

Interview with Joseph Stratos

1/24/1979

(in Mr. Stratos' office)

(WMP: Joe, I appreciate your giving us this time and I would like to hear from you your recollections of Dick Dilworth in his public life, as far back as you were with him, and right on to the end.)

Well, originally, I would say when I really first met Richardson Dilworth, I was going to Penn State University....
...totally out of Philadelphia politics. I didn't even know what a ward was, what a ward leader was or anything. I did read about Dick Dilworth. Consequently, at that time, I would say it could have been around '49, maybe '50. Dick had made a very strong policy, apparently, which came out later, of going through colleges and universities, law schools, and giving speeches on political thought, political theories...
...also about government. One of his immense drives, really, was to try and find young people who would be interested in going into government. This is a passion with him.

I remember distinctly, he spoke in Sparks Auditorium, and I would say he spoke before about....it was in the evening...
...around 4 or 500 people...students at Penn State University. And I really didn't go in there with the idea of getting to know Richardson Dilworth. I went in just to hear someone speak. And I was absolutely overcome by his speech and the encouragement that he gave, and it just fitted my niche...in the sense of probably becoming a lawyer for the purpose of entering government. Really, that's the main reason that I went to law school.

(WMP: And you did it.)

And I did, through, I would say, Dick's encouragement.

(WMP: What law school?)

I went to Dickinson Law School. Right.

After Dick finished there was a crowd of students around him...
...he always gathered students, in a sense, and he would just stay there until he finished with the last one. And finally, I was the last one. And he finally recognized me by me pulling his coattail. In other words, I was tired waiting!! And I said, "Gee, I wanted to tell you your speech was great", I was quite nervous..."Your speech was great!". And I said, "I think you should be President of the United States!!".

And with that, he turned around and he said, "What is your name?" And I said, "Joe Stratos". He said, "Oh, Mr. Straytos", he always called me "Mr. Straytos"; to this day, he called me "Straytos". And he said, "What is your name and telephone number?". And he took my name and telephone number...wrote it down on a piece of paper, and I never thought anything of it.

The very next morning, I received a telephone call in my dormitory, asking if I would like to have breakfast with him at the Nittany Lion Inn. And I thought this has to be some kind of a joke. And I did go and have breakfast with him, and the first thing he indicated to me was that he would like to see me become very active in government, through politics in Philadelphia.

Now, this kind of....was great, because you read about these things in text books, but very seldom do they occur. And I would say, during that period of time, I carried on a great deal of letter writing to him...when I was up at Penn State... ..and each and every letter was returned with ayou could see that he read the letter, and replied.

(WMP: What was your activity at Penn State?)

Well, at Penn State...oh, I forgot that...at Penn State I had organized the first Young Democrats' Club in the state. We were not permitted political parties at Penn State University. There was a bill that didn't permit it because it was a state university, and of course, I kind of thought this was kind of silly. And at that breakfast meeting I spoke to Dick about it. And I do remember that Dick Dilworth and Genevieve Blatt, at that time...Genevieve Blatt was very active within the Democratic party...gave a great deal of support and aid. And we did, within those years....did set up the two-party system up at Penn State; Young Democrats and Young Republicans.

So he was very helpful in advising me. That was the....I would say the greater part of our correspondence was over that particular issue.

(WMP: You said "we"....)

Oh yes, Dick....I read some of my letters which I have at home, and I would say a great deal of the correspondence was about that; it was under John Fine's administration. And I do remember that when I came back to Philadelphia, and Dick would introduce me to any number of people, he would say, "Well, this is the fellow who set up the first Democrat...Young Democratic party in the Penn State University, under the nose", he would say, "Ha ha, of John Fine!!" He just thought that was something great. I often thought that he tended to overdo it, as his....the adjectives that he used.

It was, I would say, a correspondence relationship through Penn State, except the letter I sent to him...and then, through law school; he followed my career through law school. I wrote and told him that Dean Walter Harrison Hitchler, who had been dean for a good number of years at Dickinson Law College, was a tough, rough dean of the old school, did not want to get political people, political speeches to be given at Dickinson, et cetera, et cetera. And I did arrange, and Dick did come up to...and he was D.A. at the time...Dick did come up to address the students.

(WMP: Law students.)

