

Interview with George Schermer  
May 2, 1976

Your first question, Walter, is will you please tell about your background and career before you came to Philadelphia as the Executive Director of this city's Commission on Human Relations. Immediately prior to my coming to Philadelphia I had been Director of what was called the Mayor's Interracial Committee in the city of Detroit. I had been in that position for eight years. Prior to that I had been area director for what is now HUD. This is during the World War II period. Managing a very substantial amount of temporary public housing for war workers in the Detroit area. Prior to that I had been Director -- I should say Assistant Director for the Detroit Housing Commission in charge of management and prior to that I had been in Chicago. I think there is some relevance to my work with the Commission on Human Relations in Philadelphia was the part that with the Chicago Housing Authority before I came to Detroit I had had quite a bit of experience in the initial opening of public housing where the racial issue emerged very strongly in whether or not Chicago housing projects should be racially inclusive or whether they should be segregated. And later in Detroit the reason I was asked to become Director of the Detroit Mayor's Interracial Committee was that during World War II there had been a tremendous amount of racial strife and a lot of the strife centering around housing. And I became recognized around Detroit as the person who could stay in communication with both the Black community and the white dominated City Hall.

(WMP: Were there actually race riots?)

There were two race riots in Detroit during World War II. The first a smaller one of smaller proportions, but in 1942 over the so-called Sojourner Truth public housing project. And I was right in the middle of that because I was the person who selected the tenants for that project and was in the process of moving them in the first day when the Whites in the neighborhood protested and drove the Blacks out and drove me out.

A year later, in 1943, there occurred in Detroit what was the most sizeable race riot that ever occurred in this country up to that point in history. There were some 19 or 20 people killed in that riot. And it went on for three days before troops were called in and order was established. It was as a result of that riot that the then mayor created what was called the Mayor's Interracial Committee and I was selected as the Executive Director of that and stayed in that position for eight years.

Did you want any more about me as to education and things like that? I grew up on a farm in central Minnesota and stayed there until I was 21 years of age. It was then that I decided to go off to the big city. This was in the midst of the Depression and the farming enterprise was not very attractive to a young man. So I hitch-hiked from Minnesota to Chicago in 1932 and started searching around for an opportunity to go to school. I had no money. And I spent several years sort of on the edge of going to school. For one solid year I lived in a rooming house near the University of Chicago just to be near the campus, but I didn't have any money for tuition. But gradually I found ways to finance my education. Working at a settlement -- a settlement house not far from the university in what was then a borderline community between the Black and White community. And our constituency at the settlement was both Black and White. And there was a great deal of hostility in that community so that we had minor race riots in our settlement almost daily. And that was where I began to learn how to cope with some of the problems.

(WMP: Did that experience motivate you to go on into the field of human relations?)

I wouldn't say I was motivated to go on because my intention was to go into public administration. I was interested in municipal government. Public administration at the municipal level, but I always found myself pulled into the race relations field simply because I had some experience and background. For instance, before I got my degree at the University of Chicago the Chicago Housing Authority called on me to come in and do some work because I was recognized already then by some of the people involved in the public housing work as a person of some experience. It was not my intention to go into housing per se or into race relations. Later, after I had my degree and was working for the Chicago Housing Authority a rather critical problem emerged at one of the housing projects and that was interesting because I had actually been fired the week before by the Executive Director at the behest of some city councilman in Chicago because the work I was doing in community relations for the housing projects cut across their own political ideas because they wanted their own political workers to organize the tenants and I was trying to develop a tenant organization that would give the tenants a greater sense of managing their own affairs. So under pressure from them the Director of the Housing Authority fired me, but a week later -- that was Elizabeth Wood, who became quite famous as a housing -- my phone rang and it was Elizabeth calling me back because a problem had broken out in one of the projects and they didn't know how to handle it.

(WMP: Were you an undergraduate at that point or were you a graduate?)

By that time I had my BA degree -- it took me seven years to just get a BA degree because I had no money and would go to school for a while and then run out of money and then go back. But I continued some graduate work after I went to work for the Chicago Housing Authority.

The situation in Chicago -- as far as the job was concerned -- was not very favorable because it was very volatile and Elizabeth Wood was very insecure herself and I being fired one day and called back to pick up an emergency on another -- so when the city of Detroit advertised a city-wide -- nation-wide competition for a position with the Detroit Housing Commission to serve as Director of their tenant relations I took the examination and qualified and went to Detroit and worked for the Housing Commission there about four or five years and then I went to the Federal Public Housing Administration for a year.

(WMP: Your function with Detroit with the housing agency there -- did that bring you into the field of human relations primarily?)

Very substantially. This was during World War II and the Detroit became a major war production center for tanks and all kinds of automotive equipment and the liberty bombers in Ypsilanti so that war workers came -- both White and Black -- came in tremendous numbers to the Detroit area and we -- the Detroit Housing Commission-- had to deal in Detroit and the Federal Public Housing Administration outside in the suburban communities. We built perhaps 30,000 temporary public housing units to accommodate the war workers in that area. And every point there was this atmosphere of threatening violence between Blacks and Whites because the Black workers were being employed by the manufacturing concerns, but the local governments were unable to cope with the housing situation adequately and every time you put in a public housing project somewhere a guarantee had to be given to the locality that there would be only White workers accommodated in those houses or they would oppose. But of course even then it was clearly illegal to exclude Blacks from their need of housing from government-managed public housing. The authorities would tend to discriminate anyway until enough pressure would develop. Then we would have to do something about bringing some Blacks into the development and this would usually trigger violence. So a major part of my function with both the Detroit Housing Commission and later with Federal Public Housing Administration was to try to find some resolution to these conflicts. And I wouldn't say I was very successful, but I was successful in one respect -- and that was I was able to stay in communication with the Black community without losing contact with the public officials in various suburban jurisdictions.

It's all a rather -- in terms of reminiscence, I could go on for hours talking about how I dealt then with the Mayor of Dearborn -- who is still the Mayor of Dearborn -- Orville Hubbard, but that is a long story in itself and not pertaining to Philadelphia, so I would suggest I don't pursue it.

The next question was -- who was the person in the Clark administration who recruited you and through what contact was your name submitted for the position? I'm not very clear about that, but I suspect that it was Frank Lescher, my predecessor, who actually recommended me. The Philadelphia Commission on Human Relations was established by the new charter and it was a different agency in that respect from the former Fair Employment Practice Commission, which Philadelphia set up two years before. Frank Lescher had been the Director of that commission and by virtue of that he and the entire staff were moved into the new commission because the new commission on human relations had the responsibility for administering the established fair employment practices ordinance. The new commission was made up of people who wanted a new program and a key figure in that was Sadie Alexander, who was one of the members of the commission and Secretary of the commission.

(WMP: Who was the Chairman?)

