

**THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY
OF THE NEW YORK COURTS**

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

Hon. Norman Goodman



Mural of The Woolworth Building in Jury Room 452, 60 Centre Street, New York, NY

**THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF THE NEW
YORK COURTS**

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ORAL HISTORY

**Subject: Hon. Norman Goodman
New York County Clerk**

An Interview Conducted by: John F. Werner

Date of Interview: September 30, 2009

Location of interview: OCA Studio, 25 Beaver Street, New York, NY

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THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF THE NEW YORK COURTS

Oral History Project

INTERVIEWEE: Hon. Norman Goodman

INTERVIEWER: John F. Werner

DATE: September 30, 2009

[Audio File 1]

JW: [00:00] Today we're going to interview Mr. Norman Goodman, County Clerk of the County of New York. And this is an oral history project of the Historical Society of the Courts of the State of New York. I worked with Norman for decades and it's my pleasure to ask him about his career. And I think we'll start with his early years. Norman, where were you born and where did you grow up?

NG: Well, before we get to that, John, I know this is hard for you to do, but you introduced me as the County Clerk of New York County. I'm also the Clerk of the Supreme Court, you'll remember, and the Commissioner of Jurors in New York County.

JW: Well, exactly, Norman. And I think we're going to cover that in some detail as we proceed.

NG: Good.

JW: Exactly. So Norman, tell me a little bit about your early years.

NG: Well, a little bit about my early years. I was born and raised in New Haven, Connecticut, went to the public schools there, the L. W. Beecher School on Blake Street in New Haven for elementary or grammar school, we called it grammar school in those days. Then to the Sheridan Junior High School on Fountain Street in New Haven, and then to the New

Haven High School better known as the Hillhouse High School, which was the academic high school. New Haven in those years had two high schools. One was called Commercial High and the other Hillhouse, New Haven High. One was academic and one was, as the name suggests, commercial. So if you wanted to be a stenographer you went to Commercial. If you wanted to -- if you saw yourself as being [02:00] an accountant, you went to Commercial. If you wanted to have any kind of an academic career, you enrolled in Hillhouse. Those were public schools.

JW: And your father, what did he do for a living?

NG: My father was a wholesale dairy products distributor in New Haven and he distributed to independent grocery stores. I should say in those days there were no chain stores in New Haven except for the A&P. There were no supermarkets. So there were individual corner stores and the dairy products were sour cream, butter, cheese, eggs, those kinds of products.

JW: And I can only assume, knowing you as I have these years, that you were a very fine student when you were in elementary school and secondary school.

NG: I did OK. I wasn't a great student; I wasn't the smartest kid in the class. Our classes, I remember, especially in grade school, were arranged with the smartest kid in the class sitting in the first row, first seat. The least smart kid in the class sat in the last row, last seat. I sat -- we had about seven or eight rows. I sat in the fourth seat, second row. A typical A minus, B plus student.

JW: I see. And of course it was your intention and your family's intention that you would go to college.

NG: [04:00] That was my intention.

JW: And where did you aspire to go to college?

NG: Well, I lived in New Haven. Of course Yale was there. We were surrounded by Yale.

And I guess every kid at one point begins by aspiring to go to Yale, as I did when I was a kid. I followed the football team, followed the basketball team, the baseball team. I sold peanuts in Yale Bowl during football games. I did all those things. And I prepared for a career at Yale. I took the College Board exams. They didn't have SATs in those days. I was not selected. As a matter of fact, there were very few selected in my class. And unless you were a super student you didn't have a chance if you were Jewish.

JW: I think it was well known that many of the Ivy League schools had quotas at that time essentially.

NG: Right. That's not to say that there weren't some Jewish students who were admitted. But I guess fourth seat, second row didn't do it. Two very close friends of mine, Ben Plotkin and Dave Pollowitz, and I went to New York. We applied to NYU at University Heights in the Bronx. And the three of us went there and we lodged in the dormitory on the campus. [06:00] Dave Pollowitz and I were roommates. We had a very nice career in the first year and second year. That was 1941. I was in the class of 1941 at Hillhouse. And September of '41 was when we went to the Bronx, NYU. We all know what happened in December of 1941. And at that time in December of '41, I was 18 years old. We finished our first year, all three of us. Ben did not come back in the second year. He transferred to the University of Connecticut. But David and I did come back and we remained roommates. And sometime in the following November 1942, when we were in our sophomore year, just beginning our sophomore year, we were offered the possibility -- that is everyone similarly situated was offered -- of enlisting in the armed services or

subjecting ourselves to the draft. If you enlisted the benefit was they would allow you to finish your academic year of college. So [08:00] we both enlisted. That was November 25th, 1942. And so there I was an enlisted serviceman not in uniform, but finishing my second year. And in early May of '43 I was called for active duty. And that was very fortuitous for us because it saved us from final exams. Final exams were given in the middle of May that year, and I was called to active duty on May 6th of that year, and the university forgave us the final exams that year. I reported to Fort Devens, Massachusetts because I was not considered a New York resident at that time. I was still a Connecticut resident and so I was ordered to report to Fort Devens.

JW: When you finished your service, you continued your education at --

NG: When I finished my service in December of '45, I returned. In the end of January or around February 1st of '46 I reenrolled at NYU, and I moved back to NYU.

JW: [10:00] This was on the GI Bill.

NG: On the GI Bill at this point. I finished the first semester in '46. David Pollowitz and I both returned at the same time, and we enrolled in summer classes at Washington Square. There were no summer classes at the Bronx campus. We were both from New Haven, so we were lodged, and there were very few dormitory facilities at NYU at that time. So we lived in the clock tower at the Judson Memorial Church on Washington Square for that summer, June, July and August. And we completed the equivalent of a term of study in those three months.

JW: And you've had a lifelong association with NYU.

NG: With NYU, yes I have.

JW: The Heights campus is no longer in existence.

NG: Yes. To my great regret. That was a wonderful campus.

JW: It was indeed.

NG: It was a wonderful campus. And we loved it there. Later in my career when I was elected to be a trustee of New York University, I made a little talk, and I said I loved New York University, I'd been a loyal alumnus, except for about 20 minutes when they sold the NYU campus.

JW: [12:00] Had it been your plan to go to law school all along?

NG: No. As a matter of fact, I was uncertain as to where I was going to go. Whether I was going to go into my father's business -- there were bids to buy my father's business. National Dairy was one of the suitors. And whether I would go there. Or what I would do. I was uncertain. But during my army career I had the good fortune to have bunkmates who were lawyers. One of them was Frank Rina. He was older than I. He was already an admitted lawyer in Rochester, New York. Frank was a big influence on my thinking at that time. He persuaded me to pursue a career in the law.

JW: And did you proceed to law school directly?

NG: No, I continued. I went back to the Heights again the following September of '46 and completed the year from '46 and graduated with the class of '47 on the NYU campus, in the Bronx.

JW: But then you went directly.

NG: Then I went directly the following September to NYU Law School.

JW: So you're class of --

NG: Graduating class of 1950.

JW: 1950. And I guess you could say that Yale's loss was New York's gain, I think.

NG: I hope so.

JW: I think so. Absolutely. When you graduated from law school you went into private practice?

NG: [14:00] Yes. I had a clerk's job in a law firm while I was in law school in my third year. And I worked in this private law office, not a large firm. There were three lawyers in that firm. And we had a general practice. We did everything from criminal to negligence to corporate law to immigration to matrimonial. We covered everything. And I worked with them until I was admitted in December of 1950. I still was uncertain as to whether or not I was going to stay in New York. By the time I was graduated, I was married.

JW: When were you married?

NG: I was married in February 1948 while I was in law school. We took an apartment in upper Manhattan. Apartments were very difficult to get in those days. The only way I was able to get one was that my mother and father owned a small apartment house with eight apartments in New Haven, and one apartment became vacant in New Haven. My mother put an ad in the New York paper, and somebody from New York [16:00] was taking a job at Yale and took my mother's apartment, and exchanged it for the apartment that I got.

JW: Was this in Park Terrace?

NG: No, this was Seaman Avenue.

JW: You lived in the north end of the island for some years.

NG: Lived in the north end of the island until 1980.

JW: And Penny and your daughters, Susan and Nancy, they went to school in the city?

NG: The city. Before that I took the Connecticut bar examination. I wanted to get into that. Because I still was uncertain where I was going to stay and what my opportunities would

be. So I studied for the Connecticut bar exam and passed it and was admitted in Connecticut, and I'm still admitted in Connecticut.

JW: Your brother still lives in Connecticut. And sister lives in --

NG: My brother and sister still live in New Haven.

JW: Now you at some point became involved with New York City politics.

NG: Well, while I was living on Seaman Avenue, in the Inwood neighborhood, and later when I moved to Park Terrace East in that same neighborhood in upper Manhattan, I joined and became active in the local Democratic club. There I made good friends and was interested in the process.

JW: Were you a district captain?

NG: Eventually I was a district captain and I was an election inspector and I did all of the routine things. [18:00] I called on people door to door. I had my own election district. And I worked pretty hard for a number of years. And later on, I became president of that Democratic club.

JW: Now Norman, your associations are vast in the city, I think broader than anyone I know, in the spheres of education, politics, our legal community. There are endless illustrious figures that we could discuss. Obviously our time is very limited. So while you were engaged in legal practice you were active politically.

NG: That's right. The name of my law firm was Levey, Myers, Katz and Goodman. And we were the same kind of law firm that we were when I first started there as a clerk.

JW: You became partner.

NG: And I became a partner in 1960. I should say that my partners (I was the youngest of the four of us) were getting older, and they were trying to ease up on the workload, which

they saw as falling on me. [20:00] I can remember one day because of illness of some of my older partners, two of my older partners, I had to cover trial calendars in Queens, Brooklyn and Manhattan on the same morning. I had my car at that time, and I drove to Queens, answered a calendar, called ahead to Brooklyn and New York, and asked for second call, and I got second call. I handled the first call, it was just telling the court that we were ready or asking for an adjournment, I don't remember exactly. And then running, getting the car, going over to Brooklyn and answering the calendar there, calling ahead again to Manhattan. And then eventually by 11:00 winding up in Manhattan. And doing all of this in three counties within two hours. And I said, you know, this is not for me. If this is what's going to happen, I don't know if I can handle it on a regular daily basis.

JW: Appearing in these various courts all over the city and running from one court to another.

NG: Various courts. Yes, and then eventually trying cases. Because I did try cases there too in all of those courts, in Supreme Court, in Civil Court, in Municipal Court in those days.

JW: General Session.

NG: Not in General Session. I never handled a General -- but I handled Special Sessions [22:00] and Magistrates' Courts and --

JW: Municipal Court.

NG: Municipal Court and 8 Reade Street in Manhattan.

JW: City Court.

NG: I tried my first jury case at 8 Reade Street in front of a Municipal Court Judge named Pelham Saint George Bissell III.¹

¹ Pelham St. George Bissell III, Judge of the Civil Court of the City of New York, 1962 - 1981; Judge of the Municipal Court of the City of New York, 1951 - 1961.

JW: Carpets.

NG: Yeah.

JW: His family -- Bissell carpets.

NG: I tried my first jury case in front of him. When I finished the case, which went to a verdict, which I won -- it was a commercial case; I told him that this was my first jury trial. And he complimented me by saying he would never have known it. I handled it like a professional.

JW: So you made a career choice that this was not what you wanted to do.

