KO:** I think...

**SJ:** Because now you've got me rambling.

**(31:16)**

**KO:** No you're not rambling. Actually it's great [undecipherable].

SJ: I'm, I'm trying to do org[anized], I'm trying to do organized rambling but you, but it's rambling nonetheless. Do you have, do you want to go back and talk about any of those things?

(31:23)

KO: I just, if we could just make sure we get right dates and stuff [Jones saying mmhmm] for some of the questions we asked before, um...

SJ: I became a judge in 1985.

(31:35)

KO: Okay. And when did you graduate from law school, from Northwestern?

SJ: In 1973.

(31:38)

KO: And your Marine Corps years?

SJ: Uhm, 1966 to 1970. I was in for about four and a half years. [Interview says and] And I was discharged just a captain.

(31:53)

KO: And you attended uh University of Illinois for...

SJ: Undergrad, mmhmm, in Champaign...I commanded the Navy ROTC drill team when I was down there. We were very good.

(32:12)

KO: And would you mind uh just the law firm that you started the clerk, when you were clerking for...

SJ: McCoy, Ming & Black.

(32:18)

KO: Would you, would you mind spelling that, just?

SJ: McCoy, M C capital C O Y. Ming, M I N G. And Black. Bob Ming was a uh stalwart in civil rights law. And, uhm...and the uh interviewer of Judge Leighton is probably getting an earful about Bob Ming [*Interviewers chuckle*]. But he got into some income tax difficulty and was fingered by the, uh by the federal government because he was instrumental in the campaign to block the appointment of Haynesworth and Carswell to the Supreme Court who were Nixon nominees. Uh, as a result of those two being blocked uh, uh Berger and Blackman were appointed. And also as a result of that effort uh he was prosecuted for tax violations on matters for which he had already uh come to resolution with the uh, with the IRS but they prosecuted him anyway and he died in, he

died in jail. Which is something for which some of us have never forgiven Mr. Nixon.

And his Attorney General Mr. Mitchell.

(34:03)

**KO:** Uhm, and then you became the president of the Bar Association in 1983?

**SJ:** The Cook County, the Cook County Bar Association. Mmhm, in 1983.

(34:14)

**KO:** And just out of curiosity, what did you study at the University of Illinois? Did you study law?

**SJ:** I majored in Political Science and uh minored in Economics. I really started out majoring in Physics. Why Physics? Because I wanted to be a pilot and I thought that's what pilots did. Well my eyes didn't pass the flight physical and I didn't do so well in uh in a course called Analytic Geometry, which all of the math majors told me would be the easiest course I'd ever take [*Interviewers chuckle*]. In fact at the end of the course the instructor told us that uh congratulated some of us for having done so well and then said, "For those of you who didn't do so well, if you promise me that I wi[ll], that you will never take another math course as long as you're at the University of Illinois you will pass this course." I was the first in line [*Interviewers laugh*]. So uh, uh so that's how I got into Political Science and Economics.

(35:19)

**KO:** And you mentioned the wel[l] all the different laws you practiced. The civil rights law, [*Jones saying mmhm*] criminal law [*Jones also saying criminal law*], you did some of the housing, clerking, [undecipherable]. Was there ever a law you liked more than another?

**SJ:** And area? Uhm, I don't know, s-s-some of the more interesting cases I had as a, as a young lawyer, uh, I represented a...a kid, a fifteen-year old who was charged with murder in the Juvenile Court and there were three defendants. I remember the other two better than I remember the name of my client. Uhm, I was in Ellis Reed's office and he was talking to a gentleman named Maurice Dore, who at the time was the Chief Prosecutor at the, uhm, at the State's Attorney's office. I believe he ultimately became a judge too. Uhm, but I could hear from the conversation, "No, no Maury I can't represent anybody right now but I have a young lawyer here who is sitting in my office right who can." So, I was appointed to represent this fifteen-year old. There was a seventeen-year old and a thirteen-year-old and they were all charged with murder they they had robbed a grocery store and the thirteen-year old shot uh, as as they were fleeing, the thirteen-year old shot the store owner through the leg with a .30-30 deer rifle and the man died right there on the street. And a his name was Balboa Clare, who is of some note in Illinois jurisprudence because his name was all over stuff. And the problem in that case was that the, was that Mr. Dore moved to charge them wi[th], charge all three as adults. Well th-the seventeen-year old was chargeable as an adult. Well, we resisted that and the judge denied it and the state's attorney indicted them anyway, uh indicted the two anyway.

Well, sen th-the juvenile court law being as they were the judge had to release them because he wasn't able to bring them to trial. Uhm, so we then got the indictment washed by the chief judge of the uh Criminal Court, who was Judge Power. The state took an appeal of that and during all this process that's when uh the kids were released. Uh my guy was really kinda along for the ride, he, I uh I regarded him as very amoral, as oppose to immoral. But Balboa Clare, when when I was in a room, w-when I entered a room with him, I I didn't even know he was in the room, but I felt myself surrounded by evil, by a very intense evil. And we know that uh, after his release he killed about four or five people that we know of. Of, uhm, he beat one murder rap and then finally, uh, uhm got convicted in another and that one was affirmed in, so he's there for the rest of, so he's in jail for the rest of his life. My guy, uh somebody told me that he became a taxi driver, something, and uh was doing okay in life. And I was pleased about that. Uh, so that taught me about the, ri- the rights of juveniles, uh and taught me about how we should evaluate whether ju[venile], uh a-about how we should evaluate at what point a juvenile is to be treated as an adult. Uhm, I clearly thought that there was no, uhm I felt that there was no uh, uh redeeming for young Balboa Clare. I mean, I I wasn't concerned about why he got there uhm that's that's a whole different issue. I was concerned about whether it was possible to redeem him, I thought it was not. Uhm, and every kid who's charged with a serious crime should be given that evaluation, uhm regardless of the heinousness of the crime. I mean the the heinousness of the crime is of course a factor. The more heinous the crime probably the less redeemable you are because you're of such a state of mind that you're willing to commit a horrible crime. Uhm, but nevertheless the evaluation should be made and the decision should never be automatic, either

automatically to keep him in the juvenile court system or automatically to ship 'em out as a as a, as an adult, to be tried, to be tried as an adult. Uhm...I got involved in the estates of a couple of deceased real estate magnets and these were people who everybody thought had it going on in life. Uh I mean they they were wheeler, big wheeler dealers in, in uhm real estate and they lived good lifestyles and everything else. But when we opened, but the estates showed that everything that they had was encumbered right up to the ears. Uhm, uhm people being in debt, and that, and that uh was a lesson that uh was important to me later on in my life. Actually later on in my judicial career it gave me uh, er it played some part in my decision to retire early and to do something else. But uhm, uhm an-and there were, er there was in one particular matter there was a fight over the, uhm, over the assets of the estate. Uhm there was the second wife of the decedent and the daughter of the decedent, who is not the daughter of the second wife. So right away you had those elements and and uhm, the daughter honestly felt that the wife was trying to hide stuff, which she wasn't. Uhm, everything was encumbered and we had to go through a l-long trial over uhm over a series of, over the different accounts of the uh, of the petition and we prevailed on every one. And uh, but she, she was not to be stopped there. She appealed, and uhm the Appellate Court affirmed on all issues and that was the end of that. But that taught me about the importance of the court system in terms of getting litigation out of peoples lives 'cause this case dragged on and on and on and it ha-w-what a distraction it had to have been to the daughter's, uhm, uh to the rest of the daughter's life and affairs. What a distraction it had to have been. It was to our client's life. Uhm, and people were constantly, er and people were constantly looked at a courts as a place where you go and your case drags through the system and some years later it'll