Law students. Again, this emphasizes our first contact...my first contact with him...was really...he wanted to instill in students what he felt at that time, the greatness of young men and women giving their life and their career toward government, you see, via politics. He was greatly interested in bringing people in. So he did come up, and it was the first speech given on a political basis...political government basis; Dick did not talk about the Democratic party. I think I still have a copy of his remarks there, at that time.

And then, when George Leader got the nomination for governor and won, I remember that I telegraphed Dick a letter of congratulations, along the lines that I felt he had done so much throughout the state in building up young people to become involved in politics, that I felt that he should be congratulated, and not George Leader, for the victory in the state of Pennsylvania. And very strangely, I received a letter, indicating that...it was right after the first Tuesday in November, and Dick indicated would I mind coming down to his home, and visiting with him and his family on Thanksgiving. And quite frankly, I thought I was invited for Thanksgiving Day dinner. And I had no idea of what he wanted to say, or anything like that; I just thought it was a social visit.

And I remember I went to the house on Saint James' Place. And he indicated to me....greeted me...Mrs. Dilworth was there...and then Mrs. Dilworth excused herself, and Dick turned around and asked me to sit down. The livingroom was in the front part of the home, and he sat by the desk...I remember distinctly...and I sat on a chair...very nervous...I thought, "My God, what does he want? What am I going to do, sip sherry or something???" Then I looked at my watch and it was around...near 12 noon. I said, "Well, my God, the Dilworths have to eat...probably, you know, they eat their big meal at 12 noon...and nothing was set up". I didn't know what I was there for!

And he came forth and he said, "I'm running for mayor. Do you want to work for me?"

(WMP: This was 1947?)

No, no. This was back indon't forget I went through law school...we carried a correspondence from about 1950 to '55. And we had seen each other at various times, but very sparsely. I mean, we were not that close friends. But out of a clear blue sky, he...in '55...said to me that morning, "I'm running for mayor. What do you think of that? And would you like to work for me?"

Of course, the answer was "yes". This was '50...sorry...it had to be '54; it was the year before I graduated. And I said, "Yes". And then I went back to law school and we corresponded. And when I would come down on holidays he would set up meetings with people such as Leon Shull. This was about a year before he even started his campaign. Leon Shull.....I believe some people were Henry Sawyer...Tom Masterson, who later turned out to run his legal squad...young lawyers' squad. Somewhere along the line, he had introduced me to Bill Green, Senior, within that year. Of course, the buildups that he had given these gentlemen were flattering and somewhat wrong. But he still went back to the idea that Joe Stratos was the first one to set up a political party at Penn State under Johnny Fine's nose. And I did go to work for Dick, I would say, as soon as my final exams were over, and even while I was taking the bars.

That whole year I had been coming down to Philadelphia every holiday or free weekend, and we'd be meeting and he'd be setting up what he was going to do. And of course, at that time, I was extremely green; I just listened and observed.

All through that period of time I never met people such as Joe Gaffigan, Natalie Saxe; the only one I really met was Pat Crosson. We only really began to assemble...

(WMP: That was his secretary.)

Secretary, right. We only began to assemble, I would say, in June of '55, when we actually started everything going. He indicated that he wanted to visit as many street corners, and again, he wanted to hold these koffee klatches. And again, that was a term that was new to my mind. He'd indicated that they were successfully held by the Kennedys up in Massachusetts; I think they were one of the first to inaugurate these klatches. And I believe he set up appointments for me in Washington with some of the Kennedy aides. Now, I don't know....I don't remember if they were John Kennedy's aides or Bob Kennedy's aides, insofar as how they're set up, the follow-up, et cetera, but it was quite systematically done. We would go into an

area, and if there were prominent people in that area, people that were civic-minded, people that had been activists along certain lines, I would ask them if they wanted to open up their home to a small koffee klatch, would they go through a very strong, but yet limited, list of people... ..people who were interested in civic...and in the city of Philadelphia. We also would add to that list if we felt that there were people that should be invited, and it was done with a formal invitation. Mr. Dilworth appeared, spoke for approximately 20 minutes, and then opened himself up completely for 20 minutes of questioning. Then would leave and go to another; there were two a night. And he did this throught the months of June, July and August.

