Oral History Interview of James Hennigan, Jr. (OH-066)

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Interviewed by: Robert Allison, Suffolk University History Professor, and Joseph McEttrick, Suffolk University Law School Professor.

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Interview Summary
In this interview, James W. Hennigan, Jr., a Suffolk University Law School alumnus (JD 1958), Massachusetts state representative (1953-1954), state senator (1955-1964), and Boston School Committee member (1970-1974), discusses the impact of the 1974 Garrity decision, which required some students to be bused between Boston neighborhoods with the intention of creating racial balance in the public schools. Mr. Hennigan reflects on the issue of busing in the Boston Public School system, recalling the Boston School Committee’s work in the years prior to the Garrity decision and the roles which various politicians and city leaders played in the debate. He reminisces about Boston’s great politicians. Additionally, he recalls his memories of Joe Moakley’s successful run as an Independent candidate for the U.S. House of Representatives in 1972. Mr. Hennigan also shares a bit of his political career and that of his family.
Interview transcript

[Audio begins during conversation]

JAMES W. HENNIGAN, JR.: [There wasn’t] a person who didn’t like Helen. She’s one of my five daughters. There’s my mother and father there. That’s—see the grotto there? That’s Jim Hennigan and that’s Kitty Oliver Hennigan; married on September the seventeenth, 1919.

ROBERT ALLISON: Wow.

HENNIGAN: In the midst of the, uh—

ALLISON: Flu epidemic.

HENNIGAN: Strike. The Boston Police Strike.¹

ALLISON: Yes.

HENNIGAN: Calvin Coolidge² was governor. It made him a president. My mother went in to get her wedding gown and there were—the whole city was in turmoil, but she still went in and got her wedding gown. This was just—that happened around Labor Day weekend, so she had to go in and get her gown before then. So—

See this picture? You see a grotto there, don’t you?

ALLISON: Yes.

¹ The Boston Police Strike was a strike by the Boston Police that began on September 9, 1919 after Police Commissioner Edwin Upton Curtis refused to allow the creation of a police union, as officers were unhappy with stagnant wages and poor working conditions. The strike briefly plunged Boston into civil chaos.

² John Calvin Coolidge, Jr. (1872-1933), a Republican, served as a Massachusetts state representative and senator before being elected governor of Massachusetts in 1918. Coolidge's decisive action during the Boston Police Strike in 1919 thrust him into the national spotlight, leading to his nomination as Warren G. Harding's Vice-President in 1920. Upon Harding's death in August 1923, Coolidge served as President of the United States until 1929.
HENNIGAN: That’s on my father and mother’s twenty-fifth anniversary.

ALLISON: Oh, okay.

HENNIGAN: That was in 1944. There’s a picture there. And I’ll just notice—see that grotto is there?

ALLISON: Oh, yes.

HENNIGAN: You say, “Well what’s the significance?” Well, see the two people there? This fellow, I turned to, and I said, “Where in America are you from?” He says, “No, I’m a lieutenant colonel in the Russian Army.” My daughter Helen called us. She was over at the Charles Hotel next to the Government Center. And she said, “Dad,”—she called her mother at seven o’clock in the morning. She said, “Dad,”—well, she talked—actually, her mother must have answered—“I got fifteen Russian generals and fifteen Russian admirals and they’ve never been in a home in America. They’d like to see”—they wanted me to show them my home. I said, “I live in an apartment. I’ll take you to my mother and father’s home.”

Callahan was the intelligence officer with them and they were in this country from June—these were Yeltsin’s people that had come over after the turnover in Russia. And leave it to Helen, she said to Helen—she was in charge of the athletic place there that people use, recreation and all that. Gym, I guess you’d call it, whatever. And she kept [saying], “Can we use the pool at night for the Russian generals and the Russian admirals?” She says, “Well, let me ask the manager,” or the boss or whatever. They said, Sure. So they went in the evenings and used it. Then Callahan said, “Well, Maura, you’ve hit it off with them. Why don’t we go up to Marblehead [Massachusetts] and show them around.” The interesting thing of all of them was they didn’t

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3 Boris Yeltsin (1931-2007) served as the first President of the Russian Federation from 1991 to 1999.
4 Mr. Hennigan’s daughter, Maura Hennigan currently serves as the Clerk Magistrate of the Suffolk County (MA) Superior Court Criminal/Business Division and served on the Boston City Council. She ran unsuccessfully against incumbent Thomas M. Menino in the Boston mayoral election of 2005.
have any money. The only money they got was what Uncle Sam\(^5\) gave then when they came here, for their expenses. Maybe two or three hundred dollars. So they’re not accustomed to living in homes. They lived in apartments. It was amazing. And so they came. And I won’t go into a lot of details, but Callahan comes through the door. They come in. Not all of them showed up. Only—they had seven or eight generals, it was. And the fellow in charge—he was the fellow I’m talking to there. He was in charge; Adrolei.

So Callahan, the intelligence officer, she was very—she could speak. She could translate and speak. She says, “Jim, get to know him. Mr. Hennigan, thank you for—” a thing. “Get to know him. He’s head of the ballistic missiles of Russia.”

**ALLISON:** Wow.

**HENNIGAN:** So I sat here—I didn’t mean to get off on this, but—

**ALLISON:** That’s okay.

**HENNIGAN:** I’m here, and they come through the door and they had all these hats and you know—they’re in civvies [civilian clothes], as you can see. That’s when Callahan comes over to me and says to me who he is. “(inaudible) Get to know him. Spend some time with him. He’s most interesting.” So it’s funny. They’re walking around in here. And one said, “Gorbachev.”\(^6\) Callahan smiled and she said, “Do you know what he just said?” “No,” I said, “What did he say?” He said, “This is how Gorbachev lived.” (Allison laughs) So I laughed and I said, “Well, listen.” I told him, I said, “My father bought the house in ’41. I learned about Russia here. But in Kiev, and Stalingrad, and Leningrad, and Sebastopol, and all the battles in the German—

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\(^5\) Uncle Sam is a national personification of the United States, often specifically referring to the U.S. government; first usage dates from the War of 1812 and the first illustration dates from 1852.

\(^6\) Mikhail Gorbachev (1931– ) was the last General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, serving from 1985 until 1991, and also the last head of state of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), serving from 1988 until its collapse in 1991.
Barbarossa\(^7\) and that attack that Hitler landed against your country. You were in the—on December sixth they were in the suburbs of Moscow.” And I said, “You suffered twenty million casualties.” I said, “That’s when I learned about Russia.”

He was surprised I—and I did. It was just—I was always interested in history and things. So—oh, and then when the fellow said, “Gorbachev,” I said, “Look it, I want you to know one thing. My mother and father worked at Plant Shoe factory. And this was their home. And this was what America was all about.” And I pointed to the—I said, “My forebears came from—see those thatched-roof houses in Ireland? That’s where they came from, a generation back or so.”

Oh. I’ll quote him once and get off the subject. Oh, I gave him a book. Before he came, it was a whole [book] of the country. You know, Maine, New Hampshire, all of it. And a pictorial one. Geez, my son Jimmy gave them to me. It was—had the whole fifty states. It went right through it; Maine, the East Coast, all the way out to Hawaii and Alaska. So I said, “Well, if someone like that’s coming you want to give them something to remember you by, that they visited.” I said, “To the Russian chief general staff, [signed,] The Hennigan Family.” “Peace and prosperity for Russia. To the Russian general staff, [signed,] The Hennigan Family, dated this [day], Pond Circle.” I wanted to make sure it was a free zone so they wouldn’t drop any bombs on us. (Allison laughs) And I only say that kiddingly. But he went out—we got talking and [went] out in the back. You’ll never find a better location than this. And so I showed him the back.

Before we built that room—we built that room in the back there. We added on—there was a—we went out through the door there and we were on the outside there, like we were standing there on the deck. And he got talking to me and this is exactly what he told me. He said—I was to a certain degree surprised by it. After we got talking a while, that’s when I was talking to him and he said, “What a different world you and I would have lived in, if, in 1917, our leadership had ever gone the right way.” I said, “Wow.” For someone, a head of the ballistic missiles of Russia, to say their history had gone the wrong way, I said—now there’s a statement. And it—I gave him the book, and you’re thinking I gave him the Constitution of the United States. And I knew

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\(^7\) Operation Barbarossa was the code name for Nazi Germany's invasion of the Soviet Union during World War II that began on June 22, 1941.
one thing: that was going back with him. [He said,] “You want to have a time over at the Harvard Kennedy School?” I said, “Oh, no. This was nice.” Maura, and Jimmy, and Helen, all the kids, my sister Helen, they went over. I said, “I enjoyed this too much.” He said, “Well if you ever come to Russia I’ll meet you.” I said, “Well, I never had a”—I said, “I only wish my mother and father were here to see you.” And so that was it and he went out. He took the book with him. I could go on. I don’t want to but—

I got a feeling when they attacked (inaudible)—he took that—and that he kept in his office. I know he does. Because he really thought—he had a great regard for this country. You could tell it. And it was somewhat surprisingly—and he later became—oh, I don’t want to—he’s now the head of the whole Russian military. He’s not the secretary of war; he is the chief of staff of the whole Russian military.

ALLISON: Oh, wow.