be over. But uhm, but uhm wh-, if you go to court on anything it's uh like pulling hen's teeth. Uh uh not, not a pleasant place to be ever uhm because it's, it costs a lot of money to go to court and uh, it's uh emotionally draining, it's distracting from the rest of life's pursuits, those are the things that I learned out of that case. Uhm, and uhm law, I, after about two years I left McCoy, Ming & Black to be with Aldus Mitchell and Sofia Hall. Uh we formed Mitchell... Mitchell, Hall & Jones [*Jones raps on table*]. And when the building was uh which we were in 110 South Dearborn, when that building was torn down uh everybody had to leave, so uh Walter Black, who was with McCoy, Ming & Black, rejoined us and we became Mitchell, Hall, Jones & Black. Uh, from there I became a sole practitioner and, I was engaged in the solo practice of law for maybe about six years at 100 North LaSalle. I was with uh initially, I was with uh in a space sharing arrangement with two lawyers uhm... his last name was Payne, Aaron Payne who was a great, great African-American practitioner of the time. And uhm another lawyer named Stanley Cook, and me. Uhm, after a while I left that office and became a solo practitioner and practice law all by myself, which is the least efficient way of practicing law. Uhm, but I learned more about advocacy from Mr. Payne, he was a much older lawyer, but uh he also had a very rich history. Uhm, uh Mr. Leighton probably knows a great deal more about Mr. Payne than I. But uh, he talked about, he taught me a great deal about advocacy and brevity. Uhm, he represented a woman who... who uhm was suing a hotel because they wouldn't let her in. And the hotel's defense was that they simply didn't have any rooms. Well, it just so happened that the trial was set in December and... the uh he made an opening, for his final argument he of course argued and uh briefly uh the defense attorney argued at some length and railed his client and never



even talked about how good the hotel was and everything else and we would never do anything like that. And uh for his uh rebuttal argument, Mr. Payne just got up, and you have to understand he had this very, very reach, rich, deep baritone voice. "Ladies and gentlemen, the hotel argues that they had no room. That's the same argument we heard 2,000 years ago and I know you'll do the right thing." He sat down and the jury wasn't out fifteen minutes [*All laugh*]. So uh, uh that was a, that was pleasant uh a pleasant experience with him. Uhm, I represented, wh-while I was with McCoy, Ming & Black, I represented a seventeen-year old who was charged with resisting arrest and disorderly conduct. She, her sister, and two of their friends were at McCormick Place and uhm, uh they were being told, along with a bunch of other attendees, to go down this way but the door was locked so they couldn't go that way. And, uh she alleged that the police officer uh hit her with his fist and...uh in the face. And sure enough there was a little scar on her face. And sure enough, all during the trial, the police officer was wearing a ring [*Jones chuckles*] tha-that that would have fit that uhm. They, they found her guilty of...the least, they found her guilty [*Jones taps table*] of the least offensive uhm uh matter and that was uh, uh disorderly conduct. I think that, no not, they they found her uh [*Jones taps table*] guilty of disobeying a police, a police officer. Actually, they they probably found her guilty of having a smart mouth, which she did. Uh, but we took that up all the way to the Illinois, to-to the U.S. Supreme Court actually. We, uh, the appellate court...uhm, denied the appeal. The Supreme Court refused to hear it, and I was prepared to take it up to the Supreme Court. But I I just told the mother that that would be much too expensive, and we probably should not do that. So, uhm...uh, that was an interesting case that I had. That I, see, a lot of the interesting cases that-that I have had had little to do with

money...uhm, more to do with other things. Uhm, uh, I had my share of personal injury cases and things like that that generated income and had my share of fee-paying criminal clients along with the non-fee-paying ones. Uhm, uh, late in, uh, late in my career, my legal career, I was appointed to represent a number of criminal defendants and, both in trial and appeal, and had uh, good experiences doing that. Uhm...a case I remember particularly was, uh, a case in which I represented the Evanston branch of the NAACP against the school board. This was a busing case of, they were, uh, reconfiguring their schools and the NAACP felt that they were doing so in an effort to actually maintain segregation as opposed to, uhm, as opposed to breaking up segregation. Uhm, that was an interesting case. Uh, I even got a, I was even able to get a preliminary injunction in the case. Uhm, uh, we ultimately did not prevail on a motion for summary judgment after discovery was taken, but it was an interesting case and, and uh, I learned a lot about people in connection with that case. Uh, let's see...I'll ask for questions? *[laughter]*

(50:48)

**KO:** Well, we can start, uh, talking more about your judgeship then, the process for the judgeship. [okay] You said, uh, Judge Ward... [nominated me] ...nominated you, [mm-hm, yep] after you had written a, you had written a letter some time ago, [mm-hm] forgot about it, [right] and Judge Ward nominated you. [mm-hm] An[d] what was the rest of the process like?

**SJ:** Okay, I, uh, had to appear before the, Chi-Chicago Bar Association Judicial Evaluation Committee. And...that wa-, that was an interesting process. Uh, th-they seemed warm

and friendly, but there was one, there was one, uh, interviewer who...uh...uh...seemed to be giving me a rough time. And I didn't know wha- if he was do- and I had, I had had a case with him as a, uh, he was a prosecutor, I was defending a, uh, somebody in a hit case. I had, I had, uhm, uh...my guy was charged with being, a shooter [*fist banged on desk*] in a hit case. He, jury convicted the person who gave the contract. One of the other hitmen testif-, flipped and testified against my client. My client was found not-guilty. And, this, state's attorney, was honestly convinced that I had done something improper uh, teaching him how to testify improperly or something. Uh, and so he was giving me a hard time, uh, about, about... I think he mentioned the case and discussed the case with, i-i-in front of the panel. Uhm...I won't talk ab-; I won't mention his name because, because, as you know, th- what goes on there is, is confidential. But, uhm, uh, I learn- I had a valuable lesson there too because, in a totally unrelated case I had a matter in front of Judge, uhm, fine judge of the, uh district court, I-I'm not even sure if he's sitting anymore, but I had an unusually difficult case, uh, it was not difficult from a management point of view in terms of it being complicated, but the fact situation was difficult. My client alleged that she was fired because of race, or disciplined because of race. I don't even remember if she was disciplined or if she was fired. Well, uhm, the case became very difficult because, she, she told, the client told me that uh, something that led me to believe that, uhm, you know, race may not have been a part of this, so we really shouldn't be in court. Well, that was determined at her trial. And during the time the judge was, uh, was constantly urging me to get the case to trial and all, and, so since he was one of the last judges in front of whom I had tried a case, I had to mention him, and, uh, he had ordered the transcript of one hearing to be sent to the uh...uh, to the

Attorney Registration Disciplinary-, Disci-, no, to, either to the Attorney Registration  
Disci- Disciplinary Commission or to the Executive Committee of the Federal Courts. I  
think the Executive Committee. Uh...because the ARDC never asked me to respond to  
it, so I guess he didn't send it there. But, uhm, uh...apparently somebody asked in the  
hearings, "How did this judge's comments get before here?" And somebody said, "Mr.  
Jones disclosed it." So, I learned that disclosure is very important. Well, I always knew  
disclosure was important, there's never any point in trying to hide anything. Uh, I-I've  
never hidden my whereabouts from the world, my-my name and, uh, my name has  
always been listed in the phone directory, the whole time I was on the bench, so anybody  
can always find me if they want me. Uhm, so, uh I was passed and, uh, was sworn in on  
December 2<sup>nd</sup>, uh, no, January 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1985. And got assigned to the 11<sup>th</sup> floor of this  
building, of which uh well one half was the Building Court. I was assigned into a  
Contract and Property Damage Court non-jury room which essentially means a  
collections room. Now a lot of people dismiss those courts as mere collection courts.  
Uh, they're so much more than that. Uhm, they are contract cases where people agree to  
pay money and they don't pay; uh, there are automobile collision cases without personal  
injuries; uh, there're cases, of, uh, all-all kinds of commercial litigation goes on there. In  
fact, except for the dollar, except for the dollar amount, the cases can be every bit as  
complex as any anywhere in the building. And, the first thing that occurred to me after  
one, I-I was in one week in one room in 1110, and another week, I-uh- the next week I  
got into 1108 and Judge O'Connell told me I'd stay there. And the first thing that I  
noticed was that anybody could walk in and ask for a continuance from the CLERK and  
get it. And, you could eith-, you would either get a LONG date, which was usually