As well as the koffee klatches, in August, he would also make a trailer...and I have a picture of the trailer...this was our first trailer...he would make a trailer stop in August, which was quite early in his campaign to do these things. All of these things were done through Dick's own personal campaign sources, which I think you might know that Sidney Dexter headed.

(WMP: He was the treasurer.)

Right, right. And in those months, July....June, July and August, I would work exclusively out of the ADA headquarters, Leon Shull. And they did a great deal of the detail work for us.

(WMP: Where did Natalie Saxe fit in?)

Natalie....when I first met Natalie, Natalie was Dick's liaison, exclusive liaison, to Bill Green, in '55. In other words, ...and we all worked out of the office in the old law firm, but it was not part of the law firm; it was just two little offices that Dick had rented. And we would have staff meetings, et cetera.

(WMP: That was in the Fidelity Building?)

Fidelity Building...26th floor. And we had very, very definite....Dick was extremely well organized. We had, maybe a meeting once a week or twice a week, depending on the....

And I know that everything that the opposition had taken up, for example, Dick was quite concerned about Thatcher Longstreth and some of the broad statements that Thatcher was making which Dick felt were just not true, and had to go answered, even though everyone was telling Dick that...."Don't worry, you're a shoe-in", et cetera, et cetera...Dick was quite concerned about each and every item that was brought up by the opposition, to be answered specifically. That is, in the way Longstreth was attacking the administration of Joseph Clark.

(WMP: This was when Dick was running for mayor.)

Running for mayor, yes. Previous thereto, I had seen Dick when he was running for D.A.; then, if you remember, he resigned and then went full-time into this venture to be mayor.

And during that campaign, I was asked to join the Dilworths and drive with them. And at times I really didn't understand how he ever did it, because I was thoroughly exhausted...at the end of that night. I would get home around 12, 1 o'clock. We would always leave the Dilworths off. But I remember distinctly that Mrs. Dilworth was always with him.

(WMP: Why was that, do you think?)

Well, I believe.....I know as a fact that Mrs. Dilworth did not have the energy that Mr. Dilworth had. And many times she was exhausted. It was my sheer belief that she was so dedicated to his profession and wants in life, that she was willing to be with him at all times. She was a great observer; she would enter a room and generally stay in the background. She would not be by his side. And if there were any discussions that she heard..someone would say some remark about the city that she felt should be answered; she'd probably whisper it to me, and then I would get a note up to Dick, so that he would either counteract this, but she was just not a figurehead. She was very, very active in participating in what was going on there.

She also, when we opened up the headquarters at the Continental Bank Building there on Chestnut Street...15th and Chestnut....she also put a great number of hours as a receptionist, in the building, and would refer, would interview people, would refer many people back to my desk. Of course, when that headquarters opened, then we moved our headquarters there right after Labor Day. That's when City Committee became very much involved.

No, she worked a good number of hours.

(WMP: Would you be willing to say how she felt about Joe Clark and about me, because I was associated with him.)

Your name was never mentioned, but Joe Clark's name was...
...many times!!! But she never mentioned you, Walter, really. Never, really...I can't recall.

(WMP: Well, I know she didn't like me!)

But I know this. I know she liked what you and Joe Clark stood for. Whatever there was in other ways, I couldn't know.

(WMP: Well, let me go about this another way. Didn't she really feel that Dick had broken the ice for the Democrats...)

Oh, there's no question about that!

(WMP: ...and didn't she...she must have resented the fact that Joe became the first mayor, instead of Dick.)

Yes. In my opinion, and from what I could gather, there was no question about it. I must say that I never heard Dick, himself, criticize Joe...or yourself...the only time that I ever heard was that meeting when I went down to the Dilworth home, and there was some question about the Council people that were going to run under Dick Dilworth...ticket...when Dick was running for mayor in '55 for the first time, and there were threats that maybe Joe Clark might run again... for mayor. And I do remember distinctly, Dick Dilworth calling Joe Clark up...in my presence...and telling Joe that... because I had indicated that was a major issue; people did not know whether Dick Dilworth was going to run.

(WMP: This was in 1951.)

'55. Because Joe was contemplating...if you remember, there was a great deal of discussion on who was going to run for City Council. And Joe was pushing for certain people. Do you remember that?

