

1 STATE OF ILLINOIS)

2) SS

3 COUNTY OF C O O K)

4 IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF COOK COUNTY, ILLINOIS
5 COUNTY DEPARTMENT - CHANCERY DIVISION

6

7 REPORT OF HISTORY OF THE EARLY YEARS OF
8 the Honorable DAVID CERDA on Friday, the 14th day
9 of January 2005.

10

11 ALSO PRESENT:

12 HON. JAMES F. HENRY

13 HON. MARK LOPEZ

14 MS. KARINA AYALLA-BERMEJO

15 MS. VIRGINA MARTINEZ

16 MS. THERESA CHRISTENSON

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23 Joyce Ledger, 084-001292
24 Official Court Reporter
69 W. Washington, 9th Floor
Chicago, Il. 60602

1 JUDGE HENRY: I want everybody to give their
2 affiliation, so when we look back we will know what
3 interest they were representing.

4 MS. AYALLA-BERMEJO: Karina Ayalla-Bermejo,
5 immediate past president of the Hispanic Lawyers
6 Association of Illinois and representing Chicago
7 Bar Association.

8 MS. MYER: Katherine Myer. I am a Chicago Bar
9 Association intern.

10 THE COURT: And where do you go to school?

11 MS. MYER: I am actually out of school.

12 THE COURT: Where did you go to school?

13 MS. MYER: Yale.

14 JUDGE HENRY: What was your major?

15 MS. MYER: Minor.

16 JUDGE HENRY: What was your minor.

17 MS. MYER: History.

18 JUDGE HENRY: That's why you are here.

19 Judge Lopez.

20 JUDGE LOPEZ: I am a friend of the community
21 and the son of Honoratus Lopez, one of the first
22 Latino lawyers in Illinois.

23 MS. MARTINEZ: I'm Virginia Martinez.

24 I have known Judge Cerda since I was about

1 19. I was a college student employee of Honoratus
2 Lopez and got to meet the six, the six Hispanic
3 attorneys there were at that point through that
4 office so I have known Justice Cerda since then.

5 MS. CHRISTENSON: Theresa Christenson. I am at
6 a program at UIC found bought this project through
7 my advisor contacted by Miss Martinez and
8 interested in this topic and I am working on it for
9 a seminar paper.

10 JUDGE HENRY: That's terrific.

11 Any other involvement you want us to add?
12 We are just amateurs ourselves.

13 There's four or five of us. We have a
14 professor from Loyola.

15 There is a law student at Kent who has
16 been wonderful and very helpful and four or five of
17 us have just been pushing this forward, so any
18 involvement that anybody wants in this, you are
19 welcome.

20 MS. MARTINEZ: I do work at the University of
21 Illinois and through Public Health program related.

22 I am an attorney, totally unrelated, but
23 we do have access to some resources there and I
24 believe that several judges have donated their

1 personal papers to the library there.

2 So there's an interest on behalf of the
3 University of it becoming a depository as well
4 as any personal effects or papers that any
5 individual judges and attorneys would like to put
6 with them.

7 MS. AYALA-BERMEJO: Side note, Judge Henry, I
8 wanted to add that Viola Rouse will be coming as
9 the interview may be started, but Virginia Martinez
10 and Viola Rouse are both the first Latina licensed
11 Illinois attorneys.

12 We are working together on a project that
13 would memorialize all the contributions of Latina
14 attorneys and judges in Illinois, so that's also
15 very much interested and couldn't think of a better
16 person to start with than Justice Cerda.

17 JUDGE HENRY: I am very happy to hear this
18 because I think it really gives young people who
19 may not view the law as a career, not just talking
20 about the Latina community, but anybody in the
21 community just wondering how does somebody get
22 from playing on the playground at the age of five
23 and maybe not coming from a background like my own,
24 where there were not a lot of resources for

1 education, but my parents were immigrants to the
2 country, kept pushing me forward with education.

3 I had some people that I met along the way
4 that I took great pride in knowing and just knowing
5 that this was a possibility to me, allowed me to do
6 it.

7 So anything that can be done to explain
8 this history and promote it in the city for all the
9 kids here, I think it's terrific and the judges
10 that are on the bench today came up through that
11 same social process that we all have. So that's
12 exciting.

13 You feel like you are being cross
14 examined.

15 JUSTICE CERDA: What a background of all the
16 people here.

17 I think it's terrific; all of them.

18 JUDGE HENRY: You know I think when we did, we
19 started with Justice Reid.

20 JUSTICE CERDA: Ellis Reid.

21 JUDGE HENRY: Ellis Reid. We were doing his
22 interview and John Steele who is the current
23 president of the Illinois Judges' Association was
24 here.

1 JUSTICE CERDA: Oh, yes.

2 JUDGE HENRY: And Larry Rogers, Jr., who was,
3 he was at the time the incoming president, was
4 scheduled to be here, couldn't be here at the first
5 interview because he was involved in a political
6 campaign and some other private legalwork that he
7 was doing, but I think it's a credit to you that
8 you have got such a high level group of interested
9 people to show up.

10 So I appreciate them being here and I
11 really appreciate you agreeing to do this because
12 it's -- I am fulfilling my own personal interest in
13 learning as much as I can about the history of all
14 of us that have served as judges and to have other
15 people share that interest is terrific.

16 Judge, the other thing is that before any
17 -- these transcripts will become public at some
18 time, you have the right --

19 JUSTICE CERDA: I won't reveal any crimes.

20 JUDGE HENRY: And at least none that the
21 statute of limitations hasn't run, but I want you
22 to know that before they be put into any public
23 form, you have the right to read them, look over
24 them, after you have given your interview,

1 something that you feel would be inappropriate,
2 something that you wouldn't want to --

3 JUSTICE CERDA: Or I could add something.

4 JUDGE HENRY: Or you could add something.

5 JUSTICE CERDA: That's probably what would
6 happen.

7 JUDGE HENRY: I just want you to know that
8 that's your call.

9 This is meant to be a pleasant thing, not
10 meant in any other way.

11 Judge, could you tell me your date of
12 birth and where you were born?

13 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes, I was born June 17, 1927,
14 on Robey Street, R-o-b-e-y, and Roosevelt, Robey,
15 the name was later changed to Damen Avenue.

16 So now it's known as Damen Avenue and the
17 building no longer exists.

18 JUDGE HENRY: I see, and tell me something
19 about your parents.

20 Were your mom and dad born in Chicago?

21 JUSTICE CERDA: No, they were born in Mexico.

22 JUDGE HENRY: Okay. What was your dad's name?

23 JUSTICE CERDA: Jesus Cerda.

24 JUDGE HENRY: Okay, and he was born -- do you

1 know where in Mexico?

2 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes, he was born in, let me
3 spell it, A-n-g-a-m-a-c-u-t-i-r-o, and it's the
4 state of Michoacan, M-i-c-h-o-a-c-a-n.

5 JUDGE HENRY: Okay, and how about your mom?

6 JUSTICE CERDA: She was born in,
7 S-a-l-v-a-t-i-e-r-r-a, and that's in Guanajo,
8 G-u-a-n-a-j, I am getting lost here,
9 G-u-a-n-a-j-u-a-n-o.

10 JUDGE HENRY: Okay, what was your mom's name?

11 JUSTICE CERDA: Conception, Conception,
12 Aguilera, A-g-u-i-l-e-r-a.

13 JUDGE HENRY: Did your mom and dad meet in
14 Chicago or did they meet in --

15 JUSTICE CERDA: They met here in Chicago, but
16 it's interesting how they got to Chicago because it
17 was -- it's all due to the Mexican revolution and
18 at that time-- the revolution started in 1910 and
19 at that time the, I think, it was some, the
20 revolution was going on and the -- as they do in
21 many, many wars, they would, they came into that
22 town and they took the oldest boys, and let me
23 think.

24 I won't go into it. My father was a

1 laborer, a railroad laborer when he came to Chicago
2 and now he worked and with his brothers repairing
3 railroad tracks to get away from the war and they
4 would be living in these railroad cars and they
5 would make their food and then sleep in the
6 railroad cars and they would come around and then
7 they would cross the border back into Mexico, but
8 that started in 1915 when they started to cross the
9 border and the one year the railroad tracks ended
10 in Chicago and they got jobs here in Chicago, he
11 and his brothers.

12 The men, the men came. The women stayed
13 behind and I guess he arrived around 1922 in
14 Chicago, in 1922.

15 My mother came from under the same -- due
16 to the war and her whole family came to, they came
17 directly to Chicago, 1917.

18 This was 1917 and they came into the area,
19 I want to say around Taylor Street, Polk Street,
20 around there, not too far from Halsted in that
21 area.

22 MS. ROUSE: Pardon me. I am sorry I am late.

23 JUSTICE CERDA: Viola Rouse.

24 MS. ROUSE: Yes.

1 (Discussion off the record.)

2 JUSTICE CERDA: And I guess her -- my mother's
3 older brother got some jobs. I don't know.

4 He was really the support for the family
5 because my grandfather and his brother went to the
6 Detroit area.

7 This was during World War 1 where they
8 were, you know, mechanics in Mexico, and they went
9 to work making, producing war material during World
10 War 1 and -- but I don't know, my grandfather and
11 his brother returned to Mexico and my grandmother
12 did not.

13 She stayed here I guess there was some
14 expectation there would be a reunion, but there
15 never was a reunion.

16 So the family stayed here and my
17 grandfather and his brother went back to Mexico.

18 At that time they were I guess, I don't
19 want to say what state they went back to first. I
20 know where they ended up, ultimately they ended up,
21 late, ultimately in Morelia, M-o-r-e-l-i-a --
22 I think I also spelled that out, Michoacan, because
23 I saw the both of them in 1944.

24 That's where I saw them they were still

1 living at that time.

2 So I know the oldest brother, I know he
3 got -- Manuel, Manuel I guess he was working,
4 painting, all sorts of jobs, automobile painting
5 and all sort of jobs to support the family and I
6 know that my uncle Joe who right now is 95 years
7 old he started working for in the newspapers, you
8 know, pressman or carrying papers.

9 JUDGE HENRY: Is that in Chicago?

10 JUSTICE CERDA: In Chicago, in the Chicago
11 area. That's where he started and I know that my
12 father had very little education, I don't know
13 maybe two or three years of education and my mother
14 I know she started grammar school here when she was
15 here.

16 When she arrived she was about 13 years of
17 age, but I know she just dropped out of grammar
18 school, so she dropped out.

19 JUDGE HENRY: Okay, how did your mom and dad
20 meet in Chicago?

21 JUSTICE CERDA: At that time, I even have a
22 photograph of them when they were dating, you know.

23 They were in a group. They were not
24 sitting together. My uncle was there.

1 He was the chaperone and it's that the
2 entire community then was a small community and
3 they really helped each other.

4 I know that when people would come from,
5 Juanopa, from El Jaral, J-a-r-a-l, they would come
6 and my grandmother would put them up. They would
7 sleep on the floor. That's what I was told.

8 I was too young to remember. They would
9 help them get oriented or find a job. They would
10 move out.

11 I don't know, they would stay a few days,
12 a week or something like that, but they did help
13 them to -- and they really helped each other a lot,
14 that community.

15 They, I know that I went to picnics. I
16 know we went on trucks, open-ended trucks, loaded
17 up, filled to capacity, out to the woods for
18 picnics because I seen some big pictures, pictures
19 of large groups of people, but I do remember I
20 think the trucks, and they got together.

21 I know that my father used to play the
22 guitar and I think there was a trio.

23 They were singing in the first Mexican
24 patriotic celebrations that they had there in

1 Chicago.

2 At that time at the beginning there were I
3 know parades, just a sort of a celebration.

4 JUDGE HENRY: When you say there was a small
5 community at the time, when your mom and dad met?

6 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes, that's how they go to
7 meet.

8 JUDGE HENRY: Through the social network?

9 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes.

10 JUDGE HENRY: When you say there was a small
11 community at the time could you estimate the number
12 and would they have been located in one particular
13 area of the city?

14 JUSTICE CERDA: I always thought that the west
15 side where I was from was the oldest community, but
16 it wasn't.

17 The oldest community was in South
18 Chicago. That's the one. That's the oldest
19 Chicago.

20 MS. AYALA-BERMEJO: That's where I am from, is
21 the oldest patriotic club first to have Mexican
22 parades in the city, over 150 years old.

23 MS. ROUSE: Really.

24 JUDGE HENRY: You are talking --

1 MS. AYALA-BERMEJO: The parade there, talking
2 60 years of parades.

3 JUDGE HENRY: Just as an aside, when I, I used
4 to work as a janitor at Little Company of Mary
5 Hospital in Evergreen Park and there were a lot of
6 Hispanics from the southeast side who were working
7 at Little Company of Mary, had been working there
8 since the hospital was founded because there were
9 two elders in the community, not by way of age, but
10 by way of respect and contact and there was a free
11 flow of jobs available and I worked there a couple
12 of summers and met a lot of wonderful people who
13 came up and they were all from the southeast side
14 which is why I remember that which was not that far
15 from Little Company at the time.

16 Now I know at this age when you were young
17 and there were kids coming up or people coming from
18 Mexico were you aware as a young child that there
19 was any difficulty in obtaining employment?

20 Do you have a recollection of the city
21 when you were young that it was a vibrant place,
22 that there was jobs discrimination?

23 JUSTICE CERDA: Oh, there was a lot of
24 discrimination.

1 JUDGE HENRY: So what type of industries or who
2 was employing the immigrants?

3 JUSTICE CERDA: I know the meat packers were
4 employing people.

5 My father got a job I think around 1926,
6 1925 with the Crane Plumbing Company.

7 So they would go into -- they didn't
8 require much skills, you know, as a laborer for the
9 vast, the vast majority.

10 I know they went into the steel mills.
11 They went into the railroads and they went into the
12 meat packing places.

13 Those were the three principal places of
14 employment at that time.

15 JUDGE HENRY: Did they feel that these jobs --
16 were they well compensated for their work? Did this
17 provide a --

18 JUSTICE CERDA: They didn't complain so much
19 about the, you know, the little money that they
20 were making.

21 I didn't hear them complain too much about
22 that. The fact that they were working and most of
23 them were working, most of them were working most
24 of them had jobs, somehow they found jobs.

1 JUDGE HENRY: Did money get sent back to Mexico
2 to help the family that was left behind?

3 JUSTICE CERDA: I know my father always sent
4 money. My father also sent money.

5 JUDGE HENRY: And how would they transmit that
6 money to Mexico?

7 JUSTICE CERDA: I don't know, probably Western
8 Union is the only thing I can think of Western
9 Union or the post office.

10 JUDGE HENRY: How many children were in your
11 family, Judge?

12 JUSTICE CERDA: Well, first of all I want to
13 tell you on my father's side, his father, my
14 grandfather had 25 children, three wives. He
15 outlived his wives.

16 They died and he kept on living and kept
17 on having children, so there was --

18 JUDGE HENRY: Did he know what was causing
19 this.

20 JUSTICE CERDA: The water, it's the water.

21 JUDGE HENRY: Water.

22 JUSTICE CERDA: And on my mother's side there
23 was a smaller family about eight, only eight or
24 something like that. It was a smaller family.

1 JUDGE HENRY: By the time they get the
2 Christmas cards written, they have to start all
3 over again.

4 JUSTICE CERDA: Now I think of it my father
5 probably met my mother, he could play the guitar.

6 He could sing. He was popular in the
7 community. They would have house parties.

8 I remember there was nothing but house
9 parties, a lot of house parties where they would
10 come in and they would sing and they would sing
11 songs of the Mexican revolution.

12 That I remember.

13 JUDGE HENRY: Do you remember, I know when you
14 were born you said you were living on Robey Street?

15 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes.

16 JUDGE HENRY: When you were a little bit older,
17 I have just got to get some idea, do you remember
18 your first address in Chicago and where this house
19 was located at and where these parties were.

20 Do you have any recollection of that?

21 JUSTICE CERDA: No, no, I don't.

22 JUDGE HENRY: Okay, what would be the first
23 house that you remember and where would it have
24 been located?

1 JUSTICE CERDA: It was on Kedzie Avenue,
2 between Ogden Avenue and 19th Street, yes, on the
3 west side of the street, I remember.

4 JUDGE HENRY: And how old would you have been
5 then?

6 JUSTICE CERDA: In grammar school, I was in
7 grammar school, probably first grade, probably
8 first grade.

9 JUDGE HENRY: And where did you go Grammar
10 school.

11 JUSTICE CERDA: I started grammar school in the
12 Polk Street-Halsted area.

13 I don't know whether it was the Jefferson
14 School or not. I know I started kindergarten
15 there.

16 JUDGE HENRY: And that was a public school?

17 JUSTICE CERDA: It was a public school, yes.

18 JUDGE HENRY: Okay.

19 JUSTICE CERDA: And then I know that I went to
20 kindergarten at the Polk Street on 19th and Albany,
21 I know I went to kindergarten there.

22 JUDGE HENRY: So you moved some time maybe
23 during the school year?

24 JUSTICE CERDA: Moved some time during the

1 school year.

2 JUDGE HENRY: How many children were in your
3 family?

4 JUSTICE CERDA: Only two, from 25 down to two.
5 My brother and I, that's all.

6 JUDGE HENRY: What's your brother's name?

7 JUSTICE CERDA: Ruben.

8 JUDGE HENRY: Is he married?

9 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes, he is married.

10 JUDGE HENRY: And how many children does he
11 have.

12 JUSTICE CERDA: One. One child.

13 JUDGE HENRY: All right, and how about you,
14 Judge?

15 JUSTICE CERDA: We have three, three children.

16 JUDGE HENRY: What's your wife's name?

17 JUSTICE CERDA: Maria; she is from Puerto Rico.

18 JUDGE HENRY: And your children's names and
19 their ages now?

20 JUSTICE CERDA: Okay, David Albert is a 1961
21 child and Martha is 1962 and Arthur is 1965.

22 JUDGE HENRY: Okay, and what do they do? Are
23 they living in Chicago now?

24 JUSTICE CERDA: All three are living in

1 Chicago.

2 JUDGE HENRY: Let's start with David. What does
3 David do?

4 JUSTICE CERDA: He is a lawyer.

5 JUDGE HENRY: Okay, are you proud of him for
6 that?

7 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes, I am proud that he is a
8 lawyer, yes, I am proud of that.

9 JUDGE HENRY: How about your daughter, Martha?

10 JUSTICE CERDA: Martha has a law degree from
11 Loyola, but she doesn't practice law.

12 She works for Chicago Works Board.

13 JUDGE HENRY: What is Chicago Works Board?

14 JUSTICE CERDA: They try to improve services
15 for City of Chicago residents.

16 JUDGE HENRY: Is that a city agency or private?

17 JUSTICE CERDA: It's privately funded, but it's
18 run -- she get a paycheck from the City of Chicago,
19 so if they don't raise the funds from private
20 sources then she is out of a job.

21 JUDGE HENRY: How about Arthur?

22 JUSTICE CERDA: Arthur has always been in
23 insurance. He works for an insurance company,
24 Mesirov.

1 M-e-s-i-r-o-w, it's a financial services,
2 but they have a 175-person division and an
3 insurance and he is in insurance.

4 THE COURT: So his office is 320 North Clark?

5 JUSTICE CERDA: That's it. That's it.

6 JUDGE HENRY: That building used to be called
7 the Thompson building.

8 It was a restaurant in Chicago.

9 JUSTICE CERDA: I remember the Thompson
10 restaurant.

11 JUDGE HENRY: That was their building. Name is
12 on the top.

13 The only reason I know it, my insurance
14 company is Mesirow. I don't know every building in
15 Chicago.

16 I know where I send my insurance check,
17 but my point is I am helping support your son right
18 now.

19 JUSTICE CERDA: Every little bit counts.

20 THE COURT: Absolutely.

21 So let's see, so when you started in first
22 grade and you moved to 18th or 19th and Albany,
23 where did you go to school then after you finished
24 the kindergarten years.

1 JUSTICE CERDA: I stayed at Polk. I said at
2 Polk to finish my grammar school.

3 JUDGE HENRY: So that was eight years?

4 JUSTICE CERDA: That was eight years.

5 THE COURT: Okay.

6 JUSTICE CERDA: When we moved from the Polk
7 Street area, I know there was trouble against the
8 Mexicans at that time.

9 There was Mexicans and they wanted to get
10 rid of the Mexicans.

11 JUDGE HENRY: When you say, they, the majority
12 population?

13 JUSTICE CERDA: The majority population so we
14 moved. I know my father had a gun. I know that so
15 we moved.

16 JUDGE HENRY: The area you moved into, how was
17 that different from the area you moved from?

18 JUDGE CERDA: This was more diverse, the area
19 that we moved to, the area was more diverse.

20 There were a couple of blacks. There was
21 Polish, German, Jewish, I dare say Irish.

22 It was eastern European, Greek. It was a
23 more diverse area, more open-minded.

24 JUDGE HENRY: And 18th and Albany would have

1 been close to Ogden Avenue?

2 JUDGE CERDA: That's where I really grew up,
3 Ogden Avenue.

4 JUDGE HENRY: Do you remember the streetcars
5 running up and down Ogden Avenue?

6 JUDGE CERDA: Yes, I remember the
7 streetcars.

8 JUDGE HENRY: You know Congressman Lipinski
9 wants to bring the streetcars back to Ogden Avenue
10 because his father used drive streetcars on that
11 route.

12 Do you think that's a good idea?

13 JUDGE CERDA: In a dream world it's okay.

14 If they go above the ground that's okay.
15 If they fly.

16 JUDGE HENRY: So tell me something about the
17 friendships you made or the recollections you have
18 of your years in grammar school, Polk school.

19 Since you were a new student were you
20 welcomed into the school? Were the teachers
21 receptive to you?

22 JUDGE CERDA: The teachers were receptive to
23 me.

24 I didn't feel, you know, I felt, always

1 felt different all my life, but I didn't feel
2 anything special. I think I felt good, comfortable
3 in the school.

4 JUDGE HENRY: Were you one of the few
5 Mexican-American students at that school?

6 JUDGE CERDA: Yes, that's right.

7 We were few, my cousins, just my family
8 was there really, my cousins and my brother.

9 JUDGE HENRY: Is your brother older than you or
10 younger than you?

11 JUDGE CERDA: Younger.

12 JUDGE HENRY: How much younger?

13 JUDGE CERDA: Four years.

14 JUDGE HENRY: Four years, so you were a big guy
15 by the time he started school.

16 Did he look up to you and follow you
17 around and did you tell him how to fit in at school
18 or not? Was he on his own?

19 JUDGE CERDA: He was on his own. He was on his
20 own.

21 JUDGE HENRY: So those years growing up were
22 you involved in any sports activities that utilized
23 the Chicago Park District?

24 Were you welcome to travel freely as a

1 young boy in the city?

2 JUSTICE CERDA: We used to go to Douglas Park,
3 yes, around Ogden Avenue because the park was right
4 across the street from the Polk school.

5 So, you know, everybody took advantage of
6 it.

7 JUDGE HENRY: Is Polk school still there?

8 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes, it is still there.

9 JUDGE HENRY: Have you ever been invited back
10 to address the students?

11 JUSTICE CERDA: No.

12 JUDGE HENRY: Would you like to?

13 JUSTICE CERDA: I would, I would go back.

14 JUDGE HENRY: There may be a follow-up.

15 JUSTICE CERDA: I would go back to the Polk
16 school.

17 JUDGE HENRY: Your kindergarten teacher might
18 still be there, you know.

19 My wife has an aunt who is a nun and she
20 taught second grade for 52 years and she said to me
21 one day, she said, "Hank, I don't miss it a bit.
22 After 52 years it was getting a little stale."

23 She was a Franciscan nun, but anyway, did
24 you have freedom of movement as a young child in

1 Chicago like if your parents, say, you go out to
2 play after school or in the summertime, could you
3 go to the park by yourself?

4 JUSTICE CERDA: No, no, they wanted me right
5 there. It was very hard, you know, to get away
6 from them.

7 I guess they wanted me right where, you
8 know, they could see me.

9 JUDGE HENRY: This was all through grammar
10 school?

11 JUSTICE CERDA: No, not all through grammar
12 school. This was at the beginning, the first.

13 Later on when I got in the upper grades, I
14 had a little bit more freedom in the upper grades.

15 JUDGE HENRY: Were you responsible for looking
16 out for your brother to make sure he got to and
17 from school?

18 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes, yes.

19 JUDGE HENRY: All right.

20 JUSTICE CERDA: Like brothers. We used to
21 fight as brothers, you know.

22 JUDGE HENRY: How is your relationship today?

23 JUSTICE CERDA: Wonderful.

24 JUDGE HENRY: Great. So you got all that out

1 of the way?

2 JUSTICE CERDA: Oh, sure, sure. Normal.

3 JUDGE HENRY: Were your parents involved in any
4 church groups or anything?

5 JUSTICE CERDA: No, no church groups.

6 JUDGE HENRY: So when you were a young boy
7 coming up through grammar school, did you have any
8 love for any particular subjects in school?

9 Did you feel like, wow, I really like
10 art. I really like math, social studies.

11 What was your -- I am sorry, if I could
12 back up one step.

13 Spanish was the language spoken in your
14 home?

15 JUSTICE CERDA: Right.

16 JUDGE HENRY: When you got to school were you
17 able to speak English?

18 JUSTICE CERDA: No.

19 JUDGE HENRY: No, so when you first arrived in
20 kindergarten, there would have been very few other
21 students in the room that would have been speaking
22 Spanish, but did some of those other students speak
23 other languages.

24 How did that work because at that time

1 there was a great influx of immigrants into the
2 city?

3 How many languages do you think were
4 spoken in your grammar school?

5 JUSTICE CERDA: I don't know.

6 I think that my kindergarten, they had
7 more newcomers, more recently arrived people at
8 that area, you know, in the Polk Street area,
9 Halsted Street area, so there were more recent
10 arrivals so there was more foreign languages spoken
11 there then because, you know, you go back at, you
12 know, that's so, but then at the Polk Grammar
13 School the people were here longer, they were here
14 longer so they spoke English very well.

15 JUDGE HENRY: I see, so then you would have
16 been, really would have been on the outside as far
17 as language is concerned as a young boy?

18 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes.

19 JUDGE HENRY: How long did it take you to learn
20 to speak English then?

21 JUSTICE CERDA: The same thing happened to me
22 that happened to my own children.

23 I just boom, just like that, we picked up
24 English.

1 I know my kids used to fight with the
2 other kids and the pediatrician said you better
3 speak to them in English so that they learn
4 English.

5 So and I saw it with my own eyes, boom.
6 Just like that just turned it on and then they
7 picked up English almost instantly.

8 That's what happened to me. I never had
9 any trouble.

10 JUDGE HENRY: Did you learn it just school?

11 JUSTICE CERDA: In school.

12 JUDGE HENRY: Or with the radio?

13 JUSTICE CERDA: In school.

14 JUDGE HENRY: Were the teachers able to speak
15 to you in Spanish until you got --

16 JUSTICE CERDA: No, no, no, there was no
17 Spanish teacher, no, no.

18 JUDGE HENRY: None at all. I see, so you
19 picked up the language within a few months?

20 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes.

21 JUDGE HENRY: You were able to converse with
22 everybody in your room?

23 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes.

24 JUDGE HENRY: Now as you progressed through

1 grammar school, what subjects did you find
2 particularly appealing to you or were you --

3 JUSTICE CERDA: Geography.

4 JUDGE HENRY: Geography.

5 JUSTICE CERDA: I liked geography. I remember
6 that.

7 JUDGE HENRY: Why do you think you had that
8 interest.

9 JUSTICE CERDA: I don't know because then I
10 started stamp collecting, you know, because of
11 geography, and I guess it went together.

12 JUDGE HENRY: Just American stamps or world
13 stamps?

14 JUSTICE CERDA: World stamps.

15 JUDGE HENRY: Were your parent able to help you
16 collect those stamps?

17 How did you do that as a young boy?

18 JUSTICE CERDA: I used to buy them or any
19 stamps that's we got on letters, you know, from
20 Mexico I put them in the book.

21 JUDGE HENRY: Was that a big deal when a letter
22 came from Mexico?

23 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes, that was a big deal.

24 JUDGE HENRY: So you got to save the stamps and

1 mom and dad were very happy to receive a letter?
2 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes, win, win, win.
3 JUDGE HENRY: Did you I ever save that stamp
4 collection.
5 JUSTICE CERDA: I lost it. I don't know,
6 somehow in the moving it just got lost.
7 JUDGE HENRY: So that was, your favorite
8 subject in grammar school?
9 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes.
10 JUDGE HENRY: The friends that you made during
11 those years in grammar school, did any of them
12 become lifelong friends that you stayed acquainted
13 with over the years?
14 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes.
15 JUDGE HENRY: And who are they?
16 JUSTICE CERDA: Judge Sheldon Gardner.
17 JUDGE HENRY: Sheldon Gardner.
18 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes, he and I went to Polk
19 Grammar School together and his father and his
20 family had a grocery store here in the middle of
21 the block between 19th Street and Ogden Avenue, so,
22 you know, everybody would go there.
23 JUDGE HENRY: Sheldon Gardner was also
24 interviewed for this history project.

