



## **Oral History Interview of John W. Costello**

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### **Interview Summary**

In this interview, John W. Costello, a 1956 graduate of Suffolk University Law School reflects upon his experiences attending Suffolk University Law School, his family's long-standing connection to Suffolk, and his life post-graduation. Costello discusses his political career including, his service in the Massachusetts legislature, the Governor's Council, and his bid for Lieutenant Governor in 1964. He describes his relationships with Massachusetts politicians such as Congressman Joe Moakley, Bobby Kennedy and Jack Kennedy. He also describes his law practice, connections to his law school classmates, and his family life. Costello concludes by discussing how Suffolk Law School prepared him for his career.

### **Subject Headings**

**Costello, John W.**

**Massachusetts -- Politics and government**

**Moakley, John Joseph, 1927-2001**

**Suffolk University -- Law School**

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### Interview Transcript Begins

**JULIA HOWINGTON:** Today is April 30<sup>th</sup>, 2015 and we're here at Suffolk University Law School, interviewing John W. Costello for the Moakley Oral History Project at Suffolk University Law School. Can we begin by you telling us your name and where you grew up, a little bit about your background?

**JOHN COSTELLO:** My name is John Costello, John Walter Costello. The Walter was from my father who was also a graduate of Suffolk University, class of '23. I graduated from Suffolk in class of '56. We had some illustrious classmates. We had George Kenneally, who served in the legislature, John Bresnahan, who served on the legislature. I happen to have served on the legislature, having been elected in 1950 to begin serving in 1951. I graduated from Holy Cross [in 1951] and there is one particular person I didn't mention.

As I said, I had illustrious classmates, and that was the one and only and great Joe Moakley, my friend. Joe and I sat beside each other. We studied together. One place we studied was in the State House itself, which was adjacent to Suffolk University Law School. And it was then Suffolk Law School, not Suffolk University. I think the university came into existence about a dozen years after we graduated. But—

**HOWINGTON:** Well, it was a little bit earlier, but no problem.

**COSTELLO:** Was it earlier? I don't know the exact dates. It was long ago, so please excuse me if I skip a particular year. But that's, in summation that's my educational background. I graduated from Holy Cross and was elected to the legislature when I was a senior at Holy Cross. When I got to the legislature I was fortunate in that the speaker of the house was Tip O'Neill. So, my first term in the House was his last term. And he was a wonderful influence on me. And Joe Moakley came into the legislature two years later. He missed that opportunity and always regretted it. I know he did because we have talked about it so often.

But we used to study, as I started to say earlier, in the State House. We would go over to the entrance where the capitol police would be and they would escort us to one of the committee rooms to the committee room we liked to study in, and that would include Jeanne Hession and myself and Jim Linnehan, and George Kenneally, and those were the principals that we studied with, a study group. All law students seem to break into groups and that was our group.

And one of the rooms we used to, we liked to use was the Judiciary Committee Room. It was an ornate room, but it kind of made us feel like lawyers long before we were lawyers, in our second and third years of law school and we're in an area where [it was] peopled by lawyers. It made us feel a little important, I suppose.

**HOWINGTON:** And so how come— so at the time that was when Suffolk was still just one building, right? Is that correct?

**COSTELLO:** Yes, that's correct.

**HOWINGTON:** So, was it better for you to study in the, over--

**COSTELLO:** Oh, yes, it was a wonderful arrangement, and we used to— another thing we used to do, we used to, after law school. At nine o'clock Conda's next door, a little Greek restaurant was not a very good one. But they were nice people, and they would keep open for us law school students who would be getting out of class about nine o'clock. And so we had fond memories of just relaxing and having a cup of coffee or a cup of tea or something or other for our supper, and that was about all, because we were all broke. None of us had much money. And I know Joe was working at low pay for the state as in some capacity, I think it was the Insurance Department. And so he didn't have any money for fancy dinners at night and neither did I, and many a night I went home and had cornflakes for supper.

By that time, by the time of graduation I think, Brian wasn't born yet, but my daughter Maureen was here. She was my— She was our lovely daughter, and then the four boys came later.

**ORI COSTELLO:** '54 and '56.

**COSTELLO:** Maureen was born in 1954, Brian in '56, and along came TJ in 1960. This is TJ here with us today also. And then two more after that. And Joe unfortunately never had children. He would have been a wonderful father, because he was a kindhearted person.

One funny little story, and now I'm going to jump ahead, was when Joe was in the house in Washington he served on Rules Committee and he served on another committee, the Personnel Committee, a small committee, and he had control over hiring of ordinary jobs, like elevator operator attendants and people like that, and many a legislator was interested in those jobs, because they would have a constituent who might have been a good contributor who had a son or a daughter going to Georgetown or George Washington University or Trinity College and those were perfect jobs for kids to make an extra dollar while they were in college.

