INTERVIEW WITH ARLIN ADAMS

INT: We are recording, on February 6, 1996, with Judge Arlin Adams, in the law offices of Schnader, Harrison, Segal, and Lewis. Our first question is to ask if you have agreed to this recording.

ADAMS: I have. I have indeed.

INT: Thank you very much. Well, this is very exciting for me to get started with you. You know the project. I did explain about our history project. We're interested in knowing about you from the very beginning. I was just at the Museum of American Jewish History, so I'm really very much attuned to the history, and where people came from, and what happened to them.

Could you start with your parents and grandparents?

ADAMS: Well, let's start with my father, and then I'll go to my mother.

INT: Okay.

ADAMS: My father's name was Aaron M. Adams. His family came from Kansas City, Missouri. My grandfather got there as a result of his parents, who came from Germany as a result of the revolution of 1848. Their ship landed in New Orleans. They made their way up the Mississippi River to the Missouri River, and out the Missouri River, to Kansas. It was kind of a prairie in those days. It was before the Missouri Compromise, that had so much to do with the Civil War, and because of the way the Civil War turned, my grandfather was very young when he was brought into the Confederate Army. I think he was only around sixteen years old. He fought in some of the important battles around Virginia. In any event, as a result of the war, he and his family decided to come east to Philadelphia, and that's where my father's family came from.

My father was a good art student, and he went to the Academy of Fine Arts as a young person. But the life of an artist is not very lucrative, and he eventually became a merchant. He sold first men's hats, because Philadelphia was a very important center for the Stetson Hat Company, but he then branched into men's furnishings. He had a store on Germantown Avenue and Somerset Street, which in those days was called central North Philadelphia. That's where I was born. I stayed there till I was around ten, maybe eleven. Then we moved to an area that we called the Roosevelt Boulevard, B and the Boulevard, and I went to grammar school there, and then on to high school, Olney High School, where I was active in athletics, student government, and journalism.

Olney High School was easily the best high school in the city at the time. We won all the scholarships. Central was in eclipse. My father had gone to Central, and I think he really wanted me to go to Central High School, but it was a terrible high school just at that period.
In any event, the Depression was on. I was graduated in January of 1938, and there wasn't very much money, and since I was interested in journalism, I went to the Philadelphia Inquirer and got a job -- not a very important job, kind of like a copy boy, or I forget what they called it in those days. When I was there only a short time, John Taxin came across me and he offered me a job in the fruit and produce business. Because of the financial situation, I immediately asked how much he was going to pay. And he said, "What are you getting now?" And I said, "Five dollars a week." He said, "I'll match that." I said, "Well, why would I leave?" He said, "Because if you work for me you can go to college." I said, "How's that?" He said, "I want you from 2:00 in the afternoon until 9:00 at night." So I went back to the Inquirer and asked Mr. Annenberg -- Walter's father, not Walter -- what he thought, and he said, "That's a good idea, young man. You go to college. You're always welcome to come back."

Well, I went to college. Classes ran generally from 8:00 in the morning till around noon time, 1:00. I would have lunch, and then walk to work. I would get there at 2:00 and stayed invariably until 9:00. In those days, Saturday was a regular work day; it was not a day off. So I would work Saturday as well. But on Saturdays school stopped no later than 12:00 noon, and I got to work at around 12:30. I didn't bother with lunch. I was able to leave Saturday afternoon at about 5:00.

I stayed with Mr. Taxin for three and a half years. I was able to finish college in three and a half years, because I went to school in the summer. There was no reason not to -- I was working, anyway. I finished right at the top of the class, got a scholarship to the University of Pennsylvania Law School. Mr. Taxin said, "Well, why don't you give up law school and stay with me, and we'll make you into a manager." I said, "No, I think I want to go to law school." He said, "Would you stay anyway?" I said, "I'll stay, but I have to work after law school." He said, "Well, I'm going to let you come in an hour later." So for my first year in law school, I came in at 3:00. And that lasted until December 8, 1941. December the 7th was the day that we were bombed at Pearl Harbor. The next day I went to the Navy Recruiting Office in Philadelphia and said that I would like to apply for a commission. And the recruiting officer said, "Well, you have a very good record, but you look awfully thin. Get on the scale." I got on the scale, he said, "I'm sorry, we can't help you, young man. You're twenty pounds underweight." I said, "Well, what am I supposed to do now?" He said, "You go back and eat bananas and cream for about three weeks and come back and give it another try."

Well, I did just what he told me. I came back, and he said, "You got your commission." And I waited around, and I was able to finish my first year at law school, and then I was called to duty, active duty. In the meantime, I was madly in love with a young lady whom I had met in high school. The most wonderful person I had ever met. And we saw a lot of each other. And we were getting pretty serious, and the question then arose, well, what do I do? I'm
going to go into the Navy. But I am an officer. By that time, I had been elected editor in chief of the Law Review, which is the highest honor that you can get at the law school. So it looked pretty sure that I could get a job when the war was over.

Her parents invited me to services on either Rosh Hashana or Yom Kippur, I forget which. After services we drove home, and I decided to talk to her father about getting married. This was 1942. I was already in the Navy, and I knew I was going to be going overseas pretty soon. He said, "Well, my daughter is a very intelligent young lady, and she seems to like you, so you have my blessing." We got married in November, 1942. Shortly thereafter I went off to the Harvard Business School for some advanced training and soon I was assigned to the North Pacific with Fleet Airwing 4, which is the Naval air arm of the fleet.

INT: What was your job?

ADAMS: Well, I was on what is known as a... a flag staff. The commanding officer was a commodore. They don't have commodores anymore. That's like a one star admiral. And I was the... it's not a supply officer. Logistics and things like that... I was the youngest person on the staff. It was a great experience. I worked every day, which didn't bother me. The commodore only had about ten people on the staff; I was by far the youngest. In fact, I was so young, he at first didn't want me to be on the staff. He thought it was an insult that Washington had sent him such a young officer. But if one can enjoy the military, I enjoyed it, because it was very demanding. We had a lot of airplanes, and a lot of ships, and a lot of ground troops, and the Commander put me in charge of all the logistics.

After I was there a pretty long time -- there were no leaves in those days -- I was assigned back to Norfolk and then Philadelphia. I had started a Master's degree program at PENN, and I was able to take courses, and as soon as I was released -- and I got released fairly early, because I had been overseas so long -- I went back to law school, got my master's degree in economics, was re-elected editor-in-chief of the Law Review, and clerked for a person that I admired very greatly, Chief Justice of the State, Horace Stern. His picture is up there. Certainly one of the smartest men I had ever met in my entire life, and one of the finest. And I was a little bit older because of the war, and the question was what was I going to do next.

I had an opportunity to go to the Nuremberg Trials, and the Dean of the Law School was encouraging me, but I was worried that that would be a detour from my career plans, so I said no, I didn't want to do that. Then I got an offer to go to Harvard, and to Harvard Law School as a teaching fellow. Well, that interested me. I thought I would like to teach law. So I went to the Schnader office, because a former professor of mine was here, John Mulder, to get his advice. He said, "Well, I did that; I was a teaching fellow at Harvard; and I became a professor. That's very nice," he said, "but why don't you practice law?" I said, "Well, I'm not sure about that." He said, "Well, why don't we meet Mr. Schnader? Have you ever met him?" I said, "No." "Would you like to meet him?" I said, "Yes, very much." So we went up, and Schnader said, "I understand you're looking for a job." I said, "No, I'm not looking
for a job. I'm looking for some advice." He said, "Well, we've looked you over and we'd like to have you." I said, "Well, let me think about it." And I went back to see Judge Stern. He said, "Well, it's a tough decision, but I'd do it. Why don't you go out to the law school and ask Earl Harrison, he's the Dean." So I went to the law school, and Earl Harrison said, "I would take the job." He said, "If you want to teach, I'll appoint you right now as one of our instructors. We want you. But you ought to do both. You could teach and practice."

INT: But what about the Nuremberg situation? Had you thought about it since?

ADAMS: Well, Mrs. Adams, Neysa, talks about that frequently. She said that's something she would have wanted to do, but she understood why I didn't want to do it. I was 25 at the time. That was a little old then. It wouldn't be old now. I was in the service for three and a half years. I would have gotten out of law school when I was about 22, and admittedly, that's young. In any event, I began working at the Schnader office in the fall of 1947. This absolutely remarkable man, William A. Schnader, had run for Governor of Pennsylvania, after serving as Attorney General for many years. He lost as a result of the Roosevelt sweep, and he formed this little office here, what became known as the Schnader firm. Up until that time there was no major law firm in Philadelphia that welcomed Jewish lawyers.

