Interview with WMP by Nan Phillips Sofaer
October 18, 1975

(ABS): What were Joe Clark's overall policies and objectives when he took office as Mayor?

(WMP) What Joe enunciated and did his best to put into practice was to establish a government of service to the people of Philadelphia. For several decades the Republican regimes which had controlled City Hall had been self-serving in character and neglectful of the residents of the city. A total reversal of attitude on the part of the civil servants in City Hall and the political leaders was needed. Clark had to project a new attitude and indoctrinate his department heads and staff people in regard to this. In his inaugural address, at the Academy of Music, he stressed this. More important, he selected people for the appointments he had to make who shared his attitudes. In order to implement this approach, Joe Clark had to find people to head the service departments who would share his point of view and be capable of reorganizing the various departments of the city and bringing in deputies, bureau chiefs, and other staff persons who would share the enthusiasm and dedication which Clark was endeavoring to inspire and did very successfully inspire throughout the top echelon of officials in the city. The spirit that they had in turn passed down through the personnel of their departments and there was a breath of fresh air throughout the city government that lasted throughout the whole four years of the Clark administration.

(ABS): What measures did Clark take to implement the Civil Service provisions of the 1951 city charter?

(WMP): The first act was to appoint the very best people he could to the Civil Service Commission. They were Shipper Lewis, who was the one which Clark chose to be Chairman; Sydney Dexter, who was a Republican and had long been active in the Committee of 70; and the third was Leon Mesirov, who had for quite a few years been legal counsel to the Democratic City Committee and served in that capacity with a high level of professionalism as well as political savvy. Clark worked closely with the Civil Service Commission in their selection of an Executive Director. It was not easy to get just the right person. The first one that they appointed was Raymond Male from Princeton, N.J. He agreed only to serve for a few months to help get the new system established. The Commission then found a man who was willing to come on a permanent basis from California named Escabido. As I recall,
Escabido did not have the best of health and had to resign quite early in the new effort and in fact, when he returned to California, died of a heart attack. In the meanwhile, however, he had engaged a deputy named Foster Roser, who was very competent and served in that position throughout the Clark and Dilworth years, in fact even through the Tate years and retired because of age about the time that Rizzo became Mayor. Administratively, the members of the Civil Service Commission performed the task of making the merit system work and Clark's glory was in picking such good members who in turn selected able staff. As I've said, Shippen Lewis was the Chairman. He was a distinguished lawyer in Philadelphia of the predominantly Quaker firm of Brittan, Evans & Lewis.

(ABS): Why do you feel that Shippen Lewis was an especially good Chairman of the Commission?

(WMP): Shippen was a Quaker and possessed of the honorable and dedicated qualities of that religion. Luther Cunningham was the second appointee. He was a Presbyterian minister of the Black community, a trustee of Lincoln University, and a highly regarded member of his community. With this commission. Clark was assured of fair treatment to all residents of the city so far as having an opportunity of having a job in City Hall. Members of the Black community began to be employed on jobs in the city government which had never before been opened to them and advancement in the service of the city from lesser jobs to higher jobs were made strictly on merit.

(ABS): Did Clark institute a sound financial management of the city?

Yes, he certainly did. He selected Lennox Moak to be his Director of Finance, Moak having been the Executive Secretary of the Philadelphia Bureau of Municipal Research. Clark himself took great interest in budgetary matters as he did in Civil Service. The Republican administration pulled a dirty trick in December of 1951 by having City Council enact an ordinance giving a substantial rise in pay to city employees without any regard to where the money would come from to pay for such wage and salary increases. One of the toughest things Clark had to do was to have that pay rise revoked, a very unpopular thing for him and damaging to his relations with employees of the various departments under him.

When it became budget time — that is, when the 1953 budget was under consideration — Clark participated extensively and had his whole cabinet sit through a review of the entire city budget before it went to City Council. He had a session which went all night.
(ABS): Did you feel that he was overly involved in detail of the department's budget, or rather that it was a policy kind of examination of the overall budget?

(WMP): In my opinion those late-night sessions were a mistake in that they went far too much into the detail of departmental activities and financial requirements. The cabinet was in effect doing what the department of finance had already gone through. Moak was a good financial man and Buck Sawyer, the Managing Director, also knew how to deal with such matters and it was my feeling that Clark got into finances in more detail than was necessary and involved not only himself but his cabinet members in minor ministerial decisions. In the latter couple of years of his administration he did not pursue such methods but instead relied upon his cabinet officers and department heads. Perhaps he went into such detail the first year so that we could all get a sense of the magnitude and far-reaching functions of City Government.