HENNIGAN: And I could go on and tell you a lot more of that but I shouldn’t have gotten far into this. But it’s an illustration of (pauses) what an individual—and we need people who must understand this. I read a lot, okay? Down South, I read a lot. Either that or I telephone and ask people to campaign for Maura, all right? (Allison laughs) I never left it since I was that youngster over there on Mission Hill and saw people coming into your home looking for jobs and looking for food, and looking to have their kids have shoes. That’s what I saw. I saw a father who was the best of them all do it. So politics to me is of the highest standard.

About last year I read something that really hit me. James MacGregor,9 who is up at Williams College there. He’s a professor and a renowned political person. He ran for Congress one time. I think he ran against Conte,10 up that way. And in the middle of this book he was talking about

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8 Mission Hill is a three-quarter square mile neighborhood of Boston, Massachusetts.
9 James MacGregor Burns (1918- ) is a presidential biographer, authority on leadership studies, and Woodrow Wilson Professor (emeritus) of political science at Williams College (MA); his book *Roosevelt: Soldier of Freedom 1940-1945* received a Pulitzer Prize and National Book Award in 1971.
10 Silvio Conte (1921-1991), a Republican, served in the Massachusetts State Senate from 1951 to 1958, then represented Massachusetts’ First Congressional District in the U.S. House of Representatives from 1959 to 1991.
Clinton\(^\text{11}\) and governing in the center, and he was—but he quoted this. Boy, I never heard anything so appropriate or so correct in relationship to history. Arnold Toynbee\(^\text{12}\)—I hope I pronounced his name right—was the noted person on civilization back in the nineteenth century. And he had come—he was from Europe over there. I don’t even know what country or anything. I’ve heard of him, but I remember just reading this in the article in the book. And after he’d been through America they asked him this question, What did you learn? And his answer was one line, one sentence. “Urgency is so often the enemy of the important.” And I saw urgency some twenty-five years ago. An evening in September of 1971 at the O’Hearn School.\(^\text{13}\) (knock on door) The vote was three-to-two and they changed it.\(^\text{14}\) And that’s why we have so much violence in this city. (Mr. Hennigan answers the door.)

JOSEPH McETTRICK: Hello.

HENNIGAN: Come in. Joe McEttrick.

McETTRICK: Thank you. That’s right. Yes, hi, and how are you? Good to see you, sir. My hands are freezing.

HENNIGAN: That’s all right. I’m glad you got here.

McETTRICK: Did any of these people show up yet?

HENNIGAN: They’re here. In fact I’ve got them—they’re probably wondering when am I going to stop talking? (Allison laughs)

McETTRICK: I’m sorry. I was right out front.

\(^{11}\) William J. Clinton (1946–), a Democrat, was president of the United States from 1993 to 2001.

\(^{12}\) Arnold Toynbee (1852-1883) was an English economic historian also noted for his social commitment and desire to improve the living conditions of the working class.

\(^{13}\) The Patrick O’Hearn Elementary School is located on Dorchester Avenue in Dorchester, Massachusetts. In June 2009, it was renamed the Henderson Elementary School in honor of its retired principal Dr. William W. Henderson.

\(^{14}\) He refers to a Boston School Committee meeting on September 21, 1971 where they voted 3 to 2 against using busing to racially balance the new Lee School; a vote in violation of the Racial Imbalance Act of 1965.
HENNIGAN: I promise you I won’t go over it again.

McETTRICK: Oh, hi Bob. Gee, I’m really sorry.

ALLISON: Oh, that’s okay.

HENNIGAN: Here, let me take your coat.

McETTRICK: Oh, okay. Thanks. Gee, that’s unfortunate. Thanks, Jim.

HENNIGAN: You found it all right?

McETTRICK: Oh yeah. I didn’t have any trouble. I was just sitting outside.

HENNIGAN: Sometimes people have to go around and—

McETTRICK: Oh no, I was just sitting outside in my car. I should have come in. I didn’t trust you guys. (Allison laughs) That’s too bad.

HENNIGAN: You’ll have to tell him what he missed. (all laugh) Why don’t you sit down?

McETTRICK: Thank you. Okay, yeah, I’m really sorry.

HENNIGAN: But you might—I didn’t intend to—but actually what I just said is capsulized. And when they write the history of this politics, that date in September—I think it was twenty-first. 1971. I was on the school committee. I wasn’t the chairman; I was just a member. Nineteen seventy-two I did become the chairman. That’s why Morgan versus Hennigan—my name’s on

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15 Morgan v. Hennigan refers to the case of Tallulah Morgan et al. v. James Hennigan et al. (379 F. Supp. 410). The suit was filed by the parents of Boston Public School students who were seeking an end to segregation in Boston Public Schools.
it. And the reason I speak of this is it’s tied in with the congressional campaign of Joseph Moakley’s\textsuperscript{16} and my own.

So I could sum—in fact I have a few pages. In fact, why I’m so up to date somewhat on this is I have this lady who’s over at the Harvard school. She came—and she comes from—name was Carmen Lopez and she comes from New Mexico. My daughter Helen found her, sold her a house, and she’s been here. She got talking to me, and she was over at the Harvard school there. She says, “Could you put all this stuff together?” I said, “Oh, I’ve got piles of it loaded around. I do.” So she was here last—the other night. Yes, last night it was. And I gave her—I says, “Here, instead of me telling you, read all this. Then we can talk.” The one thing I gave her, and I’m going to give it to you because I haven’t got the whole thing. I gave her the packet. Forty-two pages of that, my testimony. [see attachment A] And that’s why—the major reason that I ran for Congress.

I saw Hicks\textsuperscript{17} walk in there and—maybe I’ve got it here. I saved—I had a second copy. I haven’t got the others. In fact, here’s my favorite candidate of the day. That’s when I ran for Congress. That’s Maura. There’s my father, who’s my number one hero. That’s when I ran for mayor in 1959. [He refers to family pictures]

ALLISON: Oh, wow.

HENNIGAN: See that one there with the—she’s not looking well at the camera. That’s Maura. That was in 1954 and I was a candidate for the [State] Senate. And that’s when I—I tell you—see all the campaigns I’ve lost, see? That’s when I was running for attorney general. Here’s a


\textsuperscript{17} Louise Day Hicks (1916-2003), a Democrat, served on the Boston School Committee from 1962 to 1967 (serving as chair from 1963 to 1965), ran unsuccessfully for the mayoralty of Boston in 1967 and in 1971, and served on the Boston City Council before being elected to the United States House of Representatives in 1970. She represented Massachusetts’ Ninth Congressional District for one term. It was in the 1970 election that Moakley lost his first bid for Congress, in part because Hicks was an outspoken critic of forced busing in Boston, which helped her gain support in South Boston. Moakley defeated Hicks in the 1972 congressional election when he ran as an Independent so he wouldn’t have to run against Hicks in the Democratic primary.
fellow by the name of—there’s Maura. Bellotti—this fellow here lived across the street and he was a Bellotti candidate. And they’re interviewing me up here at the school—it was a Catholic school up there. It’s Shores [sic – Shore] [Country Day School], now Shores. So I just thought that. Here. You want to just—you know, you had (laughs)—no, I was giving out—she went out of here, I have those left. But, after she went—am I going too far afield for you?

ALLISON: No, no, this is good.

HENNIGAN: This was—I said September the twenty-first, 1971. There is forty-two pages. There’s only seven of them here. But it goes as far as Hicks walking into the place, okay. I don’t have my glasses. The vote was three-to-two. I think it was the—it was a contract. See when you got to talk about Joe Moakley and Jimmy Hennigan you have to talk about this. Because this was Hicks’—her urgency was surrounded totally by this. And people lost the perspective of what of—the enemy of what was important. And they did that. And we’ve paid for the last twenty-five years for it. Now I can’t guarantee you that if the course of action went the other way—but all I know in life is—all you can do is have time. And if you take on the responsibility—and they were all lawyers. They knew what I knew. They knew the contract. And all those who opposed it, they—you know, it’s one thing if you’re ignorant and you don’t understand it. You can always plead, Well, I didn’t know any better. But they were all lawyers.

I was a graduate of Suffolk University Law School [JD 1958] and so was—and Joe Moakley [JD 1956]—I don’t know if Kerrigan went there or not. Where Hicks [went], I never looked at one way or the other.

ALLISON: It’s B.C. [Boston College]

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18 Francis X. Bellotti (1923- ), a Democrat, served as Lieutenant Governor for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts from 1963 to 1965. From 1975 to 1987 he served three terms as attorney general of Massachusetts.
19 John J. Kerrigan (1932-1996) was a member of the Boston School Committee from 1968 to 1976. He gained notoriety as one of the city's most outspoken critics of busing.
HENNIGAN: Yeah. So she went out the back end of the State House like I did for morning, afternoon—I was a morning candidate, morning (laughs) students, afternoon, evening, class of ’58. But the whole thing centered on this. When they write the history of all of this, this is going to be the centerpiece of it. I was down on—June seventeenth, it was a Sunday, it was Bunker Hill Day and I was doing a thing and I went down to Doyle’s. And the editor of—oh, he’s over in (inaudible), what’s his name? Came by to me but—we’re waiting. They’re having an auction for his sister who is a nun down at St. Joseph’s. And they were auctioning off. In fact that Chris Matthew was there. And the thing I would have bought, he bought. I don’t think I could have outbid him for it. It was Roosevelt and Garner, who was the vice president. But this fellow was there and they said—I got there early and he said to me, “Hello Jim, I’d like you to meet Mr. Fowler.” I said, “Nice to meet you.” He said to me, “You Jim Hennigan?” I said, “That’s right.” And someone said, “This is Jim Hennigan.” He says, “You any relationship to Morgan versus Hennigan?” I said, “I’m Hennigan.” I said, “Most important case in fifty years.” He says, “You’re wrong. It was the most important case in a hundred years.” He was the head of the Historical Society. If that his name. Fowler?

