

James Quigley Oral History Interview – JFK#1, 1/25/1967
Administrative Information

Creator: James Quigley

Interviewer: William McHugh

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Biographical Note

James Quigley (1918-2011) was a Pennsylvania representative from 1955 to 1957 and 1959 to 1961, administrative assistant to Senator Joseph Clark of Pennsylvania from 1957 to 1958, the Assistant Attorney General of Pennsylvania in 1958, and Assistant Secretary of the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare from 1961 to 1966. This interview focuses on the 1960 presidential campaign in Pennsylvania, the leadership of the Health, Education, and Welfare Department, and the Kennedy administration's focus on civil rights, among other topics.

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of James M. Quigley

Interviewed by: William McHugh

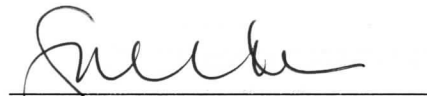
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James Quigley– JFK #1
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Oral History Interview

with

JAMES QUIGLEY

January 25, 1967

Washington, D.C.

By William McHugh

For the John F. Kennedy Library

MCHUGH: Mr. Quigley, could you say when you first met John Kennedy?

QUIGLEY: I can. Before we do that, maybe just in the interest of accuracy, you introduced me as the Assistant Secretary of the Interior. At the moment, my title is, and it's a cumbersome one, Commissioner of the Federal Water Pollution Control Administration, in the Department of Interior. Previously, I was Assistant Secretary of the Department of Health, Education and Welfare.

MCHUGH: Well, I thought that the Organization Manual listed you as an Assistant Secretary.

QUIGLEY: I'm now the Commissioner of the new Water Pollution Control Administration. Alright, now your question, when did I first meet, or get to know Senator Kennedy, and it was Senator Kennedy when I got to know him. Probably somewhere in 1957, when I was then serving as Administrative Assistant to Senator Joseph Clark [Joseph S. Clark] of Pennsylvania. I got to know members of Senator Kennedy's staff probably particularly and especially, Ralph Dungan, Ted Sorensen [Theodore C. Sorensen], and oops, the one I knew best, his name won't come to me at the moment. He had been with the Senator when the Senator was still a member of the House, from up in Boston. Timothy J. Reardon, Jr. ["Ted"] Those three and other members, and through them on occasions we had

business in the Senator's office. I probably really got to know the Senator best in an interesting session that I had with him in--let me think now--January, I suppose, of 1960. When he was then Senator from Massachusetts, when I think it was already pretty clear that he was going to make a serious effort to be the Democratic nominee at the Convention that would be held the following summer. And someone on his staff, perhaps Ted Reardon, perhaps Ralph Dungan, suggested that it would be a good idea for the Senator to sit down and sound me out as to what I thought the particular problems that he would face when it came to lining up delegations from my state of Pennsylvania. At this time I was a member of the House of Representatives. I was elected to the Eighty-sixth Congress in November of '58, and served in the Congress in '59 and '60. It was at this time, when as a member of Congress, I went over and had a long--oh, two and a half hour luncheon session with just the Senator and myself, in which we talked about many things, but basically and fundamentally about Democratic Party politics in my native state of Pennsylvania.

MCHUGH: In your initial contacts with his staff, what was your impression of his staff at that time?

QUIGLEY: Well, my impression of the staff, I suppose, is colored by personalities. And I knew Ted from over in the House, and I got to know Ted Sorensen somewhat. I probably got to know Ralph Dungan the best of all during my days in the Senate. And generally, these people impressed me as competent people, good staff men, who in their own way, quiet way, in the case of Ted, I suppose, and more outspoken in the case of Ralph and Reardon. They were dedicated to their boss and they pretty obviously thought he was a great guy, and was a comer. So on the basis of that, I shared, I think some of their enthusiasm for Kennedy rubbed off on me.

MCHUGH: You hadn't been at the '56 Convention, had you?

QUIGLEY: I had been at the '56 Convention. Yes, I was there, during the rather dramatic roll call vote involving the Senator from Massachusetts, and the Senator from Tennessee, when Jack Kennedy obviously emerged for the first time as a national figure.

MCHUGH: Did you have any sentiment about him as Vice President at the time, do you recall?

QUIGLEY: Sentiment about his getting the nomination?

MCHUGH: Yes, towards him.

QUIGLEY: Yes, I think I was caught up in the enthusiasm for Kennedy that sort of swept through the Convention

Hall that day. This was not to say that I didn't have some doubts and misgivings, and I would suspect that the doubts and misgivings ran to two things. John F. Kennedy was only, what, a few months older than I was, and maybe a year at the most, and I considered myself to be a pretty young man at that time. How old was I? Thinking back I was probably thirty-six, thirty-seven. And I think I did have some question about anybody that young being Vice President of the United States. I think the second misgiving I might have had would have been, I considered myself pretty much a liberal in every sense of the word, good or bad, I suppose, and I wasn't quite sure how liberal Jack was, and I suppose, maybe in a sense, I was bothered a little bit by his father's conservative, or maybe even in some instances, reactionary reputation. But except for youth and possibly that he wasn't liberal enough, I was pretty excited, both by his youth and his vigor, and also, by the basic prejudice that I suppose that anybody by the name of Jim Quigley would have had. I was part of the Irish Catholic backlash that ultimately, I think, helped elect Kennedy in 1960. Because this saw the religious issue being pretty well set aside, and this was something which, quite frankly, having been a young boy during the Al Smith days, which was something that I hoped to live to see be undone. And, of course, John F. Kennedy ultimately proved to be the man who did this.

