RUTGERS, THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY

NEW BRUNSWICK

AN INTERVIEW WITH MARTIN E. KRAVARIK

FOR THE

RUTGERS ORAL HISTORY ARCHIVES

WORLD WAR II * KOREAN WAR * VIETNAM WAR * COLD WAR

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TRANSCRIPT BY

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Matthew Lawrence: This begins our interview with Judge Martin E. Kravarik on October 31, 2007, in New Brunswick, New Jersey, with Matt Lawrence…

Shaun Illingworth: Shaun Illingworth…

Hanne Ala-Rami: and Hanne Ala-Rami.

SI: Judge Kravarik, thank you very much for coming in today. You have been in support of our program for a while now and it is good to finally get you down on tape.

MK: It is a pleasure to be here.

SI: To begin, could you tell us where and when you were born?

MK: I was born January 20, 1936, in Bryant Sanitarium in Bronx, New York.

SI: What were your parents' names?

MK: My mother's name was Anna nee Petrucha and my dad's name was Martin, no middle initial, Kravarik.

SI: Can you tell us a little bit about your father's background, where he was from, and what was his family background? … Was there an immigration story?

MK: Both my parents were born in Newark, New Jersey of immigrants from the Empire of Austria-Hungary, which after World War I became Czechoslovakia, where they lived. … Dad's father was a machinist in a factory, which was considered skilled work, so he did a little better than some people did. His brother, my granddad's brother, also came over. He worked on the railroad and he was unhappy and returned to Europe. My grandfather bought … eventually, accumulated enough wealth to buy a motorcycle with a sidecar, which was a big deal in those days when people in the Ironbound section of Newark actually walked back and forth from work because the homes and the factories were a few blocks apart. I don't remember when but, eventually, my paternal grandfather bought seventy acres in Nichols, New York and was a dairy farmer for the last half of his life. My father's mother, his father's first wife, drowned in the Passaic River in Newark. Naturally, it had a big impact on my father's life. His sisters were taken in by the maternal branch of the family in Mahanoy City, Pennsylvania and my father and his brother were placed in an orphanage. They lived in the orphanage, a couple of years with foster families, and when my father was old enough, he got a job at the age of eighteen after graduation of high school, which I give him a lot of credit for getting through, and he worked forty-seven years for New York Telephone Company. He married my mom; they lived in New York the first four years of my life, then they moved to New Jersey, first Newark, then Irvington, New Jersey. They had gone to the Ironbound section from New York to be close to family and then to 50 Elmwood Place in Irvington, New Jersey, which was an apartment building, and I was raised in Irvington, attending the public schools, until I went to college. Dad didn't serve in World War II, he was exempted because he was young, had a family, and, so many guys were already in the service, to maintain communications. There were a minimum number of