Bud Callahan, a lawyer, was the Chairman. Nathan Edelstein was Vice Chairman. Sadie was the Secretary. And there were Albert Nesbit, Betty Fedder, Jimmy Jones, Leon Sunstein, and L.M.C. Smith were all on the Commission. I think that there was a kind of a split in the Commission at that time with Callahan and Nesbit and Sunstein and Fedder rather strongly favoring retaining Frank Lesher as Executive. But I think Sadie Alexander was very much opposed to him because she thought that he was too much of a Quaker and too much of a peace maker and not sufficiently forthright and ineloquent. And she was supported, as I recall, by Nathan Edelstein and Leon Sunstein -- no, not by Leon Sunstein -- Sam Smith, and probably by Jimmy Jones. In any event, he found that he couldn't work effectively because the Commission was too divided over his incumbency, but Bob Callahan, who trusted Frank Lesher very strongly, and Albert Nesbit asked Frank to give them help in finding an executive. And I knew Frank Lesher because we were both active in a national organization called the National Association of Intergroup Relations Officials, an organization which I actually organized a few years before, and -- I might point out another thing there. When the new commission first came into office in 1952 they went to the Fells Institute at the University of Pennsylvania for some assistance in structuring a program and deciding on what kind of a staff organization they would want. And as a part of that operation they asked three people who were already working in the field to come and spend a day with them as consultants and I was one of the three.

(WMP: This is Steve Sweeney's method. He did this for a number of people we got from other cities.)

I didn't realize that. I knew that's what we did in our case. In any event, Tom Wright, who was then the Executive of the Chicago Commission on Human Relations and I, as Director of the Mayor's Interracial Committee in Detroit, and I think it was Frank Baldwin (?) from Cleveland, but I'm not quite sure who the third person was. The three of us came to Philadelphia for a day and we spent half a day with the then staff and the second half of the day with the Commission and so I had met the Commissioners at that time and they had met me. It was about a year later that I received a telephone call from Frank Leshner asking if I would be willing to have my name submitted to the Commission as a candidate for the position. It was a very acceptable idea to me because I was then working with an extraordinarily unfriendly and hostile Mayor in Detroit and he didn't really dare fire me because my relationships with the Black community were quite good. And with those parts of the White community like the Council of Churches, the Catholic Interracial Council, the Jewish Community Council, and so forth, were all very supportive. The labor unions were very supportive. But it was really an untenable situation. I was glad for an opportunity to find a new location. So I was responsive.

Then I came back into Philadelphia. Met Joe Clark for the first time. Bill Rafsky and all of the Commission and again we had a full day of interviews and I did a little checking around the community. It was quite apparent that the Commission had already made up its mind, based on that earlier interview a year before -- that if I would accept the position, I would get the job.

I think it was December of 1952 that I made the decision to come. I actually arrived in Philadelphia to take the job in February of 1953. So that's something of the story of how I got there.

Your next question is: what were the conditions in Philadelphia that challenged you to come there and what did you find to be the state of affairs in Philadelphia from the standpoint of human relations?

I've already indicated a little bit of what the conditions were -- because conditions in Philadelphia for me at that time were very bad and any new job that was at all in my line of activity would have been very effective. I mean conditions in Detroit, not Philadelphia -- my relationship with the Mayor in City Hall there had become untenable.

So the Philadelphia situation looked good. But in addition, I might say that the prior year we had had a national conference of our national organization in Detroit. My agency did. And we had arranged for Frank Leshner and a couple of other executives from other agencies to come before City Council to tell what was going on in other cities in the human relations field. And Frank Leshner's description of what was happening in Philadelphia had really grabbed quite a bit of attention. The City Councilmen were very interested and astonished. And of course my own Commission and I were very impressed. I hadn't until that point really known the breadth of the city charter provisions. So this made us all think that Philadelphia was miles ahead of any other city and obviously at that moment the ideal place to be an executive of that kind of an agency.

That, plus the opportunity to appear before the Commission all made it look very good to me.

(WMP: Do you know who was responsible on the city planning subjects on the city charter commission for writing into the city charter the provisions that you liked?)

I don't know for certain, but I'm quite sure that the Fellowship Commission had a great deal to do with getting that charter provision there.

(WMP: Abe Freedman was involved --)

I was just going to say that I suspect that it might have been Abe Freedman more than any other person who was there who put that language into the charter.

(WMP: He was on the drafting committee of the charter commission and he had been involved -- Leon Sunstein was his father-in-law.)

Even today, the language of the Philadelphia city charter is far in advance of any other city enabling legislation. As a matter of fact, I suspect that even today Philadelphia is probably the only city which has a city charter established commission. In any other city it would be established by ordinance rather than by city charter. I could be mistaken. There might be another one or two. Certainly in Chicago and Detroit, two cities I'm quite familiar with, it's still a matter of an ordinance.

At that point the Philadelphia Commission was somewhat better financed than any other one in the country. It had a larger budget and a larger staff and so there were many reasons why that would have looked attractive to me.

Then you speak of the state of affairs in Philadelphia -- it was quite evident that as a result of prior activity of the Fellowship Commission some of the activity of the Friends groups, Philadelphia had moved farther ahead in establishing a governmental function -- recognized governmental function -- for promoting equal opportunity and the like.

Your next question here is -- who were the members of your commission most helpful in giving your guidance and support for making the newly created Commission a vital factor in the city and would you tell the role that they played? Well, that original commission was really quite a good commission. You had really two groups on the Commission. One group of somewhat more conservative people, but they were conservative only relatively speaking in relation to say, Sadie Alexander. But Bob Callahan and Albert Nesbit and Leon Sunstein were certainly the people who had a close relationship with Mayor Clark and were considered by Clark to be the balance there. Sadie Alexander and Nathan Edelstein and Sam Smith represented the sort of militant aggressive voice on the commission and they wanted to see a great deal of action. Bob Callahan really was a rather conservative person. He was strongly committed to the idea of the fair employment practices and would support a vigorous program in the area of employment, but he was terribly concerned about any activity in the arena.

He was Irish Catholic and quite highly regarded, I think in the diocese. But between the two -- well, Betty Fedder was there and I think that Betty tended to identify with Sadie Alexander but she was not really as clear about what she wanted to see happen. Sadie really had tremendous expectations of the Commission and she was even disappointed in me in time because I was a person who was somewhat more pragmatic in the sense that I -- there were no limits to the distance I would be willing to go with the Commission provided that it was doable, but I was always strongly committed to the idea that you have to have a sufficient support base in the community to be sure you could do it. I don't buy failure. I don't believe in launching out on activities that are likely to fail.