NG: Well, I did not think I could carry it on for that long. And so I made an inquiry of my leaders as to job availability in the court system. And my best friend at that time was a young fellow named Aaron Greenfeld. Remember Aaron?

JW: I do.

NG: And Aaron was the law secretary to a famous, notorious Judge named Mitchell Schweitzer,² a General Sessions Judge.

JW: He was indeed.

NG: He was. And in 1962 with court reform General Sessions went south.

JW: As did the Municipal Court and the City Court.

NG: As did the Municipal Court and the City Court. [24:00] And they were merged and General Sessions became Supreme Court, and Municipal Court and the City Court were merged into the Civil Court of the City of New York.

NG: And, Aaron worked in the --

JW: Vineyards.

² Mitchell D. Schweitzer, Judge of the Court of General Sessions, New York County, 1954 - 1962; Justice of the Supreme Court of the State of New York, First Judicial District, 1962 - 1971.

NG: -- New Frontier Democratic Club of Inwood and Marble Hill. And at some point -- it was in 1965 that Joe Zaretzki³ was the leader in Washington Heights, which was the next district down from ours. He was a state senator. In 1965, for the first time in maybe 50 years, the New York State Senate went to the Democrats. Joe, having been the minority leader up to that point, became the majority leader. In those days, the Republicans and the Democrats talked to each other in the state senate. Joe appointed a number of people to part-time jobs as assistant counsel to the majority leader. We worked for Bernie Ruggieri, who was counsel to the majority leader.

JW: So you were one of the people he appointed.

NG: One of the people that Joe Zaretzki appointed.

JW: Right, as part-time counsel.

NG: [26:00] Part-time assistant counsel. I worked in the legislature that whole spring part-time.

JW: In Albany? Were you in Albany?

NG: In Albany, yes, in Albany. You'd make a trip every Monday morning to Albany and come back on Tuesday night in the beginning and Wednesday night later in the session. We'd stay in the DeWitt Hotel overnight. It was a marvelous time. Marvelous time. Some of my fellow assistant counsels were Vito Titone,⁴ Pat Cunningham,⁵ the Bronx County leader.

JW: To be.

³ Joseph Zaretzki, New York State Senator, 1948 - 1974.

⁴ Vito J. Titone, Associate Judge of the New York State Court of Appeals, 1985 - 1998.

⁵ Patrick J. Cunningham, Leader of the Bronx County Democratic Party, 1969 - 1977; Chair of New York State Democratic Party, 1974 - 1977.

NG: To be. Stanley Michels,⁶ city councilman yet to be. And a fellow from Rochester who was named Joe B-U-C-C-I. He pronounced it boochee, everyone else pronounced it buckeye. He was a very nice guy. We had a very good group. We worked, and at the end of the session I was appointed assistant counsel to Senator Paul Bookson,⁷ who was then chairman of a joint legislative committee on metropolitan problems. All of these jobs were part-time. I was continuing my law work and taking time off and I was permitted to do that by my partners. [28:00] And that was the time when I was working for Paul. The only time that I met Robert Moses.⁸ It was at the time when we had a hearing on the pier, I forget the number, but the pier was at the foot of Canal Street. Robert Moses appeared and his plan was to run a highway across Canal Street.

We listened to him, and we listened to a number of businesspeople who would have been done out of their businesses, a number of residents of Chinatown who on the East River side would have been displaced as well. Of course, it was voted down. It was voted down. Later that same year, Hy Gamso,⁹ who was the First Deputy County Clerk of New York County, was appointed by Bernard Botein,¹⁰ the Presiding Justice of the Appellate Division, the First Department, as the Clerk of the Appellate Division, leaving a vacancy. That was in 1965, creating a vacancy for Deputy County Clerk. The County Clerk at that time was Jim McGurrin, who was a sweetheart. He was a wonderful man. Very literary. [30:00] Wrote a book on Bourke Cockran, the great orator. I didn't know him until I met

⁶ Stanley E. Michels, New York City Councilman, 1978 - 2001.

⁷ Paul P. E. Bookson, New York State Senator, 1965 - 1974; Judge of the Civil Court of the City of New York, 1976 - 1995; Acting Justice of the Supreme Court of the State of New York, 1984 - 1995.

⁸ Robert Moses, 1888 - 1981, held numerous appointive offices in New York City and State government and was responsible for significant urban development in the New York metropolitan area.

⁹ Hyman W. Gamso, Clerk of the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court, First Judicial Department, 1965 - 1976.

¹⁰ Bernard Botein, Presiding Justice of the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court, First Judicial Department, 1958 - 1968; Associate Justice, 1953 - 1958.

him after an interview. I applied for the job. I was one of many people who applied for the job through the legal grapevine, through the political grapevine. As I understood it, what happened was that the legislature had voted to hold a judicial convention in 1967, I believe, and they were beginning to prepare for the election in 1966. They were beginning to prepare for the election of delegates to the convention. And there were positions statewide as delegate at large and there were delegates from each senatorial district in the state. It was recounted to me later that Judge Botein wanted to be elected a delegate to the state convention, delegate at large, so that he would not have to run for the office. [32:00] Some of the terms for the election of delegates were that you could be anyone, following any occupation, including Judges, and run for delegate to the state convention. So Judge Botein asked the then-New York Democratic County Leader J. Raymond Jones, Ray Jones,¹¹ if he could be considered for a position as delegate at large to the state convention. My understanding was that Ray Jones said to Judge Botein, “And what have you got for me? For my people?”, whereupon Judge Botein either was ready for the answer or thought about it for some time. He said, “This position is vacant; the one vacated by Hy Gamso, who was the First Deputy County Clerk in New York County, and it’s now vacant. It’s been vacant for some time now.” And Jim McGurrin was contemplating retirement. Whoever he selected to fill the position as Deputy County Clerk would most likely be elevated to County Clerk on Jim McGurrin’s retirement. So he said, “OK.” He said, “How do you want to do this?” And he said, [34:00] “Send me a list of lawyers and we’ll invite them for an interview.”

JW: So you went for an interview with Judge Botein.

¹¹ J. Raymond Jones, Leader of the New York County Democratic Party, 1964 - 1967.

NG: So I went for an interview with Judge Botein first, which was a kind of informal interview. Then the formal interview was with other Judges of the Appellate Division, Associate Judges, namely Charles Breitel¹² and Judge --

JW: Valente?

NG: Valente, Frank Valente.¹³ So I went in Judge Breitel's chambers and Frank Valente was there too and they both interviewed me. And sent them my resume, the work I had done over the last -- this was 1965 -- last 15 years since my admission to the bar. They were impressed. As a matter of fact, Judge Breitel said to me, "You have a very varied resume." He said, "I suggest that you stay where you are. Continue with your practice. You don't want this job." But he was apparently otherwise satisfied. After I left the Judge's chambers in the Appellate Division courthouse, I was in the corridor, and Judge Valente ran out after me, took me by the shoulders, and said, "Don't listen to him." He said, "If you can get this job take it." He said, "If I could get it for my son I would. [36:00] Take it." And eventually I don't know who else was interviewed. There were probably several others that were interviewed. But eventually Judge Botein called me and said that I was selected. And I guess you could say the rest is history.

JW: I think you can. Judge Botein, of course, had a reputation as a judicial reformer and someone who worked widely on reform of court calendars and I think was viewed as very progressive. But in this case I think Judge Valente was prescient, absolutely. So you started then as Deputy County Clerk to Jim McGurrin.

NG: Yes.

¹² Charles D. Breitel, Chief Judge of the New York State Court of Appeals, 1974 - 1978; Associate Judge, 1967 - 1973; Associate Justice of the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court, First Judicial Department, 1952 - 1966.

¹³ Francis L. Valente, Associate Justice of the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court, First Judicial Department, 1956 - 1966.

JW: So you walked into a court that was quite different than the court we work in today.

NG: Yes, it was.

JW: That's a fair statement. I guess if you arrived in 1966 that was almost 40 years after the doors of the courthouse had opened in 1927.

NG: Yes. I remember it was February 14th, 1966.

JW: Do you remember what your salary was?

NG: I think it was \$14,000.

JW: Who was Archibald Watson?

NG: I never met him. Archibald Watson was the County Clerk preceding Jim McGurrin. He had been the County Clerk in Manhattan from 1938, I believe, [38:00] until his death in 1956, thereabouts.

JW: He was a Fiorello La Guardia¹⁴ appointee.

NG: And that stemmed from the judicial convention of 1935, '36, '37, not sure of the exact year. Probably '37. When New York City County Clerks -- we've got five counties in New York City -- were still elected the same as the County Clerks in the other 57 counties outside of the city -- there are 62 counties in the state. And they were elected for four-year terms.

JW: As are County Clerks still today outside the City of New York.

NG: As are County Clerks outside. In the time since then, some County Clerks were elected for three-year terms, some for four-year terms. I was present at the time of and helpful to the upstate County Clerks in getting uniformity for their four-year terms. Some had two-year terms, some had three-year terms. It varied among the other 57 counties. In New

¹⁴ Fiorello Henry La Guardia, Mayor of the City of New York, 1933 - 1945.

York City, the five County Clerks had four-year terms. As a result of a scandal in New York County in the middle '30s --

JW: Albert Marinelli was the County Clerk at the time.

NG: Marinelli was the last elected County Clerk in New York County. In those days, as we do today, we process -- not issue but we process [40:00] as agents of the United States State Department passport applications. We process the completion of applications and the making sure that everybody's in order before we send them on with photographs and citizenship requirements and so on. But apparently there was some kind of hanky-panky going on between County Clerk Marinelli and some part of the New York mob, and it attracted national notice, and I believe that it was a House committee, held nationally known hearings. Al Marinelli left office and the passport processing function was withdrawn from the five County Clerks in New York City. In the 1937 statewide judicial convention, Mayor La Guardia went to the judicial convention in Albany [42:00] and the records show that he pleaded for New York City County Clerks to be appointed rather than elected as the other 57 counties were, that they should have terms during good behavior and that they should be appointed by their respective Appellate Divisions. That is the First Department appointing the County Clerks in the Bronx and New York Counties and the Second Department the other three counties, Queens, Richmond and Brooklyn. And that provision was adopted. And the first appointed County Clerk was Archibald Watson.

JW: Right, exactly. Now Archibald Watson did some other things when he was County Clerk.

NG: Archibald Watson was the owner and publisher of the New York Law Journal. Believe he was also a professor at New York Law School. He taught damages at New York Law School.

JW: And I think he had a law firm too.

NG: Did he? I didn't know that.

JW: I think he did.

NG: And he was reputed to be a direct descendant of President Zachary Taylor.¹⁵ So he was part of Southern aristocracy, and he was the County Clerk. He was beyond reproach. And Hy Ganso had been the editor of the Law Journal and he was appointed [44:00] as his deputy. And that was the beginning of Hy's experience with Archibald Watson.

JW: I think Sidney Asch¹⁶ was also part of that group.

NG: Yes.

JW: Believe he was. So tell us a little bit about 60 Centre Street when you arrived. I think there were no women Judges at that time.

NG: No, there were. We had -- when I arrived there were two women Judges. One was Birdie Amsterdam.¹⁷

JW: Birdie Amsterdam and Margaret Mangan.¹⁸

NG: And Mary Margaret Mangan.

JW: They had just arrived recently I'm sure.

¹⁵ Zachary Taylor, President of the United States, 1849 - 1850.

