

Edward A. Crane Oral History Interview—1976
Administrative Information

Creator: Edward A. Crane
Interviewer: William J. Hartigan
Date of Interview: 1976
Location: Boston, Massachusetts
Length: 25 pages

Biographical Note

Crane, a contemporary of John F. Kennedy (JFK) at Harvard, and a city councilor and mayor of Cambridge, Massachusetts, discusses John F. Kennedy's 1946 congressional campaign, the 1960 presidential campaign, and JFK's assassination, among other issues.

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Suggested Citation

Edward A. Crane, recorded interview by William J. Hartigan, 1976, (page number), John F. Kennedy Library Oral History Program.

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Edward A. Crane

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Oral History Interview

with

Edward A. Crane

1976

Boston, Massachusetts

By William J. Hartigan

For the John F. Kennedy Library

HARTIGAN: I'm in the office of Cambridge, Boston attorney, Edward Crane, at 1 Boston Place, Boston, Massachusetts. Ed Crane was Mayor of Cambridge for ten years, and before that, city councilor of Cambridge for thirty years. Very active supporter of the late President Kennedy [John F. Kennedy] in the years he was in the Congress and the Senate, and in the Presidency. I'm in Ed Crane's office today representing the Oral History Department of the John F. Kennedy Library, and our purpose is to interview Mr. Crane, and recall his experience during the Kennedy Administration. Ed, for openers, when did you first meet the late President Kennedy?

CRANE: About 1938. I was fortunate as an undergraduate in Harvard College to fill out an application for temporary employment, could state that I could type. So I became an assistant librarian attendant, a deskman as you might want to call, at the Union Library. And after college I went over to the law school. I was seven years at the Union Library. And during that time, I had met many undergraduates including Jack Kennedy, about 1938. I had observed him in the library and then got to know him inasmuch as he and probably two others were obviously the voracious readers. And curiously, the two others that I always grouped with him as speed readers,

because they used to take out at least two current books. You know, we had assigned reading, a class reading, a casebook reading, but then there were books made available for pleasure reading. And Philip Wells of the North Shore Publishing Company, and Glad Hill, the columnist, and Jack Kennedy, were the three fellows who used to take these books out on an overnight basis. They had to have them back for breakfast and not later than nine a.m. And that way, I got to know John Kennedy as an under—when he was an undergraduate. And then when, library would close at ten o'clock, as we became more friendly, why, he joined what you might call the Hot Soup League in the kitchen at the Union, because the engineer for the building, a fellow name of McSquiggen, and Monty Erwin, who was the doorman, and a few more, would go into the back and have hot soup, and they would be undergraduates and including Jack Kennedy. I remember one quote at the time, when they were talking about public office, and he blurted out, "Well, the big decisions of the future are all going to be made at Washington, D.C." And that would have been in 1938 or '39. Of course, his father [Joseph P. Kennedy, Sr.] at that time was Ambassador at the Court of St. James, and he had spent some time in London, and he was actually writing his thesis, which later became a book, *Why England Slept*. It was under the direction of his tutor, Bruce Harper, who previously had been my tutor when I was in Harvard College, and he shared many common experiences. And, incidentally, the late Bruce Harper and Professor Arthur Holcombe, I believe, were the only two members of the Harvard faculty who were invited to the President's Inaugural in January 1961.

HARTIGAN: At your first meeting back in '38 and for those early years in his college career, you certainly followed him to the point where he eventually was elected to office. Is that so?

CRANE: Oh yes, yes. And I had occasion to look back at my notes on Government III, which was a general course, in the philosophy of government. And they used to run all the heavyweights in the government department in there. We had Carl Friedrich [Carl Joachim Friedrich] and Arthur Holcombe and William Yandell Elliott. And it turned out that Jack Kennedy took this same course a few years after me. And discussing the course, he inquired about my notes to check on whether there had been much change. And there was a particular lecture by William Yandell Elliott in which.... Elliott, incidentally, was the professor who they'd identify as having been one of Secretary Kissinger's [Henry A. Kissinger] instructors, and Kissinger likes to be known as a protégé of Elliott. But, in any event, I had the notebook. And after the assassination, I went back, and I knew that there was a

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definition of the government of Ireland by Elliott. And he, of course, was a recognized authority on the British Commonwealth of Nations. And his definition of the government of Ireland intrigued me. I supposed my ears opened double, and I took it down verbatim that it was, "benevolent dictatorship tempered by the fear of assassination." And lo and behold, in my notebooks annotated "Good. Good." And that was the handwriting of John Kennedy. So, it's a keepsake. And it certainly turned out to be prophetic in the light of other years. It's also

tied into Harvard and Elliott. I remember that Jack Kennedy, then a senator, came to the commencement exercise in 1960, and he and I sat next to each other. They always reserve a seat for the Mayor of Cambridge on that centenary stage. And Kennedy was the Senator and, of course, an overseer, so they had him on the stage. And he was being escorted, guided that day by McGeorge Bundy, who later became part of his top Washington command. But, in any event, what happened after the commencement, of course, little if any attention was shown by anybody to the Senator at that time in June of '60, because, of course, the conventions were approaching and, you know, everybody was on tenterhooks and they were withholding comment. And the result was that I know Jack Kennedy had to get out to catch a plane to Washington for an important roll call in the Senate that same afternoon. And so McGeorge Bundy took him with me through the Tercentenary Theater, which is the open yard with a canvas, a temporary canvas, and went through Widener Library and at the very brief reception there, William Yandell Elliott, professor international, was there, and of course he had a greeting for Senator Kennedy. And I had to make an aside to the Senator. I said, "You know, he just came back from Moscow where he was the companion of Richard Nixon [Richard M. Nixon]." And the Senator said, "I know about him and I know where he is."

HARTIGAN: [Laughs] He was very observing, eh?

CRANE: [Laughs] Yeah.

HARTIGAN: Do you recall any other of his classmates that came into focus as he proceeded in his career?