(ABS): What role did Clark play in the selection of the department heads?

He played a pretty strong hand. The city charter of 1951 provides that a Managing Director should appoint the department heads subject to the approval of the Mayor, but it was my impression that Joe Clark instructed Buck Sawyer, his Managing Director, as to who he would like to have and one or two or maybe three of those positions. In any event, Sawyer and Clark were together informally in the selection.

(ABS): Did any of the Department heads come from out of town and did this cause political problems?

Quite a few of the experts brought in to help carry out the reform were from other cities and other parts of the country. For example, the Commissioner of Recreation was Bob Crawford, and he was brought here from California. The executive of the Human Relations Commission was George Schermer, who came from Detroit. Jim Dixon, the Health Commissioner, as I recall, came from Denver. The traffic expert, whose name I can't recall, came from out of town. And Emerson Greenway, who was brought here with Clark's enthusiastic support, to be the head of the Philadelphia Library, came from out of town — I think possibly from Baltimore.

ABS: What was the reaction of the local political leaders to this influx of out-of-towners?

Needless to say, they were very upset. Clark had already chosen a cabinet which was totally apart from, the Democratic party's city committee. I don't think that the chairman, James Finnegan, minded so much -- in fact, I think he did all he could to back up Clark's actions -- but he got a lot of grief from the ward leaders who had counted on a few of the top jobs. Certainly some of the deputy positions,
and spots with various commissions. The tough situation created for them was partly the result of the 1951 city charter and partly the policy of Joe Clark. The ward leaders and the members of city council had to accept the situation.

ABS: Was there nothing at all that they could do about it?

There was nothing they could do under that city charter, but they thought perhaps they could get some amendments to the charter and possibly thwart the objectives of city-county consolidation.

ABS: Could you explain what those objectives were?

You may know that the city had in effect two governments — what was known as a county government and a city government. The county government consisted of the traditional offices in rural counties such as the county commissioners, the sheriff, the register of wills, the recorder of deeds, and the coroner. As in other counties throughout the state such offices were a political plum and the people hired were chosen through the political process. City-county consolidation meant that all those county offices were put into the city and made subject to the provisions of the city charter in regard to civil service and the merit system.

ABS: How was this conflict resolved?

Somehow it was litigated and reached the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania. I don't remember which county officer or group of officers brought the action but it was taken to the Supreme Court and the holding was that the city-county consolidation was constitutional and the transfer of the functions of the old county offices to the city departments where they had been allocated by the charter was consummated.

ABS: Who were the lawyers in this case?

Well, of course Abraham L. Freedman, as City Solicitor, handled the matter for the city and I guess several lawyers may have worked on the other side. I recall Charles J. Biddle arguing the case for the Supreme Court with Abe Freedman as his opponent.

ABS: What did Joe do about the City Planning Commission and its plan?

That's a rather delicate question for two reasons. First, as Joe Clark is oriented toward abstract things and principles — he liked to work on matters of civil service
and in public administration — but he didn't have very much sense about physical things. By that I mean his mind didn't turn in that direction particularly. Edward Hopkinson, of course, had been Chairman of the City Planning Commission and also a staunch Republican and no doubt one of the fund-raisers for the Republican party at all levels of government. Albert Greenfield, on the other hand, had for some time — I should say quite a few years — been one of the big money backers of the Democratic Party of Philadelphia. He wanted to be Chairman of the City Planning Commission. It had been a very much enunciated principle of the Citizen's Council on City Planning and the young men who had founded it that real estate men should not be on the City Planning Commission at all because they would have inside information which other members of the profession did not have.

ABS: Wouldn't they also have conflicts of interest in that position?

Yes, they would, but if they were highly honorable persons they could refuse to vote on certain situations and so on, but what bothered the young planners was that the real estate agent and promoter is rarely a planner — he thinks in terms of sales and purchases and rarely has a planning — long-range planning — instinct.

ABS: To go back to Hopkinson, what did Joe Clark do about him?

