LEXINGTON ORAL HISTORY PROJECTS, INC.

Interview
John Maguire
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Interview conducted by Eugenia Kaledin
Videotape length 74 minutes

INT: What you were doing in Lexington in 1971?

JM: My name is John Maguire. And I was a resident of Lexington in 1971. Moved to Lexington in the 1960's after having done some post doctoral work at Rice University, and lived in Lexington from '66 through '76, a ten year period. During the time of this event I was on the School Committee and I think had recently been elected Chairman of the School Committee. I know just a few months before that I had become Chair and was Chair for that year and the next year as well.

INT: As Chairman of the School Committee you were doing something daring to be playing a political role as a dissenter in the town.

JM: I was terribly conflicted. And there were a lot of people who were.

INT: So what were you doing that night on the Green?

JM: I was there. I was trying to separate my public persona as Chairman of the School Committee from my private citizen's convictions. For a long time, since the very beginning of the Vietnam War, I had opposed it, opposed it vehemently, and had known two young men well and another young man quite well from Arlington, Massachusetts, who had been killed in Vietnam. And had been very much involved in the debate and the protesting over the war. I was also a faculty member at Boston College. In the late 1960's I was an assistant professor of physics and then I became Dean of Admissions. At the time of this event I was the Dean of Admissions at Boston College, as well as an assistant professor of physics. Had been actively involved in protests which had shut down that university, had been marching with Martin Luther King and Ralph David Abernathy—King in the mid 1960's and Abernathy, I believe around '69 or

'70 in a big march in Boston. So I was very much upset by the direction which this country had taken with regard to the war. I became interested briefly—a brief flirtation of about five years—with politics as a result of the war.

Had been approached in 1968—it was either '67 or '68 just after my return from Texas to Massachusetts, just moved to Lexington—by people in the Democratic Town Committee in Lexington who asked me to run for the State Senate, and I told them that was a crazy idea. Within two weeks, I was a candidate for the State Senate. They were that persuasive, particularly people like Dan Powers and Joe Cronin. I ran, was nominated, but was defeated by the incumbent senator at that time, Ron Mackenzie. I decided then that politics was something that interested me. In 1970 I ran for the School Committee and was elected. As I said, in 1971 I became Chair. I think I just turned 30 at the time. So I was young and inexperienced and a firebrand, and probably about ten years away from where I really needed to be to be an outstanding Chair of the Lexington School Committee. But I took my shot. The members of the Committee, including departing Chair, wanted me to be the Chair. So I ended up in that position. At the same time I was doing all this protesting and politicking, and while I was rightly suspected by many people in town of having a conflicted agenda in that I had ambitions to be a politician at the state and maybe even at the national level and was (quote) using (unquote)—there was an accusation that was made by some critics and there was some legitimacy to it—that I might be using the Lexington School Committee as stepping stone. Indeed, when I ran for the School Committee, I knocked on every door in town.

INT: How is the School Committee a chance to be political?

JM: I was young and naïve. I thought that the best way to move in a political career would be to do a good job in some significant position. I mean, my goal was not to use it as a steppingstone and to ignore the

considerable obligations of being a school board member and a school board chairman, but just to do a good job there and then let events take care of themselves. Well, events quickly convinced me as a young school board member that this was no walk in the park, no piece of cake. There were a lot of huge challenges facing Lexington at the time. The least of them seemed to be the national and international political events surrounding the war. At the time I assumed the Chairmanship at roughly this time—I might have been six months earlier or later—they were talking about slowdowns and threats of strikes and I was involved heavily in collective bargaining with the teachers.

INT: In the school?

JM: Yes, in the Lexington school system. The teachers thought that I might have a political agenda which would supersede my obligations to the town. Of course at the time I had six children in the Lexington school system, so I had probably an obligation that transcended all others, to maintain that system as a good one, given the contributions that my forebear had made. I felt that I could be a good school board chairman and still at some future date perhaps run for State Senate or for Congress or for some other high office. But I found myself on the Lexington Battle Green that evening solely as a private citizen, truly upset about the way the country was going and then very, very much upset by what was happening within the town. And there was the true source of the conflict because I was the Chairman of the School Committee and people were telling me, "You have no business getting involved in this because the two will come into…there's a fundamental conflict of interest. If you as Chairman of the School Committee are setting this example for the young citizens of the town, for your own children, breaking the law and protesting, what does this say about law and order?" Anyway, I was on the Lexington Battle Green from dark to the time of the arrest at three AM, boarded the buses. My kids and I got

separated. My two young daughters were there, two of my six children, my daughter Linda who is just about to have her thirtieth birthday, and my daughter Karen who is now thirty-one. At the time they were nine and ten, respectively, I believe. They were with me all night. And they were being photographed by the *Lexington Minuteman* with my permission, and boarded the bus, one of the buses. In the crowd I saw two people put them on the bus, so I wasn't worried, but I was about five people behind them. They got to the back of that bus. I finally fought my way back to be with them. We were transported to an unknown destination that turned out I guess to be the armory, the civil defense headquarters.

INT: Public Works building.