INT: Besides Wolf.

ADAMS: Well, a Gentile firm. Wolf was a Jewish firm. Jewish firms had Jewish lawyers. But no Gentile firm had any. But Schnader felt very strongly on the subject. He said, "I don't care what your religion is. If you can do the work, I want you." He was a Pennsylvania Dutchman; his father had been a minister. And that's the way he lived his life. He felt very strongly about that.

INT: You wanted to talk about Mr. Schnader.

ADAMS: When I started at the Schnader firm, it was a relatively small firm. There were no large law firms in Philadelphia, but it was one of the very best. Many people thought it was the best, because he was a great lawyer, and he had a lot of very good lawyers because of his standards. He didn't take people based on the fact that they were relatives, or rich or anything. They had to be very good lawyers. He had very high standards.

INT: Social standing, that kind of thing, didn't matter to him.

ADAMS: Didn't mean anything to him. But everyone here worked very hard. The first year I was here, I worked 365 days. He worked, even though he had suffered a stroke several years prior to that time and was partially paralyzed, he still worked every day and every night. And we worked on Saturdays. We had not closed yet on Saturdays. He was a great companion, very interested in all the lawyers, and we had a very close relationship.
He eventually changed the name of the firm to make it Schnader, Kenworthy, Segal, and Lewis. And of course, not only was he then taking in Jewish lawyers, but he was putting a Jewish name in the name of the firm.

INT: What year was this, do you recall?

ADAMS: That was around the end of World War II. And when he did that, it caused a substantial repercussion. He was a long-time member of the Union League. The Union League has tables, or at least had tables in those days. He told his colleagues at the particular table for which he was a member, what he was going to do. And the story is that one of them said, "Bill, if you do that, I will tell you that you will never represent a major bank, insurance company, or manufacturing company in this city." And (laughs) Schnader is supposed to have stood up and said, "That's the best reason I've heard for doing it." And he left the table, and I don't think he ever returned. He was still a member of the League, but he didn't go back to the table.

When he hired Bernie Segal, who is a very important figure in his own right, Bernie was about 25 years of age, Schnader was the Attorney General of the state. And he interviewed him and he said, "Well, I think I'm going to hire you." And Bernie Segal said, "Well, there are three things I have to tell you." He said, "What are they?" Segal said, "First of all, I've never voted." Schnader said, "How old are you?" He said, "I'm almost 25." He said, "It doesn't make any difference to me. What else?" Segal said, "I don't have any family connections." Schnader said, "That doesn't make any difference to me. What's your third thing?" He said, "Well, I'm Jewish." And Schnader said, "Well, does that make any difference to you?" And Bernie said, "No." Schnader said, "Then why would it make any difference to me?" And of course he hired him, and they became life-long friends.

But I'd like to go back now, because I've jumped a lot of years. I told you about my father.

INT: You didn't tell me your grandfather's name. Your father's name was Aaron.

ADAMS: My grandfather's name was Abraham. He has the same initials as I do, AMA.

INT: Did he come as a young man to...

ADAMS: The city?

INT: To the United States?

ADAMS: No, he was in the United States. My grandfather was born in the United States. My great-grandfather, it goes pretty far back, to 1848.

INT: Do you know his name?
ADAMS: No, I don't. Can't even tell you the name of the city in Germany from whence they came, although I should know, and maybe I'll remember it as I'm talking to you.

INT: Also, do you have any idea how he came through New Orleans rather than New York or Baltimore?

ADAMS: He didn't come through New York. New Orleans, I guess that's where the ship went. And the ship went up the Mississippi. When I said, "ship" it's (laughs) pretty fragile raft or something like that, and then on out to Missouri. Now, the Truman family, which settled in that same area, came from Tennessee. They went overland. My family went up...the river. My mother, whom my father met when he came to Philadelphia, had a family that came from Budapest. In those days, Budapest was part of the Austro-Hungary Empire. It would now be Hungary, but in those days it was mixed up. She came from a family with the last name of Landau, (spells it). She had a number of brothers and sisters, none of whom survive now. She didn't have much schooling. She got through high school, but then worked. I think she worked in one of the department stores. They got married. I had many brothers and sisters, some of whom are no longer here. Very wonderful brothers and sisters. But none of them was able to go to college, because of the Depression. They all grew up in that period, and there was no money. They went to work. Interestingly, one of my sisters, long afterwards, did go to college, after her children were raised. She went to college in Florida where she lived, and got her degree. Very able, charming, warm people.

So there are three of us in the Philadelphia area, and three in the Florida area. Close family, talk to each other frequently, we see each other frequently. Stay in touch and are very supportive.

INT: Do you get together for Seders? Do you get together for Jewish holidays?

ADAMS: Well, not the Florida contingent. We see them when we go to Florida. They come up for weddings and funerals, you know, the usual thing. Yes, we always have Seders, and either I go to my sister's, or she comes to me, or we go to a niece's, but...pretty close relationship, I think.

INT: Would you say your father and mother, your grandparents, had a fairly religious home, or were they interested in the new Reform movement?

ADAMS: Well, let me explain that. My father and his family were associated with a synagogue called Adath Jeshurun, AJ, and I was Bar Mitzvahed there. All of my siblings went to AJ. My sisters were confirmed. Girls didn't get Bat Mitzvahed in those days. That came later. I was Bar Mitzvahed. I was not confirmed; again, because of the Depression, I had to work. I couldn't continue. And it was a fairly long haul, because by that time I was living on the Roosevelt Boulevard. And to go down to AJ, which was at Broad and Diamond, was very difficult. I worked after school; I couldn't do it.
When I got married in 1942, the girl that I married was a long time member of Keneseth Israel. The rabbi of Keneseth Israel was then Dr. Fineshreiber, William Fineshreiber. I was very impressed with him, the way he talked with us before the ceremony, and during the ceremony. We couldn't belong to two congregations -- I didn't have the money. And out of deference to my beautiful bride, I became very active at KI. Very active. I joined the youth group, I don't know what it was called in those days. Temple Youth, or something like that. After I got a job at the Schnader office, and that was 1947, I was elected a trustee, which was very unusual, because I didn't have much money. And in 1950 -- I was only out of law school for three or four years, and I was 32 -- they wanted me to become the president of the synagogue. Well, our wonderful synagogue, at that time had three of the richest families in this area: the Rosenwald family, the Paley family, and Albert Greenfield. And that seemed to be a very formidable task, and I declined. Mr. Greenfield, who was a powerful man in those days, came to see Mr. Schnader, and he said, "You have a young..." (I didn't know Mr. Greenfield at that time), "You have a young lawyer in this office, and my synagogue wants him to be the president, and he said he's too busy." Schnader called me up and said, "Al Greenfield was in to see me, and he thinks you're too busy to be president of your synagogue. What's that all about?" And I said, "Well, I'm working every night, every day, every weekend. How can I take on...?" He said, "You've got to do it. You've got to do it. It's too important. We'll have to rearrange your whole schedule."

Well, I did it. I was only 32, and did it for three years. Schnader came to every annual meeting of the congregation, and he was very proud to do it. He thought it was a wonderful thing to do.

INT: You're talking about Mr. Schnader.

ADAMS: Schnader, yes, even though he wasn't Jewish. In the meantime, Kenworthy, the second name in the firm, left to go to Pittsburgh, and he was replaced by Harrison, who had been the dean of the law school who had hired me to teach at the law school. Earl Harrison, a Quaker, had been the head of immigration of the United States during the war. President Roosevelt had appointed him. He went into the concentration camps, officially, to do something about all of those who survived. Because of that, KI decided to make him an honorary member. And he came to all the annual meetings. (laughs) So it was a very unusual situation.

INT: Well, how did you manage? I mean, you had not really been active in a synagogue particularly before.

ADAMS: No, but I learned quickly, and I had enormous help. I remember asking Lessing Rosenwald, who was getting old, if he would stay on the executive committee, and he did. Mr. Paley was very old, but he gave generously. We found it necessary to move away from Broad and Columbia. The neighborhood was getting run-down. We had to find a new location in Elkins Park, and that meant that we had to go on a big drive, at least in those days,
four or five million dollars, and they all helped me.