The best way for me to answer that is that Joe Clark and his wife, Noel, and Mary and I went off together to a place in Florida called Ponte Vidra quite immediately after the election which put Joe in as Mayor. The then Chairman of the Citizen's Council on City Planning was John Phillips -- no relation of mine. He worked at the Insurance Company of North America — I believe in his legal department. Hopkinson was a very important director of the Insurance Company of North America and worked closely with its President, John Diemand. Whether or not prompted by Mr. Diemand, John Phillips undertook to pursue Joe Clark that he should retain Hopkinson as Chairman of the City Planning Commission. I was sympathetic to that, but Joe was not very enthusiastic, having had quite a run-in four years earlier when he was managing Dick Dilworth's campaign for Mayor in 1947 and Hopkinson, Arthur Kaufmann, and the Citizen's Council on City Planning and the Chamber of Commerce were putting on the Better Philadelphia Exhibition.
ABS: How was Clark persuaded to reappoint Hopkinson?

Well, I think that I played a part in that situation in that I pointed out to Joe Clark how all of the planning profession and the Citizen's Council would be horrified if he were to appoint Albert M. Greenfield Chairman of the Commission and that was what he was under pressure to do. There were quite a few telephone calls back and forth from Ponte Vidra to Philadelphia on this subject, mostly made by me. I believe Joe Clark understood the logic of the objection to a big realtor in that position and I think he saw there was danger to himself to have a realtor there as it might result in some sort of scandal in the administration. However, he never said this to me.

ABS: Can you explain why he was so carefully professional in his choice of people for other appointments but in the chairmanship of the Planning Commission he would consider such a political appointment as Greenfield?

That's a tough question and perhaps poses an inconsistency on the part of Joe Clark. Greenfield, of course, had supported Joe for the mayoralty and he was very powerful in the party as well as in the business establishment, particularly real estate, in Philadelphia.

ABS: Is this perhaps an indication of how Clark, as you mentioned before, lacked a sympathy for the goals and concepts of city planning?

I think that is a very interesting point and there is probably something to it. Joe was never caught up in the subject of physical rehabilitation of the city the way he was with the idea of an honest and effective civil service and the administration of the service departments of the city.

ABS: How was it that he finally did appoint Hopkinson?

What Joe did was to let the whole matter hang fire. I sent word back to Philadelphia to John Phillips advising him to suggest to Hopkinson that he not resign. That put the burden on Joe Clark to make a positive move of removing Hopkinson which he didn't want to do because it might injure his relationship to the business community of the city. So Hoppy stayed in the post for about 3 months when he and Joe Clark encountered each other at a meeting of the legal club to which they both belonged and at that juncture Joe said to Hoppy, "I want you to stay in as Chairman of the City Planning Commission."

(note to WMP: talk more about planning in the Clark administration. That will then complete the section of a general discussion of the Clark administration and it would be after discussing planning further that we would then talk about WMP's role as Director of Commerce and City Representative.

From Nan)

(Also do not lose notes which outline role as Director of Commerce.)
(ABS: Could you describe at what time and how you became involved in the Clark for Mayor campaign?)

WMP: It was apparent that it would be Joe Clark's turn to be the leading candidate in 1951 when there would be a Mayoralty election and also the election of the District Attorney. Having become quite closely associated with Joe Clark and having finished my role with the Delta Manufacturing Corporation I decided that I would like to throw my lot in with Clark and that the way to do that would be to help them organize his campaign for Mayor in the year 1951. Sam Smith had offered me a role with WFLN — one of trying to boost the sales of the radio station. This didn't really fit my background, but I proceeded to hire a secretary and to make a start at that effort. The one good thing which came out of it was a secretary whom I hired named Marjorie Sturn, who is an extremely able person -- not only as a secretary, but as an administrator. I sensed her capabilities and when the WFLN effort did not work out for various reasons, principally that I was not a salesman of radio time, I decided that since it was only about five months before Clark would be starting his campaign that I would move into a desk which was provided for me at the Housing Association by Dorothy Montgomery and I persuaded Marjorie Stern to come with me. Actually she rented me a separate suite — it was not part of the Association — though I think I was still then President of the Philadelphia Housing Association and a Vice President for the Philadelphia Housing Authority.

Marjorie and I then began planning the Independents for Clark and Dilworth and tried to decide who should be members of that organization, what sort of a budget we'd need, what kind of staff, what kind of street office and that sort of thing. Within a month or so we hired an office at 16th and Chestnut St. on about the 8th floor and organized a political group called Independents for Clark and Dilworth.