CRANE: Well, of course, Ben Smith [Benjamin A. Smith II], who later succeeded him in the Senate until Ted [Edward M. Kennedy] took the position, was well known to me, and he was a footballer, but their associations were as upperclassmen. I had closer contact with Jack Kennedy when he was using the Union Library. But, of course, we would meet occasionally at the Hayes-Bickford Restaurant down there on, let's see, they call it Bickford's in New York, but it's hyphenated, Hayes-Bickford, here in Cambridge, at the time there

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on Mass [Massachusetts Avenue] and Holyoke directly under the Porcellian Club. And, incidentally, mentioning that, Jack was never a member, he was never a Porky, as they would call themselves. But he and his brothers were all members of the Spee Club, which was round the corner, on Harvard Street. But the other classmates he would meet at a table there and have English toasted and coffee at odd hours when he might be coming back from a late party or seminar or what have you. But the one memory was of his, I know many people tell this story about Jack being short on cash and pocket money, and I know he asked one night, one morning I should say, whether you had to pay to get out of the Hayes-Bickford after he had consumed the English toasted. And when he was assured that you did have to pay, he

says, "Well, I guess I'll have to stay here." So we bought him out of Hayes-Bickford for about 15 cents. [Laughs]

HARTIGAN: Were you holding office during the election of 1946?

CRANE: No. I was not. I might insert, too, as a conclusion, my comment about the atmosphere that prevailed in June in the Harvard Yard at the commencement where everybody was with great reserve.

HARTIGAN: This was the June of 1960.

CRANE: 1960. And in December of that same year, 1960, when Jack Kennedy came back as a president-elect to attend the overseers meeting at which he tended his resignation, why the Yard was just filled with all of these well-wishers and cheerleaders and Washington shuttle candidates, et cetera. And the Secret Service had quite a job to get him out of the Harvard Yard. It was a lot tighter than it was six months prior when McGeorge Bundy was his sole escort and guide out to the Widener Library. But, of course, there had been a Democratic convention, and an election in between. And it was then that he was being taken down to Arthur Schlesinger's [Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr.] home on Francis Avenue. But it was a rescue operation to get him out of the Yard in December. Six months and a successful presidential election had made quite a difference.

HARTIGAN: Did you participate....

CRANE: I, 1946, I was just discharged from the service in March after forty months. And Jack Kennedy was a candidate for the Congress. And due to the large number of servicemen who were still out of the Commonwealth, they advanced the primary date from the usual September to June. And so I had already declared upon my discharge and return to

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Cambridge that I was a candidate for my former position in the city government, and in fact, ran on a slogan, "A veteran seeks his former position." You know you're supposed to be reinstated, but they didn't apply that to elective office. So....

HARTIGAN: That position was City Council?

CRANE: In the City Council. It was councilor-at-large which meant you ran citywide. And the housing shortage and the rest of it, but Cambridge was up to 120,000 population at that time, the highest, when people were doubling and tripling up the post-war housing shortage. And I got a call from Joe Timilty, [Joseph P Timilty] who was then the police commissioner of Boston, and he invited me to meet with Jack Kennedy's father at the Bellevue Hotel. And I went up there and I explained to them that I was already a candidate for my position, that one of the candidates that was in this

congressional district was Mike Neville [Michael J. Neville] of Cambridge, a Cambridge attorney and a state representative, and that although everybody agreed that Jack Kennedy was going to be a big winner, and it was my own prediction. In fact, Mike Neville had told me that he knew that he couldn't match Jack Kennedy through the district, that in Cambridge he expected to at least hold his own. And for that reason, I was not involved in that election. They brought up the names of a couple of young Cambridge people who'd come back from the service that were acting in the campaign. And I certainly gave them good references on Mark Dalton [Mark J. Dalton] and John Droney [John J. Droney] who later became the district attorney of Middlesex County. But the 1946 congressional election was over in June and then I was reelected at the following year.

HARTIGAN: Was there any Republican opposition in that election?

CRANE: No I don't believe so. The nomination was tantamount, as we'd say, to election. There might have been a token opponent but it was a shoo-in. And the organization was superior, and there was no doubt about the eventual outcome.

HARTIGAN: You recall the names, any of the names of those who participated in that 1946 election with the late President?

CRANE: You mean from Cambridge?

HARTIGAN: Yep.

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CRANE: I know that there...

HARTIGAN: Was Droney and there was....

CRANE: ...Droney and there was Mark Dalton...

HARTIGAN: Oh.

CRANE: ...who'd been a speechwriter when he was a young attorney. And then, of course, there were a lot of people that sponsored house parties like the Kirby family on Centre Street, and that was the first place I think I met Jack Kennedy's sisters because they were all on tour. And I think that the sisters, all of whom weren't married at that time, were just as active as the candidate. They really dug in for their brother.

HARTIGAN: That year, what office was the future Speaker of the United States House of Representatives running for? Was he in the State Legislature at that time?

CRANE: Tip O'Neill [Thomas P. "Tip" O'Neill, Jr.]?

HARTIGAN: Tip O'Neill.

CRANE: Was a representative from North Cambridge. He represented the top third of the city.

HARTIGAN: He was obviously running for reelection at that time when Kennedy was running for his first term in the Congress.

CRANE: Right. And Tip had been in the Legislature for about ten years at that time, and then, of course, in '50 he was made Speaker of...

HARTIGAN: Of the Massachusetts House.

CRANE: ...Massachusetts House. He was speaker and at that time, in '52, when Jack Kennedy became a candidate for the Senate that was his big test, if he could beat Henry Cabot Lodge. And that was an all-out campaign, and you know, thousands including myself, were very active in that campaign. But the.... Well, you mentioned Tip O'Neill. At that time in '52, I had just finished with the highest vote for mayor in the city of Cambridge, and they were after me to be a candidate for the vacancy in the Congress, due

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to Jack Kennedy's effort to be promoted to the Senate. And I, of course, realized that they were planning to use me to split the vote in Cambridge. And I sat down with Tip O'Neill whom I'd known since we carried golf bags together around the old Belmont Springs Country Club. And I said, "Being speaker of the Massachusetts House ranks the mayor of Cambridge, and you can be sure that I'm with you all the way on the fight for Congress." And it was a close contest, but, you know, once a congressman gets in there, gets a good staff, why, he can stay there, as Tip has proven.

HARTIGAN: Well....

CRANE: And many other congressmen, incumbent congressmen.

HARTIGAN: Those who did their work.

CRANE: Yeah. As long as they have the good staff and don't become just absolute bad boys.