JM: Public Works, yes, okay. When we finally got there we were at the end of an extremely long line, and it wasn't moving all that rapidly. I was fully prepared to be booked. I had already been arrested. The arrest took place when they said, "All right, folks, either leave or get on the bus." And we got on the bus. Then we got in line and I remember waiting and being really upset about this conflict when who should appear much to my chagrin—and partly I think my relief, too—but Julian Soshnik. I don't know if you're going to be interviewing him, but he was a friend, fellow liberal Democratic from Lexington, and an attorney—he asked me what I was doing there. I said, "Waiting to be arrested." He said, "You've already been arrested." I said, "Well, then I'm waiting to be booked, or whatever the proper word is." He said, "You shouldn't be here. You've got these two young kids." Indeed, I think Linda and Karen were the only two kids who had survived this ordeal and they were really exhausted. So I rationalized that and Soshnik said, "I'll give you a ride. I have my car." So he drove us back to our car. By that time it was sunrise. I said to him, "But I want to be on record as having been here." He said, "Great, you're good at preparing statements, put a statement together." So I put a statement

together and read it at the later Town Meeting. I don't know what the date was of that Town Meeting, but I think it was sometime in June. In any event, the events of that evening, all I remember was that it was chilly, that my kids were cold, but yet they wanted to be there. I think they wanted to be there because it was also a historical event, not so much a historical event at the time as it was in retrospect. I wasn't at the earlier Town Meeting at the Town Hall, but I understand that was kind of a raucous event. I thought that the true Town Meeting—and that was the point I tried to make in the statement—the true Town Meeting took place on the Battle Green.

I thought that Bob Cataldo was a model of reason and decorum, and that they were all trying to find a political solution. I was in the background. I wasn't at all involved with the [now U.S. Senator] John Kerry people or with the Selectmen. I was just sitting in the background with my kids watching this whole thing take place. The point I tried to make in the statement was that that forum of reason really was that event as it took place on that night and into the morning. And that for the most part, even though it had an unhappy resolution, and that final decision, namely to arrest us, that was an outrageous decision. But that during the evening people were trying to find solutions to compromise politically, to save face for sure. It was just regrettable that it couldn't happen that way. I didn't know what the repercussions were going to be and couldn't separate the official capacity as Chairman of the School Committee from private citizen protestor were going to be, and I was somewhat concerned. Finally when I saw—I was I think at the time 30, maybe 31—when I saw Bill Clinton's letter trying to have it both ways back when he was at Oxford, [it] reminded me of my situation in Lexington. I wanted to have it both ways. I wanted both to protest because I was outraged, and I also wanted to protect, preserve my options if I ever decided to run. Irony of ironies, the person there who said

let the devil take the hindmost, arrest me for the umpteenth time, was John Kerry. And he ended up, of course, having a political career.

It was probably on that evening or shortly thereafter that I decided that politics wasn't for me, that I couldn't make the compromise as necessary to be a good politician. That was a decision I made then that in retrospect might have been an immature decision, but was heartfelt decision at the time. I never ran for political office again after that evening. Was somewhat involved in war protests right up until the end and have since been dedicated to electing a Democratic president. Finally had the opportunity this year as a company—even though our work is not political research—to be discovered as researchers who did interesting things that could help predict how people made decisions, and got actively involved and actually retained by the Clinton people to do some work, and we finally helped elect a president. But that's the closest I've been to that kind of political decision-making since those fateful events of the early '70's.

INT: You seem to remember that evening as being one of rational debate. Would you like to talk more about that?

JM: All I remember is the monument where the people who fell on the Green are buried. And that's kind of a hill. I remember there were floodlights and that Bob Cataldo was the main speaker, although there probably were other Selectmen there. I remember being impressed. I remember feeling sorry for him. I remember saying to myself, "This is the first time I've had the kind of respect for him as a human being that he deserved." And that I, as a thirty year old, didn't have the humaneness or the sympathy to proffer him, but at the time I felt like, gee, I hope he can work his way out of this one. I felt in the final analysis that he was painted into a corner and that that event was also a precipitating event in his political career. I remember when he stood for reelection shortly thereafter he was defeated. I worked hard to defeat him. I'm sure that that event had a lot to

do with it. But he showed a lot of political courage in standing for what he believed in and I think was trying to work through a solution that might have avoided the conflict; of course, as I say, they didn't think he gave enough. In the final analysis, the decision to go ahead with the arrests was ill advised, to say the least. Outrageous, to put it the way I would have put it in those days.

INT: When you said it was important for you to be arrested, would you like to talk more about that?

JM: Well, let me say that if other people were going to be arrested, I felt like I wanted to be a part of it. But I must say that things which are clear to me now weren't then. I felt like "Chairman of the School Board getting arrested," particularly where I had run for the Senate in '68 and was seen as some kind of a, by some in caricature as a pawn of the liberal Democratic party. Of course, Bob Cataldo was Republican. And that I would be trying to create conflict and to use this conflict for my own political ends. I analyzed that and thought that that was an accusation that had some legitimacy, or at least some standing. I also had people telling me in my family that, you know, if I want to be Chairman of the School Committee, then I had to take a different position from protestor and lawbreaker, and I couldn't have it both ways, that the kids would look up to me. I took all that seriously. I mean I look back ten, twenty years later and I say that was nonsense. I mean that was not…I mean the most fundamental principles involved had to do with the Constitution and the Bill of Rights and freedom of speech and freedom to protest the kinds of issues that came up in this campaign that, you know, the separation of protest against a war and from protest against a country or a town. I mean we're talking about one act, not in any way standing against Lexington and its heritage. But it's easy to see that ten, twenty years down the line when you've matured some, but at the time it was tough. Let me say that if Julian Soshnik had not been

there and said, “These kids look tired. What are they doing here?” and “What are you doing here?” and “Issue a statement if you must do something,” I would have stayed in the line and then gotten arrested. But he gave me a convenient way out and I’ve thought about that, not often, but over the years. And then felt like there was a mistake on my part not to stay there even though I had all kinds of good reasons from the conflict of interest and the kids. But we all make mistakes. That wasn’t a serious error [to] issue the statement. But I wish I had stayed.

