

**Richardson Dilworth Oral History Interview – 8/13/1964**  
Administrative Information

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**Interviewer:** Henry W. Sawyer, III  
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**Biographical Note**

Dilworth, Mayor of Philadelphia from 1955-1962 and co-chairman of Pennsylvania Citizens for Kennedy in 1960, discusses his personal impressions of JFK, the 1960 primary and presidential campaigns in Pennsylvania, and JFK's work on urban affairs, among other issues.

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# RICHARDSON DILWORTH

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Oral History Interview

With

RICHARDSON DILWORTH

August 13, 1964

By Henry W. Sawyer, III

For the John F. Kennedy Library

SAWYER: This is an interview of Richardson Dilworth being conducted as part of the oral history project for the John F. Kennedy Library. Mr. Dilworth, will you introduce yourself, please?

DILWORTH: Well, I am 65 years of age. I was in politics at one time for a period of about 17 years, commencing in 1947, and what I would like to think of as reform Democratic politics which eventually resulted in ousting the entrenched Republican machine here in the city. I was first elected as a City Treasurer after an unsuccessful campaign for Mayor in 1947, and was elected City Treasurer in 1949, District Attorney 1951, Mayor of the City in 1955, and re-elected in 1959. Before going into active politics that been sort of a hobby, I also had been a practicing lawyer in Philadelphia since 1927. I am a native of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, but I have lived in Philadelphia ever since I graduated from Yale Law School. The first contact---

SAWYER: Excuse me, may I interrupt?

DILWORTH: I beg your pardon.

SAWYER: The interview is being conducted by Henry W. Sawyer, III. I am a Philadelphia lawyer and I was elected as a Councilman-at-Large of the City of Philadelphia in 1955 and served for four years in the City Council

at the time Mr. Dilworth was Mayor. You go ahead, Mr. Dilworth, and perhaps you can tell us when you first met John F. Kennedy.

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DILWORTH: Thank you, Henry. It is a great pleasure to be introduced—to be interviewed by Henry Sawyer because certainly he was one of the younger men who did a tremendous amount in the reform movement. He gave up a lot by becoming a Councilman in the city and did a yeoman's job there for four years, and ever since has continued to be not only in reform politics, but in very many things that have helped preserve the dignity and independence of the individual citizen.

The first time I ever met Jack Kennedy – and I like to think of him as that – was in 1956. Shortly after I was elected Mayor I went down to Washington on behalf of certain legislation for the development of urban areas and he was one of the Senators that I was asked to contact. I was tremendously struck by him. I heard a great deal about him as I went to school up in New England—went to boarding school outside of Boston and to Yale University. I had many friends up in the Boston area and I had heard a great deal about him and was anxious to meet him. I was tremendously struck by his charm, also by his intellectualism, and finally, by his toughness. It seemed to me that it was an amazing combination that he had. I think he was a genuine intellectual and at the same time he loved politics and I mean real rough and tumble politics. He was extremely skillful at it and he had an enormous amount of toughness—toughness of fiber—which it always seemed to me is essential if you are going to have a successful political career. Also, I always thought that he had amazingly good political judgment. He had, of course, been raised in a very political family.

I then – when I would go back to Washington, which was several times a month the entire time that I was Mayor, I would always make it a point to stop in and see him. I never got to know him intimately, but I got to know him reasonably well. We

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were on a first name basis and it was always an enormous pleasure to see him because his conversation was tremendously stimulating, whether he was talking about intellectual things or whether he was talking about political things and he also had, of course, a delightful – almost pixie-ish—if that is not too bad a word—sense of humor; one of the best quiet sense of humors I have ever seen, a great master of sort of understatement type of sense of humor.

The next really important contact, however –

SAYWER: Early in '56, I was going to ask you whether—what his position in terms of urban renewal was? Was he one of the Senators who was more interested or less interested in that problem because I know that is the one which you generally were in Washington for—that was your general concern—for various programs for urban renewal and mass transit and the like.