HARTIGAN: Right. Was there anything eventful in the 1948 congressional campaign?

CRANE: I should have said "bad girls" too. [Laughs] Anything eventful in the....

HARTIGAN: In the 19... It's the campaign for reelection to the Congress in 1948, right?

CRANE: Yeah. That was....

HARTIGAN: Was there anything eventful in that or was it....

CRANE: No, no. He breezed through the campaign in '48 and in '50. And then in '50....

HARTIGAN: '52 was the....

CRANE: That was the real test.

HARTIGAN: You were active at, what, were you holding office in that year?

CRANE: Oh yeah! I was in the Cambridge city government, and I'd been a mayor....

HARTIGAN: Were you a mayor at that time?

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CRANE: I was the immediate past mayor. I was in the city council and had received this very flattering vote in the '51 election, which was at the end of my first term as mayor and the only one that I describe as a happy term; the other terms were back-ins. But you know, you like to go out at the top, and I did have a very happy fortuitous term in 1950 and '51 and then, of course, in '52, I, we were active in the Cambridge organization for Kennedy for the Senate. In fact, I was running a poll for them and we predicted that Kennedy would win by less than a hundred thousand. And we also alerted Paul Dever [Paul A. Dever] at that time. Paul indicated that he might have trouble getting reelected. And sure enough, it was Christian Herter [Christian A. Herter], won by 15,000. That was the famous time when he just conceded the election and forgot about any recount.

HARTIGAN: The stories go that there were several meetings between the Kennedy group and the Dever group to determine who was going to run for what office. Were you familiar with any of those deals?

CRANE: No.

HARTIGAN: That Paul Dever at one point was thinking himself for running for senator, then Kennedy was more, in effect, waiting for the governor to make up his mind before he decided which one he was running for?

CRANE: I had read about that in news columns and political commentators and, you

know, you hear it around the table. But I was never an insider to what actually happened there. I do feel, knowing Paul Dever over the years, that he was very happy in Cambridge and in Massachusetts and he was living with, of course, as you know, he was a bachelor himself, he was living with an unmarried sister. And I never knew him to have any ambition to go beyond the governor's chair. In fact he did comment to me, one time when there was a vacancy on the Supreme Court, that he regretted he couldn't appoint himself to fill the vacancy, that he really loved the law. And as you know, when he conceded to Herter, he said, "This would give me an opportunity to resume the happy practice of the law." And it wasn't long thereafter when he was very much on the telephone, and I know heavily engaged taking care of his own private law practice.

HARTIGAN: Were you aware of any conflicts between the Kennedy

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and the Dever organizations during this 1952 campaign?

CRANE: No, no. You know, this was the election when it was Stevenson [Adlai E. Stevenson] and Eisenhower [Dwight D. Eisenhower] on top of the ticket in '52. And I can remember when Stevenson came to Cambridge, it was Sunday and he worshiped there at the Unitarian Church in Harvard Square and then Paul Dever sponsored a luncheon for him. And of course, Jack Kennedy was there and there might have been some personality clashes among members of the various camps but I don't think there was any group consensus against either group.

HARTIGAN: During Kennedy's first term in the Senate, if you'll recall, he made an effort to reorganize the party in the state, which led to a minor conflict between Democratic forces in the state of Massachusetts. Were you engaged in any of that activity at all?

CRANE: No, no. I knew about the effort that he made and that Pat Lynch [John M. Lynch] was named as the chairman and if anybody could bring peace at that time, it was somebody with the qualifications of Pat Lynch. But I was not a member of the City Committee. I very deliberately avoided the City Committee because they really could grind you up in there and there was so much friction within the Cambridge City Committee that anybody that knew the operations of the Committee certainly wanted to be on the outside. The only time that I was officially identified as a Democratic delegate to a National Convention was in '64 when they, as good Democrats, had a lot of friction, and at a meeting at the Parker House [Omni Parker House Hotel] which I knew nothing about, it was decided that in cities where the mayor was a Democrat, why, he should be a delegate. And unbeknownst to me, I received in the mail a letter, announcing that I had been chosen a delegate. So that was how I was back into the '64 convention, which gave me a chance to take my two oldest boys down to Atlantic City and have a little vacation.

HARTIGAN: I personally recall your name and your activities coming up during the

election that Ted Kennedy had just been in against Eddy McCormack [Edward J. McCormack Jr.]. You were involved to some extent there, were you not?

CRANE: I wasn't too active in that campaign. It was '62, I was mayor of Cambridge and actually I... In Cambridge, of course, Kennedy was very strong. There

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was no question that he was going to be the candidate, that Ben Smith had been in there to fill out the term and realized that there would probably be a Kennedy candidacy. And a tip-off to me on the '62 campaign was on a March 17 celebration at Holyoke. You know, in Holyoke they have probably the most active St Patrick's Day, up there they make a week out of it on the celebration. And they named the outstanding Irish-American of the nation and in fact at that time, it was Bishop Rollin who was honored. And Jack Kennedy had been previously honored. Well, this was within a month after Ted had announced his candidacy. And both Ed McCormack and Ted Kennedy were up in Holyoke, Sunday afternoon, fine weather and tremendous crowds. And the two of them were in different locations in the parade route, of course. And actually on Ted Kennedy's walking down the street, the response and the applause and the acclamation and so forth, was overwhelming and particularly compared with what Ed McCormack was able to generate. And, in fact, I always look back on it, that somebody ill advised or Ted himself decided that he'd walk the parade route a second time. And sure enough he got a bigger reception on the second time. So I came back to Cambridge and I said, "Look at it. It's all over, this campaign." And, of course, as you know, it didn't get to be a hot contest except on the radio. And I guess that Ed McCormack took care of how he felt about it and I think that Ed McCormack knew from, certainly the Holyoke exposure that he was up against the wrong candidate...

HARTIGAN: Did you...

CRANE: ...in the wrong contest.

HARTIGAN: So, in the 1962 campaign, you weren't that active.

