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### Interview with Paula Silsby by Mike Hastings

Paula D. Silsby

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## ***George J. Mitchell Oral History Project***

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**Paula D. Silsby**  
(Interviewer: *Michael Hastings*)

**GMOH# 119**  
July 10, 2009

**Mike Hastings:** The following is a recorded interview of the Senator George J. Mitchell Oral History Project, an activity of Bowdoin College. The date is July 10, [2009], Friday, I'm in Portland at 100 Middle Street at the Office of the U.S. Attorney, and it is in fact the U.S. attorney who now is our interviewee, Paula Silsby. I'm Mike Hastings, the interviewer. Could you begin please by stating your full name and spelling your surname?

**Paula Silsby:** Certainly, Paula Diane Silsby, S, as in Sam-I-L-S, as in Sam-, B, as in boy-Y, which I always have to distinguish because I have received mail addressed to Filfy, so I, to avoid the potential misspelling, I spell it that way for you.

**MH:** Good. And your date of birth and your, and I say this having, I've done, this is I think almost my thirtieth interview, and last week when I was in Portland conducting an interview a lawyer said to me, "Aren't you worried about identity theft?" when I asked these questions. And so I've referred back to Bowdoin and they say that it's a topic of discussion, but so far nobody is aware of any oral histories that have been used to steal anybody's identity. But anyway, I need your date of birth, and your place of birth.

**PS:** June 1, 1951, and I was born in Bangor.

**MH:** And your mother's full name, and your father's full name.

**PS:** My mother's name is Ruth Blaisdell Silsby, and my father's name is Herbert Trafton Silsby, II.

**MH:** Okay, we start with your parents. Can you tell me about your mother and father, what was their background, where are they from?

**PS:** Well, my parents are both from Ellsworth, my father via Aurora, Maine, and my paternal grandfather was Judge William S. Silsby, Sr., and my grandmother was Myrle Coombs Silsby. She grew up in Winter Harbor, and my grandfather grew up in Aurora, and my father and his brother, William S. Silsby, Jr., and his sister Beverly Silsby McLean, my father was ten I believe when my grandfather moved to Ellsworth to practice law. He had worked as a road commissioner and built a lot of roads in Maine, and after his family was, his two boys were born, decided that he wanted to become a lawyer, so he went to law school at Suffolk University, not having received a college degree. And Suffolk University Law School at that time, which was

founded by a couple of fellows from that part of the world, up in the Amherst, Maine, area, did not require -

**MH:** Really, Portia, wasn't it called Portia School of Law, or am I confusing -

**PS:** No, that's, no, Portia was another one, this was always Suffolk, and he went down there and graduated from law school while my grandmother raised her two boys, young, rambunctious, energetic boys in Aurora, and took in boarders, while he was in law school. And then when he graduated, they moved to Ellsworth and my grandfather practiced law in Ellsworth.

And my mother's father, my maternal grandfather was a lawyer as well, Harvard Blaisdell, and his father, William Blaisdell, was a lawyer. My grandfather Blaisdell practiced law in Ellsworth for years, my mother and her brother Kenneth Blaisdell, who became a lawyer and joined the firm, and her sister Glenice Carpenter grew up in Ellsworth.

And my father went on to law school, my uncle, his brother went on to law school, and my father, which you could do then, went to BU and came home at the end of his second year at BU and took the Maine bar exam and passed and never went back to get a degree. And he went into practice with my grandfather, his father, and then my uncle joined them and they practiced for years and years and years in Ellsworth as Silsby & Silsby. And during my childhood, my grandfather Silsby was on one side of the street with my father and my uncle, and my grandfather Blaisdell was on the, literally on the other side of the street with his father, when my great grandfather was practicing, and his son, my Uncle Ken.

**MH:** The street that leads down to the river, or the one that goes beside the river?

**PS:** Yes, it was, they moved around. When I was growing up, my father's office was in the Union Trust, the original, where the clock is, and my grandfather Blaisdell's law firm was across the street, on the corner of Main Street and State Street, which runs down from the courthouse. And then eventually my father's practice moved diagonally across the street into what is now Roy, Williams and Beardsley and some other name [Roy, Beardsley, Williams and Granger, LLC].

**MH:** So were ever then part of Hale and Hamlyn?

**PS:** No, no-no, it was Blaisdell & Blaisdell, and Silsby & Silsby. So my grandparents eventually ended up living next door to each other, and that's when my parents met and married, and my father joined the practice with his father and I grew up in Ellsworth, with my sister Kathryn Silsby.

**MH:** Okay. Now I remember the name Herbert Silsby, now who is that?

**PS:** That's my father.

**MH:** That's your father, okay, all right.

**PS:** And my father went on, actually the year that I started in this office, my father joined the Maine court, he became a Superior Court justice, following the steps of my grandfather, William Silsby.

**MH:** Okay, I wanted to get that right. Wow. Tell me about growing up in Ellsworth.

**PS:** Well, I'm sure everybody's sense of their, well, you can't say that, given the horrid misery that you see children living in today, but for me, my memories of growing up in Ellsworth obviously touched by the pain of adolescent along the way, nobody escapes that, but I had a very loving, supportive, extended family that was part of my life [including] all of my grandparents. My grandfather Silsby was the first of my grandparents to pass on, and he died in September of 1987 [p/o]. So my grandparents, both sets of grandparents were very much a part of my sister's and my lives. They lived less than a mile from us and were next door to each other, so they were a huge part of our lives. I would spend my summers with my maternal grandparents on Beech Hill Pond, where they had a camp.

**MH:** In Otis.

**PS:** In Otis, yeah, in Otis.

**MH:** Yes, yes, I know Beech Hill Pond.

**PS:** And winter activities involved going up to Aurora where my grandfather Silsby's family homestead was, and snowmobiling. He bought one of the first snowmobiles and we would get stuck, because it was, as you can imagine, a huge, massive machine, heavy, and we were young and we'd take it out and it would tip over, and we couldn't get it righted, so my grandfather would lumber out into the snow and get it right and get it started and off we went.

So my memories are very fond memories of being loved and cared for, and really having a strong, strong sense of belonging, because I had my whole, you know, I had some, there were some -

**MH:** The whole extended families right there.

**PS:** Right there, and of course my grandfathers set some precedent-making law, by opposing each other in some cases, and very, very well respected and beloved men, all of the men, and the women in my family. So I had a strong sense of belonging and a strong sense of place because of that.

**MH:** Now, did you spend all of your schooling there, through high school?

**PS:** Graduate of Ellsworth High School, class of 1969.

**MH:** Big basketball rivalries with Orono, if I recall correctly, the Linnehans and Wayne Mayo and -

**PS:** Right, and Jimmy Marcos, and John Royal, oh yes, they were seniors, they were all seniors when I started high school.

