

George J. Mitchell Oral History Project

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John N. and Marcia L. Diamond
(Interviewer: *Mike Hastings*)

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Mike Hastings: The following is a recorded interview of the George J. Mitchell Oral History Project, an activity of Bowdoin College. My name is Michael Hastings, I'm the interviewer; the interviewees are John Diamond and Marcia LaRochelle Diamond. The date is October the 6th [2008]. This interview is taking place at the office of the University of Maine System on Main Street, excuse me, Central Street in Bangor, Maine. Welcome. I would like to ask you to begin by stating your full names and spelling your last name, and in your case, you're maiden name, Marcia.

Marcia LaRochelle Diamond: Marcia LaRochelle Diamond, M-A-R-C-I-A, middle name LaRochelle, capital L-lower case a-capital R-O-C-H-E-L-L-E, last name Diamond, D-I-A-M-O-N-D.

MH: And could you give me your date and place of birth?

MD: 6/8/62, and place is Bath, Maine.

MH: Okay, and your mother's name and your father's full name?

MD: My mother was Mary Sullivan LaRochelle, and my father is Neil LaRochelle.

MH: Are they both living?

MD: No, just my father, my mother died seven years ago.

MH: John?

John Diamond: John Nathan Diamond, John is J-O-H-N, Diamond is D-I-A-M-O-N-D.

MH: Date and place of birth?

JD: November 12, 1954, Bangor, Maine. Parents' names are Nathan Diamond and Eleanor Diamond. Neither is living.

MH: Let's begin by talking about your parents. Can you tell me their stories, a little synopsis of, if I were to meet you and asked you about your parents, what would you tell me?

MD: Sure, I'll start with my dad, Neil LaRochelle. He grew up in Bowdoinham, Maine, grew up on a farm, his dad died very early in life, when his dad was early forties, and so my dad became the man of the family. He had three sisters, and he ended up going away to MCI [Maine Central Institute] to high school, lived with an uncle so that he could work part time and send some money home to support his family. He went to college at the University of Maine at Farmington, which is where his mother had gone, and became a teacher and then a principal, and worked for many years in the Bath school system.

And my mom grew up in Richmond, Maine, very close to Bowdoinham. She actually didn't want to date my father originally because he was a much older man; he was three years older than she was. She also went to Farmington, although didn't complete her years there. She had an older brother who died in a car accident and that was pretty traumatic for her. But my parents were married in 1954 and they had six children, I'm number four out of the six, and my mother was a strong influence on me, both in terms of not only going into education but in deciding to also pursue my short career in politics in George Mitchell's office.

MH: And was your mother active, she was active in politics?

MD: She was not actually, but she decided she wanted to make sure that I did something else besides just education. She always told me that I was just too smart to be just a teacher, which really she meant, I think, she didn't want me to just make that level of income, having seen that's what my father had done. But she knew that that was my passion. I played dolls with, I played education with my dolls, we played school, we did all of those things for years, there was no question that would be what I would do. But she was really the influence even when I originally went to Washington.

Gayle Cory had a sister, Carole Rouillard, who was my father's secretary at the elementary school where he was the principal, and Carole and Gayle apparently talked often about the fact that I did have an interest in politics in high school and that I should come to work in Washington, and even just do an internship. So those conversations went on for quite some time, and when we went during my college years to Washington for the summer, I met Gayle and she said, "Come to Washington."

MH: We'll explore the Gayle Cory connection a little bit later on in the interview.

MD: Sure, sure.

MH: John, can you tell me a little bit about your family background?

JD: Sure. My mother was from Bangor, my grandparents and great grandparents were all immigrants. My, on my mother's side they came from Scotland and Canada, and on my father's side came from Ukraine and England. My mother's side, my mother was very much in tune with politics and had been active, although active as a Republican, a Rockefeller Republican, as

opposed to the Bush Republican, or conventional Republican, but in 1978 both my parents became registered Democrats. That was the year where I was involved in helping a friend of mine, Jim Henderson, run an abbreviated campaign for Congress in the primary, and then I went to work for Bill Hathaway, working on his campaign.

My interest in politics, well, I should give you a little bit of background about the rest of my family. I've always been interested in politics. I remember sitting with my father watching the early returns of the Kennedy-Nixon election when I was four at that time, no, five at that time, and liked Nixon because he, his name began with N and my father's first name began with N, and my father, I remember him telling me that they were for Kennedy, even though they were registered Republicans, but I vividly remember that as my first political awareness and was always following elections and staying up late every election afterwards, from Ken Curtis's, well John Reed's elections, Ken Curtis's and so forth.

I started doing volunteer work, the first campaign I actually got involved in as a volunteer was when I was in high school in 1972, I did volunteer work for Elmer Violette and for Hathaway, those two campaigns.

MH: What year was that again?

JD: Nineteen-seventy-two.

MH: All right, so Violette was running against Cohen for the House, and Hathaway was running against Margaret Chase Smith for the Senate.

JD: Correct, and went down, took my parents' car and loaded it up with people and went down to the victory party down in Auburn, got to meet Leon Billings I think, and some of the other people that I would run into many years later.

MH: Were your father and mother active in, I mean really active? You said they campaigned for Kennedy.

JD: My mother more so. My father didn't have a lot of time to -

MH: What did he do?

JD: He was, I should have mentioned that, he was a professional musician, and then after he had four kids went to college and got a degree in teaching, but maintained, had a big band that played around Maine and in the Maritimes quite a bit, and his day job was as a teacher from 1963 or '64 on. But he grew up in Boston and had been a professional musician from when he had to sneak into the clubs he was playing at. Played, he had Arthur Fiedler as one of his early music teachers, which was a little side note.

So, but my mother was the one who was very involved in community activities, volunteered a

lot, mostly for Democrats, even though she was a Republican and never voted in her life for a Republican candidate for president, even though –

So when I, while I was, after '72 I was working for the campus radio station -

MH: You went to the University of Maine?

JD: Yes, I went to the University of Maine, and worked on the school newspaper, not, on the school radio station as the news director and in 1974 met George Mitchell when he was running for governor at the time, and he came by and, came to campus and we interviewed him. But I didn't get involved in any of the campaigns because I was doing that, and later I went to work as a student working for Maine Public Radio, so I kept my distance until '76, and then I got very involved in the Carter campaign, and Muskie was running for reelection that year, too, so I worked for the Democrats in this area – I'm pretty sure, yeah, it was '76 – and I sort of lost my train of thought on that.

MH: When did you first run for the legislature? Or is that, am I -?

JD: That was in 1980, yeah, right, I had, I graduated from Maine, University of Maine, in 1977 and went to work for the *Lewiston Sun-Journal* covering local politics and some of the, and the legislative delegation, and as you know, that's a major spectator sport in Androscoggin County, and was supposed to go work for them at the State House. I had done some of that for Maine Public Radio as a student, and because of budget cuts they decided not to send anybody to cover the State House. So, and about that same time Jim Henderson, who had been a faculty member at U Maine contacted me to see if I would run his campaign in the Democratic primary, and I was anxious to get back to Bangor so I did, and that was in late January of '78. He lost the primary.