¹⁶ Sidney H. Asch, Justice of the Supreme Court of the State of New York, First Judicial District, 1970 - 1982; Associate Justice of the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court, First Judicial Department, 1982 - 1995.

¹⁷ Birdie Amsterdam, Justice of the Supreme Court of the State of New York, First Judicial District, 1958 - 1975.

¹⁸ Mary Margaret Mangan, Justice of the Supreme Court of the State of New York, First Judicial District, 1962 - 1984.

NG: Well, Birdie Amsterdam had preceded me by a number of years. Peggy Mangan was more recent, and she was from my neighborhood. She was from the northern part of Manhattan.

JW: Norman, we're going to talk a little bit more about your career as County Clerk, Clerk of the Supreme Court, and Commissioner of Jurors. But before we do that, I'd like to discuss the courthouse in which we both have worked for so many years. Now who designed the county courthouse?

NG: Guy Lowell designed 60 Centre Street. He was a famous architect who had already become renowned for his design of the art museum in Boston. He was a very well-known architect. I believe he had not designed any courthouses to that point. A common joke in the early days since it was very difficult to find your way around 60 Centre Street was that Guy Lowell had been a naval architect and designed [46:00] the courthouse as a ship and didn't know where the prow was. Of course that probably referred to the original design of the courthouse, which took place before World War I and was circular. And much larger than the final version of the courthouse. The plans to construct the design -- was it 1912?

JW: 1913, I think was the competition.

NG: 1913 was the competition. World War I intervened and delayed the actual construction of the courthouse. And by the time that happened in the early 1920s the design had radically changed to its current pentagon --

JW: Hexagon.

NG: Hexagon shape. It's a beautiful courthouse. Regardless of the fact that the rotunda and the circular walkways on the upper floors leave you disoriented when you leave an elevator,

and you don't know exactly which point of the building you're at, so you have to look at signs directing you to the room number [48:00] to find out where you are. To this day, I've been in the courthouse now for more than 40 years, and I'm still slightly disoriented when I get off an elevator unless I know which elevator will bring me to which place. When I take a random elevator, I don't know where I am when I -- without looking both ways and trying to find out and also looking out the windows at the top of the dome. The building was opened in 1927, and, as has been pointed out, the elected County Clerk at that time, William Collins,¹⁹ who later became a Surrogate of New York County, directed the moving of records to the courthouse in 1927 from the old Tweed Courthouse where the County Clerk's office had been located before that. The City Court was in the Tweed Courthouse as well. And the Supreme Court. I think the Supreme Court was at that -- parts there too.

JW: Definitely. Oh, absolutely.

NG: In the Tweed Courthouse.

JW: That was the county courthouse.

NG: Right. Tweed Courthouse had been the county courthouse. I have photographs in my office of the excavation for 60 Centre Street, early 1920s excavation, taken by the excavating contractor.

JW: How did you acquire these pictures?

NG: [50:00] I acquired them when we had a meeting of the contractors, the excavating contractors and the architects who were hired by the U.S. Government to build the courthouse next door to us at 500 Pearl Street, the federal courthouse. They were

¹⁹ William T. Collins, New York County Clerk, 1926 - 1928; Justice of Supreme Court of the State of New York, First Judicial District, 1928 - 1945; New York County Surrogate, 1946 - 1957.

prepared to dig a big, big hole to erect a very big, very large courthouse next to us. At the conclusion of that meeting, the excavating contractor came to us, came to me, and said, "You know, we were the same contractors who dug the hole for 60 Centre Street so many years before that." What was it, 50, 60, 70 years before that. And I said, "That's interesting." He said, "And we have photographs of the excavation." He said, "Would you like some copies of them?" And I said, "By all means." He gave me three or four. There's been a midnight requisition of at least one or two of those photographs. I don't know who has them now. But I have three of them in my office.

JW: Now the site of 60 Centre Street had been somewhat infamous as the Five Points tenement area.

NG: Yes. The Five Points tenement area is located at the intersection of what is now Worth Street and Baxter Street and I guess --

JW: [52:00] Cardinal Hayes Place.

NG: Cardinal Hayes Place. And probably Mulberry Street, close to Mulberry Street, was at a different angle probably at that time. They're on the north side of the building, northeastern side of the building. And it was an infamous area, photographed by Jacob Riis and preserved forever.

JW: Now when they were doing the excavation for 500 Pearl Street they uncovered the basements of the tenements. Many artifacts, I think.

NG: They did. And a tannery. Yes.

JW: Now the design of 60 Centre Street included -- Guy Lowell anticipated some significant murals -- adorning the building. But those were not done in 1927, were they?

NG: No, they were not done. As far as I know, the rotunda ceiling, the walls were institutional gray all through those beginning years. And of course the development of the building coincided with the onset of the [54:00] Great Depression of the early 1930s. And one of the great benefits that resulted from that period was the New Deal WPA project, which hired unemployed mural artists and artists of various kinds and employed them and had them painting murals in public buildings throughout the country. Among the best of those, maybe the best of all of those murals, was done in the rotunda ceiling of 60 Centre Street. It was done in 1936 and '37 by a group of very fine artists. Fine artists. Headed by --

JW: Attilio Pusterla.

NG: Pusterla. I have a photograph which I got from the National Archives in Washington of the group of artists who painted those murals. They not only painted the murals in the rotunda and the corridors leading to and from the rotunda on the first and second floors, but also in the jury assembly room, Room 452 on the fourth floor, which resulted from the combining of two former courtrooms.

JW: Now known as the Norman Goodman Jury Assembly Room.

NG: Yes, now known as the Norman Goodman Jury Assembly Room. [56:00] And on one side of the assembly room there are wall mural paintings depicting 1936 landscapes of New York City. The murals had become badly soiled because it had been the smoking section of the jury assembly room. Across the north wall of the room, the width of the room, is a tremendous painting of New York Harbor as it was envisioned in 1936. When, in the late 1970s, I contacted the people to clean and repair the murals, we didn't have any money. So I contacted a woman who worked for the State -- not Oneonta. She was

with the State in Cooperstown. She was with SUNY Cooperstown. They had at that point a graduate program leading to a master's degree in art and document restoration. I contacted her. She was the dean at that time. I said to her, [58:00] "Why can't you have some of your students come down during the summer, some of your graduate students under your supervision, and take care of the cleaning and the restoration of the artwork in Room 452?" She came down and she looked at it. She said, "I have a proposition. I will let you take some of our students in the summer. You'll have to provide some scaffolding for them. You'll have to find a place for them to live during the summer." And I said, "OK. We'll undertake that. But we can't pay them." She said, "OK." I found them rooming at NYU dormitories. They were just building dormitories. They were vacant. There were no summer classes. There were about a half a dozen young students. They came down. The city agreed to supply us with the scaffolding. The city in those days handled their own scaffolding. They don't anymore but they did then. And of course all that time the city -- and to this day -- owns the building. Owns 60 Centre Street. And we, the state Supreme Court and the County Clerk's office, occupy it under some kind of an arrangement between the city and state where there's some kind of a formula where the state reimburses the city for housekeeping and so on.

JW: Maintenance.

NG: [60:00] And the city at that time at no charge to us provided the scaffolding to take care of Room 452.

JW: That art restoration was a terrific success.

NG: And that restoration was a terrific success.

JW: And you elevated the lights, which were all on stringers as well.

NG: That's right.

JW: You transformed the room, no question.

NG: Thanks for reminding me, John.

JW: That was important. Because you looked through this maze of stringers and you couldn't see the murals. By elevating all the lights --

NG: We elevated all the lights up to the ceiling.

JW: -- you had this great vista. Now the renovation of the building, the major renovation of the building which the city undertook in the '80s and '90s. I guess it was O'Brien-Kreitzberg the principal engineer. You were the chair of the building committee and Administrative Judge Riccobono²⁰ was obviously very much involved with that project at the time. But part of that was your campaign to restore the murals in the rotunda, the radiating corridors. What had happened to those murals?

NG: The building had over the years developed leaks in the rotunda ceiling, the roofing. The rotunda needed new roofing. There was severe peeling of the paint of the murals and breaking down of the plaster. This was paint on plaster. The leaks were getting worse and they had resulted in poor maintenance of the drainage in the porticoes around the rotunda. The condition of the cupola [62:00] at the top of the rotunda and the sheathing of the dome. I talked to the city people at in those days they called it Department of General Services, and asked them to make repairs. Until I was blue in the face. They didn't have the money or the inclination to do it. They said that they had in their grand plans way into the future redoing the rotunda, but that probably wouldn't take place within the next 10 years or even 20 years. They couldn't project that far into the future. I talked to some

²⁰ Xavier C. Riccobono, Justice of the Supreme Court of the State of New York, First Judicial District, 1968 - 1992.

lawyers who had talked to me, who had raised questions with me, like Milton Gould and Owen McGivern and Alex Forger. These were prominent members of the New York bar, and had complained to me about looking up at the art and talking about the poor condition and the deteriorating condition of the murals. And what can we do about it. And I said, "Well, the city will not undertake -- they have offered to paint it all over in industrial colors, but I believe the art commission of the city will not permit it. I believe the murals are landmarked and we're going to need the landmark commission to approve any changes we do. And we're going to have to pay for it from private [64:00] sources." So a group was convened made up of mainly the names I just mentioned and Judge Riccobono and Judge Irving Kirschenbaum²¹ and a number of other trial lawyers who were interested in raising money to restore the artwork. I first had to establish to their satisfaction that it was worthwhile doing. So I contacted the Metropolitan Museum of Art. They sent some curators down to our rotunda who examined the paintings, the murals, and concluded that they were yes indeed fine art and yes indeed worth restoring. And if I wanted to do that that the best contractor, the best art restorer in the world at that time was a fellow named Bernie Rabin. And if you could contact him -- and he would probably be interested in doing the work -- he should be retained to do it. And before we ever had any money, we contacted Rabin. Rabin came down and looked at the murals and said, "These are wonderful. These murals are wonderful." [66:00] He said, "I'd love to be able to do it but I'm getting too old to do it." He said, "You're going to have to erect scaffolding in the rotunda and I'm too old to climb scaffolding. However, I recommend my disciple, a young woman named Connie Silver, who has been working with me for

²¹ Irving Kirschenbaum, Justice of the Supreme Court of the State of New York, First Judicial District, 1974 - 1988.

some years on restorations. And she would be perfect to recruit a crew to do this.” We contacted her and she came down and looked. Then we got an estimate of what it would cost to do and she included everything. Her own recruiting a crew for herself and the erecting of scaffolding and the time it would take and so on. She came up with a number in the high three figures. And we passed that on to the committee. And the committee undertook to have regular meetings where we met in the courthouse. We met on the seventh floor. We met in the Merchants’ Club at various meetings. And we met in law offices. And agreed to ask law firms to contribute \$5,000 each to a fund to restore these murals. Now we were surprised by the almost unanimity of the responses. [68:00] You know the State Bar Association tells us that between the George Washington Bridge and Battery Park there are 85,000 lawyers, not all of them familiar with the courthouse. But they are there. And mainly from the civil trial bar we began receiving \$5,000 contributions. At the same time, we formed a not-for-profit corporation, and it’s called the Historical Records of the New York County Clerk, Inc. We used that vehicle to deposit the money in and to make disbursements to the contractors. We raised as much as \$750,000. And we called it a private-public partnership. Seeing the success of what we were doing in fundraising and paying for the restoration of the murals, the city undertook to advance their program of restoring the courthouse and to recover the dome, to replace the cupola [70:00] and to go ahead with restoring the stained-glass windows in the cupola and the major chandelier hanging from the ceiling of the rotunda. Having invested all of this time and money, they saw their way clear to start -- it was the beginning of the reconstruction of the courthouse, the installation of air conditioning and doors and --

JW: Pediment steps.