CRANE: No. That was a primary campaign and I didn't get involved and, of course, I was very friendly with the McCormacks, very friendly with the Kennedys and I respect both of them for not trying to spot me on it. But I did tell Ed McCormack at that time, and again later in 1966 when he decided to run for the governorship, that, you know, you got to do a little polling, 'cause I believe in polling from way back. And I mentioned, since 1952 we used to make a poll and it was tied in with Harvard Business School and the Harvard Law School. And people would 'fess up as to what they were going to do and in return for it, we used to say we'd give you a copy of the results. And in that way, we were able to get a real good crossfire. We'd pick certain key precincts and these people would tell us what they were going to do on the Sunday before election, and

Monday, we had good outline and I might say that some people made a lot of money on the results in 1952 of what we were able

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to poll. And the same thing happened in '66, and I said to Ed McCormack at that time, when he ran against John Volpe [John A. Volpe] for the four-year term, "Look, if you don't make it this time, why, this is the finale." And of course it turned out to be that way. And I only mentioned it because, you know, you keep your ear close to the ground.

HARTIGAN: In 1958, which was a campaign for President Kennedy for his reelection to the Senate. Were you an officeholder and did you participate in his campaign in 1958?

CRANE: Well, I was an officeholder. I was in the Cambridge City Council, I still held on as a councilor-at-large there. But that was the contest, I think, in which it was the Republican, Celeste [Vincent J. Celeste]...

HARTIGAN: Celeste, yeah.

CRANE: ...and of course, that was a romp and I know that I went down with Jack Kennedy on a Cape Ann pilgrimage and now I always point out the Yankee Clipper out there at Rockport and Pigeon Cove, the house where Jack slept because he stayed overnight down there on arrangements that I think Ben Smith had made for him. But that was just a triumphal tour and, of course, the big thing there was to just see what our margin would be. And it was heavy, and it was laying in a good part of the launching pad for 1960.

HARTIGAN: Now if I recall correctly, you did say you did not participate in the state chairman contest between Pat Lynch and Bill Burke [William H. Burke, Jr.].

CRANE: No.

HARTIGAN: No.

CRANE: No. I haven't got too many of those partisan scars. I never got involved except through the fact that I have been an enrolled Democrat over the years and as a Democratic mayor of Cambridge, why, there were certain appointments that they would make in the committee, as I mentioned about the '64 appointment as delegate, which came out of the blue to me.

HARTIGAN: Did you have the occasion as a city official in Cambridge to contact Congressman Kennedy when he was

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in the Congress or Senator Kennedy within the Senate on behalf of any legislation that as an official you thought would, he ought to be briefed on or....

CRANE: Oh, yes. I was involved with him in a big problem in '46, '47, and that was to get something going in the way of veterans' housing. And I was Chairman of the Allied Veterans Council in Cambridge at the time, and our one purpose was to go ahead and get housing under way. And I had quite a bit of correspondence and talked with him about that... [Break in tape] ...to contact him as the Cambridge congressman. One of the occasions is an indication of what goes on in city and state and national relations. There was a business firm over in Kendall Square, known as Better Homes; the President of it was called by the name of Chris McCabe. And the President of the Harvard Trust Company, where I had been a director for 35 years, called me and said that there had been a crisis arisen over the post office department and its relations with the Better Homes. So I went down and I had a conference with Mr. McCabe. It developed that he had 350 employees. You know, they were distributing these various articles, blankets, et cetera, and so forth; it became a big business particularly with women and clubs, that type of thing. So the result was that Mr. McCabe had a letter from the Chamber of Commerce for Bradford, Pennsylvania inviting him to locate out there. He showed me his metered postage that it was in excess of a million dollars a year, and of the crisis that came about because the post office had notified him that they no longer could pick up his parcel post at Kendall Square, Cambridge due to the traffic jam. This was before the Central Artery was built, which curiously is named for Jack Kennedy's grandfather [John Francis Fitzgerald], the Fitzgerald Expressway or Central Artery. And before that was built, they would take two hours sometimes of an afternoon, for a truck to go from Kendall Square into the South Postal. And the result was that this man was ready to lock up and move his business to Bradford, Pennsylvania. So I called Congressman Kennedy, I told him the background of this, and I said, "I am sure that you and I don't want it to be said that we lost a business employing 350 people because of inadequate parcel post service." And he says, "Oh!" He says, "You make an appointment with Mr. McCabe for tomorrow morning." And so we met at ten a.m. at Kendall Square. After the business was completed in about 15 minutes, Mr. McCabe then asked the Congressman if he wanted to meet any of the help. Well, it turned out that Mr. McCabe was one of those patrician types who knew every one of his 350 employees by first name. And he took the Congressman around introduced him to every one of the help by his first name. Then that afternoon, of course, I got a call that shows how fast the Congressman was on this. The

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postal inspector came to my office, law office at 60 State Street, and went over the problem and wanted to tie it together, and told me that this was a result of a voluminous report that they had. But the next week the whole problem was solved when they opened a sub-parcel post station in connection with Kendall. And that's how the Congressman saved Better Homes and the 350 jobs. So that was just an occurrence that I had when you mentioned whether he was giving service to Cambridge and I'm certain that he really pushed the buttons

on that one and produced. Another different type of situation I had, probably more pleasant, was when Frank A.K. Boland, who owned the Commander Hotels, very interested, and his hobby was Washington and the history of Washington. And he had this new memorial that was to be dedicated on the Cambridge Common, even though there had been one for the same event when they were putting up a second memorial. And he was very anxious to have the President of the United States, Harry Truman [Harry S. Truman], invited. So, I got in touch with the Congressman. I told him about it and so made an appointment for the city manager and Frank A.K. Boland to go down and meet with the President and accept a personal invitation. I can...

HARTIGAN: That was President Truman now.

CRANE: ...that was President Harry Truman. I remember it very well because Frank A.K. Boland, who had been general counselor of the Hotelmen's Association, National, he didn't like to fly. So we got on the train, Midnight Flyers, whatever, and we arrived at Union Station at 8:30. And Jack Kennedy was there with his own private car and he drove us up to his home in Georgetown where he had a nice apartment. This was, of course, prior to his marriage. And we had breakfast there. And then he was driving me up Pennsylvania Avenue to the White House and he looked and he said, "You know, this is only the second time I have been to the White House." He had been down in Washington for four years. But we had a nice conference with the President who seemed to be unusually interested in the invitation, but Korea shut that out. And I might say that it was very interesting ten years later, to see a picture of Jack Kennedy sitting in the President's chair in the Oval Office and Harry Truman standing just about the same position where Jack Kennedy had been ten years before. And I did send a copy of the picture to Independence, Missouri to point out the changing of the chairs and received a very nice personal note and a thank-you from Harry Truman who said, "It only took ten years to change the chairs."