DILWORTH: That is right, Henry. Well, he was – coming from an urban area and being a very urban person—a very civilized, sophisticated person—was

tremendously interested in the urban problem. He realized that this is an urban civilization, will be increasingly so all through this century and that very drastic steps had to be taken if we were to meet the challenge of this urban civilization. I think what always particularly impressed him—not only was he in favor of urban legislation but he was really fussy about the kind of legislation. It had to be good legislation. It had to make sense. He just was not for any kind of urban legislation that the mayors might be in favor of. He really put it right through the strainer and one of the things that always made it a pleasure to talk to him, I thought, was that he wanted to make sure that the approach that was taken was the soundest possible approach. I always

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felt very strongly that at any time you ever talked to him, while he was a very political animal, that at least I never knew him to get behind legislation that he didn't think was really sound.

Speaking of his sense of humor, one of the things that I remember was that he came up in 1956 to speak at the annual \$100 dinner in Philadelphia and by that time those dinners had gotten up to around 4,000 people and was held in the Convention Hall and I think many of the people sort of resented the battering they had taken into showing up and the result was that by the time the speakers came on—and there would always be all kinds of minor speakers and hours of introductions—the crowd would be quite gru—quite resentful and –

SAWYER: And wondered if they got their \$100 worth?

DILWORTH: Yes. And wandering about and talking, and many of them leaving the hall, and when they finally got around to the then Senator Kennedy I suppose there had been 100 introductions, there had been at least 10 minor Democrats speak and his words, when he got up, were that he said that to paraphrase Winston Churchill, “that never had spoken to so few who listened,” but he had an important---

SAWYER: Marvelous, because that was—that is strictly a ward-leaders and ward leaders' friends and committeemen and every one else who can be bludgeoned into getting there for \$100 – just to put it into context- and I do remember that in that sort of thing it was particularly a problem at the back of the hall. People were always milling around and holding caucuses of various kinds. Anything- was there anything else in that- do you remember the subject of that speech at all, Dick?

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DILWORTH: It was a very – well, he had to go through the entire speech because it was a very important foreign pronouncement. My recollection is that it followed up a speech that he had made in the Senate on what you do about Algeria – or what France should do about – or what the United Nations should do about Algeria. It – I think as I remember it—it was a good speech but he was absolutely right that out of 4000 people who had actually come to the dinner I doubt more than 200 heard what he had to say or had very much interest in it.

SAWYER: That is interesting considering what happened—what happened subsequently.

DILWORTH: The next really important contact I had with him was in 1957. I was instrumental in getting him invited to be the principal speaker at the American Municipal Association Convention in Denver and there in that speech there was a good deal of opposition to his speaking there because the American Municipal Association is really controlled by the small cities and by what are known as the State Leagues of Cities, and they are particularly strong in the South and in the mountain states and states of that kind, and he didn't particularly, at that time appeal to them. They knew that he was going to speak on urban affairs—a broad program for dealing with the whole urban problem. It was a remarkable speech and I will say that the entire convention showed up for it and listened to it with really the greatest of attention and while many of the then conservative leagues of cities didn't agree too much with what he said, I think they all agreed that it was the best presentation—all around presentation of the problems that

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the urban civilization confronted us with that anybody had ever heard up to that time and he was one of the first to recognize that this whole problem of transportation of the great urban areas is going to be a government responsibility and that unless we solve our transportation problems the urban areas are going to have a very rough time of it. It was an extraordinary speech.

Then I think the next important contact that I had with him, except these regular periodic contacts of 15 minutes, was in 1959 when he was invited up here to speak at the annual ADA Dinner.

SAWYER: Americans for Democratic Action.

DILWORTH: Americans for Democratic Action. That is right. He was, of course, then running quite hard for President, although an unannounced candidate. It was then just about a year before he made- had made- his announcement, in February, I think, wasn't it Henry? February of 1959?

SAWYER: Yes.

DILWORTH: And, of course, whenever he came into a city he wanted to touch base with the political powers and Congressman William J. Green [William J. Green, Jr.] was then the Democratic City Chairmen and a real power in Democratic politics, and he had been a personal friend of Jack Kennedy's. Jack Kennedy called him on the phone before he came up here, was not able to get him and left a message that he wanted to see him, and he got a telegram back which stated, in effect, that while the Congressman liked him personally, he did not like the company he kept and that if he wanted

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to keep that kind of company, why then he could not also expect to see Congressman Green.



SAWYER: That, of course, reflecting at the time and throughout many of these years a certain feeling between the regular Democratic organization and the kind of Democrats typified by ADA, you having in many ways successfully had a foot in both camps and the allegiance of both groups. But I think, just to put it in context, that was an old political war between those two branches of the Democratic Party.