**MH:** My best friends own a house that Jimmy Marcos built, in Blue Hill.

**PS:** No kidding.

**MH:** Yeah, yeah, the -

**PS:** The one that he had to sell after the divorce.

**MH:** Yeah, yes. Yeah, it's a beautiful house.

**PS:** Oh, I know, I heard it was lovely. Well aren't they the beneficiaries of a sad occasion.

**MH:** So you were, you spent the time in Ellsworth. What were your interests in high school, in Ellsworth High?

**PS:** Well, I was a debater in high school, and my debate coach, my best friend growing up, there were a group of us that were labeled, when I was in the fifth grade, my fifth grade teacher was my grandmother Silsby's best friend, they had grown up together in Winter Harbor.

**MH:** That's dangerous.

**PS:** Frances Smallidge. And there were five of us that, whose parents knew each other and were very close friends. And I remember – I don't know what the precipitating event was – but Miss Smallidge accused us in front, without naming names, but everybody knew who it was, in front of the class as being a clique. And I'd never heard that term, I had no idea what it was, I thought 'Oh, this is horrid,' because she didn't say it with a smile on her face.

But this clique, these five friends and I moved along into high school, and then our sophomore year one moved, Ellen O'Meara, her father was the, they had, Dr. O'Meara was the head of the Maine Coast Memorial Hospital, they moved to New York, so she left. Jennifer Foster, Ruth and Pat Foster, she went to private school in Massachusetts, Janie Rosie got a boyfriend, which left Bonnie Rosborough, J.T. Rosborough Insurance -

**MH:** In the big Victorian house.

**PS:** Correct, and so Bonnie and I were left, and we became debaters, high school debaters. And Dwight Carter, who sells real estate, I think he's still alive, he was very successful, he

eventually abandoned teaching for selling real estate in Northeast Harbor and its environs, which I think was a little more lucrative, and he was our debate coach. And Bonnie and I, I loved it, and we met with some debating success, and that was really a huge passion of mine, was my debating. And the rest of it was sort of - At that time, High Street hadn't become quite the Gaza Strip that it has in the intervening years, and Main Street, which fortunately still remains incredibly vibrant, was really the focus of attention, everything was on Main Street.

And at Halloween time, the merchants would allow students to come down and there would be a window painting contest, and everybody would, you'd pick your window, and we always had Rosborough's, because they were down on Main Street then and had a huge glass window. And then there would be a parade afterwards, and everybody would end up at city hall and they'd award prizes. And so it was really sort of the, just the small town living events, the events of living in a small town.

You know, my summers were spent at camp with my maternal grandparents -

**MH:** In Otis.

**PS:** In Otis, and the winters were spent -

**MH:** What did you do in the summers, did you work down at Bar Harbor, or out at Hancock?

**PS:** No, I worked for, one summer I raked blueberries in Aurora, which is -

**MH:** I'm sure that was an experience.

**PS:** That was an experience; that is darned hard work. And then I spent a summer, you know on the road to, down on, the road to the island, there is that wild animal farm now, on the left hand side.

**MH:** Yes, yes.

**PS:** Well before that is a row of, sort of a little baby strip-mall for want of a better word, that's brown as well. Well the corner unit of that one summer was an ice cream parlor that sold Hancock County ice cream, which was the creamery in Ellsworth, and it was fabulous ice cream. Well I worked there with my neighbor across the street, Danny Martin, who at the time, he was a senior, in fact he was the manager of the basketball team, that senior basketball team. So I worked there with him one summer, and Danny was what we call a big boy, he was enormous, and he and I worked there for the summer, and every single day, for an entire summer, I ate a hot fudge sundae that I made for myself, as did Danny.

And we had a lot of fun in that job, and then I went to work for the Union Trust Company, I worked in the drive-in window, which I loved. I loved that job, because everybody would come by, there weren't any ATM machines, so on Fridays people would drive through and everybody

would visit and everybody would bring their deposits through, and so it was a very social job. And I had a friend who worked, whose grandparents, the Whitcombs – did you ever know Eben and Eleanor Whitcomb? You know Ellsworth Falls, where the road forks and you go to Aurora on the right -

**MH:** By the old train station, yeah.

**PS:** And their house, they lived right there, and their granddaughter lived in Maryland. Kathy, she came up and she got the job as the drive-in window teller at the Liberty National Bank. We really looked no more alike than you and I do, except she was female, my age, and had blonde hair. So people would actually get us confused and think that they had gone to the Liberty National the week before, and why was I working at the Union Trust Company. So that created a certain amount of interest for one of our summers. And I did that until I graduated.

**MH:** And where did you look to, to go to college?

**PS:** Well, that was a completely random act. I had some next door neighbors at the time, whose, what was their name, Sally, her father, her husband was a doctor at the hospital at the time, and she had announced one day that her sister was coming to visit. And her sister was very actively involved in alumni relations for Mt. Holyoke College, and I was at that time maybe a sophomore, the summer between my sophomore and junior year, and Sally said, “Well you’ve got to talk to my sister about Mt. Holyoke, you really need to, she loves it and she’s very enthusiastic, and you’re getting ready to consider college, you should talk to her.”

So, I’d never heard of Mt. Holyoke College and Ellsworth High School at the time had a student population for all four classes of maybe four hundred, and there weren’t a lot of folks that went on to college, let alone to a Seven Sisters school. So I said, well, I’d be happy to talk to her, and I talked to her, and of course she was incredibly enthusiastic about it. And so I thought, as you do when you don’t have any frame of reference and you talk to somebody who just presents their school in the best possible light.

So it came time to apply, my father and I actually did the college tour, we went off and he took me around. I wasn’t interested; I’d never really been away from home. I had taken one trip to Canada with the Rainbow Girls, at that point. Other than that, my father didn’t really feel, and still doesn’t, that he needs to go anywhere that he can’t walk, and it was very different. And now these children of my friends have platinum frequent flyers before they even get into elementary school.

**MH:** So your father’s still living.

**PS:** Yes.

**MH:** I see, that’s wonderful.

**PS:** Yes. So we went on the college tour, and I ended up applying to a number of colleges and I got accepted at Mt. Holyoke, and I had loved - I mean it was, it's a magnificent campus, it's a magnificent campus, and so I went, and stayed for four years, and absolutely loved my four years there and had a very positive experience.

**MH:** Did you continue debate when you were in college?

**PS:** No, I did not. Mt. Holyoke did not have a debating team. I had actually been accepted at Bates, which of course was renowned and had quite a debating legacy.

**MH:** Of which Ed Muskie was really a product, the debating tradition at Bates.

**PS:** Exactly, and they sponsored the debating championships, the high school debating championships.

**MH:** Quimby, somebody named Quimby was the debate person, I believe.

**PS:** It was an amazing program, and I considered going there, but I was really lured by Mt. Holyoke's reputation. My cousin had gone to Westbrook College, when it was still a junior college, and I remember she had invited me down, she was older than I was and had invited me down for a weekend when I was, well, I must have been a freshman in high school, and of course that was, it was all female and there were some things, it was like one big pajama party. You know, I thought, 'oh, this is so much fun, this is so much fun.' So I thought, well this is going to be fantastic, and it was fantastic, it was a very beautiful, beautiful place to go to college, and I was afforded a wonderful education in a beautiful little community that was nestled in western Massachusetts.