HARTIGAN: Do you recall any other services that Kennedy performed in the Senate? I know they're difficult to

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remember but....

CRANE: Well, of course it's all a matter of rec....

[END OF SIDE ONE]

HARTIGAN: Ed, I want to apologize for the interruption, but we do have to change that tape over once in a while...

CRANE: Sure.

HARTIGAN: ...and you were just about to start, to tell us the event of the District Attorney

situation when Thompson [George E. Thompson] was appointed to the bench by Governor Herter. Would you continue with that again?

CRANE: Yeah. Well, of course, that threw the office of District Attorney open and there were, oh, six or eight candidates. And that made an opening for Jim O'Dea [James L O'Dea, Jr.] out of Lowell who was a young and active Democratic legislator at the time. And he won the Primary and then, Middlesex County going Democratic, he was swept in. And shortly after the victory, he called me and offered the position of first assistant because he wanted somebody down in the lower southern side of the county, such as Cambridge or Somerville. And I told him that I was flattered but if I were interested in the District Attorney's office, I would have been a candidate myself. And he then asked what is the usual, often follow up question, "Well, if you are not going to accept yourself, can you give me a recommendation?" And I told him that there was a young fellow, a lawyer, John Droney, who had been very active with the Kennedy family and a very close personal friend of Jack Kennedy, and that he'd really have two arrows in his bow, that he would have a competent attorney as an assistant out of Cambridge, and also he would certainly have a bridge or pipeline to the Senator, Jack Kennedy. So, the next day at ten o'clock, I got a call from John Droney, and he thanked me for the reference, and advised me that he had accepted the offer. And he became Jim O'Dea's first assistant. Of course, everybody except O'Dea, John Droney and myself figured that this appointment was due to Jack Kennedy. Curiously, the first time that John Droney met the Senator afterwards, the question was, "How the hell did you get that job?" Well, that was of course to be the assistant, but later there became a vacancy in the top position of District Attorney, and of course, John Droney, the first assistant, became a candidate for that vacancy. And Governor Furcolo [Foster Furcolo] was to make the appointment to fill out the vacancy, and this of course was subject to confirmation by the Governor's Council. And I remember very well there were rumors that there wasn't too

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good feeling between the Governor and the Senator. But in this case, the word went back to Jack Kennedy that the Governor was reluctant to submit John Droney's name because he didn't want to embarrass him, and he had been advised that John Droney could not be confirmed by the Governor's Council. Of course, there was another contender, at least one, I don't know how many others, for the position. And the talk was that attorney Zamparelli [John F. Zamparelli] from Medford, was very interested in the position. Well, John Droney of course was the candidate of Senator Kennedy who told directly to Governor Furcolo, "Look it. You submit the nomination of John Droney and we'll take our chances on getting him confirmed without embarrassment." And sure enough, when that pressure was put on, the name went in. And I know that Senator Kennedy contacted directly, by phone or otherwise, each member of the Governor's Council, and they went through and confirmed John Droney. So, when somebody, you know, the smart fellas in politics, the wise guys, et cetera, hangers-on and so forth, they used to say about Jack Kennedy, "Well, who the hell did he ever do anything for?" Well, I can tell you that he certainly put John Droney across as the District Attorney of Middlesex County. And, you know, it's a curious thing, but looking back

on it now, that the opponent attorney Zamparelli, is now the Registrar of Deeds in Middlesex and is close enough to John Droney, not a political ally, a friend, to the point where he was his campaign manager in Droney's last successful election. And the changes that politics make, strange, as we know, but the double-header here is that Governor Furcolo who was reluctant to submit John Droney's nomination, subsequently accepted an appointment as assistant district attorney in John Droney's staff.

HARTIGAN: That's the former governor.

CRANE: The former governor who became very active over there, a very confident trial man, and he of course had gone over there. And I'm also reminded to repeat that he had the same quote that Paul Andrew Dever had given to me ten years before, and that was, in the vacancy on the Supreme Court he wished that he as governor could have appointed himself. So maybe sometime a lawyer who is governor, be it Michael Dukakis [Michael S. Dukakis] or somebody else, will have them amend the Constitution so that a governor can appoint himself to the Supreme Court.

HARTIGAN: Well, of course, in those two cases, the record indicates that they were very confident students of law, the two of them, both Furcolo and Dever.

CRANE: No question about it. And I don't think that anyone has ever questioned Mike Dukakis' legal ability.

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HARTIGAN: Yeah, yeah.

CRANE: He was a partner down in Hill and Barlow.

HARTIGAN: So I think that it may very well be that'll come about. [Laughs] Are there any other interesting observations you'd like to make in terms of what you may have missed?

CRANE: Well, I thought, you know, we mentioned about a project which was the Better Homes, and the salvation of that for Cambridge industry. And this matter of the personality, and the being a go-through man for his friends and what he personally did in the appointment of, confirmation, not only the nomination but also confirmation of John Droney, and....

HARTIGAN: You also indicate he did his homework in terms of his constituencies at home and in the state.

CRANE: There was no doubt about it. And he had his own team and he had a good staff, and he knew how to delegate. And the matters of patronage and all

that type of thing were handled in a very good staff procedure. And he was able to take the time and go and make the campaign on a national basis that he had to after 1956. As you know from '56 on, he was a candidate because I think that he really became inspired and ambitious when he didn't receive the vice presidential nomination in '56, Kefauver's [Estes Kefauver] year. Well, Kefauver won the vice presidential over the, to run with Stevenson, when Stevenson threw the Convention open. And I think from that time on, he had the bug to project into the top spot. And it all carries out when I mentioned at the start back there when the Harvard Union soup kitchen, where he was stating that the big decisions were going to be made at Washington, and of course they start at the White House. And he was on fire. And the only thing I ever questioned him on, I said on various occasions when I might mention it, I said, "The only suspicion I have about you is your ambition." "Well," he says. "Somebody's got to be on top."

HARTIGAN: Did you attend that 1956 Convention in Chicago at...