1 I am going to get you his transcript and I
2 talked to Sheldon this morning.

3 He is always try to do some good. He
4 wants me to take an extern for the summer. "Come
5 on, you have got to do it." He is quite a
6 character. He is a good friend of mine, too.

7 Anybody else from the school that you
8 remained friends with over the years?

9 JUSTICE CERDA: I lost him. I know there was a
10 William Ross and Ruby Collins.

11 They were very good friends of mine, but
12 oh, yes, yes, yes, Veronica Bonnett.

13 That's not her last name now. It's
14 Paprocki. She used to sit in front of me.

15 Her son is now Bishop Paprocki and the
16 Chicago Legal Clinic has dinners, every May I
17 think, and that's when I see her, every May.

18 So we have remained friends.

19 JUDGE HENRY: Isn't her son also a lawyer?

20 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes, they both of them, he and
21 the other guy.

22 MS. AYALA-BERMEJO: Ed Grossman.

23 JUSTICE CERDA: Ed Grossman established the
24 Chicago Legal Clinic, both of them. So that's

1 Veronica. She used to is it in front of me because
2 she was B.

3 JUDGE HENRY: How many people have met in life
4 because of the alphabet?

5 Alphabetical; according to height. What
6 were some of your other hobbies in grammar school
7 aside from stamp collecting?

8 JUSTICE CERDA: I can't remember any other
9 hobbies.

10 JUDGE HENRY: Did your parents listen to the
11 radio?

12 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes.

13 JUDGE HENRY: Was there a Mexican or
14 Spanish-language radio station back then that they
15 would be able to accumulate information about the
16 community.

17 JUSTICE CERDA: Not about the community, no,
18 but there was one, a 15-minute program on a small
19 little station and it used to be filled up
20 practically all advertisement, I remember that, all
21 advertisement, hardly any other information, maybe
22 a little bit of information, but it was mostly
23 advertisement.

24 JUDGE HENRY: And for what type of products?

1 JUSTICE CERDA: Oh, food products mostly.

2 JUDGE HENRY: Would it be advertising a certain
3 store to go to or just the product themselves?

4 JUSTICE CERDA: Oh, stores, different stores.

5 JUDGE HENRY: And where were those stores
6 located?

7 JUSTICE CERDA: On the west side.

8 JUDGE HENRY: And so those were Spanish or
9 Mexican grocery stores?

10 JUSTICE CERDA: Or not necessarily owned by
11 Latinos, but where Latinos would shop.

12 JUDGE HENRY: I got you.
13 Were there any professional
14 advertisements in there for --

15 JUSTICE CERDA: No.

16 JUDGE HENRY: -- accountants or lawyers or cars
17 or mechanics or anything, anything like that?

18 JUSTICE CERDA: No.

19 JUDGE HENRY: Did your parents own a car?

20 JUSTICE CERDA: Oh, in the 1930s they did. I
21 think it was a Model T a Model T car.

22 JUDGE HENRY: What's your -- did you take that
23 car?

24 You said before that you used to go out to

1 picnics in the forest preserves.

2 JUSTICE CERDA: Well, later we went to the
3 Cantigny Woods.

4 That's the one I really have memories of
5 going to Cantigny Woods.

6 JUDGE HENRY: Is that in Wheaton?

7 JUSTICE CERDA: I'm not sure where it is.
8 Southern Willow Springs.

9 I want to say Willow Springs and the
10 Willow Springs area, right around there.

11 JUDGE HENRY: And was this -- who would have
12 organized these trips to the forest preserves?
13 Weekends I presume?

14 JUSTICE CERDA: On Sundays.

15 JUDGE HENRY: And who would have put together
16 those trucks that would have transported --

17 JUSTICE CERDA: Later on there were no more
18 trucks, there were cars. People in cars.

19 JUDGE HENRY: I see.

20 JUSTICE CERDA: I have a good memory of the
21 cars. Everybody would go. They would bring food,
22 you know.

23 JUDGE HENRY: You would go out on Ogden Avenue?

24 JUSTICE CERDA: We would start out on Ogden

1 Avenue.

2 JUDGE HENRY: Were these happy memories for
3 you.

4 JUSTICE CERDA: Very happy memories.

5 JUDGE HENRY: Couldn't wait to get out there?

6 JUSTICE CERDA: I felt freedom.

7 JUDGE HENRY: Did you meet kids out there?

8 JUSTICE CERDA: Lot of kids.

9 JUDGE HENRY: Did you meet kids there that you
10 didn't know that you became friends with?

11 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes.

12 JUDGE HENRY: And what would be the afternoon's
13 activities there?

14 JUSTICE CERDA: Baseball. We would play
15 baseball.

16 JUDGE HENRY: So you did do athletic
17 activities?

18 JUSTICE CERDA: I wasn't very good at it.

19 JUDGE HENRY: With steroids maybe you could
20 have been, but we didn't ask you if you were a good
21 athlete.

22 JUSTICE CERDA: No, you are right.

23 JUDGE HENRY: What kind of athlete?

24 JUSTICE CERDA: You are right. Baseball, that's

1 what we played, not soccer, I know the immigrants
2 from Mexico played soccer, but we were more, we
3 were born and raised here so we played baseball.

4 JUDGE HENRY: How did you -- you were born
5 here, but the other immigrants that came as you
6 were growing up and they didn't speak English, what
7 was your relationship with those kids that were
8 coming into your sphere of society?

9 Did you make friends with them? Were you
10 able --

11 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes, we made friends, sure.

12 JUDGE HENRY: How many times a summer would you
13 say you would you go out to these picnics?

14 JUSTICE CERDA: Every Sunday.

15 JUDGE HENRY: Every Sunday.

16 JUSTICE CERDA: Every single Sunday unless
17 something, you know, would come up, but every
18 single Sunday.

19 JUDGE HENRY: Would each family bring their own
20 food for their own family or was there anything --

21 JUSTICE CERDA: They would.

22 They had extra food because you would go
23 around and everybody would offer you food from
24 their table, picnic table and so, you know.

1 JUDGE HENRY: Was this traditionally Mexican
2 food?

3 JUSTICE CERDA: Mexican cooking, right, Mexican
4 cooking, right.

5 JUDGE HENRY: Great.

6 JUSTICE CERDA: And they would sing songs, they
7 would sing songs on the guitar and the groups.

8 My father was not the only guitar player.

9 JUDGE HENRY: Now were most of the people that
10 were at this picnic from the neighborhood that you
11 lived in from the west side?

12 JUSTICE CERDA: From the general area of the
13 west side, general area?

14 JUDGE HENRY: And were most of those people
15 from the same general area in Mexico or were they
16 from a broad cross section.

17 JUSTICE CERDA: Different parts.

18 They were from Chihuahua where I know that
19 they were a little bit better, you know.

20 Michoacan is one of the poorest states in
21 Mexico and from Chihuahua they were a little bit
22 better educated, little bit better off.

23 JUDGE HENRY: But did those distinctions blur
24 when they were in Chicago?

1 JUSTICE CERDA: They blurred. I found that out.
2 later, yes.

3 JUDGE HENRY: They shared that common Mexican
4 ancestry and that overcame any regional differences
5 that were apparent from growing up or coming from a
6 different area in Mexico?

7 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes.

8 JUDGE HENRY: So those, your childhood years,
9 they were happy for you?

10 JUSTICE CERDA: Very happy. Very happy.

11 JUDGE HENRY: What other activities do you
12 recall taking advantage of or your parents taking
13 advantage for you in Chicago?

14 For example, I will give you some examples
15 to see if these were in your sphere of things to
16 do; Riverview Park, Shedd Aquarium, the Field
17 Museum, did your parents take you downtown as a
18 young boy or as you grew up?

19 JUSTICE CERDA: Only shopping. They only took
20 me downtown shopping.

21 JUDGE HENRY: And where would you go shopping
22 downtown?

23 JUSTICE CERDA: Goldblatts.

24 JUDGE HENRY: On State Street?

1 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes, on State Street.

2 JUDGE HENRY: And there also were Goldblatts
3 Stores in the neighborhood.

4 JUSTICE CERDA: 26th Street.

5 JUDGE HENRY: Is there a reason that your
6 parents would have chosen to go downtown rather
7 than 26th Street?

8 JUSTICE CERDA: I don't know.

9 It would be more that they might go, I
10 don't know why, you know, make it a little bit
11 exciting, something different to go to a better
12 selection.

13 It was a bigger store, that I know. It
14 was a bigger store than the store on 26th Street.

15 JUDGE HENRY: You went to DePaul Law School?

16 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes.

17 JUDGE HENRY: Now, DePaul owns the Goldblatt
18 Building.

19 JUSTICE CERDA: That's true and I tell people
20 that I used to shop here. I used to see Santa Claus
21 here.

22 JUDGE HENRY: You know that was my next
23 question I was going to ask.

24 How did you celebrate Christmas as a young

1 boy? Did Santa Claus -- let me backtrack one
2 step.

3 Do you know how Christmas was celebrated
4 in Mexico and how it differed from the celebration
5 that the Latinos had when they came to Chicago?

6 I was just down in Galveston, Texas, two
7 weeks ago my wife and I went on cruise and it
8 snowed there for the first time in 15 years and
9 every kid was just ecstatic about it, rolling
10 around in the snow.

11 You said you went to see Santa Claus in
12 Goldblatts?

13 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes.

14 JUDGE HENRY: Was that something that was more
15 of an American idea --

16 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes.

17 JUDGE HENRY: -- and your parents were taking
18 you down to be part of the American celebration?

19 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes, yes, I grew up believing
20 in Santa Claus.

21 JUDGE HENRY: You still do, don't you?

22 JUSTICE CERDA: In many ways.

23 JUDGE HENRY: In many ways. So you celebrated
24 Christmas with your family and you had -- did you

1 have a large extended family here or was it just
2 you said you had some cousins.

3 JUSTICE CERDA: Cousins, yes.

4 JUDGE HENRY: Your father's brothers also came
5 to Chicago.

6 Did they stay in Chicago?

7 JUSTICE CERDA: Another brother, Ventura, went
8 back to Mexico. He was a baker. He went back and
9 my uncle, Raymond, stayed here.

10 His older brother went back right away.
11 He didn't stay too long.

12 JUDGE HENRY: So the two brothers that stayed,
13 did they get married and have families?

14 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes.

15 JUDGE HENRY: Did you see your cousins very
16 often?

17 JUSTICE CERDA: My uncle, Raymond, daughters, I
18 didn't see them very often, once in a while.

19 JUDGE HENRY: Do they live in the same general
20 area?

21 JUSTICE CERDA: No, different general area.

22 JUDGE HENRY: Where did they live?

23 JUSTICE CERDA: I am not sure exactly where
24 they did live. I think a little bit further north.

1 We were about 1800 south and I got the
2 impression that they were further north, maybe
3 around Division Street, Chicago north, somewhere
4 around there.

5 JUDGE HENRY: I see. Holidays they got
6 together as a extended family?

7 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes, we got together.

8 JUDGE HENRY: Did your mother have anybody on
9 her side, any other relatives that came to Chicago
10 that's you saw on a regular basis?

11 JUSTICE CERDA: No, no. No, just the people
12 who came here, originally.

13 JUDGE HENRY: Okay, how about the people, did
14 -- how long after, you said originally there were
15 people that's were coming up from Mexico staying in
16 your house.

17 They would have a welcome. They would
18 have something to eat. They would be getting a job
19 and they moved on.

20 Did this go on through your entire
21 childhood and in high school?

22 JUSTICE CERDA: No.

23 JUDGE HENRY: Only in the early years.

24 JUSTICE CERDA: Just the early years.

1 JUDGE HENRY: Okay, before we leave the grammar
2 school years, does anyone have any follow-up
3 questions they are interested in asking, they might
4 want to know about while we are here?

5 I was going to move into law school.
6 Let's move into high school. It's about ten after
7 3:00. Are you okay?

8 JUSTICE CERDA: I am okay.

9 JUDGE HENRY: I can keep going.
10 Let's go. When you got through eighth
11 grade what were your choices for high school.

12 Did your parents encourage you to go on?
13 How did you choose?

14 JUSTICE CERDA: I had no choice. I lived in
15 the district so I went to Farragut High School.

16 I went to Farragut High School. I was at
17 2345 South Christiana. That's where I went to.

18 I think if you lived on the west side of
19 Kedzie Avenue you went to Farragut and if you lived
20 on the east side of Kedzie Avenue you went to, yes,
21 Harrison High School.

22 JUDGE HENRY: So how far did you have to travel
23 to go to Farragut?

24 JUSTICE CERDA: I walked when I started. Then

1 we were living at 18th and South Throop, but when I
2 started at Farragut High School, it was about a six
3 or seven-minute walk about, I don't know how many
4 blocks that was.

5 JUDGE HENRY: Did your parents own a house
6 there?

7 JUSTICE CERDA: They bought a house, was 18th
8 and Trumbull.

9 JUDGE HENRY: Was that the first house they
10 bought?

11 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes.

12 JUDGE HENRY: Were they proud?

13 JUSTICE CERDA: They were very proud of it.

14 JUDGE HENRY: Was it a single family?

15 JUSTICE CERDA: No, two flat.

16 JUDGE HENRY: You lived on the first or second
17 floor?

18 JUSTICE CERDA: First floor.

19 JUDGE HENRY: Who was your tenant on the second
20 floor, do you remember?

21 JUSTICE CERDA: I remember they were Mexicans
22 on the second floor.

23 I know two of them used to sing in the
24 choir, the De La Vega sisters sang in the chorus of

1 the Metropolitan Opera House.

2 When they would sing at the house parties
3 everybody would be quiet to hear them sing.

4 They would sing these Mexican songs and
5 they were beautiful.

6 JUDGE HENRY: The singer should invite the
7 landlord to the party so they can't complain,
8 right?

9 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes.

10 JUDGE HENRY: So you went to high school
11 basically then with the same group of kids that
12 went to grammar school unless they went to a
13 private school.

14 JUSTICE CERDA: I don't know. I lost most of
15 my grammar school kids and the very few I remember
16 Ruby Collins and William Ross were former, they
17 were from the grammar school, but I don't know. I
18 lost most of them.

19 Very few of them went to Farragut High
20 School, right.

21 JUDGE HENRY: Farragut was as enormous school?

22 JUSTICE CERDA: No, no, it wasn't a big school.

23 JUDGE HENRY: I see. How many students would
24 have been there?

1 JUSTICE CERDA: I don't know how many students,
2 but Harrison that was a big high school.

3 JUDGE HENRY: Is it possible because of the
4 division between the districts for the high school
5 that some of the kids you went to grammar school
6 with might have gone to Harrison?

7 JUSTICE CERDA: It was a better high school. I
8 will tell you that. Now I know it was a better high
9 school.

10 JUDGE HENRY: But at the time your parents
11 didn't know one way or the other?

12 JUSTICE CERDA: No, they didn't know.

13 JUDGE HENRY: So you chose Farragut.

14 JUSTICE CERDA: No, I didn't choose.

15 JUDGE HENRY: Based upon geography.

16 JUSTICE CERDA: Based upon geography. Sheldon
17 Gardner started there, too. He went for two years
18 to Farragut High School.

19 JUDGE HENRY: Tell us about your high school
20 years. Were they challenging for you? Were they
21 fun?

22 JUSTICE CERDA: They were fun. I took all the
23 wood shops.

24 I took wood shop , electric shop, print

1 shop, all the shops that they had at Farragut High
2 School.

3 JUDGE HENRY: During these years what was your
4 dad doing?

5 JUSTICE CERDA: He was still working.

6 He was still a laborer at Crane Plumbing
7 Company.

8 JUDGE HENRY: Still on Kedzie, south Kedzie?

9 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes, about 4100, 4200 South
10 Kedzie.

11 JUDGE HENRY: Was your mom working?

12 JUSTICE CERDA: She never worked. My mother
13 never worked.

14 JUDGE HENRY: So now, you took these shop
15 courses at Farragut.

16 What was your interest in those classes?
17 What were your plans for the future?

18 JUSTICE CERDA: I thought I was going to work
19 with my hands, you know, like everybody.

20 It was a working-class area and most of
21 the people there that I grew up with during the
22 1930s, seeing people work, you know, with their
23 hands, I figured I would work with my hands, too.

24 JUDGE HENRY: Did your dad encourage that?

1 JUSTICE CERDA: He wanted the best for me, you
2 know. He wanted the best.

3 JUDGE HENRY: During the 1930s that was during
4 the depression.

5 JUSTICE CERDA: We were on relief at that time
6 during the depression.

7 JUDGE HENRY: So your dad was laid off from
8 Crane.

9 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes, he was laid off. They shut
10 the company down so we were on welfare.

11 JUDGE HENRY: What years were you in high
12 school?

13 JUSTICE CERDA: 1941 to 1945.

14 JUDGE HENRY: So during those years in the 30s,
15 while you were in grammar school, how would you
16 describe the sense of community in the area that
17 you lived in?

18 I am not talking about ethnically or
19 racially or anything else, but just the general
20 memories you have of growing up in what is
21 considered to be the worst economic time in the
22 history of the United States.

23 Were you aware of that at that time? Did
24 it impact upon you at all?

1 JUSTICE CERDA: I never knew. I never knew we
2 were poor at all. Never knew it.

3 JUDGE HENRY: Your parents never exhibited any
4 concern to you they might not be able to make ends
5 meet because of the depression?

6 JUSTICE CERDA: No.

7 JUDGE HENRY: You came through that relatively
8 peacefully.

9 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes.

10 JUDGE HENRY: As far as your psychic
11 development.

12 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes, didn't have any effect on
13 me.

14 JUDGE HENRY: Okay, so your high school years
15 from '41 to '45.

16 Obviously World War II was going on at the
17 time and a lot of the graduate from '41, '42, '43,
18 and '44 were on their way to unknown destinations
19 as far as their lives were concerned.

20 JUSTICE CERDA: There was a sense of the
21 community was united for the war effort.

22 Everything was for the war effort, I
23 remember that and I think the community sort of
24 pulled together for that.

1 JUDGE HENRY: Did your mom and dad become
2 American citizens?

3 JUSTICE CERDA: Only my father. My mother did
4 not.

5 JUDGE HENRY: Was there a reason your mother
6 didn't? Was that her choice?

7 Did women not make that effort to do it at
8 the time?

9 JUSTICE CERDA: She had no interest in becoming
10 an American citizen.

11 JUDGE HENRY: Did your parents both learn to
12 speak English?

13 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes, they did, my father even I
14 don't know how he learned how to read, but he
15 learned how to read.

16 JUDGE HENRY: Would a Spanish-speaking citizen,
17 a resident at that time, would they have been able
18 to find everything they need without learning how
19 to speak English.

20 For example, were there Spanish-language
21 newspapers, churches that had liturgies in Spanish
22 newspapers.

23 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes, they had, I know, the big
24 -- that church, St. Francis of Assisi on Roosevelt

1 Road, that was the church I remember where the
2 immigrants would go to. They had masses in
3 Spanish.

4 JUDGE HENRY: That's still a functioning parish
5 today and thriving?

6 JUSTICE CERDA: I remember that and they would
7 see each other and talk to each other for a few
8 minutes.

9 JUDGE HENRY: You said before just a kind of
10 wondering a little bit going back to St. Francis of
11 Assissi, you went shopping down at Goldblatts.

12 Did you ever go shopping near Saint
13 Francis of Assisi Church then go to church and then
14 go to Maxwell Street?

15 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes.

16 JUDGE HENRY: What do you remember?

17 JUSTICE CERDA: I liked the smell, the odors,
18 going around, the sound of the different languages
19 being spoken in the area. It was good.

20 JUDGE HENRY: Were there many Spanish-language
21 speaking people at those?

22 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes, there were.

23 JUDGE HENRY: They would go to the church and
24 then maybe go outside and do their shopping for

1 whatever goods might have been available there?

2 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes.

3 JUDGE HENRY: During your four years in high
4 school at Farragut with the war going on, were you
5 anxious about whether or not you were going to be
6 going into the military upon your graduation or
7 what was the sense among the young kids then who
8 were living their life nothing?

9 Were they worried about the war? Was it a
10 constant threat to them? How did you feel during
11 that time?

12 JUSTICE CERDA: It just crept up on me because
13 I remember I was listening to the football game
14 when Pearl Harbor happened and, oh, boy and some of
15 the people were going to the war and my uncle and
16 my cousin went to the war and, you know, that was
17 for older people, but then boy, then when I got 16
18 then I started to think about it.

19 At 17 I volunteered for the Navy. I
20 didn't wait.

21 JUDGE HENRY: You were a senior in high school
22 at that time?

23 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes, I enlisted in the Navy,
24 enlisted in the Navy.

1 JUDGE HENRY: How did you decide on the Navy?

2 JUSTICE CERDA: I want -- I know that from the
3 stories that I heard, the soldiers would dig a hole
4 in the ground and sleep in the ground and I wanted
5 to sleep in a clean bed, with clean sheets. That's
6 why I wanted the Navy.

7 JUDGE HENRY: Well, that's very practical. Do
8 you know if you got seasick or not?

9 JUSTICE CERDA: I didn't know how to swim.

10 JUDGE HENRY: If you are far enough from shore
11 it doesn't matter anyway.

12 JUSTICE CERDA: That's true.

13 JUDGE HENRY: So there was a, I don't know when
14 the -- I don't even know what ROTC stands for.

15 MS. MARTINEZ: Reserve Officers Training Corps.

16 JUDGE HENRY: I see. Was the ROTC something
17 that was in operation?

18 JUSTICE CERDA: Not at Farragut High School. It
19 was in operation, but not at Farragut High School.

20 JUDGE HENRY: Got you. Did people come to the
21 high school to recruit you?

22 JUSTICE CERDA: No.

23 JUDGE HENRY: Now if you had not enlisted in
24 the Navy, you would have been subject to a draft?

1 JUSTICE CERDA: Right, I would have been pushed
2 into the Army.

3 JUDGE HENRY: If you were drafted, it would
4 have been the Army?

5 JUSTICE CERDA: I knew that. So I --

6 JUDGE HENRY: So that's what you decided to do?
7 Tell me, after you enlisted, did you talk to your
8 mom and dad before you did that?

9 JUSTICE CERDA: I had to because I had to have
10 permission.

11 JUDGE HENRY: I see.

12 JUSTICE CERDA: So I talked to them.

13 JUDGE HENRY: They gave you permission?

14 JUSTICE CERDA: They gave me permission.

15 JUDGE HENRY: Did they give you any -- this
16 must have been a very difficult thing.

17 JUSTICE CERDA: For my mother particularly.

18 JUDGE HENRY: To see the oldest boy going off
19 to a war that is horrendous.

20 What is your memory of that parting? Did
21 you go to the train station to leave for basic
22 training or what happened?

23 What are the logistics of that happening
24 and how do you remember your mom and dad when you

1 left?

2 JUSTICE CERDA: There was a lot of crying.

3 I remember that, but my father drove Jerry
4 Ryva, R-y-v-a, to Great Lakes.

5 We got in the car and we drove to Great
6 Lakes and that's how -- wait a while, no, that was
7 another trip that we took.

8 I think they took us from Plymouth Court
9 where the Chicago Bar Association is now.

10 That was the Navy recruiting office and
11 from there we went on the elevated train, but that
12 didn't go all the way.

13 I think it was my father then who drove
14 Jerry Ryva and I to Great Lakes because we couldn't
15 get there by -- he drove us there.

16 JUDGE HENRY: Well --

17 JUSTICE CERDA: I remember.

18 JUDGE HENRY: And when your mom said good-bye
19 to you was she at home?

20 JUSTICE CERDA: At home.

21 JUDGE HENRY: You said good-bye and her son was
22 off to the war.

23 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes, we picked up Jerry Ryva. I
24 remember we went to his house to pick him up.

1 JUDGE HENRY: Jerry Ryva was one of your good
2 friends?

3 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes.

4 JUDGE HENRY: The two of you talked about
5 joining the Navy together?

6 JUSTICE CERDA: No, we didn't talk about going
7 to the Navy together.

8 We just did it individually on our own.

9 JUDGE HENRY: And then you both found out you
10 were going to start on the same day.

11 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes, we both found out we were
12 going to start on the same day.

13 JUDGE HENRY: Were you happy to know somebody
14 was going with you?

15 JUSTICE CERDA: It was a big help. We leaned
16 on each other.

17 JUDGE HENRY: Were you scared?

18 JUSTICE CERDA: I was expecting just, you know,
19 what's going to happen, you know, just sort of, you
20 know.

21 JUDGE HENRY: If there were many other
22 Hispanics that were in the Navy at that time or you
23 were --

24 JUDGE CERDA: At our company at boot camp I

1 was the only Latino there.

2 JUDGE HENRY: I see. Now, when you got to Great
3 Lakes just give me some idea how long did you spend
4 in basic training?

5 JUSTICE CERDA: It was eight weeks.

6 JUDGE HENRY: What type of things did you learn
7 there during that time.

8 JUSTICE CERDA: It was marching, how to march.

9 We did shoot rifles and antiaircraft
10 guns. We shot them and they taught us how to
11 identify Japanese ships and airplanes. That I
12 remember.

13 Those are the, most of the things that I
14 remember.

15 JUDGE HENRY: How many people would have been
16 in your group, I don't know what the term would be?

17 Did you bond with a small group of other
18 recruits that you were going to stay together for a
19 long time or did you --

20 JUSTICE CERDA: It was a nice group because
21 half of our group was from Chicago and the other
22 half was from Iowa, farm people.

23 It was a nice clash, but we, you know,
24 surprisingly we got along very well amazingly.

1 JUDGE HENRY: And did that group stay together
2 then as he got assigned to?

3 JUSTICE CERDA: No, we broke up when, because
4 then they dropped the bomb on Hiroshima, and we
5 could leave boot camp and then we went out to
6 California.

7 They gave me a choice of going out to the
8 Pacific or staying in California and I stayed in
9 California.

10 JUDGE HENRY: What did you do while you were
11 serving in the Navy and how long --

12 JUSTICE CERDA: I was a typist.

13 JUDGE HENRY: Did you learn typing at Farragut?

14 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes, I learned to type at
15 Farragut.

16 JUDGE HENRY: Were there any other classes that
17 you took either at Farragut or in the Navy or any
18 training in the Navy that gave you any sense that
19 your direction in life was going to change from
20 being a laborer and a technicians into something
21 different?

22 JUSTICE CERDA: No.

23 JUDGE HENRY: You were still just moving
24 forward with your life with no real --

1 JUSTICE CERDA: No.

2 JUDGE HENRY: -- idea of what you wanted to do?

3 JUSTICE CERDA: Exactly.

4 JUDGE HENRY: Did you have any dreams about
5 doing one thing or another as a kid, being a
6 fireman or policeman or doctor or lawyer?

7 JUSTICE CERDA: No, I thought I might be a
8 draftsman.

9 JUDGE HENRY: Like at an architectural firm or
10 an engineering firm?

11 JUSTICE CERDA: Not being the architect, just
12 being a draftsman.

13 JUDGE HENRY: I see. Was that because your dad
14 was involved in that type of work you think?

15 JUSTICE CERDA: Could have been, yes. Closely
16 related.

17 JUDGE HENRY: Do you feel like you were handy
18 like if your dad was working around the house doing
19 things, did you --

20 JUSTICE CERDA: No.

21 JUDGE HENRY: Glad you got out of trade.

22 JUSTICE CERDA: No, because I took all those
23 shops, but I really didn't know what I was doing.
24 I could do it, I could finish, but, you

1 know, I had no real sense.

2 JUDGE HENRY: You didn't have a passion?

3 JUSTICE CERDA: The only thing that I sort of
4 understood was drafting.

5 JUDGE HENRY: Did you still have a passion for
6 geography in high school?

7 JUSTICE CERDA: No, it had faded.

8 JUDGE HENRY: How about any other languages,
9 did you take Latin or classes like that?

10 JUSTICE CERDA: No, I wish I had.

11 JUDGE HENRY: How about your math classes in
12 high school?

13 Did you have an affinity for math, algebra
14 or geometry??

15 JUSTICE CERDA: I was average, average in math.

16 JUDGE HENRY: All right, how about English
17 literature, any classes that might have given you
18 some thought that in your future was a career in
19 the law?

20 JUSTICE CERDA: No, none.

21 JUDGE HENRY: Nothing that just really grabbed
22 you?

23 JUSTICE CERDA: But I enjoyed going to the
24 public library. That I knew.

1 JUDGE HENRY: You enjoyed reading?
2 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes.
3 JUDGE HENRY: What did you like to read?
4 JUSTICE CERDA: About Jesse Owens. Jesse Owens
5 was a big track star and I remember some other
6 books, Jack London, "The Cry of the Wild," that I
7 remember that, that book, those type of books I
8 liked to read.
9 JUDGE HENRY: Do you remember the '36 Olympics
10 in Berlin?
11 JUSTICE CERDA: No.
12 JUDGE HENRY: That's where he sent the world
13 record, won the gold medal. So how do you think you
14 got interested in Jesse Owens? He was a Chicagoan,
15 wasn't he?
16 JUSTICE CERDA: He was a Chicagoan. Sure,
17 that's why.
18 JUSTICE CERDA: Was he a big hero when he came
19 back from the Olympics?
20 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes, he was a hero.
21 JUDGE HENRY: Did he ever see him in person in
22 Chicago?
23 JUSTICE CERDA: Never met him in person in
24 Chicago. I met Metcalfe who came in second place.