**MH:** So when did you get, first let's go, cycle back a little bit. When you were growing up in Ellsworth, Hancock County if I recall correctly was largely Republican, at least a very different demographic, at least politically than it is now.

**PS:** Well the state was very different politically than it is now, yes.

**MH:** And so did you have any sense of politics when you were in high school, before you got to college?

**PS:** Yes, you know, I did have the vaguest sense, because my grandfather was speaker of the House, and so there was always this consciousness of politics, and my father actually ran unsuccessfully in the primary against Ken McCloud for a congressional seat.

**MH:** That would have been probably 1968?

**PS:** Was it? Maybe a little earlier, but it was around that time, yes. And so I was cognizant of politics, I mean in the vaguest way, it wasn't, I wasn't politically -



**MH:** So they would have been running in the primary.

**PS:** Yeah, and then Ken McCloud -

**MH:** Right, because Ken was from Brewer and he was the Republican leader of the House, I think.

**PS:** Right, so they ran against each other in the primary and Ken won, and then I forget who he ended up losing to in the general election. So it was part of, I mean it wasn't doctrinarian, all assemble at Thanksgiving or Christmas and have discussions about why we were Republicans or any of that, but politics was, and political involvement was something that was present in my childhood.

**MH:** And tell me about Mt. Holyoke. Did it turn out to be the pajama party that you expected?

**PS:** Oh, it turned out to be very interesting, and of course it's interesting because one of my best friends from college, her daughter is actually working in this office this summer as a college intern, she's going into her final year at Hobart & William Smith, and she's trying to figure out what she wants to do, and so she came here to work as a college intern in the office for the summer, just trying to see this side of life.

But Mt. Holyoke afforded me some of my best friends. As I say, a wonderful education. My freshman year was such an interesting year, and I suppose I should never admit this at the age of fifty-eight, but I still am appallingly naive, but I was really naive.

**MH:** You were truly naive.

**PS:** Right, truly, truly naive in 1969 when I left Ellsworth. And my parents drove me down, in fact for the four years that I was down there I didn't have a car, so every time I had to, I could find ways to get home sometimes, I could find rides to get back here, but every time I had to return to college during my four years, my father drove me. And he would drop me off at the front door, because he considered it completely inappropriate for a man to go into a female dorm, and so he would never go beyond the first floor of the dorm, and then he would turn around and drive all the way back.

**MH:** Where had he gone to college?

**PS:** He went to Bowdoin.

**MH:** That's what I thought. I went to Bowdoin.

**PS:** But he went to Bowdoin, which is another -

**MH:** I'm sure that's one of the reasons that I have the name in my head.

**PS:** Yes, as did my Uncle Bill. So I started that fall and I, oh, I was miserably homesick, oh, I was devastatingly homesick. And I was in what I think we can all agree, even to this day, was a very sheltered college experience. I mean it was in a tiny little town, nestled in that Five College area, and a women's college.

**MH:** But while you were there, didn't the Twelve College Program begin, when men began to appear on campus?

**PS:** Yes, in fact they did, and in fact they had some of those participants, if not all of them actually, housed in the basement of my freshman year dorm. And that of course was the year of the Vietnam marches, and my college freshman year roommate was one of four girls, four daughters, who had been educated exclusively in girls' schools. And so she had this very, she felt that what was mine was hers. And I would go, I had my own room growing up, and things and everything was in, and I'd go to get some piece of clothing, like my raincoat in the middle of a torrential downpour, and she'd have it somewhere. And so she was very, we were very different.

But that spring, when the marches started, I of course, I found it was interesting, it was exciting, it was really a social event of the spring of 1970. But the school, as all did, started to roll out options for end of the year planning, which included taking a pass/fail for whatever your course was, taking your final exam or deferring your exam until the following fall, and I think that was probably an option that was offered everywhere.

Well I, of course, was very tormented by this whole thing, as to what I should do. And I remember calling home and talking to my father, and I said, "What should I do?" And he said, "Paula, you're down there to get a damn education, take your exams," which I did. And then I had seen, I have to say it was sort of my first moment of human disillusionment, because I had seen these very bright, very committed women, who were seemingly embedded in this issue and had plans to devote their summer and as long as it took to getting us out of Vietnam. And of course the minute the college offered these various options for winding up your year, your school year, they were taking pass/fails and out of there, and the issue of Vietnam was long gone from everybody's memory.

But that year I met, as one of the male students that were in my dorm, was a Bowdoin junior by the name of Mark Dunlap. And he had grown up in western Maine, and of course is now a partner at, oh, he's a partner at – I'm having a moment.

**MH:** I recall the name, I'm trying to put a face on it.

**PS:** Well at the time, Mark was this skinny junior, college junior, with shoulder length red hair. And he was delightful. He was just, he was from Maine so we had this immediate

connection, and he was just kind and bright and nice, and he ended up meeting a sophomore that year, Martha Vanderbilt Dundon, who he ended up marrying, and they now have four children. He's a partner at Norman, Hanson & DeTroy.

**MH:** That's Peter DeTroy's firm.

**PS:** Yes. And now he has very, very short gray hair, but we've maintained this connection, and when I started at the University of Maine School of Law, one of the first people I saw when I walked into that building, that round building there, was Mark Dunlap. So our lives have sort of tracked each other so long.

**MH:** Did you go to the University of Maine School of Law right out of Mt. Holyoke?

**PS:** No, I started at Suffolk, and I did a year at Suffolk and then I came to Maine and graduated from Maine. Mt. Holyoke was wonderful, I met my college boyfriend there who, we met, and it was a blind [date], he was at Amherst, and it was a blind date arranged by one of women in my dorm whose brother was his roommate. And we dated through college, and he's now the governor of Wyoming, was the U.S. attorney before he ran for governor. And I remember, because he was very, Dave was very 'Wyoming,' and I'm not talking about the western part of Wyoming, I'm not talking about the chi-chi part of Wyoming. He grew up on a dirt farm, one of seven children, hardscrabble, but all of those children were incredibly accomplished. And he went to Amherst on a full scholarship, and was somewhat, it's so ironic, because he was somewhat of a, he just chose not to participate in the eastern way of life and would clad himself in all denim, before you could pay \$300 for a -

**MH:** Right, it wasn't common at Amherst at that time.

**PS:** And working cowboy boots, and he just railed against the eastern ways. It was hilarious, but he was incredibly, and I remember then his talking about his dream of going back to Wyoming and some day being governor. And we went on, he took a semester off, and I went on to graduate, and then I went on to law school and he came back for his final semester, and by that time of course I was in law school and just too cool for words and we broke up. And he did in fact go back to Wyoming, he worked for [the] then-governor and went to law school and practiced, became U.S. attorney, is now in his second term as a Democrat in a Republican state.