anywhere from 8 to 11 months, or you could get a-a, well if you said, "Well no, I need a short date," well a short date was 3 months, you see. And, there were lots of, I mean, most of the cases were 5 or mayb-, uh, the oldest cases were about 6 or 7 years old. I mean, just cases just dragging on and on and on and on and on and on and on and on. Now, in that division, the amount in controversy was never higher than \$15,000 and frequently was much lower. So that you would get somebody, uh a-a company might sue an individual for say \$3,000. And the individual'd go and get a lawyer. And the lawyer is coming back trip after trip after trip after trip after trip. Well, the lawyer can't possibly charge enough to come ahead on that. If the lawyer spends more than is, first of all the person doesn't have enough to pay a lawyer, because if they had enough to pay the lawyer, they'd have paid the creditor. You see. So or made a- at least made a deal with the creditor or something. Uhm, so, there's all these practitioners who're losing their shirts. And, I could relate to that because I had that same experience, I had it with, I-I'd had that experience with, uh, the civil rights person, because she couldn't afford to pay me very much. And, uhm...uh, I knew that that was a, that that was a problem in general, uh, because of a case that I handled for another lawyer. When I, when I was practicing, uh, this lawyer was sued over a banknote in the federal court. And the lawyer pursued that matter very vigorously, and one day I asked her, "Why, you know, why is it that you guys filed this in the federal court? I mean, it's only for \$7500, why'd you file it in the federal court?" And she said, "Because it takes us forever to get a decision in the state court." And I REMEMBERED that. And so I'm seeing all of these other lawyers, in here, in there. Not, not just the high-volume lawyers who are there all the time anyway but, uh the lawyers from the big law firms coming in there. Now, I know they're getting

paid uh they're charging \$200 an hour, and they're coming back again and again and again, and in order for them to get paid the amount in controversy has to, uh the amount in controversy can't possibly justify all that, so after one week of observing what was going on I said, "From now on, no more continuances from the clerk." Okay. Now, maybe they'll get them, but there won't, but the-, but it'll be from me, and not from the clerk 'cause we have to start taking control of this stuff. Then, I stopped giving out 8 month dates. Uh, I gave out 8 week dates. Except for the old cases. They might get 3 or 4 week dates. And so I systematically began, cutting away there, and cutting away and cutting away and advancing the, uh trial dates. I mean, I'd have status calls of all of the, this was, mind you this was in 1985 so I would, I had my first status call of all of the 198...2 and older cases, and there were a bunch of them. And another thing that I learned, uh, about case management. I set every, uh th-the ones who would come up, I would set them all Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday of that sa-, of that week. I'd set every one of them that day, final for trial, and I would not continue them. And, when they would, one day I remember there were 23 of them set that one day and I said, "Oh my goodness, how'm I gonna try these, these cases?" N-not a single one of them went to trial. [*bangs fist on desk in rhythm with syllables*] They all were disclosed, and that taught me a lesson. And the lesson is this: of all of the cases that get filed in any court system of any description, only 3% of them get disposed by trial, everything else gets disposed of in some other fashion. If the judges realize this the judges can be far more effective at managing the court costs because, uh, you see, a busy lawyer has to prepare every single case as if it's going to trial just a-, just so the court system can reach that 3%, that's true. But, the judge does not have to schedule the docket on the basis of

all of these cases going to trial, okay, so. And, uh, I've had a couple of other experiences that taught me that, uhm, uh, some scavenger company sued a condominium association for a scavenger bill of \$1800. The condominium association's lawyer counter-sued them for \$30,000 for, uh, concrete damage done by the truck, allegedly. So, I said, "Alright, uh, I can see what's going on here." I gave it an 8 week date and I expected this amount of discovery to go on. I set it up for trial. The lawyers came in, they hadn't done a thing. I said, "Alright, I got something for ya, this is the trial date. *[bangs fist on desk]* Now, I realize that there's a jury demand in this case. Counsels I promise you that on that date, *[bangs fist on desk]* I will find a judge and a jury to take this case. And if I can't find a judge, I'll find an empty court room and try it myself. Cause you're going to trial on that date. Please believe that." Well, the lawyer who sued for the \$30,000 who had the jury demand in, I mean, I figured, it's, all this was just a delay tactic on the \$1800, you see, he howled. He went to Judge O'Connell, he said, "Judge look what he's doing to me." And, he said, Judge called me and said, "You-you may wanna consider." I said, "Judge, it's gonna go away, it's a phony. It's gonna go away." He said, "Okay, you do what you think best." 'Cause Judge O'Connell never ever, uh, ordered a judge to do anything in the discretion of that judge. He just told me that I should consider these things, which I DID. *[laughter]* And I said, "I considered all of that, they're messin' around. And the reason I know they're messin' around is that they haven't done anything." So, a week before, uh, two weeks before I began hunting around for judges. And I found Ellis Reid, uh, who at the time, by that time he had been appointed a-a judge, and he had a jury room. And, I-I explained my problem. I said, "Ellis, can you make yourself available to start this case?" He said, "I surely can." So, come the trial date, the plaintiff and the

condominium association settled for \$600. The condominium plaintiff and the scavenger defense attorney said "We're ready for trial." I said, "Judge Reid's waiting for you in thirteen-oh- in 1310 right now. You just go there right now. He's waiting for ya. He's got 12, he's got 36 jurors waiting for ya in his room right now." They settled for \$800 before they got to his room. So, that taught me a lot about being, about aggressively handling a case. And, and really saving on lawyers' times. You see, if the case had been allowed to drag through for several years just think of the time that all those lawyers would have wasted. And, if it settled for \$800 there's no way that it would ever have been worth \$30,000. It just wouldn't, so. Uh, is, uh, I had another case and, uh, that was hotly contested that started out as a collection case, uh i[t] ended up with a lot of different counter-claims and it was an older case and, that one I tried. Uhm, involved some electric company or something, I forget the name of it now. But, uh, uh, but it, uh taught me a lot about managing and, uh, about managing a case, cases in general. And, in time Judge O'Connell, uh, suggested that I go to ju-judicial seminars on court management, and, and even, even, well, while all this other stuff was going on, I knew that I had to run for election in 1986 'cause I was appointed to mainta- to fill a vacancy. The vacancy expired in '86, so I had to run in '86. In order to run successfully I had to do a couple o[f] things. Uh, you wanted me to talk about the politics in all this. I had to make sure that 1- I would be objectionable to nobody. Because as a lawyer, I campaigned very vigorously for Harold Washington and Harold Washington's people are not in control of the Cook County Democratic Party. Uhm...and 2- I had to run on some issue. I had to pick out an issue for myself that I thought that people would be familiar, uh with and have, and w-would resonate with people in general. So, my issue was court



administration. Uh, there should not be backlog and delay, and uh by the time I started, uh campaigning, uh the courtroom that I was in was under control. There was no back[og] I ha[d]-I had successfully eliminated the backlog in that courtroom. And, it was picking up in the other courtrooms because the other judges were looking at what I was doing, uh, including, especially the judges from the downstate circuits because at that time three of those courtrooms were staffed by rotating judges from circuits other than Cook County 'cause we didn't have enough judges. And they did a marvelous job of-of, uh, doing 'em. And they, uh, th-they didn't pay much attention to it because they felt that we weren't interested, so why should they be interested. For them, it was a chore to come up to Chicago, but, uh, but, uh one of those rooms in particular, uh, that was staffed by the 4<sup>th</sup> circuit, uhm, room 1102 they really plowed ahead and, uh the other 2 just went right along with it and uh, uh we had the 11<sup>th</sup> floor humming. Uhm, then I got transferred over, then I moved over to room 1104 after Judge Zlatnik died and got that room under personal control. So, uhm politically, in terms of getting, uh, appointed...the very first committeemen that I went to see was Vito Marzullo who was, uh, Washington sworn in. An[d] well, I had one thing going for me, I was the son of Sidney A. Jones Jr. who had been an alderman on the City Council and who himself was a retired judge, and who was the mayor's License and Liquor Control commissioner. And, uh, so the aldermen always wanted to be friendly with the License and Liquor Control commissioner. And, uh, uh, but the first al-the first committeemen that I talked to, that I wou[ld] make a special effort to reach out to were those who I knew were hostile to, uh, to the mayor. Uh, of course, uh, lets see, uh my sponsor before the committee, uh, before the central committee was uh, C-uh- was Cecil Partee. And uh, he and my dad practiced law