1 JUDGE HENRY: I was going to ask you.

2 JUSTICE CERDA: I met him in person.

3 JUDGE HENRY: How did you happen to meet Ralph
4 Metcalfe?

5 JUSTICE CERDA: When I was running for Judge,
6 we went to his ward.

7 JUDGE HENRY: And he was a committeeman and a
8 congressman.

9 JUSTICE CERDA: At that time I think he was an
10 alderman. He was an alderman because Dawson was the
11 only congressman when I ran.

12 JUDGE HENRY: Let's not jump ahead to the rest
13 of your career.

14 We are just getting you back from the war
15 which you won by the way.

16 JUSTICE CERDA: We won the big one.

17 JUDGE HENRY: You won the big one here.

18 So you had come back to Chicago in what
19 year? How many years did you serve in the Navy?

20 JUSTICE CERDA: 14 months.

21 JUDGE HENRY: 14 months.

22 JUSTICE CERDA: I was fortunate.

23 JUDGE HENRY: So when you came back to Chicago
24 your mother must have been delighted to see you.

1 JUSTICE CERDA: Very happy.

2 JUDGE HENRY: Did you see her at any time
3 during those intervening years.

4 Was she able to come out and visit in
5 California?

6 JUSTICE CERDA: No, in boot camp my family
7 visited me.

8 JUDGE HENRY: They came out?

9 JUSTICE CERDA: They came out.

10 JUDGE HENRY: I see, was that once or twice a
11 week while you were there?

12 JUSTICE CERDA: I think about two times.

13 JUDGE HENRY: How did you feel about seeing
14 your mom?

15 JUSTICE CERDA: Oh, I was so happy to see them.

16 JUDGE HENRY: Did your younger brother come or
17 he stayed home with his friends?

18 JUSTICE CERDA: No, he came. He came. It was
19 great to see them.

20 JUDGE HENRY: And your dad? They brought food
21 for you?

22 JUSTICE CERDA: They brought food and I
23 remember they brought wine in a thermos jug. I
24 remember that. I remember that.

1 JUDGE HENRY: Contraband.

2 JUSTICE CERDA: Contraband.

3 JUDGE HENRY: Okay, so you get --

4 (Whereupon, there was a brief
5 pause in the proceedings.)

6 JUDGE HENRY: So you just won the war and you
7 get word that your camp or your location that you
8 are assign to in California.

9 How did you get back to Chicago? Did you
10 take the train?

11 JUSTICE CERDA: I hitchhiked.

12 JUDGE HENRY: Hitchhiked.

13 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes, I almost was killed coming
14 back.

15 JUDGE HENRY: The same guy?

16 JUSTICE CERDA: No, I was hitchhiking from
17 Treasure Island, California, where I was discharged
18 from the Navy and in the middle of night, the guy
19 had a brand new Plymouth automobile, in the middle
20 of night and I remember the speedometer was over 90
21 and we caught up to a truck that had no taillights.

22 So we just went around, off the road,
23 passed him up and we flipped over, completely over
24 and not a scratch.

1 He didn't get a scratch. I didn't get a
2 scratch.

3 JUDGE HENRY: But the car did?

4 JUSTICE CERDA: But the car. So that was it.

5 I remember then I took the train and I
6 went to -- I bet, oh, yes, I went to Los Angeles
7 and there I met my very good high school buddy, Joe
8 Turek, where we had dinner, saw a show and then I
9 took the train from Los Angeles to San Antonio,
10 Texas, because my mother, father, brother, an aunt
11 and a cousin were coming up from Mexico and we met
12 in San Antonio where my cousin, Saul, was living.

13 He moved from Chicago to San Antonio and
14 so I met them in San Antonio and I got in the car.

15 It was back here and we drove up to
16 Chicago.

17 JUDGE HENRY: How did you make arrangements to
18 meet your mom and dad in San Antonio?

19 JUSTICE CERDA: By letter.

20 JUSTICE CERDA: By letter. So you wrote them in
21 Mexico?

22 JUSTICE CERDA: No, this was this Chicago. Was
23 in California.

24 JUDGE HENRY: I see.

1 JUSTICE CERDA: Treasure island.

2 JUDGE HENRY: And they wrote you a letter
3 saying that we are going to Mexico. We are going to
4 end up in San Antonio. We will be there on a
5 certain date and you made an effort to get there at
6 that time?

7 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes, I think I was a day or two
8 early.

9 JUDGE HENRY: Just the logistics of that, you
10 know.

11 My mother left Ireland in 1926 and these
12 were the directions that her mom and dad gave her.

13 Take the boat to Boston, train to Chicago,
14 get off at 63rd Street, somebody will meet you.

15 MS. MARTINEZ: It worked.

16 JUDGE HENRY: And the reason they were able to
17 do that is they used to post in the Chicago papers
18 the date that boats arrived from Europe.

19 So they would know that the boat arrived
20 in Boston on Monday, August 15, and it would
21 usually take 24 hours to clear immigration or
22 whatever and then you would get one of several
23 trains that would come from Boston to Chicago.

24 There were two a day. So you just meet

1 the train every day for two or three says and
2 somebody will show up.

3 No telephone calls and the letter would be
4 written six months ahead of time because you knew
5 the date you would be making passage on the train,
6 but to make this quantum leap, that you are going
7 to write a letter, say we will meet you a month
8 from now.

9 Who knows how many things that could
10 happen that would keep you from being where you
11 wanted to be.

12 JUSTICE CERDA: Communication wasn't that good
13 at that time.

14 JUDGE HENRY: You got to San Antonio, you had a
15 wonderful reunion with your family and came back by
16 car?

17 JUSTICE CERDA: By car.

18 JUDGE HENRY: What did you do your first night
19 back?

20 JUSTICE CERDA: I don't remember what I did my
21 first night back, but it was good. I know I was
22 happy. My impression it was happy.

23 JUDGE HENRY: The sheets were as clean as the
24 Navy at your mom's house?

1 JUSTICE CERDA: Oh, yes. Much more comfortable
2 and clean.

3 JUDGE HENRY: And bigger.

4 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes.

5 JUDGE HENRY: Parents still living at 18th and
6 Trumbull?

7 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes, still at 1810 South
8 Trumbull.

9 JUDGE HENRY: So you went back to the same
10 house, 1810?

11 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes, 1810 South Trumbull.

12 JUDGE HENRY: Is the house still there?

13 JUSTICE CERDA: No, it's torn down.

14 JUDGE HENRY: You were happy to be back home?

15 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes.

16 JUDGE HENRY: And by this time you were 18 and
17 a half, maybe close to 19.

18 JUSTICE CERDA: This was 1946. I was 19.

19 JUDGE HENRY: 19, so now you have had this war
20 experience.

21 You have been away from home for the first
22 time. You have done well in school.

23 You have got the experience of having
24 served your country. You qualified I assume for

1 the GI bill.

2 JUSTICE CERDA: I qualified for unemployment
3 compensation. They had counted the 52-20, you know,
4 for returning veterans.

5 Technically I was a veteran. They give
6 you \$20 for 52 weeks as long as you are unemployed,
7 you know, but I received only one check for \$20.

8 JUDGE HENRY: And there were a lot of guys
9 coming back into the job market.

10 JUSTICE CERDA: Right.

11 JUDGE HENRY: And those jobs had been filled by
12 others during the war, so there an unemployment
13 problem immediately after the war. Did that
14 dissipate quickly?

15 JUSTICE CERDA: It worked itself out I
16 remember.

17 JUDGE HENRY: So what did you -- how did you
18 decide what your next step was going to be?

19 JUSTICE CERDA: Before I left the Navy I
20 already knew what I was going to do because my Navy
21 buddies, you know, Ed Wantoban and Richard Dubin
22 and Al Cohen pushed me into going to college with
23 them down to the University of Illinois.

24 JUDGE HENRY: At Navy Pier.

1 JUSTICE CERDA: I had no idea of going to
2 college I had no idea.

3 JUDGE HENRY: Now, what was their background
4 that they would have been interested in college and
5 that you didn't have that same passion?

6 JUSTICE CERDA: I don't know.

7 JUDGE HENRY: I see, but they said, "Come on,
8 Dave, we are going."

9 JUSTICE CERDA: Come on, we are going.

10 JUDGE HENRY: I see. That was at Navy Pier?

11 JUSTICE CERDA: This was down in Champaign,
12 Urbana.

13 JUDGE HENRY: You went to the University of
14 Illinois. What did your mom and dad think about
15 that?

16 JUSTICE CERDA: Well, they didn't know too much
17 about it, but they said if that's what you want,
18 fine.

19 They were always 200 percent behind me.
20 Whatever I wanted to do.

21 JUDGE HENRY: They let you make your own
22 decisions.

23 JUSTICE CERDA: They let me make my own
24 decisions, yes.

1 JUDGE HENRY: Did that give you a lot of
2 confidence?

3 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes, sur, I had their support.

4 JUDGE HENRY: So you go down. So this would
5 have been 1946.

6 Did you start school at the University of
7 Illinois in the fall of 1946?

8 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes, September, September.

9 JUDGE HENRY: Was this your first time when you
10 showed up for your first day at the University of
11 Illinois, was that the first time that you had seen
12 the campus?

13 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes. I had never seen it before
14 in my life.

15 JUDGE HENRY: So you went down with your four
16 friends, they were Navy buddies?

17 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes.

18 JUDGE HENRY: Were they from your neighborhood
19 in Chicago??

20 JUSTICE CERDA: No, they were north, they were
21 north because they went to Marshall High School.

22 So that was a little bit north. That was
23 what, about north of Roosevelt Road.

24 JUDGE HENRY: So did you remain friends with

1 them down at the University of Illinois?

2 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes, through life. Through
3 life.

4 JUDGE HENRY: Through life.

5 JUSTICE CERDA: They are still my friends. Al
6 Cohen died, but the other two are still alive.

7 JUDGE HENRY: So did you get down to the
8 University of Illinois.

9 Anybody did -- you get appointed a, what
10 do you call that, a mentor, an advisor?

11 JUSTICE CERDA: No, they didn't have anything
12 like that.

13 JUDGE HENRY: You just showed up there. How did
14 you decide what classes you were going to take.

15 Did you have options? Did you have a
16 strict curriculum?

17 JUSTICE CERDA: I think they had more of at
18 that time something laid out for you, all incoming
19 freshmen, so that's what I took.

20 JUDGE HENRY: So there wasn't a choice?

21 JUSTICE CERDA: There wasn't much of a choice,
22 maybe one or two courses that you could take.

23 JUDGE HENRY: Were there a lot of returning
24 young servicemen and women for classes?

1 JUSTICE CERDA: That's why, because none of
2 that hazing for freshmen at the University of
3 Illinois. They were veterans.

4 JUDGE HENRY: They wouldn't stand for that.

5 JUSTICE CERDA: They wouldn't, you know, stand
6 for that.

7 JUDGE HENRY: So did you go to the University
8 of Illinois for four years?

9 JUSTICE CERDA: No, only from September of '46
10 to August of '48, because at that time Uncle Sam
11 was very smart.

12 In order to save money, they gave everyone
13 a test and I can't remember the name of the test,
14 GED. I don't know.

15 I can't remember, so that proficiency test
16 and everybody passed so really when I started I
17 started out as a sophomore.

18 JUDGE HENRY: Oh, I see, because of your life
19 experience you were able to get a degree.

20 JUSTICE CERDA: Everybody passed.

21 JUDGE HENRY: In a shorter period of time.

22 JUSTICE CERDA: Everybody passed those
23 proficiency tests.

24 Uncle Sam saved one year of college.

1 JUDGE HENRY: I see.

2 JUSTICE CERDA: And then we took a lot of
3 courses and we went to school summers and so we
4 finished, I know that Richard Newman finished in
5 June of '46 and I finished in August of '46 and
6 Eddie Wantoban finished around January, February
7 '47, so all of us finished in two and a half
8 years.

9 JUDGE HENRY: Did your mom and dad ever come
10 down to visit you?

11 JUSTICE CERDA: My mother did.

12 JUDGE HENRY: Did she take the train down?

13 JUSTICE CERDA: Let's see. I know she went
14 with my madrina.

15 She came down with my madrina.

16 JUDGE HENRY: What's your madrina?

17 JUSTICE CERDA: My godmother. My godmother.

18 The two of them came down. Nobody drove
19 them because the both of them didn't drive. They
20 took the train or the bus.

21 JUDGE HENRY: I see, you mentioned your
22 godmother. Were you baptized at Saint Francis of
23 Assisi?

24 JUSTICE CERDA: No, Pompeii, Our Lady of

1 Pompeii is where I was baptized.

2 JUDGE HENRY: I was just there last week. I
3 live across the street from our lady of Pompeii.
4 That the Italian parish over by UIC.

5 So did you get a degree in a particular
6 area of study?

7 JUSTICE CERDA: Business Administration with
8 foreign trade as a minor.

9 JUDGE HENRY: How would you characterize your
10 instructors at the University of Illinois at that
11 time.

12 Did you really run into some good
13 professors?

14 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes, there were some good
15 ones.

16 They were not stars, I guess there was one
17 star that they had, I can't remember, who taught a
18 course in psychology.

19 He was one of the stars that I had, but
20 the guy who really influenced me a little bit, not
21 personally, but his course was in business letter
22 writing or was it? Yes, business letter writing.

23 He was really good in simplifying writing
24 letters, really simplified it.

1 JUDGE HENRY: Was it according to the style or
2 form?

3 JUSTICE CERDA: Style, yes, form.

4 JUDGE HENRY: So that's something you used
5 later on in your legal career?

6 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes. I used it. I used it,
7 yes, during the early years, only during the early
8 years.

9 JUDGE HENRY: How did you get into the business
10 administration because up to this point now if I
11 may summarize it, it didn't seem that you had any
12 particular --

13 JUSTICE CERDA: You are right.

14 JUDGE HENRY: -- idea and most kids don't
15 obviously.

16 Nobody knows exactly where they are going
17 to be until they have already been there and left,
18 you know, but how did you think you gravitated
19 to --

20 JUSTICE CERDA: The only reason I took it was
21 because my plans to become an engineer where shot
22 to pieces with algebra, college algebra.

23 I passed the course, but I didn't know
24 what I was doing.

1 JUDGE HENRY: You were uncomfortable with that?

2 JUSTICE CERDA: You are right. I would have
3 been a disaster.

4 JUDGE HENRY: It's good you found out then.

5 JUSTICE CERDA: I found out then.

6 JUDGE HENRY: So did any of your buddies that
7 you went down there with, did they encourage you?

8 JUSTICE CERDA: They were going into
9 advertising. Al Cohen went into accounting and Ed
10 Wantoban sort of went into journalism.

11 So they sort of -- was their influence,
12 without them telling me, they sort of pushed me
13 into business administration.

14 JUDGE HENRY: Were their parents college
15 graduates?

16 JUSTICE CERDA: No, none of the parents were
17 college graduates.

18 JUDGE HENRY: So they were in the same
19 position as you were, they really had no
20 direction.

21 Home from the war and going to the
22 University of Illinois and you are basically
23 striking out on your own, finding out what your
24 niche is going to be in life?

1 JUSTICE CERDA: Right.

2 JUDGE HENRY: Now, you said you had a minor in?

3 JUSTICE CERDA: Foreign trade.

4 JUDGE HENRY: Foreign trade. How did you get
5 that?

6 JUSTICE CERDA: I wanted to get a job with
7 Sears Roebuck or General Motors that had offices in
8 Mexico or Latin America.

9 JUDGE HENRY: I see, because you wanted to
10 travel there?

11 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes.

12 JUDGE HENRY: Or live there again, not live
13 there again but to live there?

14 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes.

15 JUDGE HENRY: But to live there?

16 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes, travel there, live there
17 for a while.

18 JUDGE HENRY: And did that come about or what
19 happened next?

20 JUSTICE CERDA: Then, I did get a job when I
21 when I graduated from college with Dr. Scholls, the
22 Scholls Manufacturing Company, exporting office
23 and --

24 JUDGE HENRY: Where were they located?

1 JUSTICE CERDA: At 213 West Schiller.

2 JUDGE HENRY: And they just recently sold that
3 building I believe.

4 JUSTICE CERDA: I don't know. It may be.

5 JUDGE HENRY: I just saw a sign up on it that
6 they are turning it into condos. I tell you unions
7 won't get you anywhere.

8 How long did you work for them.

9 JUSTICE CERDA: 1949 and I think maybe November
10 -- no, I worked someplace else. It was 1949 until
11 about February of 1950.

12 JUDGE HENRY: I see, so then you were import,
13 export. That sounds like it was right up the alley
14 of what you were looking for?

15 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes, that's what I was looking
16 for.

17 JUDGE HENRY: How did that work out? Did you
18 like it?

19 JUSTICE CERDA: That was very dull, very dull,
20 you know, to that office, but I thought maybe a
21 different office would be better, but it was too
22 small. It was a two-person office.

23 JUDGE HENRY: So you wanted to stay working for
24 Scholls in a different capacity or you wanted to

1 work for a bigger company.

2 JUSTICE CERDA: No, at that time I really
3 wanted to, I had different feelings at that time.

4 I wanted to go to Mexico. In Chicago
5 there were very few Mexicans.

6 I wanted to be surrounded by Mexicans. I
7 had always been a minority.

8 I wanted to go to Mexico to be, you know,
9 among people like me, you know. That's what I
10 really wanted to do.

11 So I went to Mexico to the National
12 University of Autonomous, University of Mexico, and
13 I -- to live with my aunt, Esther.

14 JUDGE HENRY: I just read yesterday that
15 National Autonomous University of the Mexico is
16 opening up a branch here to teach Spanish.

17 JUSTICE CERDA: I saw that.

18 MS. AYALA-BERMEJO: Kent University.

19 JUDGE HENRY: So you could have stayed here. It
20 would have saved you a trip.

21 I just saw that in the paper yesterday.
22 How did that work out?

23 That's a fascinating thing to do as a
24 young man, that you know what you want to do and

1 you did it?

2 JUSTICE CERDA: I was single.

3 JUDGE HENRY: That's quite amazing. You were
4 single. You go down. You were living with your
5 aunt.

6 What did you study when you were there?

7 JUSTICE CERDA: Last year prelaw and one year
8 of law school.

9 JUDGE HENRY: Now what made you -- from
10 Dr. Scholls, import, export and now all of a sudden
11 you are off to Mexico and you decide to go off into
12 a career in law.

13 How did that light go on in your head or
14 what happened? How did you figure that out?

15 JUSTICE CERDA: You are right, to become a
16 lawyer. It was still my objective to work in Mexico
17 or Latin America and I figured that a lawyer could,
18 you know, have a better chance of moving up in the
19 corporation.

20 JUDGE HENRY: I see.

21 JUSTICE CERDA: And go to a higher level with
22 the law degree.

23 JUDGE HENRY: Now, the fact that you were going
24 to a national university in Mexico to begin your

1 study of law, it would seem that your intention
2 would have been to stay in Mexico with a law degree
3 that would have allowed you to practice law there.

4 So I know you wanted to be surrounded by
5 people like yourself, Mexican, did you have any
6 thought that you were going to be coming back to
7 Chicago or were you saying, I am out of here.

8 JUSTICE CERDA: I thought if I could fit in,
9 you know, if I could, you know, learn to like it,
10 then I would stay there because I figured I could
11 come back and forth, you know.

12 Take an airplane and come back would. I
13 didn't, I never felt that I would permanently part
14 from Chicago and my family.

15 JUDGE HENRY: So your mom and dad, were they
16 excited about the fact that you are going to Mexico
17 or were they, Gee, we left there. Now you are
18 going back to Mexico.

19 We send our kid to the University of
20 Mexico now he is going to Mexico.

21 JUSTICE CERDA: I think my mother never felt I
22 was going to stay there.

23 JUDGE HENRY: So she was happy for you and you
24 were living with her sister or your father's

1 sister?

2 JUSTICE CERDA: My father's sister.

3 JUDGE HENRY: Your father's sister, did she
4 have a family?

5 JUSTICE CERDA: No, she didn't have a family.
6 She took in boarders in Mexico City and I lived
7 with them.

8 They were students, all of them were
9 university students. It was good.

10 JUDGE HENRY: And were you able to go to school
11 for free because of your relationship to your aunt?

12 JUSTICE CERDA: It cost something ridiculous
13 like five or ten dollars, you know.

14 I didn't tell them that.

15 JUDGE HENRY: They didn't ask.

16 JUSTICE CERDA: They didn't ask.

17 JUDGE HENRY: And you didn't tell them.

18 So how did you support yourself then while
19 you were in school?

20 JUSTICE CERDA: I had some savings. I had some
21 savings.

22 JUDGE HENRY: Okay, and when you got into the
23 prelaw --

24 JUSTICE CERDA: Then for my second year in law

1 school, I finished up on my GI bill.

2 JUDGE HENRY: Oh, I see. For your second year
3 of law school in Mexico?

4 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes, my first year of law
5 school in Mexico.

6 JUDGE HENRY: I see. The GI bill would pay for
7 that?

8 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes.

9 The GI bill paid. I would go to the
10 American Embassy and pick up my check and I
11 remember they had a big table and they had the
12 honor system and you just go there and, boom, pick
13 up your check.

14 JUDGE HENRY: And was it a sufficient amount of
15 money to cover everything?

16 JUSTICE CERDA: It was. It covered everything.

17 Even when I was living down at Champaign,
18 Urbana, \$65 a month covered everything.

19 JUDGE HENRY: Tuition, room, board?

20 JUSTICE CERDA: No, no, they paid for tuition.
21 They paid for my books and materials, anything.

22 Eddie Wantoban, they paid his airplane
23 pilot lessons. They paid him beside his journalism
24 courses, they paid for that.

1 They paid for everything. Uncle Sam was
2 very generous. They paid for everything.

3 JUDGE HENRY: And deservedly so.

4 JUSTICE CERDA: They have paid for everything
5 so really I had more than enough with the \$65.

6 JUDGE HENRY: So when you were in prelaw at the
7 University of Mexico, did the teachers that you had
8 there, did they instill in you a sense that, hey,
9 this is the right thing for me, this is what I want
10 to do and that's why you decided to go on to the
11 law school or did you sign up for a two-year
12 program when you went down there?

13 JUSTICE CERDA: I went down to Mexico with the
14 idea of going to law school, with a preconceived
15 idea of going to law school.

16 JUDGE HENRY: So you took the prelaw classes,
17 you liked it and you went right into the law school
18 there?

19 JUSTICE CERDA: Right.

20 JUDGE HENRY: Okay, knowing what you know now,
21 looking back was that curriculum basically the same
22 as you would have taken in an American law school
23 or what?

24 JUSTICE CERDA: They were I think mostly on the

1 European style.

2 I remember what courses I took, I can't
3 remember. I took I think logic, you know, Mexican
4 literature, I remember that.

5 Mexican history, I took French, I took
6 French down there, and what other courses?

7 I can't remember -- I took psychology.

8 JUDGE HENRY: You said you took psychology, I
9 think you said at the University of Illinois?

10 JUSTICE CERDA: Right.

11 JUDGE HENRY: You had it again.

12 JUSTICE CERDA: And she said I didn't get an A
13 in the final examination because the professor said
14 my Spanish was not that good.

15 JUDGE HENRY: Isn't that funny?

16 So in your first year of law school did
17 you take contracts or --

18 JUSTICE CERDA: I remember.

19 JUDGE HENRY: -- real estate law?

20 JUSTICE CERDA: Introduction to the Study of
21 Law and it was like political, political science
22 course in the law. I remember that.

23 JUDGE HENRY: Did you enjoy that?

24 JUSTICE CERDA: I was hard. That was hard for

1 me. Law school was different. It was very hard.

2 JUDGE HENRY: Were the teachers demanding?

3 JUSTICE CERDA: They were more demanding, but
4 they wanted you to really do your studying on your
5 own, you know.

6 They were big classes, enormous classes
7 and so you really had to do it on your own.

8 JUDGE HENRY: I see, no teacher's assistants.

9 JUSTICE CERDA: No, no, not that I know of.

10 JUDGE HENRY: Did you have anybody there that
11 was helping you?

12 JUSTICE CERDA: We had a group of three or four
13 that was helping us from the prelaw classes, yes,
14 from the prelaw classes.

15 JUDGE HENRY: So you kind of stuck together in
16 a study group?

17 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes, we did have a study group.

18 JUDGE HENRY: What other classes -- were there
19 any technical legal classes that dealt with the
20 Mexican legal system either procedural classes?

21 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes, we had that, right, civil
22 procedure at that time. That's not the correct
23 name, but that was the name.

24 JUDGE HENRY: You also mentioned it was more on

1 the European system?

2 JUSTICE CERDA: Because we studied the statutes
3 like Russia, France, Spain and then it came to us,
4 incidentally, by accident, the Mexican statute
5 which you really should be concentrating on.

6 JUDGE HENRY: I was just wondering, you know,
7 you said you learned French.

8 JUSTICE CERDA: Very badly and I forgot all
9 about it.

10 JUDGE HENRY: I think the Napoleonic Code was a
11 probably a source of the law in many of the
12 European nations. I don't know.

13 JUSTICE CERDA: We studied Roman law.

14 JUDGE HENRY: So this was a very, I guess it
15 would be called the classics, law school would have
16 been a classical course at the University of
17 Chicago, I suppose.

18 Now you finished your first year of law
19 school.

20 JUSTICE CERDA: I didn't finish because just at
21 the end I said I am going to return.

22 I knew halfway through that I was going to
23 return because my folks came during the summer and
24 they said, "Come back to Chicago," and I really

1 wanted to go back to Chicago.

2 JUDGE HENRY: So your parents missed you and
3 you missed them?

4 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes, and I saw that, that the
5 system there was not too good, not too good.

6 I don't think I could have fit in into
7 the, into becoming a lawyer and made a living out
8 there comfortably.

9 There's a lot of who you know and there's
10 a lot of things that go on and a lot of not only
11 Mexico, a lot of Latin American countries I am sure
12 and it's just a lot of injustice, a lot of
13 injustice.

14 JUDGE HENRY: Is that based upon economic
15 situations?

16 JUSTICE CERDA: I think it's the economic
17 situation.

18 JUDGE HENRY: So the haves are, the law
19 protects them and those that don't have the
20 resources, don't have access to the courts or how
21 do you?

22 JUSTICE CERDA: They do have -- I don't know.

23 It's who you know that determines a lot of
24 the, at that time, I am not going to say how the

1 situation is today.

2 JUDGE HENRY: Okay.

3 JUSTICE CERDA: Because this was about 1951.

4 JUDGE HENRY: Right.

5 JUSTICE CERDA: '50 and '51.

6 JUDGE HENRY: And we are only looking at the
7 historical information.

8 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes, from the historical point.
9 There was a lot of bribery going on, you know.

10 JUDGE HENRY: We are really only interested in
11 how this impacted you.

12 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes, I saw that, they turned me
13 off and I just didn't feel that I could fit into
14 their system.

15 JUDGE HENRY: But it didn't turn you off to the
16 practice of law?

17 JUSTICE CERDA: No.

18 JUDGE HENRY: Or the profession?

19 JUSTICE CERDA: No, it didn't turn me off on
20 the people. I liked the people.

21 JUDGE HENRY: How did you become aware of this
22 uncomfortable feeling you had about staying there?
23 Was it in the newspapers?

24 JUSTICE CERDA: No, it was just talking,

1 talking to other students, talking to people you
2 know about everyday life.

3 JUDGE HENRY: How did your professors --

4 JUSTICE CERDA: Other lawyers.

5 JUDGE HENRY: How about your professors? How
6 did they address the climate at the time?

7 JUSTICE CERDA: They didn't. They were high
8 up, you know, they didn't. They were idealistic.

9 JUDGE HENRY: Did they wear robes in their
10 classes?

11 JUSTICE CERDA: No.

12 JUDGE HENRY: So it was casual?

13 JUSTICE CERDA: No, they worn a suit and tie.

14 JUDGE HENRY: They worn suit and tie?

15 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes.

16 JUDGE HENRY: So you, if you decided to come
17 back to Chicago with the thought that you would
18 somehow continue your legal education, is that
19 right?

20 JUSTICE CERDA: No, so then I started to work
21 for the Regnary Company on Jefferson Avenue here in
22 Chicago with my cousin, you know, working there in
23 the factory and I remember I used to get a headache
24 everyday, even when I was in Mexico, I got a

1 headache every single day and my cousin, Bella,
2 told me, "You should go, you should go to this
3 doctor."

4 I remember he was a Polish doctor and I
5 went to see him about my headache and he said, "You
6 have a problem. Is there something you have to make
7 up your mind about? There's something." So I said,
8 "Yes, going to law school."

9 When I said, "I am going to law school,"
10 the headaches went away.

11 JUDGE HENRY: Is that right?

12 JUSTICE CERDA: That's true. The headaches
13 went away.

14 JUDGE HENRY: For some people when they decide
15 to go to school law school, the headaches start.

16 JUSTICE CERDA: I was undecided, you know. I
17 said I want to be happy. My idea was I want to be
18 happy.

19 I want to do the thing, if working in the
20 factory is for me, I'm going to stay and I am not
21 going to be unhappy. You know, I wanted happiness.