(WMP: I'd sort of forgotten that.)

Yeah...oh yeah. It was in...and I remember Dick saying, to Joe Clark, over the phone, "Joe, if you're going to run, run. Then I will run for the Senate."

(WMP: This was in '55. Right. Okay.)

'55. That's right..."I will run for the Senate". Because Dick would ask me what I would hear. And I told him that.. ...I said, "What it means...this taxicab driver indicated to me...he doesn't know who's running". Because at that particular period, there was a great deal of controversy in the paper... ...was Joe Clark going to resign...or re-run again, or was he going to run for the Senate. Joe was trying to put a wedge to get certain high-type people in Council; I believe that Dick was being pressured by Bill Green to run other people in Council. Now, I think you recall that period.

(WMP: Yes, I do.)

And that was the one time when I heard that Dick...Dick just said, "I'm just not going to sit by and wait any longer. I will either...if you want to run for mayor, go ahead. I will not oppose you. If not, then I will run for Senate and I'll put on the best blankety-blank race you've ever seen".

And I believe the following week Clark indicated he was going to run for Senate. But I know it came to that point. I was very green in politics at that time. I later learned the significance of that telephone call.

But getting back to Mrs. Dilworth, I do feel that there was a great deal of resentment against Joe Clark. About yourself, I cannot say.

(WMP: Well, I was an offshoot from Joe.)

Well, there was a great deal of resentment...and also, there was a great deal of resentment on many ...by many people of the Dilworth staff...that they felt Dick always got second shot, you see...and Joe was always out-maneuvering Dick, as far as the original party caucuses.

As I told you before, my relationship with Joe Clark has always been good, and I've never felt that way, because I guess maybe I was not a part of those very early...as they called it ...the very famous Ritz Carleton Hotel meeting...that I heard brought up so many times...I'm sure you know what happened there.

(WMP: What happened there, in particular?)

Well, I think that was the time when Dick walked in and he had enough people to slate him for mayor, and it was Joe Clark who emerged as the candidate. Do you remember that?

(HMCM: There was also an incident involving an announcement in the Bulletin. Wasn't that the case where.....Joe had announced to a Bulletin reporter, and had arranged it so that the first edition of the Bulletin had come out at the beginning of this meeting?)

Right. But I must emphasize one thing, though; I must say this. That in all of my discussions...in all of my observations, Dick never, ever said anything, in any way...to bring resentment on his part, towards Joe Clark. I know that when....
...and I think this is the first time I met you, Walter, was when Joe Clark.....I had called Joe Clark up in '55, and would he give a coffee klatch...and it was in August. And I told Mr. Dilworth that Joe Clark would give a coffee klatch. I know Dick was delighted, and he said it would be helpful, and he was grateful. But there was resentment...mainly, I would say, by the other members of the staff and older members of the staff. Now, Cliff Brenner was not with us, until '55. Cliff was hired....maybe around July of '55. I was involved before Cliff. But I think people like Natalie...and maybe Mrs. Dilworth...maybe people like Bill Churchman...Charles Pearson, who had been with him...and who's now deceased. I think a great deal of resentment was.....existed in the fact that they felt Joe Clark was outsmarting Dick. But I never once heard

Dick Dilworth say anything to me or to anyone else about the fact that he felt that Joe was a blankety-blank or something like that. It was a very strange....I think the relationship between the two men.....

(WMP: Well, they had an arrangement between them, as I understood it.)

They never blasted each other.

(WMP: That's right. And as to that particular question of who was going to be the mayor first, really, that was most delicate, as I remember. Do you recall that?)

No. Who was going to be mayor first, I can only tell you what I heard. I was not on the scene. And Dick never.... there may have been an arrangement; maybe that's the reason why, and I can truthfully say this....Dick never, never shed one bit of resentment towards Joe Clark, even in private, to me or to anyone else. But there was that feeling, I would say....probably within the family and within members...older members of Dick's staff.

(WMP: You see, well, remember the situation was that Joe had become city controller, and Dick had become treasurer. The treasurer's position didn't give much power or publicity for the person. And that put Joe in a better position than Dick was in. But his law partner and Mrs. Dilworth didn't feel that way. Dick had broken things open in 1947, and he therefore was entitled to get the nomination for mayor in 1951.)