INT: You said as Chairman of the School Committee you were involved in a number of issues that reflected the town. Coming to the town as a relatively new person, did you see then also the conflict between the newcomers and the old…?

JM: Oh, absolutely, with great clarity. The people who had been accused of building the school system were looked upon as the newcomers, were looked upon as the intellectual left. That they had put together this extraordinarily expensive enterprise at the expense of people on fixed incomes, older folks, the townsfolk who could not afford all this. This was their argument. And here was just another interloper coming in as an academic—my PhD was in physics—and as a liberal Democrat willing to spend other people into oblivion just to create a school system for the elite and where we could have more national merit scholars than anybody else, but still have a system—this is *their* argument now—a system in chaos principally because of the liberals who ran it. There was a tremendous amount of conflict at that time over those issues. It was interesting that with few exceptions, the people on one side in that school debate who were the protestors on the Green and the people on the other side were the law and order conservatives, people led by Bob Cataldo and Al Busa and some others, the old townsfolk, and people led by Joe Cronin and Roland Greeley and some others.

INT: In what way did the different viewpoints and positions people took manifest itself in what you were doing? Was it meetings, statements, votes? How did it manifest the differences?

JM: Are you talking School Committee now, or are we linking to the Battle Green incident?

INT: The larger context of running the schools in town rather than the event.

JM: Yes, there was a movement afoot with the new Town Manager, a very conservative Town Manager. I don't even remember his name, an Irish name.

NT: O'Connell.

JM: Yes, Mr. O'Connell. He was just very difficult to deal with. And he was twice my age. I mean he must have been sixty-five when I was thirty. He was a very intimidating presence and he would just weekly cause tremendous grief for Rudy Fobert who I thought was a great [school] superintendent. He was kind of a mentor of mine even as I was his boss. He [O'Connell] would keep returning all these bills and at that time, the schools had autonomy. I got into rather ferocious, almost hand-to-hand kind of combat with Bob Cataldo over issues related to whether or not O'Connell had the right under state law to not pay bills that were submitted on behalf of the schools. I was in that fight at that time with Cataldo and with the unanimous support—with the possible exception of Vernon Page—but unanimous support for the most part from other members of the School Board. I was kind of taking the lead in battling these folks on what they could and couldn't do with school funds when all this came to the fore—and the things you've not heard of—when all this came to a head on May 30. So I had kind of rough exchanges of letters with O'Connell and particularly with Cataldo who insisted that I put everything in writing because I had several chats with him on the phone. So the things that

happened within the School Board's jurisdiction that led up to this event made me less than an objective neutral observer when it came to Cataldo. And I think…was Al Busa on the Board of Selectmen at the time?

INT: Yes.

JM: Yes, he was another one who was standing up on the hill [on the Green] now that I remember. Yes, and he was a good friend. He had been actively supportive of me in 1968. And we just agreed to disagree on everything. In the Town Meeting whenever he stood, I sat, and vice versa. But we were still pretty good friends.

INT: The Town Meeting, you were a Town Meeting member?

JM: Oh yes, sure, I was a Town Meeting member.

INT: You made the suggestion that afterwards that people should have had a conciliatory discussion with these issues. Do you think that we could have arrived at some sort of understanding of each other's points of view in terms of the people involved?

JM: Oh yes. I would have liked to have seen more of a Chautauqua, (however you pronounce that word; I've seen it in writing many times, but never heard it pronounced.)

INT: What does it mean?

INT2: Chautauqua is an adult education movement that originated in the 1800's.

JM: Yes, it comes out of a town in New York named Chautauqua where people would just get, "Let us reason together," and people would…so I thought that was something and I proposed it. To some degree there were discussions and different factions in town organized to discuss these issues, but I don't recall that anything as grand as what I had gratuitously proposed ever took place.

INT: Could you just briefly tell us about the proposal?

JM: This was in June. This was my response to [Soshnik] where I said I'm going to write a statement. I've got to make it clear that I was there.

INT: Well, you did make it. Before you read that, let me say that you did make this statement just a few days later; June sounds like a long time later, but it was actually the next week, right?

JM: I don't remember. I don't have that date there.

INT: You said, "Now we are a town split wide open. It is time Lexington took stock in its future."