together, uh, before my dad went on the bench. And, so of course I made all sorts of manners there. But uhm, uh, but judicial administration was my issue and, and making manners with everybody else was my tactic. And, uh I was, I-uh,-I won the nomination, and of course, the election...So uhm, now I started going to these different, uh court management courses, uh, and that started when I, along with a number of other judges attended a course of the National Center for State Courts, which Judge Comerford had gotten to come here. It was called Strengthening the Executive Component of the Court System. And, I found it fascinating, and it just resonated all kinds of things within me th-that, uhm, and reinforced a lot of beliefs that I had had and experiences that I had, and I found myself just fascinated by the whole subject. And Judge O'Connell urged that I, uh make effort to uh, uh to go to these. So, uh, I would app- I applied to go to many of them, the basic caseload management and back-backlog reduction course. And, uh, and, uh, a number of others. Uh, all of which were just great experiences for me. BECAUSE one day I was asked by Judge O'Connell to substitute in room 1501. 1501 is the motion room for the personal injury cases in the First Municipal District. I went there, I was there for a week, and I went to th-the presiding judge, I said, "Don, you gotta put me in there." Because everything in there was old, I mean it was really old, I mean, th-the if you we[nt]-if you would go into the room, you wouldn't realize that there was such a tremendous backlog, and backlog is not, an[d] backlog is a function of time, it's not a function of numbers, ya see. So, uh, so, there were very few case[s], I mean EACH day 10 cases, 10 new cases were called up. Well, there's a huge inventory of cases, so, if you're calling up 10 cases a day, you'll never get anywhere. And, uh, and the motion call had very few cases an-uh-th-th-there was, there was just very little activity in that

courtroom. And the cases were all very old. Again, 4,5,6,7 year-old cases, a case was not even called up for any kind of management or trial call assignment until it was over, until it was about 15 months old. That was the first time that it would get called up for ANYTHING. And invariably the file was no thicker than it was the day that it got filed.

*[Taps fingers on desk in rhythm with syllables]* Lawyers sat, except for there in the initial discovery packages where lawyers file their initial interrogatories, but they do that just, uh-uh-th-th-they set them, they-their systems were set up so that when they file their appearance, they file their answer, they file their jury demand, they file their request to produce, they file interrogatories, and after that nothing, by either side. So, uh, on the basis of the things that I had learned in the seminars, uh, the first thing was to organize a task force. And, I invited ALL of the practitioners one afternoon into 1501, and there were 'bout 200 lawyers from all facets of-f the personal injury, plaintiff, and defendant practice. And I asked that, I outlined what I saw as the problem. I asked that they select from among their numbers a cross-section of lawyers who would, who could effectively discuss the matters that were important to them in a court backlog reduction campaign. And they did a masterful job of that. They, they had, uh, it boiled down to about maybe a dozen lawyers, but all of them ha[d]-uh, th-there were lawyers who were from, hi-very high volume personal injury firms that the defendant's attorneys thought were just ambulance chasers. There were lawyers from personal injury firms who were of-sl-who were of somewhat higher level, an[d] then there were a lot-then there were 2 or 3 who represented individual practitioners. The Chicago Bar Association Courts Committee had somebody there, the Municipal Lawyers Committee, the, uhm, uh the defense lawyers and there [are] several different aspects of defense lawyers too, there're high

volume defense lawyers who represent the interests of insurance companies, uh, there are lawyers who represent the interests of the minimum coverage companies who, uh, have a high volume, uh, but who never handle their cases in a complex manner, and they're very good at what they do. Then there are those who do a little bit more than that, and there are those who-uh-who represent the State Farms and the Allstates, and then there are those who-who, uh, are part of larger firms that do more than that, but who do personal injury stuff. There was of course, the city, the CTA, uh, uh people like that who get sued all the time. All o[f] these lawyers, and in a series of, in a series, uh, uh, and the first thing we had to do was to establish standards, what should the standards be. Uh, uh, AND I ASKED THEM. You know, f[or] and I didn't just say, "Well, what should the standard be?" I sa[id], "Wh-what is it that has to get DONE?" [*bangs fist on desk*] [*mm-hm*] "Okay, well, interrogatories have to uh, get answered." "Well, you all file your interrogatories as soon as you get in the case, right?" "Well, we sure do." "And, uh, defenda[nts]-and plaintiffs usually file their's in response to yours, right?" "Right." "OKAY, alright, well the rules allow 28 days to answer that. Is that not a reasonable period of time?" "That's reasonable." "Okay, after that what's done?" "Well, we have to take the plaintiff's deposition, and uh, they usually wanta take our client's deposition." "Alright, once you have received the answers to interrogatories, how long should that take?" "Well, th-it usually doesn't take place for 6 or 8 months after that." "Well, is that because they get rescheduled?" "Yes." "Okay, well why can't they just get taken on the date that you set? What's wrong with lawyers talking with each other and saying let's agree on this date [*bangs fist on desk*], I'll send you a notice, and then take it." So, it was "W-w-well, we could do that. Well, but, sometimes they don't answer the interrogatories

and so we have to enter, and so we have to, the motion to compel discovery is very, very, uh, is a very time consuming process, becau- or time spent process. Because we have to send out letters u-uh, uh, showing that we attempted to reach an amicable agreement.” I said, “Well...How many letters do you send out?” “Well, we have to send out, uh, we usually don’t get anything until we send out 3 or 4 and then we file a motion.” “Okay, well, in your letters, uh, and I-I’ve seen these letters, uhm, do-do you ask the plaintiff to respond in 28 days? Well, they’re already supposed to respond in 28 days and here you are giving ‘em a fresh 28. And then you title that letter ‘First Request,’ and doesn’t that mean you’re gonna send ‘em a second request? *[laughter]* So, then you send ‘em a second request, and that also allows them 28 days, and then you send ‘em a third request and a fourth request. What’s wrong with just one letter? One, uh, one, uh, one letter, one motion, one order, that’s it.” Now, so, “Y-y-y-yeah, we-we can do that.” Because, you see, a lot, a-a-and there’s a lot of myths that go on, and one of the myths is that the defense lawyers get paid for the activity, so they don’t mind all of this scutwork, because they get paid for it. WELL they don’t get paid for it, uh, uh, or very little because the insurance companies are uh, have been becoming more and more mindful of-of their legal defense budgets, number 1, and number 2 not very much lawyer-thought goes into the sending of a letter, a paralegal does that. So, uh, so that’s number 1. Number 2, the main lawyer activity is the deposition, the thinking about the discovery that’s comin[g] and things like that. Well, that-that’s the stuff that lawyers get paid for, and, they get paid the same amount of money whether they do it in this amount of time, my hands are about 12 inches apart, *[laughter]* or this amount of time, now they’re six feet apart. Okay, so they get paid the same amount of money. “So what’s wrong, defense lawyers,

with you getting paid for doing it in this amount of time rather than that amount of time. Don't you know that you would have more cases that you could work on?" [*bangs fist on desk*] "Hey." Okay, so, and "Plaintiff's lawyers, uhm, uh, let's look at you. You all have, you all take your cases on contingent fees. 1/3 of whatever's recovered, right?" "Right." "Okay, no problem with that, I'm not here to fight about that. BUT, don't you think you'd rather like your third to come 8 months after you filed the case rather than 4 years? And don't you think you would like to have spent maybe 20 hours on the matter rather than 50 hours on the matter, coming back and forth to court all the time, uh do you think that that would help out your law practice any?" So, [it was] the light bulbs started going on. [*laughter*] So, the lawyers, so from all of that, the lawyers developed the standards. And just as they told us in the seminars that I went to, the workshops, the standards that they enacted were tougher than the standards that I would have enacted if I had done it by myself. And that is how we successfully got the personal injury case load under control. Uhm, uhm... So we just began heightening things up, and heightening things up [*bangs fist on desk in rhythm with syllables*] and uh, th-there-[w]as just, there was just all kinds of ways in which everybody was becoming more efficient because of, because of that. First of all, people were only sending one letter, and they were getting one motion, and one order, and I wasn't chasing them back into court time and time again to enforce that order, because in the order, we, I-I would have th-the lawyers draft a self-executing sanction, if it's not done, you're, uh, the respondent is barred from introducing testimony or evidence at the time of trial. Oh, an[d], that's a pretty severe sanction and, it-it's self-executing, which means that the lawyer doesn't have to come back asking for sanctions once he gets an order to compel. Because every time two lawyers come in on