And Maureen had met a man who was elected to Congress. She had met him in an airport limousine. And as soon as he heard, as they engaged in conversation, as soon as she heard, sorry, as soon as he heard rather that she had a father who was in politics he hired her on the spot to be his secretary in the campaign, and he won. And he gave her a job or assigned her to a job in his district of White Plains, New York. She wanted to go to Washington. Mentioned it to Joe. Joe said, "Don't worry about it. I'll take care of it." And this Congressman, [Peter] Peyser his name was, he came to see Joe, asking for one of those kind of jobs, just as Joe knew he would. And Joe said to him, "Oh by the way, Peter," he said, "my godchild, Maureen Costello, would like to be in the Washington office, not in the local office." Peter received the message loud and clear, and Maureen came, went to Washington. And it was how many years, Maureen, five years, two years?

**MAUREEN COSTELLO:** It was five in D.C., but I worked for Peter for two.

**COSTELLO:** Yeah. So, those are the things that a friend will do, and like Joe, so typical of Joe. I've been reading too about Joe's sense of humor. Well, Joe had a wonderful sense of humor. His sense of humor was not necessarily in telling jokes. As a matter of fact one day he called me

before he, while he was a state senator in Massachusetts, and the state senator on St. Patrick's Day would host the St. Patrick's Day Gala and people would be invited throughout the state and they would come and they would have to be telling jokes, and usually bad ones. Joe said, "Gee, do you have any good jokes?" Well, I sent him a DVD of Hal Roach's and a Hal Roach joke book. He is a wonderful comedian from Ireland.

But Joe's humor was more geared toward an important point he was trying to make, and it usually had humor attached to it. He would see the point to be made quickly before anybody else would, and putting people at ease, and find himself where he wanted to be, leading the conversation and being the most important person in the room. He knew that he had to do that and he did it, and he was very, very good at it. He was— His humor though, was really, had its basis on Joe being a good guy who grew up as a good guy, had many friends in South Boston, and just was a good fellow.

**HOWINGTON:** So maybe— I was wondering why did you choose the law? And what drew you to Suffolk?

**COSTELLO:** My father. My father graduated in '23 and it was his influence really.

**HOWINGTON:** Was he a lawyer as well?

**COSTELLO:** He was a lawyer. My father, I don't know how he did it. My father worked for the state. He worked for the Department of Industrial Accidents. The Workers' Compensation Act was passed in 1911 and he went to work in 1912, so he retired fifty years later. He was a genius on the subject of workers' compensation. Many a lawyer went to him for advice. He also played professional basketball back in pre-NBA days. The NBA didn't come into existence until after World War Two, so that would have been 1946 or so, and he started playing in 1911 and 1912, and he played for about twenty years. But I think it was more an informal gathering of people rather than a formal league that he played with. But he had reporters later on call him the Bob Cousy of his day. I don't know he did these things. And he went to law school, too. And those years, four years leading up to 1923, which is just remarkable.

And he was well-known in the legal circle. He also was an author. He wrote a book, a pamphlet for fifteen years, the “Annual New Massachusetts Laws”, which was an annual new Massachusetts laws in summary, a Herculean task, but he managed it. And by the way, I wanted to mention that he had, he was in class of ’23, had seven, had eighty to eighty-eight graduates and seven of them became Judges. And I met them over the years, either through my own practice when I was practicing or would bump into them and my father would introduce me to them. And they became, some of them, became like uncles to me and who took an interest to me in law, which is a typical Suffolk reaction. I mean we’re, if you say, “I’m from Suffolk” you’re part of a family.

**HOWINGTON:** Why do you think that is? Why do you think it’s that way?

**COSTELLO:** I think it’s that way because most of the graduates are aspiring to greater things and a large percentage are an income class whereby their parents have, didn’t earn a lot of money and they had to pitch in themselves to help support the family, and they had to pay their own tuition and all those kinds of— And so there was a ‘we’re in this together’ attitude. And Joe Moakley’s sense of humor worked everywhere, not because of Joe necessarily, but with us he was even more so, but throughout.

Someone once told me that having a sense of humor is having the ability to laugh at yourself, and so many of my colleagues at Suffolk were that type, and were able to laugh at themselves, and at the same time be serious about their goals.

**HOWINGTON:** Yes, and I think maybe it had something to do with the fact that Suffolk had one of the few night programs so that people serving in the legislature, like yourself, could still pursue their, an advanced degree and pay the bills at the same time.

**COSTELLO:** Exactly, yes, exactly, and speaking of paying the bills, there was a woman named Dottie McNamara, she was terrific. We used to pay by the month and sometimes the money wasn’t there that month. We had to go see Dottie Mac, and she’d put on a stern face initially, but

she couldn't hold it. She was just a nice person who was so kind and thoughtful and quick to say, "Well, next week. Next week. Come up with it next week if you can." And that type of experience too, I think, was another thing that made my class feel as though they were one person. And I just have to recognize that all classes were of the same ilk, if you will, and we all had— we all loved Dottie Mac. And we all loved how she handled us and were grateful that we could stay in class because of someone like her.