22 JUDGE HENRY: I worked in a factory at 47th and
23 Kedzie. It was a hot summer in 1969 and my
24 supervisor Henrico Santamaria he said, "You better

1 get the hell out of here. You are going to be stuck
2 here."

3 He taught me that's not where I wanted to
4 be. 110 degrees in the factory.

5 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes, like my father.

6 JUDGE HENRY: They passed out salt tablets at
7 the water fountain to make it through the day and
8 the second shift, you know what that was like.

9 It was pretty rough. Wasn't too far from
10 Cranes at the time.

11 I will tell you what. This might be a
12 good place to stop. It's almost 4:00 o'clock and if
13 you would be willing to come back one more time?

14 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes.

15 JUDGE HENRY: And we will take up the
16 relationship with Judge Lopez's father, law school
17 and then we will go through law school, your
18 practice of law, your judicial career and then
19 anything else that comes out of all that, that
20 anybody wants to supplement, I would appreciate if
21 you can come back.

22 JUSTICE CERDA: No, I will come back.

23 JUDGE HENRY: That would be terrific.

24 Maybe I will coordinate with you, Judge,

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about the timing of this.

If you could communicate to everybody else, I would love to have you all back and please -- let's go off the record.

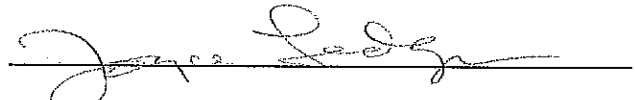
(Discussion off the record.)
(WHICH WERE ALL THE PROCEEDINGS
HAD IN THE ABOVE-ENTITLED CAUSE
ON THIS DATE.)

1 STATE OF ILLINOIS)
2) SS:
3 COUNTY OF C O O K)
4

5 IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF COOK COUNTY, ILLINOIS
6 COUNTY DEPARTMENT - CHANCERY DIVISION
7

8 I, JOYCE LEDGER, Official Court Reporter
9 of the Circuit Court of Cook County, County
10 Department - Chancery Division, do hereby certify
11 that I reported in stenotype the proceedings had on
12 this date, that I thereafter caused the foregoing
13 to be transcribed into typewriting, which I certify
14 to be a true and accurate transcript.
15

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17
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19
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23


Official Court Reporter
084-001292

24

Dated this 20th day
of September 2009

1 STATE OF ILLINOIS)
2) SS
3 COUNTY OF C O O K)

4 IN the CIRCUIT COURT OF COOK COUNTY, ILLINOIS
5 COUNTY DEPARTMENT - CHANCERY DIVISION

6
7 REPORT OF HISTORY OF the EARLY YEARS OF
8 the Honorable DAVID CERDA on Friday, the 8th day of
9 April 2005.

10
11

12 ALSO PRESENT:
13 HON. JAMES F. HENRY
14 HON. MARK LOPEZ
15 MS. KARINA AYALA-BERMEJO
16 MS. VIRGINIA MARTINEZ
17 MS. THERESA CHRISTENSON
18 MS. VIOLA ARMIJO-ROUSE

19
20
21

22 Joyce Ledger, 084-001292
23 Official Court Reporter
24 69 W. Washington, 9th Floor
Chicago, Il. 60602

1 JUDGE HENRY: I think where we wanted to pick
2 up today is maybe get into your law practice.

3 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes.

4 JUDGE HENRY: And maybe I think we were
5 finishing up with your law school career.

6 JUSTICE CERDA: At DePaul.

7 JUDGE HENRY: Just entering law school so what
8 I would like to do, there's no rush here.

9 We will go as far as is comfortable today
10 and then if we don't get as far as you want us to
11 get, you can come back at another time at your
12 convenience, it's entirely up to you. I kind of
13 view this as, first of all I feel it is a gift from
14 you to the legal community, not just the Hispanic
15 legal community, but the legal community as a whole
16 and to your law school and this I think is a gift
17 to you and your family that we will have this all
18 typed up and maybe some things that your family,
19 that you didn't talk to them about or whatever.

20 JUSTICE CERDA: That happens.

21 JUDGE HENRY: Your great, great, great, great,
22 grandchildren will say, wow, this guy had a good
23 job.

24 JUSTICE CERDA: What an old fogey. Antique

1 time.

2 JUDGE HENRY: I was going to go to about 3:00,
3 break at 3:00 for about ten minutes.

4 JUSTICE CERDA: Okay.

5 JUDGE HENRY: Then I have to stop at quarter to
6 4:00 today to take my son to baseball practice.
7 That's important.

8 JUSTICE CERDA: He will remember that.

9 JUDGE HENRY: I will remember it, too. So how
10 did you end up at --

11 JUSTICE CERDA: At DePaul.

12 JUDGE HENRY: -- at DePaul Law School?

13 JUSTICE CERDA: I don't know.

14 I do remember that there was an -- we were
15 living at 1805 South Sawyer. There was one guy who
16 went to DePaul Law School. He was much older than
17 me.

18 I was just a young kid and he was older
19 and that stuck to me, DePaul, because I didn't know
20 anything about law schools.

21 I remember I took a look at the tuition at
22 Northwestern. Boy, that was high and then I went
23 to -- so that's how I ended up at DePaul really
24 because of what a personal acquaintance went to

1 DePaul, and that's the only reason why I really
2 picked DePaul. It was a good school.

3 JUDGE HENRY: Was it located on Lake Street
4 when you went?

5 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes, 65, I think 64 East Lake
6 Street, 64.

7 JUDGE HENRY: Did you go during the day or
8 night?

9 JUSTICE CERDA: The day, the day. When I
10 started, they started to build the Prudential
11 Building and when I graduated, they finished the
12 Prudential Building.

13 So I know they took from '52 to '55 to
14 build the Prudential Building.

15 JUDGE HENRY: And also your legal career.

16 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes, that's true.

17 JUDGE HENRY: That's great.

18 JUSTICE CERDA: And the only other Hispanic
19 that I ever met was my compadre, Honoratus Lopez,
20 at DePaul Law School.

21 JUDGE HENRY: That's where you met?

22 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes, that's where we met, at
23 DePaul Law School.

24 JUDGE HENRY: And Judge Mark Lopez is also

1 here.

2 Where was your dad living at this time,
3 did you know?

4 JUDGE LOPEZ: At that time 3900 West Gladys.

5 JUDGE HENRY: He was a northsider and you were
6 a southsider?

7 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes, we were southsiders.

8 JUDGE HENRY: So this probably would have been
9 the first opportunity that you would have had to
10 cross paths?

11 JUSTICE CERDA: That's true. I was living at
12 1810 South Trumbull at that time.

13 JUDGE HENRY: Off the record.

14 (Discussion off the record.)

15 JUDGE HENRY: Okay, so when you got to DePaul
16 Law School, how did it feel walking in the door
17 that first day?

18 I know you didn't want -- medical school
19 wasn't for you?

20 JUSTICE CERDA: No.

21 JUDGE HENRY: I remember that, but now, did you
22 feel like you found your niche when you walked in
23 the school that day?

24 JUSTICE CERDA: No.

1 JUDGE HENRY: You got scared?

2 JUSTICE CERDA: No. Yes, I was scared because I
3 didn't know what lay ahead of me.

4 I was scared, confused, but, you know, you
5 have that experience of going to college, getting
6 into the Navy and coming out and how old was I at
7 that time?

8 19, 1952 I was 25 years of age. I was a
9 little bit older and I don't know, this was
10 something new. It was an exciting time for me, very
11 exciting.

12 JUDGE HENRY: And did you meet Mark's dad on
13 the first day?

14 JUSTICE CERDA: No, it was later I think,
15 probably the second semester there that I met him.

16 JUDGE HENRY: Do you remember who the dean was
17 at that time?

18 JUSTICE CERDA: Dean Taft, Dean Taft, a
19 heavy-set guy.

20 JUDGE HENRY: Tell me something about your
21 classes, your regime of classes your first year, if
22 you recall who your professor was.

23 JUSTICE CERDA: Anderson, I think we had
24 Anderson in contracts and Romidi in torts. That we

1 had. I don't remember Civil Procedure.

2 JUDGE HENRY: Didn't Romidi become an Appellate
3 Court Judge?

4 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes, he did. He later became a
5 judge, and then an Appellate Court Judge.

6 JUDGE HENRY: Did you ever talk to him about
7 that experience years later?

8 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes, I did. He later became a
9 judge. Yes, I did talk to him.

10 He was very clear. He was very good and I
11 told him that he was very good and as a compliment
12 to him, to me being a dean was a little bit, you
13 know, more prestigious than being a judge in my
14 mind.

15 So I called him, "dean" when I would see
16 him, dean.

17 JUDGE HENRY: Who else? What other classes did
18 you have your first year?

19 JUSTICE CERDA: Criminal law I think. I can't
20 remember the name of the guy.

21 His picture comes to me, criminal law. He
22 was a practicing criminal lawyer and I can't
23 remember his name, heavy-set guy, heavy set.

24 He used to tell stories and he was good.

1 JUDGE HENRY: Did you have a professor at any
2 time named Sterling Mortimer?

3 JUSTICE CERDA: No, I know him.

4 JUDGE HENRY: J. Sterling Mortimer.

5 JUSTICE CERDA: But he never -- he was there,
6 but I never had him. I never had him.

7 JUDGE HENRY: Just as a side remark, J.
8 Sterling Mortimer, he was a professor at DePaul for
9 many years.

10 He said he only gave two bad bits of legal
11 advice in his career. He had a pretty nice
12 practice, but back in the early '50s when the UCC
13 was being formulated and we put out the vote, one
14 of his major clients said, "What about, do you
15 think about this Uniform Commercial Code? Should we
16 be worried about this?" And he said, "Don't you
17 worry about that. That will never pass the
18 legislature."

19 So it passed, 49. "That was one bad bit
20 of advice I gave," and the second bad bit of advice
21 which also hurt him is he used to teach a bar
22 review course before this BRI, BAR and those
23 fellows came along and apparently they approached
24 him about getting involved in this national bar

1 review program and he said, "That will never fly.
2 There's no way there's going to be a national
3 review course that's going to apply in all 50
4 states," and so he didn't invest in it and of
5 course they all made millions.

6 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes, we all take bar review
7 courses.

8 JUDGE HENRY: Dana joined us again.

9 Dana has been working on the history
10 project. She is a law student.

11 We are in the freshman year of Justice
12 Cerda's law school career.

13 JUSTICE CERDA: And we had one of nicest guys.
14 Why can't I remember his name, butterball, the guy
15 who was there forever and ever. He was teaching a
16 course and --

17 JUDGE HENRY: Might have it have been a
18 Professor Daily?

19 JUSTICE CERDA: That's him. That's him. What
20 a nice guy, sweet guy, but he would scare us.

21 Right in the middle of the course. He
22 scared everybody. You would go in for an
23 interview. "You are doing very bad. I don't think
24 you are going to make it," you know.

1 "You are going to have to work a lot
2 harder if you think you are going to graduate from
3 law school."

4 So he did that to everybody. I didn't
5 know that.

6 JUDGE HENRY: No nobody would know that. You
7 wouldn't tell your friends that you heard that.

8 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes, so he -- but what a peach
9 of a guy.

10 JUDGE HENRY: He was very well liked and he
11 taught civil procedure before the Civil Practice
12 Act.

13 Get he would go back into remittitur and
14 demurrer, the old English cases.

15 JUSTICE CERDA: And we had someone named
16 Murphy. Murphy who also taught one of the courses.

17 I don't know whether he taught Civil
18 Procedure or not, maybe he did, Murphy, and I think
19 Daily taught personal property.

20 JUDGE HENRY: That's true. You know I think I
21 had Murphy when I was there.

22 I went to DePaul from '73 to '77, I went
23 to night school and some of those professors you
24 mentioned were well-known when I went there. They

1 had long careers.

2 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes, he was good.

3 JUDGE HENRY: So you went to law school. It
4 took you three years to get out.

5 What during the course of your law career
6 really gave you some direction to what you wanted
7 to do when you get out, like what class, looking
8 back now after all these years, wow, that really
9 intrigued me.

10 I liked it. It give me direction what I
11 wanted to do. What stuck out in your law school
12 career or curriculum that made you into the lawyer
13 the judge and the justice that you became?

14 JUSTICE CERDA: I don't know.

15 I think Anderson had an influence because
16 he was so precise in the contract.

17 In the law you have to follow certain
18 procedures in order to formulate a contract.

19 Certain things had to be done in order to
20 have a binding contract and I think that followed
21 through with the practice of law.

22 You have to follow the procedure that had
23 been laid out, the precedences that have been laid
24 out and it sort of taught me what law was and also

1 Civil Procedure.

2 It is law procedure very important and
3 with that if you just keep that in mind I think
4 that's very helpful.

5 JUDGE HENRY: Did you feel that, you know, some
6 people say you are trained to think like a lawyer.
7 That's what law school is supposed to do?

8 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes.

9 JUDGE HENRY: Did you have the sense that you
10 were looking at things differently than from your
11 engineering background and math background?

12 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes.

13 JUDGE HENRY: Did you feel more comfortable
14 with this?

15 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes, I did feel more, much more
16 comfortable with law than I did. It was more
17 interesting to me than college, more interesting.

18 JUDGE HENRY: Did during that time there was --

19 JUSTICE CERDA: You sort of, you learned about
20 life because you had criminal law and some of the
21 other fields you really learned about what's
22 happening in society, the disputes, you know,
23 contract disputes, different types of land, passing
24 property to another.

1 JUDGE HENRY: Did you have to work hard to get
2 through all the assignments?

3 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes, it was hard.

4 JUDGE HENRY: For you?

5 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes, it was hard. Yes,
6 especially at the beginning to change your way of
7 thinking, that it was hard in comparison to the
8 last year. It felt easier the last year.

9 JUDGE HENRY: In your first year did your
10 studies, they call it the Socratic method, not just
11 in law, but in others.

12 Did you -- what was your, let's just take
13 your contracts class. Was it done primarily by
14 lecture alone?

15 Did you read the cases and brief them and
16 discuss them?

17 JUSTICE CERDA: We discussed them with the
18 professor.

19 That was the good thing. He would ask the
20 question this, what about this, what about this and
21 he would sort of shift the facts a little bit and
22 what about this and he made you think about, think
23 of what, number one, he would say what do you think
24 is fair and this is the law and do you think the

1 law is fair, you know, you know.

2 JUDGE HENRY: Did your class get into a lot of
3 heated, contentious discussions?

4 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes, they did, they did and I
5 talked to other guys who had him also. They
6 enjoyed him, too, but he invited that. He invited
7 that discussion.

8 JUDGE HENRY: Now were there some courses that
9 you think that you thought were just kind of, oh, I
10 can't wait to get out of this class?

11 JUSTICE CERDA: Sales.

12 JUDGE HENRY: We don't need the names.

13 JUSTICE CERDA: It was the course, maybe it was
14 the course, yes, negotiable instruments I think it
15 was, and sales.

16 JUDGE HENRY: How about constitutional law? Did
17 you have constitutional law?

18 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes, we had, it was natural
19 law.

20 I forgot the name of fellow that taught
21 it. He really taught us natural law.

22 JUDGE HENRY: So he was a forerunner of Justice
23 Scalia. Well, it is a Catholic school.

24 JUSTICE CERDA: That's true.

1 JUDGE HENRY: There's a higher authority we
2 have to appeal to.

3 JUSTICE CERDA: That's right. I enjoyed it. I
4 enjoyed constitutional law.

5 JUDGE HENRY: Now while you were in law school
6 the case of Brown versus Board of education was
7 decided. While you were in law school --

8 JUSTICE CERDA: It was 1954 I think.

9 JUDGE HENRY: Sometimes as law students you
10 forget there's an outside world and not speaking
11 for you, you are focused in on what you are doing,
12 but that was a very momentous decision in the
13 history of this country.

14 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes.

15 JUDGE HENRY: Was that something that was the
16 subject of discussion among law students get or
17 were you too busy dealing with those 1880 cases?

18 Habby versus Backendale and Marbary versus
19 Madison. What was the political culture of the
20 school get?

21 JUSTICE CERDA: I think the class was
22 open-minded at DePaul.

23 I am glad to say and they thought it was a
24 good thing. There was a positive thinking about

1 Brown versus Board of Education.

2 You know, like it was about time and it
3 was, it was positive, the reception by the
4 students.

5 We were young, you know, we are not like
6 some of the old-timers who were set in their ways
7 so we were open.

8 JUDGE HENRY: You know, many people that I have
9 met when I was a new lawyer, I met a lot of guys
10 that had -- mostly guys, there weren't too many
11 women that I was aware of that had gone to law
12 school at DePaul during the '30s.

13 That was the depression and DePaul had let
14 a lot of people go to school from some ethnic
15 groups that were not admitted from other law
16 schools and these people were so proud and
17 delighted about their affiliation with DePaul.

18 So now what you are telling me is that
19 when you went to DePaul in the '50s, it was a
20 culture of openness and one of the other things and
21 essentially some things, the others that run DePaul
22 have always promoted it and that their purpose for
23 education was to educate the first generation of
24 students that were born in this country.

1 They had an actual commitment to provide
2 that education and so, DePaul was a leader because
3 it was together with John Marshall together in that
4 era of promoting access to not just college
5 degrees, but post-college degrees.

6 JUSTICE CERDA: I agree.

7 JUDGE HENRY: Have you had that experience?

8 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes, I felt that experience
9 throughout my three years at DePaul.

10 I think those were the sentiments, you
11 know.

12 JUDGE HENRY: Have you maintained any contact
13 with the school over the years?

14 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes, I am still on the
15 advisory, the law school advisory, the dean's
16 advisory committee.

17 It's a great big committee, but I am one
18 of them. I am a member on the advisory committee
19 for many, many years, many years, 20 years, maybe
20 longer.

21 JUDGE HENRY: So let me go back then to your
22 law school career. You enjoyed contracts very
23 much.

24 You liked the procedural aspect and I

1 think you said --

2 JUSTICE CERDA: And torts. I liked torts, too.
3 That helped me. Torts helped me because in your
4 general practice those are the things that come up,
5 contracts and torts.

6 JUDGE HENRY: So when you -- how about domestic
7 relations? Did you have a course?

8 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes, we had a course in domestic
9 relations, but nothing stands out in my mind
10 regarding domestic relations.

11 JUDGE HENRY: Okay, is there anything else
12 about your law school -- how about your social
13 activities during go law school?

14 Did you go back to your neighborhood and
15 socialize in your neighborhood? Did you branch out
16 in the city and socialize?

17 JUSTICE CERDA: I don't know what happened
18 because after we graduated from high school we sort
19 of separated and I didn't see my high school
20 friends, you know, after that.

21 So I mostly, with the law school Victor
22 Cacciatore and I think Lou Grippo and some -- I
23 remember there was an Edelman.

24 I can't remember his first name.

1 JUDGE HENRY: Was it Mortimer?

2 JUSTICE CERDA: No. It's Elliot Edelman.

3 I think he left Chicago after a --
4 practiced a few years and then he left Chicago and
5 there was a Crane, Arnold Crane. I think we had
6 three Cranes in our courtroom.

7 One of them was a photographer. Used to
8 take pictures at weddings to earn his tuition and
9 later on he made a lot of money because he
10 collected pictures and he got a lot of pictures of
11 Man Ray the famous photographer.

12 Somehow he got it in his hand and he
13 bought it and he resold it for millions, millions
14 of dollars.

15 JUDGE HENRY: So you made some good friends in
16 law school?

17 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes, and Phil Goldstick.

18 I think he played football at the
19 University of Illinois and some others, Jim Cogland
20 was there.

21 JUDGE HENRY: These are all very prominent
22 names in Chicago legal history.

23 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes.

24 MS. MARTINEZ: Did you do any activity?

1 JUSTICE CERDA: I don't think -- I belonged to
2 a fraternity, but I think a PAD fraternity that
3 Harmon, Robert Harmon.

4 He is from Lake Forest and Victor
5 Cacciatore were very -- they got me involved, in
6 the PAD, but that's about the only -- some of the
7 fellows, I didn't play basketball, but some of the
8 players like Danny Schuman and some of the others,
9 Walter Cummings played basketball and I think they
10 were pretty good.

11 JUDGE HENRY: Wow. Were there any women in
12 your class?

13 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes, there were women, about
14 four women.

15 I am off, I might be off by one. I think
16 we had about four women, but they disappeared, I
17 don't know what happened.

18 I never saw them after graduation.

19 JUDGE HENRY: How about African American
20 students?

21 JUSTICE CERDA: We had Charlie Durham who
22 became a judge.

23 Judge Charles Durham, he belonged to our
24 group. We used to study together.

1 JUDGE HENRY: You had quite an eclectic group.

2 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes, we used to go over to
3 Victor Cacciatore's house to study.

4 JUDGE HENRY: Where did he live?

5 JUSTICE CERDA: He lived about 55th and
6 Maplewood. I could be wrong about Maplewood, near
7 California Avenue. I am wrong, but in that area,
8 55th.

9 JUDGE HENRY: Around Gage Park?

10 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes, around the Gage Park area.

11 JUDGE HENRY: Do you see him today or do you
12 see any of your old friends?

13 JUSTICE CERDA: I haven't seen him in a while.
14 Now, he is the president of the Lake View Bank
15 right there on Wacker Drive and I think it's
16 Dearborn.

17 JUDGE HENRY: Your class did pretty good for
18 itself.

19 JUSTICE CERDA: Thank goodness, we did okay,
20 not all of us finished. It was true.

21 They say look who is sitting next to you
22 because one out of three, I forgot what it is, is
23 not going to finish.

24 JUDGE HENRY: So they did a pretty good job of

1 scaring you.

2 JUSTICE CERDA: That's right. They do a good
3 job of scaring you.

4 JUDGE HENRY: So anything that happened after
5 law school is probably easy.

6 JUSTICE CERDA: It was a good experience.

7 JUDGE HENRY: Okay.

8 JUSTICE CERDA: And those friends that you made
9 in law school were very important later on in
10 practice, because in practice then you get together
11 with them for lunch or you sit around and chat and
12 you trade information, valuable information about
13 experiences that you had and they had and you trade
14 information.

15 JUDGE HENRY: Trade, trade information.

16 JUSTICE CERDA: And you bounce ideas off, you
17 know, does this sound good or not sound good.

18 You don't say it on those words.

19 JUDGE HENRY: Did you meet on a regular basis
20 with your classmates in the first few years in your
21 time after law school?

22 JUSTICE CERDA: After a while, Victor
23 Cacciatore used to have a dinner at some restaurant
24 for the purpose of raising funds for Daily, because

1 Daily didn't have any retirement, money to retire.

2 So he would hold fund-raisers and once a
3 year we would go to the fund raiser that he had for
4 Professor Daily and so that was something, not
5 formal, you know, but it was a nice dinner.

6 We chatted around and talked, told
7 stories, you know. It was good. He did that for
8 many years.

9 JUDGE HENRY: That's a very nice thing.

10 JUSTICE CERDA: And he used to call Cacciatore
11 I still remember Mr. Catacarie, something like
12 that. He used to call him Catcarie.

13 I guess he couldn't pronounce his name.

14 JUDGE HENRY: He bungled the name.

15 JUSTICE CERDA: He bungled the name
16 intentionally, but he loved him.

17 JUDGE HENRY: That was nice.

18 JUSTICE CERDA: He loved him, so we used to get
19 together.

20 JUDGE HENRY: Any more questions about the law
21 school time period, Mark or Dana?

22 JUDGE LOPEZ: I might come up with something.

23 JUDGE HENRY: Please do.

24 How did your parents feel about your law

1 school career and that decision?

2 JUSTICE CERDA: Well, my father thought I was a
3 professional student because, you know, I had gone
4 to college, then I went to Mexico to college and
5 it's true.

6 After I graduated from the University of
7 Illinois, you have it down that I worked for the
8 Dr. Scholl's Company, but afterwards I used to take
9 some courses at Northwestern too in the evenings
10 and then I went to DePaul, so my father called me a
11 professional student.

12 That was my career being a student. He
13 was wondering when am I going to finish law school,
14 but my mother and father were always behind me, you
15 know.

16 They never had really a conception of what
17 education was, but they thought that whatever I
18 wanted to do, you know, they would back me up and
19 they did.

20 JUDGE HENRY: Did you feel more, I know you
21 were happy when you first went to Mexico to
22 continue your education because you felt like you
23 were no longer a part of a minority.

24 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes.

1 JUDGE HENRY: But then when you decided to come
2 back to Chicago and work with Dr. Scholl's did you
3 feel more a part of the City of Chicago after you
4 came back?

5 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes.

6 JUDGE HENRY: You reconciled that?

7 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes, I reconciled that because
8 then I knew that this is where I belong.

9 JUDGE HENRY: This is home.

10 JUSTICE CERDA: This is home for me.

11 JUDGE HENRY: So you settled in?

12 JUSTICE CERDA: I settled in, yes. Before that
13 those are the wondering years about life, you know,
14 and so you go that was like an adventure for me.

15 JUDGE HENRY: That's great.

16 So now you are in law school. You get
17 your graduation. Your parents are finally happy to
18 see you going out to make a living for yourself.

19 What did you decide to do next?

20 JUSTICE CERDA: Victor Cacciatore's
21 brother-in-law was Donald Panarese and he I think
22 graduated one or two years before us, I think two
23 years before us, and he was practicing law in the
24 office, real estate office of Joseph Cacciatore,

1 Victor's father was at 5524 South Wentworth.

2 That building is gone. It no longer
3 exists, but I became his associate, for Donald
4 Panarese.

5 He later became a judge.

6 JUDGE HENRY: I believe his son is a judge,
7 too.

8 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes, and his son now is a
9 Judge, and his wife is, was -- I can't remember her
10 name, worked for her father in the real estate.

11 She was a lawyer. She went to DePaul so
12 when we used to go over to Victor Cacciatore's
13 house to study law, we would consult with her
14 because she was a lawyer and she went to DePaul.

15 JUDGE HENRY: Joseph's wife?

16 JUSTICE CERDA: Joseph's daughter.

17 JUDGE HENRY: So it's Victor's sister.

18 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes.

19 JUDGE HENRY: She was older than you guys?

20 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes, she was older than us. We
21 used to consult with her. She was pretty good.
22 Smart woman.

23 JUDGE HENRY: Real estate law?

24 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes, real estate law, that was

1 her specialty.

2 JUDGE HENRY: And when would she have gone to
3 DePaul. Was she a few years older?

4 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes, I think she was probably,
5 I get impression, I am probably wrong, about five
6 years, something like that.

7 I think, that's my impression that she was
8 about five years older than us.

9 JUDGE HENRY: So, what type of business other
10 than real estate did Cacciatore's firm handle?

11 JUSTICE CERDA: Oh, well, Donald Panarese, he
12 handled other thing too, contracts, divorces,
13 criminal cases, criminal cases, divorces.

14 I remember one nice experience we had,
15 nothing important, but that Donald Panarese was in
16 the Army and that's why he was a lot older when he
17 graduated from law school, but he was stationed in
18 Italy and he learned Italian very well.

19 So we had a couple of clients and like
20 they only spoke either Italian or Spanish and I
21 would go with him and they would speak Italian and,
22 you know, I could understand them, but I went to
23 Italy, I couldn't understand, but the people that,
24 maybe it's the location where they were from I

1 could understand.

2 Then we went to the home of
3 Spanish-speaking people. They would only speak
4 Spanish and he would understand them.

5 So I got a big kick out of that, that
6 experience.

7 JUDGE HENRY: And you said their office was
8 5524 Wentworth and that building is probably not
9 there anymore.

10 JUSTICE CERDA: I know it's not there anymore.

11 JUDGE HENRY: Was Donald Panarese from the
12 neighborhood down there?

13 JUSTICE CERDA: No, his father, I think -- they
14 were from the north side.

15 His father was, had a coal business, coal
16 business. He was -- the coal business did not bear
17 his name I think, but I remember that he was, he
18 did, fairly, you know, he earned a good living, my
19 impression in the coal business. It was his own.

20 JUDGE HENRY: Did Don Panarese, did he go to
21 the DePaul Law School, too?

22 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes, he went to DePaul.

23 JUDGE HENRY: Was he there the same time that
24 you were there?

1 JUSTICE CERDA: No, no, he graduated I think
2 about two years before we did. I could be wrong.
3 Could be three years.

4 JUDGE HENRY: So he went on and he had
5 established his practice.

6 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes, he worked as a state's
7 attorney for a while.

8 JUDGE HENRY: And then Victor Cacciatore made
9 the connection?

10 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes, he made the connection. It
11 was through him.

12 JUDGE HENRY: So how long did you stay with
13 that?

14 JUSTICE CERDA: We started in around December
15 of 1955 until 1959 I think, right around 1959, '58,
16 '58, '59, one of those years.

17 JUDGE HENRY: Let me backtrack for just one
18 second.

19 When you graduated from DePaul you still
20 had to take the bar exam?

21 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes, we had to take that.

22 JUDGE HENRY: How did you prepare for the bar
23 exam?

24 JUSTICE CERDA: Baker's Law Review, I remember

1 that, Baker's Law Review.

2 JUDGE HENRY: And was it during the summer?

3 JUSTICE CERDA: It was during the summer. It
4 was during the summer, Baker's Law Review.

5 JUDGE HENRY: Where did you take that test?

6 JUSTICE CERDA: It was on Washington. Where I
7 took the test, the law review was on Washington,
8 but where I took the test, it was at Loyola
9 downtown.