That night Al Gamache hired me to work for Hathaway to run the 2nd District operation, at least post-primary, and then to be part of the 2nd District campaign when they added more staff. He lost, and shortly thereafter Jim Tierney and Libby Mitchell hired me to be their staff person in the majority office at the State House.

After a year of doing that, I convinced myself that I could do just as good a job as a lot of legislators and was encouraged to run for a House seat in Bangor, ran against the incumbent, a guy named Frank Carter, and -

MH: Now was that a, just one part of Bangor?

JD: Yes.

MH: What neighborhood is it?

JD: The northern side, it's the Capehart area of Bangor and Paramount Park area.

MH: Right, right.

JD: Bangor had five House seats at the time, it has four now.

MH: Okay, so it's out near where the air base is.

JD: That area, going over to, across to Broadway.

MH: Okay.

JD: And at the time my district had eighteen percent Democratic registration, and I did a big, big registration drive, and it happened to be 1980 so Reagan and Carter were running, and I won with sixty-eight percent of the vote, and was unopposed in '82, which is when I was working on the Mitchell campaign. We can get to that if you want, I don't know if I've gone on longer than you want -

MH: No-no-no, this is good, but why don't you go through the local politics, I mean your interest in local politics.

JD: Okay. I got obviously, I actually, in '79 I was elected Democratic county chair, for Penobscot County, and I was twenty-four or twenty-five, and we built a really strong organization here. We had monthly meetings where we would easily have over a hundred people come; we brought in a lot of speakers. In fact, in January of 1980 we had a straw poll event that attracted Carter and Kennedy supporters and, oh, I can't remember if we had something like four or five hundred people show up at the Civic Center in Bangor. It was huge. And Harold Pachios was state chair at the time, I remember that, and he came up. But I was, got very involved in the Carter campaign in 1980, and Carter won, as you know, he won the Maine caucuses, but it was the high profile state caucus that year, won the first.

So I, let's see, I ran for the legislature, I mentioned that -

MH: Were you involved at all when President Carter came to Bangor for his town meeting?

JD: Well, interesting story on that. Not involved in pulling it off, but I only lived a few blocks, five blocks from the Murrays, who hosted him, and my seventy-five year old grandmother, who was from Scotland, nonetheless was a big Kennedy supporter, loved Democratic party politics, hated Republicans - don't know why, I don't know whatever drove her that way, because she never could vote. But anyway, there had been a heavy snow, and my seventy-five year old grandmother and I walked down to the Murray's, in the snow - they'd blocked off the street from where we lived all the way down - just so she could get a glimpse of him entering the house and waving from the Murray's front porch. But that was one of my favorite memories, to see this -

MH: Now was she your father's mother or your mother's?

JD: My mother's mother.

MH: What was her name?

JD: Jean Klyne, K-L-Y-N-E, and she owned a photography studio in Bangor. It still exists but not under, she sold it back in the '80s. So -

MH: Tell me a little bit, and I'm going to ask you both this question, what was it like to grow up in Bangor, Maine, for you, John? I loved it. Memories of your childhood, schools and -?

JD: Yeah, well I went to Bangor public schools and graduated from Bangor High School, my father was a teacher there when I was going to school there. I always loved Bangor, Marcia knows, I really feel a strong connection to the community. Downtown Bangor used to be a pretty hopping place, and she used to come up and visit her cousins in Bangor, that was a big deal, wasn't it? So -

MD: They had a mall.

JD: Yeah, well I'm predating the mall even, so.

MH: I can remember when it was this street here that was a hopping place.

MD: Oh, I mean Freeze's Mall, and you know, an escalator and that kind of thing.

JD: That's right, it was, so I loved Bangor and thought it was a great place to live. And because my parents were so involved in community activities, my dad especially with the school, but my mother in lots of civic organizations, you just really felt like you were connected to everything, knew everybody, still do.

MH: What did you do with your summers?

JD: I played baseball as much as I possibly could. We never went on family trips in the summer, or never got shuttled off to camps or anything, it was hang around Bangor, play baseball. My parents had a swimming pool once we turned about eleven or twelve, so that made it easier to hang around, and made you very popular on hot summer's days. But yeah, just, that was my major activity. And it would still be my activity, playing baseball, if I had the ability to do it.

MH: What position did you play?

JD: Oh I, I mean a lot of it was pick-up ball, but I played in leagues and played everything I could, wherever they'd put me. Mostly infield.

MH: I note for the record that John is wearing a Boston Red Sox necktie, very apparent.

MD: Of course he is.

JD: Yeah, yeah, and if you look around you can see it's -

MD: We got engaged at Fenway Park, I mean it doesn't stop.

JD: Oh yeah, we went there on our honeymoon.

MH: Tell me about growing up in Bath?

MD: Bath was just a quiet little town, you know, home of Bath Iron Works, but at the time didn't have any family members that worked there or anything. My dad was my elementary school principal, of what was two schools originally and then became one. It was just a nice little home town place, everybody knew everybody. I have really nothing significant; it was just a nice place. And as I say, my dad was a principal during the regular school year, and he had a little business that he called LaRochelle and Sons Market Gardens, it was a gardening business. And of course that annoyed my sister and I to no end, that he would name this business that, because we were expected to do just as much work in the garden as my four brothers were. But it was just anything you could think of as sort of an ideal situation growing up, that's what I remember.

MH: So John will never make that mistake.

MD: He will not.

JD: I know better.

MD: Although it's kind of funny, because when we got married we talked about whether I would change my name, and we kind of decided that if we were staying in Bath, LaRochelle would be a much better name for both of us to have, but in Bangor Diamond would, so that was the criterion we used.

JD: But both our kids have LaRochelle as their middle names, so.

MD: They do.

MH: You started to talk about your connection between kind of your father's secretary I think and Gayle Cory. Can you kind of explain how that story went?

MD: Yeah. Carole Rouillard still lives in Bath, and she was my dad's secretary at the elementary school that he worked at for years.

MH: What was the name of that school?

MD: Well origin-, he had two schools originally, Dike School, and Newall School, and then they added onto one and put everybody in one building, so Dike-Newall, it's now a hyphenated name. And Carole worked with my dad for years and years and years and became, you know, very good family friends, and we knew them from church and so on and so forth, she had two kids that would have been the same age as siblings of mine and so forth.

And I know that there were conversations, and I think it was between my mom and Carole, for several years about the fact that I should go down to Washington, that it's just something that I would love. And I had an interest in politics in high school, I was president of our student community liaison council, and interesting high school group in that we had veto power over the principal, so it was a really unique kind of high school governing group, and I was chair of that my senior year. And my senior year of high school was Carter's year, 1980, and that was the first presidential campaign that I was ever involved with.

But I just had that interest, and I think it was something, I don't know if it was just my mother was pushing it or what, but we went to Washington, D.C. one of those summers right after that, and I met Gayle for the first time, and Gayle actually set it up that we could go to lunch with Senator Mitchell in the Senate Dining Room. Which we did, and we have great pictures of that day.