Betty Fedder was very helpful. She was herself an author and very helpful in helping us set up a publicity and public interpretation program. Jimmy Jones helped us a great deal with organized labor. He was a Black person with the steelworkers union. Frank Coyle worked with the Council of Social Agencies, I believe that's what it was called -- but he was actually a man identified with the AFL-CIO. So in one way or another, every member of that

played an important and helping role and it was several -- such a contrast to my earlier experience in Detroit that I felt that I had reached the apex of my career in having that kind of a Commission and I had a good relationship with Joe Clark so that in fact I hadn't been there very long before he asked me to write a couple of speeches for him and I was very pleased with his response. He was very happy with the kind of thing that I had done. I learned to know Richardson Dilworth and established a reasonably good relationship with him so that when he became Mayor we still had a close relationship with the Mayor's office and until Dilworth resigned in his second term to run for Governor and Tate became Mayor I had had an extraordinarily good relationship with the Commission and with the Mayor's office and a reasonably good relationship with City Council, although very early on I somehow antagonized Jim Tate and we never did get along and when he became Mayor it was quite clear that my days as Director of the Commission were going to be limited.

Your next question -- what measures did you have for determining what actions your commission should take and would you describe the program of the commission as you evolved it? Well, we had one very explicit charge and that was to administer the laws that prohibited discrimination and Philadelphia had two -- the first and older one having to do with discrimination in restaurants and hotels was no longer extraordinarily important to us because Philadelphia had already really won that battle. I'm not saying there weren't some residue discrimination in some restaurants and so forth, but we had very little activity in that arena because there weren't very many complaints, but the field of employment -- Philadelphia just two or three years earlier passed the fair employment practice ordinance -- and we took that very seriously. I always felt for many years prior that the key to advancement as far as the Black community was concerned was economic. That to whatever extent Blacks could achieve a better economic status through getting better jobs, improving their training, moving up in the job field, and thus increasing their buying power, that that would be the way in which we would solve the problems of discrimination to a greater extent than any other way. I had felt so strongly about that even in my Detroit days that back there I had led the drive for a state fair employment practices law -- I was Chairman of the state-wide committee to get that law passed and it was passed just the year that I left.

The Commission -- even Sadie Alexander, who wanted a great deal more done -- agreed that the number one priority should be in the jobs field. The more activist people on the Commission -- Sadie Alexander, Nathan, and Sam Smith -- all

had a notion somehow or other that we could do a great deal to change attitudes in the city of Philadelphia through a program that would be educational -- conduct hearings and forums, use a lot of publicity and so forth. I wasn't opposed to that, but it did not have in my mind the highest priority because I belonged to the school of thought having the notion that you made the most progress -- you got attitudes changed as you saw people working and behaving in different roles, so that I felt that if we could see Blacks in important job positions. If we could see Blacks moving into houses, that this would change attitudes. They had the idea that we could approach this from more of an educational and active community relations program. There was no real struggle between the Commission and myself on this. I went ahead and implemented as much of that kind of program as we could get done, but I didn't think then and I don't think now that it was the kind of thing that helped the most.

(WMP: the city's own policy of employing Blacks must have been part of your program -- was it?)

Yes, except that at that point the Civil Service Commission was pretty strongly committed and we didn't have to work very hard on it because the job was being done. I would say that we had some difficulties in the lower echelons. I remember that in the water department -- Sam Baxter was the Water Commissioner -- now he was very supportive in the top level, but as we got down to the level of people working in the sewage treatment plants, you had ethnic cliques at that level so that at one of the treatment plants it was nearly an all Italian work force, with an Italian foreman and their technique through the years had been to manage -- they could not longer control hiring at the initial induction levels because of the civil service -- but they could control promotions. And we had to do quite a lot of work and it was very delicate because we were constantly threatened with charges that we were interfering with the process and the merit program and they would threaten to strike. They never did, but we were confronted with that.

I might go back for a minute and say that any Commission of this kind has difficulty controlling its program because events emerge -- we used to call that the Fire Department approach and that is that as problems arose we had to respond as a fire department would respond -- and therefore the program was shaped in part by demands from the community and one of the things that was happening in Philadelphia was the case in other large cities at the time. White people were moving towards the suburbs, leaving a kind of housing market vacuum behind and as they moved, Blacks began to move to replace them. But the Whites in the community remaining behind in those neighborhoods would become very disturbed by the racial change, so that one of the problems we were dealing with constantly was the reaction of Whites toward Blacks as they moved in and we

had to shape a whole program service around preparing communities for the eventuality of change and dealing with the tensions that arose when the change occurred. An important element in shaping program in Philadelphia was the Fellowship Commission with Maury Fagan. Fagan was a man with a very fertile mind who was constantly thinking up new directions that he wanted the community to take and he was something of a problem to us in that respect because he would be making demands for program activity that were not particularly related to our capacity to get the budget to finance those programs. I would say that to the extent of 60 or 70 percent of our program activity we were simply responding to the pressures that were put on us, either by events of the community or the demands of organizations such as the Fellowship Commission and only to a small extent were we in command of shaping our own program.

Now eventually I worked out a plan with my staff and the Commission that we would prepare in advance of putting together our budget we would prepare a program plan and I would ask the members of the staff to contribute goals and ideas for program objectives and I would ask the commission to do that and we would always come up with 3 or 4 times as much activity as could possibly be done with our staff and then we would have to establish priorities and we brought the Commission into the process in determining what our program priorities should be.

(WMP: You might mention how much staff you had -- )

Our total staff perhaps never went over 35. I was a little unclear as to the precise number, but it was at least 30 and might have been up to 35. We -- after the first couple of years of sort of trial and error to determine where our program priorities should be really divided ourselves into three major operational units. I think maybe I should say four. One was compliance, which had to do with the enforcement of the anti-discrimination laws and at that time was primarily related to employment. The second area of activity was called community relations. This was to get out into the community to service -- respond to the demands of the community. Included in that was our work with the police department.

(WMP: Do you mean responding to demands or do you mean needs? Did people know that they needed help?)

When I say demands I mean in a given neighborhood, something would be happening that would cause people to feel that there was an emerging problem of racial tension and it might be

because a Black family was moving into a previously White community. It might mean that there was conflict between Puerto Ricans and Blacks in a section of the community. It might have been a case where people were complaining that the police were being unduly harsh in that neighborhood.

(WMP: Did neighborhood leaders actually come to you and say can you come out and help us solve this problem?)

Yes, we had a great deal of that. Then sometimes people would go to -- let's say the Captain in charge of a given police precinct would recognize that there were emerging problems of tension between his officers and some people in the community -- he might call us up and say he had a problem there. That didn't necessarily mean we could do anything about it, but he wanted to put himself in the position that he had gone to the appropriate agency and put us on notice.

(WMP: Was there a system of police captains being informed about your agency?)

Yes. Perhaps I should continue -- you asked about the four divisions and I will point out how the police captains would come into that. We set up the compliance division, the community relations division, the housing division, and then a public information and research division. And it was the function of the public relations and research division to publish certain newsletters and to get a lot of information out. And we targeted the police department as one place where we wanted to do extensive work and Tom Gibbons was then the Police Commissioner and he was quite cooperative and with his help we set up meetings with the top command down to the level of Captain to inform them about our existence. And we were invited to -- by the Captains of some of the police districts, not all of them, but some of them -- to come in and talk to the police officers so that we were alerting the police to our existence and Tom Gibbons set up a community relations division within the police department to work with us. So that the information got to the police and they couldn't help but know of our existence, though their attitudes were mixed.