something like that, that's about \$300 combined lawyer time gone right out the window. And the case is no closer to disposition than it was beforehand. Uh, but other things began to happen, uh, because remember I talked about calling up a case when its 15 months old, frequently there's no service of summons on the defendant. And, when the pl-, or when the defendant finally gets served, the defense attorney gets to file a motion to dismiss the case because of an untimely service of summons. Well, if the case is progressively *[bangs fist on desk multiple times]* heard shorter, on shorter and shorter dates, now I believe th[at] they're called up for the first time when the[y're] 2 months old, well that's not, that is enough time for the plaintiff to serve a summons and an alias, a second attempted service. And, if there's no service, then there's something unusual about the case, it needs court attention. So the lawyers know that the wheel is, that the squeaky wheel is, uh, needs to get oiled. The wheel is squeaky so you better oil it, so. Uh, so, the lawyers DO more, and as a result, I had far fewer motions to dismiss, uh, to decide. Uh, i-initially I think that those motions were about, a third of my entire motions and when things got under control, I'd had maybe one a week. So, an-an-an-and that was good for the lawyers, be-, it was especially good for the plaintiff's lawyers because, uh, when a defendant files such a motion, what he has done is to take away, the, is to take away your aggressiveness as a plaintiff's attorney. Take away your aggressive[ness] a your a, take away your, uhm, y-y-your uhm, your initiation of the case. Uh, it just takes it all away. Now, the case ultimately of course will settle, but it will settle for less than it what what it would've settled before because here you are trying to manage some deficiency in the management of the case. So, now a-l-l of these things worked out, and and now uhm, uh w-w-when I left the municipal department uhm, uhm most cases were

disposed of in one way, shape, or form within one year of the uhm of the date of the filling. And, the uhm, mandatory arbitration program was a, was a great tool of that. And part of uh, an-an-and and in asking for significant cases in one of these forms I listed numerous mandatory arbitration cases uh because, uhm, it was my position as uhm supervising judge of the mandatory arbitration program to rule on motions that affected arbitrations and how they would fit in with the entire caseful management system. And, even though many arbitrations were rejected by one party or the other, usually uhm the plaintiffs say that the defendants wanted to reject in order to prolong the case. Uhm, maybe they did maybe they didn't. But I just never worried about that. What I did concern myself with was to make sure that the mandatory arbitration process would help in the total caseful manageme[nt] management scheme and it did because we were able to enforce the completion of discovery by the arbitration date. The arbitration date gave us a significant event in the flow of the case so that by the time it got to a trial judge, there was really nothing more to manage. And so the, it developed that the typical sanction was that if you didn't bring it to the arbitration you can't bring it at trial. If you had a, if you had a party who did not testify at the arbitration the party could not testify at trial. And so you were stuck with manag[ing], with trying to present your case without your client. Well if you're a plaintiff that's devastating. If you're a defendant it means you're essentially faced with uh, a default on liability. Which means yes the accident was my fault so now the only issue is that of damages. AND, you can't even bring your client to court to say, "Well at the time of the accident uh, Mr. Smith was not injured." And he said, "I feel fine." You see, you can't ev[en], you can't even do that. So, uhm, so that encouraged the lawyers to get done the things that they needed to get done . . . by the



arbitration. And the case is-is, which meant that it was easier for the trial judges to dispose [undecipherable as speech drifts off]. Now . . . sometimes the plaintiff would not give up the deposition and the defendant couldn't get a sanction because the defendant [*Jones lightly taps his finger on the table for emphasis*] was trying to do stuff after the discovery closure date. Well that was alright too because defendants are in the best possible position then because they're the ones with the MONEY and the plaintiff's attorney knows that they're not going to give up any of the money UNless they get the deposition. So they, they usually get their deposition. Uh, but uh that was always enhanced by the trial judges now being encouraged to set firm trial dates. So th-th-and, and I learned, you see I-I- I just have a great respect for lawyers because unlike, well, like most people lawyers will take as much time as you give them to do anything. But unlike most people, lawyers will always rise to whatever standards are set. And I've seen that happen again and again and again [*Jones lightly taps finger on table for emphasis*]. So when people ask me, "Well Judge, do you miss it?" I say, "All the time I miss all of the lawyers. Every one of them. Even the cantankerous ones." [*Slight laughter by group*]

**(1:28:28)**

**KO:** Were you the-e su-supervisor for the arbitration for the remainder of your term then?

**SJ:** No uh, uh, as long as I was in the first municipal district I was the . . . su-, I was the supervising judge of, I started off as assignment judge of the contract and property damage rooms. I was then made a supervising judge of the contract and property damage

section. And, I was then in addition to that, made the assignment judge of the personal injury section . . . I then became the supervising judge of the unified, uh civil trial section. All of those cases were put in together because uhm we, we learned to treat certain, uhm, uh, uh, uh, Mr. Leighton, Judge Leighton . . .

**Folder B:**

**(0:00:02)**

**KO:** Uh, you were giving us kind of the rundown of the, your different positions as a judge, [*Jones saying mm-hm*] the supervisor [*Jones saying okay*] and so forth.

**SJ:** And, um, okay. The, all of the civil trial court rooms were put in one section, the civil trial section, and I was the supervising judge of that. Because, okay the treatment of cases that's where I left off. Because a lot of cases, uh, shouldn't be shouldn't necessarily have been in the uhm, in the personal injury jury rooms. Uh, what what should affect, uh well it's, we[ll], it's all about what's called differentiated case management. Uhm, the cases are not managed just on the basis of the amount in controversy or even just on the basis of whether, uhm, there's a personal injury. For example, many of the cases that are filed are really filed by insurance companies for medical payments. Well, that is a liquidated amount and the case depends solely on the bills. It doesn[t] uh, pain and suffering [undecipherable] and questions like that are never an issue. Uh, even though some of the medical payments may be for pain and suffering, but the point is they're paid by the insurance companies so they are now liquidated. Well, that case is no more complicated than a uhm, uh, than a non-personal

injury case. So, uh until a, so unless and until a jury demand was filed, all those cases would go to the eleventh floor and get handled with the rest of, uh, with the rest of those liquidated damage cases. Uhm . . . so uhm, wi-it-with it being just one section uh, one judge was able to affect those those transfers. So uh, uh, I was presiding judge of the, of the civil trial section and . . . conc- and concurrently the supervising judge of the mandatory arbitration program. Now, supervising judge of mandatory arbitration did not mean that I handled the nuts and bolts of the arbitration system. An administrator did that. Uh, I simply handled the legal aspects. And, uh the judge who had that position first had a court room over at the Arbs Center. But, he was so very seldom on the bench that, uhm, that it was felt that I could do that and he cou[ld], he went e-ventually into the law division. And he, he got the whole thing started, but uh really all the, all the significant jurisprudence in that area was set and settled, uh, uh while I was supervising judge. So uhm, a little bump in the road for Judge Jones. When you are attempting to do a significant reform you're going to st-step on somebody's toes. And there were lawyers who griped about, uh, about the enforcement of standards and things like that. So, even though all of the other uh, when I ran for retention in 1992, even though all of the lawyers, uh-uh, even though all of the bar associations, all all other bar associations found me either highly qualified or qualified, the Chicago Bar Association found me not recommended because they said Judge Jones was "arrogant, arbitrary, and inflexible." Well, uh . . . I suppose when it came to managing old cases I was inflexible. Uh, uh, uh, I suppose that if you think that uhm, a judge should not be in control, I suppose that's arrogant. Uh, and of course arbitrary is a very, uh can can be a very uhm nebulous term. But uhm, uh in response to that I, I wrote an extensive letter to the *Law Bulletin*. And if I