**HOWINGTON:** Do you remember any of your professors or other people on campus?

**COSTELLO:** Well, the two that I remember the most were Professor Flynn who taught Evidence. And I knew I was going to be a trial lawyer so I was drawn to that subject, but he was a kind of a professor that had a lot of give and take. If you didn't have the right answer he wasn't stern, he would find a way to explain to you that you should spend some time on that particular subject, on that particular issue. But he would exchange thoughts and legal problems with anybody who he called upon. He was a good man.

And the other was Dave Sargent who graduated in the class ahead of us and who became the President of Suffolk. Dave was a brilliant fellow and he had administrative talent. Back then before we needed it, it was so recognizable. He was very well-organized in his classes, and he taught subjects like Trusts and Wills, which weren't very exciting. But he made it not exciting, because you couldn't do that, but he made us pay attention. He had a way about him, kind of a disciplinarian without being a disciplinarian. And of course, over the years after that he was almost an adopted member of our class, because he always— we used to have him as our guest at reunions and gatherings. We had a lot of those that— we had that bond between us that was so strong.

**HOWINGTON:** So, do you— were you involved, maybe you didn't have time, but were you involved in any extracurricular activities? Was there much of that going on for law students at night?



**COSTELLO:** No, it wasn't too much. Extracurricular activities we had were built around an annual reunion, that type of thing, only well-organized every five years, as any college does.

**HOWINGTON:** Oh, so reunions, but while you were attending Suffolk, not so much?

**COSTELLO:** Other than that it was we were in contact with one another. If someone, for example, Arthur Paleologos became a clerk magistrate in the Woburn District Court. And if I had a question involving procedure and how it should be handled in the District Court I would call Arthur and he would come right to the fore and he would go, "Okay, this is Uncle Arthur," he would say, "What's your problem?" And he would help solve it. And others would do the same thing, and anybody with a particular position of having a quite greater knowledge in the subject matter would always be available. And that was a great asset we had in the practice of law. Or I had at least, a great asset for me in the practice of law because we can't know everything. We like to think we do but we don't.

**HOWINGTON:** So, when you graduated, so we have the picture of you graduating, there is a news clipping from *The Boston Globe*--

**COSTELLO:** Yes, I see that. There is a picture here with me and Joe and John Bresnahan. John Bresnahan was a member of the House from Lawrence. He had ten children. And he's a graduate of Notre Dame where he was on the football team, and a very pleasant, nice guy. And he wasn't as social as Joe and I were because he had ten children. He had to get back to Lawrence all the time. But he was nonetheless a very decent person and a good student as far as I could determine.

**HOWINGTON:** Do you remember that picture being taken at all or it being run in the paper?

**COSTELLO:** Well, it looks like it was at graduation, so tons of pictures were taken at graduation.

**HOWINGTON:** Oh that's true. But it looks like they're making a point to say like, "Oh, here is three members of the legislature that are--"

**COSTELLO:** Well, I might have talked— we might have talked about having been legislators. There were two others in our class who were legislators. One was George Kenneally, who became counsel to the Senate, the State Senate. and he was very effective in that position. George has passed away. And the other was Ted Vaitses and he was the only Republican. The rest of us were Democrats.

**HOWINGTON:** Oh, okay.

**COSTELLO:** And we Democrats felt as though we were better citizens. I'm sure Ted Vaitses felt as though he alone was the better citizen than anyone, than the other three or four Democrats who we went to law school with. All in good fun.

**HOWINGTON:** Well, maybe can we shift gears a little bit to talk about your political career then?

**COSTELLO:** My political career, I served— as I mentioned earlier I was elected when I was a senior at Holy Cross and started serving in January of 1951. At Holy Cross they allowed me to double-up, take five courses, normally you would take. I would take six. I took six courses my first semester and four my second semester. They accommodated me, so I was able [to study]. And I used to travel back and forth from Worcester to Boston when the House was in session. I used to travel with the Worcester Representatives and it worked out very, very nicely.

**HOWINGTON:** And which district were you?

**COSTELLO:** My district was Jamaica Plain and Forest Hills and part of Roslindale. And so I served ten years in the House, five terms. And then I served four years in the Governor's Council. I was a Governor's councilor for four years from '61 to '64, and I was the Democratic nominee for Lieutenant Governor in 1964, didn't quite make it. I lost by one half of one percent. So it was hard to take at the time, losing. By that time I had five children and I had a law

practice, but it wasn't— it probably wasn't quite as good as it ought to be because I was sharing my time with my political activities and holding office.

But from that point on I really pushed hard and practiced law sixty, seventy hours a week. And in my second— in [1969] I think it was, a young man who was a graduate of Suffolk Law School joined me in the practice of law. His name was Kevin Sullivan whose son Matthew works now for Suffolk. And he was a fine and wonderful, highly moral young man. And we had a wonderful relationship. And inside of two years I made him a partner and we stayed in that partnership for twenty-five years. We had— our firm was Costello, Sullivan, and Hammer, and we never had a cross word between us. And we had complementary skills. I was better at certain things than he was and he was better at certain things than I was, and it worked out beautifully. And we had a wonderful personal relationship. And by the way, he also had gone— he was a Holy Cross graduate. So we were both Holy Cross, both Suffolk Law, and we had a wonderful relationship in the practice of law.