CRANE: No. No I didn't. But I listened to it and I sent him a telegram after it, and mentioned that the loss made him a much bigger national figure because it was just one of those overnight affairs, and of course Kefauver had built up a national following, you know, with the coonskin and his

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campaigning and all the rest of it in '52, I believe. And with his T.V. exposure on the hearings and all that, why he certainly outranked Jack Kennedy in '56 as far as national exposure. So it was nothing to be, it wasn't a bad loss, and he proved it.

HARTIGAN: Do you recall the names of any of the individuals that you dealt with during Kennedy's legislative years? His staff I'm talking about now.

CRANE: Oh, well, several of them but usually I would get through to the Congressman and then to the Senator because, you know.... Well, Eddy Martin [Edward T. Martin] was down there. And then later, of course, Kenny O'Donnell [Kenneth P O'Donnell] and....

HARTIGAN: Did you deal with Ted Reardon [Timothy J. Reardon, Jr.] at all?

CRANE: Ted Reardon, many times. But those were, you know, what I would call [unclear] staff matters, processing. But when we get into an issue, whether it would be, as I'd mentioned, the salvage of a business or promoting the N.A.S.A. [National Aeronautics and Space Administration], which was really to put an electronics research center in the backyard of M.I.T. [Massachusetts Institute of Technology]. And there was no question that he was doing this for Massachusetts and for New England. And, you know, one month after Richard Nixon became president in 1968, why, that whole N.A.S.A.-Cambridge collapsed. And it was in my opinion a political decision. And as you know, the announcement of it was made within one month after

Richard Nixon became president in January of '69. And he appointed John Volpe to be cabinet secretary in charge of transportation. And John Volpe came up and announced, number one, that N.A.S.A. was being transferred to Houston. Of course, they had that big operation in Houston but they were transferring this electronics center to Houston, and the Department of Transportation would take over the existing buildings, which the Governor had already spent \$35 million on, not to mention the \$50 million that they committed to clear the site. But that was all a political decision and that's what happens when you don't have to have a profit and you don't have to pay dividends and you don't have growling shareholders, only taxpayers. [Laughs]

HARTIGAN: God bless the taxpayers, huh?

CRANE: Yeah.

HARTIGAN: In the presidential years, Ed...

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CRANE: Mm-hmm.

HARTIGAN: ...did you have many contacts or reasons to contact the staff, Kenny O'Donnell or Larry O'Brien [Lawrence F. O'Brien] or anybody?

CRANE: Well, I was very active in 1960 in the presidential campaign. And at that time, I, of course, facetiously, once had asked Arthur Holcombe who was one of those invitees, a former professor of Jack's. I said, "You know, he couldn't have got better marks than I did academically. We took the same courses." And I said, "All I got was mayor and now he's gonna be president!" "Well," he says. "He had a few more things going for him!" [Laughs] I'm sure that he did. And that was true of him. But the thing that I wanted to see was whether it was possible in my lifetime to have an Irish Catholic, let alone the first Catholic, but particularly an Irish Catholic, elected president of the United States, because as a youngster I'd gone through in 1928 the Al Smith [Alfred E. Smith] era. I remember the '24 convention and, you know, 24 Alabama, 24 for Underwood [Cecil H. Underwood], and then they finally gave it to John Davis [John W. Davis] because they figured that Al couldn't carry the ball because of his religious roots, and then in '28 and what had happened there. So it was always in the background. And, of course, Jack Kennedy was the only public officeholder of Irish ancestry and Catholic church that I thought could possibly ever occupy the White House. So, you know, we went all out and starting with the family and with friends and relatives and we worked with people like Professor Kenneth Galbraith [John Kenneth Galbraith]. And it's curious now, only yesterday, this week, it was announced that the Staffer was closed. I remember going to the Staffer not once but three times when it was costing \$500 for the luncheon. And of course, out to the Kenmore to raise John funds for the Kennedy-Johnson [Lyndon B. Johnson] ticket. And it was an achievement that I enjoyed much more than if it happened to me. I was so happy for his success in the showing and having the country realize that it could be done, and that this business of race

and religion could be overcome. And it was.... I know that those emotions are practically, are in every election and they get hotter as you get into election eve. And even in the last election we know that there were undercurrents of what I call "the R and R." But the thing is that Jack Kennedy certainly opened it up, and I was very happy to see how Massachusetts lined up for Carter [Jimmy Carter] after what Georgia had done not only for Kennedy but many years before that, for Al Smith. And it was a healthy sign and indicated to me that at least we are crawling in the right direction as far as being a little more civilized, which is the cost of education, they tell me.

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HARTIGAN: Did you do any traveling during the 1960 campaign for President Kennedy?

CRANE: I traveled through Massachusetts and, of course, I set up in preliminaries, several set-ups for him to come to gatherings in Cambridge. And then people in Springfield would contact me, and we would get him as a speaker at what we would call the service clubs, etc. And I can remember one time getting him to come over to the Cambridge Y [Young Men's Christian Association] for a meeting, and he came over alone. And he said, this was way back when he was a congressman, for example, he said his only particular suggestion as far as his group was concerned. And I said, "Well you've just come back from Indochina, and I should, maybe they'd like to hear about it." Well, he had gone on into Indochina. Of course, he had several friends, the French were in charge at the time...

HARTIGAN: Yeah.

CRANE: ...and he forecast in 1947 and '48 when he was a congressman, that a real burning point in the world after World War II that the next trouble was going to be in Southeast Asia, Indochina and the Vietnam area. And then it was that night that he mentioned that and dwelled on it at the meeting we had at the Cambridge Y. And there were a thousand people there. And people have commented since that, you know, he realized that that was the tinderbox for the next trouble, and it's just too bad that in the ten years between that time, more wasn't done in connection with that foreign policy to avoid what eventually did happen.

HARTIGAN: In your notes there do you have any of....