DILWORTH: Yes, a very bitter war.

SAWYER: Did this phase him at all? What was his reaction to that?

DILWORTH: No, it didn't. It didn't phase him at all. He was a remarkable person in that way. I think that even people with the thickest hides in politics actually are fairly thin-skinned. They manage to give an impression of being thick-skinned, but there are very few politicians that I have ever seen, and I think you will agree, Henry, who are not pretty thin-skinned, including both of us. But I think Jack Kennedy could come nearer than anybody I have ever seen in politics to not letting things like that really phase him or worry him. He had an amazing ability to shake things off that needed to be shaken off.

Then I would say the next important contact I had with him was when he asked me to come down to Washington to see him. He asked a number of mayors to come down and we met shortly before he announced his candidacy for the presidency. I don't

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think many of us committed ourselves to him. I was one of those who did because I had become tremendously impressed by him.

SAWYER: Yes, I recall that you were among the people that I knew in politics at all—you were, I think, almost the first person with stature here that I had any particular relationship with who was for Kennedy. I remember way back.

DILWORTH: Well, you take in the ADA, which I think has been really the political conscience of the Democratic Party in Philadelphia, I would say was more responsible than any other single group for having not only a good reform government in Philadelphia but also furnished many of our best people to the city government. There was a strong—fairly strong sentiment against him there because Kennedy had never taken really a stand against Joe McCarthy [Joseph R. McCarthy]. I was very bitterly anti-McCarthy- in fact, had a debate with McCarthy- if you could call it that- once in Washing where each person was allowed to invite four people, I think, to ask questions of the opponent. Henry Sawyer, was one of those who went down with me at that time—

SAWYER: That's right.

DILWORTH: It wasn't a debate—it was really an outrageous performance—just a screaming contest. But I was bitterly anti-McCarthy, but I could

understand why Jack Kennedy was in no position, particularly coming from where he did and the feeling in his own community and the feeling in his own church, really, that here was one of the first people who had really been able to beard the Protestants and make them like it, that he was really in no position to be one of the leaders against McCarthy.

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But in the ADA where the feeling, very properly, was very strongly against McCarthy and everything he stood for was one of the reasons that ADA was not apt to get behind Jack Kennedy and I think a man like Stevenson [Adlai E. Stevenson] was much more to the liking of the ADA. One of the things, as I say, that I particularly liked about Kennedy—one of the reasons I decided to be for him although there was very little I could do for him because I never had much political influence—was that I felt that in addition to being a bona fide intellectual and a fine politician, and it seemed to me you could not be an effective President unless you were both, he had the third essential element and that was an enormous toughness of fiber. I just felt strongly that nobody was ever going to push him around and that he had the kind of toughness that you really needed to deal with that kind of situation, which I think he inherited from both sides of his family.

SAWYER: If I can make a comment on that particular one, Dick, I recall that some time prior to the convention when most of us in ADA were very, very strongly still for Stevenson and, I think, had some misgivings about Kennedy, for one thing I think that that group generally underrated his—the degree to which he was an intellectual because I don't think he appeared that much to be one. But, in any event, I recall that your misgivings about Stevenson were really on those grounds—you thought both of them were intellectuals, both of them were men of tremendous awareness of problems but you doubted whether or not Stevenson had quite the guts—and I think you used even a stronger word than that—that Jack Kennedy did, you having known him and we probably not having known him, to confront the tough propositions in the international world that he was

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going to face. I just remember that comment as being your belief at the time.

DILWORTH: Well, I was, of course, active in the campaign but didn't see very much of Kennedy except during the time that he was here.

SAWYER: Might it be interesting to know where various salient political powers within the City of Philadelphia stood with relation to this on the eve of the convention? I think that might be a piece of history that would not be perhaps known.

DILWORTH: I think that's right, Henry. I think it is quite fascinating the way Pennsylvania was finally brought into line for Kennedy. There isn't any doubt that at the beginning of the campaign our Governor, who was

certainly the political leader in Pennsylvania of the Democratic Party and a strong political leader, plus the –

SAWYER: David Lawrence [David L. Lawrence].