**HOWINGTON:** In what area did you focus on again?

**COSTELLO:** I think Kevin graduated from Suffolk Law in [1969]. But within a year he came to work for me, and we stayed together for twenty-five years. Then he was concentrating on real estate law, so he moved to the South Shore. I stayed where I was in Boston until I retired, and I retired about ten years ago.

**HOWINGTON:** And what area of law did you practice most? Did you have a specialty?

**COSTELLO:** I had a general practice, I'd call it. I thought it could be called a trial lawyer, criminal work, and mostly civil. But in the criminal end I had four murder cases which made me more well-known, I suppose, because those cases seemed to get in the news. But I was a very, very busy lawyer. And I like to say I was conscientious and empathized with my clients, and in the course of a trial or in the course of preparing a case I used to establish a personal relationship as well as I could with my clients. If a client had some particular expertise that might apply itself to the case at hand, I would enlist my client to work along with me as one of my assets. And I

found that that worked out very nicely. A lot of lawyers don't do that, but I did and it was very effective, I thought.

**HOWINGTON:** So, maybe if we could go back to your career in the State Legislature, what were your committee assignments?

**COSTELLO:** The committees, I served on Education Committee as one of my first committees—was the natural for someone who was still in college, but I didn't find that too exciting. And I then served on the Aeronautics Committee, which at that time was a very small committee. But I was idealistic and thought that that would be important; I could supply some youthful activity toward that particular subject. But then interestingly enough, when I served in the legislature my first term was with Tip O'Neill as the speaker. And he served out the term and then he ran for Congress and was elected to Congress in 1952.

But interesting year, we were only Democratic by four votes and my second term the House went back [to Republican control]. It was the first Democratic House in Massachusetts with Tip O'Neill as the speaker, two years later the House went back to the Republican side. Charles Gibbons was the Speaker. And both the Republicans and the Democrats used to caucus frequently and we used to attune ourselves to banding together and working out of a set of principles espoused by the Democratic Party as such and the Republicans would do the same thing. And we would argue and fight. I don't mean physically but [verbally] in the caucus room. And if someone was off the reservation and didn't want to vote with the party and vote with the party platform then they were kind of ostracized for a little while, and the same thing Republicans do. And there was no such thing back then of a, or hardly at least, no such thing as a Liberal Republican or a Conservative Democrat. If you were a Democrat you were conservatively inclined, I mean liberally inclined. And if you were a Republican you were conservatively inclined. It's just as simple as that. And the nuances were ironed out in caucuses.

And in my third term it became overwhelmingly Democratic. In the fourth term and fifth term the same thing. And then my third Speaker was Michael Skerry. And Michael put me on the Ways and Means Committee, which was a prestigious committee, and I stayed on that committee

through a couple more Democratic Speakers. John Thompson was one. John was a, unfortunately was a [person] who had habits that he shouldn't have had. And I don't think I really want to get into that subject, but nobody is perfect.

**HOWINGTON:** So, what made you decide to leave? What made you leave the Legislature?

**COSTELLO:** Well, then I finished out my ten years [in the House] and then my next two, next four years were in the Governor's Council which were interesting years. I served [in 1962 and 1963] with Governor Volpe who was a Republican. I got along famously with him. He was a decent human being, a nice man. He had been successful in the world of business before he became governor. And then Governor Peabody, Endicott Peabody was a Democrat. And he was a decent man as well. He wasn't aggressive, with the consequence that he was defeated when he ran for a second term in 1968. No '66, '66. But he was a very, he was a decent person.

But politics back then was—after Tip O'Neill left the House we didn't have a great leader in either party that—but in any event, life goes on. And if you're in politics, in the State House it nonetheless remains interesting and gives you the feeling that you are doing something for the world.

**HOWINGTON:** Yes, definitely. And you represented Jamaica Plain. Did you live in the area?

**COSTELLO:** I lived in Jamaica Plain. I was born and raised in Jamaica Plain. So I was twenty-three years of age and a vacancy occurred and the incumbent legislator wasn't running for re-election. So I thought this was an opening and gathered together about 30 friends. And we rang doorbells and we handed out literature in the streets and made speeches when it was appropriate. And it just worked out. I won by eighty-seven votes and my opponent asked for a recount. And after the recount I picked up thirteen votes and I won by a hundred votes. Yes. And I enjoyed every minute of serving in the legislature. It was very, very educational and helpful for me as a lawyer as well because the State House was my second home for ten, twelve years. Fourteen years, actually.

**HOWINGTON:** And so after you were on the Governor's Council then you ran in '64. Was it for the Lieutenant Governor, as Lieutenant Governor? Can you tell us a little bit about that race and your place in it, some of the other key players?

