

Interview with Mike McCormick

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Excerpt from Interview # 1: July 8, 2010

Interviewer: Mark DePue

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McCormick: Jim Thompson, in my experience with him—one of the best politicians I've ever seen. He'd come down to southern Illinois, and he could talk a better drawl in southern Illinois than I could, and I grew up there. I'm getting off your topic, but the first time I met Jim Thompson, he came to Vienna, Illinois, and I had the Vienna grade school band—my dad and I worked on this. We blocked off a part of the square in Vienna. We had the Vienna grade school band there.

Jim Thompson comes in, in a big Winnebago thing, comes out, and he's this big, tall guy. He's got a flannel shirt and a pair of corduroy pants on. Here I am with a suit and tie on, and my dad's got a suit and tie on because the governor candidate's coming to town. He [Thompson] gets up to make a speech, and he's "you-all"-ing it and "How y'all doing?" and "It's good be down here in southern Illinois." He said VIE-enna instead of VEE-enna. He'd kiss a baby and eat a hot dog and pat you on the back. He said, "C.L., come with me." So my dad got in the van, because they were going down to a thing in Massac County, in Metropolis. This is '76. He said Thompson's in the van and they're talking, just kind of telling stories, just talking a little bit about the campaign. We're getting closer and closer to this big event that's going on in Metropolis, and my dad's thinking, Is he going to change? So finally my dad says, "Now, don't let me stop you if you need to get ready for this next thing." "Ah, no, no, I'm fine." Walked right into that big dinner with his corduroys and his flannel shirt on.