**MH:** Oh, he's a Democrat.

**PS:** He's a Democrat.

**MH:** Okay, with that hardscrabble background and the denim at Amherst, I figured that he stayed on the Republican side.

**PS:** No, a Democrat, and that was -

**MH:** I should know that, what is his last name?

**PS:** Freudenthal.

**MH:** Freudenthal, okay.

**PS:** And he was, you know, that was quite a coup, that he ran the first time against some well-known -

**MH:** In Cheney-land.

**PS:** Yes, and won, and then was easily reelected. He is very, very, very respected. [ ] The U.S. attorney from Wyoming was actually a friend of Dave's, he was a Republican obviously, but he was a friend of Dave's and so we would sort of chat about where he was and what he was doing; he's done amazing things. So that occupied a lot of my college years.

**MH:** Any travels in that period, or just back up to Ellsworth?

**PS:** Well I traveled, I got on a plane for the first time my freshman year, first semester freshman year, because my cousin was getting married and I was in her wedding and I had to come home for a dress fitting. And I remember, I flew out of Bradley Air Field, I'd never been on a plane, in a small plane, and we flew through a thunderstorm. It's a miracle I ever got onto another plane. But I made it home, and it was a good thing I did because my dress, which I had ordered in the size I was when I started college, was now about two sizes too small because I had hoovered myself through graham crackers and peanut butter, which to this day I have never had another graham cracker, let alone with peanut butter on it, because I was so homesick.

And then that spring I went to New Orleans. The woman across the hall from me lived in New Orleans and she invited me to come home in March. Well, New Orleans in March, to those of us that have grown up and lived exclusively in the northeast, is a magical time. There are flowers and it's green. And I went down there and we did the whole French Quarter trip, and went to Antoine's for brunch and drank hurricanes, and it was wonderful. But that was really it; I really didn't do any more traveling. I just went to school, came home.

**MH:** Take us through law school and get to your connection with George Mitchell.

**PS:** Well law school was sort of, I didn't know what I was going to do when I graduated from college.

**MH:** It was fairly new then, wasn't it, the reestablished law school. Dean Godfrey was there?

**PS:** Dean Godfrey was there. And I went to Suffolk my first year, and at the end of my first year, you had to write on to Law Review, I wrote onto Law Review, but I still had this sense that I wanted to be back here so I had applied to transfer, and I hadn't made up my mind. So that

summer I went home to Ellsworth, and I searched titles for my father. And it was actually that summer when I met George.

My father was not on the court at that time, he was still practicing, and we were having dinner at Hilltop, which is that restaurant on the top of the hill, and George was campaigning for governor.

**MH:** Right, that would have been the election that was decided in November of '74, the Longley surprise.

**PS:** Right, correct. So he happened to be in the Ellsworth area campaigning, and he came into Hilltop that night for dinner, and knew my father and spoke to my father, and my father introduced us and just a 'hi, how are you,' and was very gracious and enquiring about law school and yada-yada-yada, and that was that. And my father - I knew George was running for governor. And so we moved on, and I couldn't decide whether I wanted to go back to Suffolk or I wanted to go to Maine, so I started classes at Suffolk, only to find out all my friends had transferred, so I literally went down there for one day of classes, packed up, came back home, and started at the University of Maine. And I met Mark Dunlap.

And the next summer, the summer between my second and third years, I worked for [U.S. Attorney] Peter Mills in this office as an intern. And the office was tiny at this time, there was one assistant, Rufus [E.] Stetson in the Bangor office, and one support staff member, and John Wlodkowski was an assistant in this office with Peter, and we had three support staff members. So the entire office was seven people, for the entire state of Maine, entire district.

So I came into the office and Peter was this, he was such a character, and he was so wonderful to me that summer.

**MH:** I mean, he actually had roots very close to your own, he came from Stonington, or his family came from Stonington originally.

**PS:** I didn't know that, I didn't realize -

**MH:** Oh yes, the Millses are a Stonington family, his father transplanted, his father set up a law practice in Farmington, but they're from Stonington.

**PS:** I had no idea they were from Stonington. Well, Janet was in my class. So I came to appreciate Peter as a man who had this extraordinary zest for life, just an amazing zest for life. So the opportunity presented itself that summer for me to try a jury trial, and Judge Gignoux was the judge, and I went on to try the case after some to-do, and I won. And I was so exhilarated by this, and I loved the work in the office, and I had during the course of that summer met a number of agents, and I just developed this desire to work in this office. But there were only two positions, and it just was not in any way, shape or form something that I felt would ever happen for me. But I had this amazing summer, jury trial, I go back to finish my third year in law school, and now who's had the opportunity -

**MH:** Do you remember what the trial was, I mean roughly, about?

**PS:** Oh, I remember exactly what it was about. It was a gun, I remember, because it was a gun case, and it was a felon in possession, and I tried the case with an ATF agent who is now deceased, and you had to prove as part of, one of the elements of the case, that it was a firearm that was capable of being fired. And I had this agent shoot the gun, he put a blank in and he shot the gun in the courtroom.

**MH:** And then how did the judge react to that?

**PS:** Well, Judge Gignoux was a man of abiding grace, and it didn't happen again, but it happened on that occasion. And I was blown, you know, you have to, at the time was really an anomaly, my predecessor --

**MH:** Did he do it without you realizing he was going to do it?

**PS:** Oh no, no-no, no, we had it all [planned]. So I won, and I went back to school and I was just, 'I've tried a jury trial, and this is fantastic.' And I finished my third year, and I took the bar exam and I immediately went to California with my college roommate, who had to be out there, and we rented a car and we drove Route 1, and all up and down Route 1, and I came home and I found out I had passed the bar exam and I didn't have a job. And of course everybody else in my class had job. I had no job and figured that I could always stay in Ellsworth and practice with my family. So for whatever reason -

**MH:** You had several law offices you could have gone to.

**PS:** I had several offices, and that apparently just relieved the pressure, because I had no concern whatsoever about the fact that I, it's September of 1976 and I have no job. Well, I get back from California and get a phone call, and I wish I could remember who called me, but somebody called me and said, "Do you have a job?" I said, "No." And they said, "Well they have just created these two clerkships for the Superior Court, and you should apply for one because everybody else has a job, and you have a chance of getting one of these." One was going to be in Bangor, one was going to be in Portland. So I said, "Well great, I'll apply for the one in Portland," because a friend of mine from law school had gotten a divorce and I could live with her. So I said - Well, and the interviewer was Harry Glassman, whose reputation preceded me as rather a challenging individual.