**COSTELLO:** Well, what happened is the Lieutenant Governor in 1964 was Francis Bellotti who later became attorney general. He decided to run against the incumbent governor, Peabody. They were both Democrats. It was an odd thing for him to do. And today he would say, "I shouldn't have done it." But he did and he beat Peabody in the primary. And so, he became the Democratic nominee for Governor and I became the—after winning a convention vote in West Springfield where we had eleven hours of balloting and fourteen candidates—I became the winning candidate. And so, I became the Democratic nominee for Lieutenant Governor. So Frank Bellotti and I ran together. But unfortunately, because of the split in the party with Frank Bellotti beating Endicott Peabody, all Democrats didn't vote for the Democrats. And instead of—even though the Democrats were in the large majority at the time it was a split in the party. And it was difficult for me at the time. I tried to be a peace maker all around but it turns out that I lost by one half a percent and Frank Bellotti also lost by about that same amount. And so from that point on I thought it was time to put away the toys and practice law solely.

**HOWINGTON:** Much to your family's relief maybe?

**COSTELLO:** Yeah, I could be home more often.

**HOWINGTON:** Was it hard to balance family life, politics?

**COSTELLO:** Oh sure, because there were so many times I would have to go somewhere at night, to an organization or to speak somewhere or when the campaign was going it was almost impossible to be home all the time. And it was tough. But we managed, we managed.

**HOWINGTON:** And I'm sure there was a little bit—it wasn't quite as expensive to run back then?

**COSTELLO:** Oh no, no, no. Television changed all that. Television has changed the world of politics and unfortunately it's a—I don't know. It's hard for me to categorize television, but it's a whole different world since television came into existence.

**HOWINGTON:** And then we have the internet now too, making it—that's the next wrinkle.

**COSTELLO:** And it's so expensive. As a matter of fact, now that I think about it, I remember toward the end of my campaign for Lieutenant Governor I knew it was close. The polls were showing it was close. I needed to make money to get more TV time so I could get more well-known and try to get more votes. And unfortunately, I was canceling TV time because you had to pay it upfront and if you didn't have the money you didn't have the TV time. And my opponent happened to be a multi-millionaire who outspent me about twenty to one, so that was a factor as well.

**HOWINGTON:** Who was your opponent?

**COSTELLO:** My opponent was Elliot Richardson who became famous in Washington for one reason or another. He was a capable person, but I still think I would have been a better lieutenant governor.

**HOWINGTON:** So I know during your travels in Massachusetts state politics you got the chance to work with Joe Moakley, Tip O'Neill.

**COSTELLO:** Oh sure, Joe and I. As a matter of fact, when he was running for-- Oh, he ran for City Councilor and this is after he had been the State Representative. And I remember, I can remember going to part of Joe used to invite me over to South Boston if he had a gathering of twenty people or fifty people or a hundred people or something or other, an organizational type of meeting. He would have me over to say how wonderful Joe Moakley is and how fortunate all the workers are to have him as their representative, or councilor, or congressman, or whatever. I did that at least a dozen times. And Joe did the same thing for me over in my district, telling all my workers how wonderful I was. And then Joe and I would, we would laugh about it because

each one of us, while we were such close friends, we didn't regard one another as a great person. We were just buddies.

**HOWINGTON:** Normal people?

**COSTELLO:** Yeah.

**HOWINGTON:** That's good. Were there any other politicians that you remember from time either on the state level or nationally that you got to work with or got to know that you want to talk about?

**COSTELLO:** Well, Jack Kennedy, of course, especially. I got involved with Jack Kennedy's campaigns in 1952 when he ran for his first term for United States Senate. And interestingly enough, their organization was set up in such a manner that they had a secretary from every one of the 351 cities and towns and precincts within the cities and towns. Probably a couple of thousand people who were secretaries. And I was the only one that I knew of who was designated as a secretary. They didn't want politicians. They wanted citizens to be secretaries when they were running the campaign as nonpolitical, but it was still political. And so I became very well acquainted with Jack Kennedy and his brother Bobby. Bobby and I became good friends.

Kenny O'Donnell, Bobby's classmate, and he became one of the most important persons in Kennedy's presidency. He was the doorkeeper. You didn't get in to see President Kennedy unless you first went through Kenny O'Donnell. Kenny O'Donnell was the man who came from Worcester originally. His father had been a football coach at Holy Cross before I was there. And I played football at Holy Cross and he played football at Harvard. We played against each other and we became friends from that standpoint as well.

And I think I probably could have gone to Washington and into the White House at that time but it wasn't the right time. I was still holding public office and I was practicing law, and family with five little children. It just wasn't the right thing for me to do. But I haven't thought about that



connection as much as I might have over the years. But I would go to Washington occasionally and I could go right into the White House and I've been in the Rose Garden a couple of times. The President, "Come on up. Kenny, let him in. We're going out to the Rose Garden and you can just come out with us." That sort of thing.