ALLISON: Yeah. Bill Fowler.

HENNIGAN: I thought it was interesting that he understood, because—you know what? Don’t think great thoughts, read the statute. Don’t think you know anything. I’ll send you the group of the forty-two. And I was thinking about always being a congressman, all right? It wasn’t a passing thought; anymore than being a representative, senator, or a mayor. The only thing I always felt—and I’ll put aside any modesty, if I can get that word right. I think I’d have been good at—as I told the chief justice when they swore in Maura—she was to meet that day, Thursday before, when I saw the picture of John Higgins. It was a portrait, not a picture. And I said, “Any office a Hennigan’s ever run for—I’ve always totally felt that we were well-equipped to fill it.” And I look upon Maura and she’s the best they’re going to have in that courthouse as an elected officeholder in a long time. And that’s what’s important. It’s when you pass off from one generation to the next. The titles come, the titles go. It’s what you contributed. Doing it.

Showing up is the only issue. Did you show up? Did you show up—that’s the only question going to be asked. Did you show up? So I (laughs)—colleagues to this day, some of his family, oh, they don’t think too well of Jimmy Hennigan. They think I wronged them. Well, they didn’t look at it with the proper perspective. They didn’t own it. No one owns these jobs. (inaudible)—You get elected to it. I saw it as a kid. I saw it all my life. And I see it in Maura. Now, they make an ad on it getting on in regards to the mayor’s fight, since I was a candidate once. Maura—the only one in this town who’s stood up is Maura. No one should be mayor of Boston more than two terms. Nobody. Because what you’re going to contribute, you’re going to do it in that time, and then you move on and you salute and say, “If I can be of help, call on me.”

Flynn\(^2^1\) came up to me in 1983. The only time I ever told Maura how I thought she should vote. I said, “Vote for Ray Flynn, president of the council. He’s a good person.” And she did. That’s the only time. She knows more about it than I’ll ever know. She’s there. And Flynn came up to me in ’83 and he said to me—and the only reason I say this is because it ties in to the history of all this. He walked over. They were dedicating this street for a veteran right up here on Seaverns Avenue. Snow was his name. He was a marine, a rep [representative] and then I know his father, I know his brother. And they asked him. So Maura had the plaque put up. So the Sunday afternoon, on a Sunday in June, Flynn comes over and says to me, “Jimmy, what are the issues?” I said, “There’s only one.” He says, “What’s that?” I said, “The right of a child to have a good public school education. Until that happens, this city’s a failure. I don’t care what else happens. That’s the one that counts.” He says, “Anything else, Jim?” I said, “Yes, one other thing, Ray.” I said, “Tell the people of this city you’re going to be mayor of Boston for eight years and all you can accomplish, all you can do, you will do in that time and under no circumstances will you be a candidate beyond that.” And I said, “Ray, do that. Say that. Make that the foundation of your candidacy and you’ll be mayor of Boston.” So that was just that. And, you know, I said it. I think probably if anyone else has—but I feel comfortable with Ray Flynn. He was a down-to-earth guy.

\(^{2^1}\) Raymond L. Flynn (1939–), a Democrat, represented South Boston in the Massachusetts State House of Representatives from 1971 to 1979. He also served on the Boston City Council from 1978 to 1984, then as mayor of Boston from 1984 to 1993.
McETTRICK: Jim, wait, you said something that really interests me. You said that Bill Fowler was right, that the case is the most important one in one hundred years. And I guess you really have an opportunity to get on tape here and really tell people going forward, why the case really was important. What was really decided? You know, we can read the decision and the newspaper stories, but what makes it the most important case in a hundred years?

HENNIGAN: Well, we live with the results of it. First of all, it was the law of the land. First of all—and it’s in here. It’s in the forty-two pages. So part of it I’ll let you read. And I don’t want to get—I could give you quotes of that—all I know is that I’m standing there. And I’m trying to explain to them. I said, “I’m not the Supreme Court.” But this had all been tested. The Massachusetts Racial Imbalance Law22 was tested. And gone to the Commonwealth. Out to the Supreme Court of this Commonwealth. And they said, It’s the law. Now Hicks, and Kerrigan, and all of them, everyone else in that place, and any lawyer in this town, or elected official—it’s the law. As I got up one day saying there’s only three things that count when I was defending this thing. And they were having a thing—I got on my feet and I said, “I learned three things in law school: tort, contract, and equity.” I said, “This was a contract. And if you didn’t honor it equity would come in.” And the federal court came in and that was it. In other words, you got a tough job, do it yourself. That’s what you prepared. You say, “I’m going to act in your best interest.” And that’s what happened. And the city was torn apart.

McETTRICK: Well it’s so difficult for people as the years go ahead—

HENNIGAN: To understand it.

McETTRICK: Well, yeah, that’s why (simultaneous conversation)—I mean some of us really lived through it. I lived in Hyde Park. But I guess the question that people would have in the future is, yes, it apparently was the law, it was decided. Why was the reaction so violent? Why was it so difficult?

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22 Passed in 1965, the Massachusetts Racial Imbalance Law prohibited “racial imbalance” in public schools and discouraged schools from having more than 50 percent minority students.
HENNIGAN: Oh, it’s violent because they—when public elected officials or anyone else lies to people—because people have placed their trust in them. And the urgency of the moment is to please the people or to say it’s going to go away. Or we can stop it. Or you saw, you know—Jimmy Kelly’s a nice enough fellow. But you saw—what was his death about? It was all about the—talking about this [busing controversy]. You know, put it right back on the front pages. And I got along well—I could always talk with Jimmy Kelly. He was a good person. But he saw things in his light and I don’t think he ever looked at a pancake and realized it had two sides to it no matter how thin it was. That’s an old saying I use once every day. But—in ’65 the law of the land was made—and if I was in the legislature, I would be incensed too. And I was in the Senate. I went up to the Senate in ’64. I would have been on my feet. And saying, “Look it, you’ve got Springfield, you’ve got Boston. You’re imposing all this. Break it open.” And of course there was that resistance. So everyone could be whatever you want and stand up and say, Not in my backyard. So I understand that the people here were going to carry the burden of this thing. The question is how much, and how much, and how—you know, there was one thing I knew. Sixty-five [1965] school committee and now Hicks is on there. They’re all on there. And she got on there, riding this horse. And this is what she did. She—the old council, three and two, worked because you had continuity and experience. Joe White, Mike Ward, Dr. Foley. Look up sometime the people who served on the school committee. But then when they changed the system of Boston, they ended up—the worst thing they ever did was they elected five school committeemen at-large. So anybody could holler loud enough and they could get elected. And that’s what happened.

So we had people who had no political experience at all. Look them up. Never held a public office. Or if they ran for it, were defeated. Kerrigan. Boy, he was something. So sometimes I feel very intense about it because I know it’s so, you know, I saw it. And I knew where they took us. And that was it. So, [in] ’45, the state, they said, We’ll build some schools. All right, give us a plan. They asked Honor Burgess they said, Give us some time. Same thing. Okay. Department of

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24 Joseph C. White served as a Massachusetts state representative and senator, as well as president of the Boston City Council and chairman of the Boston School Committee. He died in 1967.
Education would say, Hey, we’re coming in. We’re going to do it now. They said, Okay. [In] ’67, they did it. They said, Okay, we came up with a plan. Lee [School], the Hall [School], and the Marshall [School]. There was another one there. The Lee, the Hall, and the Marshall. Yeah, there’s four.

There’s four schools: three middle schools, and another high school. That was the plan. All you could do—it was their plan. Did you know Richard Cardinal Cushing²⁵ was one of the petitioners of the Racial Imbalance Law? There were twelve petitioners. He was one. And I only say that now—he came from South Boston, didn’t he? He understood South Boston. He was probably one of its outstanding products. So there it was, and they all were lawyers, they knew the exact same thing as I knew. I’m just another lawyer. It was so basic. And that’s what they did. And then I’m on the school committee. I get elected in ’69. Because you know what? I wanted to go to Congress. I hadn’t run for mayor or anything—I always prepared myself as best I know how. And if you ever think you’ve got all the answers you’re in real trouble. Or if you ever start believing your own act you’re in real trouble. (McEttrick laughs) So, I try to be real.

Geez, when I think of some of the good ones. John Hynes.²⁶ There’s a story on John Hynes. I can show you a letter. I got the last letter he ever wrote. And he sent that to me. He’d had a heart attack. I sent over some flowers over to the Brigham Hospital. The day I opened the letter up to thank him, he had died over that weekend. He said, “Jim, appreciate the flowers you and Marge sent me. I brought them home. Any heart attack is serious but I’m fortunate that—as you can notice, my typing isn’t up to its norm.” He said, “Jim, you can’t help but”—and this is really kind of patting myself on the back, but—“you cannot help but stand out on the school committee. Wish you the best. Always remember one thing: just be yourself.” Best advice anyone can give you: be yourself.