MCHUGH: Well some people were concerned, some Catholics were concerned about Senator Kennedy because they felt he was an indifferent Catholic. Did you?

QUIGLEY: No, I'm afraid I didn't share that concern. Maybe because my own approach to Catholicism was not too different than his. I had not hesitated in my public life to take positions that I think, at times, bothered or annoyed, and maybe even shocked some of the hierarchy. And this was, his independent Catholicism appealed to me. Now I recognize that there were other Catholics who didn't react that way, but his independence as far as his religion and his public life were concerned impressed me. Keep in mind, of course, that this was all in the days before Pope John [Pope John XXIII], and that looking back over the last ten years, a revolution in attitudes on both the part of Catholics, and non-Catholics fortunately has occurred. And not only in this country, but I suspect throughout the world.

MCHUGH: Did you have a chance to discuss with him any of your concerns about him on the issue of religion, for instance?

QUIGLEY: No. I don't think that I ever got around to expressing my concern to the President or to the Senator about this. These were things that bothered me, you know, in 1956. By 1960, I was in a position,

where as a practical politician, I found myself on the horns of a dilemma. I was a Congressman from the nineteenth district of Pennsylvania. I was Ike Eisenhower's [Dwight D. Eisenhower] Democratic Congressman. This was Gettysburg; this was Carlyle; this was Hanover; this was York; a district that basically and fundamentally was Republican in its leanings, Protestant in its religious identification, and quite proud, of course, that the President of the United States came from that. Local pride was an understandable factor. I was faced with, obviously, a difficult election coming in November of 1960. I didn't win by much in 1958, and the chances of winning in 1960 were bound to be tough. Now possible candidates, like Hubert Humphrey [Hubert H. Humphrey], who had made many speeches in the area, this kind of a candidacy might have helped me. Stuart Symington's candidacy might have been even more helpful to my candidacy. But I became convinced in late 1959, and early 1960, that the only candidate that the Democrats could win with nationwide was John F. Kennedy. And so stated. And I think maybe, it was because I had made such statements that I probably ended up having this session with the Senator because. . . .

MCHUGH: What let you feel that way?

QUIGLEY: Well, I just was convinced that he had the magic or the spark, this ability to excite people that certainly had demonstrated itself at the Convention in 1956. I just felt that he was the one candidate that could give us the kind of enthusiasm that I felt we needed. After the two Stevenson's [Adlai E. Stevenson] campaigns, and I was a great admirer of Adlai Stevenson, but quite frankly, his campaign, particularly his second campaign, was not an inspirational one. It lacked drive. It lacked, to use the favorite Kennedy word, vigor. The first one I think was a, for historians will be interesting, because I think some of the things that were said by Stevenson in that campaign, and the way they were said, were classic public announcements. I'm not so sure they were good campaign speeches, but they were classic, almost statesmanlike pronouncements, but they didn't win elections. In our Democratic system, winning elections is kind of an essential requirement, because until you get elected, you're not going to be able to do any of those wonderful things you promised the voters. You sometimes find out it's a little hard to do after you do win, but at least you don't even get a chance if you don't. So I became convinced that this was the man who could attract a young group to the Party, which is what I thought the Party needed. I frankly, thought that the Party had grown old, that most of the leaders in most of the states were men and women who kept looking back on the good old days, and to them the good old days were the New Deal days of F.D.R. [Franklin D. Roosevelt]. Some of the younger element, or the middle aged element of the Party were thinking of the good old days as the Truman [Harry S. Truman] Administration. But I felt,

maybe it was because I'd seen what Ike had done as the personality to the Republican Party, maybe we need a personality. We needed a personality. We needed an exciting individual as a standard bearer. Now having become convinced that this was the one man who had the touch, who could give us the spark, that could win nationally, I was not unmindful of what Kennedy's impact might be on my own candidacy for re-election in the nineteenth district of Pennsylvania, and I recall, particularly, one of my campaign supporters from a previous campaign coming to me and saying, "Jim, are you out of your mind? Kennedy won't help you." And my reaction was, maybe he won't help me, but he can't possibly hurt me as much as Adlai Stevenson did in 1956. I said Adlai Stevenson lost my district in 1956, by something like thirty-three thousand votes, and I said I don't think Jack Kennedy could lose this district by that many votes if he tried. I was wrong. He didn't try. But the record would show that when the votes were counted the following November, he lost my district in Pennsylvania not by thirty-three as Adlai had done in '56, but by forty-three. My district in Pennsylvania was one of the districts in the nation where everything that I think people feared might happen on the religious issue did.