Jack Kennedy, by the way, was a very personable guy, wonderful fellow. My wife likes to tell a story about we were down there, the two of us one time, and we went over to the chat with the Senator at the time, and he said, "Why don't we go to lunch?" So we went to lunch together. And by the way, on our way we bumped into Nixon who was then vice president. And he said, "You want to meet him?" I said, "Yeah, sure." And he introduced us to, in the corridor to President Nixon, which I thought was rather interesting. And he remarked that he's not that bad a guy, Jack said, which also surprised me. We had lunch together in the Senate dining room, and a man walked by, tall, handsome fellow walked by, and my wife said, "Who is that?" He said, "That's my friend, George Smathers, senator from Florida." And he said, "George, come over here." So he came by and he said, "This is Mr. and Mrs., Representative and Mrs. Costello. Mrs. Costello here has been admiring your congressional record." And she said, "That's not what I admired."

**HOWINGTON:** That's funny.

**COSTELLO:** So, that's the sort of humor and good relationship we had with Jack Kennedy, who was just a nice guy. And Bobby invited us over to his home another time, and all very important people were there, some Senators and some important newspaper people, and *Time* magazine editors and people like that. And they had eight children in the family, so they were always playing games. And they were playing Twenty Questions, and they would team up man and woman. My wife teamed up with Bobby, and they went into the separate room to decide which celebrity they should be, and stumped everybody else in the Twenty Questions routine.

And my wife said, "Gee, I'm not well-versed in public affairs and national events, international events." And he said, "Well, you're a mother aren't you?" She said, "Yeah." He said, "How about Captain Kangaroo?" And didn't they win the prize, because no one-- Twenty Questions

were geared toward international and national affairs, and only somebody who had a bunch of kids would have picked out Captain Kangaroo.

But those little stories I think can be important in bringing home what a relationship was and would be and was.

**HOWINGTON:** And was that typical of sort of how Massachusetts politics was? Was it a small world kind of?

**COSTELLO:** I would say yes. I would say yes, we-- And there were many intense rivalries that grew into friendships, because there again is that what applied to Suffolk students. We were in this together. So, we have to blow aside any differences if we can and do what is best for the people we represent.

My son John, by the way, is the third member of our family who went to Suffolk Law School. My son John came to Suffolk Law School after he was married, didn't he?

**ORRY COSTELLO:** I knew you were going to ask me.

**COSTELLO:** He graduated from BC [Boston College]. And while at BC he did some work that can be categorized as akin to law work. He was a campus policeman and every once in a while in the spring time students get out of hand and he had to learn how to handle things. It was a good placement. But John, he did this, he was a campus police officer while he was going to law school, while he was going to BC rather. Then he finished BC, married, and then he decided he wanted to go to law school. But he was just married and he needed an income. So he worked for an insurance company, and then he had to work in a special investigation unit. Which there again was so important for a lawyer because if you're going to win your case you've got to have the facts. And you've got to know what the facts are, you've got to investigate and know how to investigate. And you've been taught in an investigative department.

So then he went to Suffolk because of my father and me, and he went to school nights as my father did and as I did, and he came out of it, and I was able to be helpful in him obtaining an assistant district attorney's position in Norfolk County, working for Delahunt, Bill Delahunt who later became a colleague of Joe Moakley in the House in Washington, a good man. And John worked for three or four years as an assistant district attorney. And great experience for him, learning how to try cases, but the salary was a magnificent sum of \$23,000 or \$24,000 or 25,000 dollars. And by this time he had had a child and he just couldn't afford it. So as much as he loved the work, and Bill Delahunt told me great things about my son John, which pumped me up with pride, but the way Bill expressed himself I knew he meant it, that John was a good assistant district attorney.

But then he went to work and he decided he wanted to live on the Cape and practice law on the Cape, and he went down there to practice. He could have got a job here in Boston where he could have made more money, but family came first and togetherness with the family, and a varied practice he felt he could get. And it worked out nicely for him. He's a good lawyer. And I asked him just the other day if he had the same experiences that I had with classmates, studying, "Oh yeah, we had our group, Dad. Everybody does. Everybody has a working group. We study together at exam time, especially." He is a good lawyer. I'm proud of him.

**HOWINGTON:** Well, so are there any other people from Suffolk Law School that you keep in touch with, either former classmates or--

**COSTELLO:** Oh, yeah, I alluded to that earlier, but probably didn't develop it enough, but Arthur Paleologos was a clerk magistrate, and as I mentioned, in Woburn District Court. If I had a matter that involved procedures I would call Arthur. There was Joe Moakley's former law partner, Dan Healey. When he was in law school he was a longshoreman. And he got involved with, it was marine law. So if I needed to know something about marine law in a hurry I would call Dan. And George Kenneally was invaluable help when he was a counsel to the State Senate. And every once in a while something would have something to do with the senate or issues of the day or something or other and I would call George, and he would get right to the phone, and in fact we might have lunch the next day if it was a deep subject.

Who else?

**HOWINGTON:** And Jeanne Hession, right?

**COSTELLO:** Pardon me?

**HOWINGTON:** Jeanne Hession?

**COSTELLO:** Oh, Jeanne.

**HOWINGTON:** I don't know if we talked about this already, but—

**COSTELLO:** Oh, not much. But Jeanne was such a wonderful person. And she worked for a lawyer. And back in those days, secretaries took shorthand and then they would type it up. And then the machines they had were archaic, and to make two extra copies, it was hard to do. And especially if you had a boss who was kind of tough and noticed that you were doing other things. She happened to have a good boss. She would make a copy, she would type out her shorthand notes.