(ABS: Why were Clark and Dilworth running at the same time? I think now the Mayor runs every four years and the DA every four years at different times, two years separately.  

That is correct. In those days the odd years were used for the Treasurer and the Controller and the Mayor and the District Attorney ran together at a different time.)
ABS: You mentioned that it was Clark's turn to run. Was there an agreement between Clark and Dilworth that Dilworth ran first for Mayor earlier and then it was Clark's turn? Was that an explicit agreement between them?

Nan, that question takes you into the various turns they had of being the standard bearers of the Democratic party. Dick, as you recall, ran in 1947 and then in 1949 Dick and Joe were both on the ticket for the lesser offices of Controller and Treasurer. In 1950 Dick ran for Governor but lost to John Fine, the Republican candidate. In 1951 the Democratic party and the big moguls behind it who financed it — characters such as Albert Greenfield, Matt McCloskey, Jack Kelly, and Jim Clark, the latter then I believe then still Chairman of the Democratic party — wanted Dilworth as their candidate. *reasoning, I believe, was that Dick would be more flexible, that Joe was a hardened reformer and would be more difficult to live with. To meet that situation, Joe Clark, then Controller, was meeting every morning at 9 o'clock with his closest advisors who were Abraham L. Freedman, John Patterson, Michael Byrne (who was on Joe's staff as Deputy City Controller) and me. Dick was committed to Joe — that it was to be Joe for Mayor. Dick felt that he had been running too often. Mrs. Dilworth differed with him and was very anxious to have him become the first Mayor of Philadelphia — it being quite clear then that whichever of them won the nomination would win the general election and become the Mayor in 1952. I believe there was some talk around that as a compromise, the Democratic City Committee might select Louis M. Stevens. But with all the circumstances, it was decided that we should set up a Citizen's Committee to draft Clark for the candidacy of the Democratic Party for the office of Mayor.

ABS: Did Jim Finnegan play an important role that time? I believe he was Chairman of the Democratic Committee. Did he support Clark or Dilworth and which way did he move?

I think that Finnegan played it neutral. If it had been otherwise, I would remember. Patterson, Freedman, and I, however, felt that we should start a public movement to draft Clark for Mayor and I was designated to be Chairman of a Committee to draft Clark for Mayor.

ABS: Then was your Citizen's Committee really completely independent from the Democratic City Committee? For instance, did you — did they know that you were setting it up before you made a public announcement of this independent movement?

No, they didn't know we were going to make this announcement but we were citizens first and Democrats second. We were
not in any way under the spell of the Democratic City Committee. The Lewises, for example, were big financers of the party — big contributors and they are important that way. And the same, I guess, for Sam Smith if he was on the Committee. I recall that Lou Stevens was playing it kind of cagey and I think he didn't want to serve on my committee because I guess he still hoped the mantle might fall on him.

ABS: What did the Citizens Committee do?

It met only twice, but each time it put out a press release demanding that Clark be drafted to be the candidate on the Democratic ticket. This may have been a poor move because it put Mrs. Dilworth and Dick Dilworth's law partners into a frenzy of action in support of the idea that Dick should run in spite of his earlier commitments to Clark. Dick couldn't stand the situation and he disappeared to New York for about 10 days.

ABS: How did the situation get resolved?

In a few days after this impasse arose, Clark decided to take drastic action. He had been asked to attend a meeting with the policy committee of the Democratic party and that was a small group comprised of the big financeers — Jim Clark, Jack Kelly, Albert Greenfield and a couple of others -- including, especially, Matt McCloskey. Clark figured that when he was invited to meet with them they were going to ask him to step aside as they really thought Dilworth was the more glamorous character and they were not confident of winning the Mayor's mayoralty election. Joe figured that the invitation he had to come and meet with them was going to be one where they would ask him to step aside. So he made a daring move. He announced to the press that he was a candidate and was not going to step out for anybody. Then he walked out to the meeting with the big moguls of the party -- told them what he had done, that the announcement was already on its way to the press, and would be in the newspapers very shortly, and that he was going to stay in the race no matter what else they did. The so-called bosses of the party then capitulated and accepted Joe as the candidate. When Dick got back from New York his sense of sportsmanship or better judgment, or both, led him to take the second place on the ticket under Joe Clark, that of candidate for District Attorney.