MCHUGH: Is that so? Could you mention some of those things?

QUIGLEY: Well, I'll give you an example. The Congressional district was made up of three counties: Cumberland County, which was my home county, and a Republican County; Adams County, which is Gettysburg and a small county and Republican; and York. York is the largest county in the district and it's Democratic by registration. York County had been a bellwether county in the twentieth century. Every time there'd been a election, a national election, York County voted with the winner. Which means it was with Teddy Roosevelt, it was with Taft [William Howard Taft]; it was with Wilson [Woodrow Wilson]; it was with Harding [Warren Gamaliel Harding]; Coolidge [Calvin Coolidge], Hoover [Herbert Hoover]. It went against Al Smith, and for Hoover. It went for Roosevelt four times. It went for Ike twice. It had, in 1960, a Democratic registration advantage of about seventeen thousand votes; yet in the November election Dick Nixon [Richard M. Nixon] carried York County by seventeen thousand votes. The basic, fundamentalist, Protestant concern about a Catholic in the White House still was a factor six years ago in York County, Pennsylvania. And, of course, I went down to defeat. Kennedy lost, as I said, the district by forty-three thousand. I think I lost it by, oh, ten or eleven thousand. My religion didn't seem to bother them, but Kennedy's did.

MCHUGH: At that time, the time of the campaign, did you have any sense that statements that Kennedy had made had changed any sentiment, that is, towards

religion in any of the . . .

QUIGLEY: I don't think that got through. I think that Kennedy's famous statement before the ministry group in Texas made an impact in Texas. We played and replayed on television, and in a variety of movie ways the speech. But it just didn't make an impact in our part of the country. Now, maybe, if he had made a personal appearance, maybe if he had a similar confrontation between himself and some Protestant clergy, it would have made an impact, but the television and the filmed account just didn't get through.

MCHUGH: The New York Times mentioned at that time that a certain amount of anti-Catholic literature was circulated in your district, especially in rural areas. Were you particularly aware of this?

QUIGLEY: No, I wasn't. Let me say this, that in my several bids for public office, when I won and when I lost, I was always told confidentially in the last week of the campaign that "Jim, they're using your religion against you in certain parts of the district, or in certain parts of the county." But I have yet to see a piece of literature that, you know, said Jim Quigley is a Catholic, or anything that--John Kennedy is a Catholic. As far as I'm concerned, it was not a scurrilous kind of campaign, I think it was just a quiet, almost inbred concern that, maybe, having a Catholic in the White House was just fundamentally unAmerican. I had Democratic committeemen, men in their fifties, men, who at the age of sixty, men, who at the age of thirty, had not been able to vote for Al Smith, though they were good lifelong Democrats, and at the age of sixty, were having trouble bringing themselves to vote for John F. Kennedy for the same reason. Now, they had voted for me, and perhaps, without knowing my religion the first time, but they were just having real struggles within themselves over the whole idea of a Catholic in the White House.

MCHUGH: You mentioned, well, in your two and a half hour discussion with Kennedy initially, do you remember what his, what things were of most concern to him then?

QUIGLEY: Yes, the things that were of most concern to him then--the thing that was of most concern to him then, was "Jim, what do I do about Dave Lawrence?" And Dave Lawrence, of course, was then the Governor of the State of Pennsylvania, and had been the Mayor of Pittsburgh, and for a generation was the dominant figure in the Democratic Party in Pennsylvania. It was a problem. He remained a problem, he remained a problem up until, I suppose, the opening day of the Convention, as far as Kennedy was concerned. And Dave's basic problem was that as a young man he had made a decision to be a

politician, to devote his talents to politics and the Democratic Party, and I think he went through a traumatic experience in 1928, when he saw the '28 campaign, and saw what happened. This really shook Dave Lawrence, I think to the roots. As a consequence, while he stayed in politics and made many contributions to the Party at the state and the national level, Dave never really overcame the shock that he had in the '28 election. Dave Lawrence finally ran for Governor of Pennsylvania in 1958 and was elected, and was the first Catholic elected Governor of the state. Dave Lawrence could have run for Governor on the Democratic ticket any time he wanted to, any time in the twenty-five years previous--any time he wanted the nomination he almost could have had it. He might have wanted it. In fact, I'm sure he coveted it, but he refused to take it because he was afraid of the religious issue, and because he wouldn't run to a considerable extent he vetoed other Catholic candidates. So Dave really was afraid that in his twilight years he was going to live to see a complete rerun of the '28 campaign. He didn't want this to happen, so this was the subject of our long luncheon conversation. What should he do about Dave and how best to handle him? I made it clear that I thought that the Governor, Governor Lawrence, would be delighted to have a Stevenson-Kennedy ticket, and that the Governor was completely enamored with Adlai, he liked him in '52 and he liked him still in '56. And I thought he still liked him very much in '60. He was attracted to Adlai as an individual and as a personality. And if John F. Kennedy were anxious to be number two man on the ticket, then I thought he would have no trouble getting together with Dave Lawrence and getting his bandwagon for second spot on the ticket rolling. He made it clear at that luncheon that he wanted no part of that, that he was in this thing for the top spot and that was what he was going after. My advice was, "As far as Pennsylvania is concerned, the best thing you can do is stay out of the state. Don't come in, because if you do, you'd embarrass the Governor. He won't want to be against you, but quite frankly, I don't think he can be for you at this point in time." And in answer to his question, "Well, what do I have to do for him to be for me eventually?" I said, "Well, the best thing you can do is to do well every place else." Which in essence is what he did. He went out into the other states, and entered the primaries and did quite well. He even did quite well in the Pennsylvania primary, because there was a surprising and impressive write-in vote for Kennedy in that campaign, though he did not come into the state, and he did not campaign. Of course, ultimately, when the convention delegates caucused in Los Angeles, it was clear that, despite Dave Lawrence's grave misgivings, that the overwhelming number of the delegates, particularly those from the big cities, the, you know, Philadelphia, Erie, Pittsburgh, Scranton, Wilkes-Barre, they were for Kennedy. And I think Dave was confronted with the choice that the only way he could continue to be the leader of this delegation, was to follow it. So smart, savvy politician that he is, he came out and publicly announced