NG: The pediment steps. It all came together in the same decade.

JW: That was a major logistical challenge, was it not, Norman? Because weren't your offices vacated? And weren't all the courtrooms and chambers in rotation vacated? It was a very complicated process.

NG: Yes. That was a very complicated contract, as was the restoration of the murals in the rotunda, and the colonnade and the front vestibule, the front entrance, and the corridors leading to and from. The city paid for that. We paid for Connie Silver and her crew. We took almost a year, maybe more than a year of a rolling scaffolding going around the rotunda and into the colonnade. And all of that artwork was done. And we expended all of the \$750,000.

NG: The City Art Commission oversaw all of this and gave permission to fix the landmarked artwork. So it was all submitted to them.

JW: Well, I think what's clear from what you're telling us, is that almost constant vigilance is necessary to preserve the art and architecture of this very important building.

NG: Oh yes. Oh yes. To preserve the architecture of the building. At the conclusion of the artwork, I said, "We have repaired the artwork and taken care of it for our generation." My guess is that in some future generation they're going to have to do the same thing all over again.

JW: Do you remember the city "save a watt" program? Do you remember where they were taking down our Tiffany chandeliers? They wanted to replace most of them with fluorescent lights? We put a stop to that?

NG: Yes, we put a stop to that.

JW: With the landmark commission's help. It was a very strange project on the city's part and I'm sure well-intentioned, but totally inane when it came to the heritage of --

NG: John, I believe the leading person who got involved with that was yourself.

JW: I was involved with that.

NG: Yes, you were involved.

JW: Because I saw these chandeliers on the floor. [74:00] I was so shocked. I couldn't imagine that anyone would --

NG: Yes, and you bring up a wonderful point, which is that all the chandeliers throughout the building --

JW: Of which we lost quite a few.

NG: Of which we lost quite a few. Were done by Louis Comfort Tiffany.

JW: Norman, you located some important bronze reliefs of Judges from the Tweed Courthouse era in the basement of the Tweed Courthouse. When you found them, what happened? What did you do with them?

NG: We found them. Again we did this with the help of the Metropolitan Museum of Art. We had a young intern or student. She brought them to my attention. She came to me and she said, "We have these bronze sculptures in the basement of the Tweed Courthouse. And they're just sitting there gathering rust and dust. Is there anything that you'd be interested in doing?" I said, "Please let me look at them. Let me see what they are." So we went to the Tweed Courthouse basement, looked at them, and found that they were sculptures done by memorial committees on the death of three Judges in the early 20th century, maybe one of them was the late 19th century. With names that we don't see

anymore, for instance, Henry Rutgers Beekman.²² [76:00] Where do you find a name like that anymore? Henry Rutgers Beekman was a Judge of our court. He was one of the three Judges whose sculptures remained a possession of the court, in the basement of the Tweed Courthouse.

JW: I don't know why Abbott Lawrence Lowell²³ comes to mind. But he was a president of Harvard and first cousin of Guy Lowell so I think --

NG: Is that right?

JW: Well, of course Guy Lowell being part of this Boston Brahmin family.

NG: Probably related to Amy Lowell too, right?

JW: Exactly. It's from a different generation, different era, and different --

NG: The Cabots, the Lodges, the Lowells.

JW: Exactly. So you had --

NG: So again we ran short of money and I needed money and expertise for two phases.

Number one, I needed riggers to move the sculptures from us to an artist's studio; two, to move them back to our courthouse; three, to erect them on easels. I went to the Fashion Institute, FIT, and contacted a professor again of a graduate program in art restoration. If we could ship these bronze sculptures to his studios in the 20s where the school is, he would agree to have his graduate students restore the sculptures at no cost to us. [78:00] The cost to us would have been the cost of rigging and moving. And he did. He did that over a period of time. We then tried to get the money with difficulty from the city to move them back to our courthouse. We did that at the time the reconstruction was going

²² Henry Rutgers Beekman, Justice of the Supreme Court of the State of New York, First Judicial District, 1895 - 1900.

²³ Abbott Lawrence Lowell, President of Harvard University, 1909 - 1933.

on. We were happy to have a good relationship with O'Brien-Kreitzberg, the foreman or manager of the project agreed to recover, to get some steel, to build steel bases for the three sculptures and erect them in the lobby of Room 300.

JW: Ceremonial courtroom.

NG: Ceremonial courtroom. Where they stand today.

JW: I believe the deed of gift of one of those sculptures provided that it was to be removed to the new county courthouse when built. So we kept faith with the grantor. Now Norman, when you arrived at 60 Centre Street, was the Administrative Judge Saul Streit?²⁴

NG: He was. One of my learning processes was learning what the role of the Administrative Judge was vis-a-vis the County Clerk as Clerk of the Court.

JW: And you became County Clerk in -- you succeeded Jim McGurrin in --

NG: I did in fact succeed Jim McGurrin. And there's a little story attached to that too. And the story attached to that is that [80:00] while I was still Deputy County Clerk Judge Botein, who had promised me the County Clerk spot, retired and joined a law firm.

I called him and I said, "Judge Botein, what about your promise to me about County Clerk?" And he said, "Norman, do not worry about that. Harold Stevens,"²⁵ who was his successor as Presiding Justice, "will treat you the same way that I would have had I remained." And he did. And when the vacancy arose --

JW: In 1969.

NG: In 1969. Jim McGurrin retired. And Harold Stevens appointed me.

²⁴ Saul S. Streit, Justice of the Supreme Court of the State of New York, 1954 - 1972.

²⁵ Harold A. Stevens, Presiding Justice of the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court, First Judicial Department, 1969 - 1973, 1975 - 1977; Judge of the New York State Court of Appeals, 1974.

JW: Saul Streit was then Administrative Judge. Not only Administrative Judge of Supreme Court, Civil Branch of New York County.

NG: No. He was Administrative Judge of Supreme Court, Criminal too, as well as Bronx County.

JW: Civil and Criminal Branch, Bronx, and New York County.

NG: Civil and Criminal Branch, Bronx and New York Counties.

JW: I guess it was the judicial conference which was then the administrative arm of the court system.

NG: The Appellate Division --

JW: [82:00] Well, each of the four Appellate Divisions administered their departments but --

NG: And Lee Tolman, Leland Tolman, was the director of administration at 25th Street and Madison Avenue.

JW: Right. And a constitutional amendment in 1977 [82:31] created the Unified Court System, the Office of Court Administration, in which the Appellate Division ceded their administrative authority largely to the central administration, as we now refer to it. And I guess this was under Judge Breitel's aegis. Was the first Administrative Judge Dick Bartlett?²⁶

NG: Dick Bartlett.

JW: And so that really transformed the administration of the court system. But you were saying that one of your first responsibilities was to educate yourself in terms of the relationship between the County Clerk's office and the Supreme Court and --

²⁶ Richard Bartlett, Chief Administrative Judge of the State of New York, 1974 - 1979.

NG: And I did. I found that cooperation was the best way to handle it. It was in the time, before judicial conference, when we were still with the Appellate Division. [84:00] I asked Lee Tolman to consider transferring the employees in the jury assembly rooms to the table of organization of the County Clerks so that we could refine our reporting system, which was at that time very broken. It went off in different directions. After much pleading and arguing and reasoning, he approved it. We for the benefit of the employees who were working in the assembly rooms at that time -- assembly rooms in 60 Centre Street and 100 Centre Street and 111 and at that time we didn't have Thomas Street but later we did -- I gave them all the opportunity to stay with the Supreme Court in the various divisions, the criminal side and the civil side, or come with us. I believe at the time all but one, maybe two, of those employees came with us. They found it easier, the reporting system for the maintenance of the jury system was much easier at that point. [86:00] And the cooperation between us and the Supreme Court, both on the criminal side and the civil side, and in the Civil Court and wherever jurors were needed developed in a very cooperative manner over the next decades. [86:20]

[End of Goodman Part 1.mp3]

[Begin Audio File 2]

JW: [00:00] And -- [00:01]

[82:31 - 86:20 of Goodman Part 1.mp3 repeats in 00:01-03:50 of Goodman Part 2.mp3]

JW: [03:50] I think a hallmark of your administration is this [04:00] level of cooperation between the County Clerk's office and the Supreme Court. Anyone who is even remotely aware of how wonderful that relationship is appreciates all you've done to foster and promote that. No question about that.

NG: I think the feeling is mutual.

JW: Now, I have a schematic here which we won't go into detail. But I've got Norman Goodman 1966 to the present as County Clerk in the County Clerk's office. And then the various and sundry Chief Judges of the Court of Appeals, Presiding Justices of the Appellate Division, Chief Administrative Judges and Administrative Judges of our court, this bevy of names and all these columns, and the only constant that we have here is yourself. I think that's a wonderful tribute to you and of course you worked with everyone who is listed on this page. The role that you have occupied these years, of course, as County Clerk, Commissioner of Jurors and Clerk of the Court involves a wide range of responsibilities. Let's focus for a moment on your role as Commissioner of Jurors. Now you'll recall it wasn't so long ago that jurors were summoned for two weeks and essentially sat in your jury assembly room for a two-week period until discharged. What was the catalyst for some of the reforms? And how were you involved with that?

NG: When I arrived at 60 Centre Street, jurors were, [06:00] as you mentioned, required to serve for two weeks, whether they were used as jurors or not. We paid them an insignificant amount of money. I don't know if it was \$6 a day, something like that. There were 22 occupational exemptions. These were all exemptions that were granted by law by the legislature. If a legislator had a first cousin who was a podiatrist, all podiatrists got legislation exempting them. If they were embalmers, they were exempted. If they were volunteer firemen, they were exempted. If they were teachers, they were exempted. If they were lawyers, they were exempted. If they were chiropractors, they were exempted. The list was long and exhausting for us. In addition to which until the middle late '70s, women were exempted. No woman was required to serve. They could claim an

exemption simply on the grounds that they were women. [08:00] In *Taylor against Louisiana*,²⁷ the United States Supreme Court in the middle to late '70s came down with a decision based on a case that happened in Louisiana. What happened was that they had the same kind of rule in Louisiana and many states that New York had, except that in Louisiana they didn't summon jurors. At least in New York, we asked women jurors to qualify as jurors. It was up to them to ask for an exemption. In Louisiana, they didn't do that. Women could serve, but only if they took a personal trip to the county seat and asked to be made jurors. The Supreme Court stated in very general terms, in terms that we still use to this day, that juries should be composed of a fair and representative cross section of the community. When that case came down I remember. Louis "Louie" Lefkowitz,²⁸ who was then the Attorney General of the state, went to the legislature and said, "We want to remove that women's exemption." That was based on his view, his assistant's view, and my view. [10:00] I had a line to Louie Lefkowitz. The legislature on his recommendation removed the female exemption from jury service. That was the first step in removing and improving exemptions.

JW: Judge Kaye²⁹ appointed the Jury Project, Colleen McMahon,³⁰ Chair, in I think 1993. You were one of the commissioners.

NG: I was one of the commissioners. But before that time, in the 1970s and in the 1980s, we worked so hard to try to get exemptions repealed. New York had more exemptions than other states. Mississippi was second, and we were first.