Well I came down to interview, and he couldn't have been lovelier. And he offered me the job and this was like a Tuesday, I started the following Monday. Peggy Kravchuk, who's now the magistrate judge in Bangor, got the position in Bangor.

*End of CD One  
CD Two*

**PS:** ... I worked for all the Superior Court judges, which included, at that time it was Louis Scolnik, and Sumner Goffin, and Judge Rubin, Peter Rubin's -

**MH:** I don't know him, but -

**PS:** Peter Rubin's dad, and Judge [Ed] Stern, Marshall Stern's [father], it was this wonderful group, and I had the most marvelous time. Well that November of 1977, there had been, it was around the middle of November, it was hunting season, and there had been a father and son who went missing and eventually their bodies were found in the woods. And the father was with the sheriff's department, and the son was thirteen, and they had gone out hunting and they hadn't come home, and they did this massive search and they found their bodies.

**MH:** Where was this, where was this occurring?

**PS:** Gorham.

**MH:** Gorham, okay.

**PS:** And they eventually identified a juvenile, a Donald Ruby, who was sixteen at the time, as the shooter and he was a juvenile. And the court had asked George if he would represent him, because it was a juvenile case and it was a double homicide and there was the law enforcement connection. And George agreed. And that December, the week between Christmas and New Year's, they had scheduled the bind over hearing for him, which is the proceeding, as you know, that determines whether or not a juvenile will be tried as an adult or kept in the juvenile system. And because it's a juvenile proceeding it's, I assume it's still closed, it was closed at that time, and it was, you might imagine, very slow in the courthouse, the Cumberland County Courthouse at that time. I went up to Judge Devine, who was the judge presiding over this bind over proceeding, to see if he would allow me, as a law clerk for the Superior Court, to sit in on this proceeding, because I figured I would never have another opportunity to see one.

So he said, "WI have no objection but you need to check with the two lawyers." And the prosecutor was Arthur Stilphen, and he said, "Fine, fine," and I went up to George and I -

**MH:** Arthur Stilphen who later became the commissioner of public safety, under Joe Brennan.

**PS:** Yes, yes, he was assistant attorney general, and he was a prosecutor. And I went up to George, and I forget whether I, I must have introduced myself, because it would be way too much to expect to be remembered, but I introduced myself and he immediately says to me, "Oh, of course, I met you with your father at Hilltop when I was campaigning." I mean, now you can imagine how extraordinarily flattering that is, to have somebody even recognize your name, let alone remember -

**MH:** Almost four years later.

**PS:** Correct, every fact and circumstance as to where you met. And that is, has obviously gone on to be one of George's many, many strengths. He has an amazing capacity not just to remember names, but he has a whole system for how he remembers names, but faces and factual detail. So I told him what I was doing, and he said, "No, I have no objection whatsoever." So I sat through that proceeding, and of course it was the judge, the court reporter, the court clerk, Arthur, the defendant, George, and me.

So over the course of that week – and I think it took two or three days to get through the whole proceeding – George and I started talking. And of course Carter had won, and George was rumored to be the next U.S. attorney, and he said to me, "What are you going to do after this, do you know what you're going to do after this job?" And I simply said, "Well I'd really love to be in the U.S. Attorney's Office, I spent a summer there and I loved it, and that's what I would really like to do." So he said, "Well, I'm interested in the job of U.S. attorney, and if that should happen, I should get that job, why don't you send me a resume?" So I said, "Great, I will certainly do that."

So time passes, we get through the hearing and time passes, and he surprisingly does become United States attorney, and he immediately – now understand, the office had seven people in it, and there were only two positions, assistant positions, and he immediately hired Jim Brannigan. Jim had been in the U.S. Attorney's Office in Brooklyn and came with some experience, and he was in the AG's Office at that time, and so he hired Jim for the Bangor office, which were two people, and he clearly needed somebody with experience because they were going to be unsupervised and all by themselves, and Jim was a fabulous lawyer, and a wonderful man, and so he hired Jim. That left one position.

So I sent in my resume, and he interviewed me for the job, and on June 1st, which is my birthday, of 1977, he told me that I had the job. And I remember going to F. Parker Reidy, which was like the only --

**MH:** 'In' place -

**PS:** Yes, the totally 'in' place to go, to celebrate, and I started in August of that year. And we were in the courthouse then, and you came in the front door, as you still do, and our offices, as you come in the front door and you take a right, the office where the clerks, you enter the clerks office, where that window is, was a little small office, and one of the support staff sat in there. The next office was a huge office with a frosted glass door, halfway down, that was my office, and then it had a connecting door into George's office, which was the next office. Then below that, next door to that we had the remaining support staff. That corridor was the entire United States attorney's office.

**MH:** And how big is it now? How many people do you have?

**PS:** Now we have over fifty, between Bangor and Portland. So there we were, just the two



of us in Portland for that year. And then that following year, 1978, George got an additional position, an additional FTE, full time equivalent, and he hired Margaret McGaughey who is George Isaacson's wife, and Margaret clerked for Judge Coffin. So now he had an office that was sixty-six and two-thirds female, in 1978, which was -

**MH:** Unheard of.

**PS:** And still is, in 2009. But, you know, I use this whenever I want to make the point [that] statistics are misleading. George got an award from the National Organization for Women for his progressive hiring practices in having two-thirds of his office female. So, and then from there the office grew and continued to grow through the Cohen years, and actually it grew some under Jay and it's grown some under me.

**MH:** And so you've been with the U.S. attorney all the way through.

**PS:** I have, unlike George, who can't keep a job, I have stayed and have just finished my thirty-second year in the U.S. Attorney's Office.

**MH:** Tell me what he was like as a boss, and how he differed perhaps from other bosses you've had.

**PS:** Well, George, it's so interesting because now that I have moved into his position, I have come to be terrified at his approach, and yet in other ways embrace his approach. He was a very hands-off boss. I didn't know nothin' from anything, and he gave me full authority and discretion with whatever my cases were. And I shared this with my office at our retreat last year when we did a panel on people who had been in this office and who now were in private practice, long term practitioners, and I told them this story.

I had a case assigned to me of a man who had kidnapped his girlfriend. They had broken up and he had kidnapped her at knife point and taken her to Canada, and he didn't harm her, and eventually she found her way back. But the case was presented to me for prosecution, and here again, Mark Dunlap was representing this fellow who worked - I can't remember what he was doing at the time, but he was a young man. And Mark pleaded his case as a complete and total aberration and he just was distraught at their breakup, and if he were prosecuted it would ruin his life, and he had the potential for this, he was an educated fellow, and could I please find an alternative to prosecute him.

Well back then, now of course we have statutorily mandated requirements for dealing with victims, under the Justice for All Act, and victims have found their voice over the last thirty-two years, and appropriately so. But then we didn't, so I never even spoke to, let alone met the victim of this particular crime, but I agreed to pretrial divert him, which is the federal equivalent of filing in the state system. You enter into a contract, you can put conditions on the contract, but if you successfully complete the contract without violating the conditions or getting yourself into further trouble, then you have no record. If you don't, then you can be prosecuted on the

original [charges].