ABS: As you describe Clark's standing up to the moguls of the Democratic Committee, it's very impressive. Was this a precedent for how he continued to behave with them, showing them that he was in command?
Yes, I would say for the most part it was. For example, when Albert Greenfield sought a zoning change on the 800 acres of the Morel estate in Torresdale so that he could make a killing by simply reselling to builder, the Philadelphia Housing Association, under the leadership of Dorothy Montgomery, then the Managing Director, ....

.... and I believe also the Citizen's Council on City Planning were utterly opposed and distressed as here was a great open space and wooded area that could be added to the park system of the city. The way Joe handled this confrontation between a big realtor and the idealistic quarters of planning was to say he would go up and look at the property alone and make the decision. So he drove up there and took a look and came back and said that he thought Mr. Greenfield should have it to develop lovely houses for people up in that neighborhood.

ABS: Do you mean to tell this story of Clark's relationship with Greenfield as an exception to how he usually stood up to these leaders in the party?

No, actually it shows how he would take one side one day and another side another day. I could tell you where he stood up to Greenfield. When Joe had been elected Mayor about a week later he got on a train for Florida with Mary and me and his wife, Noel. While we were down there a great deal of pressure was brought to bear for the appointment of Greenfield as Chairman of the City Planning Commission — city planning having been one of my great interests. And the Citizen's Council on City Planning having a strong principle that realtors should not dominate the City Planning Commission, I conferred by telephone with the then President of the Citizen's Council on City Planning, John Diamond, Jr. Actually, Diamond got me on the phone and together we decided that the best thing to do was to persuade Ed Hopkinson not to submit his resignation. Hopkinson, of course, was a big Republican and quite a power in Republican circles. I figured that nevertheless he was a Philadelphia gentleman, a very important trustee of the University of Pennsylvania, a member of the same social, as Joe Clark, namely, the Philadelphia Club, and that Joe Clark would find it difficult to fire Hopkinson. I suggested to Joe that he just let the situation ride and I got word back to John Diamond to tell Hoppy just to sit tight. So nothing happened while we were away on vacation and Hopkinson stayed on for about three months without any word from Joe Clark. But one night at the legal club (they both belonged to the same legal club) he said to Hoppy, "I want you to be the Chairman of the City Planning Commission." Albert Greenfield accepted the situation and had to wait until Dilworth became Mayor before he got the chairmanship of the City Planning Commission.
ABS: Could you describe how you organized the Clark for Mayor campaign?

As I mentioned — I had come across a very able woman who I had hired to help me with the work at the WFLN radio station and we had both left there and had gone down to the office next to the Housing Association. I probably paid her salary myself at that stage while we were putting together a Citizen's Committee for Clark and Dilworth. We had the key people meet and we raised a little bit of money so that we could open an office at 16th and Chestnut St. After about six weeks in the Housing Association area we moved to that new office. John Patterson, Abe Freedman, and I served as chairmen of the Citizen's Committee for Clark and Dilworth and I gave it my full time until they were actually elected in November. We had a very able women's committee and they quite well staffed the office. Across the hall, we persuaded Sydney Dexter to set up a committee of Republicans for Clark and Dilworth and supplied them with the funds and they hired a girl as executive director.

ABS: What kind of a campaign was it that you ran? What techniques did you use to organize support?

The first problem was to raise money and I set up a series of small lunches of about ten to fifteen people in the Bellevue and twice a week we would have these lunches to raise money. By that device we got together about $65,000 and that was all we needed because we had so many volunteers. It was a pleasure to operate the campaign because everybody knew we were going to win and the sound trucks were on the street, and we had television programs and ladies activities and so forth.

ABS: Who was the opposition candidate and why were you so sure that you were going to win?

The opposition candidate was a Rev. Daniel Poling. He was a Baptist minister who had quite a following in Philadelphia and had a strong style of preaching. He was quite pompous, however, and naive in regard to politics. The policy adopted by Clark and Dilworth was to treat him with a certain amount of reverence and sort of bring out by different devices his naivete. It was an extremely smoothly run campaign. Every Monday a lunch was held at the Racquet Club -- Mike Byrne, and Jim Finnegan, and Dick Dilworth, and Patterson, Freedman, and me. We met there because both Dick and Joe were members of the Racquet Club.
ABS: How did the election come out?

It was quite a sweeping victory. I think Clark and Dilworth won with something like a 125,000 majority.