10 JUDGE HENRY: Were you nervous that day?

11 JUSTICE CERDA: I was extremely nervous because
12 I made a mistake, a huge mistake.

13 I went to the north side, you know, the
14 north side Loyola and then I didn't, I didn't know
15 what.

16 That day I was very nervous so I didn't
17 have any money to get from Loyola on the north side
18 to get to Loyola there, but a taxicab driver said,
19 "I would take you. You will pay me later," and I
20 did.

21 I sent him the money later and he drove
22 me, but I missed half of the morning.

23 So they was I didn't have time to be
24 nervous because, boom, I had to hit everything,

1 whatever came.

2 That's what I put down. I didn't have
3 time to second think anything because I didn't have
4 time, I didn't finish, but.

5 JUDGE HENRY: You did enough.

6 JUSTICE CERDA: I did enough that morning.

7 The afternoon was better, but that was a
8 hectic day.

9 JUDGE HENRY: Was a one day?

10 JUSTICE CERDA: Two and a half.

11 JUDGE HENRY: Two and a half. Then it was two
12 and a half.

13 JUDGE HENRY: Was it all written?

14 JUSTICE CERDA: All, yes, written. It was
15 written.

16 JUDGE HENRY: And you felt, how did you feel
17 after it was done except for missing that --

18 JUSTICE CERDA: I thought I had failed really
19 because of that morning that was bad and we would
20 talk. You talk with the other guys and they have
21 different answers and that I know makes no
22 difference what the answer is, it's how you get
23 there.

24 JUDGE HENRY: How you get there?

1 JUSTICE CERDA: How you get to the solution
2 that counts. You have to get those points.

3 JUDGE HENRY: Do you remember where you were
4 with when you got the results of the exam?

5 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes, I remember, I don't know
6 how I found out that.

7 I think I called my mother and I asked her
8 whether it was a thin envelope or thick envelope
9 and she said it was a thick envelope. Then I knew
10 I passed.

11 JUDGE HENRY: Some things don't change.

12 JUSTICE CERDA: I still remember that. It was a
13 tremendous feeling. You know, it was a great
14 feeling.

15 JUDGE HENRY: So you got those results in the
16 fall and you will started practicing?

17 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes, while I was waiting for
18 the results I worked at a small steel assembly
19 company in Berwyn.

20 JUDGE HENRY: So your dad was happy about that?

21 JUSTICE CERDA: He was happy about that.

22 JUDGE HENRY: So now, you stayed with Don
23 Panarese until 1958?

24 JUSTICE CERDA: I think it was '58 or '59, the

1 end of '58 or the beginning of '59. I am not sure.

2 JUDGE HENRY: Okay, and you felt that was a
3 wonderful opportunity?

4 JUSTICE CERDA: I think it was a good,
5 wonderful learning experience for me, yes.

6 JUDGE HENRY: Okay, and how about your social
7 life and family life at that time?

8 Did you start dating then? Did you have a
9 girlfriend?

10 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes, I was dating, I was dating
11 in law school.

12 Yes, I was dating and while I was
13 practicing law I got involved in organizations,
14 LULAC, United League of Latin American Citizens.

15 I was the first president of the first
16 council in the Midwest of the League of United
17 Latin American citizens, and I belonged to what the
18 Mexican American Council that used to meet in Hull
19 House on Halsted Street and the American Legion
20 Post. Their first meeting was at Hernandez
21 Barbershop at 21st and Ashland.

22 I remember I wasn't a member at the
23 beginning, but I used to attending the functions of
24 the Mexican Patriotic Committee.

1 They used to have meetings or functions,
2 social functions so I would attend them and I would
3 attend functions of other organization too even if
4 I wasn't a member. So I was very involved.

5 JUDGE HENRY: Were you still living on Trumbull
6 at that time?

7 JUSTICE CERDA: No. When I graduated from law
8 school we had moved in 1954, January, I think to
9 Berwyn, Berwyn, 3523 Winona in Berwyn.

10 So when I graduated I was no longer living
11 in Chicago.

12 JUDGE HENRY: I see, and so when you were
13 commuting from there to the law office with Don
14 Panarese did you use public transportation?

15 JUSTICE CERDA: I drove. I had a car.

16 JUDGE HENRY: Did you have an automobile?

17 JUSTICE CERDA: I had my own automobile which
18 would break down as always, you know you have a
19 cheap, that is all you can afford.

20 I remember I used to change tires.

21 JUDGE HENRY: What kind of car did you have.

22 JUSTICE CERDA: A Ford, Ford, I can't remember
23 what kind, but boy would it break down.

24 JUDGE HENRY: One other candidate.

1 (Whereupon, there was a brief
2 pause in the proceedings.)

3 JUDGE HENRY: Where were we at? I'm sorry I had
4 to interrupt you.

5 You were dating?

6 JUDGE HENRY: Let's skip over the law school
7 dating experience and we are going to move right to
8 your true love, your wife.

9 Where did you meet your wife?

10 JUSTICE CERDA: It's interesting. It involves
11 the house a little bit.

12 She came over from Puerto Rico and she had
13 two friends with her, I think Father Jordan and
14 Amelia Sharp.

15 Amelia Sharp was Cuban and I was very good
16 friends with Amelia Sharp.

17 We used to go to the different social
18 functions together, used to meet other people with
19 problems and I would meet her and I was engaged to
20 a Mexican girl at that time and -- but for five
21 years, four years.

22 I would date her primarily and then I
23 guess we broke up and so, I know that they told her
24 that they had an attorney that they wanted her to

1 meet and the circumstances that we met is that she
2 was coming back from a meeting of the Caballeros of
3 San Juan, the Knights of Saint John, a Catholic
4 organization, and some of the group that works with
5 the younger people and the younger people after a
6 meeting had been stopped by the police and so she
7 was riding with Art Popa, and Art Popa saw that and
8 he got out of the car and he asked the police
9 what's, you know, and then they, they handcuffed
10 him and I remember she told me they broke his
11 watch.

12 I remember she told me they broke his
13 watch so she was a witness to that and Mrs. Sharp
14 then said, "You go and interview her."

15 So I went into the Puerto Rican
16 neighborhood and I remember it was a some sort of
17 an, I can't remember. It was a club.

18 I had a typewriter. I had a portable
19 typewriter and I went in and I asked her about,
20 explain to me what happened and I was taking it
21 down on the typewriter and that's how I got to meet
22 her, but then afterwards I put the car, the
23 typewriter in the car and then I came back and
24 talked to her and then when I came back, the

1 typewriter was gone and I always blame it on the
2 Puerto Ricans.

3 JUDGE HENRY: When you say you went to the
4 Puerto Rican neighborhood, where was that located?

5 JUSTICE CERDA: It was around Division Street,
6 somewhere around the Division Street area, general
7 area.

8 JUDGE HENRY: And who is Art Popa?

9 JUSTICE CERDA: He was, he was volunteer, for
10 Hull House.

11 JUDGE HENRY: I see.

12 JUSTICE CERDA: A volunteer and Amelia Sharp,
13 she was employed by Hull House.

14 JUDGE HENRY: I see, and did you know Art Popa.

15 JUSTICE CERDA: Through Amelia Sharp, I knew
16 him through Mrs. Sharp, yes.

17 JUDGE HENRY: So how did your romance develop
18 from that inauspicious start?

19 JUSTICE CERDA: They used to chaperone us. This
20 is true. Father Jordan and Amelia Sharp used to
21 chaperone us.

22 We would go from place to place, you know,
23 restaurants to eat, or different functions and they
24 were always there and that's how we started to

1 date.

2 JUDGE HENRY: That would have been 1959?

3 JUSTICE CERDA: This would be, yes, the end of
4 '58, yes, the middle of, summer of '58 from the
5 beginning the summer of '58, right.

6 JUDGE HENRY: And how long did you, did you
7 date before you got married?

8 JUSTICE CERDA: Two years. 1960, we were
9 married in Puerto Rico.

10 JUDGE HENRY: In Puerto Rico?

11 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes, she was going to the
12 University of Chicago and she started and I helped
13 her move from the YMCA at McCormick on State and
14 Oak Street, that's where she was living, to the
15 University of Chicago, and I helped her move and
16 she started her masters there.

17 JUDGE HENRY: Where was her undergraduate
18 degree from?

19 JUSTICE CERDA: Puerto Rico, University of
20 Puerto Rico.

21 JUDGE HENRY: So her parents were still living
22 in Puerto Rico and she had come to Chicago to find
23 employment or to?

24 JUSTICE CERDA: An adventure.

1 The story, she tells an interesting story
2 that she and her cousin, you know, wanted to go to
3 the United States.

4 So they didn't want -- and they saw, they
5 went to the office and she saw something about
6 Chicago.

7 So she said, "Let's go to Chicago." They
8 didn't know a soul in Chicago.

9 So she and her cousin came to Chicago and
10 that's how she -- she was a social worker. She got
11 a degree in social work and so she got a job as a
12 social worker here in Chicago.

13 JUDGE HENRY: Did she speak Spanish?

14 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes, her English was not too
15 good. Her English was not too good.

16 JUDGE HENRY: But the Spanish that she spoke
17 from Puerto Rico was easily conversant with any
18 Spanish that you would have known?

19 JUSTICE CERDA: It's a -- there's a little,
20 some words, you know, are different as she knows,
21 some words are different, some the accent is a
22 little bit different.

23 They speak faster than Mexicans or a lot
24 of South Americans do. They speed. They speed a

1 little bit when they talk.

2 JUDGE HENRY: Of course she was an American
3 citizen.

4 JUSTICE CERDA: She was an American citizen
5 right and that is how she wound up -- oh, she, then
6 she went she asked for where she wanted to meet the
7 Spanish-speaking people in Chicago and she met, she
8 asked for at the Holy Name Cathedral which was
9 close and Father Jordan was there at Holy Name
10 Cathedral and that's how she got to meet them
11 through him.

12 She met a lot of other people.

13 JUDGE HENRY: While we are on the family part
14 of it you got married 1960. Tell me something
15 about your children and then we will take a break
16 and we will pick up the legal career back after you
17 leave Don Panarese's office.

18 So tell me about rest of your family. You
19 are married in 1960?

20 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes, 1960.

21 JUDGE HENRY: When you came back to Chicago
22 where did you establish your home?

23 JUSTICE CERDA: It was 69th and Oglesby in the
24 South Shore area.

1 JUDGE HENRY: A very nice area.

2 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes.

3 JUDGE HENRY: Did you ever play golf at Jackson
4 Park?

5 JUSTICE CERDA: No, I never was a golfer.

6 JUDGE HENRY: No.

7 JUSTICE CERDA: I played a few times, but not
8 there.

9 JUDGE HENRY: Not there. Did you live in an
10 apartment?

11 JUSTICE CERDA: An apartment, first floor
12 apartment.

13 Rent was \$110 and I know we looked at a
14 brand new building and the rent was \$180 and I said
15 that's too much money.

16 The difference between \$110 and \$180 at
17 that time was tremendous and that's where we lived.

18 JUDGE HENRY: She continued working as a social
19 worker?

20 JUSTICE CERDA: She worked, yes, but not for
21 how long because we had our first child, we were
22 married July 2nd we had our first child May 8, so
23 she didn't work for long.

24 JUDGE HENRY: Did she get her master's degree?

1 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes, she did, she did get her
2 master's degree.

3 JUDGE HENRY: Was that in social work?

4 JUSTICE CERDA: Social work, yes.

5 JUDGE HENRY: So you have your first child, you
6 are living in a one or two-bedroom apartment?

7 JUSTICE CERDA: One.

8 JUDGE HENRY: One-bedroom apartment at 69th and
9 Oglesby.

10 Was that a boy or girl?

11 JUSTICE CERDA: A boy, David Albert, yes.

12 JUDGE HENRY: And he today is a prominent
13 lawyer in Chicago?

14 JUSTICE CERDA: He is a good lawyer. He is a
15 good lawyer.

16 JUDGE HENRY: All right, and did you have any
17 other children?

18 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes, we had Martha, one year
19 later May 9, one year later and then my wife had a
20 miscarriage and then our youngest son was born in
21 1965.

22 So if it wouldn't have been for the
23 miscarriage, we would have had four children in
24 five years.

1 JUDGE HENRY: Okay, and your youngest son's
2 name is?

3 JUSTICE CERDA: The youngest one is Arthur.

4 MS. MARTINEZ: Was he born in May as well?

5 JUSTICE CERDA: No, he was born in October.
6 October 11. October 11 he was born.

7 JUDGE HENRY: And how long did you live at 69th
8 and Oglesby?

9 JUSTICE CERDA: I think about one year, no, no,
10 I think it was longer than that.

11 No, it was about one year, and then after
12 Martha was born, so we lived -- because she was
13 born in '62, and in '62 we were on 2350 East 70th
14 Place.

15 JUDGE HENRY: So that would have been almost by
16 the lake?

17 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes, right by the lake, yes.
18 That building no longer is there.

19 JUDGE HENRY: 2350.

20 JUSTICE CERDA: 2350 East 70th Place. It was a
21 short walk to shopping on 71st Street. That was an
22 advantage.

23 JUDGE HENRY: Beautiful place to live.

24 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes, it was and transportation

1 was nice.

2 You could take the IC which was about a
3 block away or you could take the bus. So it was
4 good, good transportation.

5 JUDGE HENRY: And that was the South Shore
6 neighborhood.

7 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes, South Shore.

8 JUDGE HENRY: And were there many Hispanics
9 living in that community at that time?

10 JUSTICE CERDA: No, except there was, we had an
11 Argentine couple, a doctor, a young doctor, a
12 resident doctor and his wife from Argentina. They
13 lived downstairs from us.

14 JUDGE HENRY: Let me go through your family and
15 then we will take a short break for the facilities
16 and so on.

17 So David is an attorney and living in
18 Chicago or the suburbs?

19 JUSTICE CERDA: Chicago.

20 JUDGE HENRY: And Martha what does she do?

21 JUSTICE CERDA: She has a law degree from
22 Loyola, but she never practiced law.

23 So she works at Chicago Works Board. It's
24 privately funded, but she gets her paycheck from

1 the City of Chicago.

2 JUDGE HENRY: And what type of work does she do
3 for them?

4 JUSTICE CERDA: They improve the employment
5 services for the City of Chicago. They are
6 privately funded.

7 So if the private funds ever go out, she
8 is out of a job?

9 JUDGE HENRY: And your younger child, Arthur?

10 JUSTICE CERDA: Arthur. He never wanted law
11 and he works in insurance. He is an insurance
12 manager.

13 He is a portfolio, an insurance portfolio
14 for what is it I forgot the name of the company,
15 big one.

16 JUDGE HENRY: Now your parents really weren't
17 able to give you much direction as to what you
18 should do with your life, but were you able to give
19 your children or did you give them any direction or
20 encourage them to go to law school?

21 JUSTICE CERDA: I refused to give them any
22 encouragement to study law. I didn't. I didn't.

23 JUDGE HENRY: They didn't follow your advice.
24 They did it anyway?

1 JUSTICE CERDA: I told them when they started
2 college, I told them this is a learning experience
3 for you in college.

4 You should try different things and find
5 out what it is in life that you want to pursue, you
6 know, that was my advice to them. Find out, you
7 know, what are you going to be most satisfied with
8 because I was afraid of pushing them towards the
9 law.

10 JUDGE HENRY: Back to your children again.

11 Did your children grow up at this address
12 2350 East 70th Place?

13 Is that, would you say that was where they
14 spent their youth?

15 JUSTICE CERDA: No, I think they spent their
16 youth where we live now 9029 South Bennett because
17 we lived there in moved there in October of '66.

18 So David Albert was about five and Martha
19 was four and the other one was about one.

20 JUDGE HENRY: And did they go to school in that
21 neighborhood?

22 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes, they went in that
23 neighborhood.

24 They went to the Robert Black Magnet

1 School which was only one block from our house.

2 JUDGE HENRY: All your children went there?

3 JUSTICE CERDA: All my children went there.

4 JUDGE HENRY: How about high school?

5 JUSTICE CERDA: David Albert went to Francis
6 Parker, a private school.

7 Martha went to Whitney Young High School
8 and Arthur went to Saint Ignatious, so they went to
9 private, public and Catholic schools.

10 JUDGE HENRY: Okay, and those are all top
11 schools in the city, those three?

12 JUSTICE CERDA: They are good, they are good
13 schools.

14 MS. MARTINEZ: Where did David go to law
15 school? Martha went to Loyola?

16 JUSTICE CERDA: Loyola. Martha went to
17 Loyola. David Albert went to the University of
18 Michigan Law School and Arthur studied at
19 Worcester, Clark University, in Worcester,
20 Massachusetts.

21 I cannot pronounce that name.

22 JUDGE HENRY: We are going to find out about
23 your law practice, to put all those kids at
24 first-rate schools you must have been very

1 successful. Let's take a five-minute break and we
2 will come back and we will pick up with the law
3 career again.

4 (Whereupon, there was a brief
5 pause in the proceedings.)

6 JUDGE HENRY: We will pick up the legal
7 career.

8 So where did you go from working with Don
9 Panarese?

10 JUSTICE CERDA: South Chicago. South Chicago
11 had the oldest Mexican community in the City of
12 Chicago and so I went there and at the suggestion
13 of Sheldon Gardner.

14 Sheldon Gardner used to work with, I don't
15 know, maybe a partner with David Lynn and Rector
16 and they had their office on Commercial Avenue.

17 So for years he had been telling me, "Come
18 to South Chicago. Come to South Chicago."

19 JUDGE HENRY: Sheldon was working out there,
20 too?

21 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes, Sheldon was working out
22 there so he was the one that found me.

23 I said, "Yes, I am going to go to South
24 Chicago." So I left Don Panarese. I went to South

1 Chicago.

2 I worked for Herman Moses, a lawyer. I
3 used to answer his morning call, and I used to get
4 the rent free after that. So I had my own law
5 practice.

6 JUDGE HENRY: Now, was Herman Moses, I see was
7 he affiliated with Sheldon Gardner and David Lynn?

8 JUSTICE CERDA: No, no.

9 JUDGE HENRY: But you officed together?

10 JUSTICE CERDA: He used to work with Silverman,
11 the office of Silverman and he was the attorney for
12 that there and he had his own law practice.

13 JUDGE HENRY: And where was that office
14 located?

15 JUSTICE CERDA: About 9231, something like
16 that, South Commercial Avenue, right around there,
17 9231 South Commercial Avenue.

18 JUDGE HENRY: Now in the times that you worked
19 with Don Panarese, Sr., you had developed your own
20 client base, were many of those clients, were they
21 from the South Chicago area or were they mostly
22 related or --

23 JUSTICE CERDA: Most of them were from the west
24 side of Chicago, very, you know, from the west

1 side, west side.

2 JUDGE HENRY: Did you keep those clients with
3 you then for most of your --

4 JUSTICE CERDA: Some of them went to, a few of
5 them went to South Chicago, a few of them, yes.

6 JUDGE HENRY: You didn't feel like you were
7 going into totally virgin territory when you went
8 to South Chicago?

9 JUSTICE CERDA: No.

10 JUDGE HENRY: You had deep connections with the
11 Mexican American community?

12 JUSTICE CERDA: I had the actual LULAC, we had
13 a LULAC council in South Chicago.

14 So I had friends there and they had a
15 Mexican patriotic organization there so I knew some
16 of them there and so I had friends there in South
17 Chicago.

18 JUDGE HENRY: And it wasn't too far from your
19 new home on Bennett?

20 JUSTICE CERDA: That's right, it was very
21 close, but at that time we were still living on --

22 JUDGE HENRY: Oglesby?

23 JUSTICE CERDA: No, 70th Place.

24 JUDGE HENRY: 70th Place.

1 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes.

2 JUDGE HENRY: Okay.

3 JUSTICE CERDA: And so it was very -- ten
4 minutes from 70th to 90th, 92nd.

5 JUDGE HENRY: Tell me how your practice
6 developed in South Chicago.

7 JUSTICE CERDA: It developed, I continued with
8 the same thing, criminal law, real estate, housing
9 cases, divorce cases, some corporations, starting
10 up some small store corporations.

11 JUDGE HENRY: What else was there?

12 JUSTICE CERDA: Wills, I had wills, drawing up
13 also.

14 JUDGE HENRY: Now the housing cases --

15 JUSTICE CERDA: Some other things, but I can't
16 remember.

17 JUDGE HENRY: It will come back to you and the
18 housing cases and the criminal law cases, those
19 would have required court appearances?

20 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes. Tort cases, of course all
21 the time I had some tort cases, even in Wentworth,
22 I had some tort case, yes.

23 JUDGE HENRY: So were you commuting downtown
24 and to 26th and California?

1 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes, I would go downtown, yes.

2 JUDGE HENRY: Where were the housing cases
3 located at that time?

4 JUSTICE CERDA: In the City hall.

5 JUDGE HENRY: There were no -- the housing
6 courts weren't in the various communities?

7 JUSTICE CERDA: No, all downtown.

8 JUDGE HENRY: Centrally located?

9 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes.

10 JUDGE HENRY: And the domestic relations cases
11 that you had?

12 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes, they were downtown, too.

13 JUDGE HENRY: They were downtown, too.

14 JUSTICE CERDA: On the county side, divorce
15 cases were on the county side.

16 JUDGE HENRY: Did you drive downtown or did you
17 take the IC when you were coming down?

18 JUSTICE CERDA: The majority of the time I
19 drove, the majority of the time. Sometimes I took
20 the IC, the IC train sometimes.

21 JUDGE HENRY: Okay, now, tell me something
22 about your tort cases.

23 Did a lot of those cases in those years go
24 to trial?

1 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes, some of them went to
2 trial, but not too many, especially at the
3 beginning they didn't go to trial, but at the end
4 before I became a judge.

5 JUDGE HENRY: So your tort cases were they
6 mostly trials cases if they went to trial?

7 JUSTICE CERDA: No, mostly non-jury.

8 JUDGE HENRY: Criminal law, how did that work?
9 Were they criminal cases?

10 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes, I used to --

11 JUDGE HENRY: Jury or civil, jury or bench, I
12 am sorry.

13 JUSTICE CERDA: Bench, bench, bench. If they
14 were a felony case, I wouldn't handle a felony.

15 I would give it to some other lawyer to
16 handle, the felonies.

17 JUDGE HENRY: Did you enjoy the trial work, to
18 try your causes, would you say that was something
19 you had an affinity for?

20 JUSTICE CERDA: No, I knew I didn't have an
21 affinity for it, I just, I knew I didn't.

22 JUDGE HENRY: Okay, and how many years would
23 you say that it took you for you to feel really
24 established in the South Chicago community as an

1 attorney, not as a professional or a family man,
2 but just to feel that your law firm was thriving
3 and allowed you to go forward with your career?

4 JUSTICE CERDA: It wasn't until the end, I
5 think, I think, 1964, the year before I became a
6 judge that I really, you know, felt there was some
7 momentum building up. It took a long time.

8 JUDGE HENRY: And you were a sole practitioner?

9 JUSTICE CERDA: Sole practitioner.

10 JUDGE HENRY: Yes.

11 JUSTICE CERDA: Long hours, Saturday.

12 JUDGE HENRY: And if you can't make a court
13 appearance, there's nobody else to go but you?

14 JUSTICE CERDA: That's right.

15 JUDGE HENRY: Did that experience you think
16 make you a better judge when you became a judge?

17 JUSTICE CERDA: I understood that.

18 I gave a lot of consideration to the
19 lawyers realizing that they had to go from court to
20 court to make an appearance and to be ready and I
21 had an understanding of the problems that they had,
22 you know, in getting their clients there, you know.

23 The clients are late in getting there. So
24 I had a understanding of, you know, what it takes.

1 JUDGE HENRY: What involvement did you have
2 with the Mexican-American legal organizations
3 during the formative years of your practice?

4 I know you told us that you were involved
5 in a lot of social and community organization and
6 the VFW. Any -- this picture that you brought in,
7 this was a meeting of the first?

8 MS. MARTINEZ: Not the first but 1982.

9 JUDGE HENRY: A 1982 picture, what type of
10 legal --

11 JUSTICE CERDA: There was no legal
12 organization, there was none. There was no legal
13 organization.

14 JUDGE HENRY: I see, and when did the first
15 Mexican American legal organization get founded?

16 JUSTICE CERDA: It started in 1973. Some of us
17 got together. I am going to forget everybody's
18 name. There was Leo Aubel. He was from Mexico and
19 Antonio Sarabia who worked for Lord, Bissell and
20 Brook, an international law lawyer. He was from
21 Chihuahua, Mexico, and Manny Reyes and Honoratus
22 Lopez, and --

23 JUDGE HENRY: Spell that, Judge.

24 JUSTICE CERDA: I know my memory. I don't have

1 a good memory of this. My memory fades.

2 Mario Perez, Mario Perez. Those were the
3 ones that really started the organization. Maybe
4 somebody else. I think we don't have everybody
5 here. I know we don't have everybody there and I
6 can't remember.

7 JUDGE HENRY: Tell you what, we will come back
8 to that, you know, if we don't get finished up
9 today, we will come back to that issue because I
10 think that's an important part of the history of
11 your involvement in the law in Chicago.

12 Being a sole practitioner, it's kind of a
13 lonely life, isn't it?

14 JUSTICE CERDA: Oh yes, yes, very lonely.

15 It's very lonely, very hard.

16 JUDGE HENRY: I mean professionally. I don't
17 mean personally.

18 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes, it is professionally, it
19 is hard and I take off my hat to all those sole
20 practitioners.

21 JUDGE HENRY: Did you -- were you happy doing
22 it?

23 JUSTICE CERDA: I was content. I was content
24 but I know, I didn't feel that I could keep it up

1 though, you know.

2 JUDGE HENRY: With three children at home?

3 JUSTICE CERDA: Right, and all these social
4 organizations that I had I was too busy and I just
5 I know I wouldn't be able to keep it up.

6 JUDGE HENRY: Okay, so you became a judge, you
7 said, in 1964?

8 JUSTICE CERDA: 1965.

9 JUDGE HENRY: And let's see, how old were you
10 in 1965?

11 JUSTICE CERDA: Let's see it was May 1st,
12 1965. I was born in 1927 in June, I think 37, 37,
13 37, I was going to be 38 in a few months, in a
14 couple of months.

15 JUDGE HENRY: How did that come about? How did
16 you become a judge?

17 JUSTICE CERDA: The old man, Richard Daley,
18 wanted a Hispanic to become a magistrate, an
19 associate Judge.

20 So he reached out to the Mexican
21 community, Arturo Velazquez, my compadre, and some
22 of the others to submit a name for associate judge,
23 magistrate and so, he, with Frank Duran and there
24 was a Mendoza, Mendoza.

1 I can't remember the first name and some
2 of the others had an organization and they invited
3 me to a meeting, you know, because they were
4 looking for a candidate to interview, me.

5 So I interviewed with them and then later
6 they told me that they were going to submit my name
7 to the mayor for the position of associate Judge,
8 and they did. I don't know how it happened, but I
9 received a telephone call to buy a robe and to get
10 sworn in.

11 MS. MARTINEZ: To buy a robe?

12 JUSTICE CERDA: I didn't have to go through any
13 interview. I didn't have to ask for anybody. I
14 guess it was different in those days. It was a lot
15 different.

16 I went to the Chicago Bar Association
17 first to be approved because the mayor didn't want
18 to submit someone who was not approved by the
19 Chicago Bar Association.

20 So I did go for an interview and I was
21 approved, qualified by the Chicago Bar Association.

22 JUDGE HENRY: Okay.

23 JUSTICE CERDA: After that I received the
24 telephone call.

1 JUDGE HENRY: And that was about the time when
2 there was a change from the magistrate system?

3 JUSTICE CERDA: 1964 was the Reform Act came
4 into, that's when the first, you know, associate
5 judges were magistrate judges.

6 The new judicial system came into the
7 system.

8 JUDGE HENRY: Who else became an associate
9 judge at the same time that you did if you
10 remember? If not, we can --

11 JUSTICE CERDA: Bob Buckley, we retired
12 together. He was there.

13 JUDGE HENRY: He served on the Appellate Court
14 with you, too?

15 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes, he served on the Appellate
16 Court.

17 JUDGE HENRY: What was your first assignment as
18 a judge?

19 JUSTICE CERDA: Suburbs, the 6th District, out
20 of, you know, Markham, Blue Island, Chicago
21 Heights, Calumet City, I think Tinley Park, South
22 Holland, Dolton.

23 JUDGE HENRY: And at that time there was no
24 central courthouse, was there?

1 JUSTICE CERDA: No, we used to go ride -- we
2 were circuit riders. We would go sometimes two
3 towns in one day.

4 JUDGE HENRY: Did you feel like you were in
5 south Texas?

6 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes, like we were in south
7 Texas.

8 JUDGE HENRY: Where did you hitch your horse
9 up?

10 JUSTICE CERDA: It was nice. It was beautiful
11 for me because the calls were light compared to the
12 City of Chicago.

13 The calls were very light. It was a
14 slower pace. They didn't have as much serious
15 crime as we had in the City of Chicago.

16 So it was wonderful to break in that way.
17 I think that was one of my good luck opportunities
18 to learn to become a judge.