DILWORTH: David Lawrence, and the next strongest political leader, our Congressman, William Green, had pretty much decided between them to get behind Symington [William Stuart Symington] as their candidate or, if they had to retreat from Symington, Lawrence was going to go for Stevenson. I doubt Green would have gone for Stevenson. For some reason or other Green was never willing to go for Stevenson. He refused to go for him in '52 and tried with everything in his power to prevent his getting the nomination in '56. At least they were both determined to block Kennedy. Green was very friendly personally to Kennedy. I don't think

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Lawrence had any feelings one way or the other, but both felt very strongly that a Catholic candidate would not be good in Pennsylvania.

Now what happened was that the Kennedys really infiltrated Pennsylvania, particularly in the hard coal areas and the soft coal areas and the industrial areas and would pick up a delegate here and there and about a month before convention time—of course they were aided by the tremendous success that Kennedy had in the primaries—the Governor woke up to the fact that out of—I think—there were 72 delegates that year, Kennedy had about 30- 30 delegates scattered around the state and Green woke up to that fact also and at about that time the Kennedys really moved and through their- some very close friends of Green's in Congress- Congressmen from Brooklyn actually—the pressure really came on to Green, and as Kennedy won all of those final primaries, I think Green made the decision that this might help him actually to become the political leader of this state. He made the –

SAWYER: He seemed to be aware of the final results quicker than Lawrence, don't you think?

DILWORTH: Much, I think- don't you?

SAWYER: Yes, more observation. Yes.

DILWORTH: He showed—

SAWYER: I think you might- we might just say this, Dick, to put it into context, both Lawrence, of course, and Green were Catholics.

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DILWORTH: Yes.

SAWYER: And wouldn't you say that Lawrence believed quite sincerely and strongly that he had been hurt badly and had lost—he was elected of course—but lost a great many votes. I think he used to say 750,000 when he ran for Governor because of being a Catholic in the up-state region and believed very strongly that it would really hurt Kennedy badly.

DILWORTH: Yes, I think that they both—both had felt—

SAWYER: I didn't mean to interrupt. Go ahead.

DILWORTH: Oh no. But, as Henry said, Green perceived the trend much more quickly than Lawrence did and he had meetings with Jack Kennedy's father and the next thing anybody knew Green had been able to switch – just before the whole delegation left for California- been able to switch another 30 votes, including nearly all of the Philadelphia votes.

SAWYER: And suburban votes.

DILWORTH: And suburban votes. That's right. Where there is—and when they landed in California, Green was really sort of controlling a majority of the votes in the Pennsylvania delegation for Kennedy. Well, that left the Governor in an absolutely untenable position because he had been a strong leader- a strong national leader in Democratic politics for many years and to get this kind of licking was something he really could not tolerate, so I will say that with enormous foot-work he managed

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to make the jump before it became too public and actually make it look to the outside world—

SAWYER: Exactly.

DILWORTH: – although not to Pennsylvania, as though he had actually gone along really after looking over the whole situation and considering it that this was the thing to do.

SAWYER: Having come in late on that, he was, I though, really consummately skillful in keeping the delegation totally, apparently, in line and as if he were totally in control of it until the time came when he could no longer do anything else and that was the famous—wasn't it—Sunday morning breakfast meeting at the hotel where the Pennsylvania delegation was –

DILWORTH: That's right.

SAWYER: – was stationed, and then, if I recall correctly, finally everybody but Genevieve Blatt, then Secretary of Internal Affairs, and one other delegate on the first vote, and then they made it unanimous.

DILWORTH: Albert Greenfield stuck with Johnson [Lyndon B. Johnson]—

SAWYER: Oh, Greenfield, that's right.

DILWORTH: – so did Emma Guffey Miller, and Genevieve Blatt stuck with Stevenson. Joe Clark [Joseph S. Clark] stuck with Stevenson right to the very last instant and then decided he ought to vote with the whole delegation is my recollection.

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SAWYER: What did-what strength did Johnson have at that point other than Greenfield and Miller? Did he have any delegate strength in Pennsylvania? He didn't have any really, did he?

DILWORTH: None. My recollection is that Pennsylvania just could not have been less interested at that time in Johnson.

SAWYER: Yes.

DILWORTH: – except for Greenfield and Emma Guffey miller and they got nowhere in persuading anybody else. It was – in the Pennsylvania delegation the struggle was really first, could the political leaders put over either- put over Symington. It was perfectly apparent long before the convention actually – it should have been they could not put over Symington, although I think most of the line of –

SAWYER: Pro's.