(WMP: Was the Bureau of Public Information in the City Representative's office helpful to you or did you have your operation entirely separate from it?)

I would say that we tried to work as closely with the Bureau of Information as we could. But we had our own operation and we had a person on our staff who was responsible for doing that kind of work. I'm a little hazy about that because

I had Bert Gordon as my head of that division and he was a very competent person so that I delegated to him -- he was the most competent person on my staff -- and whatever I delegated to him he handled very effectively. Now I know that when we put together a program in -- I suppose it was about 5 years, probably around 1958 -- we put together a mass media program. We felt it was very important to sort of educate the mass media on a developing greater perception and skill about handling news on race relations. This was one of the most successful things that we ever did. For a period of I would guess four or five months we had weekly luncheon meetings with some of the top staff of the media. I know the Managing Editor of the Bulletin was at every one of those meetings. And on that program, which took a great deal of planning to get the people in there, because they felt that this was an agency of government trying to manipulate the media, we had to be very careful about how we did that. We got a lot of help from the City Representative's office and we were very very pleased with that.

Perhaps I should go to the next -- please recount any specific instances of Commission action which you felt were particularly significant and illustrate in that sort of way the work of the Commission. I've just mentioned one -- the program we did with the mass media which we I think played a very substantial role in developing greater maturity on the part of the media in handling race relations news. The program was so successful that we wrote it up and it became the model for similar programs in many cities around the country. Another very important program that we undertook of which I was always very proud had to do with housing. I was always very concerned -- my number two priority as far as I was concerned was housing. And at the outset even the Fellowship Commission -- even Sadie Alexander -- was afraid to go into that because they felt that that was the most volatile issue. That if we moved too strongly in the arena of housing that we would antagonize the community. We developed the concept that we would reach three basic audiences. The first audience was what we called the changing neighborhood audience where people were living with the reality of racial change occurring in their community and in many instances were responding to panic. And we designed a very special program for them consisting of an educational film strip. We spent a lot of money putting that strip together and then we put out questions and answers. A whole educational kit. But what we were trying to do was develop a kit of materials that any community leader could use themselves in dealing with this problem. And that program was well received.

The second package was designed to be used in the all-White neighborhood, which was not yet feeling the pressure of racial change. We were trying to get across to them that racial change will eventually come to your community.

There are important reasons why Blacks must search for housing. And you may feel that you are insulated and that this won't happen in your community, but we want you to be prepared that eventually it will happen. It was a good package, but it was interesting that White people living in that kind of neighborhood were not really responsive. This was suggesting that they had to deal with a problem that they didn't want to think about. The third package was directed toward the Black community and the basic message of that package was yes, Blacks are barred from the housing market, and Whites are responsible for that but Blacks are responsible too if they accept it. If Blacks feel that they don't want to live indefinitely hemmed in within the confines of the ghetto it is important that Blacks themselves -- we didn't say Blacks in those days, we said Negroes -- test the market. And therefore, if you're looking for a house and if you can afford to pay for one, you do have a responsibility to test the market, and that means that when you see houses advertised in newspapers and you see billboards up announcing houses, you should search there for houses and test the market. And each of these had an educational filmstrip and a packet with information and questions and answers. The interesting thing about that one was that it was addressed to the Black community, but it was the White community that got the message. And if there was ever anything that alerted real estate men and builders and neighborhood leaders that we were doing something very daring, it was that piece. So that while it was addressed to the Black community it was the White community that got the message. And it created a good deal of stir in the community. The Bulletin came out with a headline saying almost in effect Commission on Human Relations Recommends Block-busting. And I had been trying for two or three years to get opportunities to speak to these neighborhood real estate brokers associations. They would never open up. Within a day after we put that out I got an invitation from every one of those groups to come out and talk. It was the most daring thing we have ever done, but it also was the most effective one that we had ever done and I was very very pleased with the results. I'll say this for Dick Dilworth. Natalie Saxe in his office was shocked that we did this and her first response was one of anger and then Dilworth called me up and said, "George, what is this about?" And I explained -- incidentally, it was always our policy never to ask the Mayors whether we should do anything, but always to tell them that we were going to do it. Always felt it was inappropriate to ask, because if we asked then the burden of the decision was with the mayor's office and if the mayor thought it was too far out he would perhaps have to say no and then that would put him in a bad position because then people would say the mayor said we couldn't do this. If we asked him and he said yes, it puts him in a position -- so my policy was not to ask but always to tell in advance what we were going to do.

We had telegraphed in advance that we were going to do this and somehow Dilworth and Natalie Saxe hadn't quite registered on it until it actually occurred. But I went over -- Natalie asked me to come over and talk to Dilworth about it, and Dilworth listened for a while and said, "Ok, George, I'll give you complete support." There was no question of his complete support.

Continuing with your question about specific instances. The other thing that I think is worth recording is that I believe that our commission in Philadelphia was the real inventor of the idea of affirmative action. Now affirmative action is something that dozens of agencies around the country will claim that they were the originators of, but I am positive that we in Philadelphia developed that concept. And what we meant by affirmative action was that up till then the fair employment laws and fair housing laws were geared to the idea that if a person was discriminated against he should file a complaint and then it would be investigated and then we either would resolve the complaint or carry it to a hearing and it never really worked very well. In a sense it put the burden of proof on the person who was discriminated against and it meant that you were going to resolve discrimination by first requiring that an overt action of discrimination occurred and there then would be a complaint filed and investigated. So we developed a concept that since the city charter gave us powers of investigation that we would search for patterns of discrimination and if we found what were in effect patterns of discrimination we would ask for the group -- for instance, we took a look at the employment practices of all of the banks and finance institutions in the city and we took a look at the employment patterns in the restaurant industry -- and where we found that there were in effect patterns of discrimination, we were asking the industry to take actions to commit themselves to employing affirmatively -- in other words, they were not just supposed to be neutral about it -- they were supposed to actively recruit Blacks in order to compensate for the pattern of discrimination that had occurred through the years.