²⁵ Richard Cardinal Cushing (1895-1970), who was raised in South Boston, was a cardinal of the Roman Catholic Church. He served as Archbishop of Boston from 1944 to 1970 and became a cardinal in 1958.
²⁶ John B. Hynes (1897-1970) was a 1927 graduate of Suffolk University Law School who served as city clerk of Boston from 1946-1950, then as mayor of Boston from 1950-1960. Mr. Hynes also served as a trustee (1964-1970) and treasurer (1969-1970) of Suffolk University.
McETTRICK: You know, you mentioned people from South Boston who got involved in this. I was looking at some of this material the other night. And the name came up—I hadn’t really thought about this for a while, because there was so much to it. Eddie McCormack\(^\text{27}\) was mentioned as having been involved at some point as—I think he was some kind of a master or expert and they came up with a plan that Garrity ultimately rejected. And it’s so hard to go in on each phase, but what was happening really at that time?

HENNIGAN: Well what happened was they balanced the Marshall, the Hall, and it came down to the Lee. And this was the merger of two schools. It would have been a balanced school. You know, fifty-fifty, sixty-forty, it would have been balanced. The Lee was in the black community there. Right next to the ballpark there on—over there. And the other was up there at—what’s it? Codman? Is it Codman Square? No, not Codman Square. Yeah, maybe it is Codman Square. Up there, the other end. So it wasn’t cross-town busing. It was just busing in a circle. And as—you’ll be able to read this. Read this afterwards. It’s well worth the time. The best part of this is—good people would finally come to—they would eventually because people would study it like you’re doing here. Let’s see, well how did it all come together? How did it all fall apart?

When I ran I knew three things. As I said, that none of them had the—honor the contract, which was for the desegregation because there was no other course of action. Either that or the federal court—Brown case\(^\text{28}\) in Alabama or Mississippi was going to come in, separate but equal’s no good. So you have to—desegregated (inaudible) since 1954. So we knew that Uncle Sam—and we also had tested it at the Supreme Court. It’s the law of the state, the law of the land. That’s the way it’s going. It’s going to be the contract. Second thing was to change the school committee and make it go back to a school committee by petition and so forth. This was done by accident when Plan E was trying to put in Plan A and all that. Do that. The third thing to do is get a new


\(^{28}\) Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka refers to the May 17, 1954 decision by the United States Supreme Court in the case of Oliver Brown et al. v. Board of Education of Topeka et al. (347 U.S. 483), which overturned earlier rulings going back to Plessy v. Ferguson in 1896 by declaring state laws which established separate public schools for black and white students denied black students equal educational opportunities. The unanimous decision (9-0) stated the inherently unequal nature of separate educational facilities and, in so doing, paved the way for integration and the Civil Rights movement.
superintendent. Now Ohrenberger\textsuperscript{29} was all right and all this, that, and the other thing. But once again, Franklin Roosevelt was a president for four terms but that was the Depression and World War II and the most extreme time in the country’s history since the Civil War. But soon as that was over they stopped that from happening ever again. And that’s why I think we should have gone back, and to this day, that’s what they should do. That was right then, it’s right now. And then they break it down and—like Maura was in favor of the district council. And nine and four. That’s a good plan for a council. But for a school committee you want to bring in the best you’ve got in this city. And a Joe White, you’d have to get 150,000 votes. You could vote for two, or you could vote for three. Some of them all ended up judges, and this one, and that one. You look at them. And that was the premier office. Maurice Tobin\textsuperscript{30} went from there to be a governor. A mayor, a governor, a [U.S.] Secretary of Labor.

\textbf{McETTRICK:} When Bill Ohrenberger finished up as superintendent, was that when William Leary\textsuperscript{31} came in? Or what was the succession?

\textbf{HENNIGAN:} Yeah, you got it. This was a—and I personally, I knew Ohrenberger, he was all right. He was kind of a rough-and-ready guy. All right. I always got along good with him. I got a picture of me walking into his office on the second term. I remember sitting around with him. And I don’t know if this was a—can’t say if I was chairman—I guess I was chairman at this time I talked to him. And [he] said, “You going to vote for Ohrenberger?” I said, “No. Are you going to vote for Ohrenberger?” “No.” There was only one who did say yes. Or, no, he said yes, and later he did. And I said—I went down to Ohrenberger and I said, “You don’t have the votes and you can’t get it.” Well. Someone said, “What was the reason.” I didn’t want to say I wanted to make a change. I said, “He’s sixty-nine years old, it’s a six-year term. He’ll be seventy. I want

\textsuperscript{29} William H. Ohrenberger served as deputy superintendent (1960-1963) and superintendent (1963-1972) of the Boston Public Schools. Upon his retirement in 1972, a new elementary school in West Roxbury, Massachusetts, was named in his honor as the William H. Ohrenberger Community School.

\textsuperscript{30} Maurice J. Tobin (1901-1953), a Democrat, was a member of the Boston School Committee from 1931 to 1937, then served as mayor of Boston from 1938 to 1945. Tobin also served as governor of Massachusetts from 1945 to 1947, and United States Secretary of Labor from 1948 to 1953 in the administration of President Harry S. Truman. In 1967, the Mystic River Bridge, which connects the Charlestown section of Boston with Chelsea, was renamed the Maurice J. Tobin Memorial Bridge in his honor.

\textsuperscript{31} William J. Leary served as superintendent of the Boston Public Schools from 1972 to 1975.
someone new.” That was what I said. But what I thought was that it just needed the change. And then, wherever he was—

**McETTRICK:** I believe, yeah.

**HENNIGAN:** He came in. And we’ve had about six, or seven, or eight since then. And the sad, sad commentary, you just have to go out and look at the *Globe* today. Students coming out of our high schools aren’t making it in college. If they go—and they have to have special training. It’s just—you know, if someone said, “Jim what was the best thing you ever done in politics?” Well I’d swap it for everything if I had found out if we had traveled the other route. I would have like have known how the city would have gone. And I use the word town because Boston is a town. Really is. I get talking on this subject, I probably—

**McETTRICK:** Do you recall—you know there are a lot of faces, it’s amazing, there are so many people involved in this. But some of the figures in the black community—for example, people like Tom Atkins, Kenneth Guscott, Mel King—what were your impressions because, you know, they had a piece of the town as well when they were running. How did that look from where you were?

**HENNIGAN:** Well first of all you had to look at the overall picture. You had to look at [Martin Luther] King, [Jr.]. You know, we just celebrated his holiday. And what he brought to the nation and what he brought to Alabama and all that. I’ll give a digress[ion] on one thing. In 1962, I

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32 Thomas I. Atkins served two terms (1967-1971) on the Boston City Council, becoming its first African American member, and also ran unsuccessfully for the mayoralty of Boston against incumbent Kevin H. White in 1971. Mr. Atkins also served as president of the Boston chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and later as general counsel for the NAACP at the national level.

33 Kenneth Guscott is a developer and business leader in Boston, who oversees the Long Bay Management real estate firm and co-chairs the Columbia Plaza Associates (CPA) investing and development group. Mr. Guscott also serves as Jamaica's Honorary Consul in Boston.

34 Melvin H. King (1928- ) is an educator, activist, and writer who has served as a Massachusetts state representative (1973-1982) and currently serves as adjunct professor of Urban Studies and Planning at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). He also ran for mayor of Boston in 1983, narrowly losing to Raymond L. Flynn.
decided to become a candidate for attorney general. I really thought I had a chance. Collins\textsuperscript{35} said when I took the Senate seat ten years previously—Collins had run against Vendohl and lost by seventy-five. Brooke\textsuperscript{36} beat Kelly,\textsuperscript{37} who was not the premier candidate of the old school. (laughs) So I said, “Well I’m going to do much better in the cities than Kelly did.” Francis E. Kelly. And I said to them, “I’m going to do this. Ten years is long enough in the Senate for any of them.” And, well, they wrote a book—and it’s Ed Brooke [who] wrote the book. I went everywhere. I worked hard. The one thing about me—Maura is—the only one who worked any harder in politics than me I think is Maura. I don’t say that boastfully, that’s just the way I am. Maura, oh well.

I ended up in that fight and I saw the whole change. [John Fitzgerald] Kennedy was assassinated. [Barry] Goldwater’s running for president. [Lyndon B.] Johnson. And here I am. Massachusetts: greatest Democratic liberal state in the country. That’s the way they depict us, right? I’m running against a fellow by the name of Brooke. Wow. All this was starting to go on. Well I suppose I was a symbol of the alternative. Brooke was the symbol of the new. The hope. And I saw Deval Patrick\textsuperscript{38} in July of—a year ago. A year before that Maura’s running for mayor. I said, “You’re going to be governor. I’ll tell you why. Three letters, N-E-W.” That was Brooke. It was all over. It was the same thing as Brooke’s thing. I think this fellow’s got more talent than Brooke though.

\textbf{M\textsuperscript{c}ETTRICK:} So you think that really part of what you were seeing as all of this was going on was that there was a lot of change happening in a town that you knew. Can you describe that? Because it seems like a lot of things happened at the same time and there was a lot of change.

\textsuperscript{35} John F. Collins (1919-1995) served as mayor of Boston from 1960 to 1968. Prior to serving as mayor, Mr. Collins served in the Massachusetts State Senate and Boston City Council and also ran unsuccessfully for attorney general of Massachusetts in 1954; Collins graduated from Suffolk Law School in 1941.

\textsuperscript{36} Edward W. Brooke III (1919- ), a Republican, represented Massachusetts in the U.S. Senate from 1967 to 1979. He previously served as attorney general of Massachusetts from 1963 to 1967.

\textsuperscript{37} Francis E. Kelly served as lieutenant governor of Massachusetts from 1937 to 1939, and as attorney general of Massachusetts from 1949 to 1953.