DILWORTH: – leaders throughout the country were trying to put over Symington just as in 1952 they tried to put Barkley [Alben W. Barkley] over and were not able to and Stevenson got the nomination. I think we had very much the same situation in '60, don't you?

SAWYER: Yes.

DILWORTH: Then a great many of the Pennsylvania delegation were very closely- had enormous allegiance to Stevenson and so that was something of a problem.

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SAWYER: That became very critical, of course, later. I- you might develop that- I was going to ask you a question as to whether you had any comment because I remember you making some comment to me at the time and I suppose a lot of people have talked about it. I know it's in the *The Making of the Presidency* but

in firsthand contact with that amazing Kennedy organization at the convention, which I think has now become much more of a pattern for organizing a convention, as you could see by the recent one, and I suppose it was the first time it was ever done in quite that organized a way – in terms of field telephones and all that. And I am sure you saw that at firsthand.

DILWORTH: That's right. Well, I did want to say something about it because one of the things that impressed me tremendously with Jack Kennedy right off the reel when I first met him was—I thought was the amazingly high caliber of his senatorial staff and that staff really was what formed the nucleus of his White House staff. I thought they were, again, an extraordinary combination – most of them very much – a number of them – the top ones very much like himself- bona fide intellectuals and also mighty good politicians.

Then you had men like Sorenson [Theodore C. Sorensen] who was not too much interested in politics and was, I think, one of the best speech men that anybody has ever had, and then a few very practical people like Larry O'Brien [Lawrence F. O'Brien], who were excellent organizers. He had extraordinary staff and his brother Bob [Robert F. Kennedy], because I was co-chairman in the 1960 campaign of the Pennsylvania Citizens for Kennedy and so I had quite a lot of contact both with his brother Bob and with Byron "Whizzer" White [Byron R. White], who is now a Supreme Court Justice and who was the chairman- national chairman of the Citizens for Kennedy, but I was immensely impressed with his

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brother's organization ability – with Bob's absolute dedication to his brother Jack, and his determination to elect him, his willingness to work himself literally to death if it was necessary to do it, and after seeing a fair amount of him I could understand that when his father said that all of his boys, the one who was most like father was Bob, that Bob had the tenacity, the determination and would go – I think – I cannot remember his exact words his father used – but that he could actually go beyond what seemed to be human endurance in anything that he really got his teeth into something he never let go, and I think it is one of the reasons, of course, that he has never had the popularity that his brother did. I don't think he was ever an intellectual; he never had the polish, of course; he does not have as much charm as his brother, but he is a person of tremendous character and tremendous ability and now is the real head of the family. I certainly hope and feel that he will play a very important part in the life of the nation over the coming years. But it was an extraordinary organization, both in its devotion and its skill and ability and, as Henry Sawyer said, that was particularly apparent when we finally got to the convention. I think it was the first time that a convention got organized with that thoroughness. I – we had assigned to the Pennsylvania delegation Bob Kennedy himself and when the very emotional demonstration for Stevenson started a lot of people though, by gosh, this thing might do what the Wilkie [Wendell L. Wilkie] thing had done in 1940. We suddenly looked up and found Bob Kennedy there with his walkie-talkie, calm as could be and he said, "Stand firm. Don't any of you join that parade. This thing is sewed up, we got the votes and don't let anybody out in that aisle get into this parade."

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SAWYER: I guess nobody moved.

DILWORTH: Oh, Genevieve Blatt and Joe Clark got into the parade, and I think that's one of the reasons Bob Kennedy always hated Joe. Bob is a real feudist. Bob always intensely disliked Joe Clark.

SAWYER: Joe also gave some press statements that—even after the delegation had gone for Kennedy or was going for Kennedy—something like maybe we ought to have a second look, or something like that.