experienced people they had to have so he was exempted so he could continue his work for the telephone company. His brother was drafted into the military. We think there was a mistake in identifications because he was drafted into the Signal Corps, which would have been a natural for my father. … He went to Camp Crowder in Missouri and after a couple of the hospitalizations, they finally said, "You can't stay." He didn't want to leave. He was older than most of the troops at that time, but, he had such flat feet that on every march they had to put him in the hospital and he kept insisting he wanted to stay. But they said, "You got to go," so, he was honorably discharged. One of the funny things that happened with him is they used to have these troop trains, and he left from, I don't know where, maybe, New York City, maybe Newark, to go out to Camp Crowder with the train of draftees, and, again, he was older than most, so, he was also wily having been an orphan, so he knew how to procure things. So, apparently, they had like a baggage car that was full of supplies and things, and, somehow, he got into that car and he found cookies, so he grabbed a bunch of cookies, boxes of cookies, and took them back to his car and passed them out to all the kids who had nothing to eat except what people would give them from the platform. Wherever they stopped on the way, people might give them a cup of coffee or a doughnut, or something like that, through the window because they didn't get many amenities on the trip. Of course, he did his thing and got down on his knees and, didn't pray, he played craps with the guys. Mom had a difficult life also in a different way. She was semi-literate; could almost read the newspaper, that was about it. What had happened was her family, all my ancestors came here around the turn of the century. I keep meaning to try to do some of the research but I haven't gotten around to it, like many things. I'll probably die without doing it. But they came over about the turn of the century and married a few years later, and so on. My mother's side of the family was established in the Ironbound section, but they had, back in the old country, real estate, a farm. I've learned it's since been absorbed into Bratislava, the city having expanded, and the communists building those huge apartment houses that they were [keen] to do, and so on. So, that area has been swallowed by the city but it was rural at the time. … They also put their money in the bank in Prague and so when my mother was still a small girl, they went back to Slovakia on a visit and while they were there, a Serbian nut shot the Archduke Ferdinand and World War I began, so, they were trapped there even though they were American citizens. In those days there was no way to get any help, or anything. The way the draft worked there is they would have a platoon of soldiers and they'd grab any guy that looked like he could fight, and so, they grabbed my grandfather and took him away. The family didn't know where he was, what happened to him, or anything, and he was impressed into the service for Austria-Hungary in World War I. He lost a kidney to a bayonet and his lungs were damaged by gas, and after the war, he returned to the farm where the family stayed while they were in Slovakia, and my grandfather was physically unable to return to the United States; he was too ill. My grandmother, however, rather courageously, went back to the United States with my Aunt Betty, the oldest daughter, and did try to reestablish a home for the family in this country. … My mother and her baby sister, they had another daughter while they were in Europe, stayed behind with cousins and she tells the story of being fed the leftovers and eating off the floor, not the floor but, you know, on the floor rather than at a table with chairs. She didn't like it very much, so when her father died she, nobody knows how, somehow she saved pennies and had enough money, she hitched a ride, it wasn't far, she hitched a ride on a wagon into Bratislava. She was seventeen years old and all she had is a rudimentary European education, which peasants got, you know, if you could read and write and that was it. But, unfortunately, in Slovakia you weren't permitted to use your own language in school; you had to use Hungarian instead of

Slovak, so it didn't really help a heck of a lot. At any rate, she caught a train in Bratislava and she went to Bremerhaven, Germany and somehow got on the SS *Deutschland* [Hamburg-Amerika Line, Germany owned passenger liner] and sailed to New York …

SI: She took her younger sister with her as well?

MK: No, no, on her own. She ran away from the cousins. She ended up at Ellis Island, and when they found out she was born here and was a citizen, somehow they found my grandmother and she came to Ellis Island and picked my mother up. Then, the baby sister, eventually, my grandmother was able to bring over also. But I remember very well in the kitchen of my home, my present home, the last time I had the three sisters together, they're discussing how stupid their parents were to go back to Europe and get caught up in the war and what a difference it would have been in their lives if they'd had an American education. … I never heard that, I never heard a negative thing about their parents, or anything, until that moment, and I overheard it; they were talking amongst themselves. We were having a deck party in the backyard and they wanted to stay in the kitchen and talk to each other, and be in the air conditioning and comfortable. So, I came in to get something for the folks outside and I heard that and it was both shocking, in a sense, but it really made me keenly aware of how difficult their lives were made by a twist of fate, which was wrapped in history as big as World War I. So, that tells you how the big events you read in history books trickle down into the individual human lives and the people of that time.

SI: That is an amazing story. Were there any other stories that she told you about her life there?

MK: No, it was, you know, a peasant life, very simple, rudimentary type of living there. Their home had a dirt floor. My paternal grandfather came over at the age of seventeen with ten cents and he, in the old country, was a lumberjack. The way that worked back in those days, you had an axe; you went out into the woods; you picked out a tree; you chopped it down, manually, and then you tied a rope around it and you dragged it to the mill where they paid you for bringing in the tree. That makes you understand why he went to America, doesn't it? [laughter] I can't imagine that, but that's what life was. Everything we have is descended from people like that, who lived that way.

SI: They were very hardy people.

MK: Oh, yeah. I don't think we would work very well on a two thousand mile journey on a Conestoga wagon ourselves. Yeah, we owe it all to these folks. There were different kinds of pioneers. It didn't end in 1865, you know, it continued for years after and immigration is the story of that.

SI: Do you know how your parents met?