\textsuperscript{38} Deval L. Patrick (1956- ), a Democrat, serves as governor of Massachusetts (2007-present); he has also served as assistant attorney general for the Civil Rights Division under President Bill Clinton.
HENNIGAN: You had the World War II people like myself. I just got at the end of it. I was just in the end. Then we came home and they all ended up—Joe Moakley, he went in when he was fifteen years old. He went in as a real—he was a kid. I went when I was seventeen. I had just about turned. And we had come out. Some of us had seen more action. I only saw a lot of water to be honest with you. I was on troop transport. And there was something built into that. When you saw the Depression. You saw that. And you know, they talk about, what is it? The “Greatest Generation.” I don’t agree with that. The results of the “Greatest Generation” were our mothers and fathers who taught us how to be great, if you want to use the word “great.” They’re the ones who came to this country and made it work. Made it work to what it said it could do. And they proved it; that you could come here when you were poor; you could come here even when you’re uneducated. You could come here, and you could live on Pond Circle. Since 1941, this is my father’s home. I would never sell it.

But that’s—you talk about Guscott, and King, and that whole thing. They’re coming along. And this is the time. Time and tide of history is coming. Well, don’t be the fellow who stands out there in with the king and says, “Not going to come in.” Well, it’s going to run right over you. And that’s what happened on this whole thing. They’re all sitting there and they get elected to office because [they said], We’re going to stop it. Yeah, like they’re going to stop the tide down in Boston Harbor. Not going to happen. If you lived in the world of reality, of political reality—that’s what makes a good politician. Reality. And so they came along and this is the time and the tide and we were the symbol. We are the symbol of the country. It started here. And when that guy overtook that flag and stabbed that attorney there, that won a Pulitzer Prize and did more damage to this city than anything else I know in my time, right?

ALLISON: Do you think people were surprised? You’re talking about change, and you talked about Cardinal Cushing. He had been a petitioner. Do you think people were surprised at the

39 At the age of fifteen, Joe Moakley altered his birth certificate to enlist in the U.S. Navy and served as a Seabee in the Pacific theater during World War II; he was honorably discharged from the U.S. Navy in February of 1946.
40 *The Soiling of Old Glory* is a Pulitzer Prize-winning photograph taken for the *Boston Herald American* on April 5, 1976, by Stanley Forman. The photograph was taken during a protest against court-ordered busing at City Hall in Boston and it depicts a white teenager, Joseph Rakes, preparing to assault the black lawyer and civil rights activist Ted Landsmark with a flagpole bearing the American flag. The photograph ran on the front page of the *Boston Herald American* the next day; it won the 1977 Pulitzer Prize for Spot Photography.
reaction of, say, the courts, and Cardinal Medeiros, and some of these institutions? Is that part of what (simultaneous conversation)

**HENNIGAN:** Well if you look in the thing here—I don’t say this—I’m not trying to pat myself on the back. I took being a school kid—most important job I ever held was on this school committee—because it was the most important office. It was the most important case. And *Morgan versus Hennigan*—because people read this and they’ll hear it and they’ll figure it out. Because history will—they’ll say, Well, Collins this, and what about this one and, what about that one? Well, if enough people study it, they’ll come up with it. I don’t have all the answers. But a lot of other people have them, and I have some of them. I saw it. At least I am the central figure of *Morgan versus Hennigan*. I’m the catcher. I was the catcher. I was glad. I had a choice of being a mayor, a governor, or a congressman if I could turned that around and ever won on that—and no one ever knew I did—well sometime a long time back they would say, You know what? He did it well. That’s all you got to get out of this politics. The best ones never get—give me a—you know, you can have Lyndon Johnson, you can have all of them, but give me a Sam Rayburn or give me a John McCormack. Give me a John McCormack and then you end up with Thomas O’Neill. Give me a John McCormack and then you’ll end up with a Joseph Moakley. Come one, I’ll show you how to do it. That’s what counts. One generation saying to the next, Come on, I’ll show you how to do it.

**McETTRICK:** Were you surprised—you know a few years ago we had the litigation. I guess it was Michael McLaughlin, one of my neighbors actually in Hyde Park. Litigation over Boston

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41 Humberto Sousa Cardinal Medeiros (1915-1983), a Roman Catholic cardinal, was appointed Archbishop of Boston on September 8, 1970, then appointed a cardinal on March 5, 1973.
42 Samuel Rayburn (1882-1961), a Democrat, represented Texas’ Fourth Congressional District in the U.S. House of Representatives from 1913 until his death in 1961. He served several nonconsecutive terms as Speaker of the House of Representatives over seventeen years, the longest tenure in U.S. history.
43 John W. McCormack (1891-1990), a Democrat, represented Massachusetts’ Twelfth and, after redistricting, Ninth Congressional Districts in the United States House of Representatives from 1928 to 1971. He served as Speaker of the House from 1962 to 1971.
44 Thomas P. “Tip” O’Neill (1912-1994), a Democrat, represented Massachusetts’ Eleventh and, after redistricting, Eighth Congressional Districts in the United States House of Representatives from 1953 to 1987. He served as Speaker of the House of Representatives from 1977 to 1987. He also served in the Massachusetts House of Representatives from 1936 to 1952.
Latin School\textsuperscript{45} and the admissions—(simultaneous conversation) how did that look to you through the perspective of someone who had gone through the *Morgan versus Hennigan*?

**HENNIGAN:** Well the whole thing—people resent unfairness. And the court ruled the other way in that. And that was an incidence grew up out of trying to absorb into Latin school and those—and here’s a person who was denied it. And he says, “Hey, what about my rights?” And the response was correct. But the basic thing—I think you mentioned Eddie McCormack. In fact Eddie McCormack’s stepdaughter lives next door. She’s a very nice person here, and they just had a new baby. And her mother was Eddie McCormack’s—after Emily died, he married her brother. So you can take the McCormack thing or you can take the McLaughlin thing. You can take all the incidents that flowed from this and you take today.

The travel less—that the road less traveled was the one to go instead of going (inaudible). Go this way. Stop it. Don’t do it. It wasn’t going to happen. If we had had—the next school to be the big thing was the Hennigan. I didn’t put the Hennigan School\textsuperscript{46} there on Heath Street. The Hennigan School was built for the desegregation of the Jefferson School, which I went to. My father was the first graduate of that class, of the Jefferson. The Bullfinch [School] where I had gone as a kid, too, in the lower grades and then when I moved to Caston Street I went to the Jefferson [School]. The other one on the opposite side of the hills—not the Tobin, named for Maurice, the opposite side of the hill. I can’t think of it. The name always escapes me. Those three were put together. And that was a good, solid school. The money was expended for these schools. And it came in. The money wasn’t going to come out of the city. The money had to come out of the state. We didn’t have money anymore. It was the same argument. Little state contributor, the taxes go up. The same thing over and over. Once the loss of that one went up the chute.

\textsuperscript{45} Boston Latin School is a public exam school founded on April 23, 1635, and is the oldest public school in the United States.

\textsuperscript{46} The James W. Hennigan School is located at 200 Heath Street in Jamaica Plain, Massachusetts, and serves students from kindergarten through fifth grade.
As soon as elitism comes in—you allow elitism to come in that door, they’re going to tell you everything in the world that you’ve done wrong. Because you’re not smart enough to govern. You don’t have the capacity. And you know whether that’s in—if you look at someone’s history—I wish—you know what I would have done if I had—you know if I had one choice in this life to be, you know who I wouldn’t want to have been? Garrity. Every moment, all politics is drama. Show me someone who can set the sights on things and get the people to understand. I mean, people I knew had it, [Harry S.] Truman knew it, [Franklin D.] Roosevelt knew how to do it, [John Fitzgerald] Kennedy knew how to do it, [Ronald] Reagan knew how to do it. I say it doesn’t matter if you’re Democratic or Republican; we need balance.

So if all of a sudden you come into it and just be able to say, Garrity, that’s just the thing. You know what I’d have done? I’d have put every one of them in those courtrooms. Summons them all in. First thing I would say, if I’d been there and I’m the principal aren’t I? “Hennigan, you a lawyer?” “Yes, your honor.” “Sit down.” “Kerrigan, you a lawyer?” “Yes, your honor.” “Sit down.” “Hicks, you a lawyer?” “Yes, your honor.” “Sit down.” “Craven, you a lawyer?” “Yes, your honor.” “Sit down.” I’d have called them all in and I would point out one thing. They knew better. They knew better. And I’d have done it for a week. Across this country, [I] would say, “Are you a lawyer? Sit down.” And then I would have held them in contempt if they didn’t honor the contract. Simple contract. “Get out of here. Do it. Then come back and we’ll see how you did.” That’s how you handle it. You don’t call Harvard. You don’t call elitism. You know what they said about Kennedy? He’s more Irish than Harvard. Robert Frost [said that]. And by God, he was right. That’s how I would have done it.

**McETTRICK:** So what do you think that would have translated into? How do you think—what result would (simultaneous conversation)

**HENNIGAN:** Because it would have cost—all you can do is [work] with the time [you’ve got]. The only thing you’ve got in this whole life is time. And you take one step and you say, “Well, it worked. It wasn’t perfect, but it worked. And this one here works.” And you build up confidence. You watch Roosevelt—you knew he was going to get us into [WW II]—we were going to go to England, lend-lease and this, that, and every step and out. [Roosevelt said],

Page 24 of 33
“Here’s fifty destroyers. I’ll protect Bermuda. I’ll do this.” They were out there knocking German subs off. That’s how you do it. You make it work as you best you know how. You’re not going to get the ultimate knowledge. People up there saying, Well, it’s going to go away. For the—you can’t ignore reality.