19 JUDGE HENRY: How many other judges were out
20 riding the circuit with you?

21 JUSTICE CERDA: I think there were about nine,
22 I could be off a little bit, but roughly nine.

23 JUDGE HENRY: Did you ever meet at a particular
24 location to trade notes or?

1 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes, we would meet at
2 restaurants.

3 JUDGE HENRY: For lunch?

4 JUSTICE CERDA: And then Judge Schultz made it
5 a point to have meetings so we would meet with
6 Judge Schultz. He was the presiding judge of the
7 6th District.

8 JUDGE HENRY: I see, and the situation was the
9 same where as an associate Judge you have a
10 four-year term.

11 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes. Four-year term.

12 JUDGE HENRY: So during the time you were
13 riding the circuit, your kids were growing up, you
14 were able to be available?

15 JUSTICE CERDA: I was available for them, yes.
16 That was a big relief.

17 JUDGE HENRY: I'll bet. What a difference in
18 being a sole practitioner with three children.

19 JUSTICE CERDA: Shorter hours, yes.

20 JUDGE HENRY: And so in four years you would
21 have would have put your name in for reappointment
22 as an associate judge?

23 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes.

24 JUDGE HENRY: And what, at what stage did you

1 move up in the judicial system?

2 JUSTICE CERDA: In 1966, one year later.

3 JUDGE HENRY: One year later.

4 JUSTICE CERDA: I asked for an interview with
5 Mayor Daley, the elder, and I remember I called up
6 his secretary, talked to her and about three weeks
7 later I had an interview with Mayor Daley and I
8 told him about the growing needs of the Hispanic
9 community to come out to vote and encouraged them,
10 more of them to come out to vote and I was involved
11 in a lot of organizations and that it would be, you
12 know, good to have to be the first elected Hispanic
13 judge in Illinois.

14 I don't know of any other elected judges
15 before 1966 in Illinois and he didn't say yes, true
16 to form. He didn't say yes. He didn't say no. He
17 didn't say no.

18 He asked me questions about the family,
19 you know. He was very concerned about the family
20 life and what law school I went to and some other
21 interesting questions.

22 JUDGE HENRY: Didn't hurt that you went to
23 DePaul?

24 JUSTICE CERDA: No, it didn't hurt at all, his

1 alma mater, Daley's alma mater.

2 So I didn't hear anything and then later
3 Colonel Jack Riley was his, his liaison with the
4 Hispanic community.

5 So he called me to go for an interview
6 with the, before the committeemen and I went for
7 the -- he didn't say anything else, just to go for
8 the interview.

9 So I went for the interview, answered
10 questions by the committeemen.

11 I don't know how many, 50 committeemen and
12 then I left, you know, and then I received a call
13 that, to call Colonel Riley and he said, "Why did
14 you leave?"

15 I said, because I didn't have a chance.
16 I saw these other guys. I saw Solski, a former
17 congressman, and other people there. I said I
18 didn't have a chance. I left.

19 They said, "Well, you left too early you
20 were selected to be the candidate for the
21 Democratic party," for that associate judge elected
22 position, and so that was -- I was with Father
23 Jordan at that time.

24 JUDGE HENRY: See, that helps.

1 JUSTICE CERDA: And Amelia Sharp and my wife at
2 that time.

3 JUDGE HENRY: Okay, you know, just as an aside,
4 a similar story, we took Judge Freeman who recently
5 retired.

6 He is about 90 years old by the way and he
7 got a call from Richard J. Daley on a Saturday
8 morning saying he wanted a Republican.

9 I don't know how many openings there
10 were. They were looking for two Republicans to run
11 on the ballot ticket. What did he have to say.

12 He had a been alderman which is how he
13 knew Richard J. Daley and he said, "Well, I don't
14 know I will have to talk to my wife." "Well, call
15 me back." So he goes and he talks to his wife and
16 his wife says, Yes, absolutely, call him back right
17 away get on that phone." So he went back and he
18 calls and he said, "Yes, my wife said, yes." Well,
19 then it's official.

20 I didn't put your name down, so, that's a
21 great story. So, how long did you serve then in
22 that position?

23 JUSTICE CERDA: I was elected Judge from '66,
24 from '66. Yes, from '66 until May 1989.

1 JUDGE HENRY: Wow, so how did your assignment
2 change in those years from being --

3 JUSTICE CERDA: It didn't really change. It
4 didn't change.

5 JUDGE HENRY: You still stayed in the south --

6 JUSTICE CERDA: Oh, yes, I was one year out in
7 the suburbs and then I was in traffic court. In
8 May of 1967 I went to traffic court.

9 JUDGE HENRY: Downtown?

10 JUSTICE CERDA: Downtown, yes.

11 JUDGE HENRY: At 321?

12 JUSTICE CERDA: What a difference. What a
13 difference. You have about 400 cases, you know, on
14 the court call.

15 JUDGE HENRY: In an hour.

16 JUSTICE CERDA: In an hour and I remember
17 Sebastian Rivera, the dean of the lawyers.

18 You know, I didn't even know it was him
19 because at that time we had to do a lot of writing
20 for each one and the clerks before could do those
21 things, but since Adamowski was in power, he
22 indicted some people and now, the judges had to do
23 the writing and you had to work, I didn't know it
24 was Sebastian Rivera until I lifted up my head and

1 there was Sebastian Rivera.

2 JUDGE HENRY: Who was that?

3 JUSTICE CERDA: He was the dean of the Puerto
4 Rican lawyers.

5 He was a lawyer before I was born. Before
6 I was born he was a lawyer and he was a sole
7 practitioner throughout his career.

8 JUDGE HENRY: So he was a prominent attorney?

9 JUSTICE CERDA: He was prominent. Mayor Daley
10 wanted him to become a judge a couple years later
11 and his name came up, but later on he turned it
12 down. He just couldn't leave the practice.

13 JUDGE HENRY: I see, and was he friendly, a
14 friend of yours?

15 JUSTICE CERDA: Oh, a very good friend of mine,
16 very close friend of mine. So that was my baptism,
17 my first day in traffic court. I was busy. I was
18 busy.

19 JUDGE HENRY: You know that's funny, that was
20 my experience my first day in traffic court, too.
21 I couldn't believe it, but one thing it does is you
22 learn how to make a decision.

23 JUSTICE CERDA: You are right. That's what
24 they say and it's true. Boom.

1 JUDGE HENRY: You can't wait and look for
2 Blacks' Law Dictionary.

3 MS. MARTINEZ: When we are talking about he was
4 going around the country to set up the council, did
5 we cover that or not?

6 JUDGE HENRY: No, we didn't. So let's do it
7 right now.

8 MS. MARTINEZ: So when were you going around
9 the country?

10 JUSTICE CERDA: Okay, this was in 1956 the
11 lawyers league of United American Latin Council was
12 established that was actually right around that
13 time for the first time particularly in the Mexican
14 community which is the only one that I knew, we
15 started get to know one another.

16 The people from the west side started to
17 meet the people from the South Chicago and from the
18 back of yards, 47 Street.

19 We started to meet each other because we
20 were so separated before and this organization and
21 these other organizations started to have meetings
22 and, you know, we started to -- wonderful that you
23 started to know one another. You shared common
24 experiences. You had the same background, poor,

1 poverty.

2 It was good, you know, we were up and
3 coming young energetic community and it was very
4 exciting for us at that time.

5 We did, from the west side we went to
6 South Chicago, we established a council there. On
7 the west side we established the LULAC council #288
8 there.

9 We went to Indiana and we established a
10 council there. We went to Michigan. We
11 established a council there, Iowa, Fort Dearborn,
12 Madison, Iowa, and then in Wisconsin we went up to
13 Racine, Wisconsin, too and Elgin I think we went to
14 Elgin, too, to establish a council there.

15 So we did some -- it was nice, Val
16 Hernandez was the chief. He was a very good
17 organizer.

18 He was a member of our organization. He
19 refused to run for any office within our council,
20 but he just loved to, loved to organize.

21 So he would set up the meetings for us in
22 these various communities. He would, I don't know
23 if there's a name for that, but he would go there
24 and so he would go, we would already have the date

1 set up and where to meet them and it was wonderful
2 meeting them.

3 I think the kindest people I have ever met
4 were in Iowa. They were the most hospitable
5 people, kindest people.

6 They went really went out of their way to
7 make you welcome, you know. You sleep in their
8 house and they feed you. It was so nice.

9 JUDGE HENRY: Is there a council in Aurora,
10 too, if you remember?

11 JUSTICE CERDA: Not in those days never. Now
12 probably, but never in those day, no. Bensenville
13 we had one.

14 JUDGE HENRY: And that organization --

15 JUSTICE CERDA: And there was another one out
16 far west, the three quarters.

17 JUDGE LOPEZ: Quad City.

18 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes, the Quad City area,
19 Moline. Moline, Illinois, and also Des Moines,
20 Iowa, also Moline, Illinois, yes.

21 JUDGE HENRY: And this organization is still in
22 existence? These organizations are still in
23 existence?

24 JUSTICE CERDA: They are bigger now.

1 JUDGE HENRY: International in scope?

2 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes, bigger, much bigger now.

3 JUDGE HENRY: Okay.

4 JUSTINE CERDA: But it was wonderful, sharing
5 the same problems that we had.

6 There was a lot of discrimination in the
7 community in which they lived and so they would
8 help them to feel a little bit better.

9 They felt better themselves if they could
10 organize and have a voice to protest, to organize,
11 to stand up, stand up for your rights and to bring
12 your claims to the national organization.

13 JUDGE HENRY: And you didn't feel as alone
14 either?

15 JUSTICE CERDA: No, you didn't feel alone, no.

16 JUDGE HENRY: I think we touched on that before
17 you came in about the lonely life of a sole
18 practitioner.

19 You were busy doing everything with nobody
20 to share the load with.

21 MS. MARTINEZ: I always felt sorry. I work in
22 the public defender's office. If I had a problem
23 or I had a bad judge I could go, oh, so it's always
24 nice to share that and I always felt sorry for

1 someone who was in private practice because they
2 didn't have that camaraderie that you have.

3 JUSTICE CERDA: And I think the communities
4 felt a little bit more part of where they live.

5 They got to meet the town officials of the
6 different towns before because they had an
7 organization that they would go to and talk to
8 them.

9 So they felt, more they became a more
10 active part in their own community.

11 JUDGE HENRY: Okay, you know, I think I am
12 going to have to stop.

13 JUSTICE CERDA: Okay.

14 JUDGE HENRY: Can you come back one more time?

15 JUSTICE CERDA: Sure, I can.

16 JUDGE HENRY: I would like to finish up with
17 the legal career, the judicial career and the
18 circuit court through '89 and your time on the
19 Appellate Court.

20 One thing I would like you to look think
21 about look for the next time, I would like you to
22 look back at the legal profession, how it's
23 progressed over the years and if you were king,
24 what you would to do change it or that it's okay,

1 whatever you think it is, but I just want you to
2 make your recommendation with all your experience
3 and your history as a practitioner and with the
4 court system and from the Appellate Court level,
5 what do you think can be done to change the system
6 over the next 50 years.

7 Just think about that. That's your
8 homework assignment.

9 JUSTICE CERDA: Okay, I could dream. I could
10 dream.

11 (WHICH WERE ALL the PROCEEDINGS
12 HAD IN the ABOVE-ENTITLED CAUSE
13 ON THIS DATE.)

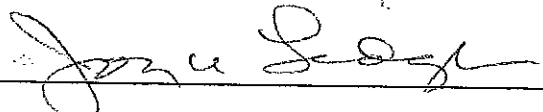
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1 STATE OF ILLINOIS)
2) SS:
3 COUNTY OF C O O K)
4

5 IN the CIRCUIT COURT OF COOK COUNTY, ILLINOIS
6 COUNTY DEPARTMENT - CHANCERY DIVISION
7

8 I, JOYCE LEDGER, Official Court Reporter
9 of the Circuit Court of Cook County, County
10 Department - Chancery Division, do hereby certify
11 that I reported in stenotype the proceedings had on
12 this date, that I thereafter caused the foregoing
13 to be transcribed into typewriting, which I certify
14 to be a true and accurate transcript.

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Official Court Reporter
084-001292

Dated this 20th day
of February 2006

1 STATE OF ILLINOIS)
2) SS
3 COUNTY OF C O O K)

4 IN the CIRCUIT COURT OF COOK COUNTY, ILLINOIS
5 COUNTY DEPARTMENT - CHANCERY DIVISION

6
7 REPORT OF THE HISTORY OF THE EARLY YEARS
8 of the Honorable DAVID CERDA on Friday, the 24th
9 day of June 2005.

10
11

12 ALSO PRESENT:
13 HON. JAMES F. HENRY
14 HON. MARK LOPEZ
15 MS. VIRGINIA MARTINEZ
16 MR. DAVID BADILO

17
18
19
20
21

22 Joyce Ledger, 084-001292
23 Official Court Reporter
24 69 W. Washington, 9th Floor
Chicago, Il. 60602

1 JUDGE HENRY: Okay, Justice Cerda, again I want
2 to thank you for giving us the time to share with
3 us, your experiences both in Chicago and your family
4 history and your educational background, and today,
5 for your third session here, what I would like to
6 go through is your experience as a judge.

7 We are going to go into your judicial
8 career, your time acting as a judge, how you
9 perceived it, what were the good points, the bad
10 points, what you think could be improved about the
11 system, how you enjoyed being a judge and then also
12 moving into your appellate career.

13 How did that role change from being the
14 arbiter of disputes in the trenches as they say and
15 conducting trials and hearing motions and having a
16 lot of contact with lawyers and then going up to
17 the Appellate Court and have to have more of a
18 cloistered life.

19 So I would like you to just be mulling
20 that over in the back of your head as we go through
21 this and then one question I ask everybody, if you
22 were king what would you do for the legal system to
23 make it better and, Counsel, if you have anything
24 that you want to ask, please, please, please, jump

1 in at any time because your input would be very
2 much appreciated and then I also told Justice Cerda
3 before that we got the first transcript back,
4 Joyce, is working on another one and today's will
5 be the third.

6 I was going to give them to Mark. I would
7 go through them and Mark would go through them for
8 typos and different things like that and then if
9 you could proofread it with us, each of us take a
10 volume or each of us proofread what the other has
11 proofread and make sure we have all the spellings
12 right, the names of Mexican cities or towns if they
13 are spelled properly and then the judge could go
14 over them himself and anything that might trigger,
15 oh, I wish I had said one other thing about that
16 situation, I remember that now, then maybe we could
17 have a fourth session to wrap up any of the issues
18 that the judge would need to make a whole package
19 complete. Okay, and that's the plan.

20 All right, Judge, you have just been
21 elected, appointed.

22 Did you become an associate judge first?

23 JUSTICE CERDA: An associate judge, we were
24 called magistrates at that time, and after I was

1 sworn in it was May 1st, 1965, there were five of
2 us in Chicago, new, brand new judges who went out
3 to the 6th Municipal District, out to Blue Island.

4 We didn't have any court building, but we
5 would go to town to town, but I liked what Maurice
6 Schulz did for us.

7 He had the five of us go to visit the
8 different towns and sit in, say a morning and watch
9 one of the judges conduct a, hearings, you know, go
10 over the court hearings for that particular day, I
11 thought that was very good.

12 JUDGE HENRY: Who was Maurice Schulz?

13 JUSTICE CERDA: He was the presiding judge of
14 the 6th Municipal District, you know, elected judge
15 and I had never heard about him before, and I never
16 heard about him before, and I don't know anything
17 about his background or anything else about him.

18 JUDGE HENRY: Do you know if he was elected
19 from a district, if he was elected county-wide, if
20 he was elected to be the presiding judge of the 6th
21 Municipal District?

22 JUSTICE CERDA: No, Boyle assigned him.

23 The chief judge of the Circuit Court named
24 him to be the presiding judge of the 6th Municipal

1 District. That much I know.

2 JUDGE HENRY: So the court system had been
3 unified by that time?

4 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes, it had been unified the
5 year before.

6 JUDGE HENRY: So it was John Boyle then that
7 would have assigned you to the 6th Municipal
8 District upon your appointment as an associate
9 judge?

10 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes.

11 JUDGE HENRY: Okay, and your first day in
12 court, after you got out there to sit in the
13 courtroom and watch a judge were you turned loose
14 the next day as an expert?

15 JUSTICE CERDA: I think it was a couple of days
16 later.

17 JUDGE HENRY: A couple.

18 JUSTICE CERDA: Which was good, and I, you know
19 we got behind the bench and it felt so different.

20 It felt so different to be behind the
21 bench than in front of the bench.

22 There was a big difference. There was
23 more responsibility, you know, to conduct and to
24 give everyone a fair hearing, move things along and

1 give everyone a chance, make sure everyone's case
2 was called and to make rulings.

3 So that was, you know, a big, big change,
4 for the five of us, not only me. We felt
5 different, which was, you know, when we had to
6 change.

7 JUDGE HENRY: Were you nervous the first time?

8 JUSTICE CERDA: Oh, very nervous, but less
9 nervous because I had sat and watched and I was so
10 grateful that I had the opportunity to see some of
11 the others, I think it was Crane, Ronald Crane I
12 think was one of them out there who we observed out
13 in the 6th Municipal District.

14 JUDGE HENRY: Okay, did in your first couple of
15 days on the bench did any Hispanics appear before
16 you?

17 JUSTICE CERDA: No, that I know.

18 JUDGE HENRY: Did it happen -- when was the
19 first time that it did?

20 JUSTICE CERDA: When I was back in Chicago. I
21 had to come back to Chicago for that.

22 JUDGE HENRY: Happened in Chicago?

23 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes.

24 JUDGE HENRY: How did it feel?

1 Were you able to speak, were they able to
2 converse with you in Spanish?

3 JUSTICE CERDA: No, it was -- I didn't because
4 the contrast was so great between the suburbs which
5 has a slow pace, very few cases and the traffic
6 court where you have, I don't know 100, 200, 300,
7 400 cases and you have to go very fast and I didn't
8 realize it was Sebastian Rivera until I looked up,
9 raised my head to look and it was him and he was
10 asking for a continuance and I gave him the
11 continuance.

12 JUDGE HENRY: Who was that?

13 JUSTICE CERDA: Sebastian Rivera; he's the
14 dean. He was the dean of the Hispanic lawyers.

15 He was licensed to practice law in 1926
16 one year before I was born.

17 JUDGE HENRY: Wow, and was his family from
18 Chicago or?

19 JUSTICE CERDA: He was from Puerto Rico.

20 JUDGE HENRY: He was from Puerto Rico.

21 JUSTICE CERDA: I know he started studying in
22 the seminary, but it wasn't for him and then he
23 came over here and he went to Northwestern Law
24 School. He was the dean.

1 JUDGE HENRY: And his name was Sebastian?

2 JUSTICE CERDA: Sebastian Rivera.

3 JUDGE HENRY: Did you have ever hear of him?

4 MS. MARTINEZ: Yes.

5 JUDGE HENRY: And what kind of case did he
6 appear before you on?

7 JUSTICE CERDA: A traffic court case, a traffic
8 court case. He was a solo practitioner so he
9 handled everything in his office.

10 JUDGE HENRY: And you knew him prior to that?

11 JUSTICE CERDA: I knew him prior to that time,
12 yes, I knew him because we were practicing law, I
13 was practicing law and of course social friend and,
14 you know.

15 JUDGE HENRY: That must have been an amazing
16 experience for him to finally to be able to appear
17 before a Hispanic colleague on the bench?

18 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes, and I was elected in '66
19 and the opportunity came for him to become a judge
20 in '68.

21 I know Mayor Daley, you know, wanted him
22 to become an elected judge, an associate judge and
23 the committee nominated him the Democratic
24 committee nominated him, and then lo and behold he

1 turned it down, because he couldn't leave his solo
2 practice, he just couldn't. You know, he had been
3 practicing for so long.

4 He was, I don't know, how old at that
5 time. When he died in 1990 he was 88 years old, so
6 this was what, 28 years less than that, so he was
7 60 years old.

8 JUSTICE CERDA: High mark.

9 JUDGE HENRY: I think recently the Supreme
10 Court proposed or is adopting rules that you be
11 allowed to sell a law practice where at that time
12 it probably wasn't possible.

13 If you are a solo practitioner, your
14 clients are relying on you.

15 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes.

16 JUDGE HENRY: You just can't walk away from
17 them either.

18 JUSTICE CERDA: He just couldn't do it and he
19 turned it down.

20 JUDGE HENRY: Did he have a family?

21 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes, he had a family, I know a
22 couple of boys and a girl.

23 JUDGE HENRY: We are talking about the dean of
24 Hispanic lawyers in Chicago, Sebastian Rivera. He

1 was from Puerto Rico, licensed to practice law in
2 Illinois one year before Justice Cerda was born.

3 He was busy in traffic court as a new
4 judge and this particular lawyer, you know, when
5 you have your head down in traffic court, you are
6 not looking, appeared before him in a traffic
7 matter, asking for a continuance on behalf of his
8 client.

9 The reason I asked if he had any family, I
10 was just wondering did any of them become lawyers?

11 JUSTICE CERDA: No, no, I know one of his
12 children was in public relations, Arlington
13 Racetrack, still active in, maybe not racetrack,
14 but something along those lines.

15 I think he used to write for the Tribune,
16 or something, maybe about the horses. Thomas Rivera
17 is his name.

18 JUDGE HENRY: Okay, so when you came into the
19 traffic court in Chicago, you did then had the
20 opportunity to have Hispanic --

21 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes.

22 JUDGE HENRY: -- lawyers appear before you.

23 What response do you feel you got from
24 them when they stepped up before you and did you

1 speak Spanish with them?

2 JUSTICE CERDA: No, no, I never spoke Spanish
3 to them. We wouldn't speak Spanish to one another,
4 no.

5 JUDGE HENRY: Would you get an interpreter to
6 come in and handle it?

7 JUSTICE CERDA: At that time sometimes we would
8 need the lawyer to do the interpretation because
9 they didn't have interpreters at the beginning.

10 Later I know we used to have meetings with
11 Judge Wachowski urging him to have interpreters in
12 the courtroom and then he pushed it and so that it
13 was included in the budget and he did push for it
14 and we did get interpreters.

15 He was in on the beginning, Judge
16 Wachowski.

17 JUDGE HENRY: My experience in traffic court
18 was without the interpreters. There was no
19 justice.

20 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes.

21 JUDGE HENRY: Well, first of all you couldn't
22 handle a case. The number of languages spoken in
23 Cook County is phenomenal.

24 JUSTICE CERDA: Sometimes they would have their

1 children, you know, or a friend act as interpreter.

2 That's how it would work out. Does anyone
3 speak Spanish?

4 The clerk or somebody would speak Spanish
5 and then they would do the interpreting. That's
6 how we worked it out at that time.

7 JUDGE HENRY: Now they have languages, the
8 Clerk of the Circuit Court says there's 50
9 different interpreters on call.

10 Many of the courtrooms have Polish or
11 Spanish interpreters assigned to them, so you
12 always have some including the more rare languages
13 there are interpreters available, but you have to
14 tell them a few days in advance.

15 How long were you in -- where was the
16 traffic court located when you came to Chicago?

17 JUSTICE CERDA: It was located the same, three,
18 what is it, 321 North LaSalle?

19 JUDGE HENRY: And how many judges were sitting
20 there at that time?

21 JUSTICE CERDA: I don't know, 20, something
22 like that.

23 JUDGE HENRY: And how long did you spend there?

24 JUSTICE CERDA: I spent there from I think May

1 of 1966 and I remember I was there even after I was
2 elected, I'd say probably around January or
3 February; February of '67 probably.

4 No, I was there a year, no, ten months,
5 about ten months, roughly ten months I was there,
6 now I remember, ten months.

7 JUDGE HENRY: How do you remember your
8 experience in traffic court?

9 JUSTICE CERDA: Oh, it was, it was hectic
10 because you had so many cases.

11 I remember some of the lawyers, the judges
12 would immediately leave after a full day's work,
13 but I couldn't leave.

14 I was so tired at the end of day I would
15 just stay there for about five minutes, you know,
16 before I felt okay.

17 Again, then I would walk out, because all
18 of those cases, the volume of cases that we used to
19 have used to be pretty heavy.

20 JUDGE HENRY: You know I was in traffic court,
21 too.

22 Mark, I don't know, did you sit in traffic
23 court?

24 JUDGE LOPEZ: Two weeks.

1 THE COURT: And everybody that I know was.

2 MR. BADILLO: I'm here for the hearing.

3 MS. MARTINEZ: You are David, right?

4 MR. BADILLO: Yes.

5 MS. MARTINEZ: He is doing a book on the
6 history of Maldef which is in the '70s.

7 MS. MARTINEZ: Yes.

8 MR. BADILLO: Virginia told me about your
9 event.

10 JUDGE HENRY: Great. Come on in. Sit wherever
11 you want.

12 MR. BADILLO: Sorry I am late.

13 I'm David Badillo, Leman College in New
14 York.

15 JUDGE HENRY: This is Judge Mark Lopez and this
16 is Justice Cerda.

17 MR. BADILLO: Hi.

18 JUDGE HENRY: And Joyce is our court reporter.

19 MR. BADILLO: B-a-d-i-l-l-o.

20 JUDGE HENRY: If you have any questions that
21 you want to ask, please feel free to cut in.

22 What we are doing today, this is the third
23 session we have had with the Justice and we are
24 covering his experiences as a trial judge.

1 Then we are going to ask him to explain or
2 tell us anything else about, about being on the
3 Appellate Court and the differences between the two
4 and the last question was if you were king, what
5 would you do to make the judiciary a better place
6 to be.

7 MR. BADILLO: And you are going to have another
8 hearing after this?

9 JUDGE HENRY: Well, we will proofread the
10 transcripts when they are available. We have got
11 the first one back and then we will correct any
12 typos. Joyce can redo that on her machine.

13 We are going to proofread them for other
14 reasons, to make sure all the spellings are
15 correct, some of the terms are spelled correctly or
16 other words aren't familiar with and then the
17 Justice can take a look at it.

18 Some of the comments we have recorded may
19 spur a memory he would like to include.

20 MR. BADILLO: But this is the last formal
21 interview session?

22 THE COURT: Yes. None of them are formal.

23 MR. BADILLO: Right.

24 JUDGE HENRY: They are more formal than

1 informal, just to give the Justice an opportunity
2 to relive his career and the principle reason is
3 that judges have generally not over the course of
4 history have not been interviewed, just generally
5 not part of the regime of being a judge and so many
6 very smart and wonderful people that have a lot to
7 speak to the future generation of lawyers, we
8 wanted to preserve that. That's the purpose of
9 this.

10 So where were we at? Traffic court; my
11 experience in traffic court was that every judge
12 that sat in traffic court at the end of the day was
13 exhausted and worked harder and used up more energy
14 while sitting there handling hundreds of cases than
15 they were when they were in private practice.

16 In private practice you got a break. You
17 had to go to the next client. You had to go to the
18 next courthouse.

19 You could take a little break, but there
20 it was just one after another, after another.

21 JUSTICE CERDA: So many.

22 JUDGE HENRY: So many cases and so little time.

23 JUSTICE CERDA: That's true.

24 JUDGE HENRY: But I did get the sense and tell

1 me if you agree or disagree, that justice was done
2 in those cases there, that even though there were a
3 lot of cases people did feel that they got a chance
4 to say their piece.

5 How did you feel?

6 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes, I think we felt the same
7 way; maybe not as much as time allowed in the
8 suburbs.

9 In the suburbs we handled a lot of traffic
10 cases in the suburbs, in the 6th District and there
11 they had more time to go into all of the facts and
12 all the details, but here it was a sort of
13 abbreviated and we just got the essentials of what
14 had happened and so I think we did a -- we did as
15 best a job as we possibly could to give everyone a
16 fair hearing.

17 JUDGE HENRY: Okay, go ahead.

18 JUSTICE CERDA: That's what we always tried to
19 do is give them a fair hearing.

20 JUDGE HENRY: Did you have any jury trials
21 while you were there?

22 JUSTICE CERDA: No, I think. No, I think at
23 that time there was a special room for jury trials
24 where we would -- if someone would ask for a jury

1 trial, we would send them out to the jury room.

2 So even at that time there was a jury room
3 for jury trials.

4 JUDGE HENRY: Okay. Where was your assignment
5 when you left traffic court?

6 Where did you go next?

7 JUSTICE CERDA: After that I went up to the
8 Daley Center and I handled small claims, contract
9 cases, personal injury cases, non-jury, non-jury---
10 no, it included jury.

11 JUDGE HENRY: And that would have been in the
12 1st Municipal District?

13 JUSTICE CERDA: 1st Municipal District, yes.

14 JUDGE HENRY: And who was your presiding judge
15 at that time?

16 JUSTICE CERDA: I think Drumalski was the one.
17 Drumalski --

18 JUDGE HENRY: Okay.

19 JUSTICE CERDA: -- was the presiding judge of
20 the 1st Municipal District, Raymond Drumalski.

21 JUDGE HENRY: Having been in private practice,
22 these were the type of cases that you were
23 handling?

24 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes, those were my cases.

1 JUDGE HENRY: You must have felt very
2 comfortable in that assignment?

3 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes, I felt better.