INT: So you were the one that moved the synagogue to Elkins Park.

ADAMS: Yes, but not myself. We negotiated with Temple University, sold them our synagogue. They converted that into their law school. Then I was served on the committee to acquire the property at Township Line. I remember one day, Mr. Breyer who owned that tract, talked to me and the head of the building committee, Sam Feldgoise, and he said, "Gentlemen, I understand you're looking for a piece of property in Elkins Park." We said, "Yes." He responded, "Well, I own this piece of property at York Road and Township Line." And he said, "I'm going to sell it to you if you want it, for $250,000," which was a bargain. He said, "I own this thing across the street," which he later gave to the Boy Scouts. He said, "But I need the answer today." And I looked at Sam Feldgoise, and he looked at me, and I said, "Sam, this is too good of a bargain." He said, "I know, but you got to have permission of the trustees. I said, "I'll tell you what, Sam. Let's you and me buy it. And we'll sell it to them if they want it, at the price that we're going to pay for it, and if they don't want it, it's our responsibility." He shook hands with me, he said, "You're on." We turned around to Mr. Breyer, and we said, "You got a deal. Write up the papers." We went back a week or so later to the trustees and told them what we had done. They said, "You made a good deal, it's ours." And we built the temple there.

INT: That's a good story. (laughs)

ADAMS: I would have been rich had they turned me down. Because that property's worth millions of dollars today.

INT: You could have put up your own townhouse.

ADAMS: Anyway, I stayed working very hard at the Temple, which I enjoyed. I thought that was a great experience.

INT: How about the experience of the architecture, you mean, having it built, or you mean directing the whole activity?

ADAMS: By that time the chairman of the building committee was Montie Tyson, who was a wonderful charitable man.

INT: Yeah, I knew him, too.

ADAMS: Did you know Monty?

INT: Monty and Bertha, sure.
ADAMS: And Bertha Tyson. They were very active. He was up there every day. The architect was Iz Demchick, who was Selma Fishman’s father, and they did a wonderful job for us, they really did. I saw Selma recently, and I told her I’ll always be obligated to her because of what her father did. And at that time it was the biggest congregation in the city. We had over 3,000 families. Enormous undertaking. It was a good experience.

I had three daughters by that time. They all went to KI. They all were confirmed there. Still no Bas Mitzvahs. They didn’t have that. They loved it.

INT: But some people, you hear stories about people being president of congregations, that they really feel that they have a lot of hard work and a lot of problems, but you didn’t have that.

ADAMS: No, I had an enormous amount of support. I guess everyone felt sorry for me, because I was so young, and they knew that I was working very hard at the law. But by the time I became president, we had a young rabbi, by the name of Bertram Korn, who was my contemporary, and we were very close. And I thought he was the greatest rabbi in the United States. And from there I became active at the Hebrew Union College, which trains rabbis.

INT: Well, I’m from Cincinnati. I’m familiar with the Hebrew Union College.

ADAMS: Are you from Cincinnati? Well, you know, it. And they had a great president, and I enjoyed that, to a point.

INT: Nelson Glueck.

ADAMS: Well, first Dr. Glueck was there, and then he died, and Fred Gottschalk replaced him. Dr. Glueck was a wonderful man. Went to Israel with him.

INT: Do you remember what year that was?

ADAMS: I know he died shortly thereafter.

INT: Was that your first trip?

ADAMS: My first trip. He was a great archaeologist. I’m wasting too much of your time now, I’m going on. You have to stop me. Well, what happened after that, let’s see. By the time I was finished with my assignment at KI it must have been about 1955. I was spending a lot of time in the office. I was teaching at the law school, and I had written a book with another judge who’s here; pointing to a picture of Judge Flood. A prominent Roman Catholic in Philadelphia, a saintly man if there ever was one, and we were very close. We had lunch at least one day a week, and together wrote a book on Pennsylvania practice, and I taught that subject at the law school with him. Taught federal practice and constitutional
law. He was a great inspiration in my life. Also a man that just didn't care what your
religion was. You do what you believe, and that was satisfactory to him.

Well, that took me to the latter part of 1955. So I was practicing, I was active in the Bar
Association. I was active at Hebrew Union College, KI. In the meantime, Judge Stern, who
by that time had retired -- he had been a president of the Federation -- got me interested in
Federation activities. I became a trustee of Federation.

INT: You think without him you wouldn't have...

ADAMS: Well, he was an inspiration. He was a very inspiring man. a wonderful person.
Very bright man. Very quiet.

INT: I met him, but when he was quite old.

ADAMS: At about that time we had three hospitals, three Jewish-based hospitals in
Philadelphia. One was the Jewish Hospital at Broad and Tabor. The other was Mount Sinai
in South Philadelphia, and the other was Northern Liberties, in Kensington. And it was
decided -- principally by Albert Greenfield, who was a very imposing figure -- that there
ought to be an amalgamation. And they sought to change the three hospitals to an individual
medical center. They decided to name it the Albert Einstein Medical Center. In those days
the constitution of Pennsylvania provided that the legislature could not give money to a
religious institution. So the organizers removed any concept of religion from Albert
Einstein. You could be any religion you wanted, to be a doctor, a patient, whatever, but they
did have a problem, because they had two institutions: one was the Home for the Aged, was
the Home for the Jewish Aged, and one was the Home for Incurables. the Home for Jewish
Incurables. And it was decided that they had to divest themselves of those two institutions
in order to qualify for state aid. I was asked, with a very good group of trustees, to take over
the home for the incurables. Federation asked us to do it. Charlie Klein, Judge Klein, was
very active at the hospital, and he got Morris Satinsky and myself involved in the Home for
Incurables. Also on the Board was Leon Obermeyer, who was a boyhood friend of my
father. He came from Illinois, his family came from Illinois when my family came from
Kansas. Both Leon and my father went to Central High School together.

I started out with the Home for Incurables, and after about three months, Morris Satinsky
looked at me one day, and I looked at him, and he said, "There's something about this that
I don't like." I said, "Morris, you beat me to it. What don't you like?" He said, "Every time
I go through the doorway, I see the sign, "Home for Incurables." I don't want to be associated
with a home for incurables. Let's change the name. Let's change the purpose." I said, "What
do you have in mind?" He said, "Let's make it a rehabilitation hospital." I said, "Terrific.
I'm all for it. What shall we call it?" He said, "Well, we have money from Lucien Moss.
It's only $100,000, but let's use that, and we'll call it the Moss Home. The Moss
Rehabilitation Hospital." So we went to the Federation, we got permission. Morris deserves
the credit, not me. He was the moving force. I was busy. Morris was a remarkable guy. Came from a remarkable Satinsky family. And we started working to convert the home for the incurables. He had a tough time getting money, but the Einstein hospital gave us land.

And then, kind of by magic, I guess, I was asked to work on the campaign for governor of one William W. Scranton. His uncle, whom I knew from Scranton, said, "Look, I have a very attractive nephew, Bill Scranton. I want you to help him. Will you do it?" And I said, "Sure."

INT: How did you know the uncle?

ADAMS: We practiced law together. And Scanton won. There he is. (Pointing to Scranton's picture.) That's Bill Scranton. By this time it was 1962.

INT: Well, but you're a Republican now. You haven't discussed that at all.

ADAMS: Okay, I'll go back.

INT: Some other time, maybe.

ADAMS: How I became a Republican. That's an interesting story.

Anyway, Scranton, won the election, and after he won the election, he called me on the phone and said, "Look, you guys got me into this mess and you got to help me out." I said, "So what do you want me to do?" He said, "I want you to be secretary of banking." I guess I was about 40 by that time. I said, "Bill, I don't know anything about banking. I'm a litigator." "You'll be fine." I said, "Let me think about it." I went to see Mr. Schnader. He said, "You must be crazy. You'll ruin this firm. We have all these clients." So I went back and said to Scranton, "I can't do it. Mr. Schnader said no." Two days later he called me. He said, "How about being head of insurance?" So I went up to see Mr. Schnader. He said, "You must be crazy. You'll ruin this firm. We have all these clients." I went back and told Mr. Scranton. He said, "Well, you're letting me down." I said, "I'm sorry." The day after Christmas he called me. He said, "My sisters and I had Christmas dinner yesterday. All of them want you to be Secretary of Health and Welfare of Pennsylvania. They know about your work at Moss." I said, "Well, I'll try, but I can't cross this man. He's been a very good friend of mine." He said, "Try it." I walked into his office. We were in the Packard Building. He said, "Well, what is it now?" And I said, "Well, the Governor was on the phone, and he wants me to be head of Health and Welfare." He looked up at me, and he said, "Well, that's different. That's a different story. That means a lot to your people."