²⁷ *Taylor v Louisiana*, 419 US 522 (1975).

²⁸ Louis J. Lefkowitz, Attorney General of the State of New York, 1957 - 1978.

²⁹ Judith S. Kaye, Chief Judge of the New York State Court of Appeals, 1993 - 2008; Associate Judge, 1983 - 1993.

³⁰ Colleen McMahon, Judge of the United States District Court for the Southern District of New York, 1998 - ___.

JW: So how were you able in 1996 to convince the legislature to do away with all these exemptions?

NG: It was the culmination of a long effort. When Judith Kaye joined the Court of Appeals, first as an Associate Judge, she talked to me and various other people in the court system about these exemptions. They bothered her as much as they bothered me. I pleaded. I went at least twice to an Assembly Judiciary Committee meeting and pleaded with them formally. And the legislators would look at me and actually laugh and say, "Are you asking me to require [12:00] my constituents to go to jury service?" I said, "Yes I am." And they would say, "Well, what are you trying to do?" And of course I was just me. I was one County Clerk out of 62, one Jury Commissioner out of 62 Jury Commissioners. And when Judith became Chief Judge she adopted our system for reform.

JW: It may be parochial of me to say, but I think New York County is the center of gravity for much of the jury reform that has occurred throughout the state. You as a commissioner, not only of the Jury Project, but also on the Commission on the Jury, which was chaired by Mark Zauderer and reported in 2004. Many of the recommendations in terms of reducing the time of service to one or two days, one trial, jury questionnaires, supervised voir dire -- all of that I think is a product of the campaign which you and those in the Jury Department, Vinnie Homenick and the Chief Deputy County Clerk, Jim Rossetti, were so involved in promoting. And I think as I say you really did champion this. And you hold sway, of course, with all of your fellow County Clerks and Commissioners of Jurors throughout the state. You have wonderful relationships over decades and you had such leadership in that role too.

NG: John, I'm not going to say you're wrong.

JW: That's good. [14:00] But it really was a major effort and major success and I think it transformed things. It was important to Judge Kaye. It is an ongoing project, obviously, but it was an enormous improvement.

NG: I should take this opportunity to say that in my career one of the first proponents of jury reform was Bernard Botein. When I first arrived. Bernard Botein and Hy Gamso. When I first arrived at the County Clerk's office, there was a program in force initiated by Judge Botein and Hy Gamso in New York County, and that involved telephone reserve jurors. Jury service was still two weeks. We invited at random certain jurors who had access to telephones during the day. If they would agree to serve on a telephone reserve, that would exempt them from the regular two weeks of service. Instead, they would agree to be available on telephone call to come down to the courthouse and begin service as a juror when they were needed. A certain number of jurors volunteered for that, and that program worked. [16:00] It kept on working even after Hy left. During the years that I was the deputy, I tried to refine it with Hy's advice and with Judge Botein's advice. And it got to be a finer and better system. But it turned out that the activity in the calendars in New York County wouldn't tolerate it as a general rule. It was OK for an experiment, but it didn't survive being expanded to the whole panel. We still have a certain amount of this process to this day. As far as the results of the jury commission reports in New York County, the sheer volume of cases will not permit us to have one day, one trial. But we have refined it to two days, one trial.

JW: An enormous advance. Of course, the whole system is now computerized. Jurors can automatically secure a deferment for the first appearance.

NG: The first appearance is automatic, no questions asked.

JW: And you summon hundreds and hundreds of jurors every day.

NG: Every day. Thousands.

JW: Thousands. Jury assembly rooms at 60 and 100 and 111 Centre Street and 71 Thomas Street. Most of the selections are all under supervision. [18:00] Now, as Clerk of the Court, Norman, tell me a little bit about the responsibilities of the office in terms of the record room and the transformation in New York from a service state to a filing state in 1993, which significantly changed the volume of filings in New York County and increased them. Also, obviously, automation has been an important part of your office, and, on the court side, you work on all those projects, starting I think in 1971 when you computerized your plaintiff-defendant index and later your minute book. And as I say this transformation to commencement of actions by filing and keeper of all of our court records and your judgment section is also renowned, deservedly so.

NG: John, I didn't invent computers. When I arrived at the courthouse I learned about not computers but automation. We had our jurors as most of the other counties -- as a matter of fact I might say all of the other counties in the state, the other 61 counties in the state -- had their jurors listed on name cards, three-by-five cards with their names, addresses, occupations, telephone numbers and [20:00] various jury qualifications. We had ours on punch cards, which was a system that was brought into being by Hy Gamso. He brought that to the County Clerk's office before I ever got there. We had keypunch operators in our office; that was the way we selected at random. When we selected a panel, that is for a whole call, one of the Judges would have to come down to our Room 139 and press a button to say that he supervised the drawing of the jurors for that panel. It was a regular formality that we used to observe. Whoever the Judge was who was assigned that duty

would come down and look at these keypunch cards and the selection system, like it was the 25th century.

JW: But of course when you arrived everything was pencil, paper, minute books, these enormous minute books.

NG: The minute books were all pencil and paper. And -- pen and paper.

JW: And of course when you arrived, the court side was the same. It wasn't until 1986 that we introduced CCIS Civil Case Information System. [22:00] Then-Chief Clerk Jonathan Lippman³¹ was seriously involved [in] the introduction of CCIS, working with the central administration. Since it didn't apparently occur to anyone that a complementary system should be provided in your office, you had to go hat in hand to the central administration and ultimately prevailed on them to introduce CCOP (Civil Case Operating Program), which is the counterpart to CCIS. But all of these systems obviously need to be integrated and still do. In the County Clerk's office, that's something that we've all championed for such a long time and will continue to do so. Not long ago, there were rotary phones, now we're on this local area network with numerous personal computers. It's an unbelievable sea change. You were on a commission generally known as the Floyd Abrams Commission, which addressed public access to court records.

NG: Access to court records, public records but court records specifically. But what came out of that commission was a conclusion that records -- not all public records should be available to the public or should be broadcast online because damage can be done at various points [24:00] in litigation and in papers. Lawyers are exempt from libel when they say things in legal papers, but if they put them out on a public display which is on a

³¹ Jonathan Lippman, Chief Administrative Judge of the Courts of New York State, 1996 - 2007; Chief Judge of the New York State Court of Appeals, 2009 - 2015.

computer, you have to be worried about what public is reading this. We have records going back to the American Revolution.

JW: And before.

NG: And before. We don't have Dutch records though. But we do have from before the historic Peter Zenger trial.³² And we have no problem with most of those records. We had a problem with matrimonial records. They're confidential by statute. As a matter of fact, there was a period of time when Aaron Burr's divorce case³³ was a historical record and it was recorded and the Q&A was recorded in our books. And it was really sordid. Historians were interested, but they were matrimonial records and they couldn't be exposed.

JW: Well, we'll get to archives in just a minute. But I want to focus on [26:00] again public access to court records. The advent of e-filing with the first enabling legislation in 1999. It was nowhere written that New York County would be the center of gravity of electronic filing in the state. Monroe County was also authorized in 1999 to introduce e-filing in certain action types, as was, of course, New York County. Quite frankly it was your collaboration and Jim Rossetti's collaboration and your main office's collaboration with the e-filing unit on the Supreme Court side, Jeff Carucci, now Statewide Coordinator of E-filing, that really promoted this project. The legislation which was just recently renewed authorizes the chief administrator to designate certain counties and certain action types in which e-filing would be mandatory. None of this could have occurred without this close collaboration and your support of this project. And this will

³² John Peter Zenger, a printer and journalist whose famous acquittal in a libel suit in 1735 in New York City established the first important victory for freedom of the press, which was subsequently incorporated in the First Amendment of the United States Constitution.

³³ Aaron Burr, Vice President of the United States, 1801 - 1805.

ultimately transform the way all of our courts in the state do business. The federal courts have long gone in this direction. The legislature hasn't been quite as enlightened as perhaps we would have liked to have in terms of expanding our --

NG: Legislature, enlightened, do those two words go together?

JW: But this is the future. I know how much Jackie Silbermann,³⁴ former Administrative Judge, Joan Carey,³⁵ our present Administrative Judge, and the central administration is of the fact that you've given such support to this project and so much help.

NG: Thank you.

JW: [28:00] New York County is a resource center for the entire state when it comes to promoting e-filing. So this is a really important undertaking and again I think, as I say, it was nowhere written that this was going to be our role, but people make a difference. And in terms of people making a difference, one of the things I've noticed about your office is you have a way of retaining talented staff over decades. Esther Bandel. When did she start in your office?

NG: When I got there in '66, Esther had already been there for 23 years. She started in 1943.

JW: So she must be the longest-serving state employee of any in the state.

NG: She probably is. She is now 90 years old. I'm saying this for publication. She comes to work every day in my office, and she does a job. And rain, sleet, nothing will stop her. Snow. Nothing will stop her from coming down. She is terrific.

JW: Indomitable. And of course, Linda Arnone who's your personal secretary and your chief deputy.

³⁴ Jacqueline W. Silbermann, Justice of the Supreme Court of the State of New York, New York County, 1983 - 2008; Administrative Judge of the Supreme Court, Civil Branch, New York County.

³⁵ Joan Carey, Judge of the New York State Court of Claims, 1986 - 2009; Deputy Chief Administrative Judge, New York City Courts.

NG: Well, we won't call her personal secretary. Linda is my executive assistant.

JW: Executive assistant. I'm sure that dates me. Exactly right. And Jim Rossetti who works so closely with you is your Hy Gamsso.

NG: My chief deputy.

JW: Is your chief deputy and fulfills the same role that Hy Gamsso fulfilled for Archibald Watson. Jo, is so important to all of us. And Joe Antonelli and Stephen Kubinec. Again the fact -- Vincent Homenick. The fact that you maintain these employees over decades maintains institutional memory --

NG: Well, I will say for some of them that they keep on threatening to retire. But the threat is not aimed at me. It's aimed at the Office of Court Administration. [30:00] Certain administrative things happen and they constantly threaten me and say, "If this doesn't happen, I'm putting my papers in." Because they've been around for so long.

JW: Now as Clerk of the Court, you're responsible for maintaining our archives. How did you come to organize the Historical Records of the New York County Clerk, Inc. and appoint Joseph Van Nostrand and Bruce Abrams as your archivists? Those archives were ignored for decades, were they not?

NG: They were ignored for decades. They were ignored by the court system for decades. They were not ignored by historians.

JW: There was a Commissioner of Records in the '30s, I understand. La Guardia dispatched the Commissioner of Records. After that I think the records just sat there.

NG: Yes. I'm not privy to how the Commissioner of Records position started, its history. But I know that it was thought of in my time as a sinecure, a political sinecure.

JW: I'm shocked, Norman.

NG: Yes, there was a notorious Commissioner of Records in Brooklyn, who couldn't read, write or speak the English language. He spoke with a very heavy accent, but he was illiterate in English and was a political stalwart. I won't say what party.

JW: I believe your historical records organization presages the Historical Society of the Courts of the State of New York, Chief Judge Judith S. Kaye and Associate Judge of the Court of Appeals Albert M. Rosenblatt³⁶ have championed and done so with the wonderful assistance of Marilyn Marcus.³⁷ [32:00] How did the Historic Records of the County Clerk, Inc., a not-for-profit, come about and what motivated you to establish this historical records as not-for-profit, and also to appoint your archivists to maintain this important historical record, which I think it definitely is.

NG: Oh, the archive, historical records. Well, I hesitate to mention the history of the sheriff's jury.