4 JUDGE HENRY: How long did you stay there?

5 JUSTICE CERDA: Only a few months, only a few
6 months because then I was assigned to 61st and
7 Racine, Boys Court.

8 JUDGE HENRY: Now when you say, "Boys Court"
9 was that a part of the juvenile justice system?

10 JUSTICE CERDA: No, no. They would get sent to
11 the same jails, prisons as the adults, but these
12 were boys 17 through up to 21 years of age at the
13 time of the commission of the alleged crime.

14 JUDGE HENRY: I see, so it was a kind of an
15 in-between?

16 JUSTICE CERDA: In-between. The difference is
17 that we had social workers there who could -- I
18 thought that was different, that we give them a
19 chance to straighten out their lives.

20 JUDGE HENRY: Okay.

21 JUSTICE CERDA: Through a social worker.

22 JUDGE HENRY: What was the facility like at
23 61st and --

24 JUSTICE CERDA: Bad. It was on top of a police

1 station with no air conditioning. We had fans.

2 During hot weather it was pretty horrible
3 and we had wall to wall people naturally in those,
4 in the police courts.

5 JUDGE HENRY: Now, that area in the-- of the
6 City in the late '60s was an area that might be
7 characterized as racially changing.

8 There were African Americans moving in.
9 This was Englewood, right?

10 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes, it was Englewood.

11 JUDGE HENRY: Then on the west end of Englewood
12 it was predominantly Anglo?

13 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes.

14 JUDGE HENRY: Were there any Hispanics that
15 were living in that district?

16 JUSTICE CERDA: Very few, hardly any. No, I
17 didn't have to speak of.

18 JUDGE HENRY: Did that court have any
19 geographical jurisdiction, such as, was it every
20 case involving a juvenile between the ages of
21 17 and 21, south of Madison Street or east of
22 Racine or did it go out to the southeast side or
23 was it?

24 JUSTICE CERDA: Oh, yes, it did encompass most

1 of the southeast side except the South Chicago
2 area, South Chicago area, some cases, but I also
3 sat later at the South Chicago court but they
4 hardly ever had any cases.

5 We had most of the cases. I don't know
6 how. They got a few cases. They hardly had any
7 cases on their call in South Chicago.

8 JUDGE HENRY: Was there a north side Boys
9 Court?

10 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes, Judge Epton, Saul Epton
11 had the north side.

12 JUDGE HENRY: I see.

13 JUSTICE CERDA: I think it was Zelezinski who
14 had the Boys Court at 11th and State.

15 JUDGE HENRY: So there was?

16 JUSTICE CERDA: Three of us.

17 JUDGE HENRY: Three.

18 JUSTICE CERDA: Three boys courts.

19 JUDGE HENRY: And once in a while some of these
20 cases would get assigned to, there was another
21 branch court at 89th and Commercial?

22 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes, right, 89th and
23 Commercial.

24 JUDGE HENRY: And when you referred to the

1 South Chicago Court that you sat in later that's --

2 JUSTICE CERDA: That's the courtroom.

3 JUDGE HENRY: Was that courtroom also in a
4 police station?

5 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes, it was also a police
6 station.

7 JUDGE HENRY: How long were you in Boys Court?

8 JUSTICE CERDA: I think from '67 to '69, about
9 two, two and a half years, something like that.

10 JUDGE HENRY: Was that a difficult assignment?

11 JUSTICE CERDA: That was a difficult assignment
12 because you had to try and be fair to -- they were
13 gangs.

14 There were a lot of gangs were prevalent
15 in that area and the gangs were just spreading out.

16 We had the Blackstone Rangers with Fort,
17 Fort, F-o-r-t, was the leader of gangs at that time
18 and James Montgomery was their lawyer at that time.

19 So he would come in with money, cash in a
20 bag and put up the bond money for the gang members
21 and we had the Disciples, too.

22 We were actually in Disciple territory at
23 that time.

24 JUDGE HENRY: Those were principle rival gangs?

1 JUSTICE CERDA: Rivals, yes, they were rivals.

2 JUDGE HENRY: What type of --

3 JUSTICE CERDA: We had to have the Blackstone
4 Rangers escorted into our courtroom to get through.

5 JUDGE HENRY: From their home?

6 JUSTICE CERDA: From their home, yes.

7 JUDGE HENRY: To the court?

8 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes, to the courtroom.

9 JUDGE HENRY: What type of cases were they
10 charged with?

11 JUSTICE CERDA: They were about shootings, a
12 lot of shootings, lot of shootings.

13 Shootings were prevalent in that area.

14 JUDGE HENRY: Were there drugs?

15 JUSTICE CERDA: A little bit, a little bit of
16 drugs, not much, not much drugs at that time.

17 This was '69. There was some drugs, yes.

18 JUDGE HENRY: Mostly violent crimes?

19 JUSTICE CERDA: Mostly violent crimes.

20 JUDGE HENRY: Did Jeff Fort ever appear before
21 you?

22 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes, he appeared before me a
23 few times, yes, he did.

24 JUDGE HENRY: What was your feelings about him?

1 JUSTICE CERDA: I tried to always give him a
2 fair trial.

3 I always tried to do my best to not to,
4 you know, hurt him or give him a break either, just
5 try to be fair to him.

6 I think that was the best policy.

7 JUDGE HENRY: Did he ever have to testify in
8 court before you?

9 JUSTICE CERDA: No, no, never had to testify,
10 never had to testify. I know that.

11 JUDGE HENRY: Just as an aside, I talked to
12 Judge Epton one time about his experience with Jeff
13 Fort because he also saw quite a bit of him and he
14 said, "You are such a natural leader. Why are you
15 using your talent to lead your community into
16 despair. I mean could you use these same
17 organizational skills and be a great leader."

18 "I will keep that in mind judge," is what
19 he said.

20 Can we go off the record for just a
21 second?

22 (Discussion off the record.)

23 JUDGE HENRY: Anyway, let's go back. Amazing.

24 JUSTICE CERDA: And he had his group organized

1 and they plugged into this work.

2 The federal government was giving out
3 money to train people in order to get jobs.

4 So just for attending these training
5 sessions they would get paid every week and he had
6 his people there and they would turn over their
7 checks to him.

8 So he would collect all their money.
9 That's how he -- that's one of the ways how he
10 collected his cash.

11 JUDGE HENRY: Did you sense that there was any
12 problem with complaining witnesses testifying in
13 those cases?

14 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes, a lot of times they had
15 problems getting someone to testify against him.
16 There was a problem.

17 JUDGE HENRY: So at the end of your tenure
18 there, did you find that system was operating
19 efficiently? Were you frustrated?

20 Did you sense that justice was done, not
21 talking about you as a judge.

22 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes.

23 JUDGE HENRY: I am just talking about the
24 impact that the criminal justice system would have

1 on the neighborhood.

2 Was it able to effectively diminish crime?
3 Was the problem bigger than the criminal justice
4 system? What was your sense?

5 JUSTICE CERDA: I thought that we were losing
6 ground with them.

7 I thought that a lot of times maybe not
8 including them, the Blackstone Rangers, the
9 Disciples, but there were other gangs, too.

10 They wouldn't testify against each other
11 because they would shoot each other.

12 The guy who was a victim one time, next
13 time he would come to court he was a defendant and
14 he shot the guy who shot him and they would just
15 have that gang warfare where they meted out their
16 sense of justice to the other people.

17 JUDGE HENRY: Like the wild west?

18 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes, like the wild west. They
19 didn't really let the courts decide it. You can't
20 force -- I tried many time to get them to testify.

21 I had them in front of me, tried to coerce
22 them into testifying, but they wouldn't testify.

23 JUDGE HENRY: I suppose that's their right.

24 JUSTICE CERDA: That's their right, you know.

1 Then I just stopped doing it because I
2 don't live in their neighborhood and, you know,
3 there's some problems sometimes, you know, in
4 testifying, so I stopped doing it.

5 JUDGE HENRY: One of the problems with being a
6 judge is you are alone a lot.

7 Did you ever have a chance to meet with
8 Judge Epton or Judge Zelezinski and discuss common
9 problems in different parts of the city and how you
10 were doing?

11 JUSTICE CERDA: No, we didn't, we didn't, no.

12 JUDGE HENRY: Did you feel isolated?

13 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes, I felt isolated on the
14 south side.

15 JUDGE HENRY: Were you the only judge assigned
16 to 61st?

17 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes, only one judge.

18 JUDGE HENRY: And you had felony jurisdiction,
19 so you could hear any matter?

20 JUSTICE CERDA: No, we couldn't hear felony
21 trials. We couldn't do it.

22 JUDGE HENRY: Okay, when you moved out of 61st
23 and Wentworth what was your next assignment?

24 JUSTICE CERDA: Housing court.

1 JUDGE HENRY: Okay, in the Daley Center?

2 JUSTICE CERDA: Here at the Daley Center, yes.

3 JUDGE HENRY: Who was your boss there?

4 JUSTICE CERDA: I think it was Wachowski at
5 that time, Judge Wachowski.

6 JUDGE HENRY: And how long did you serve in
7 that assignment?

8 JUSTICE CERDA: I think it was about three
9 years, I think.

10 JUDGE HENRY: Okay.

11 JUSTICE CERDA: About three years in housing
12 court, pretty close to three years.

13 JUDGE HENRY: And how did you find that
14 assignment? Now you are back in quasi-civil a
15 assignment.

16 61st and Racine must have seemed like a
17 million miles away.

18 JUSTICE CERDA: There was a lot less pressure
19 then because at the Boys Court, someone was going
20 to go to jail perhaps, you know, and so, there's a
21 lot of pressure on you.

22 I used to sit at the edge of my seat
23 trying to listen and hear everything and then in
24 housing court, they were just fines, you know.

1 So I just relaxed. It was a much more
2 laid back courtroom than Boys Court.

3 JUDGE HENRY: Was Boys Court depressing to you?

4 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes, it was depressing. It was
5 depressing, so much violence.

6 JUDGE HENRY: How did you feel when you were
7 driving too and from court?

8 Did you just look out and wonder where the
9 next brick is going to fall or?

10 JUSTICE CERDA: We used to park right at the
11 police station. So I felt a little bit safer
12 there.

13 I remember when they killed Martin Luther
14 King, all of us would put our headlights on, on the
15 automobiles because that's what we were told, you
16 know, so we wouldn't have any problems. Drive
17 around with headlights.

18 So that's what we did. I had headlights
19 on. I wouldn't go out for lunch. I would eat my
20 lunch there in my chambers and there would be a
21 loud groan from the people that I would take 30
22 minutes to eat lunch, you know, because everybody,
23 the cops, the witnesses, they want to get out and
24 they just want you to stay there and not eat or

1 drink or do anything.

2 JUDGE HENRY: How many cases would you have on
3 the call?

4 JUSTICE CERDA: I don't know. I really don't
5 know how many, but we used to be there until 5:00
6 o'clock, 5:00 o'clock, long days.

7 JUDGE HENRY: And putting eight or nine hours
8 on the bench.

9 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes.

10 JUDGE HENRY: Where you are the sole focus of
11 every word that's spoken is tiring.

12 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes, it was tiring. That's why
13 a big contrast with housing court.

14 JUDGE HENRY: So now in housing court a lot of
15 the social problems that are endemic in the city,
16 they appeared before you in the form of a housing
17 court violation?

18 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes.

19 JUDGE HENRY: How were you able to deal with
20 that? Did you feel the city was being fair in their
21 prosecution of housing court matters?

22 Do you feel like they could have done
23 more, they were doing not enough? Was it strictly
24 enforcement?

1 Were there other remedies to the people
2 available to get their houses fixed?

3 How did you view your role there? Was it
4 solely as a judge?

5 JUSTICE CERDA: At first, you know, I started
6 to push them and fine them for not fixing up their
7 buildings, but then, you know, later on I realized
8 that it was better if they could show me some
9 progress, that they are doing something to fix up
10 their buildings.

11 They would just show me a little bit of
12 progress, then I would give them an opportunity.

13 So I turned from being hard on them to
14 push them to, to give them time.

15 As long as they were doing something, you
16 know, some of them, they had to get a loan to get
17 some money to do the repairs.

18 We would give them time to get a loan, to
19 close the loan and to make the repairs, but one
20 thing that was very frustrating to me was there
21 were these, I don't know what name would you call
22 them?

23 These are, these are people that would buy
24 buildings and they would put them in different

1 names and then they would soak the building, no --
2 they bought the building with that intention to
3 just soak all of the money out of them and not do
4 any repairs, let the building run down, buy another
5 building and do the same thing.

6 There were a few of them we just had a
7 hard time trying to pin them down because they
8 would give them to somebody else, somebody else
9 comes in and he is doing it.

10 We don't know whether he is the owner,
11 it's the same owner or not. They were very slick.

12 That problem persisted even after I left.
13 I used to read about in the papers how they would
14 try and try to get them, but that was very
15 frustrating.

16 One thing that was very nice is around
17 Taylor Street. That's where I saw an area that
18 they had a lot of progress and we gave them a lot
19 of time and we saw what they did to that
20 neighborhood on Taylor Street.

21 Oh, boy, did they put in a lot of money in
22 there. Now it's a very good neighborhood.

23 JUDGE HENRY: So you think the housing court
24 had a positive effect?

1 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes, we did have a positive
2 effect there, but sometimes it was frustrating.

3 JUDGE HENRY: What do you think was the key to
4 a neighborhood where the housing court apparatus
5 had success?

6 Was it the involvement of the community?

7 JUSTICE CERDA: I think it was the involvement
8 of the community, oh, yes. That's the key.

9 If you don't get the community involved,
10 we used to have community people who would come in
11 to testify and then we would put more pressure on
12 the owner and that was good to see is that the
13 community was involved. They usually got results.

14 JUDGE HENRY: What other communities in your
15 experience had similar experiences as the Taylor
16 Street neighborhood?

17 JUSTICE CERDA: I think at the beginning of,
18 the University of Illinois in that area, too, in
19 that particular area.

20 JUDGE HENRY: Anything -- was your jurisdiction
21 in that, in your particular Housing Court that you
22 sat in, was it --

23 JUSTICE CERDA: We only have a certain, there
24 were other housing court judges, so we had

1 different areas.

2 JUDGE HENRY: It was geographical.

3 JUSTICE CERDA: It was geographical. I had
4 some on the west side and some on the south side,
5 too, not the north side.

6 JUDGE HENRY: Any place else on the south and
7 west side where you feel the housing court had an
8 impact on the community?

9 JUSTICE CERDA: Only pockets, there were
10 pockets on the south side where they had the
11 community involvement.

12 I think the Oakland area as I recall.
13 They had an organization there that pushed for
14 better housing and together we did a little bit.

15 There were only small pockets compared to
16 the University of Illinois and Taylor Street.

17 JUDGE HENRY: Any jury trials in that
18 assignment?

19 JUSTICE CERDA: No, we didn't have any jury
20 trials at that time, no.

21 JUDGE HENRY: What was your next step?

22 JUSTICE CERDA: After that I think it was, oh,
23 after that I went to 11th and State.

24 JUDGE HENRY: That's still in the 1st Municipal

1 District.

2 JUSTICE CERDA: 1st Municipal District, yes.

3 JUDGE HENRY: Now you are back in the criminal
4 court?

5 JUSTICE CERDA: I had gun court. I had gun
6 court, racket court, the policy wheels. I had a
7 lot of those policy wheel cases.

8 Now I don't -- because of lottery, I think
9 they are out of business or if they are they are
10 minuscule, but we had a lot of policy wheel cases
11 there which was interesting.

12 JUDGE HENRY: And were you the only Judge
13 assigned to 11th and State?

14 JUSTICE CERDA: For that, for gun court, yes.
15 No, we used to have two judges there. One in the
16 courtroom and one in the small room in the back.
17 So there were two of us.

18 JUDGE HENRY: Who was there when you were
19 there?

20 JUDGE HENRY: Oh, I remember I couldn't
21 remember his name. I can't remember his name
22 because he was an associate judge and he was
23 elected and I can't remember his name.

24 JUDGE HENRY: That's okay. How did you divide

1 up the work between you?

2 JUSTICE CERDA: I sat in the courtroom and he
3 sat in the back.

4 JUDGE HENRY: Okay.

5 JUSTICE CERDA: That's how we divided it up.

6 JUDGE HENRY: What was the volume over there?

7 JUSTICE CERDA: It was heavy, but only for a
8 while. It wasn't all day long. We had an
9 afternoon call, but that was lighter than the
10 morning call. The morning call was heavy.

11 JUDGE HENRY: What was the ethnic makeup of the
12 defendants that appeared before you in that court?

13 JUSTICE CERDA: It was a mixture.

14 It was a good mixture, black, Anglo
15 mixture in gun court.

16 JUDGE HENRY: And were a lot of these cases
17 were they repeat offenders?

18 JUSTICE CERDA: Some of them.

19 JUDGE HENRY: In gun court, was it illegal
20 possession of the gun?

21 JUSTICE CERDA: That's what it was, illegal
22 possession, not for shooting, illegal possession.

23 JUDGE HENRY: So the people that were brought
24 in they needed to have a city permit or state

1 permit?

2 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes.

3 JUDGE HENRY: I see, and if they were stopped
4 for a traffic stop and had a gun then that case
5 would end up going to gun court rather than to
6 traffic court?

7 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes.

8 JUDGE HENRY: And traffic tickets would follow
9 with the gun case over to you at gun court? Is that
10 how it worked?

11 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes, that's how it worked.

12 JUDGE HENRY: Okay, what were the defenses that
13 the people would have for not getting a permit?

14 JUSTICE CERDA: I don't remember what their,
15 what their defenses were, you know.

16 "It wasn't my gun. Someone else was
17 driving the car and I didn't know that he left the
18 gun in the automobile," you know.

19 "It wasn't my gun. It was somebody
20 else's gun."

21 JUDGE HENRY: Well, that's good to know.

22 JUSTICE CERDA: And sometimes there's a bunch
23 of guys in the car and one of them is the
24 Defendant.

1 JUDGE HENRY: Last one out of the car owned the
2 gun.

3 JUSTICE CERDA: The owner, the owner of the
4 car.

5 JUDGE HENRY: How long did you stay in that
6 assignment?

7 JUSTICE CERDA: I think it was from '73, I
8 think to '75.

9 JUDGE HENRY: You have gotten to see quite an
10 amalgam of Chicago's -- the grit of the city.

11 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes.

12 JUDGE HENRY: When I say, grit, I mean in the
13 sense that where there are frictions among
14 community groups and owners of property and gangs
15 that are moving in and overtaking neighborhoods and
16 attempts to regulate guns and the people in court
17 may not necessarily be criminals other than the
18 fact that they didn't have a permit for the gun
19 that they had.

20 So you had a quite a view of the '60s and
21 early '70s from a seat in the front line?

22 JUSTICE CERDA: And some of them were good,
23 outstanding citizens and you hate to, you know,
24 have them get a criminal record.

1 Some of them we would give them court
2 supervision. We could tell it was there just for
3 their personal safety.

4 Some of them were guards who should have
5 known better, security guards too, who know that
6 they are not supposed to carry the gun on their
7 person.

8 JUDGE HENRY: Did it strike you as odd that it
9 seemed like a lot of police station were, I am
10 sorry, a lot of the courts were in police stations?

11 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes.

12 JUDGE HENRY: Did that rub you the wrong way?

13 JUSTICE CERDA: It's true because then they
14 think that you are prosecution minded because you
15 are in the police court.

16 JUDGE HENRY: I know, when Ellis Reid was
17 interviewed, one of his concerns was he ultimately
18 became head of the 1st Municipal District was to
19 separate the police from the court process in the
20 suburban courtrooms.

21 He used to go to court in the village hall
22 which is also part of the police station and
23 Justice Reid always felt as a practicing lawyer
24 when he was walking into a courtroom to represent

1 somebody and the judge and the police were having
2 doughnuts and coffee in the back, he didn't quite
3 feel that there was the same separation of the two
4 combatants that would be more appropriate.

5 JUDGE LOPEZ: Sure.

6 THE COURT: So you had that same feeling?

7 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes, I had that same feeling,
8 too.

9 Sometimes in all of my assignments up to
10 that point I had been pulled out for periods of
11 time.

12 I remember I opened up the second violent
13 felony, violent forcible felony.

14 I forgot the name of the court at 11th and
15 State -- I mean at 26th and California and also a
16 drug court.

17 I know I opened up one of the courtrooms
18 for drug cases at 26th and California.

19 JUDGE HENRY: Did you volunteer for that
20 assignment?

21 JUSTICE CERDA: No, no, never volunteer. Never
22 volunteer.

23 They pulled me out and also I had the
24 homicide call which was the worst assignment I ever

1 had because it was very sad.

2 I used to start at around 5:00 o'clock in
3 the evening until whatever time at night and it was
4 sad to see these five, six or seven-year-old kids
5 testify about their mother's boyfriend, you know,
6 the mother's boy friend who did the shooting, shot
7 his mother, shot his brother, you know.

8 It was very sad. The little boy on the
9 stand and you tried to qualify him as a competent
10 witness and very, very, very, sad.

11 Saw a lot of family shootings and it was
12 very, very sad it was to hear. That was, that was
13 my worst assignment.

14 JUDGE HENRY: Now were you doing preliminary
15 hearings there?

16 JUSTICE CERDA: Preliminary hearings, all
17 preliminary hearings on the homicide call, a lot of
18 them and there were so many cases, so many cases
19 and so many cases.

20 JUDGE HENRY: How did you feel after driving
21 home?

22 JUSTICE CERDA: There I felt sad, very bad,
23 very bad about home life, you know, about society
24 in general, you know, failing us.

1 JUDGE HENRY: As a judge you are kind of just
2 overseeing what's happening.

3 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes.

4 JUDGE HENRY: Do you think that judges should
5 be more politically active?

6 When I say politically active I mean
7 lobbying for rules, regulations, statutes, money to
8 be used to combat the social problems that result
9 in these criminal activities?

10 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes, I think we should have
11 representatives from the judiciary who should be
12 lobbying for those changes for money in the budget.

13 JUDGE HENRY: Would that eliminate some of the
14 frustration you might have felt as a judge if you
15 had another outlet? I need a job for kids at Boys
16 Court.

17 JUSTICE CERDA: I think that would have been
18 helpful, even in Boys Court, if they would have
19 been able to get a job, put money their pockets
20 especially during the summer, get them off the
21 streets that would have been wonderful.

22 JUDGE HENRY: And you feel now looking back,
23 judges should have been advocating for that as
24 another remedy that you might have had, to say go

1 over here you will be able to find employment.

2 If you show up I will give you
3 supervision, but if you don't, jail is another
4 option, not having an option you are sentencing
5 somebody to a dead end street.

6 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes. We would give them court
7 supervision, but with a job that would help us
8 tremendously.

9 So we, I think we should have some
10 representative from the judiciary, from the
11 administrative office who would push and lobby for
12 funds.

13 MR. BADILLO: Can I ask a follow-up question?

14 THE COURT: Sure.

15 MR. BADILLO: You are talking about the
16 isolation of being a judge, it seems to run through
17 most of your experience.

18 Now, when did you first acknowledge that
19 fact that you either have to be isolated or you
20 wanted to be isolated and how did you come to terms
21 with that, that was going to be part of being a
22 judge?

23 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes. I didn't know about how
24 isolated you, a judge is sometimes.

1 So that was a change for me to feel that
2 feeling, that you are isolated when you are on the
3 bench and you are the only one that going to make
4 the decision.

5 Nobody else is going to make the decision
6 in that particular case.

7 So it is a, you know, you have to get
8 adjusted to it and then make up your mind I think.

9 Traffic court is a good court to begin
10 because there you have to render a decision right
11 away.

12 You do get some, I'm glad you get broken
13 in and make decisions little by little.

14 It's very, very difficult. Sometimes you
15 think it over at nighttime while you are at home
16 alone and you do think about the decisions you made
17 during the day and you go over some of them, and --
18 but later on when we get to the law division, there
19 is where we had more camaraderie.

20 Lot of the judges use to get together and
21 we used to have lunch together, but I didn't have
22 that camaraderie until I went to the law division,
23 not in any of those courtrooms.

24 Most of the time I was by myself and then

1 at 26th Street, you know, I had that 5:00 o'clock
2 call, so there were no judges around and during the
3 summer, I used to pinch hit some summers for a
4 month and there the judges from 26th Street have
5 their own clique.

6 So you are just there for 30 days. You
7 are not part of it so you still feel alone.

8 JUDGE HENRY: Didn't they have a lunchroom at
9 26th Street.

10 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes, they had a lunchroom at
11 26th Street.

12 JUDGE HENRY: So that was some kind of meeting
13 area for the judges who were assigned there
14 full-time?

15 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes.

16 JUDGE HENRY: When you came to the law
17 division, you said there was a camaraderie?

18 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes, there was.

19 JUDGE HENRY: What do you think caused that to
20 happen?

21 JUSTICE CERDA: I think we, I think we as the
22 judges, I think we on the 20th floor, Lerner and
23 there was Tom Janczy and then we had some of the --
24 Judge McMorrow who is now Chief Justice McMorrow

1 and James Traina and Lou Gilliberto.

2 We used to sit down for lunch every
3 Tuesday I think it was, some day of the week and we
4 used to talk over our cases, you know, it was very
5 good.

6 JUDGE HENRY: Did you eat in the building here?

7 JUSTICE CERDA: Downstairs.

8 JUDGE HENRY: What is now the West Egg cafe?

9 JUSTICE CERDA: That's where we ate. That was
10 a big difference being here at the Daley Center.

11 JUDGE HENRY: Now in that case, too, there were
12 more jury trials that you had.

13 JUSTICE CERDA: All jury trials.

14 JUDGE HENRY: All jury trials. So you were
15 kind of a referee there or umpire rather than the
16 decision maker?

17 JUSTICE CERDA: Big change, less responsibility
18 I felt.

19 I felt less responsibility because it was
20 the jury that was going to decide the case, not me.

21 I just call the balls and strikes.
22 Overrule the objection. Objection sustained which
23 was a lot easier.

24 JUDGE HENRY: What are your views on the jury

1 trial system?

2 JUSTICE CERDA: I loved it. I loved it. I
3 thought that the jurors did a fair overall, very
4 good job of evaluating the evidence.

5 JUDGE HENRY: Any cases that you had where you
6 felt strong disagreement with the jury's verdict or
7 what percentage if there was a percentage where you
8 felt the jury might have come back differently than
9 you might have thought.

10 JUSTICE CERDA: Very few cases, very few cases
11 because some of them I realize there was a toss-up.

12 So I couldn't make up my mind as to which
13 way it should go or not, but there were very few
14 cases that I really felt were wrong, very few.

15 JUDGE HENRY: Did you talk to the jurors
16 afterwards?

17 JUSTICE CERDA: We did, we did talk to the
18 jurors and asked them how they made up their minds,
19 what they saw.

20 They picked out a certain witness'
21 testimony, certain witness which they believed or
22 didn't believe or some evidence, some physical
23 evidence that was overwhelming in the case.

24 JUDGE HENRY: How long did you sit in the law

1 division?

2 JUSTICE CERDA: That was a long assignment. I
3 think it was from around October, November of '76
4 until April of '89. That was a long assignment.

5 JUDGE HENRY: So that's, that's almost 13
6 years.

7 JUSTICE CERDA: I was in heaven when I went to
8 the law division.

9 JUDGE HENRY: I will have to tell Judge Levin
10 next door. He is about to retire.

11 JUSTICE CERDA: He doesn't want to retire.

12 JUDGE HENRY: He doesn't want to retire. You
13 are right, he does not want to retire.

14 Did you have any other assignments in the
15 Circuit Court?

16 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes, I had, at 11th and State I
17 had woman's court, too, Women's Court and then I
18 was at 51st and Racine, 51st and the expressway.

19 JUDGE HENRY: Wentworth.

20 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes, Wentworth, I was there,
21 South Chicago, 51st and Wentworth.

22 JUDGE HENRY: Did you ever go to domestic
23 relations?

24 JUSTICE CERDA: No, no, no, I think we -- I

1 think they had a domestic relations courtroom at
2 11th and State and I sat there for a few months at
3 11th and State.

4 JUDGE HENRY: But never on a permanent
5 assignment?

6 JUSTICE CERDA: No, not a permanent assignment,
7 no.

8 JUDGE HENRY: Why don't we take -- I think that
9 completes your tenure on the trial court and you
10 sat just about in every court that still exists.

11 JUSTICE CERDA: Oh, there is one other court.

12 I had, it was a property tax. I don't
13 know, we don't have property taxes any more, but we
14 used to have property tax.

15 JUDGE HENRY: Personal property tax.

16 JUSTICE CERDA: Personal property tax.

17 JUDGE HENRY: Didn't Judge Gilliberto do that,
18 too?

19 JUSTICE CERDA: Maybe he did, maybe he did, but
20 I did that for a few months.

21 I don't know how many months it was, but I
22 did take that call.

23 JUDGE HENRY: Let's take a five-minute break.

24 JUSTICE CERDA: Okay.

1 JUDGE HENRY: If that's okay with everybody and
2 then we will focus on just, if you could, summarize
3 your feelings about being a trial judge from that
4 first day when you walked on until you finally
5 stepped on as trial judge and then you moved from
6 there directly to the Appellate Court and then I
7 would like to really hear how you changed your hat.

8 You know, there's that old story -- let's
9 go off the record.

10 (Discussion off the record.)