INT: What did he mean by that?

ADAMS: The Jewish people.
INT: Oh, he did think that.

ADAMS: He said, "If you want to do that, I won't object.

INT: Well, why did he think it meant a lot?

ADAMS: That's what he said. Because he knew about tzedakah and things like that. It was part of the religion. See, he had picked up enough to know that. "I won't object if you want to do it." And I said, "Well, thank you." And I turned to walk away. He said, "Do you have any idea what they pay you in Harrisburg?" (laughter) I said, "No." He said, "Well, I thought this was coming, and I looked it up. You get paid $22,500 a year." I was making about $100,000; I had a very successful practice. I took a gulp and I said, "Gee, I didn't know that." And I started to walk away again. He said, "Wait a second." He said, "I don't have any children. You have three daughters," which I did. He said, "I'll give you the difference." I said, "No." I wouldn't take it. He said, "Well, you're a fool, but I can understand how you feel." And I went out. (crying) And as you can tell, it still means a lot to me.

INT: Absolutely. Oh, my.

ADAMS: And I stayed with the state government for about three and a half years. I worked until after 11:00 every night. I would start at 8:00. So much so that the governor began calling me and saying, "Look, you can't do this to yourself. Nobody can work that hard. You're ruining it for everybody in Harrisburg. Everybody knows that you're working, and they want to go home at 5:00. (laughs) You're there till 11:30!" But I had all these cases. People would write to me. Mentally retarded, hard of hearing, blind people, and I took them personally, and I would try to help them.

But it made an indelible impression on me; a great experience. Eventually, of course, I had to come back. I really couldn't afford it. Not only didn't get very much money, but I had to have an apartment up there because I lived up there.

INT: The family didn't move?

ADAMS: No, but everybody supported me. Came back here. I'll tell you two other things, then I'm going to go back to these other things. I came back, and I was elected the head of the Bar Association. And I served a year, and after the year I wasn't sure what I was going to do, except I knew I had to keep working to make up all the time I had lost when Tom McCabe, who was the Chairman of Scott Paper, called to invite me to a birthday party for Richard M. Nixon, whom I had known while he was the Vice President. Nixon was trying to run for President, and the group didn't particularly care for him. They were for Rockefeller, including Mr. McCabe. As the luncheon party was ending, everybody was walking out, Richard Nixon said, "Do you mind waiting a little while? I want to talk to you." I said, "No." He said, "I know all your friends here are going to support Rockefeller, but I'd
like you to support me. You've known me a long time." I said -- I don't know what I called him, Richard. He wasn't President. -- "I've been away a long time. I just got to go back and make a living." He said, "Well, think about it." He said, "Is there anything troubling you?" And I said, "Well, the main thing that troubles me politically is Vietnam." He said, "Well, you wait a second. Let me tell you what I would do about Vietnam if I were elected President." And I said, "Glad to hear." And he told me. It was a brilliant description. And I went home, told my wife, and she said, "Well, I think you did the right thing."

Monday morning, Schnader calls me up. 10:00. I walked in. "I got a call over the weekend from Richard Nixon," he said. I said, "Yes, I was at Tom McCabe's," and I told him about it. He said, "Nixon told me all about it. I don't like him. I don't like him at all. Never did. But young man, you go to 30th Street Station. Take a train. You go to see Mr. Nixon. You're on the team. We'll work it out." I did what he told me, and I was one of Nixon's principal advisors.

INT: Well, how did you know him before?

ADAMS: When he was Vice-President.

INT: How had that come about?

ADAMS: Well, I had known Dwight Eisenhower when he was President. Nixon was his Vice-President. Well, I have to go back. You asked me how did I become a Republican. When I was clerkind for Judge Stern I was writing a book with Judge Flood on Pennsylvania practice. And I told you we had a luncheon meeting at least once a week. Judge Flood was on a court that included Judge Leventhal and Judge Bok. And frequently they would join us for lunch. Wonderful people. And at one of the luncheons, I was talking about what I was going to do in the future. By that time I was in the Schnader office. Flood said, "You really ought to take a year off and go into the District Attorney's office, and get experience in criminal law." And Bok said, "Jerry (meaning Flood) I wouldn't do that." Flood said, "Why not?" Bok said, "If he goes into the DA's office, he will become a Democrat." Bok was an ardent Democrat. Bok said, "We don't have many good young Republicans in the city of Philadelphia, and he's associated with William A. Schnader. He ought to become a Republican." (laughter)

INT: And what were you saying? Just listening.

ADAMS: I kind of laughed at that, but shortly thereafter I met Hugh Scott. Hugh Scott was then the congressman from our area, and we became very close friends. And so I was fairly active.

INT: You had considered yourself an independent before that?
ADAMS: Yes, I just didn't give it much thought. I was only 25, 26 years old. And with Scott, I thought Scott was a good congressman. I helped him in his Senate race.

INT: My memory is a lot of Jewish people were Democrats because of Roosevelt.

ADAMS: Oh, of course. That's right. I was an admirer of Roosevelt. And I thought a lot of Truman. But I liked Eisenhower, and my little daughter, now my oldest daughter, was four years old when Eisenhower was running. Where is she? (looks for her picture) This little girl here, she was four. Carol. She developed a little speech, which was called, "Time for a Change." Roosevelt and Truman had been in office so long.

INT: I remember that slogan.

ADAMS: She said, "The Democrats have been in power since 1932. It's now 1958. 26 years. Don't you think it's time for a change? I do." Eisenhower heard about it. So we thought it was time for a change. I'm not an ardent Republican, but I generally vote that way, although not necessarily. But I worked on the Eisenhower-Nixon campaign. After Nixon won the nomination for president in 1968, he brought me to California; he brought his main people to California.

INT: What did you do for him?

ADAMS: Well, I was in charge of Pennsylvania. I ran his campaign in Pennsylvania.

INT: Fundraising, organizing?

ADAMS: There wasn't much fundraising in those days. You didn't have to do very much. People came to me and gave me money. I didn't do very much. But the thing that I did for him was I got him delegates for the Convention. In fact, the night that he got the nomination, he invited Mrs. Adams, myself, and my daughters, who were there, to a party, a small party, and brought the Vice-President over, and said, "I wouldn't have gotten the nomination without this guy." I did get him a lot of delegates, there's no doubt about it. And it was not easy. Pennsylvania was for Rockefeller. But then a fateful mistake. He invited me to California. And we were around talking about what he was going to do, and he got around to me. "So what do you think?" Somehow the discussion got around to Vietnam, and I said, "Get out. Let's say we won and get out. It's a no-win situation." Unlike what he had said to me in Tom McCabe's office, his reaction was completely different. He was visibly upset, I could tell. And that began some sort of a deterioration in our relationship. Most people thought he was going to invite me to be in the Cabinet. He didn't invite me to be in the Cabinet. Most people thought he was at least going to appoint me as Solicitor General of the United States. He didn't do that. He was rather cool, but he did send somebody up to see me that wanted to know what I wanted. And I said,
"I don't want anything. I did what I did and that's it." He said, "Well, you'd better come down." So I went down in the summer of '68 or '69 to the White House. And the Attorney General came over to see me and he said, "The President wants to appoint you to the Court of Appeals." I said, "Well, I appreciate that, but I really don't think I can do that. I've been mixed up now in community affairs. I really have to settle down and make a living. I have children that want to go to college." He said, "Well, I wouldn't do that. When the President asks you to do something, I would take it very seriously. And I don't think it's the end of the road for you."

So I came back, talked to the people here. They said, "Try it. If you don't like it, resign." And I called the President, talked to him personally. We had a few other discussions, about Social Security, and things like that, and he appointed me. I was still pretty young. I was still in my forties. And it was clear that there was still the Vietnam thing that must have bothered him.