Well, even as I'm telling you this, again, I am so horrified, appalled at that decision. But it turned out – I could tell you that it was because I was so prescient that I foresaw that this young man would go on to nursing school, become a nurse, marry and have a family, which I learned a number of years after this pretrial diversion – but it was luck that something hadn't gone wrong, and that that young woman hadn't gone to the press and railed against the lack of attention that was given to this case.

But George was very hands-off, and how I learned – I could always go to him, but he wasn't one that was an active supervisor and so I had this enormous amount of discretion and authority by virtue of my position, at the age of twenty-six, that I managed to get through without any disasters. So I look back on that and I think, of course, that's what everybody that age really craves, and I didn't -

**MH:** But we don't all handle it as well.

**PS:** And we don't have the luck. So I contrast where we are with the young lawyers in this office, and in fact where we are with experienced lawyers in this office, in terms of a supervisory structure, and I always harken back to those days where I really had a very hands-off manager, and I learned a lot very quickly but through trial and error. And I say, "There's a reason I have come to be terrified at some of the things I did at that age and I want to spare you from ever having to realize the terror that I felt." But of course at the time I just thought I was the greatest thing since sliced bread.

So, but he was wonderful. Things were so much slower then, Mike. We had one judge, and he would go to Bangor occasionally and he -

**MH:** Puerto Rico, and Chicago.

**PS:** Right, but he was our one judge. We had a part-time magistrate, for a while it was Mel Zarr.

**MH:** I don't know him.

**PS:** Oh, Mel is a professor at the law school. We had no technology; we just barely [had] self-correcting typewriters. The office was a slower place. And David Himmelstein was the reporter for the *Press Herald* that was assigned to cover the courts, so in the afternoon Dave would come over and walk into George's office, and of course the door between our two offices was most of the time open, so I'd walk in and sit down and the three of us would sit in George's office and just sort of talk. And the clerk became Bill Brownell, he had been there, and Bill would come down and sit in the office, and we'd all just talk about what was going on in court, if there was anything, about the world, about politics and – it was a slower time, and George tried cases himself then, and he was, we became friends. I really liked him, and it was just the two of

us and so we had a unity by virtue of being the only lawyers in the office and the office being so small.

**MH:** How did Jay McCloskey enter the mix?

**PS:** George hired Jay I think, what was Jay doing? And of course, they'd known each other through politics.

**MH:** Right, I think he may have worked in the, it seemed to me that, he may have worked in the state House.

**PS:** No, he was, no, he was in Congress for a while, he was in the House for awhile, and he I think -

**MH:** Right, he was a representative.

**PS:** Right, and so Jay was really plugged into that whole Democratic -

**MH:** Ran for the Senate I think and lost, state Senate and lost.

**PS:** That may be. And then he was in private practice with Paul Zendzian, and Paul ended up, I don't remember, Paul ended up going overseas, and I don't know if that was what caused Jay to be seeking other employment, or he decided he wanted to be a prosecutor, so George was still, it was a small window, the U.S. attorney, and George hired him and he went into the Bangor office.

**MH:** You mentioned Bill Brownell. Before I worked for George Mitchell I worked for Bill Cohen, and I got to know Bill Brownell by telephone because I worked with him on the creation of the second judgeship. I was working for Cohen, who was on the Judiciary Committee, we were working on the Omnibus Judgeships Bill, and so I was trying to build a case for that second judgeship, because it wasn't in the administration's original mark. And so I got to know him during this, that very same period of time, and nice fellow. At least on the telephone, he was great.

**PS:** Oh, he's fantastic. Bill is a wonderful - He had worked for Betty Sax, who was the clerk the summer that I tried my case and worked for Peter Mills, and he was the deputy clerk so I have known Bill forever. And Bill is a wonderful raconteur, he loves stories and he remembers them, and he has an engaging way of telling them. And during the Judge Gignoux years, because we were a family then, we were all in the courthouse, and there was a lot of interaction among the judicial clerks, and me, because we were contemporaries, and Bill, and we had a lot of fun, because it was slower and gentler time.

**MH:** It was funny, because I remember the first call that came in, I think to Bill Cohen, was from Ike [Ralph] Lancaster, and he was talking, saying you really need to get the committee to

think about a second judgeship for Maine. And so Cohen told me that we're going to work on this, and all of a sudden I began to get calls from Bill Brownell. It sounded like, all of a sudden I realize the whole, it was all being orchestrated by somebody and I couldn't figure out who it was.

**PS:** Always, there is somebody (*unintelligible*).

**MH:** I suspect it was Judge Gignoux.

**PS:** Right.

**MH:** But I never had a conversation with him.

**PS:** You didn't?

**MH:** No, no, because I think he was, I *think* that he was simply talking to Ike Lancaster, and then I would get all the data from Bill Brownell. And of course what was interesting about it is that, I didn't know George Mitchell at the time, but the judgeship did get created, and of course Mitchell was the first one to sit there.

**PS:** Yes, well that's right, because he left the office within six months, I mean this is what, George was U.S. attorney, United States District, federal District Court judge, and United States senator, that's a -

**MH:** Now, when he was a judge in Bangor, did you ever have to argue or -

**PS:** No, because the way the cases are, I was really in the Portland office, and we had the lawyers in the Bangor office, and all of his cases, the court assigns the cases. The state breaks right around Augusta, so everything filed north of Bangor, north of Augusta, east and west, goes to the Bangor court and is handled by our Bangor office, and the cases all go to the Bangor judge. And so my time was, you know, I was down here and the Bangor lawyers handled -

**MH:** Were all your relatives, legal relatives in Hancock County, were they all judges by the time that you were trying cases there?

**PS:** No.

**MH:** Because I would think you might have to avoid Bangor, just for fear of some kind of conflict at that point.

**PS:** Well my grandfather had retired by the time I got this job. The wonderful thing was that I still, after my first year out of law school, my clerkship, I had wanted, and I really would love to have practiced law with my family, but that fall my father got his judgeship from Governor - You know, the Independent.

**MH:** Governor Longley.

**PS:** Longley, yeah, Jim Longley, so I was really free to take this job, because my father was honored and wanted to be a judge and that took him out of the family practice at the same time that I started here, so he went on. And the nice thing was they really traveled the circuit more than they do now, and so he spent a lot of time in Portland which gave us time to sort of have dinner and get together.

**MH:** Were you surprised when George Mitchell resigned, or stepped down from the bench to take the senatorship?

**PS:** No, I had always -, and I can't tell you -, this was never - This is something that I always felt, and it wasn't because I have any memory of George saying it or having discussions with him about it, but I had always felt in my heart that, that was where his love was, was in politics. And not that it's a bad consolation prize, to be U.S. attorney and a federal District Court judge, but those two pursuits are so very, very different. One is a life of law and research and contemplation, and yes, maybe you have some trials. But it's also a very insulated life, I mean you can kind of hang with the other judges, but let's face it, who wants to spend a lifetime hanging with other judges.