JM: That's in here somewhere. Yes, this is rhetoric that I might tone down after twenty years, but... "The Statement of John Maguire on Lexington Battle Green Incident, May 30, 1971":

> "I was present on the Lexington Battle Green during the entire fateful night and was a witness to and participant in the dramatic events that occurred there. I was there as a private citizen for reasons of conscience and philosophical conviction. I emphatically disagree with the series of decisions, especially the final one—*that's the arrest*—by the Board of Selectmen, which helped make confrontation inevitable. But the luxury of hindsight is always easier to come by than the wisdom of foresight. And so as a public official, let me say that although their values were in my mind transposed and their judgment is in error, I sincerely sympathize with them. There was a great irony in what happened that evening. At sunset a fierce battle scene was played out in this very town hall, which in Lexington's proud past had been its forum of reason. And then near midnight on the Battle Green, a Town Meeting officially labeled lawless by the Selectmen, transpired in quiet dignity. There were the veterans counseling reason and respect. There was the Chairman of the Board of Selectmen showing political courage in admitting error. And there were the police in active and friendly dialogue with the protestors. And now we are a town-—I wish I could use the word community—split wide open, embarrassed before the world in the eyes of some, the resolute model of law and order to others. We can take little comfort in the fact that general malaise of anger, tension and inflamed rhetoric spreads far beyond Lexington's boundaries.
>
> It is time that Lexington took stock in herself and her future. So I would like to offer the following proposal that

> we— all of us through the churches, the various town boards, the League of Women Voters, FACT, our numerous fraternal and service organizations, and interested citizens on both sides of the great issues that divide us—begin now to plan a three day symposium to be held either on the weekend of April 19 or May 30, 1972. A subject will be the community of Lexington, 1975 and beyond. The Metcalfe and Eddy report provides Lexington's future with physical form. The planning of this symposium would begin the far more awesome task of infusing it with soul and substance. Such a proposal has been tried elsewhere with modest success and it can work here. Its main purpose is to bring together committees of philosophically diverse citizens in an atmosphere of cordiality and reason to identify those many issues, value and goals, which unite us, and to develop respect and tolerance for our differences. This is not an attempt to sugarcoat our genuine political difference, nor to short circuit the political process. All of us will still campaign vigorously either to support—or unseat—the Chairman of the Board of Selectmen, and the Chairman of the School Committee, for that matter. But if this proposal succeeds, it is my hope that the tone and the level of rationality will be elevated and that performance and policy rather than personality will be the issues. I hope you will join me in this effort."

I did work some over the next couple of months to push on this, but was pretty much told that by some of the groups that I listed that rather than join to get them in a massive effort, there would be many little, separate approaches to dialogue. I believe there was also some dialogue on the school as well over those months. But I can't recall anything of major substance that came of this proposal. Certainly there weren't a lot of people leaping up to volunteer to do this sort of thing. I do know that we went back shortly thereafter to a pretty tough battle on issues that related to the school budget. I was still having my rather intense disagreements on the one hand with the Board of Selectmen and the Town Manager, and on the other hand, with the teachers who saw me as a lever in collective bargaining negotiations.

INT: The coverage of the School Committee meeting that night noted that you were late to the School Committee meeting because you were delivering this address to the town and they were discussing the demise of driver education at that meeting.

JM: I remember, but my recollection could be faulty here, but to the best of my knowledge, I went to the meeting.

INT: You did go, but you were late.

JM: I went to the meeting, convened it and then left and then came back. I think that's what happened. Whoever was chairing the meeting at the Town Hall that evening allowed me to come in and speak and leave. I was only gone for, like, a half-hour. That's my recollection.

INT: You said that people weren't leaving to volunteer to [lead] the symposium and that you talked about other issues. Is the fact that there were other hot and burning issues the reason why that didn't take place?

JM: I'm sure it has also to do with…

INT: I'm trying to ask you an open question and not put an answer in your mouth, but I also wonder if there was such deep embarrassment that you referred to in your statement that people were avoiding looking at this in a public way. Let me just ask you this, why did it not take off?

JM: I certainly was not a model of leadership in that regard. I did not spend more than a few hours pushing on this proposal after I made it. And others did not pick up on it. It's possible that one of the reasons had to do with people just wanting to put it behind them and hope that history would not record that this had ever taken place to the embarrassment of the town, to the humiliation of the town, and therefore that there wasn't a great groundswell to continue the discussions. But that's a hypothesis that's just occurred to me as you asked your non-leading question.

INT: But if people were sure that what they were doing was right, should they have been embarrassed? I mean, your sympathy for Chautauqua

was very moving because most people don't express that. I'm interested in whether that group of people who felt they were believing in what was right, should have felt embarrassed.

M: Yes, I think that the people who…when I was using the word "embarrassment" to relate to the events of 1971… Of course,I wasn't embarrassed. Of course all the people who were on the right side, which was the left side, weren't embarrassed. It should have been the town and its leaders, particularly the Board of Selectmen and the Town Manager, who I think, by the way, was as much a prime mover on this business as anyone—Mr. O'Connell. I can't prove that. And it's probably unfair to make that accusation so many years after the fact. Is he still alive today?

INT: I don't know.

JM: I think that he had a great influence on the Board of Selectmen in that he was very right-wing in his approach to a lot of things. My feeling is that those folks should have been embarrassed. Their resolute law and order approach got so much negative publicity around the county, probably around the world, that they probably felt that Lexington had been, by a liberal press, painted in a non-favorable light. They probably didn't feel embarrassed, but they felt that the unfavorable light that the Lexington had been put in would rebound to the discredit of the town, perhaps unfairly, but nonetheless would embarrass the town simply because others would not see it the way they chose to see it. I think events proved them wrong. But I definitely was, even at my young and intolerant age, moved by what I saw going on late that evening. I'm talking about after midnight when a lot of people had left. Virtually all kids had left. I thought that Bob Cataldo was as rational and reasonable as I had ever seen him. We continue to have fights with him that would cause me to be less than sympathetic to his causes. But on this particular occasion I felt that he was kind of trapped and couldn't get out of it, and it was going to be a humiliation to the town. But

that was no reason not to pursue this. There were bigger issues than the humiliation of the town here, the ones I've already mentioned having to do with the First Amendment.