JW: I think it's a fair subject of discussion.

NG: The sheriff's jury was an organization, authorized by law. It had a very distinguished history. It was probably composed of what might have historically been thought of as a blue ribbon jury. And it evolved over the years from the time of the revolution to recently. It had various functions at various times. I'm told that at the time of the American Revolution all Tory members of the bar in New York County -- or New York State probably, for that matter -- were disbarred. And they were readmitted to the bar only by permission of the sheriff's jury at that time. The sheriff's jury had to review their loyalties to the new republic. [34:00] The jury varied in its functions over the years until from the beginning of my time in the court until its eventual demise, it served as a special

³⁶ Albert M. Rosenblatt, Associate Judge of the New York State Court of Appeals, 1999 - 2006.

³⁷ Marilyn Marcus, Executive Director of the Historical Society of the New York Courts.

jury in involuntary incompetency cases. As a matter of fact, when I was practicing law, I once had occasion to try a case with a sheriff's jury in the old Tweed Courthouse on an involuntary incompetency. They were a very selective group. And it turned out that those people had a lot of money, and they were really individuals who, if they were on the sheriff's jury, they were exempt from all other forms of jury duty in the state courts. They would among themselves appoint a treasurer. They would call each other. They would call a meeting of the sheriff's jury every month, the whole sheriff's jury. There were three panels of 150 persons on each one. And those who didn't show up would be fined an amount, a private amount among themselves. They would replenish their own treasury, and raise a lot of money that way, private money, which they annually spent on a dinner. One of the things they wanted to do was to help preserve the records [36:00] of the County Clerks. The County Clerk, New York County. It was in order for us to receive money for that purpose, for the purpose of helping to preserve some of our records, money that we could not get from public sources that formed this corporation. It's a not-for-profit 501 (c) (3) corporation. We received annual donations until fairly recently from the private sheriff's jury associations. Since that time, we've never really gone out and formally raised money. But we have a treasury. For many years, we were the beneficiaries of film companies, which would come in and film in our facilities, in our records facilities, and make a donation to us, voluntary donation. We would deposit it in this corporation's treasury.

JW: All to support the archives.

NG: All to support the archives.

JW: And of course you have a vast storage of material off site. Your attention to the preservation of the records of our court is legendary and much appreciated. Certainly all the scanning of records. I think you've been scanning pleadings, for example, since February of 2004. All the scanning that both your office and our offices are doing is a vehicle I think now. Replacing the microfilm process that we had been so involved with, that your office had been so involved with. [38:00] It'll be much simpler in terms of digitizing this material but --

NG: When I first came to the court, there had been a microfilm project ongoing initiated by Hy Gamso, where we filmed judgments. We had a viewer; one viewer in the office, and we'd use that. In my time, we expanded that microfilm program to -- this is before scanning came into effect. We tried to film recent year cases and kept microfilm records of those cases. It helped us in some ways to destroy some records and preserve the historical ones, and preserve the film. There were years when, instead of storage records, we would destroy records. We don't do that so much anymore. And we don't microfilm anymore, though we do scan.

JW: We're creating both on the e-filing front electronic original records and on the scanning front virtual records, which, while not the original records, will ultimately serve that purpose. Norman, you mentioned that Saul Streit was the Administrative Judge of the First Department Supreme Court Criminal and Civil branch, Bronx and New York County when you arrived.

NG: Correct.

JW: [40:00] Now I think he was succeeded by Edward R. Dudley,³⁸ who had a very interesting career in his own right, had been borough president, I think had the first ambassadorial-level position in Africa, had been part of the Eisenhower administration, really quite illustrious. And we enjoyed him. And was it Xavier Riccobono who succeeded Edward Dudley? I think that's true. And then --

NG: Yes.

JW: -- Stanley Ostrau,³⁹ a mutual friend, close friend of both of us.

NG: Yes.

JW: And Steve Crane.⁴⁰ And then Jackie Silbermann and now Joan Carey.

NG: Joan Carey, right. Correct.

JW: And during that period there were various Clerks of the Court. Well, of course you're the Clerk of the Court. But I guess Chief Clerk of the Supreme Court, originally referred to as the General Clerk of the Supreme Court.

NG: Correct.

JW: And that was Tom Galligan I guess.

NG: Yes, he was.

JW: And Tom was succeeded by Herb Spector and Herb was succeeded by Max Sirkus. And Max Sirkus was succeeded by Jonathan Lippman, now Chief Judge of the State of New York, formerly Chief Administrative Judge of the State of New York.

NG: Correct.

³⁸ Edward R. Dudley, Justice of the Supreme Court of the State of New York, First Judicial District, 1965 - 1985.

³⁹ Stanley S. Ostrau, Justice of the Supreme Court of the State of New York, 12th Judicial District, 1984 - 1997; Presiding Justice of the Appellate Term of the Supreme Court, First Judicial Department, 1988 - 1997.

⁴⁰ Stephen G. Crane, Justice of the Supreme Court of the State of New York, First Judicial District, 1990 - 2001; Additional Justice of the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court, Second Judicial Department. 2001 - 2005; Associate Justice, 2005 - 2008.

JW: But before all of that, Jon Lippman began his career in the court system where?

NG: Johnny Lippman began his career in the court system as a court attorney in the staff of the general Law Department. He then got promoted to law clerk to Sam Spiegel, who was then a Justice of the Supreme Court. And that's where I first met Jonathan, when he was Sam Spiegel's law clerk, law secretary I guess they called it in those days.

JW: They did indeed.

NG: [42:00] And we became friends and I became friends with Sam Spiegel too. And there was a political connection there too. Sam's wife Charlotte was a district leader and she was very political, eventually became county leader for a short period of time, and is still living today. Last I saw of her was at Jonathan's reception after his swearing in as Chief Judge last February in Albany. I hope she recognized me. Her daughter, Sam's daughter, asked me if I wanted to see her, because I remembered her from years ago. We were pretty friendly. And I'm not so sure she recognized me at that point. I think she's up in years.

JW: Well, she survived Sam by many years. Sam died in 1977.

NG: Right.

JW: But Jonathan, he grew up near the courthouse, did he not?

NG: Yes. Jonathan grew up in the Grand Street, the Amalgamated housing at Grand Street and the river where his father Ralph Lippman was the manager. And he was informally known as the mayor of Grand Street.

JW: And Sam Spiegel came from that area and Jack Markowitz came from that area.

NG: That's right. And so did Shelly Silver.⁴¹ Shelly Silver and [44:00] Jonathan grew up together, and they're still friends to this day. Shelly, of course, now being the speaker of the Assembly, and probably after the Governor the most important political person in office in the state.

JW: Longevity helps.

NG: Longevity helps, right. Yes, both for him and me.

JW: Now there came a time when Sam Spiegel decided he wanted to be Surrogate. When Sam Spiegel ran for Surrogate, of course won, that was in 1976, Jonathan went with Sam Spiegel as his law secretary, just as he had been at 60 Centre Street in the Supreme Court.

NG: Correct.

JW: Sadly, Sam Spiegel died within about four months of becoming Surrogate.

NG: Right.

JW: [46:00] Which left Jonathan Lippman --

NG: Without a job.

JW: Without a Judge and without a job. I think it's fair to say that you were very helpful and Ed Dudley was very helpful in creating a position for Jonathan so that he could return to our court and then become what amounted to deputy chief court attorney or deputy chief law assistant, as they were then called.

NG: That was the only 20 minutes he was out of a job in his legal career since law school.

JW: Another NYU graduate of course.

⁴¹ Sheldon Silver, Speaker of the New York State Assembly, 1994 - 2015; Member of the Assembly, 1977 - 2015.

NG: That's right. Well, Jonathan was not only an NYU law graduate. He also graduated from the campus at the Heights, where he was Phi Beta Kappa. And the law school. And the rest is history, but Jonathan excelled in the job that you now excel in, and --

JW: Chief Clerk.

NG: Chief Clerk. As you pointed out, when I first arrived and Saul Streit was the Administrative Judge, the Chief Clerk was Henry Silverman. And it was a General Clerk at that time. There was no Chief Clerk. And then Tom Galligan replaced him and Tom was the Chief Clerk of the Supreme Court, First Department, which included the Bronx --

JW: Bronx.

NG: -- criminal and civil and just as Saul Streit was the Administrative Judge. And as you pointed out [48:00] I've been friendly and close with every Administrative Judge in the 40 years that I've been in this position. And we've worked closely together, and we've never had a falling out, either with any Administrative Judge or with any General Clerk, Chief Clerk.

JW: Jonathan, I guess remained Chief Clerk. I think he became Chief Clerk in 1983, and remained Chief Clerk until 1989, then he moved over to the central administration.

NG: Where he became Deputy Chief Administrator.

JW: Right. Essentially to Matt Crosson.⁴² And as you say the rest is history. So proud of everything he's accomplished as Chief Administrator and Presiding Justice of the Appellate Division, First Department and as Chief Judge. It's remarkable when you think that he started his career as a law assistant two in 60 Centre Street on January 28th, 1972 at the grand salary of \$16,000 a year. So speaking of salaries, Norman, when you came to

⁴² Matthew T. Crosson, Chief Administrator of the Courts, State of New York, 1989 - 1993.

the court, do you recall -- this was 1966 -- what the salary of a Supreme Court Justice was?

NG: [50:00] When I first came as deputy, Jim McGurrin was making \$20,000 a year. I'm guessing that the salary of the Supreme Court at that time was \$32,000.

JW: I would have probably guessed \$35,000. But I know the Civil Court Judges in, for example, 1965 were earning \$25,000 a year. And I believe that Hy Gamso retired as Clerk of the Appellate Division in 1977 at \$31,000 a year. Of course, then we had 11%, 12% inflation, and the rest is history on that front. But I guess I raise the subject because it's my distinct impression that when you came to the court many of our Judges were coming from private practice. Some had come from the Assembly. Some had come from Congress. Some had come from a varied spectrum of legal practice. And I think there's been a serious sea change. This could be a sociological study in terms of Judges now moving more from civil service positions -- and I don't say that in any pejorative sense, obviously I spent my career in public service. We had wonderful Judges when we arrived and we have wonderful Judges now. But I think that there is a change in that there's been more diversity in terms of women and minorities clearly, all to the good, but there may be less diversity in terms of life experience in terms of legal practice.

NG: Life experience, right.

JW: [52:00] I think that's a fair statement.

NG: That's probably true. Some of the Judges are coming from different areas of the civil service.

JW: District Attorney's Office, Legal Aid, which is a counterpart, Corporation Counsel, Attorney General's Office.

NG: Law clerks.

JW: Our own court. Which of course is very fine experience for the judiciary I've always believed. Fewer perhaps are coming in from private practice and maybe that'll change, I don't know what the economy has in store. And of course we're graduating so many lawyers these days.

NG: They're also coming from some of the lower courts. When I first arrived some of our Judges had not served in the lower courts. They had come directly in -- a Judge like Judge Capozzoli⁴³ was never a Municipal Court Judge or a City Court Judge. He became a Supreme Court Judge. I think the same thing holds true for Saul Streit.

JW: Probably Irving Saypol⁴⁴ too.

NG: Well, Irving Saypol had been a United States attorney, and Davidson⁴⁵ was a congressman, and Dickstein⁴⁶ was a congressman.

JW: Sidney Fine⁴⁷ was a congressman.