Then there was a vacancy on the Supreme Court. First vacancy, first or second vacancy. And I picked up the paper, and it reported that Hugh Scott had gone to see President Nixon to recommend that he appoint me to the Supreme Court, which I doubted was going to happen. And I went to see Hugh Scott, who then was the leader of the Senate. He was just like Dole is today. I said, "Withdraw that suggestion. It's ridiculous. I'm not qualified. Plenty of people are." He said, "Forget it. I couldn't withdraw it if I wanted to. Nixon was very enthusiastic about it." He said, "If you ask me, I think he's going to appoint you." I said, "I don't believe it." He said, "Well, you wait and see." Well, the day came, the nominations were announced. Let's see, Walter Cronkite called me, and said, "Everybody says you're going to be appointed. Can I send the cameraman?" He was with CBS. Cronkite. I said, "No." I wouldn't permit it. He said, "Well, I hope you change your mind."

I went to a dinner at Bryn Mawr. By that time I was a trustee at Bryn Mawr College, where my daughter was going to college. At the last minute Nixon named the person who is now the Chief Justice, Rehnquist. And the story was that the right wing Republicans had discouraged him. They thought it was risky. I was liberal, or a moderate, or something like that. But right before Nixon died, he came to Philadelphia for a dinner party for Walter Annenberg. And he told the group: "The biggest disappointment in my presidency was that I didn't name Adams to the court." He said, "He deserved it. He should have been appointed, and I regret very much that he was never appointed." Which was a nice thing, even if he didn't believe it, it was nice to say.

INT: Very nice. Considering what the Court did to him. (laughs)

ADAMS: Yeah. The Court really hurt him. I stayed on the Court of Appeals until I was 65. When you're 65 you may, if you wish, retire. You don't have to. It's your choice. I chose to retire and to come back here. I didn't think there was anything more I could do on the court. I'd been there 18 years. I loved it. I enjoyed it. But I was looking for other things to do. And
that's where I am.

Now, let's go back. (Pause) My mother. Well, I've told you about my mother. She came from Budapest.

INT: You don't know any more information about the Civil War stories, or...

ADAMS: No, I've been down to the battlefields.

INT: What was it like in Kansas to live in those days?

ADAMS: I do know that my grandparents, while I was, while they were still living, and I was a little boy, spoke German. But not exclusively. Our neighborhood at Germantown Avenue and Somerset Street, I wouldn't say was predominantly German, maybe it was but it was heavily German. We were surrounded with hosiery mills and carpet mills, and they were mainly German workers. And at Eighth and Tabor Road was a German American Club called "The Rifle Club." But my father didn't speak it. My father was more Reform, even though he went to AJ. Leon Obermeyer was a member of AJ, and then there was a schism there, and Leon's group went to RS. My father stayed at AJ. The group left AJ because of Rabbi Klein. I can't even tell you what the dispute was. I have no recollection.

INT: Well, all I know about it is that the Jewish Theological Seminary sent Rabbi Klein down there to kind of save AJ for Conservative Judaism.

ADAMS: AJ was a wonderful experience. I loved Sunday School. I really did. A few of my old friends are from AJ. Great Sunday school. Great teachers.

INT: You only went on Sundays.

ADAMS: No. Until the time I was Bar Mitzvah, I went Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Sundays. But then I couldn't stay after I was Bar Mitzvahed for Confirmation. I just couldn't do it. It was too far of a trip. Not many boys were confirmed in those days. The girls were confirmed, the boys were Bar Mitzvahed. It's different today.

INT: Are your daughters members?

ADAMS: Well, one daughter's in Nashville. She's not a member. One daughter lived in Pottstown, and she's now downtown. She goes, but she's not a member. The other daughter is a member, she lives in Wyncote. Even before I returned from Harrisburg, I was elected President of the American Jewish Committee here in Philadelphia. Went to all those meetings. I was active with the Jewish Family Service, particularly in the division that was devoted to taking in New Americans. A wonderful group of men that did that. Al Lieberman and Satinsky, and I.M. Scott, Isadore Sable. Devoted themselves to that. Ben
Sprafkin ran that.

Then from the American Jewish Committee, well, I kind of veered away from strictly Jewish organizations. After I was appointed Secretary of Welfare, I didn't tell you this. But Morris Satinsky, who helped change from the Home for the Incurables, was then the Chairman of Moss. And he came to see me in Harrisburg, and he asked for a lot of money, government money. The Department had a program known as Hill-Burton. I said, "Morris, I think you're on the right track. I think there ought to be a rehabilitation hospital. I'm going to recommend that you get three million dollars. But I will never return to the Board of Moss Hospital again. If you get that money, I don't want anybody to say that it's a conflict. That I was giving it to help myself." We shook hands, and I've never been back. So when I came back from Harrisburg, I would not be active at the Moss Hospital. I became active on the Einstein Board, and eventually became Chairman of Einstein.

INT: I notice in your bio that you've done, you were on the Board of the Pennsylvania School for Social Work, at the Bryn Mawr School for Social Work? I'm curious, does this come from the Health and Welfare?

ADAMS: Yes. While I was in Harrisburg, and I was head of the Department of Welfare, the School of Social Work at Penn asked me to join the board. I was interested in recruiting good social workers. On the other hand, my daughter was starting at Bryn Mawr College as a student. And I became a trustee of Bryn Mawr, and the President, Kathy McBride, said, "We'd very much like you to become Chairman of the School of Social Work here, given your background." I said, "Well, I will do that, but I have to resign from Penn." She said, "Well, it's a lot to ask, but I would hope you would do it." She was a wonderful lady. I did resign from the Penn School of Social Work, and recommended that they take my wife, which they did. She's still there. I went to Bryn Mawr, stayed for ten years, and then resigned. My daughter was out of school by then, and I didn't want to do it anymore.

By that time I had been the chairman of the Fels School of Government at Penn, on the board of the Wharton School, on the Board of the Law School, and I was pretty deeply tied in with Penn.

INT: Very good.

ADAMS: Well, we covered a lot of territory.

INT: Well, we did. And I think, you know, we need a rest.

INT: Today is July 9, 1996. And we're in the offices of Arlin Adams at Schnader, Harrison.
And I must once again ask you if you have agreed to this interview.

**ADAMS:** I have.

**INT:** You just signed a consent form, for which I thank you very much. One of the reasons I had to come back today was I forgot one important thing that we're all supposed to start with, which is to ask you your birth date.

**ADAMS:** April 16, 1921.

**INT:** Thank you. I have jotted down a few little points that I wanted to ask about, but also, if you had something that perhaps you thought about since then, it's been a long time. (laughs) If you wanted to add...

**ADAMS:** I forgot where we left off. Do you remember where we were when we broke the last time?

**INT:** Hill-Burton.

**ADAMS:** So. I was in Harrisburg.

**INT:** In Harrisburg, yeah.

**ADAMS:** Why don't you ask a few questions that are still in your mind, and I'll pick up from there.

**INT:** Well, I wanted you to perhaps talk a little bit more about your father, and his interest in art, if it came out later on as well as early on?

**ADAMS:** Well, I think I told you that my father was born in Kansas City, Missouri.

**INT:** Right.

**ADAMS:** And he came to Philadelphia at about the same time as Leon Obermeyer's family did. Leon's family came from Scotia, Illinois, as I remember. S-c-o-t-i-a. By the way, his wife, Julia, just died this week; we just attended her funeral.

**INT:** Yeah. I saw it in the paper.

**ADAMS:** A very wonderful lady, a wonderful couple. Both of the young men went to Central High School, which may have been the only high school in the city at the time. I think South Philadelphia High School, and Northeast High School came later. Don't hold me to that -- that's my recollection. Central was a very unusual high school, both in those
days and today. It had the authority to grant degrees. In any event, Leon went off to law school. He went to Penn Law School. He didn't go to college. Not very unusual in those days. Very, very few lawyers went to college. For example, Morris Wolf didn't go to college. He went right from Penn Charter to the University of Pennsylvania Law School. But my father was not interested in the law. He went to the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts. But his family was in the men's hat business, which was a big business in Philadelphia, because Stetson, which was the largest hat manufacturer in the world, was located in Philadelphia. Blocks and blocks of factory buildings. So my dad really ran the business for his father, and then ran it for himself, and he only dabbled in art, kind of like a hobby. But almost everything in the house he did. He did the, in those days they had valances over windows. I don't know whether you remember that. But he would build them and paint them, and did all the signs for the store. He was both very handy mechanically, as well as artistic, but he did not make a living at it.

INT: I thought that you had said that he was interested in a career.