Well I think he tried to get it.

(WMP: I think he really stepped aside and let his law partners and Mrs. Dilworth maneuver for him.)

Well I can't answer who maneuvered because that was a time when I was completely....really; I was a student in those days and I did not know. But I can say it again...I think that you've answered a question that's long been in my mind, because Dick would comment to me about certain people. But he never, ever commented that Joe Clark tricked him or that Joe Clark went back on his word, or that Joe Clark was even a son-of-a-gun.

(WMP: They were both men of the old school...the old school tie.)

Well, I've always wondered about that and maybe you've answered that for me, because I do know, again, there was just icebergs when on very, very few occasions when Noel Clark and Joe Clark would campaign on behalf of Dick. And when they would meet, Dick was very, very....tried to be very, very warm,

but I do know that Ann was very, very cold.

(WMP: Well, as I recall, Joe, when Dick ran for governor, I think it was...)

The first time.

(WMP: The first time...I guess it was, yes...he promised Joe that he would help him run for mayor...something like that. And then, with so much pressure on him, from his supporters, that he got out of town. He went to New York.)

Right.

(WMP: And then, his people wouldn't take it that way and they were pushing for Dick. And then the understanding between Dick and Joe didn't reach down to the whole Dilworth team.)

I cannot say, 'cause I was not part of the scene. I do know that when Dick ran for governor the second time, I was appalled by the ...and I think I'd indicated this to you, previously, that I had conducted a little survey on behalf of City Committee, and the odds were that Dick just was not going to come through. And I was a bit amazed at the numerous people...law firm...staff people...who just absolutely pressured Dick into making that move...in other words, resigning as mayor. And I think I also indicated to you that I did work for him some period of the time; then I resigned. I resigned in middle May of that year, that he ran the second time, because I....I mean, the reason I gave him was the fact that I just....

*** Interruption due to the changing of the tape ***

(WMP: Do you think Harry Kalish?)

I think Harry Kalish was definitely a very strong part of it. I think he was a definite....and let me just point out to you that in my association with Dick, versus other politicians, I never felt that Dick applied pressure himself.

(WMP: Oh, I agree with you.)

I don't feel that Dick ever applied pressure for himself. And it was a very difficult decision for me to make, when he ran for governor the second time, because I stood the chance, and I know Dick was.....I don't know if he was hurt, but I think he was questioning in his own mind...why I would not continue. But that was one period of time that I felt he was extremely pressured by each and every one, and again...nothing

to put my finger on; I just felt ^{that} there were certain things that Dick was not informed about, and a lot of things were kept away from him. There was a big difference in the Dilworth that I knew in '55 versus the Dilworth that I knew in the latter years when he was running for governor, in a sense. In '55, and then when he ran again in '59, he seemed to have his fingers on the pulse of what was going on...in other words...of public opinion. He kind of...knew what was going on. But I felt very strongly that he was being fed...in my opinion....he was being fed a bill of goods.

(WMP: What was the role of Natalie Saxe at that time?)

Well, Natalie was...I would say...Dick's top liaison person and I would say Natalie was...sort of Dick's pulse...pulsebeat on various things outside of the office of the mayor. Of course, in '59, Natalie was....I forgot what her title was at City Hall, but in '59 Natalie could not be liaison to Bill Green; I was the liaison to Bill Green. And I believe if Bill Green Senior were alive today...and I'm not trying to flatter myself...I think that he would indicate that it was a period that there were no particular gigantic squabbles between Dick and Bill Green...because I think one would have to take certain things and sift them through before they were fed back to the mayor. In other words, not just blanket statements...because Dick had a certain sense of...he was volatile in many things, you see...and if you presented things in a certain way that....So I would say that the '59 campaign was very harmoniously....I believe to this day...I may offend certain people...I believe to this day that it was a matter of how you approached Dick. Dick was not a person who would demand to push pressure himself, et cetera; he did have a tremendous feeling, as I said before, with what was going on. But then I think the involvements within the city really occupied a great deal of his time, and he sort of lost grasp himself, and was depending on what other people....That was my opinion, and that's what made me....and I don't consider myself a strong factor within his political set-up. Only recently do I feel that I basically may have been. And again, when he ran for governor, I was just totally against it; I just wanted to be his friend and not a political-pressuring person who would....