had, I should have anticipated that the, that the interview would go that way, I'd of brought it for you. Uh, I can get it to you if you like. Uh, in which I talk about the tension that exists between lawyers and judges and how lawyers need standards and judges are the only ones who can enforce them. Because there's 10,000 lawyers, there's only 400 judges. And actually when you look at the judges who are in the trial courts, uh, they're only, there's less than a dozen of them and there's thousands of lawyers who, uh, go there so lawyers can't do it. Now it is true that every time a lawyer comes before a judge, the lawyer [*Jones taps finger on table for emphasis*] really does need that continuance. That's true. But it is also true that the lawyer's request for a continuance is probably a function of the lawyer's unsuccessful attempt to manage uncertainty in the courthouse in some other areas. And, only judges can manage that; can get rid of that uncertainty. So, that's where we started. And it had, all of it had a kind of a trickle up effect into the law division because our judges, our uh better judges uh, having learned this would go up to the law division, the law[yers], the younger lawyers who were improving and getting more experience were going into the law division. So, uh when Judge O'Connell finally became the chief jud[ge] or the presiding judge of the law division, the law division uh, uh he was able to get the law division well on its way because of what we had done together in the First Municipal District. And so uh, but I did, of course I did win my uh, my retention. And I did so by not picking, not ever picking a fight with the Chicago Bar Association, but by using it as simply an opportunity to educate the Bar and the public on case management issues. And after the retention campaign everything settled down and uh, uh, uh we were a smooth operation. Well, in 1998 I ran again for retention; got found qualified by everybody this time. And after that

I was uh transferred to the Chancery division. Uh the Chancery division handles...uh injunctions uh a lot of cases between the government and people, between different branches of government, uh business dissolutions, uh personal trust disputes, uhm, uh, receiverships of large companies and buildings, and and a lot of stuff like that. Lo[t], a lot of potentially very complicated stuff. Well, I've always been of the view that a case is as complicated as the judge lets it become. Okay. And the best way to control that is to set a firm trial date. So uhm, using everything that I had learned in First Municipal, I grabbed a hold of my calendar which was 10% of the case load. Uh, I had a new calendar and I got one hundred cases from each of the other thirteen calendars. So I started off with 1300 cases virtually all of them old dogs or many of them old dogs. And uh, before the year was over they were just about all gone. And, and uh I ended up with the lightest case load in the division. An-An-And, and all this time I was getting my fair share of the new cases you see. So, uh, uh, I mentioned the Intercounty Trust Company as an, as an important case that I handled. This was a case involving the theft of over sixty-two million dollars by the owners of Intercounty Trust Company who also owned, uhm, Intercounty Title Insurance Company. Intercounty Trust? Inter something trust. But it was called InTrust. But anyway, they did it by shifting millions of dollars back and forth between the two companies and when the state found out that thirty-two million less went this way than that way, they shut down both companies. And I had the Trust Company, uh receivership. And the first s-s-several, or many of the first s-s-several or uh uh actually all of the uh proceedings were initially in the presiding judge's courtroom because there would be, uh, the first s-s-several of them, hundreds of people were there. I mean there were of course many many lawyers, many many uh, uh investment people,

many many uh investors, and investor group people, press, all all these kinds of people. And, the attorney for the receiver said, "That the first thing to be done is for, i-is we have to allocate how the loss, uh we have to determine how the loss of this money is to be allocated among the shareholders. And judge as complicated as this is going to be it mi[ght], it'll take five years." And I said, "Oh no it won't. It'll be over in a year." So, uh, uh, just by again . . . [*Jones taps fingers on desk*] keeping, keeping a tight rein on everything, uh, avoiding excessively long briefing schedules, etc., etc., etc., uh the use of the Intercounty website . . . uh, uh, so that people could see what the orders were and everything, uh we did get to, we did conduct loss allocation hearings. And, an order was entered and on appeal everything involving allocation was affirmed. I did not get affirmed on, on uh attorney's fees uh, uh, but I figured I wouldn't but I wanted to enter some order there so that the whole case could go up. Otherwise they'd of been fiddling around with attorney's fees for a, for a couple of years and I wasn't with that. So, uh, uh, I was very proud of that. Now, uh, in other areas where I had sensitive litigation for example, lawsuits between lawyers who are part of dissolving law firms, very, can be very bitter. Uh, uh, family disputes over family trusts, very bitter. And on all of those, whenever I would recognize such a case coming up I usually would come up for the fir[st], well my cases would get called up for the first time for case management conference when they were six months old. That would be the normal course of things... Well, a lot of times a lawyer would come in on a motion-n-n to appoint a special process server and right uh, an-and I cut out the practice of them getting that [*Jones snaps fingers*] and just being able to drop those orders off because that meant that something unusual was happening in the, in the case and I'd want to know about it. Well it would

turn out to be a, fam[ily], uh, be a family trust. Well, uh we can't sue Billy cause Billy won't be served. Well okay, I understand that but uh let's have a case management conference next week. You know, to find everybody who's on board and we'll just go ahead without Billy and Billy can catch up later. And, [*Jones taps finger on table for emphasis*] so I was able to get uh those cases under control because I was convinced that the only thing that would happen in the passage of time...is bad. So, and it would make the case more complex. So that's, that's how I would manage those highly sensitive cases. AND now, why did I retire from the bench? Well, as I was uh, my, my wife and I saw a presentation of a marketing company and we decided that we would join it. Of course I couldn't because a judge can't be a part of a business, but a the business taught financial education. And, you know when you're in school, you don't learn that. Not even the finance majors, uh, and the marketing majors. They learn how to manage somebody else's finances. They don't learn how to create finances for themselves. And, so I messed around and, uh, because I hang around my wife a lot, I got to hanging around her business partners and messed around and, and uhm, picked up a financial education for myself. Which you don't get in law school either. And I found this knowledge creeping into my presence as a judge. Uh, for example in, in a pre-trial conference, uhm, people would discuss uhm what their clients' assets were well, "Oh, my client has his home." I said, "Well the home's not an asset." "Yeah sure it's an asset, it's-s." "No, the home doesn't make him any money. He has to spend money for his home." So, uh the lawyers would exchange glances at me. But, that's how I looked at a home. And uh, uhm, and I learned that people struggle financially because they have poor wea[lth], wealth mentalities. Meaning that, uh, they have a wealth allocation mentality. And that

simply means that somebody else is responsible for your financial well-being- usually the job. Well the problem is you don't own your job. 'Cause you don't own the desk you sit at, you don't own the telephone they don't want you talking too much on, you just don't own it. And it's just not the job's job to look out for the financial security of the employees. It's the job's job to keep the employees and pay them as little as possible so the employees can make somebody else's babies wealthy. And that's what a job is, isn't it? Okay, uh I'm, I mean I'm not saying a job is bad because a job supports people's lifestyles. But uh, I beg[an], but the biggest problem with wealth allocation mentality is that wealth is not something that is allocated, it is created the way Bill Gates created Microsoft out of almost nothing. Uhm, uhm . . . so I began looking at litigation as wealth allocation mentality in my courtroom. "Uh, Judge he allocated something from me I want you to allocate it back." And, that perspective is not necessarily uh of benefit to parties who are interested in redress for what they feel are redress for legal remedies. It's- it's a good perspective in terms of helping to settle a case or to mediate a case. But uh, it's not so good, a it's a, sometimes conflicts with the overall importance of the judge's primary job which is to judge each case on the facts and the evidence that are before the judge. Now of course it can be said well that's just background information that's good for judges in general just like all other experiences in life are good for judges in general. Well, maybe so but I felt a conflict. So uh and in fact one day in the middle of that, uh, Intercounty Trust Company case, uh, I started to give a wealth creation presentation right in front uh, ur-r-r, right in front of the bench in front of a hundred onlookers and right away, uh, that that convinced me that I needed to go so that's why I retired. Uh, in retrospect I, I think I wished I had stayed on a little bit longer. That way I would have



stayed on, I only needed to stay on a couple a, about two and a half more years and I'd of gotten my full retirement. Or three and a half more years I'd of gotten my full retirement. And I struggled a little bit learning the business because all of the habits that I had accumulated were really not good for a marketing company. You know as, I was a Marine Corps officer, I was a lawyer where people paid, uh, I was a Marine Corps officer where people did what I told them to do [*Jones snickers*]. I was a lawyer where people paid me ta, to do what I told them to do. Then I became a judge where with a stroke of a pen people did what I told them to do. Uh, and besides which I became judgmental [*Jones snickers*]. Well, judges are supposed to be judgmental. Uhm, so those are exactly the skills that you don't need in a marketing company. So I've, I've had to, struggle with that, but I enjoy, uh, I've enjoyed the experiences and the people I've met and being able to be helpful to people in that regard. And, I've kept my fingers in the legal pie a little bit. I've done some arbitrations and mediations. I prefer mediations to arbitrations. Uh, a mediation is when you help people make their own decision, reach their own decision. An arbitration is when you decide and an arbitration is just like a bench trial. Well I retired from the bench so I wouldn't have to do that. So, uh, so I much prefer mediations. I have not practiced law. Uh, whenever people tell me they have a legal problem I tell 'em you need a lawyer [*Interviewers chuckle*]. Uh, one friend asked me to do, to come in at the very last moment on a matter so I am doing that and I am about to get out of it and I've regretted it. Uh, so I'm just, I'm I'm not engaged in the practice of law.