Pennsylvania was for Kennedy and that was pretty much the ball game.

MCHUGH: I presume then that he hadn't seen the Bailey [John Bailey] Report, or he didn't take much stock in it.

QUIGLEY: Dave, I'm sure had seen the Bailey Report because there wasn't much that happened in national politics in the last forty years that Dave Lawrence didn't know about, didn't study in depth and in detail. But Dave was not willing to accept the validity of the Bailey Report conclusions. He just--he might have wanted to believe it, but he just didn't.

MCHUGH: Has he told you about his own--his misgivings about his ability to be elected Governor if he had run before that himself?

QUIGLEY: I don't know that he ever expressed it to me in specific terms during a conversation that I can recall. But it was clear from Dave's every move that he would have loved to have run for Governor, I think much earlier in his career. I'm not saying that the religious issue was the only factor. Dave had a bad time when he was in the [George H.] Earle Administration in the 1930's and in essence he left the state Capitol, beaten, almost a broken man. And he had to go back to Pittsburgh, and almost rebuild his political career from scratch. But I am sure that as a young man that Dave Lawrence had hopes and dreams that might have even included the White House himself, one day.

MCHUGH: Can you state just briefly what the bad time was that he had with . . .

QUIGLEY: Oh well, yes. The Earle Administration in 1934 to 1938, was the first Democratic Administration that we had had in Pennsylvania in this century. It rode into office pretty much in the sweep of the New Deal popularity. It was a young man's administration, I think, if you look back, Dave was probably the youngest man in Earle's Cabinet, and at that time he probably was not more than forty-three or forty-four. He was also the Democratic state chairman. It was an Administration that, frankly, was large on enthusiasm and on idealism, but a little short on administrative competency and the like. And the result was that they did things, they went off half cocked. There were charges of scandals and the like. And the Republicans, particularly in Pennsylvania, have always been masters at exploiting charges of scandal against the Democrats. In this instance Dave Lawrence was eventually indicted for misfeasance and malfeasance in office. And after a long and rather highly publicized trial that ran several weeks in

Harrisburg, he was finally acquitted. But he left town not a criminal, but he sure didn't leave town in triumph. It was a very rough period in that man's life, and I think it would have broken many a man. You know, they would have said, "Well, you know, I'm getting out of this politics, and I'll never get into the dirty business again." But Dave was a dedicated politician, and he did go back, and, in essence, started from scratch in Pittsburgh, worked his way back, became Mayor, became an outstanding Mayor, and led the city through its greatest period of change and renewal.

MCHUGH: If we could return to the campaign or to that meeting just a moment, when you talked with Kennedy then, did he have a pretty firm conviction that he would be able to win? Do you remember just how he felt about his own chances of . . . ?

QUIGLEY: Well, I don't think it was any question about his confidence about winning in November, and I think this might have been the common denominator that we had. The meeting was arranged by his staff because I had indicated that I thought he was a winner in November. His basic problem at the moment was how to get to the starting post, not how to get to the finish line. How do you get the nomination? And it was clear at that particular point, that maybe, the basic strategy to go into certain primaries, including Wisconsin was being formulated. But the basic question of what primaries to go in, and what ones to stay out of, and how to line up support in key states like Pennsylvania, these were the things that were on his mind at that time. I think he was having some trouble putting together the people that would lead to the nomination. He didn't seem to lack any confidence that once he got the nomination he would go on to win.

MCHUGH: I see. I think we could probably go on now to his Administration, unless you have any other comments you'd like to make.

QUIGLEY: No, I think in a general way, I'll probably recall other items and incidents after we stop, but generally this is Kennedy the candidate as I remember him. He did, of course, campaign in my district. We did bring out what we thought were larger and impressive crowds when he visited the York Fair, and when he came to the Harrisburg Airport, and the like, but I'm afraid we didn't bring out very impressive crowds on election day, and the ones that did come out all seemed to vote for Nixon.