ABS: How did Clark appoint his cabinet?

I think you mean how did he select them and he did that up at Cape Cod on your grandmother's lawn or porch. Joe had rented a cottage that year over in Barnstable. For some reason his wife, Noel, was spending a lot of time in Long Island with her mother and I don't think she was there at the time we were talking politics. Abe Freedman, however, had rented a house down near Falmouth, and John Patterson had chartered a sailing yacht and was cruising in the Cape Cod waters with Emily and Leon Sundstein and their young boy. Under these circumstances we had several political pow-wows.

ABS: Whom did he select for his cabinet and what were his reasons?

The number one position in the cabinet was looked upon as that of managing director. Robert K. Sawyer, whom we had brought to the Bureau of Municipal Research when I was its half-time paid President had moved from the Bureau to the Greater Philadelphia Movement to be its Executive Director. He had made that move after having had a leave of absence from the Bureau to be the Executive of the Committee of 15. He had done a brilliant job in that post of exposing graft and corruption in City Hall, having the courage to release to the press his findings when his own committee was trying to cover them up. Sawyer was clearly the best choice of anyone in Philadelphia. The alternative would have been to bring someone from another city. Lennox Moak was then the Executive Director of the Bureau of Municipal Research and had made quite a name for himself in the area of municipal finance, both in New Orleans, where he had been before coming to Philadelphia and in his job with the Philadelphia Bureau. He was, therefore, our choise for Finance Director. Abe Freedman, being a brilliant lawyer and member of one of Philadelphia's most distinguished law firms — Wolfe, Block, Shore and Solas Cohen -- and having practically written the city charter, along with a couple of others, was the obvious choice for City Solicitor and Abe was anxious to have that job. The fourth post which the Mayor had the right to fill under the 1951 city charter was that of City Representative and Director of Commerce. For some reason reason he chose to not think that I filled the requirements for that job and he was right in that the charter commission
envisioned a Grover Whalen type of person who also knew publicity and public relations. The type of person which was apparently envisaged by the City Charter commission for the post of City Representative and Director of Commerce was an established advertising executive or experienced public relations man.

ABS: How did it come about that Clark did select you for the position?

Both Abe Freedman and John Patterson felt very strongly that I should be in the cabinet, having done the most to run the Clark campaign and having had a broad background in public affairs at the civic level. Joe Clark was very resistful, feeling, I believe, that I did not have the public presence on the platform which was rather expected in that job if the person holding that position was the represent the Mayor in large gatherings and greeting conventions and doing that sort of thing.

To go back to your question of how Joe was finally persuaded to appoint me, the answer is that Jane Freedman bore down on him and told him that he had to include me in the cabinet, and that I had done more for him than probably anyone else. She really beat the table on it so Joe finally capitulated.

ABS: Did Joe not consult the Democratic leaders about his appointments?

He didn't and that was rather a shock to the leaders when they came to that subject. He did not raise the question with Joe until after the election. They did not know that Joe had made reservations to go to Florida a couple of days after election day. What he did was to ask to have a meeting with them, breezed in, announced who his appointments would be, left, went to the station, got on the train with his wife, Noel, and Mary and me and we spent the next two weeks in Florida. The big party moguls who had been financing the campaign and so on were shocked, but they kept their cool. The only one that gave us much trouble was Albert Greenfield, whose desire to become Chairman of the City Planning Commission I've already recounted.

ABS: What was done about the appointment of the heads of departments?

Clark left that until he got back from Florida and then he did talk with Jim Finnegan at considerable length and Jim supported him in his selection of able department heads. Only about two were strictly political figures and they didn't last very long because of their ineptness in the administration of a large organization. Jim Finnegan was extraordinary on backing Clark on his selections of people of merit.
ABS: What was Finnegan doing at that point?

I should have said that Jim Finnegan, Chairman of the Democratic party, ran for city council and he was elected and then when Council was installed, they chose him to be President of City Council. They supported Clark in all his actions and programs. With Finnegan's help Clark could muster a majority of City Council even in the face of strong opposition, Jim Finnegan being the strong leader there that he was.

ABS: Did Jim Finnegan remain Chairman of the Democratic City Committee while he was President of City Council?

Yes, he did and I always thought it was a mistake, not only because of possible conflicts of interest but also because it was too much of a physical strain on the man. Actually, he weakened himself to the point that later he died.