NG: Sidney Fine was a congressman. And Farbstein⁴⁸ was a congressman. And [54:00] you're right, there was a different kind of diverse experience.

JW: Well, Sam Rosenman⁴⁹ in the '40s and late '30s chose to stay as a Supreme Court Judge rather than go with FDR to Washington, which --

NG: He eventually did go.

⁴³ Louis J. Capozzoli, Justice of the Supreme Court of the State of New York, First Judicial District, 1957 - 1966; Associate Justice of the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court, Second Judicial Department, 1966 - 1977.

⁴⁴ Irving H. Saypol, Justice of the Supreme Court of the State of New York, First Judicial District, 1952 - 1968.

⁴⁵ Irwin D. Davidson, Justice of the Supreme Court of the State of New York, First Judicial District, 1962 - 1974

⁴⁶ Samuel Dickstein, Justice of the Supreme Court of the State of New York, First Judicial District, 1946 - 1954.

⁴⁷ Sidney A. Fine, Justice of the Supreme Court of the State of New York, First Judicial District, 1955 - 1975.

⁴⁸ Leonard Farbstein, Member of the United States House of Representatives, 1957 - 1971.

⁴⁹ Samuel I. Rosenman, Justice of the Supreme Court of the State of New York, First Judicial District, 1936 - 1943.

JW: Well, I think he went back and forth regularly, I guess it's fair to say, in terms of his speechwriting duties. But he was a fixture in our court as well.

NG: Yes, he was.

JW: And that was because the remuneration was attractive at the time. I think this last decade has been very difficult for our Judges in terms of the salary situation.

NG: Well, if I'm not mistaken, our Judges haven't received a salary increase in 11 years. Is it 11 years?

JW: I think it's going on 11 years.

NG: And frankly many nonjudicial employees, like you and I, were frozen in place.

JW: Right. Well, and the vast preponderance of employees throughout the state, state employees, have had increases during this time, and it's a modest number that have not. But it certainly has been very difficult for our Judges. I think this is a sociological study in terms of transformation of the court regarding its relationship to the bar that practices before it. I think it's just worth our taking note. In terms of our recent dedication of the jury assembly room to you, the dedication ceremony we had in the rotunda, at which [56:00] Judge Lippman, Judge Pfau,⁵⁰ and Judge Kaye all spoke, is an indication of their heartfelt affection for you and of the affection that all of us here at 60 Centre Street have.

NG: That's an affection that's reciprocated from me. I have the utmost respect for all. Respect and I will say love of a sort with all of the people you just mentioned.

JW: Who is Robert Meade?

NG: Yes, who is Bob Meade?

JW: The elusive Mr. Meade, as we sometimes refer to him.

⁵⁰ Ann T. Pfau, Chief Administrative Judge of the Courts of New York State, 2007 - 2011.

NG: Bob Meade is probably the smartest guy in the courthouse, you and me included.

JW: Certainly me, not necessarily you.

NG: He's very self-effacing, and he's got a very pleasant disposition. You can always get a smile out of Bob. He's a peerless writer and a wonderful conversationalist when you can get him on a subject that he's familiar with. I'm not so sure how well he does with baseball.

JW: Very well, indeed!

NG: Oh he does?

JW: Oh absolutely.

NG: I've never had a baseball conversation with him.

JW: Absolutely. Do it.

NG: But he's a terrific guy, I love him.

JW: I think it's fair to say that he's been very important to our court and to the Unified Court System in terms of his writings and in terms of some of the projects we mentioned.

NG: No question.

JW: Including public access to court records and e-filing. And something we didn't mention, the creation of the Commercial Division in New York County and beyond. Bob was deeply involved with that. [58:00] I have actually a paragraph that I'm going to read that Bob wrote, "Norman's professional accomplishments are many. And they are compelling. But he has managed something even more unusual. To combine high achievement over many years with enduring qualities of remarkable personal grace. His high intelligence, personal integrity, wonderful sense of humor, loyalty, warmth and self-effacing manner constantly impress all who are privileged to work with and know him.

He treats everyone with respect and always has. And as a consequence he has earned the respect of everyone.”

NG: The feeling is mutual.

JW: Well, he’s a wonderful talent. He deeply admires all that you’ve done and your contribution to our court.

NG: Thank you.

JW: He has campaigned tirelessly to preserve his anonymity and I often tease him about corresponding with himself. Because he writes for so many. But he is a wonderful talent.

NG: He is a wonderful talent.

JW: Judith Kaye appointed you these many commission assignments I’ve mentioned. Of course, you’ve worked so closely with her over these years. If I’m not mistaken you and Jim Rossetti and Vinnie Homenick and some others meet annually in her chambers.

NG: For breakfast. Right. We had an annual December breakfast.

JW: To take stock on jury reform initiatives and so on.

NG: We did.

JW: She had really a remarkable tenure. First woman appointed to the Court of Appeals. What accounts for her dynamism and her presence?

NG: Well, I’ve known Judith many, many years. Long before [60:00] she became Chief Judge, when she first became Chief Judge, she was a friend. She was interested in the jury system, having served as a juror, and having observed it, and in the role that jurors play in the judicial system. Before she was chief she actually served on the jury, and we became friendly during that period. She’s a wonderful person. She and her late husband

were wonderful people, Steve Kaye. And I think we enjoyed each other, and I think we had a mutual admiration society.

JW: She's been very much involved with the introduction of the Historical Society of the Courts of the State of New York, as has Albert Rosenblatt, former Associate Judge of the Court of Appeals. Judge Rosenblatt seems to have a great affinity for historical subjects and for --

NG: As I do. He's a wonderful person, he and his wife, and a wonderful teacher. He was a wonderful Judge when he was on the Court of Appeals and before. And I've had a great relationship with him, and we have mutual interest in New York County history.

JW: [62:00] He's also a Sherlock Holmes buff, is he not?

NG: Is he?

JW: Absolutely. Now you're a voracious reader. You do read --

NG: Well, I haven't read Sherlock Holmes lately.

JW: No. But don't you read a novel a week or something of that sort?

NG: Something like that.

JW: You really keep up on your reading. I commend you for that. The Historical Society of the New York State Courts has worked closely with your historical not-for-profit, the Historical Records of the New York Clerk, Inc.

NG: Yes, it has. We have tried to be a regular contributor. A corporate institutional contributor to the Historical Society. Which we've done -- I believe we've done every year since the Historical Society has been in effect. Beside that, we've helped with some lectures and publications and we are great advocates of the work that Judith's group, Al Rosenblatt's group, is performing with the Historical Society for the Courts of the State.

JW: I guess it's Marilyn Marcus that's the wonderful executive director of the Historical Society. She has worked closely with us on many projects.

NG: I love Marilyn.

JW: I know you do; I know you do. And she's really been important to us in coordinating all these projects.

NG: She's a great lady.

JW: [64:00] Norman, I mentioned before that when you arrived in the courthouse it was 30 years or so after the courthouse had opened. But the fact of the matter is -- and you've already indicated as much -- you worked with many who had been a part of the courthouse for years before you arrived, which is what we would expect. Esther Bandel comes to mind. So in that sense you may not have experienced directly the courthouse of the 1950s or even 1940s but you have this frame of reference with all of these individuals who had worked in the courthouse during those years. So there is this continuum which I think you and I appreciate particularly and have learned from quite frankly and I think is important to us.

NG: Well, I was admitted to the bar in 1950 and I had clerked all through law school from 1947. The business of my law firm in those years frequently brought me into contact with the Supreme Court at 60 Centre Street. I went through records. I remember the days even before I got there. There was a clerk who was in charge of the record room in Room 103, and his name was Joe Gordon and Joe was a martinet. I remember as a young lawyer [66:00] occasionally making a mistake in requisitioning a file. And he had a little box on the counter, and when you handed him a requisition for a record, you had to tell him if it appeared in today's Law Journal or not. If it turned out that the record did appear in

today's Law Journal and you didn't tell him that, you had to put a nickel in the box. That nickel went for good and welfare of the employees in the office. Now Joe was there when I got there, and I became friendly with him afterwards. But he was a martinet. He was a tough guy. He was the muscle at the requisition desk. I also remember we had a lot of matrimonial work in my firm. I remember when Archibald Watson was the County Clerk. There was an interlocutory decree in those days; you were divorced, but it became final in 90 days afterwards. What you needed, besides the Judge's signature and the judgment of divorce, was a rubber stamp to be added to your certified copy signed by Archibald Watson, which said that 90 days had elapsed and there's been nothing has happened in the 90 days, [68:00] and the decree has now become final. You needed that on your papers. You had to put it on. I remember coming down and having to do that on various papers. So I wasn't entirely unacquainted with the -- and I would look up index numbers in the index books that we had, the alphabetical index books. And doing the searches and filing. I was involved in filing all kinds of lis pendens and mechanics' liens and we used to have a block and lot requirement and we had maps. We still have those maps, some of the maps, the land maps. They were as old as 1913.

JW: They'd come over from the Tweed Courthouse.

NG: They came over from the Tweed Courthouse.

JW: Well, people certainly make a difference. For example, Al Hassle and Joe Hipius, who were such legendary figures in your office and such wonderful role models for us all.

NG: Joe Hipius for so many years. And when I came there was a fellow named Manny Cooperman who was the Chief Clerk. He was before your time. Manny Cooperman I think was succeeded by Joe Hipius.

JW: People make a difference obviously. We talked a little bit about Jeff Carucci and his great initiative in promoting electronic filing. It's exactly that kind of difference that is so important. And I'm reminded of [70:00] Judge Wachtler⁵¹ and Jonathan Lippman's collaboration in promoting the individual assignment system throughout the state. If my recollection serves me, Judge Wachtler's predecessor, Lawrence Cooke,⁵² was an aficionado of the master calendar system. Judge Wachtler saw it differently, and when he succeeded Lawrence Cooke, among his first initiatives was the introduction of the individual assignment system. And Jonathan was so directly involved with that in our county and I think promoting that beyond. But tell us a little bit about Sol Wachtler. I know you worked closely with him.

NG: Sol Wachtler was and is to this day a great personality. He's a warm, loving person. I saw him just last week at the Sotomayor function. He was there. Gave me a big wet kiss. He's still got a great sense of humor, great wit. He must have asked me how things are going along. And I don't know, I love telling him, "Not as well as when you were there." He was always waiting for those words.

JW: Well, he had wonderful timing, as almost a standup comic's gift or vaudevillian's gift. When he spoke, he spoke not only beautifully but with such good humor. I think all of us who were privy to some of his after-dinner speeches or any of his presentations really admired --

NG: He said to me at the Sotomayor affair last week, "Where is that plaque?" He said, "The [72:00] memorial to Peter Zenger." And I said, "There it is, Judge, right there, right

⁵¹ Sol Wachtler, Chief Judge of the New York State Court of Appeals, 1985 - 1992; Associate Judge, 1973 - 1984.

⁵² Lawrence H. Cooke, Chief Judge of the New York State Court of Appeals, 1979 - 1984; Associate Judge, 1974 - 1979.

there.” I said, “Do you remember that on the back side of that plaque before it was implanted on the wall I signed my name, I etched it in the metal, signed my name, and Harold Wolfe signed his name?” You remember Harold Wolfe?

JW: Very well.

NG: Yeah and Harold Wolfe signed his name.

JW: A coconspirator with Michael McEneney.

NG: Right. At Harold Wolfe’s retirement party, he said he wanted to make sure that everybody knew that when that plaque is unearthed by archeologists in centuries henceforth, people were going to say, “We know who Harold Wolfe was, but who is Norman Goodman?”