CRANE: On that one I suppose we ought to all plead guilty. I know as far as notes are concerned here, I mentioned that on a JFK memorial—that is a book in itself—I consider that, you know I lived ten years with that from the day of the assassination in 1963. I can remember I was mayor of Cambridge at that time. I went out with Governor Peabody [Endicott Peabody] to the Arborway office of the M.B.T.A. [Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority] in December of '63, to start the ball rolling on getting the M.B.T.A. guards and Harvard and Kennedy Corporation file the friendly suit with the Massachusetts Supreme Court, 1967. Everything was cleared, and as a fella said, "You

know, if it drags out long enough, these environmentalists will stop it.” And that’s what happened. But that whole chapter or book will be something for an investigative reporter or team of reporters to get into, and show not only

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what’s happened to the JFK memorial and the family and the cost to the public taxpayers, and all the Commonwealth. And the whole story, if it was spread out in book form, would be a best seller, and a demonstration of what can happen in the pendulum swings of government. ‘Course I did have occasion to meet the President once when we were out in Hawaii. He came to the League of what was then called Conference of Mayors. Since then, I guess the councilors have got into the thing that it’s now the League of Cities, and the Conference of Mayors, it’s a giant operation. I always remember being in a bus out there in Hawaii and there were about twelve councilors from Buffalo [New York], and I said, “Did your mayor come out?” “Oh yeah. But we wouldn’t vote him the money to come out until he agreed to bring us, too.” [Laughs] But Jack Kennedy showed up out at Hawaii there in ‘63, at the conference, and I had a nice renewal with him from the stage. I had been given one of these chains of office because a group of admirers, so called, had put together this chain that, they thought the Mayor of Cambridge had been very embarrassed at a recent dinner when the Lord Mayor of Cambridge, England came over. So I had this gimmick around my neck, the chain of office, which was made up of all tin cans, and it told the life story, you know, like one of those “This Is Your Life.” And from the stage, the President of the United States was pointing down at me and I could read his lips and that is “What the hell have you got there?” And afterwards, with the Secret Service, he came down. He went by. He tickled the chain and then went right to my wife [Mary F. Crane]. And he said, “It’s good to see you again.” And, you know, it proved to me that Jack Kennedy from the very start always realized that there were more gals voting than there were men. And you look back and I know that one of the considerations over the years was that, you know, women outnumber the men. And that’s a good thing to keep in mind. But to see it demonstrated that way out in Hawaii was a good example. After that, of course, my last meeting with him was twice in one week in October ‘63. The Prime Minister of Ireland, Sean Lemass [Sean F. Lemass], of course they called him a “taoiseach.” I don’t know if I even pronounced that correctly in Gaelic, the Irish language, but I am sure I can spell it. But Sean Lemass came as a guest to visit the President of the United States. And he was entertained at the White House. And then the Irish government, with whom I’ve always had friendly relations, invited my wife and myself to a reception at the Mayflower, which was an exchange of receptions, and this was being sponsored by Sean Lemass. And going through the reception line on October 16, 1963, I had brought with me a Kennedy crest clan [unclear] from Ireland, because I used to always send a card from Dublin. The only admonition he ever gave me after he became president, was to get to know Dublin. So I had the tie and, of course, Biddle [Angier Biddle Duke] was the protocol man at the time. And

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they were moving along the line, and I said to the President then, "Have you got the Kennedy crest tie?" And he said, "Yes!" He says, "The Irish are very thoughtful and generous." But he says, "Ted hasn't got one!" [Laughs] About fifteen minutes later, I was down in the line, but he also said to me at that time in passing, he said, "I'll see more of you after January '69." And then he says, "I'll tell you about the world and you can tell me about Cambridge and Dublin." That was the last words that I had with the President. Later at the little reception there in the Mayflower, why, Joan Kennedy [Joan Bennett Kennedy], Ted's wife, came over, and chatting with Mrs. Crane and myself, and she says, "The President tells me that you have something for Ted." And sure enough, my wife had opened up the bag and given the tie [Kennedy clan tie] to Joan. [Laughs] But it was a pleasant experience. But then coincident was that three days later, October 19, he was scheduled to be a speaker for a money-raiser here in Boston. And that was as, sadly, that Harvard was hosting Columbia at that stadium. And the ticket manager over there, Frank Lunden, was always a good friend of mine. And, of course, he knew the pressure that usually comes on the Mayor of Cambridge to get tickets for some of the type games and all that type of thing. I'd known Frank Lunden over thirty years. So I asked him about the tickets for Columbia because I hadn't signed up for season tickets. They'd give the Mayor, at that time at least; they did give him two tickets, which were over in section ten, which was about the goal line. And so I wanted to buy a couple of tickets and have a good spot 'cause I knew several of the fellas that were on the team at Harvard, and my own boys were planning to go there. And sure enough, Frank looked at me and he says, "I got two tickets for you." And so I bought the two tickets. Well on Friday night, Frank Lunden called me up and he said, "Say," he said. "I'm in a stew." He said, "You know," he said, "I sold you those tickets." And now he says, "I got a call from the Governor." And Chuck Peabody, who you'll remember was an All American footballer and a good friend of mine, he wanted two tickets. And he said, "He knows why I sold the tickets to you." And it happens that I said, "Well, if you want the tickets back...." He said, "Look it. You'd do me the greatest favor if you'll get those back and I'll get you a couple of others. But," he said, "the tickets in that particular section are now all assigned." And I looked over it. I said, "I will call Ed Crane to find out if I can get those two tickets for the Governor because he's making such a fuss about getting these two tickets." Well, it turned out that the two tickets were next to the President's seats. [Laughs] So I was very happy to have Chuck, who did more for Harvard football than I ever did, be there with his friend, Jack Kennedy, and we had many a laugh about it afterwards. But that was the experience I had with the two tickets on October

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19th and this the month before the assassination, when I consider he was martyred.

HARTIGAN: Ed, I know you touched very briefly on it, but would you care to recall the day of the assassination?

CRANE: Oh, I remember very well. It's like Pearl Harbor Sunday. This was a Friday, the 22nd of November, that I was over to a luncheon meeting at M.I.T.