MCHUGH: Now at the time that he took office, how did you come to be invited to fill the position that you have?

QUIGLEY: Well, you never know for sure. I think a key man, a key man in my selection for a spot in the Kennedy Administration, was Ralph Dungan. Ralph, I indicated was someone I had gotten to know quite well, when I was on Senator Clark's staff. And we stayed in some touch while I was serving in the Eighty-Sixth Congress. I was a defeated Congressman, and one of those people that, as the saying goes, maybe ought to be taken care of. I think, that's the general expression that's used. I was in the unique position, as far as the state is concerned, that I had the backing of Joe Clark, and I had the backing of Dave Lawrence, and I had the backing of Bill Green [William Joseph Green]. Bill Green was then the city chairman in Philadelphia and was serving in the Congress also. Now, this in itself, I suppose, made me unique, because there weren't that many things, or that many people that these three strong personalities agreed upon. So I think when Kennedy found somebody from the state of Pennsylvania that was going to unite, instead of divide these three, and this was automatically a plus in my favor. The second factor, of course, was that I think John Kennedy looked favorably upon Jim Quigley for a number of reasons, not the least of which was that he felt a certain personal responsibility for my defeat. I think he recognized that my candidacy was not going to be help--his candidacy was not going to be helpful to mine, yet, despite that I had stuck my neck out and said I thought he was the man that should be the nominee at least a year before. I recall, particularly, after I had been appointed Assistant Secretary of HEW, this is probably in February of '61, they had a reception at the White House for all of the then-appointees, which would have been the Cabinet Officers, the sub-Cabinet Officers, the Under and Assistant Secretaries, the General Counsel, and we were there. We were going through the receiving line, and as we were going through, my wife and I. When we got to the President, he said, "Jackie, I want you to meet Congressman--I mean, Secretary Quigley and his wife." And he said, "I want you to know that this is the one congressman whose defeat I brought about, and was completely responsible for." And I looked at him and said, "Well, I'm not so sure that's completely accurate, but I don't know that I can totally disagree with it." So I think he, in essence, said, look if there's anybody who lost their seat in Congress that we ought to make a job offer to, and offer a spot in Administration, maybe it's Jim Quigley. Now, maybe, I would have lost anyway. Maybe if the nominee had been Stevenson or Symington, or Humphrey, I would have lost anyway. But he did feel, in a sort of--he delivered a coup de grace of whatever my chances were of being a congressman in the Eighty-Seventh Congress.

MCHUGH: How was your position initially defined in terms of emphasis on various activities that were under your office?

QUIGLEY: Well, I came into the Department of HEW, this was

a bit of a surprise Department in some respects in the early days of the Kennedy Administration.

Abe Ribicoff [Abraham A. Ribicoff] was a surprise appointment as Secretary. Abe had been the original Kennedy man. He and John Bailey had kind of put the thing together back in '56 and stayed with it. I don't think anybody was surprised to see Abe in the Cabinet, but I think, I was surprised, and a lot of people were surprised to see him in HEW. You know, the general speculation was that this was a job that was likely to go to Soapie Williams [G. Mennen Williams]. So after Abe was appointed I got a call from, I believe it was from Ralph Dungan, it says, "Jim," I was up in my home in Pennsylvania then, "What are you going to do?" I said, "Oh, I don't know. Maybe go back to practicing law and give up this whole crazy business of politics. I've got a wife and a family to support, and this business of winning and then losing is getting a little monotonous and precarious." And he said, "Oh, no. You want to be part of the Kennedy Administration. Why don't you come down and we'll talk." Well, we came down, and we talked, and I had no particular idea, or you know, I had no particular job in mind. As a matter of fact, at one point, someone suggested that I ought to go to the State Department. The job that I think they had in mind was the, oh, what is it?--the Office of Security and Consular Affairs? It's the one that--oh, come on--that fellow who was so controversial in the Eisenhower years. Scott McLeod [Robert S. McLeod]. Scott McLeod's old job. And I had served in the Congress, and had gotten to know Scott, who incidentally, I found, despite his public reputation, to be just an absolutely delightful individual as a person. And the suggestion was made that maybe this was a job I would like. Quite frankly, I think the thinking behind that was Tad Walters was still very much, you know, a force and a factor to consider in the Congress as far as security and immigration and similar matters were concerned. Maybe the thought was that I would be an appointee who would be satisfactory to Tad, who was then the dean of the Pennsylvania delegation. It went so far, as a matter of fact, that I had a breakfast with Dean Rusk to discuss the matter, and I was kind of negative. I was kind of negative for two reasons. My temperament was such that I could not see myself devoting my time and my talents on a day-to-day basis to security matters. I recognize that national security is an essential matter that has to be taken care of, but I just don't consider myself the ideal security officer. My temperament is not for it. I made this point with Dean Rusk, who had then been designated as Secretary of State. And his answer was, "Well, of course, this could be, perhaps, an initial assignment. There would be other assignments that might come along in the State Department which would be of interest to me." My response, I think, to that was, "Well, this might be true, but I recognize that I would be in competition with a professional Foreign Service Corps trained for the jobs, with backgrounds that I didn't have." So my attitude was pretty much, no thank you, on that. And I'm not so sure whether it was