So I decided at that point to graduate early from Farmington, which is where I was. I should have graduated in May of '84, but I took overloads because my intention was to go do an internship from January to June and still get back to Maine in time to apply for teaching jobs for the fall. So I had this all planned, and all worked as planned. And of course as things approached, Gayle had a conversation I'm sure with my parents, probably my mother, about the fact that I should just come and live with them during the time that I did my internship. Gayle had two daughters, Carole and Melissa -

MH: Now, Gayle was from Bath?

MD: She was originally from Bath, correct. And in fact her mother at the time and her brother were both alive, still lived in Bath. In fact, I believe all of her family was still alive and active in the community there.

So I did, I drove to Washington and moved in with the Corys, that was in December of 1983. Again, quite an event. The Corys had two kids, Gayle and Don had Melissa and Carole, and Melissa had some developmental disabilities and so we talked about the situation, that I would live with them for free, but I would do what I could to help Melissa learn to read, and that was the way we'd work it out. And as it turned out, I just became a big sister to the two girls, and they did everything with me. Which I didn't mind. I was a twenty-one year old, loved kids, loved to do things with kids anyway. But Gayle of course knew everyone, and she was just such

a fascinating person to talk to.

It was also very interesting, being a real small town girl, Bath, Maine, we – Gayle didn't drive, so since I had a car I then could become her transportation for the two of us to get to the Amtrak station, in Gaithersburg, Maryland, and then we would take Amtrak into Washington, D.C. every day and back again. So that was also a big help to the family, that Don didn't have to do the driving of Gayle every day.

We'd get the *Washington Post*, and she'd get the front section and I got the "Style" section -

JD: Some things never change.

MD: And so we sat together. Of course the one thing I will never forget is, I never had the courage to tell her that I really didn't want to sit in the smoking car, because I really objected to cigarette smoke, but that was back in the days when things were really different, and Gayle was a heavy, heavy smoker. But that's what I did, and I somehow survived it.

But living with the Corys was just such fun. They just made me part of the family, and of course because of that I was privy to all the conversations Gayle had, whether it be phone conversations or work conversations or, on anything that she did. And she was just very, very good to me, and such a wonderful mentor, role model, and I learned so much from her.

MH: Could you describe your job and how it evolved?

MD: Sure. I started as an intern in the press office.

MH: I see. The sun's on you. Do you want to move? Is it bothering you?

MD: Nope. The way internships worked at the time was, there was a three-job rotation, so during your six months you did two months in each place. Usually you did two months in the press office, two months in the mail room, and two months with the legislative assistants, as I recall.

So I started in the press office, and during that time I believe I also moved into the mail room for a short time, but it was something that I really enjoyed, and I always have enjoyed journalism and media and so forth.

MH: And what year would this have been?

MD: This would have been January of '84 through June of '84. During that time there were some changes in the front office. John Trattner was the press secretary for Mitchell, Regina Sullivan was the assistant press secretary, so I was assisting them during that time. And then whoever was the personal secretary left, and I can't remember who that was, but Regina took the personal secretary's position. So rather than complete my internship, they just kind of moved me

into that assistant press secretary position for the rest of my six months, and then hired me to continue that job beyond June.

So I worked in that position up until John left, and then I was acting press secretary for a time, and then they hired -

MH: John must have left at the end of the year.

MD: Probably, it would have been about that time. And then they hired, they did a search and they hired Ed somebody [Hatcher].

JD: Wasn't it Rich? No.

MD: No, Rich Arenberg was the, he was the chief of staff, or AA. Ed, can you picture him?

MH: It's after I left, I think.

MD: Was it really?

MH: I left in October of 1984.

MD: You did? Oh, wow, okay. The name might come to me. He was only there for a short time, and then he left and so I became acting press secretary again, and then that's when they hired Diane Dewhirst, and she did sort of a dual role in the main office, as well as the senatorial campaign office.

And so I stayed in Washington for a couple of years, and then at that point they were looking to have a press presence in Maine and asked me to move back to Maine. Which was a really hard decision. I absolutely loved Washington. And I ended up doing that, and choosing to do that and going to Augusta, but it just wasn't the same. I did it for another two years, but it, the federal building in Augusta, Maine, is nothing like the Russell Building in Washington, D.C., and so it was, it really, it lost its luster at that point.

And again, I had always trained to be a teacher, I knew that was something that I would eventually do, and as John and I got together, which is another whole story, that's when we kind of decided to move back into that direction -

MH: In general though, you met in the, under the general umbrella of the Mitchell office, is that right?

MD: Not just the general umbrella. Go ahead.

JD: May 5, 1985, there is a congressional fund raiser being held down there, and I was a friend of Regina's, and Regina invited me to come down. I was going to be in Washington for a

legislative conference of some sort, and she asked me if I would be her date for this dinner.

So we all gathered, it was, you know, a formal affair, I had to rent a tux and haul it with me down from Maine, and we all gathered in George's office to have a group picture taken of everybody who was coming. And Mary was, Brennan's niece, Mary Catherine?

MH: Toker.

MD: Hmm-hmm.

JD: Yes, thank you, she was going to take everybody's picture. So we got in there and I was placed next to Marcia, who had a nice green dress on at the time, and we met right there on the spot and had our picture taken, just like that, the group picture.

So we sat together that night and Regina, as you know, knew everybody so she was running into friends left and right, so that gave Marcia and me some time to talk, and nothing other than became friends, and then that summer Regina came up to Maine and I called my friend Jeff Mills and said, "Oh, Regina's bringing a friend up, you'll have to, we'll all go out to lunch together or something."

Well then I didn't see Marcia again until, was it J-J Dinner, October -?

MD: Well, right before that. I knew I was moving up, and I really was not looking forward to it, although interestingly Gayle said to me, "Don't worry about a thing, you're smarter than most of those people in Augusta," which I got a kick out of. But Regina called John and said, "Marcia's moving back to Maine, you'll have to introduce her to people and help her get to know folks there." So the next time we ran into each other was that cocktail party before the J-J [Jefferson-Jackson] Dinner.

JD: Yes, at Beverly Bustin's house.

MH: Beverly Bustin being a state senator at the time?

JD: At the time, yup.

MH: From where?

JD: Augusta.

MH: Augusta, okay.

JD: And so we met, or reconnected there and socialized, and then we happened to sit together that night with a bunch of Mitchell people – and her grandmother.

MD: My grandmother, which was another interesting story, because I had originally planned to take my grandmother to the J-J Dinner, she was going to be *my* date for that. And I got a call sometime during the week that I needed to be Mitchell's driver that day, so I had to arrange for my sister-in-law to bring my grandmother up to the dinner, so that's where we met, so -

MH: So you were well chaperoned that evening.

MD: Very much so.

JD: Yeah, absolutely. And so we sat next to each other at dinner, with the grandmother and a couple of other folks, John Dodge -

MD: Oh yeah.

JD: I don't know if he's on the list of people to talk to, but he was there.

MH: Now who was he, I don't know?

MD: He was an intern in Washington about the same time that I was, and so we just all connected at Bev Bustin's house that night.