ADAMS: He was, but it wasn't feasible. Very few young men could make a living out of art, especially if they wanted to have a family, and he did. But he was a very interesting man, and he... he really was the victim of the Depression, as so many of those men were. It was beyond them. Business was bad. He eventually left the hat business. Stetson eventually closed up. Men stopped wearing hats. And he went into the electrical appliance business: washing machines, vacuum cleaners, all those things. And he was in that business till he died. Kind of slowed down. He had semi-retired.

INT: Did anybody in the family inherit his artistic interest?

ADAMS: I did in a way. I went to art school. But when I had to begin working in order to go to college, and really devoting myself to make sure that I would get good enough marks to get a scholarship, that kind of was the end of it.

INT: We didn't talk too much about your early years in grade school. Anything particular you remember there?

ADAMS: I started in a grade school called George Clymer. That was around 13th and Somerset Streets. George Clymer had been a signer of the Declaration. The school was named after him. My school did go up to eighth grade -- I left before eighth grade because we moved to Roosevelt Boulevard. I skipped twice. Maybe three times. Either two or three times. I skipped once in college, I only took three and a half years in college. I forget whether I skipped twice or three times, and that was the reason that I was only sixteen years old when I was in college. And I was 20 years old when I was in law school. This is sort of unusual. I was a little on the young side. I'm not so sure I would advocate that today. The world was different. We didn't have many schools. And many of the classes were what were known as divided classes. You have 6A and 6B in the same classroom, and kind of an aisle,
so that if you were curious or alert and you were in 6A, you would start doing the 6B work, and by the end of the year the teacher would have to say, "Well, you can do the 6B work, so we graduate you." And that's what happened.

I was a good student. I wouldn't say that I was spectacular. I was at the top of the class, but you know, they were small classes. Eventually the family moved and I went to a school called Clara Barton, which was at B and Wyoming, and that school was named after the first nurse in the United States military, Clara Barton. She was in the Civil War. It was a great experience. The faculties in these schools were top notch. There were no deportment problems in the school in those days. Everybody arrived on time, sat in their desk, did their homework. And each school had a schoolyard. The great game in those days was volleyball, and I was very active in volleyball. We had, in both schools, adjunct schools that taught the boys manual training, shop, and the girls sewing and cooking. I don't know whether they do that anymore.

INT: No. (laughs)

ADAMS: I thought Barton was a very good school. It went up to eighth grade as Clymer did, and then I was off to high school. And I went to Olney High School starting in 1934. Olney was the best high school in the city. I gave a lot of thought to going to Central, because Central had a tradition that anyone whose father went to Central could go to Central, regardless of where he lived. But it was very run-down. It was right across from where Rodeph Shalom is today. Very old building. Whereas Olney High was within walking distance.

I remember in my class, my graduating class, I think we won 22 out of the 24 mayor's scholarship. The teachers were superb. It was a great experience. Again, I was not at the very top of the class, because I was doing a number of things. In the first place, I was the editor-in-chief of the school newspaper. I was working full-time in high school. I worked at the department stores during the week, during the weekdays. And the weekends I would also have other jobs like cutting lawns or working in a fruit store. (laughs) It was the Depression, and we really had to scrape awfully hard for any money. Money was very scarce.

Anyway, I was ready to graduate in January 1938.

INT: Did you get any socializing while you were there?

ADAMS: Well, I was about to say, the greatest thing that happened to me in high school was that I met a very beautiful woman -- young lady, not a woman -- who was unbelievable. She was smart, she was pretty, she was charming, she was modest. She just about had anything that anyone would ever want. And even at that young age I fell in love. I was just sixteen. And I went with her until I married her. And she's still my wife. She was an
outstanding student. She was...at the very top of the class. They were very big classes. The classes had 500 students in those days. She was the editor of the yearbook.

And I think I told you what happened when I got out. It was January, '38, no jobs, no money to go to college, and I got the job at the "Philadelphia Inquirer" for five dollars a week.

INT: Yeah. I wanted to ask you about Moses Annenberg, what kind of a man he was. I wondered about him.

ADAMS: Well, I guess you would call him a tough businessman. He knew what he was doing. He ran the newspaper with an iron fist. The writers did what Mr. Annenberg asked them to do, or else they weren't around very long. My recollection is that in those days the Annenberg family belonged to Kneseth Israel. He very much liked Dr. Fineshreiber. And they were in, the "Inquirer" was in a pitched battle with the "Philadelphia Record." There were two morning newspapers in the city: "The Inquirer," which was nominally a Republican or conservative paper, and the "Philadelphia Record," which was located very near the "Inquirer," on Broad Street, owned and published by David Stern. Not only a Democrat, but an active Democrat, pretty close to Franklin Roosevelt. And there was intense rivalry. They threw each other's trucks into the river and God knows what. The "Inquirer" eventually emerged as the stronger of the two and the "Record" went out of business.

The other newspapers in the city at the time, there was "The Daily News," owned independently, not controlled by the "Inquirer." And they published around 22nd and Arch Streets. Then "The Philadelphia Ledger" was at 6th and Chestnut, and the Curtis family owned that. A very good newspaper, it eventually went out of business. And of course, "The Bulletin," which was the biggest newspaper, an evening newspaper, was situated at that time at Juniper and Filbert Street, right across from City Hall. Many years later they moved out to the 30th Street Station.

I had worked for the "Inquirer," "The Record," and the "Bulletin." That was another job I had while I was in high school: I reported on all sporting events. And they gave me for that, I think $1.75 for each game. And I remember going down on Saturday morning to collect my money, and taking a subway to do that. A great experience. But I was interested in journalism so it wasn't inconvenient to me.

Anyway, that brings you up to college. You know what happened in college, I think. I did tell you what happened in college.

INT: Oh, yeah.

ADAMS: And law school.
INT: Right. And the question that I thought about as I was listening was why you became a litigator, how you, you know, picked that branch of the law. Why that appealed to you.

ADAMS: That's a good question. Anyway, when I got out of law school and came over to the Schnader... of course, I didn't talk to you about my experience with Horace Stern, did I?

INT: Oh, yeah. Yeah. We went pretty far.

ADAMS: And how bright I thought he was?

INT: Oh, yeah.

ADAMS: Picture's up there. And then when I came over here, I was quickly assigned to the head of the firm, who was William A. Schnader. He had had a stroke, and he wasn't able to go to court, but he was a very good writer, a very good brief writer. And he had me help him. And since he couldn't go to court, I pretty much had to do it for him. And then there was another gentleman in the firm by the name of Kenworthy, Charlie Kenworthy, who had been a judge and retired, and he was a litigator. He had gone both to law school and medical school, so he knew a lot about medicine and malpractice, which was very unusual in those days. Very bright, very good-looking man. Extremely good-looking man. Everyone thought that he ought to run for Governor. But he had difficulties with his wife, and it led to divorce. And in those days, it was not a good idea for a divorced man to run for office. So he left Philadelphia, left our firm, and went to Pittsburgh, to a big firm, the biggest firm in the state at the time: Reed, Smith, Shaw, McClay. Very powerful political office, that did most of the Mellon work. And he was replaced by Earl Harrison. Earl Harrison had been the Dean of the Law School.

INT: Yes.

ADAMS: I told you about Harrison, how he became an honorary member of our synagogue, a Quaker. And after Kenworthy left, Earl Harrison and I handled many matters together. And we did many matters together with the Wolf office. Particularly Morris Wolf, Abe Freedman, and later on Louis Goffman. And I became a very good friend of Morris Wolf. I had great admiration for him. Very bright, very good judgement, great advocate. And I guess I used him as one of my role models. You don't think that clearly when you're young, but I was very impressed with him. Abe Freedman was also a very bright, able fellow. Morris Wolf was a very charming man, he really was. Very impressive. In a modest way. He always wanted me to come to that firm, and I was reluctant to do that. We were in the same building, in the Packard Building. And I remember when I was in the Governor's cabinet. Scranton called me in one day and he said, "You know, I bumped into Morris Wolf. I have a feeling he would very much like you to go to that firm." I said, "Well, Governor, I would worry about doing that. I mean, these two firms are in the Packard Building, and I would just feel uncomfortable. I'll always be good friends, but I just don't want to do that."
Of course today, lawyers jump from one firm to the other, they don't even give it two minutes' notice. But in those days that was very unusual, and I did not want to do that.