11 JUDGE HENRY: Okay, well, we have the good
12 services of the court reporter until 4:00 o'clock.

13 So why don't you, Virginia, why don't you
14 step in here and ask Justice Cerda about his other
15 activities during this, the time period that he was
16 on the bench?.

17 MS. MARTINEZ: In the previous session you
18 mentioned that you had started being involved with
19 LULAC.

20 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes.

21 MS. MARTINEZ: In 1956 and I know that you
22 continued that and other activities, while you were
23 on the bench.

24 So what were some of those organizations

1 and your involvement with those volunteer groups?

2 JUSTICE CERDA: I think that the first
3 organization I became involved with even before,
4 no, around the same time, around the same time was
5 the Mexican American Counsel that met at Hull
6 House, Hull House there on Halsted street.

7 We used to have meetings. It was mostly
8 Anglo Americans who were there and there were about
9 three or four Latinos who were in the organization
10 to try and better the situation of Mexicans in
11 Chicago.

12 That went out of existence. I think they
13 had some funding or something and it went out, so
14 that was, it was only there for a short time.

15 Then I know that there was a SER, Jobs For
16 Progress and with the GI forum and LULAC that was a
17 combination job-training organization that was
18 funded.

19 I think they received federal funds so I
20 was involved with that organization. The Boy
21 Scouts, I was involved with that.

22 I think Judge Wachowski I think was on the
23 Board also of the Chicago Boys Club.

24 This was the one for, the central one in

1 the City of Chicago. So we would have meetings
2 there particularly concentrating on where the
3 Latinos lived to give them more -- to keep up the
4 services and I don't know, there is some other
5 organizations.

6 I know there's the Mexican Chamber of
7 Commerce, I was involved with that, with the
8 Mexican Chamber of Commerce.

9 The Mexican American Council on Education,
10 that was really a -- that was a good organization
11 citywide organization, where we -- they broke into
12 the Board of Education system to push for more
13 teachers in the system and for more administrative
14 positions in the City of Chicago and we did make
15 some headway there.

16 MS. MARTINEZ: What year was that?

17 JUSTICE CERDA: I think it was about '67, '68.

18 I think we started that organization and
19 had a lot of good people who would come in and out
20 of the organization, lot of, and we would go into
21 the -- meet in different neighborhoods in the City
22 of Chicago and it was, it was good because anybody
23 from the community could go in and talk.

24 I remember that and that was our policy,

1 to let everybody have a say so and it was a good
2 feeling.

3 JUDGE HENRY: Where did you meet, Judge?

4 JUSTICE CERDA: Pardon me? I left that
5 organization. We got some funding, but then the
6 funding dried up.

7 This was about 1975, '76, '77, somewhere
8 around at that time, about ten years.

9 JUDGE HENRY: Where were the meetings held?

10 JUSTICE CERDA: At different, different, on
11 18th Street, different locations, churches, we used
12 to meet in churches.

13 We used to have good cooperation with the
14 churches in all the organizations.

15 The one that Frank Duran was involved in,
16 we used to meet with some of the revolutionary
17 priests, Father Maher, Father Hedley and some of
18 the others who really -- liberal ones.

19 JUDGE LOPEZ: Was that the Cordimarion?

20 JUSTICE CERDA: No. We used to meet at 1300
21 South Wabash on the second floor.

22 They really got us involved. We formed
23 through them I think some sort of affiliation of
24 Mexican American organizations.

1 It was an umbrella organization where
2 other organizations belonged to it.

3 MS. MARTINEZ: Diocese Committee for the
4 Spanish Speaking?

5 JUSTICE CERDA: That's the one. That's the
6 one. That's the committee.

7 MR. BADILLO: Was that under Cardinal Cody or?

8 JUSTICE CERDA: Maybe it could have been under
9 Cardinal Cody, but I think before Cardinal Cody. I
10 think it was before Cardinal Cody.

11 MS. MARTINEZ: And then when did you start
12 working to develop the lawyers group, the Mexican
13 American Lawyers Association?

14 JUSTICE CERDA: That was about 1972 and I think
15 I want to give credit to Manny Reyes for that.

16 We were sitting around the table talking
17 things over and I think he was the one that came up
18 with the suggestion about forming a Mexican lawyers
19 organization.

20 It was Honoratus Lopez, myself and him and
21 the feel is then we decided, we made a joint
22 decision to reach out to the other lawyers and form
23 the Mexican American Lawyers Association.

24 We got Antonio Sarabia from Lord, Bissell

1 and Brook. We got Lee Abul. He was a patent
2 lawyer and then who else was there?

3 I think Richard Salas was involved.
4 Caesar Valarde was just getting out and he joined
5 the organization.

6 There were very -- we used to sit at, we
7 used to go to the restaurants and all of the
8 Mexican lawyers could all sit at a table, you know.

9 I remember that. There were very few of
10 us at that time.

11 MS. MARTINEZ: Italian Village?

12 JUSTICE CERDA: We used to meet there, too.

13 MS. MARTINEZ: And a young secretary.

14 JUSTICE CERDA: You were the secretary.

15 MS. MARTINEZ: Working part-time.

16 JUDGE LOPEZ: Mario Perez was one of those?

17 JUSTICE CERDA: Mario Perez was one of the
18 original ones.

19 We used to wait years. I used to get the
20 reports from the Chicago Daily Bulletin about the
21 new lawyers and sometimes we would go for years
22 without any Latino lawyers coming in.

23 I know he came in 1960.

24 JUDGE LOPEZ: Yes.

1 JUSTICE CERDA: And then there was a vacuum
2 until later on. Few years for another one. It was
3 very slow in those days, very slow getting the
4 lawyers.

5 MS. MARTINEZ: And so when did the --

6 JUSTICE CERDA: 1973 was the year we formed the
7 organization, 1973.

8 MS. MARTINEZ: And those were all the Mexican
9 lawyers and then there were several Puerto Rican
10 lawyers that formed their own organization.

11 JUSTICE CERDA: It was sort of, they started,
12 what was it called, Latino Lawyers Association.

13 I told Jose Vazquez he should form a
14 Puerto Rican Bar Association, but, no, they went
15 ahead and started the Latino Lawyers which was a
16 good idea.

17 MS. MARTINEZ: Latin American Bar Association.

18 JUSTICE CERDA: Latin American Bar Association,
19 which was a good idea.

20 MS. MARTINEZ: So in addition, I kind of
21 remember in total there were probably 15 Latino
22 lawyers in 1972 when I started law school.

23 It was --

24 JUSTICE CERDA: That's a lot.

1 MS. MARTINEZ: Ed Garcia?
2 JUSTICE CERDA: He was a lawyer.
3 MS. MARTINEZ: Vincent Lopez.
4 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes. Vincent Lopez. He ran
5 for public office at one time.
6 MS. MARTINEZ: And then I don't remember who
7 some of the others, the Puerto Rican lawyers were.
8 JUDGE LOPEZ: I had a few names that I don't
9 recognize, Jose Sanchez Delaney.
10 He was -- he worked here, but he was from
11 Mexico City and he went back to Mexico City and as
12 far as I can tell he is still practicing today out
13 there and he was sworn in to the Illinois bar in
14 1960.
15 I had Mario Perez, 1960. Vince Lopez,
16 '58. Manny Reyes, '57, Honoratus Lopez, my father
17 '56, David Cerda '55, Ricardo Meana '52, Antonio
18 Sarabia, '50, Ralph Vasquez, '48 and Jose R.
19 Vasquez '48. Rene Coier, '56, and I am still not
20 sure whether they are related or even the same
21 person because I don't find any reference about
22 Ralph Vasquez after the '50s, Sebastian Rivera, '26
23 and then William E. Rodriguez, 1913.
24 He was a Chicago Alderman and then like I

1 said I had a gap from '60s to '70 where I could not
2 find any Hispanics lawyers graduating from law
3 school post June 24, 2005. It was noted that Leo
4 Aubel was admitted to the Illinois bar in 1963 and
5 then in the '70s, Richard Salas and then it started
6 shooting up incrementally after that.

7 So at the time this was formed far as I
8 can show there were maybe about 15, 20 Hispanic
9 lawyers that I can identify.

10 JUSTICE CERDA: Very few.

11 MS. MARTINEZ: And you had sent me some
12 documents about MALA's role, the Mexican American
13 Lawyer Association in trying to advocate on behalf
14 of the Mexican American community here and to try
15 and get an office of MALA, Mexican American Legal
16 Defense and Educational Fund to have an office here
17 so.

18 JUSTICE CERDA: We saw a need to have MALA
19 established.

20 We saw the work that they were doing out
21 on the west and we thought that we would, you know,
22 they could open up an office here to get legal
23 representation, it would be wonderful.

24 So it was a joint, we decided that at a

1 meeting of our organization to bring in MALA, to
2 Chicago.

3 MR. BADILLO: What were some of the matters
4 that you thought MALA would be able to address?

5 JUSTICE CERDA: Lot of discrimination, you
6 know, employment, housing, education.

7 Those were the main areas where our people
8 were involved.

9 MR. BADILLO: Was this more for the native-born
10 Chicanos or immigrants coming over?

11 JUSTICE CERDA: Both, both, I think both. You
12 know, if -- education, housing, you know, and
13 employment at that time, yes, both not only for the
14 immigrants.

15 MS. MARTINEZ: I remember both while I was at
16 law school working at Legal Aid and before that at
17 the law offices of Reyes and Lopez, people coming
18 in about having signed contracts that they couldn't
19 read, contracts for cars, that there were people
20 buying real estate on contract not understanding
21 that the property would be taken away from them if
22 they missed a payment as opposed to going and
23 getting financing through a mortgage.

24 So I remember those being big issues

1 especially in Pilsen where Honoratus and Manny were
2 practicing.

3 There were a number of issues going on.
4 Fraud, there were a number of complaints about
5 fraud.

6 JUSTICE CERDA: That's true.

7 MS. MARTINEZ: So those were the kind of issues
8 that the organization was interested in, that MALA
9 was interested in?

10 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes, we were, yes.

11 JUDGE LOPEZ: Some things don't change. Lot of
12 those things go on today.

13 JUSTICE CERDA: But a lot of the work is being
14 done now.

15 MS. MARTINEZ: So you had sent, you had a
16 number of letters that were sent to --

17 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes, we wrote --

18 MS. MARTINEZ: -- to Velma Martinez who was
19 general counsel, but even before she became general
20 counsel, the first general counsel was Mario Ometo?

21 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes, that's his name, Ometo.

22 MS. MARTINEZ: And had you contacted him?

23 JUSTICE CERDA: No, we didn't contact him. We
24 didn't contact him.

1 By the time we got around to writing,
2 Velma was the general counsel. I had known about
3 Ometo from LULAC.

4 He is from Texas so I had known about him
5 from before. Velma, I didn't know.

6 MS. MARTINEZ: But you did meet with her at
7 some point?

8 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes, we did meet with her here
9 in Chicago. Ed Garcia and I met with her
10 personally in Chicago and urged her to establish an
11 office in Chicago.

12 MS. MARTINEZ: And what was her response?

13 JUSTICE CERDA: She said that she would like to
14 see an office, but she would have to go back to the
15 board and see what the board would say because they
16 needed funding for that.

17 So she was, I think she was positive about
18 opening up an office.

19 We told her about the number of people
20 that we had here, our population, our economic
21 situation and here in Chicago and the problems that
22 we had here.

23 MS. MARTINEZ: I also know that during the
24 period while you were on the bench, almost every

1 Latino student who applied to law school asked you
2 for a letter of recommendation.

3 Do you remember, do you have any idea how
4 many letters you signed?

5 JUSTICE CERDA: No, I don't remember. I don't
6 remember.

7 I know I used to visit the different law
8 schools and talk to some of them and it was good.

9 Not enough though, not enough. They
10 should have had more, should have had more applying
11 for law school.

12 MS. MARTINEZ: But that was a role that you saw
13 for yourself that you could do?

14 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes.

15 MS. MARTINEZ: Even as a sitting judge that you
16 could at least help us all by sending letters of
17 recommendation?

18 JUSTICE CERDA: Sure I was glad, boy, good
19 future lawyers, that's great.

20 JUDGE HENRY: You needed company?

21 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes, it was lonely. For a
22 long, long time it was lonely.

23 MS. MARTINEZ: Do you remember any other kind
24 of activities that you were involved with at the

1 time?

2 JUSTICE CERDA: I am sure there were. I know I
3 was with Pilsen. What is that organization?

4 That's not Central De La Casa, not that
5 organization.

6 MS. MARTINEZ: Casa Aztlan?

7 JUSTICE CERDA: What?

8 MS. MARTINEZ: Casa Aztlan.

9 JUSTICE CERDA: That's the one Casa Aztlan,
10 A-z-t-l-a-n. I was on the Board there.

11 I used to meet and it was a difficult
12 situation to work with because there were some, you
13 know, gang members who sort of ran the area.

14 They were very nice to me, you know. They
15 would escort me to the car and everything, but they
16 just didn't want to leave control over it so that
17 was a constant struggle with the organization, but
18 it's still going strong.

19 We used to have a street fair, street
20 carnival, street carnival where we would raise
21 funds to keep going because it was doing good work.

22 It was doing good work in the community,
23 but it was, they just -- it was a struggle.

24 We never -- when I left we hadn't won that

1 back with the gang members.

2 It was a very nice, quiet subdued fight
3 with them over power, but I was there for about
4 two, three years I think.

5 I served a three-year term with
6 Montenegro, Juan Montenegro. He was also on the
7 Board.

8 He was a radio announcer. He has a better
9 position now.

10 MS. MARTINEZ: Were there other duties that you
11 can remember?

12 JUSTICE CERDA: I am sure there were. I am
13 sure there were. I can't remember the names.

14 MS. MARTINEZ: You were still involved with
15 LULAC also at this time as well?

16 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes, I was still involved with
17 LULAC. LULAC was my big hope, but I was
18 disappointed, so in 1990 I resigned.

19 I didn't see any hope. Now it's coming
20 back strong. Now they have got millions of
21 dollars. Before it was very poor, very poorly run.

22 MR. BADILLO: Did you know Dr. Jorge Prieto?

23 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes, yes, he was a good friend
24 of mine, very good friend.

1 Yes, he was. He marched with Cesar Chavez
2 out in California, that very big march. That's how
3 he got sick, long, long, march to the capital of
4 Sacramento on behalf of the farmers.

5 He was quite a guy. He has written some
6 books, you know. He is quite a guy, quite a man.
7 He wrote a book, "The Quarterback That Never Was."

8 He got a scholarship from Notre Dame to
9 play football and he never played football.

10 He was a light guy, you know, lightweight,
11 skinny guy and he never really made the team.

12 He was a star in Mexico because they
13 played, the Mexico Allstars played I think the Army
14 team with Blanchard and Davis and they beat the
15 American team in Mexico City.

16 He was the quarterback. That's why he got
17 the scholarship from Notre Dame because of that,
18 but he was always grateful to Notre Dame for that
19 scholarship which gave him an education.

20 He was very -- he mentioned that in his
21 book also.

22 JUDGE HENRY: Quarterback.

23 JUSTICE CERDA: He used to get free medical
24 services to lot of people, even to the family of

1 Jim Rosas who is a lawyer, Jim Rosas who is a good
2 lawyer and a lot of people that I know, to the
3 client.

4 He used to have this office right across
5 the street from a church on Roosevelt and Halsted.

6 Then he started the family law practice in
7 Cook County Hospital. He started that specialty in
8 Cook County Hospital and I was sorry he passed
9 away.

10 MS. MARTINEZ: Justice Cerda, is there a
11 restriction on judges in terms of fund-raising?

12 JUSTICE CERDA: At that time I was a judge we
13 could not lend our name to any fund-raiser.

14 MS. MARTINEZ: But despite that you found ways
15 to continue to be active in all of these
16 organizations that were raising funds for
17 scholarships and for other kinds of activities in
18 the community and continued to make a contribution
19 even though your name couldn't be used for
20 fund-raising purposes?

21 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes, as long as my name was not
22 on any letter of solicitation, I could be active in
23 trying to raise funds.

24 MS. MARTINEZ: Lot of fund raising in the

1 community?

2 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes, that's true.

3 MS. MARTINEZ: Do you have any idea how much
4 time per month you volunteered?

5 JUSTICE CERDA: It was a tremendous amount and
6 I'm grateful to my wife and my children that they
7 permitted me to do that.

8 Without their, you know, support I could
9 never have done it, but my wife was a social worker
10 at one time and she started out to become a social
11 worker and so she understood it very well, you
12 know.

13 She understood. Then she started working
14 with the Latino Institute and she was also involved
15 in some organizations too, but not on - she never
16 put in the hours that I put in, but she was also
17 active.

18 So she understood me very much. She is
19 Puerto Rican.

20 MS. MARTINEZ: So do you have any guess on how
21 much time per month you volunteered?

22 JUSTICE CERDA: No, no.

23 MS. MARTINEZ: But substantial.

24 JUSTICE CERDA: It was big.

1 JUDGE HENRY: How many nights a week were you
2 out?

3 JUSTICE CERDA: Oh, a lot, quite a bit because
4 there was different organizations, so many
5 different organizations that would have meetings,
6 at first with LULAC.

7 This was when I was single. We used to,
8 we started organizing in Wisconsin and Indiana and
9 Iowa and other parts of Illinois.

10 Also I think we went to Michigan and
11 Minnesota, but so it was nice to see the different
12 Mexican communities all over and they were so warm
13 and hospitable to us everywhere we went.

14 It was nice and we understood, they
15 understood us. They understood these problems. We
16 are going through the same process in the City of
17 Chicago.

18 MS. MARTINEZ: Thank you.

19 Nothing else.

20 JUDGE HENRY: Mark, anything else?

21 JUDGE LOPEZ: Not any questions, just comments
22 in terms of, yes, you have always been a constant
23 in my life and the lives of young Latinos and some
24 things one takes for granted once in a while.

1 You are always there and you are showing
2 us the model to follow and we all appreciate it.

3 MS. MARTINEZ: Those hundreds of letters of
4 recommendations that you wrote over all those
5 years, I knew about them all.

6 I knew a number of them. You were like a
7 godfather to everybody who went to law school.

8 I mean, everybody. We would always say if
9 you are applying to law school be sure you get a
10 letter from Judge Cerda and you always accommodated
11 people and I am sure that there are hundreds of
12 attorneys out there, Latino attorneys who in part
13 thank you for their participation in the legal
14 profession.

15 JUSTICE CERDA: I am just lucky I was here.
16 That's all, just to be around, that's the important
17 thing.

18 JUDGE HENRY: Well, you did it.

19 JUSTICE CERDA: Be around. That's the
20 important thing.

21 JUDGE HENRY: Let's just finish up today.

22 JUSTICE CERDA: Sure.

23 JUDGE HENRY: We can go another ten minutes and
24 you are always welcome back.

1 We will cover everything we want to cover.
2 Doesn't matter. We will have another day.

3 Did you go directly from the Law Division
4 to the Appellate Court?

5 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes.

6 JUDGE HENRY: Okay, what -- how did that come
7 about? Was that an appointment or was it an
8 election?

9 JUSTICE CERDA: I wrote letters to the Supreme
10 Court judges, three of them asking to be assigned
11 to the Appellate Court and that's how I received
12 the assignment.

13 JUDGE HENRY: Who were the judges that were on
14 the Court at that time?

15 JUSTICE CERDA: John Stamos, who else?

16 Ben Ward and my sponsor who I can't
17 remember his name, the one who put up my name
18 before the other two judges and he passed away.

19 He was on the Supreme Court and I have his
20 face right in front of me, but I --

21 JUDGE HENRY: Was it Clark?

22 JUSTICE CERDA: Clark, William Clark. That's
23 him. He was the one that put my name for the, to
24 the other two judges.

1 JUDGE HENRY: And he was the former Illinois
2 Attorney General?

3 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes.

4 JUDGE HENRY: Did you have a personal
5 relationship with Justice Clark?

6 You say he was your sponsor. Did you know
7 him better than the other two?

8 JUSTICE CERDA: No, I think really my good
9 friend, Neil Hartigan, was a great help to me.

10 He was the one that suggested that I put
11 my name up for the Appellate Court and at first I
12 said, don't, because I loved the Law Division and I
13 didn't want to be, you know, isolated up in the
14 Appellate Court and then a few months later he came
15 back to me again and in the meantime I thought I
16 owed it to the Hispanic community to go up to the
17 Appellate Court.

18 So that time I said, yes, I am going to
19 apply and then I applied.

20 JUDGE HENRY: How long after you applied did
21 an opening become available?

22 JUSTICE CERDA: I think it was about six months
23 later, seven months later probably, seven or eight
24 months later, because there was an opening and I

1 didn't get that opening and some other judge got it
2 and then another opening, three openings came up.

3 They decided to expand the Appellate Court
4 from 21 to 24, the 1st District.

5 So Rosemary LaPorta, Geno Devito and
6 myself were the three new Appellate, circuit judges
7 assigned to the Supreme Court.

8 JUDGE HENRY: And how long did you serve on the
9 Appellate Court?

10 JUSTICE CERDA: From April 1st of '89 to
11 December of 2002.

12 JUDGE HENRY: So another 13-year run?

13 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes, 13 years, 13 and a half
14 years.

15 MR. BADILLO: Judge, might I ask, when you sent
16 the letter to the Supreme Court justices was the
17 focus, the emphasis that the Hispanic community
18 needed representation or deserved representation or
19 was that even, was that something that was just
20 assumed by the fact that you were applying?

21 JUSTICE CERDA: I think I might have mentioned
22 it.

23 I might have mentioned it, I might have
24 mentioned it because up to that time the Supreme

1 Court had never really made an appointment of a
2 Hispanic up to that point.

3 I probably mentioned it, up to that point
4 the Supreme Court had not made an appointment of an
5 Hispanic.

6 MR. BADILLO: Was that something that ever came
7 up in your discussions with Hartigan or Mr. Clark?

8 JUSTICE CERDA: That's what Hartigan, Hartigan
9 pointed that out to me. He was the one that
10 pointed it out to me.

11 MR. BADILLO: Okay.

12 JUSTICE CERDA: And encouraged me to apply.

13 Big difference between the, as a Circuit
14 Court judge I used to have a lot of my friends walk
15 in, you know, during lunch, before court or after
16 court and we could talk to them, discuss things
17 with other, you know, anybody could walk in and
18 out.

19 In the Appellate Court it stops all of a
20 sudden. The circuit judges didn't come to visit
21 me. My lawyer friends wouldn't come to visit me.

22 So it was really, except once in a great
23 while, why, why, why, it was a surprise when they
24 would come.

1 So that was a big difference from the
2 Circuit Court and the Appellate Court.

3 , I remember my first hearing, oral
4 arguments, after the first case was over, I was
5 just about to blurt out my decision when I realized
6 I had to look to these other two and I couldn't
7 make and then we could go back and have our
8 impression conference. We called that our
9 impression conference.

10 After oral arguments you go back and you
11 sit down and you discuss the case and how you want
12 to rule on the case and then we would reach a
13 consensus as to how.

14 We could change our minds later because it
15 was only a first impression, but most of the time
16 that first impression lasted as to how we wanted to
17 make our decision and so it was, it was a lot
18 different.

19 We didn't see, like I said I used to joke
20 that we don't see people. We only see lawyers in
21 the Appellate Court.

22 Very few parties show up in the Appellate
23 Court for oral argument and really we -- we really
24 worked say on Wednesdays from 9:30 until 12:30,

1 three times a month because the fourth week you
2 were off.

3 So we hardly worked there and then the
4 summers usually you had July and August with no
5 oral argument or sometimes we would have oral
6 arguments.

7 We would put them on one or two weeks in
8 July and that's all, but we worked harder.

9 It was much harder. I had took less
10 vacation time as an Appellate Court Judge than as a
11 Circuit Court Judge.

12 As a Circuit Court Judge when I would
13 leave, especially the Law Division, they would send
14 in another judge to take my place and he would take
15 my call, but in the Appellate Court, those are your
16 cases, you know, so you have got to push, push out
17 your cases.

18 You push the other judges on the Appellate
19 Court to decide your cases and they push you to
20 decide their cases, to look over, read and approve
21 your cases.

22 So you work harder, I found you work
23 harder in the Appellate Court than I did as a
24 Circuit Court Judge, especially in the Law Division

1 where I was in heaven, where you had to make your
2 rulings, objections and pretrial motions also, but
3 during a jury trial which could last weeks, three
4 weeks, you just sit back there and relax and let
5 the lawyers and let the jurors make the hard
6 decision of deciding a case. So that was a lot, it
7 was a lot different.

8 JUDGE HENRY: How did you feel about having
9 somebody else to convince or at least share the
10 burden with you in the Appellate Court? Was that a
11 relief?

12 JUSTICE CERDA: I liked it. Yes, it was a
13 relief because sometimes I would have a different
14 viewpoint and I could change someone's mind or else
15 they could change my mind.

16 I learned a lot. I learned a lot of law
17 in the Appellate Court. I learned a lot.

18 JUDGE HENRY: Who were your first, the first
19 panel that you were assigned to?

20 JUSTICE CERDA: There was William Sylvester
21 White, Freeman on the Supreme Court and Dom Rizzi,
22 the four of us.

23 JUDGE HENRY: How long did you stay together as
24 a panel would you say?

1 JUSTICE CERDA: We only stayed there for about
2 a year because then Freeman was elected to the
3 Supreme Court in 1990 and then William Sylvester
4 White retired and then Tom Tully came in and Alan
5 Griman came in, so it was Alan Griman, Tom Tully --
6 I mean John Tully who beat me.

7 I ran for the Appellate Court in 1990 and
8 I lost, but since I was an assigned judge I stayed
9 there, but I wanted to get elected.

10 Griman ran for the Appellate Court, too,
11 and he lost but he was an assigned judge, so he
12 stayed on the Appellate Court.

13 I think we are the only two who have ever
14 been assigned and have run for the Appellate Court.

15 JUDGE HENRY: Was that a disappointment to you
16 not to be elected?

17 JUSTICE CERDA: It was a disappointment to me,
18 but then I was named the presiding judge, see, so
19 the guy who beat me I was his presiding Judge.

20 I was the presiding judge over John Tully
21 so it wasn't too bad.

22 JUDGE HENRY: That was the election that he was
23 not retained in the Circuit Court, but elected in
24 the Appellate Court?

1 JUSTICE CERDA: That's the election. That's
2 the election, yes.

3 JUDGE HENRY: How did that make you feel about
4 the electoral process?

5 JUSTICE CERDA: It was crummy. It was crummy.
6 I was slated by the Democratic party.

7 JUDGE HENRY: Do you have an opinion now that
8 you are retired about the appointing process versus
9 the electoral process?

10 I should put it this way, to other than
11 your personal experiences.

12 JUSTICE CERDA: I think, yes, I think that the,
13 like the magistrate associate judges who get
14 selected I think they are pretty good, they are
15 pretty good and it all depends, it all depends on
16 who is elected, you know.

17 We have good elected judges and we have
18 some that are not so good. Thank goodness most of
19 them are good.

20 JUDGE HENRY: We have to stop now and we will
21 pick up at this issue.

22 Maybe what we can do we will finish up the
23 transcript. We will take a look at them.

24 We will get them to the Justice for his

1 comment and then if there is anything that you
2 would like to expand on after you look at the
3 transcript, something that you would really like to
4 put in, somebody you would make mention of, some
5 experience in your life we didn't touch on here,
6 then we can come back and finish the questions with
7 the Appellate Court.

8 Were you friendly with Justice Bilandic? I
9 will end on this note.

10 JUSTICE CERDA: Yes.

11 JUDGE HENRY: Because when he was running for
12 the Supreme Court he appeared at one of the Bar
13 Association meetings and I was there.

14 He was introduced. He got up to speak.
15 It was a few days before the election.

16 He said, "Well, there a great controversy
17 afoot in the United States. The federal judges are
18 appointed, people are unhappy with that. They want
19 to elect the federal judges and here we elect. All
20 I ask, I am on the ballot on Tuesday. Please vote
21 for me. Thank you very much."

22 That was a cute thing.

23 JUSTICE CERDA: That's him. That's typical of
24 him. What a wonderful good, wonderful person.

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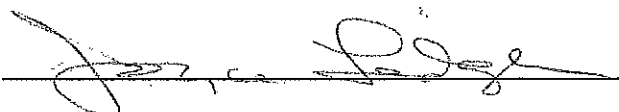
JUDGE HENRY: Okay.

(WHICH WERE ALL THE PROCEEDINGS
HAD IN THE ABOVE-ENTITLED CAUSE
ON THIS DATE.)

1 STATE OF ILLINOIS)
2) SS:
3 COUNTY OF C O O K)
4

5 IN THE Circuit Court OF COOK COUNTY, ILLINOIS
6 COUNTY DEPARTMENT - CHANCERY DIVISION
7

8 I, JOYCE LEDGER, Official Court Reporter
9 of the Circuit Court of Cook County, County
10 Department - Chancery Division, do hereby certify
11 that I reported in stenotype the proceedings had on
12 this date, that I thereafter caused the foregoing
13 to be transcribed into typewriting, which I certify
14 to be a true and accurate transcript.

15
16 
17 Official Court Reporter

18 084-001292

19
20 Dated this 20th day
21 of February 2009.
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