(0:18:38)

LM: Uh, what year was it that you retired?

SJ: Uh, 2001.

(0:18:43)

LM: Okay.

SJ: April.

(0:18:53)

KO: And you're still with your marketing firm?

SJ: Yes. It's called myEcon. Small m, small y, capital E, c, o, n, one word ... short for my Economy. It reminds us that there's a, that we have a great deal of interest, a great deal of control over our own personal economy. But yet, if you go to a Starbuck's or someplace and you hear people talk and a half an hour hasn't gone by and you've heard all of the world experts solving [*Muffled chuckles from interviewers*] ALL of the economic problems of the world, the country, the locality, everything. But they haven't solved their own. And you know what? That's also true of our congress people, our state legislators, and our aldermen, and our county commissioners. And it- it's not their fault because they come from us. You see. But, who said we have a financial education? 5% of America has a financial education and they learned it at the dining room table [*Jones taps finger on table for emphasis*]. They didn't learn it at school.

(0:20:02)

**KO:** Do you have any final stories or thoughts you want to share about the law or your time as a judge even?

**SJ:** I enjoyed every single second from the moment I started on the bench until the very last second of my last day. I enjoyed the lawyers, all of them. I felt that I was productive and of benefit to the bench, the bar, the public, and to my community in particular because uh, I was sensitive to the needs, particularly of people with whom I grew up, but everybody else too. Uh, which is something else that's worth me going back on, uh. Dur-during my first retention I was, uh, or first election . . . I was being questioned by the gay and lesbian lawyers. And they asked me, "Well what do you do to keep gay and lesbian lawyers from being discriminated against?" And I said, "Well, first of all there's too much, there's much too much going on in my room for me to take notice of anything like that." I just have . . . I-I just control my courtroom and there's not enough time for lawyers to take advantage of ea[ch], to take undue advantage of each other for any reason. And if I see it, I clamp down on it. For example, uh, once a man and a woman came before me. The[se], these were lawyers. And, they introduced themselves to me before, a-as they were coming up and it was obvious to me that they did not know each other, or had not met each other before. So, the fella starts in, "Well, Judge such and such and so and so, and uh, Mary and I thought," and I said, "That's Attorney Smith." "Oh, yes, Judge. And, uh, such and such and so on so and uh, Mary thought that..." I said, "That's Attorney Smith." "Well Judge, such and such and so on so and uh, uh, Mary really thinks that..." So, I just kinda leaned back in my seat and s[aid] stop. And

the whole courtroom gets really, really quiet. My my wife says that sometimes I get a look on my face well, the whole room got quiet. Cause you know, uh, you're not supposed to talk in court but if you're ever in a court you see how somebody could, "spspspspsp, hey." You hear the clerks talking, counsel [speech drifts off mimicking whispering amongst people in a courtroom]. Stone quiet, you could hear a pin drop. I said, "Counsel, you've called this a, lawyer by her first name three times. I've reminded you three times that you're not to do that. Please don't do that again in this or any other court room." "Well, Judge I was just trying..." I said, "I know what you were trying to do and I won't have it in this court room." So, things like that happened. Uh, that's how I usually addressed it. And so I very, very, very seldom ever had to put anybody in their place about anything because my reputation circulated about the court room, the court house. And, sometimes when I speak in front of kids groups, uh, uh, high school students, they ask, "Did you use the gavel?" I said, "No, I never had to." [All present chuckle] So, uh, uh, and as a circuit judge it's our responsibility to elect associate judges. Uh, if there, if for example there [are] twenty-five openings, there may be 400 lawyers who apply for them. The circuit court selection committee selects from that 400 twice as many who are to be elected so fifty people are running. And, uh, as the judges, as the candidates would come in I would tell all of them I-I spoke [Jones taps finger on table for emphasis] with every single person who ever ran as an associate judge. And, I had the same conversation with all of them because I said the chances are, you think the chance is only 50% of you becoming a judge actually it's 75 because people who don't get it done this way run again and they become a judge or they uh, do something else that gets them in similar[ly]. So, the chances are 75% that you're going to be a judge so this

conversation's worth while. And I talked about just two things. I talked about court management, uh, it's the importance of getting litigation out of people's lives and I talked about racial fairness. Uh, and how the best way to assure it is to make sure that everybody is following the same rules. Uh, uhm . . . and . . . so now I'm in the business of teaching people how to be free of debt and how to invest properly so that they can retire. And, that's a need really in everybody's community. Some people [undecipherable] whenever I'm talking to somebody I know in my community, they'll say, "Well that's something we really need to know." I say, "Well, wait a minute, do you know that there's three, that there's three hundred million people in the country. There's fifteen trillion dollars worth of personal wealth. That's fifty thousand dollars for every man, woman, and child in the country. That's no wealth because if you invest that and get 10%, that's only \$5,000 a year. You can't live off of \$5,000 a year. Now if we take all of the black folks and all of the Hispanics out of that equation, that's \$250,000, or 250, uh, million people. If you divide 250 million into 15 trillion the answer is \$60,000. Well, 10% of that is \$6,000. Now, you don't want to live off of \$6,000 any more than you didn't want to live off of \$5,000. So you see, white folks don't have it either, they're broke too." *[Laughter from interviewers in background]* And if you don't believe it just let me take you to any overpass of the Kennedy Expressway and see all of them driving in to jobs they don't want. And, uh uh, and every single one of them are a paycheck or two away from financial disaster just like everybody else. Now it's true that when the economy hiccups, the black community gets a convulsion. That's true. Uh, they are, uh, com[mmunity], that community is more vulnerable. But it is NOT true that black people are the only ones who lack financial education. You see, 95% of Americans don't have

it. That MUST be a whole lot of white folks. [*Chuckles from the group*] Mm-hm. Are there any other specific questions or concerns that I can address that I haven't? Cause you know, if you ask me something I'll probably think of something else too. [*Laughter from group*]

(0:27:25)

**KO:** I think we've gone through all of our themes unless you have something else you wanted to add. You answered a lot of our questions along the way.

**SJ:** Oh, okay. Okay, well.

(0:27:35)

**KO:** Our themes anyway that we had in our head. Uh, unless you have anything else you'd like to add.

**SJ:** Well, I think a part of my effectiveness as a judge was because I was not . . . connected with any establishment of lawyers. I was no[t], I was active in the Cook County Bar Association. I was not super active in the Chicago Bar Association. I wasn't one of the collections lawyers. I wasn't one of the defense lawyers. Uh, uhm, so, I came there with a fresh set of open eyes, and when the lawyers, at first the lawyers were a little nervous about things, but when they saw that everything was even handed and, uh, gave them predictability, uh they began to appreciate it. And a lot of them made a lot more money.

And, all of them worked very, very hard to get us to where we ultimately came . . . And that's why I say that I just have a great deal of respect for lawyers.

**(0:28:40)**

**KO:** Well, I guess we can wrap up the interview then. Uh, Judge Jones thank you again very much for all your time and your very, your information and your answers. We appreciate it. And (turning to Laura Malmberg), was there anything you wanted to add?