DILWORTH: Well, you know Joe is a very tenacious fellow, and he was absolutely committed in every way, and every other way, to Stevenson, and he doesn't give up. But I think one of the reasons that he always had bad relations after that, as I understand it, with Bob Kennedy was that neither one of them ever forgot that incident. Bob Kennedy got very rough with him, and Joe got very rough with Bob Kennedy. But the only two in the whole Pennsylvania delegation who joined the parade were Genevieve Blatt and Joe Clark. The organization there was extraordinary. I also tremendously admired him—that is, Jack Kennedy—when he went down and had that debate before the Texas delegation with Johnson. It was taking a long risk—one that I think he had to take—and he handled himself in such masterful fashion. Johnson is a one of the best goaders in the world and he did everything he could to goad Jack Kennedy, and he had been saying very unpleasant things about him— and particularly about his father.

SAWYER: Oh, I remember that—that he had been out there and that that part of it was quite rough.

DILWORTH: Oh, he said really rough things about his father – and Jack

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Kennedy was absolutely devoted to his father. And I think Johnson was very hopeful that before his own delegation he could get him going; but actually it was just the reverse. Kennedy handled Johnson so beautifully that Johnson was the one who got frustrated and tended to lose his temper, whereas Kennedy wound up his speech by saying, "I agree that this is the best majority leader the Senate has ever had, and we need the best majority leader right where he is," and wound up the debate in really masterful fashion.

The campaign got off to a very slow start. I thought his acceptance speech was fine— and yet it didn't go over well for some reason, even with the audience.

SAWYER: No, it didn't— in this sense also, if you remember— Stevenson made a speech there— at that same open Coliseum, I think –

DILWORTH: Right.

SAWYER: And the response was really much more emotional, even after it was all over, to Stevenson's speech. And Kennedy's speech at that point seemed to me somewhat of an anticlimax.

DILWORTH: It did indeed.

SAWYER: It wasn't until much later, it seemed to me, that his speeches began to come through much stronger – towards the end of the campaign. Did you have that feeling?

DILWORTH: Very much so. And his first swing down through California was almost a total failure. His first swing up through Oregon and Washington was dismal. But they had that amazing stick-to-it-iveness – and they never gave up; but it was much more than that. When things

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weren't going right they would sit down and figure out why things weren't going right and what they had to do to correct them. It never occurred to them for a moment that they couldn't correct them and that they weren't going to win. And they really went at it. I think what he did on the religious issue – the meeting with the Baptist, Methodist, and Protestant clergy – in Dallas, wasn't it?

SAWYER: Yes, it was Dallas.

DILWORTH: In Dallas. It was quite extraordinary. The film that was made of that was quite extraordinary. I thought he did a really masterful job. I think the campaign began to turn at that point. And then, of course, those debates which we both watched on television. Actually, he didn't really outdebate Nixon [Richard M. Nixon] – I don't think. If you hadn't known what was going on, and just listened, you would have thought each was a stand-off. But...

SAWYER: Except, I think, one thing, Dick – and that was his unbelievable and almost encyclopedic knowledge of the facts on parts that he couldn't possibly have prepared ahead of time – that is, in the give-and-take- where Nixon would say, "Now you didn't do this, and we did do that..." and he had been able to recite chapter and verse- about this act, what it provided, why it wasn't passed, who voted for it. That, I think, was impressive. And it really overshadowed Nixon. That won the second. Otherwise I would say that's true.

DILWORTH: Well, it's simply this – that the personality...

SAWYER: The personality...

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DILWORTH: The personality was what came through. He showed himself to be an absolutely cool customer, that nobody could face down, that had complete confidence in himself – but not overconfidence – justifiable confidence. He was a really cool customer. You could see the way he eyed Mr. Nixon that Mr. Nixon was really his meat – I thought – and it just struck you that he was a man of enormous ability, enormous confidence in himself, who could handle pretty much any situation. Because Nixon was, in theory anyway, a really great political debater. I think Nixon had thought he was really going to win this thing on the debate, and it was very clear in that first debate that Nixon was really frustrated, as though he had a fencing match and every pass he made was not only warded off, but was countered.

SAWYER: The counter blows, yes. Well, it seemed to me that it was about that time during that campaign- it was about that time that something happened to the public response to Kennedy. Dick, you remember the time when he came here – not at the very end of the campaign, but around that time, well before the end, when it was in full swing. You rode with him in the car – and Bill Green did – I believe the three of you were in the back of the car. I was riding back further. But that was the first time that I saw these amazing demonstrations by women, who would come up and fling their arms around him. And these weren't teenagers...

DILWORTH: No! All ages!