MK: Through the church. My grandfather, paternal grandfather, was also the sextant of the first Slovak Lutheran Church in Newark. … He and my paternal grandmother were charter members of that church and my mother's family joined that church, and that's how they met. In those days, your social life was pretty much confined to your own ethnic group.

HA: Was there a large Slovakian population near where you grew up?

MK: No, and they quickly assimilated. … My grandmother told me stories about things that happened when she was a young girl; like the Magyar Cavalry coming in and what happened to the people. But there are only a relatively small number of immigrants from Slovakia, but, they go all the way back to Jamestown. The two carpenters at Jamestown were from Slovakia and they were Lutherans. Now, as you know, the boundaries keep changing in Europe so there was a strong German influence, particularly, in Czechia and Moravia, now the Czech Republic, but, apparently, it also trickled into Slovakia, and so, my ancestors were Lutherans and that is a very, tiny minority, even in Czechoslovakia, so, their group wasn't very large, and neither my brother nor I married a Slovak girl and that was an absolute scandal in the church. [laughter]

HA: What kind of role did religion play in your upbringing?

MK: Well, I think, religion played a great part in my life as far as my values were concerned and, I guess, because we were a minority, I was a bit resilient or rebellious, whichever way you want to characterize it, and was determined to overcome any obstacles that came along. When I was a boy, I studied the Catechism for three years in English and in Slovak, and our pastor was Reverend Chernansky and he was a chaplain in World War II. He left the church and went into the army. I don't even know where he served, or anything, but I do know he was a changed man when he came back. I suspect he saw a lot but he taught me Catechism for three years in both languages and I remember his son, Bobby, very distinctly. For some reason, I don't know why, the two of us, whenever we got together, we were mischievous, and so here's the minister's son and me, and we're the buddies in the Catechism class, [laughter] and we always got in trouble. I remember one time particularly. Discipline was different in those days, where Pastor Chernansky had me and Bobby kneel on a broomstick in the corner for I don't know how long, but I think that pacified us in future classes quite a bit. Today, I guess, the minister would get sued or go to jail for doing that or something, but it worked. So, there was a lot of discipline. … I would say I learned a lot of discipline through my religion in the sense of the environment in which I learned it, and, of course, as today, the church was also a social organization, that's how you met other people, other kids. There were parties. I remember putting my face down into [a] washtub full of water and apples, bobbing for apples, and they'd have amateur contests and my father appeared in some. … There were a series of annual minstrel shows, which, of course, today are in disrepute, but were acceptable in that time, and they'd have the side men and the interlocutor, all that sort of thing, and they'd do some music and comedy with a typical southern flavor to it. My dad, who is ninety-seven now, is the last surviving member of that era of the church, which has dwindled. Now, they don't even have a full-time minister and it's dying out, as did the church in Mahanoy City years ago. I guess, eventually, some other social group will buy the church and, hopefully, use it for religious purposes themselves, whatever their faith might be. … I don't know whatever became of the original church in the Ironbound. But the church I was raised in was on 14th Street and Avon Avenue in Newark and that was sold to an independent black congregation many years ago. For the hundred-tenth anniversary of the church, my brother and I went to Newark to take pictures of the old church. We couldn't get in and the church office there wouldn't respond to my phone calls, but all the stained glass windows were gone, except the one over the front entrance of the church, which was, I guess, a geometric design let's say. All the stained glass windows along the side of the church, with figures on it,

were gone. We don't know whether they were destroyed during the [1967 Newark race] riots, or whether the congregation that was using it intentionally removed them, or covered them up, or whatever. We were taking the pictures and a couple of guys in a utility truck stopped and said, "You guys have a problem?" We said, "No." We were parked in front of the church, and he says, "You better get out of here." We finished taking our pictures and we left, but apparently it wasn't the right place for us to be and a couple of passers-by were just trying to protect us. … That's part of the whole history and evolution, too, I guess.

SI: What drew your parents to Newark after they had been living in New York? Was that because of the community?