And then there is the political side, which is so tactical and so people oriented, and so coalition building and engaged. I had always had the sense that the governorship had not worked out, and these were amazing opportunities, this track that he was on and ended up being a judge, and of course eventually would have found his way back to Portland, to sit in the court down here. But the politics were his real love, and so I wasn't surprised at all. In fact I was thrilled because I thought, what are the chances that anybody -

**MH:** Gets to be appointed to the United States Senate.

**PS:** Would have this happen to them when it's their, as I was thinking, their real love, and which they for all intents and purposes had seen as over.

**MH:** I think I want to go back to when you were in the U.S. Attorney's Office with him for a second. You described how much latitude he gave you, with respect to pursuing your cases. Did you tend to handle cases separately, or did you ever work on cases together?

**PS:** No, the case load was very different then. Our tax cases were handled out of the Department of Justice, so whenever there was a tax case in Maine at that point, they sent a department rep to handle it, which actually was Joe [H.] Groff, who ended up joining this office. He's now over with Jensen Baird and has been for years. Because George and I met him when he was coming up to handle tax cases, when George got a second position in the Bangor office, he offered the job to Joe, but Joe's wife had a fantas-, she's British but she's a fluent French speaker, and she had a phenomenal job doing translation services in Washington and they didn't

want to leave Washington at the time, so Joe said to George, “Well, my office mate is single and he’s sick of living out of hotel rooms, and he’s fantastic, you should hire him.”

So [Bill] Browder flew up, met with George at Miller’s Restaurant in Bangor, George offered him the job, and Browder took the job in Bangor. And then as the office continued to grow eventually, and George didn’t hire him, but eventually Joe was hired and eventually Bill moved down to the Portland office.

**MH:** Now, Bill Browder doesn’t live in Maine any more.

**PS:** Oh yes, he lives up in Freeport.

**MH:** Oh, he does, Freeport, so it must be Brannigan?

**PS:** Jim Brannigan, he’s retired out of the U.S. Attorney’s Office in San Diego, but I think he is back here.

**MH:** Oh, is he, okay. So you didn’t really end up working together that much.

**PS:** No, no, he had some cases that he handled, one I remember very clearly because at the time it was such a horrid case, it was a child pornography case, and of course now a good percentage of our case load is child pornography, thanks to the Internet. And he tried that case, Kevin Menard was the name of the case, and I remember he tried that case, and Judge Gignoux was so thrilled to have the U.S. attorney trying a case, because Peter had never done that and Judge Gignoux was just delighted.

**MH:** Did he have his own style, George Mitchell -

**PS:** Oh yes, he had, yes.

**MH:** What was that like, I guess what I’m really getting to is, I wonder what his style was in the courtroom.

**PS:** He has a very deliberate style, and he wasn’t a grandstander, and he was a solid, articulate, commanding presence in the courtroom. I mean, his style was consistent with how he presents himself now.

**MH:** As U.S. attorney, do you try cases often?

**PS:** I do not, and I made that decision because the office has grown so much more and I have felt, I have chosen and felt that it was important that I be available to anybody whenever they wanted to speak to me.

**MH:** And you wouldn’t be if you were trying cases.

**PS:** And I wouldn't be. And I had begun, I had taken on a couple of cases [that] ended up not coming to fruition, but I found that it was, at least for me, something that was very distracting, and I tend to like to focus and when people want to see you, if you're right in the middle of trying, you have to put them off, or you have to go back to your case, so I made the decision not to do it.

**MH:** Let me ask you, I mean the population of Maine in 1973-74, right after you, or actually before you graduated from law school, was a million people, roughly, and we're only at 1.26 million. Why has there been a need for the U.S. Attorney's Office to grow from seven people up to fifty?

**PS:** I'm not certain there was a need. I can't tell you that today we are one bit safer than we were back then, but things have changed. We have, and this is a source of some consternation for a lot of people, there has been a federalization of crimes that were previously perceived as exclusively state crimes, such as domestic violence. We now, there's jurisdiction for domestic violence. And there's a reason for that, because you can't have people take advantage of various jurisdictional differences when they are stalking an ex- girlfriend or boyfriend or husband or wife across state lines with the intent to injure them. So that has expanded the number of cases we [have] become involved in.

There [have] been a number of initiatives over the years. The first one really started with the financial institution fraud, there was a concerted push on the part of that administration to expand the U.S. Attorney's Office to prosecute those cases. And they provided the additional FTE necessary to do that on a permanent basis. So when the financial institution fraud cases were concluded, you had all of these extra lawyers in U.S. attorneys' offices that started doing cases. And that may have allowed for doing some cases that otherwise would have been declined because there weren't enough resources to do them.

Clearly the drugs have consumed a huge amount of resources, that problem hasn't abated, it's grown, it's expanded. I mean, prescription drug cases when I started, we did do some diversion cases, but maybe I could count on one hand the number that we did. Now of course prescription drugs are devastating this state.

**MH:** Yeah, thirty-five years ago it wasn't prescription drugs, it was other kinds of substances.

**PS:** Right. Health care fraud, the billions and billions of dollars that have been put into Medicare, Medicaid, just creates, that is an opportunity begging for fraud. So we've expanded, and there have been a number of positions expanded to allow us to address that. And life has become much, the Internet, you cannot begin to appreciate how the Internet has facilitated the commission of crime. I mean, child pornography being the perfect example. Before, that whole world was a very covert world and those people, I don't know that there are any more child abusers or child pornographers in Maine or in the world today than there were back in 1976, but they've found each other, and their ability -

**MH:** They have a marketplace.

**PS:** Yes, so it's become a marketplace, and they've created their own little universe, they can easily find each other and validate each other's behavior, and they're not living in isolation. Because their isolation deterred [them] from acting out on these impulses, now they find like-minded people sitting in the privacy of their own bedrooms. And that, and fraud, eBay – I mean we have become a much, much more technologically advanced society, and with that has come any number of new and different ways to commit crimes that were on the books years ago but it was harder to commit them.

**MH:** After George Mitchell went, became a senator, majority leader, whatever, did you have much contact with him then, when he went on the Washington side of things?

**PS:** No, I went to Washington for a year in 1987 and 1988 as the assistant director of the [Attorney General's] Advocacy Institute, which is the training program for the Department of Justice, and I saw George a couple of times during the course of that year.