(WMP: You're speaking now about the second governor...)

Second governorship, yes.

I did work the campaign in '59; it was much easier. We operated on the same level...the coffee klatches...the trailer... As I told you before, Dick was definitely the type of person who was well, well prepared. He had the campaign going while Bill Green was still in Longport. In other words, during the summer months, Dick had it going. And Dick never really wanted to depend on the amount of money City Committee would say

....after Labor Day, somewhere around the third week...we're going to put so much money into your campaign. Dick really wanted to be prepared...and he always was.

But, talking to you, I again emphasize that I never, never felt that Dick ever pressured...in other words, I never heard him get on the phone to pressure...for this one to pressure and that one to pressure for his doing and getting certain spots.

(WMP: He had a lot of charm. He didn't have to pressure; he just charmed people into things.)

Well....

(WMP: Don't you think?)

I don't know. I don't know about...well, he did have charm, there's no question about it, but he had a certain degree of integrity about himself that...and he was the type of person who really cared. Now, a lot of people never liked Dick Dilworth and I could never figure out why. I personally, as a young fellow, was always afraid of him. I never wanted him to throw the hatchet at me, because....I'll never forget one time, and that was when I flunked my bars, 'cause I'd given about 80% of my time during the cram school to work for his campaign. And when I flunked the bars, and I needed a position to keep me going, until I passed the bars...and he vehemently said No, and for me, absolutely, he was not going to see me develop into a City Hall....what do they call them... City Hall.....just a drone. 'Member they used the word... the drones...he said, "Young man, you're not going to be a drone. You get out...I don't care how you raise your money; you get out and you pass those bars!"

And that was about....and then the other only time that I would say that he ever argued...he always wanted clearance with ward leaders. He had great respect for ward leaders. I think he had more respect, maybe even, than Joe Clark did. By that, he would never even go into an area for a koffee klatch. And the koffee klatches were given predominantly by the independents...within our city. But he would never go in unless I would have called the ward leader and say..."Well, are there any objections?" He never did that unless he'd gotten clearance, and what were the basic problems? And I would ^{have} given him a fact sheet every time around 4 or 5 o'clock at his home. He always would go home around, maybe 3:30, 4 o'clock, rest, have dinner...mostly in bed. And then he'd be fresh as could be to go out and campaign in the evening.

But one time, I couldn't get a hold of Bill Barrett, and I sort of tried to....garble...my response when he asked me, when we were going down...did I clear this?...the meeting

in South Philadelphia with Bill Barrett and I was coughing, and hacking and everything. And then he told the chauffeur to stop the car, and he said to me, "Now, specifically, did you talk to Bill Barrett?" And I said, "No". And he said, "Well, here's a dime. You get him. We don't go unless we..."

And I did get Barrett. But he was very, very keen on not creating any waves. 'Cause if you remember those days, some ward leaders were very, very adamant against having independent support of the groups that were, quote, "independents" in the area.

I never did anything great under Dilworth's administration, insofar as government's concerned. Mainly I was either practising law or associated in the City Solicitor's office, and then going back and working on his campaigns.

(WMP: You became quite a friend of Dick, didn't you?)

Well, I became a friend of his, but I never thought we were that^{close} friends until in the later years...I would say '59, we became..... I think basically, we became friends from the first day we met, but I never realized it. I know that there were other people who worked on staff like myself, who would work for one campaign and then leave. But I know that he would always...whether it was a good luck charm, or something, he always would ask me to come back. And we did develop into good friends. It was shown when I was in the service during the time, and I had two leg operations...Dick was the type that was really on the phone...to Germany.

(WMP: Do you want to put on the tape what you told me on the telephone about the last days...when Dick was ...when Ann was taken to the hospital, and Dick was...)

Well, it was a....I had heard, about a year prior thereto, that Dilworth was not well. I heard this from another lawyer and I immediately contacted Mrs. Crosson. And of course, she dissipated any reports...but that he was not well. In other words, I had heard it in May, a year prior to his death. But then, quite by co-incidence, a member of my family was in the hospital for the first time in August. And Dick Dilworth was in. He had that...somewhat...attack...they said it was high blood pressure. Dick Dilworth himself called it "a close shave"...if you remember, he said, "I had a close shave".