So that after I left the cabinet, I came back to the Schnader firm. And I tried very hard to get out of Harrisburg, because pressure was building up for me to run for Governor, and I didn't want to run for Governor. I can't tell you why. I just didn't want to run for Governor. Scranton wanted me to run, Senator Scott wanted me to run, and I said, "That's not for me. I want to go back, make a living for my family, my children." And the governor eventually said one day, "Well, look. If that's how you feel, you have my blessing. You go ahead." And he gave me a luncheon, and he gave me this beautiful gift, a piece of Steuben ware. (Pointing to it.) Did I mention this to you?

INT: No.

ADAMS: Greatly cherished. And this says: "Successful public service is the most rewarding of human endeavors." And then it's signed by, presented by Governor Scranton.

INT: It's very, very nice.

ADAMS: And I agreed with him. We had a lot in common. He treated me almost like his younger brother. He didn't have a brother, and we were very, very close.

INT: But it's through him that you met people like Hugh Scott?

ADAMS: No, I knew Hugh Scott before I knew Bill Scranton. Hugh Scott was the congressman from the Germantown/ Chestnut Hill/ Oak Lane area. And I met him, and I helped him with some of his campaign. The way I met Scranton was very interesting. I had been in a lawsuit with some attorneys from Scranton, Pennsylvania. And one of them was a very fine, distinguished gentleman by the name of Edward Warren. And when Scranton decided to run for Governor, Ed Warren called me up and said "I would like it very much if you would help my nephew."

INT: Warren, or Warrend?

ADAMS: Warren. And that's Scranton's middle name. Because Ed Warren was Bill Scranton's mother's brother. It was Marjory Warren Scranton. And I said, "Sure, I think very highly of him, he's very clean-cut, highly intelligent. The next time he's in Philadelphia, I'll make it a point to meet him." And I did, and I became one of his campaign managers, and we were very close. A wonderful person, one of the greatest people in my life. And after he was elected, in kind of a landslide -- he beat Dilworth -- he strongly urged me to go into his cabinet, and I eventually agreed to do that.

INT: But you had met Hugh Scott before.
ADAMS: Oh, I had known Hugh Scott.

INT: How did you get to President Eisenhower? Through Scott?"

ADAMS: Scott was close to Eisenhower. Scranton was close to Eisenhower also. Eisenhower wanted Scranton to run for President. By the time we were in Harrisburg in the Scranton administration in 1963, Eisenhower was living in Gettysburg. So he would frequently come over to Harrisburg for events, or Scranton would run down to see him. They were good friends. And Eisenhower was a little different type of a politician. He would rarely come out with a positive statement. But he would say to Scranton, "You ought to give some thought to running." Well, from a former president, that is really an endorsement. But Scranton was very modest. He wanted to please Eisenhower, but he didn't want to run for president. He really didn't. I remember going over to his house, called the mansion, Indiantown, because I lived in Harrisburg when I was Secretary, and talking about his making a race for it. And he didn't want to do it, until finally one day he called me on the phone and he said, "I've decided to do it." But it was too late. Goldwater had almost all the delegates. So he fought a good fight. But he could not win. A great loss for the country. He would have lent a different type of coloration to the job. He was a very fine person, well-educated. He was really a refined Nelson Rockefeller. He and Nelson were good friends; Nelson didn't have the refinement of Scranton. Scranton was impeccably courteous. Got up very early in the morning, worked hard. Was so thoughtful and good-looking and rich, he had everything. The only person who has come along that rivals him was John Heinz, who was a disciple of Scranton. He liked John Heinz.

INT: Did the fact that you were Jewish ever come up?

ADAMS: Oh, Scranton was well aware of my religion. He respected it. It didn't mean anything to him. He just didn't care about it. The first thing he ever asked me to do when I was in his cabinet, was to pinch hit for him at a B'nai B'rith dinner. And I remember his calling. He said, "Look, I want to go to that dinner. The guy that they're honoring is the finest citizen of Scranton. I just can't do it. I want you to do it. Because he would like you." I forget the guy, who owned a department store in Scranton. And he was right. He was just a very fine gentleman. No, he didn't care about one's religion. I didn't think Scott cared. Religion didn't mean anything to him.

INT: Yeah, so you said. That's really so interesting.

ADAMS: It just didn't mean anything. If anything, they'd give a little tilt the other way.

INT: Well, I guess that's why they were great men.

ADAMS: Well, that's right.
INT: One of the reasons. The other thing we didn't go into very much is when you were on the bench, if there were any particular issues that were important to you, or that you felt more strongly about.

ADAMS: When I first became a judge, one of the big issues was what should we do with people who have been convicted of crimes, say at the state level, and then discovered that there was some mistake during their trial, and would run over to the Federal Court and file what is known as Habeas Corpus. And very frequently they would indeed find that there was a mistake, which really had nothing to do with their guilt or innocence. And they were proceeding to file these petitions for Habeas in great numbers; they were flooding the federal courts. But more than that, many of the federal judges were beginning to release these men from prison, and I thought it was a serious mistake. And for some reason, the Democratic Party, which was more interested in so-called civil rights, human rights, than the Republican Party, was pushing this approach.

By the time Nixon ran for President, it had become a major issue in the country -- the idea of "soft on crime" began developing. And that was one of the things that the people were talking about. In case we would arrest somebody, they would assert their so-called constitutional rights and the case would be dismissed. You couldn't have line-ups anymore, a whole series of things.

The idea took hold that one of the problems was that the Supreme Court was too liberal. There were some wonderful people on the Supreme Court: Hugo Black, Bill Douglas, Bill Brennan. But the general feeling was that they had tilted too far. Crime had become a big issue in the country. Whether it was because of Habeas, or a whole series of things, no one will ever know. The people in the south were far less liberal than the people in the north. The civil rights revolution had not really come into complete flower. So in his campaigning, Nixon began talking about two or three ideas that symbolized what I just said. One was the silent majority. I don't know whether you remember that. You hear all these liberals running around the country, they're not the majority. There's a silent majority that feels different. And the idea that there ought to be at least one Southerner on the court, developed into something called "The Southern Strategy." Because up until then, the South was solid Democrat. Every southern state had voted Democratic. And then the question whether we weren't going too far with Civil Rights. We ought to slow down, let the thing catch up with itself.

The liberals on our court, and they were very smart, very nice, wonderful people, they were tilting one way. Abe Freedman, for example, was on the court of appeals. Very bright, very nice. Much more liberal than I. And I kept worrying, and I talked to Abe, he was a good friend of mine. "Abe, in the long-run we're not doing these people any good. To let people leave prison when they've committed a crime, they'll come back to haunt us." It started with the affirmative action -- all things being equal, you have to give the odds to the Black person. The police department had to have so many women, so many whites, and so many Blacks.
I said, "It's going to come back to haunt us. That's not the way to go." Well, that was a battleground on our court for a long time. I didn't win many of those arguments. But gradually the country came to that view, and of course now it's evened out. But I think a lot of damage has been done.

INT: You mentioned to me that there was an oral history when you were on the bench.

ADAMS: I remember an oral history. Somebody was experimenting with the court. I forget who was doing it. It was from the Federal Judicial Center.

INT: Do they have those records?

ADAMS: I don't know.

INT: You don't know where the records are.

ADAMS: No, I do not know. Probably the Federal Judicial Center, and the person who is most apt to know is Leo Levin.

INT: Oh, really.

ADAMS: Do you know Leo?

INT: Yes.

ADAMS: He's at the University of Pennsylvania Law School, and at one time he was the head of the Federal Judicial Center, and he might know about that.

INT: Because it would be a nice thing to be able to add to your record.

ADAMS: I don't think they ever took mine. I don't think so. I don't recall it. I know they did some, and I know I was on the board of the Federal Judicial Center. So I know they did some, but I certainly don't recall them doing mine.

INT: The next question was when you were the independent counsel for H.U.D.

ADAMS: Eventually I became 65 years of age, and that permitted me to retire from the court. I had been on the court seventeen years -- at 65 you could retire. I retired, and came back here as a counsel. And before I was here very long, President Reagan asked me if I would become the Deputy Attorney General of the United States. I said, I don't want to. He said, "Well, if you accept that, you'll become the Attorney General."

INT: What was he like? Did you know him well?
ADAMS: No, I did not know him well. Hardly at all. It was not a personal request. He was embarrassed by the Attorney General, who at that time was Ed Meese, who was under investigation. And my friends said, "Look. If he wants to appoint you Attorney General, you ought to take that. But if he wants to appoint you the Deputy in order to kind of save Meese, I think it would be a mistake." So I, after a great deal of anguishing, I said no. And there was no hard feelings -- at least I hope not.