**(0:28:53)**

**LM:** No, just thank you for giving us the opportunity to interview you.

**SJ:** Okay. Now, do you want that, uh, letter that I wrote?

**(0:29:02)**

**KO:** If you wouldn't mind I think that would be great to put in the file.

**SJ:** I wouldn't mind at all.

**(0:29:05)**

**KO:** I think it would be wonderful. [Okay] I think Dr. Manning would love that as well.

**SJ:** Okay. Uh, to whom and how shall I send it?

**(0:29:11)**

**KO: Do you want to send it e-mail or do you want send it like in the mail?**

**SJ: Well, let's see. I'm not sure if I have it electronically. Uh, no, yes I do. I did it on a computer. So I do have it electronically. I can probably e-mail it to you. Uh, in a, it'll, it would come in Word pack Works rather than, rather than Word.**

**(0:29:35)**

**KO: That's not, that's not a problem at all.**

**SJ: Okay, so...**

**(0:29:37)**

**KO: The interview is ending. It's about 12:45 on Saturday.**



**APPENDIX I: INTERVIEW THEMES**

**Cook County Court Oral History Project**  
**Judge Sidney A. Jones III**  
**Daley Center, Chicago, IL**  
**Saturday, October 27, 2007**

Interview Group: Kelly O'Connor, Laura Malmberg, Chris Cayer (not present)

**Outline of Judge Jones's Background**

Prominent civil rights family

Father a judge

Grew up in Hyde Park

University of Illinois undergrad- 1966

Marine Corps 1966-1970

Northwestern Law 1973

Private practice 1973-1985

Appt to fill a vacancy in 1985 and received *Chicago Tribune* endorsement

Reduced backlog in his divisions as judge

President of Cook County Bar Association

**Themes for Interview of Judge Jones**

Chicago native

Impact of neighborhood or Chicago surroundings on decision to pursue law

Shaping moments during childhood and adolescence

High school attended

College- choice in major; decision to attend University of Illinois

Events during time between college and law school

Reasons for going to law school

Degree to which race affected law; decisions to become a judge and lawyer

Type of law practiced after graduation; where was it practiced- private or public sector

Private practice life

Preference for certain type of law or specialty

Events that led to wanting to become a judge

Process of becoming a judge

Roles held as a judge; placements as judge

Noteworthy cases and anecdotes

Courtroom demeanor and atmosphere

Noteworthy accomplishments as a judge

Ways he solved backlog issues in his area of court system

Meaning of law

Years and service on the bench

Reasons for retirement

Life after retirement

Effects being a judge had professionally and personally

Thoughts and words interviewee wants especially included in the interview

**APPENDIX II: TIME LOG**

**Time Log for Judge Sidney A. Jones III**

**Folder A**

- 0:00:00 Introduction, birth place, and quick life Synopsis.
- 0:01:30 Remembrance of childhood community.
- 0:02:00 Proximity to School and Parents' move.
- 0:03:00 First home and subsequent residences.
- 0:04:00 Divorce and move to North Side.
- 0:05:00 Interest in law and draft decision.
- 0:06:00 Choice of Navy ROTC over other branches and then continuation into Marine Corps.
- 0:07:00 Coffee Break.
- 0:08:00 Vietnam, Camp Lejeune, and sister.
- 0:09:00 LSAT and future with Marine Corps.
- 0:10:30 Sister's YWCA panel and impact the experience had on pushing Judges Jones toward a career in law.
- 0:11:00 Decision to leave Marine Corps and attend Northwestern Law School.
- 0:12:00 Exit interview and Friendship with Prof. Bill Chamberlain.
- 0:13:30 First job during law school.
- 0:14:30 Time as a clerk in the Corporations Counsel's office.
- 0:15:00 Reflections on who was prosecuted and impression of effectiveness.
- 0:17:30 Judge Ellis Reed, McCoy, Ming, and Black's prestige, and the lineage of judges.
- 0:18:30 Law clerking in McCoy, Ming, and Black under Ellis Reed.
- 0:19:30 Coffee Break, part II.
- 0:20:30 Professionalism in law and Aldus Mitchell.

- 0:22:00 Court case between Judge Edith Sampson and Aldus Mitchell and its impact.
- 0:23:30 Politically motivated cases Judge Jones represented.
- 0:24:30 Opinion of the role of lawyers in society.
- 0:25:00 Early law career and participation in the Cook County Bar Association.
- 0:27:30 Presidency of CCBA and the role it played in Judge Jones's appointment.
- 0:29:30 Nomination to the bench by Justice Ward.
- 0:31:00 Clarification of details and dates.
- 0:32:00 Remembrance of Bob Ming.
- 0:34:00 Area of study at University of Illinois.
- 0:35:30 Murder trial involving three juveniles represented by Judge Jones.
- 0:38:30 Rights of juveniles, when to try as adults, and the necessity for finding redeeming qualities.
- 0:40:00 Estate case involving deceased real estate magnets.
- 0:42:30 The role of the courts to expedite litigation.
- 0:43:30 Law career following McCoy, Ming, and Black including created firms and time as a sole practitioner
- 0:45:00 Aaron Payne and the role of advocacy in law.
- 0:46:30 Racially charged case involving a seventeen-year old girl.
- 0:49:00 Discussion of a NAACP case involving the Evanston branch and the school board concerning the reconfiguration of the school district.
- 0:51:00 Experiences with the Chicago Bar Association Judicial Evaluation Committee.
- 0:53:00 Judge Jones talks about a case involving civil rights in which a woman sued her former employer on the grounds of improper firing.
- 0:54:00 Brief mention of the Attorney Registration Disciplinary Committee and Executive Committee of the Federal Courts in relation the Chicago Bar Association Judicial Evaluation Committee.

- 0:55:00 Date sworn in (January 2<sup>nd</sup> 1985) and assignment to Property Damage Court
- 0:57:00 Experiences in the court and his efforts to reorganize the process.
- 1:04:00 Mentions Judge O'Connell's and Judge Ellis Reid, noting the impact their relationships had on his experiences on the bench.
- 1:06:00 Mentions the importance of seminars on Court Management.
- 1:07:00 Campaign for election in 1986.
- 1:08:00 Impact his structural changes had on other Judges and his room transfer.
- 1:09:00 Resumes discussion of his appointment, highlighting the relational nature of Chicago and the need to cultivate positive contacts
- 1:11:00 Returns to the importance of Court Management training.
- 1:12:00 Contends to the nature of court backlogs.
- 1:14:00 Creation of a backlog task force between him and city lawyers to enforce standards. Notes the impact the task force had on cases and backlog.
- 1:16:00 The effectiveness of the task force and the rigorous nature of the created standards
- 1:22:00 Remarks on the positive changes made by the task force in the courts.
- 1:23:30 Removing backlog through effective case management as judge.
- 1:24:00 Involvement in mandatory arbitration program.
- 1:27:00 Respect for lawyers.
- 1:28:30 List of positions held as judge including supervisory roles.

**Folder B**

- 0:00:00 Continuation of roles held as judge.
- 0:00:30 Differentiated case management.
- 0:02:30 1992 retention issues since not recommended by Chicago Bar Association.
- 0:04:00 *Law Bulletin* letter in defense of 1992 retention.
- 0:06:00 Retention victories in 1992 and 1998

- 0:06:30 Transfer to Chancery Division.
- 0:08:00 Intercounty Trust Company Case.
- 0:11:00 Management of sensitive litigation.
- 0:12:30 Growing interest in financial education leads to decision to retire.
- 0:16:30 Looking back on decision to retire.
- 0:17:30 Involvement with legal profession today.
- 0:18:30 Retirement date- April 2001 and affiliation with myEcon marketing firm and financial education.
- 0:20:00 Reflections on being a judge.
- 0:21:00 Court room policy for discrimination; need for sensitivity.
- 0:23:30 Responsibility of circuit judges to elect associate judges.
- 0:24:30 Racial fairness and court room management talk with associate judges.
- 0:25:00 Teaching financial responsibility after being a judge.
- 0:27:30 Effectiveness as a judge.
- 0:28:00 Wrap up of interview.