JD: Yeah, I can't remember who else was there, and Dick Gephardt was the speaker. And this was October 11th, 1985, because that night I told Marcia I was going down to Acadia the next day for lobster, and I asked her if she'd want to come, want to go. So she said she would, the next day she was supposed to show up in Bangor - oh, I got thrown ahead. I was spending the night with Angus King and Mary Herman, Angus was playing around with the idea of running for Congress at the time, so he had a suite at the hotel that was adjacent to the Augusta Civic Center. So I had told them, I said, "Can I stay with you? Because I'm going to go out after the J-J Dinner with somebody I just met."

MH: And so you knew Angus from your days working for Bill Hathaway.

JD: Yeah.

MH: In the, that would have been the '72 campaign.

JD: But I knew Mary better because of her work at the State House, because I was doing, I was majority leader at this point.

MH: Right.

JD: So I got back there and I was going to share a room with her brother, John, which I did, and we talked a little bit, and the next morning Mary, before I headed back to Bangor, Mary said, "So, how was your date last night?" And I said, "Well I think I met the future Mrs. Diamond,"

and we all laughed, ha-ha-ha-ha. And three months, not three months, a month later she said, “Hey, whatever happened to the future Mrs. Diamond?” I said, “Well, you know, she may be.”

But anyway, so that Sunday, October 12, Marcia came up to Bangor, was two hours late – she had good reasons, went to church and then went, it was raining -

MD: I didn’t get back to Bath ‘til four in the morning. We went to the Senator [Inn] and had a drink, and then we went to Howard Johnson’s and had breakfast, and then I went south to Bath -

JD: Breakfast, late, like 1:00 a.m. breakfast.

MD: Yeah, I went south to Bath, he went to Augusta, and then drove to Bangor. Well I woke up the next morning, went to eight o’clock Mass, and it was yucky out.

JD: Pouring, yeah.

MD: It was drizzly and gray, and I was just really convinced he wasn’t going to be going to Acadia. So I hemmed and I hawed, and finally decided, “Oh well, I’ll just hit the road and if he’s still going, we’ll go.”

JD: Yeah, so she shows up about eleven o’clock in the morning, and after I introduce her to my cats we head out for brunch at the Lucerne Inn, get the Sunday papers, read the papers, I’m thinking, “Wow, this is cool, it’s nice to have somebody who’s really into - ” my background was in journalism so newspapers meant a lot to me, so it was nice to see. Then we went to Acadia and it was raining, walked around, then we went to Jordan Pond House and ate dinner there, and by that point she did not want lobster, which I promised that this, we hadn’t even gone to the lobster place yet, so we just came back to Bangor. And the next day I sent, she was having, she had to go back home – you were having your tonsils out.

MD: I had to have my tonsils out.

MH: I’m amazed at the detail you remember.

JD: Oh, man, I know, we’re probably giving you too much.

MH: No, it’s fascinating.

(Speaking at once)

JD: And I had to give a speech in Calais, to the Calais High School, so when I left the high school I went to a local drug store and bought a postcard, an aerial view of Calais, and marked a little “X” on downtown Calais and wrote, “I am here,” and sent it to her and said, “May your tonsils rest in pieces.” No, that was the flowers.

MD: That was the flowers. He sent me flowers in the hospital for my tonsils, and, “May your tonsils rest in pieces,” was the note on his card.

JD: That’s right. I did send you a postcard from Calais.

MD: He did, he did. And that was the same week that the Bangor Baptist thing happened.

JD: Oh, yeah, Buddy Franklin.

MD: Yeah, because he called me every night and had to tell me all this excitement of everything happening.

MH: Oh, this was about the, since you mention it, why don’t you give a little synopsis of what -

JD: A very prominent pastor of a mega church in Bangor who had a very public ‘Jimmy Swaggart moment’ of disclosing an inappropriate relationship with a parishioner. So that was big news in Bangor, so being news junkies, we shared news.

MH: So how long was it after all this then that you married?

JD: A year. Yeah. September 13, 1986.

MH: Now I have to ask, I have to ask, do you have a copy of that May 5th picture?

MD: We do, somewhere.

JD: Somewhere, yeah.

MD: And what’s really interesting is, it didn’t come out very clearly, it’s kind of fuzzy. So we always thought that was just kind of funny, that that happened. But we do have a copy of that.

JD: Yeah, somewhere.

MD: I think it’s in that red -

MH: I think that, very few people, I would venture, actually have a picture of the -

MD: The moment they met.

MH: The moment that they met.

MD: And they probably didn’t meet in George Mitchell’s personal office either. Yeah, we do

have a copy; they sent that to us after.

JD: And I proposed to her with a press release. That was really -

MH: I see, and how did you do that? I mean, you just wrote a press release up and handed it to her?

JD: Yeah, and she said she'd get back to me on that, so.

MH: And so it goes.

JD: But I actually gave her the ring at Fenway Park, on April 21, 1986, so, but who's counting anyway.

MD: John's good with dates.

MH: So how many years have you been married?

JD: Twenty-three.

MH: And you have two children?

JD: Yes.

MH: And their names are?

MD: John LaRochelle Diamond, and he's eighteen, just started college at the University of Maine, and Sarah LaRochelle Diamond, who is sixteen and a junior at John Baptst.

MH: I had the high personal honor to help move your son in, I think, wasn't it?

JD: That's right, I saw you.

MH: On Maine Day, not too long ago.

JD: That's right, that's right.

MH: John, tell me about your kind of developing relationship with George Mitchell. You mentioned that you first ran into him in the gubernatorial campaign in 1974, but -

JD: Right, and didn't have any interaction with him until Muskie was named secretary of state and Brennan introduced George at a news conference at the State House. And at that point I was working in John Martin's office; they had rearranged the staffing for the majority offices and the speaker's office to have one chief of staff, that was me, and some part-time people who

worked during the session for the majority office.

So I didn't realize that the news conference was taking place that day. Actually, wait a minute, no, I did know that, I take that back. Yeah, because it had been well publicized. I went down to it and went afterwards, watched it and went through the receiving line and didn't think, you know, I just, I introduced myself to George and he said, "Oh, you're the county chair in Penobscot County, I need to talk to you." So I said, "Okay, great."

And not too long afterwards he called me, and I thought it was George Mitchell who worked for the Bureau of Indian Affairs, so I get this call in John Martin – well, in my office, but in John Martin's suite, and so I'm assuming it's related to my job as the chief of staff. So he says, "Hi John, it's George Mitchell, how are you?" And I said, "Fine George, how are you?" And we're talking, and then it hits me, that it's not George Mitchell of the Bureau of Indian Affairs. And I think at some point I mentioned it, and I was kind of embarrassed by it but he laughed, and he said he wanted to get together with me to talk about working on his 1982 campaign. And again, you know when this was, this was in 1980.

So we talked a little bit, and he knew I was running for the legislature at that time. And I don't remember at what point we agreed, but that it, during my first term in the legislature, so this would have been '81, I formally went to work for the campaign. And I think at the time I was, or actually for quite a while, I was the only official campaign person, and most of my interaction was with Larry Benoit and Charlie Jacobs and the Senator.

MH: Could you talk a little bit about your respective roles, what were the three of you doing in that early part of the campaign?