The next year there was a scandal in the Reagan Administration because the secretary of HUD, Housing and Urban Development. Sam Pierce, was found doing all sorts of political favors, cost the government a lot of money, and the court invited me down and asked me if I would take that over. And the same as I anguished about the other job, I said, "Well, how long will this take?" They said, "Oh, you'll finish in six months. There's nothing to it." So I agreed to do it. And I said, "I can't resign from the law firm. You know, I can't go in and out of these things." "No, just come down two or three days a week, and all will be well." "I just have to make a living for my children." Well, the six months turned into five years, and it was a very interesting experience. It was successful. We prosecuted many people, and got back millions of dollars, and I don't regret having done it. But after I was finished with that, and I was really ready to settle in, take a little more time, then the New Era thing came along. And they came to see me and said, "Well, this is a serious matter for the Delaware Valley. If somebody doesn't straighten this out, the ability of these charities to raise money is going to be injured." And I said, "So how long do you think it will take?" They said, "Well, about six, seven months." And one of the organizations that was involved was the University of Pennsylvania. I said, "Well, I'm a trustee of the University of Pennsylvania." "Well, why don't you take a leave of absence?" So I talked to the president, who was Judith Rodin by that time. She said, "We think you ought to do that. You've got to resolve this thing." So I did it, and I'm still doing it.

INT: Okay. The other request was to take your bio that your assistant had prepared. I wonder if I could add that to your archive.

ADAMS: I didn't give it to you?

INT: Yeah, you did. I just wanted to ask you if that would be okay.

ADAMS: Oh, sure, of course.

INT: You mentioned there were a lot of other organizations, you know, we talked a lot about your Jewish involvement, the synagogue, and...

ADAMS: Well, all right. Let's talk about some of the organizations.

INT: Were there any others that were particularly interesting to you?
ADAMS: American Philosophical Society. The American Philosophical Society is the oldest honorary society in the United States, predating Phi Beta Kappa, and founded by Benjamin Franklin in 1741. It's a very prestigious organization. Almost half the people are Nobel Prize winners, and many have become prize winners in this century. There are only about 500 members in the United States. You have to be elected, a long procedure. God knows why they elected me; I was not qualified. I clearly was not qualified. Gratified, but not qualified. In any event, I became active because it was so near the courthouse, and eventually they asked me to become president, and I was thrilled to be the president. We have foreign members, 125 foreign members. It's very interesting to go there and see their archives. The first president was Benjamin Franklin. The second president was Benjamin Rush, but the third president was the President of the United States at the time, Thomas Jefferson. And some of its early members were Washington, and John Adams, and Sam Adams, and Madison and Monroe, all the great patriots. And Chief Justice Marshall. It's a marvelous organization. Completely endowed, no dues, nothing like that.

INT: But the point of the organization is to recognize people for their achievements? Do you have programs?

ADAMS: It's a combination: to recognize people for achievement, then to have interesting programs, which they have twice a year. You can discuss anything you want.

The other organization that I found interesting was the Diagnostic Center in Philadelphia, which has an interesting history. The state was going to rebuild Vine Street. Everyone said, "Well, if you rebuild Vine Street, what are you going to do with the people on Skid Row?" Vine Street went through Skid Row. And the city fathers said to the state, "If you agree to build Vine Street, we will create an organization to deal with those alcoholics." And that's called the Diagnostic and Rehabilitation Center. It's down near 2nd and Arch, a beautiful building, and it really got rid of all the Skid Row people. It began treating alcoholics. It worked out a deal for it with Eagleville, and then it went into drug rehabilitation. And I was a president of that for three or four years, and I thought that was very interesting.

INT: Very good. Well, what they'd like us to ask down toward the end of our interviews, is if you could, if there was any kind of defining event, or disappointment, or achievement that you think that you can point to?

ADAMS: Well, I guess the biggest, you can't call it a disappointment. I don't know how to characterize it. On three occasions Presidents of the United States have considered me for the Supreme Court and it just never worked out.

INT: That's more like an achievement, isn't it, to be considered?

ADAMS: Yeah, I didn't really have any political connections as such. I wasn't a Senator, or anything like that. And I always felt very gratified that I was thought of, so I guess that's
one. And I didn't want to run for Governor, so I can't say I was disappointed in that. I just didn't think that was for me. That's about the only one. I think I've been very, very lucky. Nothing I ever wanted that I haven't been able to do. I've been very healthy. I lose very little time. I like what I'm doing. I have a wonderful wife and wonderful children, and I love the Jewish community. I loved being president of KI. I thought that was a wonderful job. I loved being chancellor of the Bar Association. A wonderful job. I loved being Secretary of Welfare. I loved being on the Court of Appeals. They were all exciting things to me. I loved every second of them. I loved teaching at the University. I loved writing. So I've just been very lucky.

We haven't even talked about Federation. I had a great experience with Federation. I was asked to be president of Federation when I was a judge, and I went to the Attorney General. He said, "You can't do that because the situation at the present time is tense, with the United States and Israel. And if anything ever happens, and you're the president of the Federation, you will have dual loyalties. And the President doesn't think you ought to do that. You can be vice-president, something like that. You can do whatever you want. We're just giving you our ideas." So I accepted that. And we got a very good president of the Federation at the time. When I declined to do it, Morris Kravitz agreed to do it, and I thought he was a very good president. He gave the Federation a great deal of time, and money, and resources. I thought he was very good.

INT: Oh, yes.

ADAMS: I thought that Moss was an inspiring experience. Morris Satinsky and what he did, the Home for Incurables, making it into one of the greatest rehabilitation hospitals. A great experience. I thought Einstein was a good experience. They took old broken down buildings and built it up. And so no, I have no regrets. No defining experience. I think it was a combination of being born in the United States, which is one of the luckiest things that can happen to anybody, having nice parents, a nice wife, and nice children. Being healthy. All of that. I had as much to do about selecting my mother and father as that picture there. How could I select where I was going to be born? I could have been born in India! I had nothing to do with it. I had nothing to do with my health. I mean all of those things are just sheer luck. All you can do is do your best each day, and hope for luck. That's all you can do. Try as hard as you can.

INT: Do you want to continue as a of counsel, or do you anticipate...

ADAMS: Well, I keep...

INT: Not coming to the office? (laughs)

ADAMS: Yes, I think I'm getting too old. The young people must pass my door and say, "When is that guy going to go home so we can have some liveliness around here?" But I
don't know. If you do it, you quickly, nothing happens, and you're not doing anything for anybody. And I guess I'm selfish, and I don't want to do that.

INT: Well, you're doing wonderful work.

ADAMS: I think I would like to do a little more for the Jewish community, which I haven't done in the last few years. Most of my activity is with the APS, the University. But it's not easy to go back.

Another interesting experience that you and I haven't talked about is my experience with Hebrew Union College.

INT: Yes, you did. Yes, you did.

ADAMS: That was a wonderful experience. I really loved that. HUC had a fine board.

INT: I think it's because you went to Israel with...

ADAMS: That's right. We established a faculty there with Nelson Glueck. That was the first Reform facility that was established in Israel, and Glueck was, oh, you don't remember him, do you?

INT: Oh, I do.


INT: I knew his sister, also.

ADAMS: Well, he was a great archaeologist. I remember when his picture was on the cover of TIME.

ADAMS: All of a sudden, an older person comes on the scene. Generally what I have done as I've been active in a group and my term of office is over, I kind of stay away. I think it's unfair to other's success.

INT: There's certainly many places that look for help. So. That's not my job here, but you would find much to do.

ADAMS: It's a great community. I don't regret for a minute being in Philadelphia. I'm a little bit worried about the future of Philadelphia, mainly because of the job situation. And if you don't have a job base, people will leave, or you'll have too much crime, and everything gets into disrepair. I'm not smart enough to know the answer.
INT: Well, I want to thank you very, very much on behalf of Temple University and the Archive Center.

ADAMS: Well, it was a pleasure talking to you. And I apologize for talking too much. I regret that.

INT: Oh, no! (laughs) Please!

ADAMS: I'm sure you have more interesting things to do and people to talk with than me.

INT: No, you were on the top of the list.

ADAMS: Yes, I'll bet. With A! (laugher)

(END OF INTERVIEW)