Faculty Club on Memorial Drive, used to be the executive offices of Lehman Brothers. And I came down to get into the city car and the driver called over to me and he says, "I just got a flash here that the President has been shot at Dallas." And that was it, because I immediately went back to the Mayor's office at City Hall. And we were awaiting developments, and I got a flash before three o'clock that it was all over. And that was my experience. Then of course, we observed the thirty-day mourning period. And they asked the people to come up with mementoes, souvenirs that they might have, to recreate the student and government days of Jack Kennedy, both as a student and as a Harvard graduate and as, you know, we still call him a Cambridge congressman. And I came forward and we had to keep City Hall opened until midnight for that affair. Then, I talked to my two brothers about going to the funeral, and they figured that the family should be represented. And I was married at the time. And I went down very early Monday morning. We took a plane. And Councilor Al Vellucci [Alfred Vellucci], who is now the Mayor of Cambridge, he was vice mayor. And he asked me, called me up at about six o'clock that morning and he said, "Are you going to the funeral?" And, of course, Al Vellucci, as we call him "A.V.", has a sixth sense. And I said, "Yes. And I'm booked to go out at 7:30 at Logan." And he said, "I'll meet you over there." So I left and I took three, I took a little container by hand, and my wife asked me what was in the container when I was going out. And I had a bottle of scotch and rye, and bourbon in a bottle. And I said, "You know, this is going to be a long day, and a dry day," because it had been announced that the bars would be closed in Washington. "And I just don't know when I will be back." So we arrived down there and spent time to review, the body of course was sealed, the casket, you know, at the Capitol, and then we watched most of it as a matter of fact on T.V. But the aftermath of it was that, if you remember the President of the Republic of Ireland, de Valera [Eamon de Valera], came over supposedly on a special request of Jackie Kennedy, the new widow. He was to bring the honor guard, which had put on a display for them when the President had visited earlier in 1963. And sure enough when we saw this display on a TV at the Arlington Cemetery, and all day I inquired then as to.... I called the Irish Embassy in Washington to find out where the honor guard was

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staying. And they told me that they were over at Fort Myer. And so I called the Commandant at Fort Myer. He told me where they were, who was the liaison officer. And sure enough, it turned out that General Jack Crowley of Cambridge who had been an immediate past commander at Myer, I was able to reach him. And they met us at the gate, took us right down, and we had a renewal with the honor guard. And that was, there were about thirty of these men, that, you know, they were really from what would be the West Point of Ireland, the Kildare up there on Tara. And so I asked Colonel Mattimore, who was in charge of the honor guard, if it was permissible to offer a little libation to the members. He said, "Well." He said, "Some of them may be pioneers. But," he said, "I'm sure that others are thirsty and would appreciate any libation at this hour!" And within ten minutes the three bottles that I had brought from Cambridge were consumed. And the empties, I think, were taken back to Ireland. And the Colonel invited Al Vellucci and myself and many of our friends, including wives, whatever, to Dublin to make sure that we went up to the Tara. And next spring, we were over there, that's 1964, and Colonel Mattimore met us at Dublin, took us up. They had

a nice public luncheon. They made us honorary cadets of the Curragh, which I say is the West Point of Ireland. And then the story went around that these were the fellas that brought the lorry of whisky, you know that's a truckload, down onto Washington. So in some way, the story got around that we certainly were remembered by the Irish honor guard for having hosted them down in Fort Myer after a long and sad and damn dry day.

HARTIGAN: Ed, can you think of anything we've left out in this interview that you'd like to insert in here before we....

CRANE: Well, I tell you Bill, I could get wound up on the loss of the JFK library and memorial to the Cambridge, Harvard community. And you know, realizing that his father and four [sic] brothers all went to Harvard, lived in Cambridge for not less than four years. He represented Cambridge in Congress. And knowing that he in his lifetime strolled the Charles River. And when it was pointed out that one of the possible locations of the M.B.T.A. yards, he said, "Oh." He says, "that will cause a furor," you know, with the relocation of [unclear]. That this was in his lifetime. And here he was, I imagined, anticipating like the other presidents, that he would go back, and I hadn't any doubt that he was intending to come back to the Harvard community, and probably go in for teaching and run seminars and the rest of it, similar to what's being done at the JFK Institute now. But, I know that, you know, he worked with Bob Brigham who was then the business manager of Harvard,

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vice president in charge of those things, and with others. And he certainly told them all that the site he liked was right there next to the business school, which has recently been covered over with the housing development by the university. But, of course, after the assassination, why, the location of the M.B.T.A. and so forth became of prime importance and no one questioned it until after eight years the environmentalists tied into it. And I could go on for many chapters on spelling out the rip-off, as I call it, in my opinion it was the biggest public rip-off in my lifetime as far as Cambridge was concerned.

HARTIGAN: Well, one does hope that maybe the decision that has already been made recently on the library will make up for those mistakes.

CRANE: All we can hope for is that there'll be something done. And they are going to have, I understand, some memorial park there, but it'll be like a thousand other memorial parks. That the real memorial is not going to be in Cambridge, Harvard, Charles River area where it belongs. And I'm one of those fellas, you know, that doesn't like to settle for second best. And I congratulate President Robert Wood [Robert C. Wood] and his group in their victory but Harvard lost, and Cambridge lost. And it's tough to lose when you don't even make a fight.

HARTIGAN: Ed, do you think that we've about covered everything now?

CRANE: Yeah. And you know, we didn't make the fight because the Kennedy family let it be known that they didn't want to have any public controversy over the location of the memorial and that was their wish. It was a very personal thing and I know that we shouldn't try to outguess the family on a very personal matter such as this location of the library.

HARTIGAN: Ed, the last observation I'd like to make with you, I know I've looked at some of the records and some of the memorabilia we have here. I'm hoping that at some point you'll consider them for the library and so they may take their proper place and be put to use by the future leaders of our country who'll go study at the library and do research there.

CRANE: Well....

HARTIGAN: So when you get your thoughts together and your papers together I'm hoping that you'll proudly consider donating to the library and we'll be very happy

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at any time to have them reviewed by the archivist department and put them in the place of honor that they deserve.

CRANE: Well, I certainly would make available anything that they can use. I just see here this picture, portrait, the only portrait that the President ever sat for that we know of, done by Bill Draper [William F. Draper] who was a classmate of mine. And they were both members of the Spee Club. And this was done at Palm Beach, '62. And Jack Kennedy told Draper while it was being done that, "Here," he says. "You're giving your talent and I'm giving my time." And that was on the Spee Club. And I remember when those kids from the Spee Club brought it down to be put up on the wall of the council chamber. They had turned it over to the Fogg Art Museum because they had to have \$50,000 insurance on it. And when they delivered it, they reminded me in the Mayor's office that the Spee Club pays \$5,500....

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[END OF INTERVIEW]

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