SAWYER: No, they were women who looked like they probably had two or three children at home, and they didn't look like nuts at all. Yet

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that demonstration was just an indication. I remember at one point you were sitting on the outside, I think, and Kennedy was in the middle, and maybe Bill Green on the other side, and some woman came and just sort of flung herself across you to touch him, so to speak. I remember you – I can just see a mental picture of you sitting there wondering, as though to say, “Well, what am I going to do with this woman who is on my lap, but who is obviously trying to touch Jack Kennedy.”

DILWORTH: It was amazing.

SAWYER: He wasn't really a demagogue in any sense. He never appealed that way...but he so just totally came through about the middle of that campaign.

DILWORTH: He really did.

SAWYER: Yes, I remember that very well.

DILWORTH: We spent a whole day together riding in the car. Of course, there were four people who wanted to ride with him. There was the Governor, there was

Senator Clark, and there were myself and Bill Green. Bill Green refused to count himself out. I said I was the major of the city and that, by gosh, I wouldn't let the police get the parade started unless I was in the car with the presidential candidate. And so the Governor gracefully bowed out, and so did Senator Joe Clark. And Bill Green and I, although we had always personally been rather friendly, at that time were hardly speaking for some reason. So it was Kennedy and Bill Green and myself; but

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by noon each day we three would all be extremely friendly, because Jack Kennedy had an amazing ability to warm people up and get people together, and all during the tour that we had – and that automobile tour went on for two solid days – everything would remind him of things. He had an amazing fund of good anecdotes, really good anecdotes. He also had an amazing knowledge of Irish history and Irish political history. I remember once we stopped and a little woman who had only been over here...she was quite well along, certainly in her early seventies...rushed out, and she said she had only been over here three months and had brought over from Ireland with her a piece of Irish bread- just a little bit stale, as you can imagine- which she gave to Jack Kennedy and held up the caravan and insisted that we take a bite out of it while she was there. That reminded him of the amazing loyalty the Irish have to so many of their customs and how long they clung to him, and it reminded him of things in his grandfather's house- Honey Fitzgerald's [John Francis Fitzgerald] house – and the goings-on at various seasons of the year, and all that. He was very fascinating on all those things.

Then he could switch from that to purely intellectual things very rapidly, and also to silly political things. Those two days of riding with him were an absolute delight. And the funny part is that way back then his brother – let's see, it was two years later that his brother ran for the Senate, but I remember Jack Kennedy saying to Bill Green then, "I am very flattered at your saying you think that Bob and I are excellent politicians. But," he said, "the member of our family who is the best politician, and likes it the most, and who I think is going a long, long way in politics, is our youngest

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brother, Ted [Edward M. Kennedy]." Well, at that time nobody took Ted very seriously, but those are the principal recollections I have of that 1960 campaign. I know my wife, who had never been particularly taken with political candidates of any kind, thought that he was the most charming fellow that she had ever meet in politics, and she really worked harder, I think, in that campaign than she worked in my own campaign.

SAWYER: Of course, the result in Philadelphia was so incredible that I think it perhaps ought to be mentioned; because, naturally, Philadelphia was to go Democratic, there was no question about that. But the extraordinary extra margin was so far above what, for instance, the Republicans I understand had quietly told Nixon they would be able to hold the vote down to (I think maybe 150,000 or something plurality); of course, it was so far above that- really extraordinary. I think, by the way, that it was a combination of three things: it was a combination of (you won't say this, so I'll put it in) – it was a combination of, I think, the Kennedys' romantic appeal (which was presumably a factor

everywhere), Bill Green's extraordinary organization – but above and beyond that, the reform movement and your own stewardship as Mayor which made people, who might not have been, favorably disposed to vote Democratic because of the excellent city government that you gave them, and Joe Clark before you. But otherwise, I don't think you can really account for the fact that this particular city went so much more strongly for Kennedy than any other big city – that is, with that extra margin, which of course in turn influenced Pennsylvania, and obviously you know about the election – how close it was.

DILWORTH:           Kenny [Kenneth P. O'Donnell] was here ten days before the election, and at that time

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all of the returns had come in from the ward leaders, and all that. I remember when we were riding the last day he was here, Bill Green told me he would carry the city by 250,000. Kennedy was rather doubtful. He said if he could do better than 200,000 he would be very happy, and of course he went by 330,000.