**MH:** Are you a tennis player?

**PS:** No, I'm not, no, I'm not a tennis player.

**MH:** I always ask that of people, because I find it interesting how they interpret his tennis playing style.

**PS:** Oh, no, I'm not a tennis player. But I saw him a couple of times during the year that I was down there. Really I have not had any regular contact with him since he left and joined the Senate. I run into him when he's home in the summer, I'll see him up with Harold having lunch at One City Center, or on the street. But people seem to think that I have – and I told him this once – because people are always asking me if I will get in touch with George to see if he'll do something. And most recently -

**MH:** I have the same problem, and my connection was stopped twenty-four years ago.

**PS:** Yes, and I say, well look, I know how to reach him. And he's wonderful because any time I have called he's always returned my call, and if he's traveling, I mean he picks up, he's always returned my calls so. The most recent one was to see if he'd be a graduation, a commencement speaker for the law school, and he agreed to do it and came up and I saw him then. But no, I mean our lives have diverged after -

**MH:** Have his successes in business and in mediation internationally surprised you at all?

**PS:** Nothing that George has done has surprised me; his capacity for excellence was evident from the moment I met him. He has an amazing skill set, I think, if I were to characterize sort of



my sense of what his greatest capacity is, is the ability to take immensely complicated sets of facts and analyze them and take out of those what needs to be said, and say it in a way that we can all understand.

In fact I just got back from a trip to Paris and London. I was traveling with a friend who is on the law faculty at Valparaiso Law School, and they have a presence with Cambridge University, the undergraduate school does, and in the summer they let the law school use their facilities over there for purposes of a summer program. Claire was going to be teaching, as she has for several years now, a course on Shakespeare and the law; she teaches legal writing at Valparaiso. And one of her colleagues is this professor at Valparaiso Law School by the name of Ed Gaffney [Jr.] who, just anecdotally, is a very, very, very close friend and law school classmate of Antonin Scalia's.

**MH:** One of the, that society, the Federal -

**PS:** I don't know that they're poli-

**MH:** The Federal Society?

**PS:** I don't think they're politically aligned, I think they're political opp[osites], but they're very close friends, and he had invited Justice Scalia over to Cambridge a couple of summers ago, and my friend Claire and husband, who's a magistrate judge in South Bend, traveled with the Scalias and Ed Gaffney.

So Ed comes over because he keeps the students that are participating in the summer program for a week and does a legal tour of London. So he had invited us to have lunch with him at the Middle Temple Inn of Court. I had been hearing about Ed for as long as I've known Chris and Claire and I hadn't met him, but his reputation had preceded him, and he's very, very, very supportive of the Palestinian position. So Claire said to me, "Oh, when he finds out you know George Mitchell, be prepared, he's going to lobby you and you're..."

Well, we sat down for lunch and he said, "So you're from Maine." And I said, "Yes." And it didn't take long before George's name came into the conversation. And he said his daughter, Ed's daughter, is a documentary film maker and she has collaborated with him on a documentary on Palestine. He said he had interviewed George for this documentary, and he said, we had gone through this entire section where George was recounting this very comp-, providing this incredibly complicated analysis on some point associated with the Israeli-Palestinian issue. And Ed said it was just extraordinary, because he was able to articulate and organize his thoughts without one *er* or *hunh* or whatnot, and had given this incredibly succinct, pithy analysis.

And he said, "Then we found out that there was some defect in the microphone and that every time you said 'p' there would be this horrid *ppppp* sound in the microphone."

**MH:** Oh, it was over-resonating, yes. I haven't run into that problem yet here, but I worry

about things like that.

**PS:** Well, he said there wasn't any way to correct it, and that meant that we were going to lose this whole section. So George says to the microphone operator, "Are you having trouble with any other letters?" And the mic operator said, "No, I'm not." So he said, "Wait a minute," and Ed said he proceeded to rephrase his entire thought.

**MH:** Without 'P's.

**PS:** Without one 'p' in it.

**MH:** Absolutely remarkable.

**PS:** That is an extraordinary skill set, he's almost computer-like in his ability to process information and organize it and repeat it in a way that allows for the simplest of us to understand.

**MH:** When did this conversation take place?

**PS:** It was -

**MH:** Had to be recent.

**PS:** Yes, it [really] was, I got back on July 2nd, we had, June 30th, yes, he just told me. So, and it resonated, because that is George, that is George. But the one thing that saddened me is that the world [ ] sees George as he presents himself, and as I'm sure he wants to present himself, as this man of extraordinary gravitas that's very sort of serious and unapproachable. And the reality is – which I know you have heard already and will hear as you continue to talk to people – he has the most magnificent sense of humor, and almost boyishness about him, which you appreciated, I'm sure, when you worked for him.

I mean he can be intimidating, oh my God. He's not a man, or he wasn't when I worked for him, he was not a man to tell you that you had done something well, but he certainly told you if you had erred. So you knew that if you didn't hear that you had erred, that you had done it well, but he wasn't one to reprimand, he wasn't one to nurture his workforce with praise. But he has this wonderful sense of humor, and he is himself a raconteur, a wonderful story teller, with this sort of, when something tickles him or strikes his fancy, this sort of giggle that is really delightfully boyish, and so at odds with the austerity of the persona that I know he wants to cultivate and present to the world.

**MH:** That captures it perfectly. Before we stop, I wanted to do two things. What things would you consider doing after the U.S. attorney phase of your life is over, or your career is over? It'll never be over in terms of your life, but -

**PS:** Well, that is the sixty-four thousand dollar question. You know, if you're lucky, the one

benefit of sort of maturing is that you come to understand yourself somewhat, and I have, as if my thirty-two year career in the same job didn't tell you that already, I'm a very linear person, and I've made the decision that as long as I'm in this job, this is my job, and that's where my focus and my energy and my passion and my commitment rests. And when this job ends, which it will within the next few months, I will have to figure that out.

**MH:** Lastly, I give you just this opportunity, is there a story that you had hoped to tell that I haven't given you a good opening to give to me?

**PS:** No, there really isn't. I think what was most important for me to say was about George's sense of humor. And we had, during our year together in the office, and even after Margaret started, we had the opportunity to have some laughs at sort of the comings and goings of the federal court system, and I just have the fondest of memories of that year with him. It was wonderful. I owe him, obviously, my career. Had he not hired me, I would never have been able to be sitting here today to talk to you, after thirty-two years in this office particularly, serving currently as a U.S. attorney. So I will forever, ever be indebted to him for providing me with that opportunity and what's been a marvelous career.

But I also feel so blessed, not just because of what he went on to do, clearly that's part of it, but just for the opportunity to have spent that time together and had at that point somebody, I mean clearly my family was a huge influence on me in, and how one conducts themselves in the practice of law, and the integrity and compassion that you need to bring to the position, but George also afforded me that understanding that it's a serious profession, and particularly in this office. I think the amount of power that one has as a prosecutor, in terms of being able to charge, who to charge, what to charge, whether or not charge, is enormous. And having to know how to judiciously exercise that discretion is vital to being a good prosecutor. And George taught me that by example through the years we spent together in this office.

**MH:** I'll let that be the last word, thank you Paula Silsby.

End of Interview