JD: Sure. Larry was working in Portland, running the field office, and was in charge of the whole field operation for the, on the Senate side, and Charlie was, I don't remember what Charlie's official role was, but he was my point of contact on scheduling issues and just about anything else. And my job was to develop a field organization, first statewide and eventually as the campaign stretched out it narrowed down more and more. But my, at the time it looked like Ken Curtis was going to run against George in the primary, and so I went to every town meeting, I mean every town committee meeting, every county committee meeting, and just started collecting names and talking about George and developing a massive Rolodex of names.

MH: Did you get a lot of assistance from the state Democratic office?

JD: Let's see, I'm trying to remember who was, I'm trying to remember who was the, it was after Steve Stycos. In fact, I had been recruited by Harold Pachios to be the executive director of the party, and that kind of fell through and that's why I ran for the legislature. So whoever took the -

MH: Steve Stycos, S-T-Y-C-O-S, is that right, Stycos?

JD: I think it was K-O-S [*sic*: Stycos].

MH: I haven't thought of that name in many years.

JD: I know.

MH: But now, I was thinking for the benefit of the transcriber, I was trying to figure out how it would be spelled.

JD: And I don't remember who came in, who actually took that position. But I, the party wasn't all that strong, the state -

MH: You were really developing your own list of names.

JD: Yeah, and a lot of them were people that I, were some of the party regulars, and other people were either names of people who were interested in Mitchell, but for the most part it was just going, I went through voting lists and started calling people, doing early, early canvassing.

MH: Was it difficult to be working for the Senator and also running your own campaign for the legislature?

JD: At that point, well at that point, when we first started doing all of that, it was post-1980, so in '81 that's all I was doing. And then in '82 it ended up that -

MH: You were unopposed.

JD: I ran unopposed, so, I mean I just threw myself into it. I – and because at the time I was twenty-five or so, I didn't know that you didn't operate this way. Because I can't imagine doing it anymore.

MD: I'm not sure you still know that, honey.

JD: Yeah, I know, but, and it was just, I worked out of my apartment and, I mean we didn't have a headquarters, and eventually Maggie Cox Murray, who had worked for me, no, that was, she worked, I had known her as a, when she was a student at the university, she was behind me at Maine, but certainly knew her father who was a state representative. I eventually, in the summer of '81 hired her to be more, something of a part-time administrative assistant. But I ran, we ran the whole operation out of my apartment until 1982, sometime in '82, then got a place in downtown Bangor.

MH: Where did you get, where was the storefront?

JD: Where Susan Collins' office is right now. It had been I think a clothing store -

MH: The one next to the Penobscot Theater.

JD: Yeah, just, you know, just down from there.

MH: Chiro's Clothing Store, I think it was.

JD: Yeah, I think you're right, yeah. So anyway, so, and as, during '81 – I think Ken had his heart attack in maybe early '82, but it was pretty hectic in late '81 because a lot of people were holding out to see whether Ken was going to run. And George, at the time, he didn't have the same public persona that people recognize now, he still -

MH: What was it?

JD: I always remember that when he was running for governor, he always wore the three-button Brooks Brother suits, and when he first was in the Senate he still had that judicial air about him and was very, seemed to be very serious in meetings. And we were setting up town meetings for him, not as a candidate but as a senator, during '81, to go just anywhere we could go, and of course he was trying to get to every high school he possibly could, that was part of his pledge.

But there was one time in particular that I remember seeing a completely different side of him, and it became the persona that I think we all know and love now. And this was, we were down in Belfast, and it was in the winter, early winter of '81, I think it was early February, and we had a fairly small turnout in the town office in Belfast, or it's actually City Hall down there. Maybe there were ten or twelve people there, but it was a little embarrassing. And George started off, and he had his suit on, and people were just asking really, most everybody there I think tended to be people who knew him, or were maybe party members but not necessarily active party members. And he took his jacket off, and it's the first time I remember seeing him at an event where he actually took his jacket off, neatly folded it, put over the back of a chair, and then he sat on the edge of a table and he started, he was very loose, he was smiling, he was funny. And I remember saying, "Whoa, where did this come from?" And I'm sure everybody who knew him on a more social basis would recognize that side of him, but I had never seen him so relaxed with a group as he was that night.

And it became part of the routine, where he would take his jacket off and be much more informal with people, and much less judicial in appearance. And I don't know what triggered it, but I remember seeing it that night. And I was driving – I can't remember where we went from there – but I just remember saying to him as politely as I could, you know, "That was the best ever." He would always ask, "Oh, you think so?" He'd always ask nice questions, but I just remember that profoundly. I've told you that story a million times.

MH: You started working for him in 1980, when those polls came out that showed, and I think he had a poll himself and then Emery had a poll that confirmed what I think the Mitchell group already knew, and that was, is that he was way behind.

JD: Yeah.

MH: Did you have some reservations about signing on during that period?

JD: No, I was always a big Muskie fan, although I was never part of the, you know –

MH: Hmm-hmm. Right.

JD: - the inner operation of the Muskie campaigns, but I just respected Muskie so much, and I really like what George Mitchell stood for. Nothing against Ken Curtis, but I just didn't see that he could, I mean I didn't think it was right to challenge somebody who had been blessed by Ed Muskie –

MH: Hmm-hmm, hmm-hmm.

JD: - and Joe Brennan for that position, I just saw it as being divisive for the party. And having gone through the 1980 primary season, that was the last thing I thought the party needed. So I didn't, I didn't have any problem with that. But a lot of people did, early on in '81.

MH: Can you think of other memorable events during that first campaign?

JD: I remember, yeah, a couple of things stand out. I remember, this was in '81, it was on George's birthday, I think it was his fiftieth birthday, would that be right? Because I remember there was a cake there.

MH: He was born in 1933, on August the 25.

JD: Then it wasn't his fiftieth birthday; it must have been his forty-eighth. Yeah, it was August, though. We were down in Wells, I think, and we had a meeting, it was - David Johnson, Larry -

MH: Larry Benoit.

JD: Yeah, Larry Benoit, I'm pretty sure Charlie Jacobs was there – oh-oh-oh I can't remember who else, but Pat Cadell was there, I remember, because I talked baseball with him a lot, he's a baseball junkie too, and George. And there was one other person there, a woman, and I can't place her name but she was I think a consultant.

MH: Right.

JD: And it was talking about how do we structure the message of the campaign, and the campaign organization. My role was not there to be, to give great advice, it was to listen and learn, give my advice on what I had done so far on the organizing side of things. But to figure,

you know, just, I was a secondary player but I had the good fortune to be there.

And I remember Pat Cadell talking about how, “This nuclear freeze thing is a hot issue.” That and the environment were going to be big issues in the eighties. And I remember being intrigued with the idea and kind of impressed, but I always remember that because that became such a core part of George’s message after that, developing the, you know, the public persona as a champion of the environment.

MH: Was this largely a meeting where Cadell gave polling information, or analysis of a poll, or?

JD: Yeah, yeah.

MH: Okay, and then -

JD: It was very informal; everybody was in shorts and t-shirts and were sitting on some, in the deck or something. I remember I was very embarrassed because I sat down in a director’s type chair, and as soon as I sat down it ripped out, went right through. I said, “Okay, here’s the new kid who’s trying to play with the, is present with the big players and falls through the chair.” I mean I weighed the same then as I weigh now, so. But, and it was for two days, and we, and it was just basically laying the groundwork for what was going to take place for hopefully the next year and a half.