Ralph Dungan, or Adam Yarmolinsky who first thought of me as maybe, an Assistant Secretary for HEW. I'm sure Ralph played a part in the picture, because I ended up getting a call from Abe Ribicoff. I flew up to Hartford, met with the Governor up there, and with John Bailey. Abe's attitude was--his basic question was, did I want to be General Counsel? And I said, "Quite frankly, I don't." I said, "If I'm going to get into the law business, I think I'm going to get in, not as a Government lawyer, but as a practitioner." And he said, "Well, what about the Assistant Secretaryship for Federal-State Relations?", which I think was the title they gave it at that time. And I said, "Well, quite frankly, I think I'd be more interested in the Assistant Secretary for Legislation, on the basis of my experience on the Hill, and I think I would be better qualified for that." And he said, "Well, quite frankly, Jim," he says, "That job is committed. I want Wilbur Cohen [Wilbur J. Cohen] to be my Assistant Secretary for Legislation." And, of course, I recognized Wilbur Cohen as one of the, maybe, the outstanding authority on Social Security and it was clear that Medicare was going to be one of the big things that would be moving in Department. So I said, "Well, as between the two, the other Assistant Secretaryship, or the General Counsel spot, I would prefer the administrative job to that of the lawyer's." So I came in as the other Assistant Secretary along with Wilbur. And I think the job, as the Eisenhower Administration had defined it, was that of Federal-State Relations, which, as far as I was concerned, was completely meaningless. And certainly the role I played in HEW during the first few months, and as a matter of fact, I suppose during practically all the time I was there, was kind of that of the utility infielder. Wherever they had a crises, wherever they had a problem, that seemed to be where, you know, I'd end up. And in this way I got involved in civil rights matters, and in this way I got involved in water pollution, got involved in air pollution, and got involved in many of the things that I spent, to my surprise, the next five years doing. Because I assure you, I had no intention of, you know, having a career in Government. This was something that I was going to do while I thought about what I was going to do, and maybe while I made up my mind whether or not it would be worth the effort to take one more crack at that nineteenth Congressional seat. So here I am seven years later, completely involved in Government, and up to my armpits in water pollution.

MCHUGH: So what was your function in relation to Wilbur Cohen say, in legislation?

QUIGLEY: Well, Wilbur's basic job was that of Assistant Secretary for Legislation, and as such had the job of overseeing the business and drafting the Federal Aid to Education Bill, and the Medicare Bill, and numerous proposals that went forward from that vastly expanding Department of HEW. Because I was an ex-congressman and had

entree to the Hill, and because I had some experience in legislative drafting etcetera, I suppose I even got involved in legislative matters to a certain extent. But then Wilbur is kind of a universal man too and he got involved in everything, too. A pretty tremendous guy who ranged across the department in a variety of roles. He, too, filled in gaps wherever they had to be filled. So you see, this was a vastly expanding Department and you only had two assistant secretaries. Some of the departments with a tenth of the people, and a twentieth of the programs, would have five, six, eight assistant secretaries. And this as the newest department of the government was still struggling with two. I think now they have, maybe, six or seven or eight assistant secretaries over there. But this was not the case in 1961 and '62.

MCHUGH: In general, how would you describe your relationship with Secretary Ribicoff?

QUIGLEY: I think my relationships with Abe were good without being cordial. I think Abe recognized, as a matter of fact, I recall the first staff meeting that we had. He looked around the room and there were all the Commissioners there, Food and Drug, and Welfare, and Surgeon General, the Social Security Administrator, he looked around the room, Wilbur Cohen, who had a career in Social Security before he went to the University of Michigan, Abe looked around the room and he started out by saying, he said, "Well, with the possible exception of Jim Quigley, I'm sure there's not a person in this room who doesn't know more about this department than I do." So I think, in essence, Abe recognized that as an ex-congressman and an ex-Governor he didn't know a great deal about the department, and I think he clearly recognized that as an ex-congressman I didn't know that much about it. So, in essence, maybe we didn't start together. He started a little bit ahead of me. We had a good relationship, but as I say, I would never say that it was cordial. He didn't call on me the way he would have called on Lucas Miles [Rufus E. Miles Jr.]. Lucas Miles was the Administrative Assistant Secretary, who had been there since the Department began through several administrations, and different Secretaries. So he could call on Wilbur and say, "Look, you know, give me the background on this." And he couldn't call on Jim Quigley for that because I didn't have any more background than he did. So I think, as a result, I tended to get the new assignments, when civil rights became the major push that it became, the major issue, it came to Jim Quigley. When water pollution became the responsibility of the Secretary of HEW, Abe's decisions were, well, give that to Jim. And the same thing happened on air. So on the old line program he looked to the old line experienced people. On the new programs they had a tendency to come my way. I think this, I think Abe very early in the game was disillusioned with his Secretaryship. I think he had some notion, and I'm sure he would agree, looking back was rather