JW: Harold Wolfe was the David Bookstaver of his time. And Mike McEneney had a thousand and one functions, and among them some of them functions that Laura Weigley performs today. But as I was suggesting before, Michael McEneney had great interest in everyone who worked in the court system from Buffalo to Potsdam to New York and kept in touch with all of them and still probably does. Who was Edith Spivack?

NG: Edith Spivack was a wonderful lady. Wonderful lady, wonderful lawyer, with a great sense of humor. One of the reasons that I remember her so well is a meeting we had.

JW: I was there.

NG: You were there at this meeting. [74:00] Do you remember the subject matter?

JW: She was doing a program for us on women’s history actually during Women’s History Month. And of course she had this remarkable career at the --

NG: At the New York City Corporation Counsel’s Office.

JW: Her career spanned 70 years in that office. And she was one of the first women graduates of Columbia University Law School and had gone to Barnard before that.

NG: Columbia University, right.

JW: So the subject of NYU came up.

NG: Yes, the subject of NYU Law School came up and we were talking about historical records. We were talking about inviting the librarians of the various law schools to join us in some historical work that we were doing in the law.

JW: You did an exhibition in the rotunda on women's history, which she helped us with and Judith Kaye helped us with and which was a wonderful success. I think the State Bar actually has a DVD or maybe we even have it of all of the exhibits of the County Clerk's exhibition in the rotunda, which was a wonderful, wonderful effort on the part of yourself, Joe van Nostrand and your historical organization.

NG: She said, "Well, we ought to get the librarians of Columbia Law School and Fordham Law School and Brooklyn Law School and New York Law School." And I said, "What about NYU Law School?" She said, "What?" She said, "That two-hour law school?"

JW: She said, "In my day that was considered a two-hour law school." Exactly.

NG: And I reacted badly. She said, "Oh?" She said, "Have I offended someone's sensibilities?"

JW: As only Edith Spivack could. She was a darling and [76:00] your indignation was somewhat feigned. But it was a very humorous moment, I must say. We enjoyed her immensely. She was just a great woman and promoted the careers of so many other women and men, both in Corporation Counsel and the court system, and beyond. She was so active in New York County Lawyers and so proud of the work that New York County

Lawyers and other bar associations do in this area. Do you know, Norman? You recall we did our own program on the history of Foley Square. And I think we had architectural historian Jon Ritter give a presentation on March 12th, 2008. And our distinguished UCS videographer Nick Ullo was kind enough to include in his very busy schedule this program. Working with Jon Ritter's PowerPoint and with obviously the video he had taken, he created a wonderful CD-ROM that captured much of that evening and Jon Ritter's very thoughtful presentation on the expansion of the New York County Civic Center north of Chambers Street, including of course 60 Centre Street. At that time, we also prepared a brief architectural design history of 60 Centre Street, which we circulated, which [78:00] makes an effort to capture some of the architectural and design history of the courthouse. Much of the information from this narrative was found in the New York Law Journal publication of February 14th, 1927, which recounts the dedication of the courtroom, which took place on February 11th, 1927. Not only was a great deal of information provided in that article in terms of the elements of the courthouse, including how many chairs and how many benches and how many desks and how many rooms and all of that sort of information, but they also have in that article a verbatim transcript of each of the speakers on that occasion. So it's a wonderful resource for anyone who is interested in the movement of the county courthouse from the Tweed Courthouse to 60 Centre Street. Of course we would very much like to recapture the Tweed Courthouse. It is, after all, a courthouse. I think the mayor has been very mean-spirited in not returning it to us. I know Judith Kaye made a pitch for exactly that during both of his inaugurations.

NG: He's not going to ask her to swear him in for his third.

JW: Maybe Judge Lippman will make --

NG: It'll be up to Jonathan.

JW: -- the same request. But it's a wonderful historic building and we're so glad it survived after being scheduled for demolition for decades.

NG: That's right.

JW: I don't know if it's apocryphal or not, but it's said that the city just didn't have the money to tear it down. Of course, then they spent \$90 million restoring it [80:00] and that's when they should have turned it back over to us. Obviously, they have put it to very good use now housing the Department of Education. Milton Gould. We should talk a little bit about Milton Gould. You recall his remarkable series in the Law Journal on hubris.

NG: Yes, I do.

JW: Which I think many of our politicians of some recent vintage would have done well to have read.

NG: And taken heed, right.

JW: And taken heed. But he was a larger than life figure. He was so involved with the restoration of the murals and a good friend of yours. And such a --

NG: Milton Gould was a sweet man. He was very -- I can't begin to say how smart, how brilliant he was, what a brilliant lawyer he was, what a brilliant writer he was. And what a wonderful raconteur he was. He could tell stories about his own career and everybody else's career. And too bad we don't have him here today to tell us everything about his career, about his advising of many United States Supreme Court Judges and U.S. District Court Judges and Second Circuit Court Judges he prepared for their confirmation hearings. And he was an instant study no matter what the subject was. I remember once

my brother, who was in the business of coating metals with paint for the skin of buildings; he once had a contract. He had a contract with a company in Montreal, [82:00] Bombardier Corporation. They had manufactured subway cars for New York City. My brother covered the metal inside of the cars, including the ceilings. My brother was sued by Bombardier. Some paint allegedly started to peel somewhere, and my brother needed a high-rated lawyer to represent him in the courts. I took him to Milton Gould, and I sat in on the conference. You wouldn't believe it, but in 20 minutes, he had mastered all of the technical aspects of that. He knew as much as my brother did about the process of putting those things in place and a hell of a lot more than I ever knew. And I was just listening. I was slack-jawed. So was my brother. So was my brother.

JW: It's a gift.

NG: He was really a brilliant, gifted guy with a terrific sense of humor. And, as I said, a terrific storyteller.

JW: Oh, I commend that series on hubris to anyone. Actually, in one of those narratives, I can't remember the context, he does discuss the transformation of New York University Law School from -- what did Edith Spivack --

NG: Two-hour.

JW: Two-hour law school to the major force in legal education which it is today. But he did focus on it. And [84:00] I remember reading it and thinking of Edith at the time. When you mention accomplished speakers, Owen McGivern⁵³ comes to mind. I must say that

⁵³ Owen McGivern, Presiding Justice of the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court, First Judicial Department, 1974 - 1975; Associate Justice, 1967 - 1974.

he was among the finest speakers that I can recall. And you have to include Judith Kaye, of course. But Owen McGivern, Dean Mulligan⁵⁴ and Joe McLaughlin⁵⁵ --

NG: Correct.

JW: Circuit Court of Appeals.

NG: Those three Irishmen.

JW: Irishmen, yes. I did notice that there was some ethnic affiliation there. But Owen was just enormously charming in every way.

NG: In every way.

JW: And very helpful to the personnel at the court. You remember when we had the reclassification of court employees following the takeover.

NG: Yes, I remember that.

JW: 1977. I actually went to Owen with several of my fellow court attorneys at the time and asked him. We felt that there had been some injustice in terms of what our classification had been. And without pausing a minute he said, "Well, of course I'd be delighted to help." And he invested a good deal of time and energy and was very --

NG: Pro bono.

JW: Pro bono. And was just enormously helpful. And the result was very positive. This group which was so grateful to him. Actually, he recruited Paul Crotty,⁵⁶ who was then -- this was all done in leisure -- into the effort. And Paul, of course, now a District Court Judge, is also so accomplished. But that was so typical of Owen to extend himself and to be

⁵⁴ William Hughes Mulligan, Dean of Fordham Law School, 1956 - 1971; Judge of the United States Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit, 1971 - 1981.

⁵⁵ Joseph M. McLaughlin, Dean of Fordham Law School, 1971 - 1981; Judge of the United States Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit, 1990 - 2013.

⁵⁶ Paul A. Crotty, Judge of the United States District Court for the Southern District of New York, 2005 - __; Corporation Counsel of the City of New York, 1994 - 1997.

helpful. He had the combination of a Hell's Kitchen childhood and a classical education, which I've always found, I think, among the most unique combinations and obviously --

NG: He could quote Shakespeare at length. And the Greek classics [86:00] and the philosophers. And he was a wonderful person, wonderful guy. And I believe I told you the story about this dinner that I had with him once at the University Club. And I've been to many meetings and group dinners at the University Club, never a private dinner on one of their upper floors. Owen invited me to dinner this one night, just the two of us, and I was very honored and very pleased to be having dinner with Owen. And we sat there. We had this enjoyable dinner. Then I said to him at the end, "Owen, it's been so nice to -- we had such a lovely evening. And I feel so privileged having dinner with you here at the University Club. But tell me, why is it that we suddenly had this dinner, because we never had dinner before except in a public place." He said, "Well, to tell you the truth, the reason I asked you to dinner is I wanted to find out what are your views on life after death." I said to him, "Owen, of course you know I'm Jewish." He said, "Yes." He said, "That's why you're here. I want to find out." And I said, "I wish I could believe in life after death. That's something that I've heard about and I know about it. And I think in the very Orthodox Jewish religion there is a belief in life after death. [88:00] But I wish I could believe in it myself." And he said -- because he was going on. He said he's concerned about it.

JW: I know we don't have much more time. Two very good friends. Tim Murphy, Judge Murphy,⁵⁷ former Presiding Justice of the Appellate Division. Betty Weinberg Ellerin,⁵⁸

⁵⁷ Francis Timothy Murphy, Presiding Justice of the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court, First Judicial Department, 1977 - 1997; Associate Justice, 1971 - 1977.

⁵⁸ Betty Weinberg Ellerin, Presiding Justice of the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court, First Judicial Department, 1999; Associate Justice, 1985 - 1998, 2000 - 2005.

former Presiding Justice of the Appellate Division. When you came to the court was she Judge Frank's secretary?

NG: She was Judge Frank's secretary.

JW: And had a meteoric rise through the court system.

NG: But I knew her briefly before that. My last year in law school, I think, was her first year of law school. And I knew her then. There were so few women in law school at that time.

JW: Oh very few.

NG: There were only three women in my class in law school.

JW: That's another whole discussion.

NG: I met Betty briefly during that period of time. I was in the class of 1950, and I believe she was in the class of '52. So 1949 was probably her first year, and it was my second year or last year of law school. And in the court we then became very friendly. She was --

JW: She was important to you, I know, and still is.

NG: And still is.

JW: And Tim Murphy, who was also important to you.

NG: Very important to me. Tim Murphy.

JW: Wonderful speaker too.

NG: Yes. I knew Tim Murphy before he was a Supreme Court Judge. And I knew his father.

JW: Powerful leader in the Bronx.

NG: He was a powerful leader in the Bronx and he was a lawyer too. As a matter of fact, when I was practicing law at 521 Fifth Avenue, his father's firm had a relationship with our firm [90:00] because their firm specialized in decedents' estates. We had a few decedents' estates.

JW: So it was a very longstanding relationship. But we could talk about many individuals and many associations that you've had over years. We won't have time to do it today. I don't know that we'll have another opportunity. That's up to others. But that's something that might be fun to do. And we could reminisce about -- Judges or Presiding Justices or Chief Judges or assemblymen or state senators or mayors or district leaders or educators in the city. We can just go down a list of the Court of Appeals Judges and the Appellate Division Judges. There are so many that you've worked with and had these relationships with. Again, it might be interesting to do that some time. Thank you. [91:17]

[End of Goodman Part 2. mp3]