Also, if we had a specific case of discrimination in which we made a finding of discrimination, then we went beyond that specific case into the whole history of that firm's employment patterns. We examined their recruiting methods, their promotional methods, -- we took a close look at how Blacks were distributed throughout the firm -- and we would issue an order which would ask the firm to do a whole series of things to remedy that. So that we were not just going through a one by one process of getting individuals to complain -- that we were affecting the general pattern of the industry. When we took a look at the hiring practices of the restaurants and hotels in the city, the hotels and restaurants had long since adopted the practice of equal service -- of non-discriminatory service -- but in employment

the industry was very heavily stratified with Blacks doing certain kinds of jobs only -- in restaurant after restaurant you would find that all the people who washed dishes and cleaned up and the people who served as bus-boys or bus-girls were Black. The people who waited on tables were always White. There were only a couple of restaurants in the whole city of Philadelphia that had any Black waiters and waitresses. Horn and Hardart, for instance, had an interesting pattern that had all of the table service in every Horn and Hardart restaurant was White. All of the people behind the steam tables that dished out the food were in every case Black. And this had been so traditional -- and Horn and Hardart was considered by Blacks to be a good employer. The Blacks weren't very happy about the fact that we were going into this. The reason we were pushed into this in a way -- we wanted to take a look at the whole industry -- but some people were opposed to us looking at Horn and Hardart because they felt they had a reasonably good employment situation there. But Rev. William Grey was very upset about this pattern at Horn and Hardart and he kept pressing us to do something about it. In any event, we set up targets for the industry. We had a great deal of difficulty with the unions in this case. We established certain kinds of -- we didn't use the word "quotas" because we didn't want to be committed to quotas -- but we used the word targets, in that we wanted to see 5 or 10% change in the course of a year in these employment patterns. And they couldn't claim that there weren't qualified people -- there were too many Blacks working in the restaurant trade for them to tell us they didn't have qualified people.

I cite this concept -- of affirmative remedies -- as something very innovative that the Philadelphia Commission did. Now we were doing that in the late '50's when John Kennedy was elected President in 1960. He had made commitments during his campaign to strengthening both the federal fair employment practice role and its housing role. He made that famous statement somewhere during his campaign that it would take no more than a mere stroke of a pen to change the practices of the federal government in housing. Now he more or less reniged on that and it wasn't more than two years after he was elected that he finally signed a very weak executive order. But in the employment field he did take a number of steps to strengthen the fair employment practices role of the federal government and it was then that the federal agencies adopted the concept of affirmative action in employment.

Incidentally, Lyndon Johnson, then Vice President, was named by Kennedy to be the Chairman of the President's Committee on Equal Employment Opportunity and a chap who I had hired originally in Detroit as one of my staff people became the staff director of that federal fair employment practices commission. It was that commission and Lyndon Johnson was Chairman that began to develop the concept of affirmative action and by that time people all over the country were beginning to use the term affirmative action or affirmative remedies, nearly all of them forgetting that they first got the words and they first got the idea out of our Philadelphia Commission.

Your question -- how did the work of the Human Relations Commission intermesh with the activities of the privately established Fellowship Commission? I've already mentioned Maury Fagan. The Fellowship Commission was both a great help and something of a problem. The Fellowship Commission, being led by that very energetic person, Maury Fagan, tended to pre-empt the role of other groups in the city, so that the NAACP, for instance, never emerged as a very strong agency because it was a constituent part of the Fellowship Commission and Fagan was a more articulate person than Charlie Shorter, for instance.

At that time there was a group called the Armstrong Association in Philadelphia which preceded but later became the Urban League. It too was rather weakly led. There was a catholic interracial council -- there was a Council of Churches Race Relations Committee -- there was a race relations committee of the Friends, and so forth. But it was very difficult for us as a commission to establish direct lines of communication with those groups because they were always being brought together under the umbrella of the Fellowship Commission and it was always Maury Fagan's voice that was being heard. While there was nothing wrong with the program he was promoting, but he became a kind of buffer and insulator between us and all of the groups with which we ought to have had more direct contact and I always felt that in some respects Maury Fagan was doing a disfavor to those other groups in the community because the Fellowship Commission itself couldn't possibly generate enough funds and have enough staff or did it have legitimacy, credibility as a spokesman for the Black community, for instance. So in those respects I found the Fellowship Commission something of a problem because I felt we ought to have more direct lines of communication. We tried to build our direct lines of communication but we were always running into the fact that we were expected to meet with these groups through the auspices of the Fellowship Commission.

On the other hand, Fagan with his several committees -- there was a committee on community tensions, and a committee on schools, and a committee on this and committee on that -- Fagan was an imaginative and creative person who was always coming up with new ideas and we didn't have to do much thinking on our own because we were always confronted with the thinking that had already been happening. The other side of that coin again -- Fagan thought of the ideas but he was the architect but not the engineer. He conceived of programs but he was not the man who began to work out the logistics of how you got the manpower and the resources to focus on a given project. So you would think about something -- say, work with the police department -- he would generate something there, but then he was off on another program and we would be left with heavy demands from various sources in the community that we should carry out this program.

On balance, of course, we felt that the Fellowship Commission was the voice of the community. It wasn't appropriate for us as an agency of government to protest its existence. We had to work with it. A number of people on my staff were very resentful of the role of the Fellowship Commission. I didn't feel that way personally because I just relaxed and accepted the fact and went ahead and did the best program we could.

(WMP: How many people did you have on your staff, George -- did I ask you that?)

You did ask, but I guess I didn't finish answering that. I described the four divisions. We had about 20 people in professional levels -- they were either supervisors or what we called human relations workers and that meant that they were professionally trained people serving as investigators of employment complaints or working out in the community with community organizations. And then with the clerical staff, somehow the number of 21 professional and about 12 clerical sets in my mind as about the way the staff was divided. I know that we never got over 35 and it seems to me we built the staff -- when I first came there were about 15 on the staff and we built that up very quickly.

(WMP: did you feel you were adequately staffed?)

One was never adequately staffed. I would have liked to have pushed that up to higher levels than we had. But comparatively, we were the best staffed agency in the country. State or federal or municipal. By this I mean that if you think of the population of Philadelphia as around 2 million or slightly less and compare that with say the staff that the New York State Commission had in relation to the millions

of people living in all of New York State -- probably 20 million or something like that living in New York State -- then we had a proportionately larger staff. We had a larger staff in the New York City Commission. We had a larger staff proportionately then, so that when I came before City Council to testify about our budget, one of the questions we would be asked at the time was how does your budget compare to some other comparable agencies around the country -- I had to in all honesty say we had the largest budget and the largest staff in the country. You had a hard time justifying more staff in those conditions. I thought we were rather liberally treated. Now since then I think the city commission has perhaps tripled its staff. I think that they are doing -- this may sound ungracious of me -- I don't think they are doing nearly as much work as we did with three times the staff. That's because they don't have the kind of thrust anymore. They're much more compromised.

Next -- were there any particularly explosive situations which developed in the city while you were there and if so, would you recount them and tell of the actions which your commission recommended? -- or were taken possibly without bringing in the Human Relations Commission for guidance. The first very explosive situation occurred, I guess, the very first year I was there when a Black man and his wife bought a house -- it actually was an old abandoned store front not far from the old stadium on the near north side where the Phillies played ball. This was an all-White working-class community. Quite poor. Strongly Italian, but quite a few Irish there also. A local Catholic parish was a dominant force in that community. And here was an abandoned store -- the window had been broken out and boarded up and a man -- a Black -- had bought it at a sheriff's sale for a small sum. And people in the neighborhood ganged up on him when they realized he was going to move in there. And for -- they wrecked the place. It was in bad shape before he bought it, but they really wrecked the place. He was not a very articulate or able person -- he wasn't able to explain what he was doing. He was a man without very much education, but he had a lot of guts. He had decided that he had to move somewhere. That he was going to fix this place up for himself and he wasn't going to run. So he stayed there, in spite of the mob. The police established some sort of order to protect him personally, but the question then was what should be done. He said he was going to finish the place and he expected police protection.