INT: Were you aware of the role that the churches were playing behind the scenes in all of this peace movement?

JM: I probably was, but I can't recall today.

INT: For example, John Wells, the minister of the First Parish Unitarian Church?

JM: Yes, I recall those words now after all these years.

INT: How about Father Casey? Did you know him?

JM: He was one of my heroes growing up, yes.

INT: Tell us about him.

JM: Monsignor Casey was a great man. And yes, he was brilliant. Even though I was not a subscriber to *The Pilot*, I used to read his columns and had great reverence for his approach to life and to politics and to religion. I remember generically—he was such a compassionate man and I remember he was an opponent of the war—but I can't make a direct nexus to the events of that day and the weeks thereafter and any role he played. He was certainly one of the great men of Lexington and somebody whom I would have relied on as a conciliatory figure. But I don't recall what happened. I think I was too caught up in School Board politics to spend as much time as I would have needed, using him as a lever. I remember talking with him about this, but I don't recall going to him and saying, "Look, you're somebody who could help with this proposal." All I remember about him is he…if somebody had said name five or ten people during those years who you have profound respect for and looked upon as models or even heroes, he would have been one.

INT: He was never afraid to speak his mind.

JM: Never. That was one of the reasons I liked him so much.

INT: I may have missed something at the beginning of this interview, but what brought you to Lexington in the first place?

JM: I'd finished my doctorate at Boston College in theoretical physics and was given a post doc at Rice University in Houston, Texas. Went down there for a year and a half with my family, my wife and five kids then. When I finished the post doc I wanted to move back to Massachusetts. I had an appointment as a senior research associate in physics at Boston College and a good chance to be named to the next open slot on the faculty as an assistant professor. So I wanted to move back in the area. Arlington was my hometown, born and brought up in Arlington, Mass. I wanted to be near Arlington. I was coaching. I was the fanatical baseball coach. As a matter of fact, this year marks the thirty-fourth consecutive year that I've coached baseball since I started as a teenager as a coach. I wanted to be near Arlington because that was where I'd done a good deal of my coaching and would do much more after that. I know that's kind of strange reason to find a community. Yet I wanted to find a community with great schools. So Lexington, my choice was narrowed. It was near Arlington and it was reputed to have great schools. We did a quick house search in Lexington and found a nice house on Lincoln Street.

INT: In what year was that?

JM: 1966, '67. I did some searching in '66, but I think we moved there in '67.

INT: It may be hard to remember, but what do you remember about how you heard of this event? How did it bubble up in your consciousness?

JM: Ah, that's interesting. I remember I was not at the Town Hall, was it at five or six in the evening? I was not there. I was not associated in any way with the march. I felt like as Chairman of the School Committee I had to stay away.

INT: You knew about it?

JM: Oh, yes, I knew about it. I hadn't made a conscious decision. It was just that I was Chairman of the School Board and at the time I was Dean of Admissions at Boston College. I had a lot of work. I worked a hundred-ten-hour weeks when I was young enough and crazy enough to do that sort of thing. I remember taking my kids to the Burger King in Lexington that evening and I ran into somebody, I forget who it was, who said there are just crazy things going on down at the Town Hall and there's about to be a confrontation over the war and the permits. I went home and might have called some folks, but I don't recall who they were at the time. Anyway, I got informed and then my two… I think there was third daughter who was there for a while, but she went home early, like at eleven or twelve o'clock at night.

INT: How about your wife?

JM: She was home with the other kids. Although she was, at the time, as sympathetic as I to the aims of the war protestors. I ended up living on Lincoln Street up near the Green. I walked down. I don't think I drove down. That was another problem when I got over to the Public Works Department; I didn't have a car and dawn was arriving.

INT: Your kids walked with you, the little kids?

JM: Yes, sure. All I know is that I found myself there. I hope and I think, I truly believe that it was the outrage at the leaders of the town that related to the war and not my conflicted views that had to do with all the other battles I was waging with these folks that led me to the Green. I certainly was not going to play a leadership role. I wasn't up making speeches and I wasn't up in the middle of the folks saying, "This is the way it should be." I was back on a blanket with my daughters and committed to staying there as long as it was necessary to get to get that permit and to get things moving with the veterans, never suspecting that I was going to be there the whole night—I was actually going to see sun up. I remember my

daughter Linda pointing out to me that when we left the Public Works Department—I've been calling it the armory all these years—with Julian Soshnik. I think he drove us home. And the sun was coming up. The first rays of dawn were appearing in the east.

INT: Did you feel that the town officers should have had more say in the decision? You didn't go to the Town Meeting that was held the day before?