MH: Did you follow the plan that was laid out then?

JD: Well, as best as I can remember. I know on the field side, one of the things I did, I worked with Larry on developing what is standard operating procedure now, but a canvassing system where we’d get volunteers to call in every community to find out what issues were on voters’ minds, and we identified fifteen or so white papers that – and they evolved after as a result of these calls – where we would follow up with a letter from the Senator – no, actually, signed by the campaign, by whoever the volunteer was – that said, “Thanks for taking the time to talk with me about Senator Mitchell, here’s a white paper that Senator, or a position paper that Senator Mitchell has done on this topic.” And it was very labor intensive, but we sent those out to everybody we called, whatever the issues were, so everybody got at least one of these.

MH: Did you end up driving him to many places, were you his driver, or did you have other people who did that?

JD: For the most part, early on I drove, during, but I would say once, the summer of, early summer of ‘82, I wasn’t driving at all. In fact, at that point we hired Mary McAleney to run the Lewiston office and I was, I’d gone from doing statewide activity to usually the, I think I ended up with nine counties, and then that, by September I was down to -

MH: 2nd Congressional District, probably?

JD: Yes, and then by September we had people in every county, Dolly Harding up in Aroostook, so, and I was the point of contact for most of the people in the 2nd District at that point.

MH: John, did you play a fund-raising role?

JD: Did not.

MH: How was that handled, who did that?

JD: I can't remember. There were some fund raisers that I coordinated, but I don't, not on a statewide, I remember Scott Hutchinson of course was involved.

MH: So you didn't, it was mainly the finance committee, then.

JD: Yeah, yeah. But -

MH: When did you, did you get a sense that you were improving on those bad poll numbers?

JD: And I can tell you the day.

MH: I figured that might be the case.

JD: July 4, 1982. One of the things, we had this headquarters down there and I believe, this was where we were making all the, on the third floor, we had a paint shop where we were making all of the two-by-eight foot signs for the campaign, statewide, they were all being generated and we had people who did nothing but paint all day. I'm sure OSHA, if they had known, if we had realized it – but we had quite an operation there.

And one of the things we decided to do for the Fourth of July parade in Bangor, which is a pretty big one, is pass out balloons that had Mitchell's name on it, and we had five thousand balloons made up, and we got a helium tank and did the usual thing and passed them out along the way.

And I, because I was in the legislature I was also in the parade, so I went to the Brewer side and got in the parade with the Democrats. George wasn't walking with the rest of them, he had his own float. And I remember coming into, going down Wilson Street in Bangor and then coming into Main Street and seeing this sea of Mitchell balloons that was just so impressive, it was great.

I pulled out of the parade by the headquarters, just so I could watch what was going on, because George was coming behind us, somewhere up along, and as soon as – we didn't even know it was George, but you could hear this wave of applause coming, and as he, as soon as he starts coming down the hill, everybody is applauding for him. Not your typical greetings for a politician, but almost like a welcoming hero, and I was really impressed. And then here comes

Dave Emery – nothing, nothing for Dave Emery. I mean, a smattering of applause.

But we all gathered after the parade, in the campaign office, and we were just flying, saying, “Oh my God, did you hear that response?” It was just overwhelming. And -

MH: For a guy from Portland.

JD: Yeah, yeah. But it just seemed like everything that he had been doing and everybody else had been doing was all coming into place, and I just remember that so vividly. And then Mary McAleney, there was some event coming up in Lewiston and Mary calling, saying, “Hey, can we get some of those balloons?” you know, it was just, and she experienced a similar thing, I remember. I don’t know what the event was, it was Franco American Days or what, but it just seemed like everything was going so smoothly at that point.

MH: You spent the night of the election where?

JD: In Bangor until eight o’clock. I think, well, and then we stayed, I stayed in Bangor just because we had a big event going here over at the Ramada Inn, and we ended up taking lots of seats. At the time I was the only, Eddie Kelleher and I were the only House members from Bangor, most of the area delegation was Republican, and we ended up taking almost every seat. People who we didn’t, who were names on a ballot, were winning for us.

Larry called me at ab-, we were all really nervous, and he called me about seven-thirty, and he said, “How’s it going?” I said, “Oh boy, you know, turnout’s so heavy, but we don’t know what that means.” He said, “At eight o’clock CBS is going to call it for Mitchell.” And I said, “Oh my God.” He said, “Don’t say anything,” after that, “don’t worry.” So that half hour was just, you know, just so amazing. And then of course we had a great celebration that night.

And then George came, a couple weeks later we had a ‘thank you’ party for all the volunteers at the Ramada Inn. I’ve got pictures of that from somewhere, but huge, huge turnout, and it really was the resurgence I think of the Democratic Party in this area at that point, because the party stayed really strong through the ‘80s in this area, and it was all built around Mitchell as the party’s standard bearer, so it was pretty exciting.

MH: What was your role after the election in 1982?

JD: In terms of, for?

MH: For the Senator.

JD: I didn’t have any formal role, I mean he was nice to stay in touch but I became, right after that I became majority whip and then majority leader. Then in ‘88, when he was running again, we had already decided, we’d decided after we, or before we got married, that I wouldn’t be running again in ‘88. Didn’t say anything to anybody, but we both wanted to get into

teaching, so after – I don't want to take, this is a nice segue for Marcia, but you were planning to hang on with Mitchell initially, through the '88 campaign, because we all thought that Olympia was going to run. And then when she said she wasn't, you went to Mitchell and basically asked to do something different.

MD: I did. At the same time we also, you know, at that point John and I had gotten – married? Were we married at that point?

JD: We were.

MD: We were. And we were traveling to Augusta from Bangor every day, which was a long ride, just terrible. And I had fallen in the parking lot at the federal building in Augusta, on my tail bone, and I just couldn't handle the ride any more, it was just killing me. So that, combined with getting married and deciding really the time was right, because clearly we didn't have the same need politically, Mitchell, you know, was going to be fine, didn't need the in-state press presence that we thought he needed before.

MH: Hmm-hmm, hmm-hmm.

MD: So that's when I started looking for some teaching jobs in the area, and that's when John started at the University of Maine -

JD: It actually, yeah, had already started.

MH: Now, were you teaching first, at Orono?

JD: I was working on my master's, and I was a teaching assistant. Actually, I was an instructor, because I didn't teach –

MH: In which department?

JD: The journalism, no, excuse me, speech communication department, which is now communication and journalism.

MH: Brooks campus. And your first, Marcia, your first teaching assignment in this area?

MD: Was in East Corinth, I taught sixth grade math, I took over in January for a teacher who was moving, and so I did that, and then -

MH: That was in '88, because when I returned from Africa back to Maine, you were involved with Odyssey of the Mind at that point -

MD: I was, I was.

MH: But I think in, must have been ninety-, fairly soon, in '93-'94?

MD: Oh, definitely, I did it for several years; I'm the state director -

MH: Could you explain a little bit about what that is?