I remember Joe Clark was away on summer vacation. He was out in Jackson Hole, Wyoming. And the police really needed some instruction at that point. The police couldn't see any sense in protecting a man in that building.

Incidentally, there was an extra problem. That place wouldn't pass inspection for human habitation. It didn't have adequate plumbing facilities and so forth. So that the city authorities wanted to force him out of there. The place was not up to code. And we were part of a real dilemma. If we took that position the Black community would see that as an action by the Commission on Human Relations itself and the police department of depriving the Black's rights to property. On the other hand, if we insisted that he be protected in his right to stay there it would look as though a Black man had the right to live in a substandard house. So we went to the Fellowship House -- not the Fellowship Commission, but the Fellowship House. And Marjorie Penny -- and talked to her about organizing a crew to put that house into shape. And she was very cooperative and we got together a crew of skilled workman who were committed to this sort of thing under the auspices of Fellowship House -- we got plumbers, electricians, carpenters, and so forth, in there and we got the police to protect the right of those people to do the job. And for maybe two weeks the mob was around there all the time. But we put that house -- when I say we, we were working with Marjorie Penny -- we said we would provide the protection if they got the job done. So we got the place into a position where it would pass inspection. I think we had to have police stationed around that property for up to a year, because people in the community were determined to get him out of there. But we established a principle in doing that -- that a Black who has legitimately bought a piece of property was going to have the right to occupy that property. And you couldn't use the mechanics of such as inspection to find something below code to get him out of there. And I think that the police department understood that and a lot of people in the city agencies understood that. We did something very important. Incidentally, Betty Fedder wrote that up as a story for then Reporter magazine and gave it good treatment. It was a piece that was widely circulated all over the country as an example of how a city agency, working with community groups could establish this kind of a principle.

But that was early -- I think that was in '53 or '54 that we did that. Then around 1960 we had a summer where we had a sudden outburst of a whole series of incidents. It was actually a Cherokee Indian who moved into a neighborhood. The people there insisted he was Black, but he was Indian, and in those days it was a Portugese couple from New Bedford, Mass., -- anyway there are a number of little fishing villages of Portugese speaking people. They've been there for generations and they still speak Portugese and there is a very strong African mixture there.

Some of the people are very dark and they look like Blacks. But they themselves don't consider themselves Black. They consider themselves Portugese. And a Portugese couple moved into a house. In any event, we had a series of about six different incidences where crowds gathered and in several instances -- for instance, the Portugese couple and the American Indian couple left. They were frightened -- and submitted to so much pressure that they left. These incidents occurred sort of in the near northeast, that we call Fishtown and Kensington. Our concern there was that the police were playing too neutral a role. When Tom Gibbons had been Commissioner we had had a more vigorous posture. Al Brown became Police Commissioner and he is a very articulate guy, very helpful in the way he would work with us. But he never had quite the posture of being a vigorous commander so that the police had assumed the posture of just maintaining order but not going beyond that and the mere presence of a crowd that is shouting threats is in my opinion a form of assault.

We had several meetings -- including lawyers, the Fellowship Commission, representatives of the NAACP, our Commission, City Solicitor's office, -- to discuss the kinds of procedures that should be taken to protect people under those conditions. And for the first time we were reasonably successful in formulating a set of policies and procedures for the guidance of the police department on what actions the police should take under those kinds of conditions.

It in my opinion was one of the better pieces of work that we did, though I don't think it lasted because after I left I think the posture of the police department -- Rizzo had become Police Commissioner. Well, first he became an Inspector and later he moved, under Tate, to the position of Police Commissioner. And the guidelines that we had developed I think were lost.

Next question -- what were the resources of the city upon which you could call for help in your work and would you say that Philadelphia was quite rich in such sources? When I first came to Philadelphia I thought it was an extraordinarily rich city in that regard -- it was such a contrast to Detroit. In Detroit the power structure was stark and clear. You had the manufacturers and you had the labor unions and you got things done if you could get the manufacturers and the labor unions to agree on a policy. Most of the time if you tried to do something you got yourself identified with one side or the other and then you had the other side against you. So if you worked too closely with the unions you had the manufacturers against you. If you worked too closely with the manufacturers you had the unions against you.

There were certain basic things you could get an agreement on and once you got those two groups to support it it was clear and the press knew what the score was and you could go to town.

Philadelphia is a much more complicated place. You had to touch base in a thousand spots. There was no one group that emerged as a very powerful group but you had to build consensus as a part of the old Quaker tradition, I guess. You had to generate consensus. And I thought that was a wonderful kind of arrangement because you could get different coalitions in support of different kinds of programs and if you failed occasionally you didn't lose the war, but you lost that particular battle. Because you could reform another coalition on another program and move forward. You had the Friends, you had the Council of Churches, the National Conference of Christians and Jews, the GPM, the Philadelphia Housing Association, the Council of Social Agencies -- all of those groups. I would suppose that in that respect Philadelphia was a more supportive community for our kind of work than most cities in the country.

On the other hand, I had the feeling that most of those groups were somewhat removed from the real core of political power. And when I was beginning to have my battles with Jim Tate and I was looking around for a body of community support, it didn't turn out to be nearly as strong as I had thought it would be. There were meetings, but it wasn't that easy to coalesce that support in time and I think Jim Tate rode rough-shod over all of the protestations of the various groups and after they had spoken their voices he wasn't listening or didn't care and those forces weren't able to deliver the thrust of power that was necessary. On balance, though, I would say that Philadelphia is a city which will survive as a pretty decent and human city through the years, I suspect, because there is a residue of resources in the community that always will be there. They might be overwhelmed for periods, but I think that that kind of thing will reemerge. So I have greater hopes for Philadelphia in the long-run than I would have for some other cities such as Detroit, Cleveland, St. Louis -- they are all much worse off in my opinion in that regard than Philadelphia.

I think that one of the problems with the Philadelphia group that I'm talking about is that at that time they were still pretty much controlled by very nice people -- I mean polite, Quaker-ish types of people who weren't quite prepared to deal with the extraordinarily harsh thrust of the Black community. It was one thing to have some nice middle-class Blacks to deal with -- it was another thing to have Cecil Moore emerge and be for a time the voice of the Black community. And I saw what happened in the Philadelphia Housing Association. The -- when Dorothy Montgomery retired and was replaced by Cushing Dolbear (?). And Cushing tried to relate herself

to the emerging Black voice of the community. I think that she quickly found that the Blacks were no longer accepting the role of the kind of middle class White, educated, polite leadership. They wanted to exercise their own voice and I don't know what's happened to change the name of that Association now to the Housing Association of Delaware Valley -- I suspect it doesn't begin to have the influence it had in the days of Dorothy Montgomery. Partly because the more militant Blacks still do not control the power structure. I knew that Shirley Dennis is now the Black director -- I don't know about the whole staff. It's a very different kind of ballgame, I guess. The older leadership group -- a lot of the people are still around, but I don't think they have the influence -- at least not in the political arena -- that they had in the days of Joe Clark and I don't suppose that the more militant Black leadership has much control over the economic structure of the community. But they had more -- there is a different kind of relationship with City Hall and it is one of I suppose bargaining strength. I guess that Rizzo probably is very contemptuous of the Black community, but he knows how to bargain with power forces in the Black community and it's not in my opinion a particularly constructive situation for the time being. I suppose it will square itself away in time.