So the day that Hicks walked in I definitely knew I’d be a candidate for Congress. And [State Senator Robert] Cawley had drawn the district. And the night they’d drawn the district I announced, and they nearly fell off their seats. And it took him six months before he even got in the fight. They didn’t know what to do. And I had someone tell me Moakley said, “That’s Hennigan’s district. You’ll win it.” And then came in Hubie Jones. Miller, Vern Miller. I got those things there. And—where’d I put them? Oh, they might be—oh, here they are. I looked for these. You know, they always say, Don’t read. Think great thoughts, read the statute, but don’t—I looked over the—Laura [Muller] got me—I said, “Get me the [election] results.” Here it is. Boston wards three, four, six, seven—that was South Boston. Eight, nine, Roxbury. Ten, Mission Hill. Eleven, twelve, thirteen, fourteen, fifteen, nineteen, and twenty—Cawley was the senator that I had previously represented, too. So I—

And the interesting thing was she wins by twenty-one thousand. Cawley comes second, I come third, close to him, a couple thousand behind him. The other ones get—Hubie Jones, he came from Newton actually. [Howard] Miller—I think Hubie Jones got more votes. I should have them here. But the end result was she wins the primary. So the day after the primary I said to Deirdre, who teaches in New York, I said, “Deirdre, come on, I’ll show you what to do with what we have.” I walked into city hall. I walked in. They were sitting in there, Joe Moakley and all his friends. And I walked through there. I said, “Joe, I’m with you.” Then we got talking. He was naturally pleased to see me to come in to support him. There was this fellow who I think was his campaign manager—I think it might have been McCarthy. Patrick McCarthy, I think. He

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47 Hubert "Hubie" Jones is a social worker as well as dean emeritus and professor at the Boston University School of Social Work. Mr. Jones has also played a key role in the formation and leadership of at least thirty community organizations in Boston. OH-064 in the Moakley Oral History Project is an interview with Mr. Jones.

48 Patrick McCarthy served as Congressman Moakley's administrative assistant and aide from 1972 to 1975; he helped persuade Moakley to run as an Independent in Moakley's successful 1972 congressional campaign against Louise Day Hicks. Mr. McCarthy resigned his position with Moakley in December of 1975 to run against incumbent
was the one who convinced him to run as an Independent. We got talking about it. He said, “How do you—?” They said, “Well, let’s do this or that.” And I said, “No.” I said, “Joe, I think this is what we should do.” I said, “You and I went to the House together as the youngest members, you, I, and John Costello [JD 1956].” All three of us went to Suffolk Law School, out of the same group. So I said, “You and I were in the House together, the youngest members.” I said, “I went to the Senate, you went to the Senate.” And I said, “You’ve been on the city council and I’m on the school committee.” So I said, “I want to write a letter saying how you and I were the youngest members of the House of Representatives. You and I served in the Senate. And the Democratic philosophy that we always spoke of, advocated, has always been present with us. And I know at this time, you running as an Independent [is] the only means to bring this Democratic philosophy that you and I have represented to the Congress of the United—not to the United—to Congress.” And I said, “Because of that, and my long——” you know, I don’t know exactly the words I said to him. I said, “I so join you in this campaign and urge all my friends and all Democrats to support you in order to bring the Democratic party’s philosophy to the Congress.” Or, words to that effect. “Sincerely yours, Jim Hennigan.”

Well, you know, they saw me later, someone in the room. Pat McCarthy said to Joe, he said, “Joe, Jim Hennigan just made you a credible Independent. Your candidacy and credibility as an Independent.” So they always say, Only show up. I say, “Deirdre, all you do is show up.” (McEttrick laughs) Because if you miss the opportunity to do that—and there’s one thing I guess I can—I smile when I think of it. And some people might turn around and say, Gee, why’d he do that? Why’d he run for mayor in ’59? Why did he do this? Why did Deidre run and why did Maura run?” Because when you see something, you believe in something, there’s only one question, and you talk about it. Their question to you would be, “Did you show up?” And the Hennigan answer is, We always try to. And we do as best we know how.

**McETTRICK:** Did you ever have a chance or a moment where everybody was so busy and trying to do all these things—and Joe Moakley was running his campaign. Did you ever have a

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James A. Burke in the 1976 election for Massachusetts' Eleventh Congressional District seat in the U.S. House of Representatives.
chance to talk to him about the effect that this case was having on his people or the town as he saw it? (simultaneous conversation)

**HENNIGAN:** Well, I think this. He was aware of it. He understood it. He understood if you—the only one who endorsed Moakley, Joe Moakley, was Miller, who runs the *Bay [State] Banner*, is it?

**McETTRICK:** Oh, *The Bay State Banner*.

**HENNIGAN:** Yeah. And he was—and I probably shouldn’t even say this, but Cawley didn’t endorse him. They all stood, “Well, he’s an Independent.” Everyone took, you know, “Oh, I’m a Democrat, he’s an Independent.” Hubie Jones came from Newton. I called him, “Say, you going to join our effort?” He says, “No, I’m not going to get involved anymore.” I say, “Okay.” That one surprised me. I probably shouldn’t even say that. No, you know, I’m only one thing. No one’s enjoyed it more or had the adventure of being in politics, or having the heroes that I had. And I mean it. And you know what? And the only thing I really—now the Hennigan School—and honestly, you know what I’m going to ask? You’ve got the name but you really can’t see it. (McEttrick laughs) I go down to Heath Street where I grew up, and I said to Maura and Margie the other day—you know, I go down there and if someone said, “Where’s the Hennigan School—?” You could drive right by it and not see it. You know it’s a school—and I’ve been there. It’s a great school. I go down, well yes, I was down—look at that. That’s a picture of me reading to the kids there. And every year I go down. And right then [and] there recently, I don’t know if it was the last time—it said from sixty different nations. And I went in and it wasn’t so much that I’m reading to them, I was amazed at what they could come back and do. And I saw people volunteering there. Some run a dance program. Not even getting paid.

We’re losing them. We’re losing them and it creeps down. It’s gone from the seventeen, the eighteen, nineteen, the fourteen, down to the thirteen years old. Bromley Park, hell I rang every doorbell in that area. I went through Mission Hill. I used to go down through—and when I ran for the Senate right through the South End. Ten o’clock in the night and campaigned. It was a great town. No fear.
**McETTRICK:** Do you think any—you know, a lot of bad things did come out of this. Do you think anything good has happened? Do you think the city is better positioned in any way? Where is the—where are the neighborhoods going?

**HENNIGAN:** Pardon?

**McETTRICK:** Where are the neighborhoods going today? Where is the city going?

**HENNIGAN:** The city is going to come back. The question is, how does it come back? And that’s it. You know if you have money, you can always buy your way. So those who—because I had (inaudible), I had Kate at English High School⁴⁹ and that place turned into a riot and she was running down the street. I had Margie out here at a (inaudible) thing and she—so I understood a parent’s viewpoint of concern for their children. That’s obvious. I mean, that’s only natural, by any standard. What do you say—we drove the people. Where do you live?

**NICOLE FEENEY:** East Bridgewater.

**HENNIGAN:** How long does it take you to come to Boston?

**FEENEY:** Forty-five minutes.

**HENNIGAN:** If you’re lucky.

**FEENEY:** Yes. (laughs)

**HENNIGAN:** A lot of these places didn’t have the resources, the money, to take on this impact of people. Some places must have received them better than others. Some places gave some better schools. I mean Brookline’s terrific, okay? Great school. Your schools produce your

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⁴⁹ English High School of Boston was founded in 1821. The school is currently located the Jamaica Plain neighborhood of Boston, its sixth location since it was founded.
product. If I hadn’t been—if I hadn’t walked out the back door of the State House and become a lawyer, I—because it was there I took advantage of it. People said—but what has happened is we drove them out. They now are paying a hell of a price because they’re not getting—some of them aren’t getting an education. Only one step at a time and look at thirty-four years worth of—let’s see, twenty-five, thirty-two—

McETTRICK: Yeah, well, thirty-four years since ’72, yeah.

HENNIGAN: So it’s been—we’ve lost all that ground. So what—you know, everybody can complain about it but—let’s turn it around. You say, “How?” Well you’ve got to (laughs) put up and—you know it would have been better if maybe four or five years ago if we put enough police on the street, we might have slowed it down. Because the old cop on the beat that went up and down Centre Street when I was a kid was a deterrent. I don’t care what they say—you can’t be pennywise and pound foolish. Sometimes you’ve got to spend it. Sometimes you’ve got to make sure you spend it on the right thing. I saw schools—you know when you see things that are done. After I lost for attorney general I came out and I didn’t plan to lobby and (inaudible) says, “Why don’t you lobby, Jim?” I said, “No, I don’t want to do that.” So Joe Benedict came to me and he said, “You’re not going to lobby?” “No.” He said, “Will you do me a personal favor? Would you take us on, Jim?” “Yeah.” I said, “Joe, if you make it personal, you’ve been good to me, I will.” So I lobbied for a while. I was good at it. I won even when I wasn’t supposed to win them. And I don’t say that—it’s just when you can see the nature of things—John Higgins taught me a long time ago [to] step back. He said—he was a chemist by his profession then became a representative. He was a World War I veteran. His wife was in the—Eleanor. He said, “Jimmy, always step back. Look at the nature of things.” And he said, “If you can have a sense of that, an understanding. Then build everything else on it.” We are not teaching our people in public office how, not so much to act, as how to think. And you don’t run away from a problem. And you don’t give your identity up. And you don’t cut the House from 240 down to 160. You

50 John Patrick Higgins (1893-1955) served in the Massachusetts House of Representatives (1929-1934), the U.S. House of Representatives (1935-1937) from the Eleventh Congressional District, and as chief justice of the Massachusetts Superior Court (1937-1955). Mr. Higgins was also an officer in the United States Navy during World War I, and worked briefly as a chemist after the war.
don’t pay pay-differentials. You don’t take chairmans of committee. And you don’t take the State House and turn it into the Taj Mahal. That’s why we fail.