**HOWINGTON:** From class?

**COSTELLO:** From class. And she would make two copies, one for Joe and one for me. And this is why Joe and I both said we would never become lawyers were it not for Jeanne. She happened to be a great student. She was the salutatorian of our class, the valedictorian just beat her out, and she was the salutatorian and we all, if we had voted she would have become the valedictorian. And thinking of voting, George Kenneally, who was in the Legislature with us and our good friend ran for class president. And Joe and I went, "George, we know you're our colleague, but Jeanne is the one who should be class president." We strong armed everybody in the class to make sure that they voted for Jeanne. And Jeanne won. Back then there were damn few women in law.

**HOWINGTON:** About how many in your class were women, do you think? Do you remember?

**COSTELLO:** Well, there was Connie Kosmopolis [sic Coulopoulos] and I think we only had three.

**HOWINGTON:** I think she was, Jeanne was the first—

**COSTELLO:** She was certainly the first class president who was a woman, yeah. Oh, a remarkable-- I talked with her the other day. She is just a sweetheart.

**HOWINGTON:** And then she became the first alumni trustee as well.

**COSTELLO:** Yeah, and she has been very generous. I look upon her with love. She is a wonderful person.

**HOWINGTON:** Yeah, she is a good part of the Suffolk family.

**COSTELLO:** Yes, and she has a sister too, Marguerite who is a lovely person, but there is only one Jeanne. To Joe, to me, she was the *crème de la crème*. And who else in my class? Well, I can remember being up in Essex on a case for a couple of weeks of trial, and one of our classmates was in an office in Lynn. So that became my office, you know, during that period of time. And another fellow from Fall River the same thing, we didn't keep in close contact at all times or anything like that, we were available, we all knew we were available to each other and we were helpful to each other at no cost either. We didn't have to share fees or anything unless it turned into a thing where you had to adopt them as a colleague for a couple weeks on an important trial.

But thinking of secretaries, I had a marvelous secretary. I had one of those secretaries who were taking shorthand and if my syntax was not right she'd correct it. One time I had my back to her, I was dictating as I was looking out the window, and I turned around and she wasn't [transcribing

what] I said, "You're not taking this down, Dorothy." She said, "I already got that. Move on." She knew me better than I knew myself. She, by the way, was Tip O'Neill's wife's sister. In the law firm, my law firm I went to when I first started a practice was Sheppard, O'Neill, Dierkes, Pearl, and O'Neill was Bill O'Neill. Who was Bill O'Neill? Tip O'Neill's brother and the father of Michael O'Neill at Suffolk.

**HOWINGTON:** Bill O'Neill?

**COSTELLO:** Bill O'Neill. It's the same as his father, Bill O'Neill.

**HOWINGTON:** He's the dean of the Business School.

**COSTELLO:** So I'm really connected with the O'Neill family. And Dorothy also was one of the great women in my life. She worked for me for twenty five years. Of course the greatest woman in my life is sitting over here, my wife Orry, and the second greatest is my daughter Maureen, of course.

**HOWINGTON:** Speaking of which, where did you meet Orry? How did you guys meet?

**COSTELLO:** Oh, we met in our senior year of college. Orry was a student at Marymount College in Tarrytown, New York, and I was a student at Holy Cross. We were seniors. And I was on the swim team at Holy Cross and one of my teammates had a girlfriend who happened to have been Orry's roommate at Marymount, so they were an item, and as a few years went by they married other people, they didn't marry each other, but I met Orry and as soon as I met her I was toast.

**HOWINGTON:** That's good. Seems to have worked out.

**COSTELLO:** It worked out. This is my son TJ. He is another professional in the family. TJ is an architect, a Cornell graduate and a wonderful architect. He lives in Long Island, New York.

And he has worked with some of the greatest architects, Moshe Safdie, he has worked with Moshe Safdie, he has worked with-

**TJ COSTELLO:** Giurgola.

**COSTELLO:** Mitchell Giurgola and-

**TJ COSTELLO:** Earl, Earl Flansburgh

**COSTELLO:** Earl Flansburgh, and also in New York he worked for Skidmore—

**TJ COSTELLO:** —Patrick Weitenberg

**COSTELLO:** Yeah. A good man. I'm proud of him.

But I was talking about my wonderful Dorothy, and I should have mentioned Bill O'Neill too a little more. Bill was a Holy Cross graduate also, but he went to Harvard, Harvard Law, and he was a very, very good lawyer, very intelligent guy. Tip used to turn to him in moments where the legal answer, an unbiased legal answer had to be given. And one thing that he had that I envied and that was his voice. He had a booming voice, just as Tip does, the same booming voice. Tip, I don't think I can remember his. If things needed to be settled down in the House, Tip would say, "The House will be in order." He would bring that gavel down and everybody would shake. And he had a commanding personality, and his brother Bill had a commanding personality as well.