Your question 10 -- do most large cities have some form of Human Relations Commission and do they in most cases predate the founding of the one in Philadelphia? On the dating, I'm not quite sure. Chicago and Detroit -- well, let me go back even farther in history -- there were city agencies -- mayor's committees; and so forth for some short duration dating back to 1919 when there was a race riot in Chicago and the then mayor set up some sort of a Commission that existed for a year or two.

In Detroit in 1926 there had been a major race riot -- I shouldn't say major, but of some significant proportions around the old Northwest High School and a chap by the name of Reinhold Niebur was then the pastor of a nearby church and he became Chairman of the first Detroit Mayor's Commission on Race. That existed for a couple of years, but all such -- the agencies that have a continuous lot that exist today, the Chicago Commission on Human Relations and the Detroit Commission on Community Relations, which is an outgrowth of the old Mayor's Interracial Committee both date back to about 1943 and those have been in continuous existence. In 1947 I called together in Detroit the first meeting of known city agencies that were concerned and there were about seven of them. There was St. Paul, Minneapolis, Chicago, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Buffalo, New York, New York City, and Detroit. And later that year -- 1947 -- we met in Chicago and formed what was called the National Association of Intergroup Relations Officials, which is still in existence.

Philadelphia created its Commission on Fair Employment Practices I think about 1948 or '49 -- I'm not quite sure. That was really the forerunner of the present Commission on Human Relations. To this date, as I said earlier, as far as I know, Philadelphia is the only one that has a chartered Commission on Human Relations, though it's conceivable that others exist. Now in 1963, after I resigned from the Philadelphia Commission, instead of consulting, the first project of any significance I had was to write a book -- a set of guidelines on city's interracial committees. And this was funded by the then Eleanor Roosevelt Memorial Foundation and it was printed by the Anti-defamation League of the Brinai Brith and it was officially circulated by the National Conference of Mayors and it was undertaken at their request. And at that time I documented all of the known existing -- in fact, I did not include in the list the many sort of informal unstaffed commissions but I listed all of the staff agencies. I think by that time there were over 30.

More -- some years later I kind of did a review of that. We were thinking of updating it, although the updated document never got published. But eventually, I would imagine that there were officially established and funded and staffed agencies in 50 or 60 cities around the country. The greater percentage of them never amounted to very much. Quite frankly, I do not give municipal human relations agencies as a whole very high marks. They became, to a very large extent, sort of instruments of city hall and we had something going for us in Philadelphia when Joe Clark and Dick Dilworth were mayors. We were able to establish a considerable amount of independence from city hall. Independence in the sense that those mayors supported us and therefore gave us license to go forward. But in time most of those agencies have lost their thrust. I wouldn't give you very much for the Chicago Commission today or the Detroit Commission. They become sort of job sinecures for a lot of people who -- usually they are heavily staffed by Blacks, but they are Blacks who are there because they are considered safe by the city regime. So these official agencies don't begin to have the thrust today that they had ten years ago.

(WMP: Would you say they aren't needed so much as they were in those earlier days?)

I don't know. From one point of view they are not needed as much because in those days the White power structure was terribly upset by the new thrust -- the new assertiveness of the Black community -- and they needed some sort of a helping agency to adjust -- to accommodate the community to accepting the idea that Blacks were not going to remain quiet any longer. We ~~were~~ no longer as worried about the  
are

potential of racial tension as we were then. I'm not saying there is less racial tension -- if anything, there may be more -- but we aren't as worried about it as we were in those days.

On the other hand, I would say that the need for agencies like that to do what -- to get the work done -- is greater today than ever because there is so much implementation that is required in employment, in housing, in bringing about neighborhood racial inclusiveness in neighborhoods and so forth -- I would say the need is as great or is greater than it was before. But I don't think people are as troubled about it and for that reason less is expected of the agency.

(WMP: Do you foresee that there may be some racial breakout incidences of magnitude?)

I don't particularly think so. I think that we will continue to have skirmishes -- and a lot of them -- but I think that the White community in this country has accommodated themselves to the fact that Blacks speak out and make demands. They don't necessarily give in to the demands, but it's no longer a frightening thing to have Blacks speak out and because Blacks can sound off and make demands and put on their demonstrations, most of our cities learn to deal with that. Southern cities, for instance, were exposed to a great deal of marching in the early '60's and they found -- at first the reaction was to get the police out and beat heads and send those people back into their neighborhoods. And then they got the idea of let them march -- let them go through this process. So once that was done and Blacks could express themselves, the danger of Whites rioting abated. And I don't think there is much feeling in the Black community today in support of violence. I think that the feeling there is that it doesn't accomplish very much.

But there is so much other work to be done. The Blacks have not gained economically nearly as much as they ought to have over this period. Blacks -- until we had this recent recession or depression -- had been increasing their income, but not relatively. In other words, Blacks and Whites were both becoming somewhat more affluent, but the relative position -- economic position -- is about the same as it was fifteen years ago. The housing stock in our older parts of the city is deteriorating and while Blacks are not receiving resistance to their entry into newer types of housing in suburban areas, the economics of housing today are such that an awfully lot of Blacks are being kept out of the market. I think that we -- if we had any way of objectively measuring the housing condition of Blacks -- we would find that there had been a very substantial improvement in the housing condition of Blacks during the

'50's and early '60's and that there is a steady deterioration since then. Deterioration in that the old houses that the Blacks moved into during that period of the '50's and '60's is that much older and deteriorating and the new housing stock that has been coming on the market is steadily rising in cost -- to the extent that Blacks are just not moving into that part of the market.

(WMP: Also, the new housing is built in neighborhoods where they have not been accepted -- )

I think that the degree of resistance -- it depends on what part of the country we are talking about. In the Washington, D.C. area there is no great resistance to Blacks moving into suburban communities. It happens, but it's not the market resistance that is keeping them out, it's the economics of the housing market. Now I suppose that in the Philadelphia area the situation may be somewhat different. I'm not saying that there is affirmative marketing of housing for Blacks, even here, but I think that as Blacks probe the market they are not getting a lot of resistance and whether they are in the Philadelphia community, I don't know. But I think it is more today a question of pricing -- the capacity of Blacks to get into the market economically than it is actual discrimination.

(WMP: My next question then -- how are the Blacks doing on employment?)