**McETTRICK:** You spoke about Ed Brooke in your comparison in your mind with Deval Patrick. Where do you think Patrick is headed? He seems to be a piece of this story.

**HENNIGAN:** Right.

**McETTRICK:** What do you perceive—

**HENNIGAN:** I see him being a great governor. And you know what? I think that’s what he sees too. You fill a vacuum and nature abhors a vacuum. And just think about why Deval Patrick is governor. Because we are not creating public leaders. In my father’s time, the twenties, the thirties, the forties, when you look at Curley, you look at them. Twentieth century. Two figures. (inaudible) Everyone stop Curley. Everyone battled him and he battled back and he was good. He was good at it, even in adversity. Go to Kennedy. Why do we produce so many candidates for president? Because the rest of this country looks at Massachusetts and says, We’re the biggest liberal—and this all, and that business, too. But there must be something up there that they got. That’s why Dukakis and Kerry got nominated for president of the United States. So Jack Kennedy did—Jack Kennedy was a Fitzgerald. He has intuitiveness that was built into him by his grandfather. Joe Kennedy had the money but Rockefeller had ten times that money. But he didn’t have the intuitiveness of Kennedy.

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51 James Michael Curley (1874-1958), a Democrat, served as mayor of Boston for four non-consecutive terms: 1914 to 1918, 1922 to 1926, 1930 to 1934, and 1946 to 1950, and as governor of Massachusetts from 1935 to 1937. He also represented Massachusetts’ Twelfth Congressional District in the United States House of Representatives from 1911 to 1914 and the Eleventh Congressional District from 1943 to 1946. He served jail time in the late 1940s for official misconduct, but remained in office as mayor during that time.

52 John F. Kennedy (1917-1963), a Democrat, represented Massachusetts’ Eleventh Congressional District in the U.S. House of Representatives from 1947 to 1953, then represented Massachusetts in the U.S. Senate from 1953 to 1960, when he was elected president.

53 Michael S. Dukakis (1933- ), a Democrat, served in the Massachusetts House of Representatives from 1947 to 1953, then represented Massachusetts in the U.S. Senate from 1953 to 1960, when he was elected president.

54 John Kerry (1943- ), a Democrat, has represented Massachusetts in the U.S. Senate since 1985. He was the Democratic presidential nominee in 2004, but lost the presidential election to incumbent Republican President George W. Bush.
So that’s what has happened here. It’s not just that—it’s we have lost our—and you know what? They don’t know how to face a problem. Urgency is so often the enemy—geeze, when I read that I said, “That’s—there he is.” (McEttrick and Allison laugh) That’s what he said in the nineteenth century. And it doesn’t make—we’re all limited. And the most important thing is to be able to listen. And anything I say, it’s because I listened.

McETTRICK: Well, it’s important. That’s right.

HENNIGAN: And we were the best. And we are still the best. If we make sure the talent is there. Deval Patrick won because he was new. The reason he was the candidate is that we have not, since thirty years, produced a Tobin. Produced a Paul Dever.55 Produced a Christian Herter.56 Because we’re not producing them. That’s what happened. You broke your traditions. Three terms, Speaker of the House—next. Three terms, president of the Senate—next. Thomas O’Neill—yeah, next. Move on. Christian Herter. Look at Christian Herter. Geez, you know what he’d do, if you wanted to go in and see him? He’d say, “Sit down. What’s on your mind?” He’d listen to you for ten minutes. He’d say, “Okay, we’ll look into that.” A perfect gentleman. [Who] was that congressman? Defeated (inaudible) secretary is the greatest—the history. You know, I don’t care whether they’re Yankee, I don’t care whether they’re Irish, I don’t care whether they’re—whatever they are. We are the best.

McETTRICK: So, Bob, I don’t know if there was anything that you wanted to—(simultaneous conversation)

HENNIGAN: You know what, I’ve probably gone—

55 Paul A. Dever (1903-1958), a Democrat, served in the Massachusetts House of Representatives from 1929 to 1935, as attorney general of Massachusetts from 1935 to 1941, and as governor of Massachusetts from 1949 to 1953.

56 Christian A. Herter (1895-1966), a Republican, served in the Massachusetts House of Representatives from 1931 to 1942, then represented the Massachusetts’ Tenth Congressional District in the U.S. House of Representatives from 1943 to 1953. He then served two terms as governor of Massachusetts, from 1953 to 1957, and as United States Secretary of State from 1959 to 1961.
McETTRICK:  Jimmy, we wish you’d tell us what you thought, Jim, you know? (laughs)

HENNIGAN:  Well, you know what? Since you’re going to put it down, you might as well hear it all. (McEttrick laughs) And if you wanted another two hours I could give it to you. (all laugh) And you know what the most important thing in the world to do [is]? I’ll tell you the best—Judge [Daniel J.] Gillen, who was [the] closest guy to Curley, and he was the—his brother was the editor of the Boston Post. And I went up and asked—he lived across from the Poor Claire’s. I went up and I asked him this question. I said, “Judge, how did Curley ever do what he did?” Oh, he smiled and he said, “Oh, Jim.” He said the thing that could sustain him over all the defeats or the other things—he said Curley could always see the humor in the situation. And you know in the end here what we just did here, we laughed at—in the comment.

McETTRICK:  Sure. Yeah.

HENNIGAN:  And besides, see, am I lucky that you came out here now. (laughs)

McETTRICK:  Well, you know, that’s why we—

HENNIGAN:  You know what? I’m going to get you some coffee. I said, do you want some coffee?

McETTRICK:  Yeah, I might have a little bit.

HENNIGAN:  Come on, have some coffee.

McETTRICK:  Well, that’d be good. I have to go in and teach, but I’ll take some coffee with you. Sure, that’d be great. Shouldn’t she turn that off?

ALLISON:  Should she turn it on now? (laughs)

McETTRICK:  Yeah, let’s turn it on. I think we’ve got him prepped. (Allison laughs)
END OF INTERVIEW

Attachments:

Attachment A:
Photocopy of the transcript from the Boston School Committee conference held at the Patrick O’Hearn School in Dorchester, Massachusetts on September 21, 1971.
CONFERENCE of the BOSTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE of the City of Boston, held at the Patrick O'Hearn School, 1669 Dorchester Avenue, Dorchester, Massachusetts, at eight:ten p.m. 

\[ \text{Sept 21, 1971} \]

PRESENT:

Chairman Tierney (Presiding); Committee Members Craven, Hennigan, Kerrigan, and Lee; Superintendent Ohrenberger; Board of Superintendents; Business Manager Burke; Secretary Winter.

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CHAIRMAN: The meeting will come to order.

I have been informed by the Fire Department that we are over capacity this evening in violation of the safety laws, and for that reason I would like to put a reasonable deadline on the length of the meeting.

I have talked with some of the members informally, and, if it meets with your approval, I think nine:thirty, which will give us an hour and twenty minutes, should be more than sufficient to respond and listen to your questions.

(Cries of, "No, no deadline.")

CHAIRMAN: I think it's important that we
set a deadline. I am going to set a nine-thirty deadline because that is reasonable, an hour and twenty minutes.

(Cries of, "That is not enough.")

Mr. CRAVEN: Mr. Chairman and members of this School Committee: It is now apparent to me that I was given as a School Committee member inaccurate figures on what it was necessary to do to racially balance the new $8 million Lee School in Dorchester.

I have been completely misled by figures supplied to me on the Option 2 Lee School Plan by our own Educational Planning Center.

We on the Boston School Committee were told that if we adopted the so-called Option 2 it would racially balance the new Lee School.

It now develops that this was totally untrue and that we on the School Committee were given misinformation by our own Educational Planning Center.

It is clear to me now that my previous action, based on false information, was a mistake. The truth is that it is impossible to racially balance the new Lee School without forced busing. (Applause)

I am against forced busing. I have always been against forced busing. (Applause)
And as long as I am a public official of the City of Boston I will always continue to be against forced busing. We never have had forced busing in our Boston Public School System.

I am now going to move to correct my previous action which was based on erroneous information furnished to me by the agency of the School Department on which I depended for the truth.

I am making the motion that parents of the children in the former O'Hearn and Fifield School districts be allowed to make their own decisions on whether they shall (loud applause) send their sons and daughters to those schools or to the new Lee School, and children living in close proximity to the new Lee School whose parents wish them to attend that school but who have been assigned to the Fifield or O'Hearn Schools shall also have the right to attend the new Lee School if they want to do so.

(Appause)

Let me re-emphasize one point: That the only way the new Lee School can be racially balanced is by wholesale forced cross-town busing, and I am strongly opposed to any cross-town forced busing. I have always been, and it is a violation of the state law. So I now
move reconsideration of Option 2. (Applause)

CHAIRMAN: I think 816 may be good enough. Does any member of the School Committee have a comment to make before the motion for reconsideration is voted?