JM: No, didn't. I think I was coaching. Baseball at that time of the year interfered with… I was being Dean of Admissions during a critical period in the admissions cycle. I was Chairman of the School Board during that critical period in the school board cycle. And probably the highest priority at the time was to get my baseball team going. I think that weekend I was doing a good deal of coaching and spent time with the family. So I was not involved at all. But when I heard, I thought that it was going to be pro forma. They were going to issue the permit. The march was going to take place. I'd be there for some part of it. No problem. But when I found out that this was all coming to a huge head, I said, well, I've got to be involved even it's only in the background as one of a thousand private citizens. I think there were times when there were way more than a thousand people on that Green, although only four hundred and some odd of us got on the buses.

INT: Did you wife have any thoughts about…I mean you said she was herself sympathetic, but did she have any suspicion that there might be arrests and that she might be concerned about how to deal with that with the kids and you?

JM: No, I don't think that was a major problem. I don't think for the kids it was a major problem although for their father it was, and I think I was worried about the image, as I said before. And also worried about my future in politics, to be very candid. My wife was proud of us. She did not

in any way…she wasn't the person who was telling me…none of my kids and not my wife were the folks in the family telling me that this was foolishness.

INT: Is this the Arlington contingent, your family?

JM: Yes, although when they see this on the video, "I still love you."

INT: They were proud of you, too. How about the vets? Did you get a chance to talk to any of them?

JM: I had talked briefly over the years with John Kerry, particular when he first ran and then later when he ran for Congress shortly thereafter. I had known him, but I was not actively involved in any way with the vets either before, during, or after those events. Intried to keep arms length, given my position in the town and also the other things I had on my plate at the time.

INT: You weren't scared at any point that something could happen?

JM: You mean scared physically?

INT: Yes.

JM: Not at all. Not once, never. Not a problem. I had my kids up on my shoulders showing them, because there were big crowds around, so they could see what was going on when the floodlights and Bob Cataldo was making his speeches. A colleague who was a member of the School Committee at that time, Fred Frick, at his memorial service a couple of months ago I just happened to come late, before the service had started, but one of the last people in. There was only one seat left in the place and I happened to elbow my way by this gentleman who wanted to stay on the aisle and sat down next to him only to find myself sitting next to one Robert Cataldo. We chatted more than amicably. There was no tension at all over the years. That had dissipated entirely over the years and we just had a great chat. I felt the same kind of warmth for him then as I kind of felt that one fleeting moment when I said I felt sympathy for him on the Green.

INT: You said it did have an impact on your life, this moment, in terms of changing your attitude toward being a politician.

JM: Are you asking a leading question? The answer is yes, it did. I convinced myself soon thereafter and perhaps naively that I was not cut out to be a politician. I could stand the wear and tear of it physically, but I was girded for battle and probably enjoyed the skirmishes with Cataldo and less so with the teachers because I felt like I was on their side and they were very clever bargainers. They had read all the books on collective bargaining and their goal was to make me feel like they didn't think that I was on their side and was doing great harm to the system. So I felt badly on that end. But on the other end, that is, the day to day, and even the big conflicts with other town boards, with the Finance Committee and particularly with the Board of Selectmen, that didn't bother me at all. I just felt like I probably couldn't make the compromise as necessary to be a successful politician.

INT: What was that compromise that became apparent to you that you felt you weren't going to be able to make the possible compromises that would be required in the future? What was this compromise? Could you say that?

M: I thought I should have been more forthright in explaining to the folks from Arlington and relatives and friends who thought there was an irrevocable conflict, that there were certain things that superseded even the image of being a School Board Chairman. In the final analysis I could never really come to grips with the ambition, the blind youthful ambition, some would have called it, of 1968. The thing that troubled me most about all this was leaving before I was booked, because everybody knew I was there and there were photos and there were going to be statements. That was in some ways a technicality. What bothered me more than anything else was the fact that the events of 1968—that is when I had run, been nominated, been the Democratic nominee and came reasonably close to

unseating a very popular senator who years later told me he wished profoundly I had won that election. His name is Ronald C. Mackenzie and he ended up resigning in disgrace and going to jail. But I was forever compromised in the minds of some, there's no way I could be an effective School Board Chairman. There's no way I could make decisions regarding the school budget, the school children. There's no way I could be a private citizen protesting in that arena because I wanted to be a Congressman. I've got difficulty dealing with that. There's a great essay by Jonathan Swift called "The Art of Political Lying." I wasn't as adept as perhaps I should have been at being able to explain away those conflicts and apparent contradictions. I just finally said I'm not going to be very good at this, ever. I could tell, so I went on to other pursuits.

INT: Thank you. That's just exactly what I wanted to know. Also, you said that these events precipitated you moving away from politics. Did they precipitate your moving toward anything in particular?

JM: I stayed for another ten years, eleven years, as Dean of Admissions at Boston College. Then later as Chief Enrollment Officer at the institution, which meant I supervised a number of offices including admissions. Never strayed too far from the physics department and I held that appointment, although I never exercised it. I sat on a few doctoral committees and tried to stay up a little bit with the field. But my principal interest at the time was the burgeoning field of marketing higher education. In 1983, left Boston College to form this company, which has been a very successful company. We now have an office, not only here in Concord, but in England as well. We're probably the largest company now in the world serving educational institutions with regard to marketing. Interestingly enough, although I was never far from Democratic politics and had contributed money, and some time but not a lot of time, to some of the presidential campaigns, notably first Bob Kerrey and then later at his

recommendation, the Clinton campaign, saw the techniques that we were using to help to understand how students and families make college choices would have applicability to a political arena. So for the last year and a half I was actively involved, very actively involved as a company, in doing market research, polling, and now these electronic focus groups which got us that mention in some of the national press that you mentioned. Those were the small but important contributions to the election of someone who back in those days was protesting in many ways just like I was with some ambivalence, but with a lot of passion.