naive, but I think he had some notion that the Department of Health, Education and Welfare was just a do-good group that did nothing but passed out money and passed out help to all sorts of people. And being Secretary of the Department would kind of be like being Santa Claus three hundred and sixty-five days a year. He soon found out, as he said in his classical comment, that it was a department of controversy, a department of--what was it?--dirty air, dirty water, and dirty looks. We had, and they still do, over there, have a tremendous number of terribly important programs but every one of them is controversial. And Abe discovered this and decided that if he stayed in it too long he was just going to get chopped up by the American Medical Association, the Welfare groups, or somebody, so he wisely decided to take an exit when it presented itself, which it did, of course. And in '62 he ran for the Senate in Connecticut.

MCHUGH: How would you compare your relationship with Celebrezze [Anthony J. Celebrezze] as . . .

QUIGLEY: Well, my situation with Celebrezze was somewhat different. What happened to Tony Celebrezze shouldn't happen to anybody, in this sense, that he came into Washington with a legal background, and having been Mayor of a major city, Cleveland, for a number of years. But with absolutely no background on Washington. He'd never been a congressman, he'd never been a staff man, or on a Senate committee, never worked in any of the bureaucracy, and really it's a cruel, and almost a barbarous thing, to throw a man into the town, and expect him to, you know, survive. And, of course, in the meantime, of course, the Assistant Secretary Tony Celebrezze met was not the same guy that had taken the job under Abe Ribicoff. I was a year and a half older, and certainly eighteen months more experienced and seasoned. So at this particular time I was in a position to give counsel and advice to the new secretary on such things as civil rights and air pollution and water pollution. So that by this time I had become something of a seasoned old hand and this was like sending a Naval Officer to sea to captain a carrier and the last time he'd been to sea was when he was a midshipman. You have him spend twenty years in the Pentagon, and then suddenly send him to sea. This was a rough experience on Tony. He did a remarkable job under the circumstances. He, too, like Abe, found out what an impossible job it was. His personality was different. I don't know how he felt privately but publicly I don't think he chafed under the job quite as much as Abe did.

MCHUGH: How would you describe their personalities?

QUIGLEY: Personalities? It is one of the most unbelievable things I have ever witnessed. You know the traditional, the traditional picture, the typical picture of the Italian, is explosive, outgoing, you know, always

his feelings and emotions were out on the table all the time. This was not Tony Celebrezze. Tony Celebrezze supposedly had a temper, but I have to be honest with you, I don't think I've ever seen it displayed. In contrast, Abe, who projected the handsome, urbane image on the television screen and, you know, always suave and sophisticated, completely under control, actually, in the office with his sleeves rolled up Abe was a pretty, you know, goddamn sort of guy, you know. He was fighting and he was mad, so that they're really in so many respects, Abe was far more Italian than Tony, in that aspect in their personality.

MCHUGH: Could you compare them as administrators?

QUIGLEY: As administrators I don't think there's any question that Tony was a far better administrator. Abe was not an administrator. I served in the Congress with Chet Bowles [Chester Bowles]. Chet Bowles is not an administrator. I don't know what it takes to become Governor of Connecticut, but I'm convinced you don't have to be a good administrator. Chet Bowles got in trouble, as much trouble as he did in the State Department. Because basically, he got the administrative job over there, and this is not his cup of tea. Chet wanted to be--Chet was an idea man, and really Abe wanted to be in on the policy decision. He wanted to be in on the conferences in the White House, what was going to go into the Federal Aid to Education bill? He wanted to be on the policy decision. After that it was for the technicians, for the Wilbur Cohens and the General Counsel's office to work out the details. Tony, in contrast, couldn't care less about the policy decision. If the President of the United States wanted him to be for federal aid to parochial schools, he'd have been for federal aid to parochial schools. He would go about and do the job. I think what was tough on Tony was, that the Department of HEW is not the city of Cleveland. It's a big, vast, diversified Department with all sorts of problems. And being there at the desk at nine o'clock in the morning and staying there til six o'clock five days or six days a week, which I'm sure is the way Tony was a good mayor in Cleveland, still wasn't enough to make you a good Secretary of HEW, because there's just so much going on that you couldn't keep on top of it. But overall, I think, clearly, Tony was the better administrator of the two.

MCHUGH: Which programs in HEW became especially involved in civil rights?

QUIGLEY: Well, in a sense, I suppose that everything that HEW touched was involved in civil rights. Those that were particularly and especially involved, of course, were education and hospitals. Welfare should have been more involved than it was, but for some reason or other I always thought that welfare seemed to be able to wiggle off the hook. But in my time over there we became deeply involved in civil

rights issues in both the education area at the grade school, and high school, and college and university level, and in health care, at nursing homes, hospitals, and the like. This was particularly true in after Title Six of the Civil Rights Act of '64 was put on the books. That became our major assignment.

MCHUGH: Were you involved in a major way in these in the education program, legislation?