MD: Sure, and I got involved just through my teaching in East Corinth. It's a, it was a state problem-solving competition, and teams organized groups of five to seven students, and they had to solve a problem, and they had to pick one of, at the time I think it was five different problems they could choose, produced by a national organization. And the teams had to solve the problem themselves and create a skit around the problem. For example, one of the common ones was the balsa wood problem, where they had to create a structure out of balsa wood and glue only, and it had to meet certain specifications, and then hold a certain amount of weight. So students had to set it down and then pile free weights on top of it and got points for how much weight it held, that would be one example of the kind of problem. And then they developed a skit around it, so there was a creative element to it.

And then in addition to that, they had another aspect of the competition called the spontaneous problem solving, where they would go into a room and get hit with a problem right then and there that they had to solve in about five minutes. So it was a really, really good program -

MH: Kind of like politics.

MD: Yeah, like politics: think quickly and solve a problem and do it creatively.

JD: And don't take 'no' for an answer.

MD: That's right. So I just got involved, and I can't even remember how, probably coaching a local team, which then led to running a regional competition and then the state level competition, which we then were able to hold at the University of Maine, and it was a great program, great for kids.

MH: Briefly I, when I returned from Africa I had a son, my youngest son was in second grade, and he got into this and his team did fairly well, and we ended up at the university, and you walked up to the podium and introduced yourself and I said to my wife, I said, "I know her!" But then I heard the last name, and, you know, I realized that I had, I had to really figure out how this all happened.

MD: Right, right.

MH: Because I didn't, you know, I didn't know the two of you together.

MD: Right.

MH: I knew the two of you separately, but then, but it was fun. And my son really enjoyed that activity.

Okay, so why don't you tell me a little bit, Marcia, about what you've been doing since your starting in East Corinth teaching and doing Odyssey of the Mind, and what, kind of bring us up to date, to the present.

MD: Sure. Well, I worked in East Corinth for six-and-a-half years teaching, and then decided, at that point we had Johnny and Sarah, and Sarah was a baby, her childcare provider decided she was going to go do something else, and so in a moment of panic I came home and said to John, "I think I'm just going to stay home." And he said, "That's a wonderful idea." And I said, "No-no, you're the voice of reason, you're supposed to say, 'Oh no, honey, you know, that's fine, we'll find someone else.'"

And as it turned out, I stayed home for a couple of years, but in 1988 we had gone to the Democratic National Convention together, in Atlanta, and we had a really hard time finding a sweatshirt to bring home. We wanted one sweatshirt, we were going to share it, and there was nothing clever, creative, or anything.

So John said at the time, let's come up with an idea, something *we* could put on a sweatshirt that would pay our way to national conventions. So he did, he came up with the idea of trademarking the 'Electoral College,' and then that we would design a line of sportswear that imitated collegiate sportswear, t-shirts, sweatshirts and hats. So that was all in '88, real clever, real cute.

So of course now I'm home and taking care of two children, so this was the time that he decided we needed to get this business off the ground. So that's what I did, working from home. Johnny was now in school, or at least in pre-school, so I did that from home for several years and we got things off the ground.

MH: Did that take a lot of your time?

MD: Yeah.

JD: So much for being a stay-at-home mom.

MD: Far more than I ever intended.

MH: How many different pieces of sportswear did you have?

MD: Well at that point, it was all designing, you know, we hired a graphic designer, we had to do everything from a business plan, I mean there were a lot of elements of it, hiring a national company from, we ended up with someone in Omaha that would take orders online, getting screen printers that could be ready to produce quantities. And again, this was all around '94, as I recall.

JD: Yep.

MD: So it was slow, we did some big national advertising in some campaigns and elections magazines and some other of the big magazines, spent a lot of money on advertising. Kind of got things off the ground, but didn't really do a whole lot with it.

A little while later, about four years later, I decided to go back into teaching, and at that point I took a job at St. Mary's Catholic School in Bangor, which is where both of our kids went to school at the time. And progressed through, went back to get my master's in education, became assistant principal, and that year, I think it was the year 2000, of course, which was the Gore-Bush election, when the Electoral College suddenly became something people were talking about. So that was the craziest year probably of our entire lives, or at least the craziest three or four months -

JD: The business took off.

MD: Because the business took off. There was a small blurb I think in the *Portland Press Herald*, AP picked it up, and it went nationwide.

JD: CNN.

MD: And within days we had installed eight phone lines in our house, and we had, you know, huge orders that we were placing with our manufacturer, we had credit cards being processed in our son's bedroom, and orders being filled in our daughter's, and they love to tell the story about all these people who suddenly lived in our home day in and day out.

JD: Well we, I'm sorry to interrupt, but related to that, because there's a Mitchell connection here. We got called by NBC to come on, down to New York and do the *Today Show*, so Katie Couric interviewed us on the show, and while we were waiting, there was a delay because of a, one of the court decisions was taking place or some court activity -

MD: In Florida.

JD: She starts talking about George Mitchell, so, "I know George," she mentioned that he had introduced her to somebody once and, you know, and anyway, so we had a very nice pleasant conversation, similar to this one, about how we knew George Mitchell and how, what a great guy he was and all of that with Katie. But yeah that was -

MH: She didn't bring it up on the air, did she?

JD: She mentioned George, because you can still see the piece on the Web, it was a five-minute interview with us down there. But she said, "So Marcia, you worked for Senator George Mitchell, the majority leader."

MH: So does the company still exist?

MD: It does, it does.

MH: Under your direction?

MD: I'm the president, yes.

MH: And is it still thriving?

MD: It's not thriving to the level that it did in 2000.

MH: Right, right.

MD: As I say, that was crazy, but it's been fairly cyclical, presidential election years are bigger, and we're hoping for a big year this year so we're gearing up again.

MH: When I heard on Saturday that candidate John McCain had closed up his Michigan operation and was, sent part of his Michigan staff, of all places, to Maine.

MD: For our one 2nd District electoral vote.

MH: I immediately thought of you folks.

JD: Well thank you. Please do, please do.

MH: It was very, it seemed very strange, but I thought maybe I'll see more of their t-shirts.

JC: Well, we've got new ones out now.

MD: We have, yeah, some new designs.

JD: Class of 1960, for the Kennedy year, and class of '80 for the Reagan year, so anyway, but -

MH: So you're small business owners as well as -

MD: As well, right. And then even after that happened, that's when I got my job as principal of All Saints, which is All Saints Catholic School, which is -

MH: That began in when?

MD: I became principal in two-thousand-?

JD: Two, wasn't it?

MD: Two [i.e. 2002], and that continues today.

MH: Why don't you update us, John, from, you said from going to work for the, well actually, getting your master's degree at the university in Orono, and kind of explain the process.

JD: Sure. Right after I finished my master's, the, I went to work for Maine Public Broadcasting on a contractual basis doing a couple programs, one called *MaineWatch*. I was on that for the first three years that it existed, and then one of my own called "Inside Augusta With John Diamond" which was a series of half-hour documentaries on how the political process works as viewed through case studies. So the program dealt with how lobbyists work, one on grassroots organizing to promote smokers' rights, a variety of shows, and did that for, I did ten half-hour programs for that program. Then it was in the early nineties, when the budget, the state budget crisis began of the '90s, and funding for that was cut.