INT: Do you think these big protests had an impact on any…?

JM: Clinton was asked the question and Stockdale said, and Perot[1] said, that in fact they had an impact on extending the war. I don't know the answer. In some ways they shortened the war and other ways they might have lengthened the war. But that's irrelevant. The fact is, what's most important is that this country is founded and is fundamentally committed to the whole notion that the citizens have the right to speak out. So in a way whether it extended the war or shortened the war, from the point of view of the politicians arguing in 1992, is not relevant. What's important is that people have to do what they have to do. If you have to also factor in complex political consequences, whether they be how's this going to look on my resume, or how is it going to effect the children of Lexington, or is it going to extend the war, then you're looking at the wrong angle. The more important angle is the Bill of Rights, and interestingly enough, [that's] what Lexington and Concord were all about originally. That was the contradiction really that night on the Battle Green—that the Selectmen were in fundamental conflict with what Lexington and Concord had been all about.

[1] Perot was a Republican candidate in the presidential primary and Stockdale his running mate.

INT: I thought about that in terms of education in Lexington, and the irony that the Selectmen were educated in Lexington. Yet somehow the education hadn't stressed those values as much as it had for people often who grew up in other parts of the country. Did you think about that as a School Committee member at the time?

JM: That's interesting. I think a lot more about that now that I live in Concord. I do live in Concord now. Although now I'm a private citizen, I'm at a point that as a member of the Light Board (that's my politics for this decade) but I think a lot about how, and I've got two young children. I now have eight children. I have two on the second marriage and two young children, one ten and one seven. The seven-year-old is the special needs kid who doesn't go to school in Concord. But the ten-year-old is a student here. So I think a lot about how his education could be improved. One of the things that intrigues me most is the immediacy of the intellectual, historical, political environment as it relates to Concord, and tying that in with education, the hands-on approach. We live right on a hill overlooking Louisa May Alcott's house, and my son had a whole year of studying Louisa May Alcott, culminating in a tour of Louisa May Alcott's house which he gave to his parents. There's no way that anybody can understand American literary history the way he as a nine-year-old could understand it without that kind of prop and process. So using the Lexington Battle Green, using the Concord Bridge, using the great authors' homes, the history and immediacy of Boston to me now makes all the sense in the world twenty years later. But it wasn't something that was high on my agenda as I was stomping out brush fires when I was Chairman of the School Board.

INT: Do you think sometimes though when teachers do this, they stress too much the traditions and not the life of the ideas, say, of Louisa May Alcott who was in a sense a kind of feminist—they may not stress the fact

that her father built the stove in the kitchen, but not the fact that her ideas speak to a lot of modern women who see women in a different light?

JM: If they only do one and don't do the other, they've missed a lot. But at least the one gives you a platform to do the other. So I'd say that if you do it right, you'll do both.

INT: You've referred often to your style as being something of a firebrand and not having the political skills or the people skills and having some ambivalence about politics; I'd love to hear you talk about how you came to be that kind of a person and what has happened to bring you to different approaches.

JM: I don't think I've changed fundamentally. I still probably say too much and don't listen enough and still a firebrand, but now I'm a fifty-two-year-old firebrand and not a twenty-nine or thirty-year-old.

INT: Was that learned from your father?

JM: Oh yes. As a matter of fact, I had the honor and sad duty of delivering a eulogy at my father's funeral earlier this year. And there's no doubt—and I didn't realize it at the time—but being forced to write a eulogy can clarify one's thinking immensely. In writing the eulogy I was able to make connections that I perhaps hadn't made heretofore. It was very clear to me that my father had had a profound major telling impact on my life. That went back to the earliest days, so my earliest recollections of life involved my father when I was—do you want me to go on?

INT: Very much.

JM: When I lived in Hartford, Connecticut, my father was a policeman and I remember hearing screams in the neighborhood, and my father ran towards the screams. A young kid had an Indian headdress on and it had caught fire and my father had put out the fire and it was kind of in flames, but looked okay. My father rushed him off to a hospital. This big hulk of a man who had never graduated from high school and who had been a gas

station superintendent before he was finally hired to supervise many college students, and so without even a high school education, came back to the house crying because the kid had died. He inhaled the flames. In those days, that was fatal. That he had tried to rescue him, that was an important thing in my life. I remember when I was four or five years old, in Connecticut, my father chastising me really in a way he had never done before. He was a gentle person who never hit me even though he's an intense person. But when I had seen probably the first black kid of my life and had made a disparaging comment, he lectured me in a really important way about equality. He was a Democrat and a liberal and I think it's no accident that that's how I turned out. But the most important event in my life as a youngster took place in January of '54, when I was thirteen years old. My father won the Massachusetts Humane Society award as the bravest man in—it chokes me up—in Massachusetts when he rescued a kid out of the Mystic River. He, in January, went by and saw two hundred people standing—this was all reported on the front page of the *Boston Globe*, so you can, if you want, go back and look at this one. I had to refresh my memories to go back and get the old clipping, and it indeed was front page, with two hundred people reported as standing watching this kid on an ice floe getting swept down the Mystic River at its widest point in Medford Center. He leaped out the car and he tore off his clothes as he was running and then proceeded to—he was a life guard in Arlington, growing up—proceeded to walk and then fall through and then get up and because the ice was on the edge of the river, the middle of the river was no ice. That's an ice floe [where] the young nine-year-old boy was. He proceeded to keep falling through, cutting himself to ribbons on the ice and swam out and got the kid as the kid fell off. Then, because they had been swept down, couldn't get back in, because the ice was blocking and he was in the water for twenty minutes with the kid. The fire department finally came