I would say that we've got enough activity going around the country -- there is a Federal Fair Employment Practices Law, there are the federal contract requirements that a great many states have Fair Employment Practice laws, and all in all I would say that the posture of most employers toward the qualified Black is to give him about the same treatment. The big problem is that there are so many Blacks who fall into the untrained, unskilled categories -- the educational system hasn't done nearly as well by Blacks as it has by Whites, and so the levels of unemployment among Black youths in our center cities may be as high as 30% or higher, whereas the overall level of unemployment in the country is 7 or 8 percent, maybe 9 percent in some areas. So you have a tremendous body of unemployed or underemployed people in the Black community. People who don't compete very well for jobs. We were on our way -- badly done as much of it was -- we had various programs during the period of the so-called poverty war, which were designed to cope with all of that. But we docked all of those programs. The competent, trained Black person is competing rather well -- as a matter of fact, of course Washington is an untypical situation because of the Federal government being the principal employer. But I would say that you have an emerging class distinction in the Black community that is much sharper than it used to be, with one segment of the Black community steadily moving up into the higher job categories because they are trained and they can compete. But behind

them is a very substantial minority, it's not the majority of the Black community, but it's a very significant segment of the Black work force that is not doing at all well. And during the period -- it's especially hurt during the period we've been going through the last couple of years where unemployment is very high. Because those were people who were underemployed when there was a heavy demand -- when I talk about underemployment I'm talking about people who work on temporary jobs and part-time jobs. They are not unemployed the year round, but they are employed only a third of the time or so. During the last couple of years they have been especially badly hurt and these levels of unemployment in that class among Blacks is very large.

(WMP: Not for reasons of discrimination, but because of lack of training?)

Lack of training and because the economy isn't active enough to put all of those people to work.

Briefly on your question #11 -- you ask me would I be willing to compare the degree of interest in the Commission that was taken by Mayors Clark, Dilworth, and Tate? I'll answer that rather quickly. Joe Clark was very very supportive and he and I got along extremely well and I never had a single incident in which, in talking things out with Joe Clark, that he wasn't totally supportive. We had at that time a very good Commission. Dick Dilworth became Mayor, we began to get a somewhat different kind of commission, that is, he actually fired Bob Callahan. He asked Bob Callahan to resign and he appointed some different people, and the caliber of people that Dick Dilworth appointed to the Commission were not as good, although he did make one very good appointment -- that was Chris Edley, a young Black lawyer, whom I was very very fond of. But he also appointed Sheppard Lyles, to replace Jimmy Jones, and Sheppard Lyles was a Black labor man who was just not articulate and he wasn't useful to us at all. Dilworth didn't ask Jimmy Jones to leave -- Jimmy Jones had to leave, but Jimmy Jones had been just a tower of strength. He was not well at that time.

Nathan Edelstein was elected Chairman of the Commission after Bob Callahan left, but we just didn't have quite the strength in the Commission. Now I got along personally very well with Dick Dilworth, so I had no personal problems there. If anything, he was more articulately supportive than Joe Clark had been. A few things began to happen -- Tom Gibbons left the police department and Al Brown came in and Al was just a little bit less outgoing and a little bit less forceful than Gibbons had been. But still, as far as I personally was concerned, Dick Dilworth was never farther away than the telephone. If I called in and he wasn't there, he always called me back. All of that changed just overnight when Tate

became Mayor. Tate and I hadn't gotten along while he was in City Council. It hadn't been exactly an identifiable thing -- I could just sense his hostility. Tate didn't like anybody who looked like an educated person or who was out of tune with his brand of politics. Now, Nathan Edelstein had resigned about that time and the Commission had elected Sadie as Chairman. And Raymond Alexander and Tate had always gotten along fairly well in City Council -- they kind of understood the political game and could work together politically. Tate then made it quite clear that he was not going to do business with staff, and his communications were all directly with Sadie Alexander. So my communication with the Mayor's office was cut off completely. I would try and try to get to call Tate directly or arrange an appointment, and I would never get a response. But Sadie herself was playing her own kind of a game and she began to sense that she had emerged as a very powerful person in this, so that she wanted to -- she aided and abetted this barrier between me and Tate. She made it very clear that I would have to do business with her in order to get any support from City Hall at all. And yet, Sadie had been a very gutsy, courageous person in her day, but Sadie was getting along in years at that time and was no longer geared to fighting the way she had at one time, so she was trying to develop more of a compromise relationship, and this at the very time that the Black community was getting more vigorous. The very time when the Black community was the most suspicious of our Commission. If they thought that there was kind of a deal going on between the Chairman of our Commission and the Mayor -- because Tate certainly didn't have an image of sympathy for the Black community. So that at the very moment when we should have been more vigorous and exerted a stronger voice in the community, Sadie was saying to me and to my staff -- "I'll work things out for you with Tate." And we couldn't speak out. I would try to speak out, but I would find that I wasn't getting -- we had different members of the Commission then -- we had Jim Mahoney -- who was replaced Francis Coyle -- he was the AFL-CIO voice on the Commission. And we had a fellow by the name of Graham, who was a kind of a former manufacturer's man -- a very decent guy, but totally inarticulate. We had Mary DeSylvester (?) the wife of a South Philadelphia State Legislator. And they wanted to do business with Tate.

I told you earlier that I always had the policy of not asking the Mayor what we could do, but just let him know where we were going -- he could stop us if he wanted to, but we would be independent. Now, when I would go to the Commission, we were constantly confronted with -- Maybe Sadie, you'd better talk to Tate. Another thing happened. And that is that before we had had very strong support from the City Solicitor's office -- our lawyers were our lawyers, you see. Then Tate had a man named Bower -- and the next thing I knew our lawyers had to caucus things out. Instead of having our lawyer, our lawyer becomes a kind of politician who wants to check our policy with the Mayor's office. So we were very substantially weakened, and weakened at a time when we should have been --

if we were going to have any standing at all with the Black community, we had to be strong.

So I had really -- I'd been there long enough. I had the notion once in my life that seven years was the maximum time one ought to be on any particular job. That five years I thought was a little too short a time to really crystalize and firm up what you wanted to do and I was sure that by ten years on the job one went to seed. Well, I had been there ten years and I had really been thinking of leaving. I, for one thing, felt that it was important to get my ten years in in order to make the most out of the city retirement system -- I needed ten years for that. Secondly, when Nathan had resigned and Sadie became my Chairman I was stuck with this peculiar spot of if I quit then it would look as though I didn't want to work with a Black woman. I couldn't very well quit at that moment without implying that George Schermer, the great liberal, the guy who was supposed to be a strong civil rights man, couldn't work with a Black woman, so that was another reason why I had to hang on.

Tate gave me the best reason in the world to quit. We had that series of events where the Core group was picketing City Hall and Jim Tate was putting up this tremendous show of resisting and making all kinds of charges that our commission was weak and so forth. And then overnight he turned around and he practically gave the Core group City Hall. He cancelled contracts on the construction of the new city building and so forth. We had the rug pulled out from under us two or three times in quick succession.