I was teaching full time, though, during that. I was, started in 1989 teaching in the journalism department, covering for somebody who went on sabbatical, he ended up not coming back so they hired me in a non-tenured track full time position. Then in 1992, the summer of '92, Fred Hutchinson became president of the university, actually in the late, April 1, 198-, 1992, and that summer he asked me if I would be his, I was working on my Ph.D. and he asked me if I would be director of public affairs. I said no because I wanted to finish my doctorate, agreed to do it for six months, and I unfortunately never finished my doctorate. I ended up staying in that position for ten years, then have been at the university system for six years. That brings me to where we are today.

MH: Have – what's been your connections with former Mitchell staff people? Do you see any of them on a regular basis?

MD: Nobody on a regular basis. Of course I've seen the Cory girls periodically over the years, but not nearly close enough contact that I'd like to have. In fact, the year we went to, it was an Odyssey of the Mind World Finals in Baltimore, we visited with them and had some time with them.

MH: It was before or after Gayle died?

MD: That would have been after Gayle died. And then actually a cousin of the girls also died in Bath, and Carole came up for the funeral so I had a chance again to connect with her several years later. Who else have we kept in touch with? Mary McAleney, we see or talk with her, periodically again, not often enough with anyone.

MH: Hmm-hmm. I'm very hopeful that I'll be able to interview Regina, who I believe is back in Washington now.

MD: From where, where did she go?

MH: Well she lived in Texas, and I believe she's back in D.C. working for one of the agencies, or a lobbying firm, and I hope to interview her.

MD: Hmm-hmm.

JD: I'm thinking, the one Mitchell connection that we, which we maintain, is a very close connection, the Kilroys.

MD: Oh, of course.

JD: In 1980 or '81, I think it was '81, MacDonald, not Clyde, Angus and, she was Clyde MacDonald's secretary, Ida McDonald -

MD: Ida, that's right.

JD: Called me and said, "Senator Mitchell has a cousin who's just moved here to the area, was originally from Maine, his grandmother was Jane Callen, the former state senator, and thought that he's about your age, maybe you can get to know them, and he probably will want to help on the Mitchell campaign." Well it was Brian Kilroy and his wife Barbara, we became very good friends with them, I was friends with them and then when Marcia and I started dating we both were -

MH: Worked for a labor union, or for the teachers' union.

JD: He does that now.

MH: And he lived in Hamden, I knew -

JD: Yeah, right.

MH: I didn't realize that, I knew he went to my church, I didn't realize that he was related to the Senator.

JD: Yeah, he is. His, the old Kilroy-Mitchell connection. So anyway, we became very good friends, and when their first was born Marcia and I -

MD: Callen.

JD: Callen, named after Jane Callen, okay, we became her godparents, and they are godparents of our daughter Sarah. So that's probably the closest Mitchell connection from the Mitchell days for either one of us.

MH: And John, would you describe a little bit what your job is right now for the system?

JD: Executive director of external affairs, which involves primarily media relations, some government relations, and publications, marketing, advocacy with, basically we're developing a grass roots organization to promote higher ed in Maine, and those are really my primary duties. I work for the chancellor of the system.

MH: And Marcia, you're the principal you say of -

MD: Principal of All Saints Catholic School.

MH: And All Saints is successor school to?

MD: St. John's Catholic School and St. Mary's Catholic School, which merged in the year 2000.

MH: And your student population is?

MD: About 270 right now, pre-K through grade 8.

MH: I see. How many faculty do you have?

MD: Teachers, I have twenty-three, total staff is forty-five, because we also have a full-time child care program that runs full year as well.

MH: Thank you, this has been very good. I – we do ask, I ask a question, is there a question you wish I'd asked that you had an answer ready for me on?

MD: I have two good stories that I was thinking of.

MH: Okay, well please, that's exactly what I want -

MD: One was appropriate, the other one may not be but I have to share it because it's just too funny. The first one is, and I was thinking this with Gayle Cory, and one of the best lessons I learned from Gayle Cory. It would have been the summer probably of '85, Gayle asked me to call one of the hotels in Portland to set up a press conference for Mitchell. I did that, and she gave me the name of the person to call, and the person said, "I'm so sorry, we don't do those kinds of things for politicians any more" – who would have been the year before? Was it- Gary Hart I think had had several events at the hotel and had never paid his bill, and so they were not going to book any more events for politicians.

So I hung up and went back to Gayle and said, "This is the story." And she said, "Marcia, one of the first things I want you to learn is that you never take 'no' for an answer." So she got on the phone, she made a phone call, and she gave me the name of somebody to call. I went back in, I called the person, they were extremely apologetic that I had ever been told no in the first place,

took care of all of those arrangements, and I went back to Gayle after and she said, “Again, don’t ever take ‘no’ for an answer.” And that was one of those things that I’ve never forgotten. And so often, when I get something done now, people will say to me, “How did you do that?” I say, “You just don’t take ‘no’ for an answer.” And it’s so true, it just -

JD: Believe me.

MD: My husband knows best.

JD: Yeah.

MD: So I just, it was a defining moment for me in terms of asserting myself, I guess, but also understanding that that’s just not an acceptable way to do business. So, that was one of my stories.

But the other one is one of the funniest stories, I thought, from my Mitchell career. When I first started driving Mitchell, it was probably the first overnight trip that I had to take him on, and my job was to meet them in Lewiston and then I had to take him to Farmington and he had to speak the next day, I think at the hospital, or maybe a Rotary Club or something.

Well, no one had ever told me that one of my jobs was to get his luggage from the previous driver. So of course I pick him up in Lewiston, we go to Farmington, and he says, “You did get my luggage from the other car?” And I said, “No, I had no idea I was supposed to.” And he said, “Well,” he said, “it’s too late to drive back to Portland tonight, what I need you to do is this...” So he gives me a list of the things that I need to go to the local WalMart and buy, and they included shaving cream, a razor, he said he could wear his suit and his shirt but I needed to get underwear and t-shirts, which, again, a little embarrassing. I was fairly young, but I knew I could do it.

So I go off to WalMart. Well the only underwear I can find in WalMart are purple and orange polka dots. And I -

JD: It wasn’t WalMart, was it?

MD: I think it was, at the time. And it was such a dilemma, because I thought, “I *cannot* show up at the hotel with this as my only option.” And so they called the Jay WalMart, and of course Jay was quite a few miles away, and they did have white boxers there, but I couldn’t decide. So I drove through downtown, because I’d gone to school in Farmington, I knew there was a men’s clothing store there, so I could see some people in the back, they were doing some inventory or something. So I’m banging on the door outside this little place, dark at night, and finally they come and answer the door and I said, “You’ll never really believe this story, but I don’t care if you do, I just need some white boxers for George Mitchell.” And they said, “You know, who would come and make up that story?” And so they sold me what I needed and I was able to deliver them. I don’t know if I ever told him that story, it was one of the funniest things that I’ve

ever had to do.

MH: This may be a good way to end this today.

JD: Yeah.

MD: Well as you say, then you can cut it off the end if you think it's not appropriate.

MH: Thank you very much, there's no way we could do better than that.

JD: Oh, no way, that's a classic.

MH: Well thank you both very, very much, this has been great.

End of Interview