and with a ladder they were able to get him out. They took them both to the hospital for immersion, but my father almost died. And this kid lived and sent my father a card every year from that point forward. My father was offered an opportunity to apply for the National Carnegie Medal and he said, in typical fashion, he would not apply for anything. But he did get the Massachusetts Humane Society award as the bravest man in Massachusetts. So he was the kind of person who had credibility when he spoke. I think that who I am today is a reflection of my father more than anything else. He was stubborn and ornery and he could be a very difficult person, but most of what he believed in was kind of a liberal philosophy that is carried over, I'm proud to say, to me and to all my eight kids. That had to do with a kind of a tough approach towards dealing with people who choose to confront you in a kind of venal way, and at the same time, a compassionate approach to people who need help. That's why I thought I could be a good politician because I could be mean and tough and tenacious, and yet I was brought up as, if anything, an ultra-liberal. I didn't see enough ultra-liberals who could be politically down and dirty. But after a while I decided that I wasn't going to be that good at it myself.

NT: You're not a very old man you know.

M: Oh, I'm still a young person, a very young person.

INT: You know, you don't necessarily have to have made a life long decision.

JM: Oh, wait a minute; you're not supposed to ask any leading questions.

INT: Have you followed John Kerry's career in those terms?

JM: A little bit, yes. I also should mention that my oldest son who's twenty-eight—his name is John Kennedy Maguire. So, political heroes were important to me, but the personal heroes, my father and maybe people like Schweitzer and Einstein, those were even more important.

INT: And Father Casey.

JM: Yes, I did mention him.

INT: Was he criticized a lot during the time you talked about people criticizing?

JM: Oh, yes, the Catholics in Lexington just thought he was way out of bounds; excuse me, not the Catholics, but many Catholics including the more conservative element who disproportionately were Catholic. They thought that he was just a nice old man, but radical. And his politics.

NT: Were you a Catholic in Lexington?

JM: Yes, I was born and brought up a Catholic, but I'm not a practicing Catholic today, although—how do you say it—some of my best friends are practicing Catholics. I don't spend a lot of time thinking about those issues.

INT: Were you a member of Father Casey's parish?

JM: Yes, Saint Brigid's. Yes, as a matter of fact, my wife taught Sunday school there and I think one or two of my daughters still teach Sunday school there today.

INT: Some of the family is still in Lexington then?

JM: My ex-wife still lives in 249 Lincoln Street. And my youngest daughter, Terry, who is twenty-nine, she lived in an apartment in that house and she's a teacher in the Winchester school system. The others are all off on their own. I have four grandchildren. Two older daughters are married. I mentioned Linda has three children. She's working here. That's about it.

INT: Thank you. You certainly have done a good job.

JM: I think I strayed from the agenda, but.

INT: We appreciate people telling us some of their background. I'm not completely content because you referred a number of times to your contentious style. And you said, well, "I still say too much". But I perceive that you do have some shift in your perspective on your interpersonal way of doing things. I remember you as an enormously confrontational figure

on the School Committee. I just remember one meeting in which you and the head of the Lexington Education Association were going at each other. I certainly have some sense from listening to you about where that came from, but it sounds to me like your work here is toward finding other ways to accomplish things, very different ways of accomplishing things, and it's that evolution that I'm really curious about. Maybe it doesn't belong on the tape or as part of this, but to me, it's very interesting.

JM: So many things happened to me so early in my life that… I mean, Fred Frick for example, who was kind of a mentor of mine—I liked Fred a lot. He was a School Committee member who had a ready smile and a kind of a disarming ability to negotiate and he and I got along just fine. He nominated me and voted for me for Chairman. That's the ultimate test. But when I had to reflect when I was at his service the other day that when he was on the School Board with me, he was three years older than I am today. And I was elected to the School Board almost twenty-three years ago. I was too young perhaps. But I had done all kinds of things. I was the Dean of Admissions and a hyper-achiever. And that was part of the problem. I had done very well in school and had done very well in sports and had done very well in politics and hadn't had the virtue or the value of time which mellows and certainly imparts wisdom. Although I was bright and I think I was well grounded philosophically, family values were correct and all that, you just learn from experience. It would be different today if I were Chairman of the School Board than it was twenty years ago. In some ways better, but not maybe in all ways. Because then I had indefatigable vigor, tenacity and probably would go further in pushing for ideas and less willing to compromise. If I was on the right track, maybe I would have got them further along.

INT: But you did a lot. The School Committee did a lot to change the town schools while you were on it.

JM: I don't know that that's true. But if some people see it that way… I got some nice letters from some folks who were grateful for… Lexington was already well on track. Perhaps it had gone off track; some would argue it's still off track a little bit in its tilt. But it's a great school system. I'd like to think that during those years I did little to harm and maybe some to help the system.

END OF INTERVIEW