QUIGLEY: No, I was not involved in the education legislation. I think my involvement was in the civil rights field, and particularly in implementing the Executive Order on Equal Employment within the Government, within the Department. And then after the passage of the Civil Rights Act of '64, of implementing it, particularly and especially in Title Six section which says Federal Employment should not be expected to subsidize segregated activities or facilities.

MCHUGH: Were you in the Employment Policy [President's Committee on Government Employment Policy] operation for HEW?

QUIGLEY: Right, I was the focal point at the top for implementing fair employment practices within the Department.

MCHUGH: When this order came out, what was the situation in HEW?

QUIGLEY: Well, the situation in HEW, I suspect, was just one of those that was bogged down in tradition and lethargy and pessimism. There had been Executive Orders on equal employment before issued by Eisenhower, issued by Truman. I think the bureaucracy, however, you know, they didn't see this as one of their responsibilities. And when you asked them why they didn't have any Negroes working for them, they had one answer. Well, no qualified Negro has ever shown up on the register. And as long as this was the case they rationalized that they had no further responsibility. Now we're still struggling with this problem six years later and frankly, I don't think we've successfully coped with it. But I think the Kennedy Administration and the Kennedy Administration largely under the drive of the then Vice President Johnson and the then Secretary of Labor, Goldberg [Arthur J. Goldberg], did a lot to give drive to the equal employment program in Government. It still has a long way to go, but I do think that this is one of the major achievements of the Kennedy Administration, to mount this drive and to stay with it because I think this is what happens in Government, you get something started and you get a new administration and a new assistant secretary, and, you know, it fades away.

MCHUGH: Did you work on the President's Committee on Equal Employment Opportunity?

QUIGLEY: I was a member of that sub-Cabinet group on civil rights. Now, I don't know how much exposure you've had to that, but this is one of the little interesting operations that went on within the Kennedy and Johnson Administration.

MCHUGH: Could you give some background on that, I'd like . . .

QUIGLEY: Well, very briefly, this was a group that was set up in the White House, oh, I'd say in spring of 1961. I think the basic ideas for it was Harris Wofford. And Harris, as you may recall was the ex-professor from Notre Dame who was a campaign aide for Kennedy, and who thought of the idea of Kennedy calling Mrs. Martin Luther King when he had been jailed. And this was kind of a key play in the campaign strategy. And Harris was then on the White House staff. The group was not headed by Harris, however, it was headed by, come on, a guy who has been AA to Pat Brown [Edmund G. Brown], who later became Assistant Secretary of State. He just managed Pat Brown's unsuccessful campaign for Governor. I want to say Dillon [C. Douglas Dillon], but it isn't Dillon. It'll come back to me as I go along. Anyway, this was a group that was set up, we met in the Cabinet Room. We were sub-Cabinet Officers at the Assistant Secretary's level. And the basic premise on which the Kennedy Administration started, in looking back, it was kind of naive, but the basic premise was that we didn't need any more civil rights legislation, that there was already enough civil rights legislation on the books. All we needed was a more vigorous and more aggressive and more imaginative administration of the laws. And that if we did this, this is all that needed to be done. Well, the basic purpose of the sub-Cabinet group was to explore ways and to exchange experiences among the agencies as to what could be done, and what was being done. We accomplished, I suppose, in a sense, quite a bit. But when you see what eventually became the Civil Rights Act of '64, the idea in '61 and '62 that we didn't need any more legislation, does seem almost unbelievable. But this was the basic premise at the time. And we met and we worked there, and pretty much, I think, laid the ground work for what eventually became the Civil Rights push within the Administration. Now, true, there were a lot of other forces that were, not the least of which, of course, was Birmingham. I think that this kind of dated all civil rights thinking in this country, before Birmingham and after. After the Birmingham situation with the dogs and hoses, why a real sharp change came about in the thinking in this country and what needed to be done in civil rights. And this change was reflected from the President on down.

- MCHUGH: Were Jerry Holleman and John Field very active in getting that program . . .
- QUIGLEY: Jerry Holleman and John Field were part of the people, because John was then Assistant Secretary to Arthur Goldberg. Field was sort of a professional staff man too, I suppose--Holleman was in Labor, Field was on the Committee headed by the Vice President and these, along with Harris, were a couple of the key people.
- MCHUGH: Was Secretary Goldberg substantively involved with . . .
- QUIGLEY: Not at the sub-Cabinet level, but what I think the sub-Cabinet group did was tended to make a lot of the snowballs that Arthur Goldberg and the Vice President, you know, threw. So I would say, yes, that Arthur Goldberg, in my judgment, was very much involved in this, in civil rights at this stage.
- MCHUGH: What about problems within HEW on equal employment?
- QUIGLEY: We had them. As I say, the . . .
- MCHUGH: Did you make much headway?
- QUIGLEY: Oh, we made some headway, we didn't make anywhere near enough, but this was partly because that the lethargy took a long time to disturb, and even after we did it, it was not easy to find qualified Negroes for many of the key positions that we hoped we could.
- MCHUGH: I have to stop for just a moment.