Following the election I saw the President-elect on a number of occasions, because at that time I was President of the United States Conference of Mayors and he wanted to discuss urban problems, urban legislation – also the appointment of Dr. Weaver [Robert C. Weaver] as head of the HHFA. And the thing that was extraordinary to me (I have never known anyone to be busier than he was at that time) was that every time you went in to see him he knew who you were, and I don't think he had to be reminded. He seemed to remember who your family was and seemed to remember pleasant incidents that you had had together – and those things do make a tremendous difference, I think, because everybody in politics has a good deal of vanity and it means a tremendous amount to go in and see a president-elect and have him remember who you are and your wife's name and pleasant incidents that you had together. After he was elected President I would see him from time to time on urban matters; and, again, I was always struck by (one of the things that you brought out, Henry) his encyclopedic knowledge of urban affairs and urban legislation. It was always extraordinary to us. Small committees of mayors used to go in to see him – always saw him once every two or three months for 15 or 20 minutes. Then, I think the last time I saw him...No, he did appoint me as chairman of a committee to look into the question of transportation in the whole Boston-to-Washington corridor, because there you have 40 million people and a

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third of the industry and commerce of the United States, and that corridor is really threatened with traffic strangulation and inability to move freely. He was tremendously interested in that and he set up this committee to study it- and not only to study it but to come up with a plan that he could actually present to Congress to try and arrive at a real solution to it, particularly with the emphasis on rails, and he was very interested in that. He seemed to be completely abreast of what was going on, what was being done on all those fairly technical and fairly involved subjects. I last saw him- I think it was just shortly before he went to Dallas. He came up here- my recollection is for some kind of party that Bill Green had to raise money and finances. There were about 200 people at that party. I think everybody had to contribute \$500 to go. They were

trying to raise money for the National Committee, and he had agreed to come up. There were, oh 200-250 people there. I happened to bump into him and the first thing he brought up was this study and said he hoped that we would be in a position to make a definite recommendation in a short time, to discuss a few things in connection with the study; and he was doing the same thing with everybody in the room who was in any way involved with any of the things he was interested in. He had an amazing mind, I think – I have always felt strongly that if he had lived and been elected to a second term (which he certainly would have been), that his second term – I think his first term was fine and that he was a splendid President – but I think in the second term he would have been just

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completely outstanding. I think the best proof of that is the original Bay of Pigs against his handling of the terrible threat of those Soviet Missiles in Cuba. When you read it (I just read in this month's *Look* what I think is a pretty accurate article on how that whole thing was handled), I think that that was about as beautifully handled as anything could have been. If it hadn't been handled with that combination – there, it seemed to me, is where the three things that he stood for served him in such good stead- being an intellectual, being a master politician, and being tough as nails. The three things together made it possible to ride through that thing. I doubt that there are very many men who could have brought us through that without some pretty nasty incidents. So I felt that his second term would have been just an extraordinarily successful one; and it's just possible, I think, that anyone who had any acquaintance with him would agree that it was a great tragedy for our nation that he was assassinated at the time that he was – just when he was really reaching the height of his power.

SAWYER:            You were involved, of course, with some of his legislative proposals, particularly the urban ones and transportation ones. Am I correct in saying that you had the impression that it was more like an eight-year plan. He had that kind of staying power – to know what he wouldn't have got out of Congress the first time around and what he was very likely to hope to get out of it, and probably would, the second time around – that is, another term.

DILWORTH:        No question about it! He felt that Congress couldn't be driven, they had to be gently urged, and also persuaded. He did an

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enormous amount of personal contact work (so one of his close associates, Ken O'Donnell, told me) with the Congress. It never really let up. Every day he was in communication with many, many men of the Congress – both on the House and on the Senate side – and he kept it up and kept it up, and the accumulation of that was really beginning to pay off. As you say, he was capable of taking the long-range point of view. He didn't feel that you had to have it all today, or that you could get it all today. He wasn't the kind of man who would try to drive you to that extent. Not that he didn't drive himself tremendously. He did. His staff worked – I don't think any staff has ever worked hard. Not that he drove them; it was a sense of real dedication, devotion, that they had to him as a man and as a leader. I guess that's about it.

SAWYER: Thank you very much, Richardson Dilworth.

DILWORTH: Thank you very much.

[END OF INTERVIEW]

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