Tip's wife also had a commanding personality. They were a strong couple. She was a nice person. And Tip's father had been in politics, except that he was elected to some city office in Cambridge, and I gather that he too, he had lost his wife when Tip, I think, was only a little boy, I think three or four, five years of age, and he had to be mother and father, and he also remarried, but I gather that he was a strong political figure as well and a man to be reckoned with, but decent and honest. That came first.

I have been associated with some wonderful people in public life, and occasionally you'll see someone who is really less than honorable. What you do with those people, you just ignore them, and you just stay away from them. You know you can't change them, so you just stay away and you do it right yourself and you figure that provides some balance.

**HOWINGTON:** Well, and you have touched on this a little bit, but how do you think Suffolk prepared you for your career, in summation?

**COSTELLO:** Well, that's a hard question, but I think I have to compare it with what I divine that it's like in other schools. I know what it was like in Suffolk, I know there was a great sense of togetherness, a great sense of helping one another, because we needed one another, and that need was supplied. And I don't know how, but somehow in Suffolk you were taught that honesty and propriety are essential in the life of a lawyer. And besides, you were a professional man, you're not a business man. You're not in the business to make money. You're out there to serve clients. So that was the first pervasive thought in Suffolk.

I had the impression that Harvard, for example, is more elitist in that they delve more into lofty legal propositions than we did. Constitutional law, for example, I think is an extremely important subject in Harvard. It's important and has to be important at Suffolk or any law school, but what I mean is it's overwhelmingly important in a place like Harvard, Boston College, and Boston University. Boston College, by the way, they were in an office building. One of my sisters married a lawyer whose name is Costello, by the way, but not related, who went to a law school at 18 Tremont Street. Right down the street here, in an office building, and there were probably at the time a couple hundred students in the law school. And at that time the law school was being built out near Boston College at the time. So they were kind of a fledgling law school in the sense that when I was there, much more so than Suffolk, where my father went in 1923. I mean Suffolk was on solid ground as an educational institution for lawyers. And Boston University, it was similar to Boston College.

**HOWINGTON:** Dean Archer went there.



**COSTELLO:** I would just be guessing to compare Suffolk Law with those. But I can't say enough about Suffolk and the education I got and the, including the moral attitudes that are not necessarily taught, or if they are taught it's, I don't know-- It's just the type of students it attracts, I guess, we just were all people who, because we had to work so hard for it and we had to starve ourselves to death, literally, to get through those night classes, we just knew we had to be decent human beings. We had to be thankful for what we got out of Suffolk.

**HOWINGTON:** Do you have any other closing thoughts, anything we forgot to cover?

**COSTELLO:** Well, I don't know. I'm so blessed to have such wonderful personal friends that grew out of Suffolk University, mostly my classmates but others as well. Larry Cameron, for example, the rotunda in this building is named after Larry and his wife Barbara, both, I got to know Barbara as well. She is a sweetheart of a person. Larry, by the way, he came up the hard way. He was a Boston police officer when he went to law school and that's how he worked his way through law school. Oh and by the way, he became the right arm of Judge Donahue who was a giant in Suffolk University. Before he became a judge, by the way, he was a member of the Industrial Accident Board and my father and he were fast friends because they both liked to work late. They would work until ten o'clock and eleven o'clock at night and then leave, and be in at eight o'clock in the morning, the both of them, and so they came to admire one another because they had that work ethic. And he was probably one of the two or three most important persons at Suffolk University to make it what it is today. A remarkable man.

But those are the experiences— I had to get talking to get with some other. What I need to do, I think right now is to get together with a half a dozen of my classmates and start going over these things and ask each one how blessed he is and she is. And I'll tell you it will be a wonderful session.

**HOWINGTON:** Maybe we can do that the next alumni reunion.

**COSTELLO:** One other point, before we came in here who appeared on the scene but a young man by the name of Matthew Sullivan whose father was my law partner for twenty five years

and who was a decent human being and a wonderful lawyer. And I must say it's easy for me to see that not only does young Matthew look just like his father but he is like his father and he's a decent person, and I look forward to spending more time with him. And he is a fund raiser for Suffolk University itself and I'm sure doing a wonderful job at it.

**HOWINGTON:** Well, very good.

**COSTELLO:** I don't know if I've left anything out. I can give you a list of the names of those judges and a photograph of the class of '23.

**HOWINGTON:** That would be helpful. Thank you so much for giving us a framed portrait of the class of '23. A very small class if you look at it compared to what you think of modern day law schools. We could probably count everybody in the photo.

**COSTELLO:** Well, I think Suffolk was started in the living room of—

**HOWINGTON:** Gleason Archer, yes.

**COSTELLO:** Yeah.

**HOWINGTON:** Yeah, it has grown quite a bit. It has made a lot of strides. Well, I want to thank you for sharing your memories with us.

**COSTELLO:** Well, thank you for jogging my memory. I appreciate it very much.

**HOWINGTON:** My pleasure.

END OF INTERVIEW