And then both he and Ann left for Europe on...I think it was the "France" orsome French boat.

(WMP: Well, coming back, the Andrea Doria.)

No, the Andrea Doria was way, way earlier....way earlier.

But then he had to return because, apparently he wasn't well while they were in France. And then he came back in the hospital in September.

But my recollection was the fact that Mrs. Dilworth was the one that was ill, and that he had come in to spend time with her. And she was...in fact, they shared one room. But from September through to October, Dick seemed to be failing. And then, I got wind through the hospital people there that he was....that HE was ill. And...but I would occasionally see him, either in the hallway or occasionally I would go in to see him, or I would always send a note in with his nurse. And at that time there was a great shortage, and many times he sent his nurse over to take care of one of my parents when we couldn't get a nurse. And we had many a little chat within the hospital. But the last time I'd seen Dick Dilworth was about December the 16th, that is to talk to him. Then he was operated on, and then I just did not want to see Dick in the condition. You know, but I had seen him in the hospital; he didn't see me, but I had seen him. And then he passed on. He was a week in a coma, and then passed onI think it was January 22nd.

(WMP: He was a very interesting personality.)

Well, he...very interesting....it amazes me that....one thing I couldn't figure out. I think Ann used to tell him sometimes, "You definitely have suicidal tendencies...self suicidal tendencies". For example, the time he discussed recognition of Red China. That threw him out of the governor's race, so to speak, when Leader got it...or..it was Lawrence that got it. And I remember distinctly about the Board of Education...he really felt that someone had to go in, and...he didn't think he was God....I think he recognized his many, many faults. He knew that he got into things that were pretty controversial, but he felt that the School Board was one of the most controversial things in this city and needed attention. And at that time there was talk of Jim Tate running again, and then Jim Tate appointed him, and I specifically....I think that was one of the first times that I really asked him not to do something....it was in the Racquet Club...and he felt that he knew everything that I said was true...that it would be a controversial seat...that he could never run for another office in Philadelphia again, at least...because I had hopes that he would run for mayor again. But he felt that the job had to be done. And this is not just trying to make a hero out of him; he really believed...not that he could do it, but he felt there was no one else who could put as much in it as he could that was willing to do the work.

(WMP: Didn't he bring a fellow over from New York...Graham Finney?)

His days in the Board of Education...I never really got into that...I really never got into that.

I know people like Joe Gaffigan and people like...well he surrounded himself, I would say, with some of the best people in City Hall. Of course, he never knew Joe Gaffigan prior to....till after the election in '55. He really did not know him, because apparently, he had promised that seat to Bill Green. But apparently, he was very, very content with Joe's help throughout those years, acting as a liaison between himself and Bill Green.

(WMP: I've interviewed Joe Gaffigan. He was the one who said to get in touch with you.)

Yes. Joe and I became friends. I never knew Joe either; we became friends, I would say, somewhat maybe about two years after Joe was appointed deputy mayor. Joe was a very good, calming factor to Dick. As you well know, Dick could blow his top at times, and I think one of the great things Joe was able to do was to smooth a lot of the ripples that may have occurred between City Committee and Dick. That was my impression. But I was always impressed with the people that Dick had chosen for cabinet positions, et cetera...as compared with now...I mean as compared to what occurred.

I know one thing. Even though apparently he had arguments with Jim Tate, he always had great admiration for Jim's work.

(WMP: Did he?)

He really did. He...I think if there was any sense of differences between the men, I think that he felt maybe Jim didn't think in broad enough terms. But he knew that Jim Tate....many a time he'd come in to me.... he'd say..he'd point up to Jim Tate's office and he'd say, "Look, I betcha that son-of-a-gun's still working!" In other words, really working himself.

But, just let me comment...the Dilworths themselves were just really a great family. They were just marvelous to be associated with...in their environs...in their home. I had occasion to be there many times when I was the only one. And they were always very polite, and they were just...they were ...all the children were devoted towards their father's occupation, and his desires to be mayor.

(WMP: That's a tribute, I think. Well, I think you've given a good account here, Joe, it's very helpful. It's good to have it in the record, and we'll have it transcribed and give you a copy.)