Mr. HENNIGAN: Mr. Chairman, I have always at all times during this debate over the racial imbalance law and the problems that we have been confronted with voted and shall continue to vote for adoption of Option 2.

I never did this with any great degree of thought that this particular vote would meet with great popularity, but by necessity, by experience, by my knowledge and my responsibility I will so vote again.

I think the alternative, Mr. Chairman, is that no doubt this will revert back to where the $21 million will now be a court issue, and will be a matter which will be resolved at the court level.

I have always felt and have in the past that the Racial Imbalance Law should be repealed. It has been a difficult law at the least to work with. It was questionable and debated at great length when it was first initiated in 1965.

At least, we have brought home the difficulties
of living within it and under it, but as a member of this School Committee I have always felt obliged to make things work as best I can, even in adverse situations.

I think that this issue has gone far beyond this, and, unfortunately, I think it has been broadened. This is our fourth-stage effort, and we received the full brunt of that statute when this city was compelled to face a deficit of $21 million in state aid.

This city needs a lot of help dollarwise, but that wasn't the reason -- or the only reason. That would be litigated, and I am aware that Springfield has the same problems.

But I am also concerned that by this action and by being forced to go to court, I am tremendously apprehensive as an elected city official of this city that this School Committee has responded in this way.

I think when you are an elected public official you have an obligation to face up to your responsibilities and to respond, to use your head, our experience, your conscience, and your heart in the hope that we will undertake -- (Applause)

(At this point Congresswoman Hicks entered the room.)
Mr. HENNIGAN: Mr. Chairman, we are now about to go into litigation. I hope the result and the finding will be in the interest of this city.

I am apprehensive of the results because that is all I can do.

Someone said to me, "Well, Mr. Hennigan, you are not the Supreme Court."

No, I am not, but I do have to make a judgment when I vote, and I have to anticipate what may happen and what I believe will happen.

The Racial Imbalance Act was litigated in our courts for two years, and it was found constitutional. We lost that one. I believe we are going to lose this one.

This issue is broad in concept, and, as I read it, it's this. We will go now and ask for the $21 million. The Department of Education now will ask us to conform to their last demand and request to us. What was that demand and what was that request?

On March 30th it was directed to the Superintendent of Schools, and this is the way we should have gone and not where we went.

The plan should include at least the following elements: A description of the Boston School Department's
procedure in implementing the Board of Education's new policy on open enrollment adopted on October 27, 1970; a description on how new schools to be opened during the academic year of 1971 and 1972 will be and continually racially balanced; a description of how Boston's proposed redrawing of high school academic years 1971 and 1972 will create racially imbalanced attendance areas. Just for the high schools.

A description of how racial balance in seven intermediate schools and four elementary schools with intermediate grades will be reduced to a significant extent by changes in attendance districts before the academic year of 1971 and 1972.

That was the request and direction to the Superintendent of Schools on March the 30th.

Our response to that was this: We opened the door ourselves.

Mr. Kerrigan asked that we should have a redistricting plan for the entire City of Boston.

Mindful of what the Department of Education asked us, our response was: Tell us what your redistricting plan is. Give it to us. Let us know.

That opened a breach that was unnecessary and
totally unneed ed.

The vote on that section on April the 8th, in response to this communication to the Superintendent of Schools, was that, in accordance with Section 2 of Chapter 61, the Acts of 1965, the Board of Education request to provide technical and other assistance in the formulation and execution of plans to eliminate racial imbalance by formulating district lines not alone for high schools, junior highs, middle schools, and senior high schools by May 15th, 1971.

On a roll-call vote, the order passed by the following vote: The Yeas were Messrs. Kerrigan, Lee, and Tierney. The Neas were Mr. Hennigan, because I felt it was my responsibility never to relegate to a course or the Department of Education that heavy duty and responsibility.

I came to the School Committee with my experience, with my knowledge, and with my right to exercise it.

I feel cheated. I feel that my action here has been prevented from completion. I feel that we have been prevented from serving as a School Committee because we have stepped away from it.

The judiciary, with their power of equity and
their power of redistricting has been handed the ball. We have opened the spectrum and said, "We can't resolve this. We can't perform our duty and obligation."

I regret very much that in this year I couldn't have participated or that my vote didn't count, and that some member of the judiciary will act or that the redistricting lines will become the redistricting lines of the Department of Education.

I regret that as much as I have ever regretted my inability to act when I see something that I would like to make the best of.

What was the response? They asked for Option 1 here. They didn't ask for Option 2. Did we negotiate? Did we compromise? Did we gain?

Yes, we did. But this evening we threw it all aside. I'm sorry. I think it's a mistake.

I would hope that this committee and all of you would re-examine your position and think about it.

The high schools they are asking now. What is at issue? And what do they ask?

They asked for Option 1. I thought that was a more serious impairment in disrupting this district.

Option 2 was within the law and workable.
And when do they want this redistricting? They want it as of today, September, 1971.

The Chairman here asked for an advisory committee, and your members of your School Committee would have to vote and revote those actions.

We have not delegated, we have not given away, our authority, but we lost here tonight. We defaulted, and I say so seriously. I lost by default.

I would hope that this Committee would re-examine and respond and let us try again.

CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Mr. Hennigan.

(Cries of Boo.)

CHAIRMAN: Mr. Kerrigan?

Mr. KERRIGAN: Mr. Chairman, it would appear that the serious weeks that have confronted the Dorchester community are about to come to an end and that the basic right of sending their children to a neighborhood school, a school that they want, will be returned to the Dorchester people, and I publicly commend School Committeeman John Craven for his stand. (Applause)

The only thing that disturbs me is that we will soon lose John Craven to the City Council, and when Commissioner Sullivan shoves down our throats the redistricting
of the Trent School in Charlestown, he won't be here to help us, and when he shoves down our throats the redistricting of the Agassiz School in Jamaica Plain, when that is opened, he won't be here to help us, and when he shoves down our throats the redistricting of the Hart-Dean School, he won't be here to help us, or the Georgetown School in West Roxbury.

He has helped us say to Mr. Sullivan today that at least three members of this School Committee will not be his stooges, will stand up for the people of Boston. (Applause)

It's a sad comment when we think that three hundred years of good education, of sound education, of education where a parent could send his child to a school without fear being near at hand was almost wiped away and may very well in the future be wiped away at these new schools that I have mentioned.

It's very true that I asked in an order of the School Committee for the plans of Commissioner Sullivan, to give us the districts that he wanted, but the reason that I asked was because the districts that Commissioner Sullivan wants are eight feet wide and eight miles long, so that he can bus everybody around this city.
He is not interested in quality education, he is interested in integration and transporting our children, and I think we all know this and I think we all know a man who has been maligned, because that is the thing to do. When anyone stands up for his basic rights he is maligned as a bigot, but the biggest man in this hall tonight is a fellow that should be our guideline and was our guideline and stood by us and led us all to this happy night. That is Father Leonard Burke from St. Matthew's.

(The audience stood and applauded.)

Mr. KERRIGAN: What I would like to say about Father Burke is profane, so I will make it as nice as I can. In this day of so many gutless, illegitimate ideas it's nice to have a man so heavily endowed.

Thank you, Father. (Applause)

CHAIRMAN: Mr. Lee?

Mr. LEE: I understood the motion was to reconsider.

CHAIRMAN: Yes.

Do you have any comment to make?

Mr. LEE: No. If there is a vote to reconsider, I would like to then discuss the motion.

CHAIRMAN: Mr. Secretary, would you call the roll on the motion to reconsider.
(Roll call:)

Mr. CRAVEN: Yes.

Mr. HENNIGAN: No.

Mr. KERRIGAN: Yes.

Mr. LEE: Yes.

CHAIRMAN: No.

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CHAIRMAN: The motion to reconsider is carried. The question is now before us.

Mr. CRAVEN: Mr. Chairman, I now move that Option 2 with the two amendments to give the Fifield pupils the option to attend the Fifield or the Lee School and the O'Hearn pupils the option to attend the O'Hearn or the Lee School be now passed. (Applause)

CHAIRMAN: Mr. Lee?

Mr. LEE: Mr. Chairman, as you know, I want to see civil rights restored to the people of Boston.

I think we ought to consider whether the particular form of the motion is the right one.

There would be as now claimed a sort of head-on collision, an about-swing, full reversal; whereas the same end could be achieved by a motion that might simply
say that the children of these schools shall not be denied the same instruction that other pupils already enrolled in these schools are receiving.

I also believe this may be more serious. Mr. Craven's motion leaves out one of the most important factors. I believe in civil rights, and those rights have been denied, as you can see, by the overbearing state government of late, but if I believe in civil rights, I naturally believe in them for all the persons concerned.

We have some two hundred -- it may be two hundred and fifty -- Negro youngsters, I am told, now attending the Lee who are not supposed to attend the Lee School under the plan that is now in effect and who, I think, will not be supposed to attend the Lee School if Mr. Craven's motion goes through in its present form.

I am not particularly anxious to grasp a lot of students two hundred strong by the neck or by the coat collar and pitch them out of that school to carry out some social experiment in the minds of people at the State House.

In other words, I think the motion ought to be broadened to safeguard what I conceive to be the civil rights of pupils at the O'Hearn, at the Fifield, and at the Lee Schools. (Applause)