MK: To be close to the family, yeah, to be close to the community, yeah. They were isolated in the Bronx. They were in the Pelham Bay section of the Bronx, Fteley Avenue we lived on. My father used to take me to the Bronx Zoo before he went to work in the morning, and we'd walk through the zoo, and I really don't remember it but he didn't even have to pay. He just walked in and they would be feeding the animals … at six in the morning or whatever time it was, so that was one of our excursions. His lease expired and he had to scramble to find a place. He hadn't found a place in Jersey yet, so I don't know how long, but I think just a month or two, we lived in the Fort Apache section of the Bronx, because that's the only place he could get a lease at that time, but that was brief.

SI: Do you have any memories of the Bronx?

MK: Not really. My wife had an acoustic neuroma, which is commonly called a brain tumor. Technically it's not, until it's advanced, but, at any rate, she was being treated at Columbia Presbyterian [Hospital]. We went and we had lunch in a Dominican restaurant there in Spanish Harlem and I said, "Honey, I'd like to show you, you know, where my family lived when I was born." So, we went straight up Broadway and across the river into the Bronx, and I went two blocks and turned around and left, cursing myself for putting my wife at such risk. It was like a war zone. I don't remember what year it was, but, you know, all abandoned, boarded-up buildings and young men congregating on all the corners. I just decided it wasn't that important, so I hightailed it back into Manhattan and, I think, we went to the Cloisters, gave her a little sightseeing, and then we came back home to Jersey, the Garden State.

HA: You were brought up speaking English and Slovak, is that correct?

MK: Yes. Yes, but when my grandmother passed away the use of Slovak also passed away, and so, you know, I can talk pidgin Slovak but I can't have an intelligent conversation of any kind.

HA: Have you maintained any of the cultural practices or anything, or did that mostly die out with your grandmother as well?

MK: Well, the things that died out were the great food and dessert. My Aunt Betty was the baker of the family. We used to love to go to her house, especially at holidays, because I don't know how many days she'd spend, but she'd bake up a storm, you know, and I remember when she lived in Hillside. She worked for Bristol Myers [a pharmaceutical corporation] in Hillside

and she had a home in Hillside. She had been widowed when my cousin, Betty, was one year old. Her husband worked for the … he worked for the Hollander Fur Company, again, in the Ironbound section in Newark. People walked back and forth to work. Somebody went into the tanning pit and didn't come back out, so, a succession of one, two, and three men at a time went down to try to save them and they all died because of the gas, in addition to my aunt's husband; Remias was their name. There were two young Slovak boys, who had immigrated and they had absolutely no family at all over here, so, all of them are buried in Hollywood Cemetery, not Hollywood Memorial Park, Hollywood Cemetery on Stuyvesant Avenue in Union Township, New Jersey. The Hollanders put both boys in a single coffin, in a single grave. … Then, to help my aunt's family, they gave work to my aunt and her mother as servants in their home. One of the highlights of my life was a day in Deal, New Jersey, which was always a very affluent community, more so almost back then than it is now, to the Hollander home, summer home, down there. The [Hollander] family wasn't there. We pulled in, the chauffer was washing and polishing the limousine. It was one of those homes, big homes with the carriage entrance and all of that stuff. I remember going into the kitchen, which I thought was huge. I don't know how big it really was but to a young kid, it was a huge place; big, stainless steel table and stainless steel double sink, big double sink. Of course, they had a cook and it was your summer vacation to get to work at the summer home, that's the only vacation people of their class would ever get. So, the cook and my grandmother were in the kitchen snapping the ends off the beans and shucking the corn, and whatever, for the evening meal and the chauffer, eventually, wandered in. I remember it as a very pleasant experience. Here were these humble, hard-working people, all working together to prepare the evening meal, and socializing while they were doing it. I remember that happening in my home, too. … The only company was family and everybody helped, so whatever the meal was, all the women would be working on it out in the kitchen and socializing, while they did [it]. It was a custom at least amongst our family, so that was the same thing that happened at this huge home down in Deal. Then, my grandmother offered to give me a tour of the house, but said, "Don't touch anything," and I didn't touch anything. I remember thinking I was in a museum because, you know, they had *objet d'art* [French for art object] in the way of things around the house, and gorgeous furnishings and carpets, so I was very impressed. … I didn't get to see the second floor, which were the bedrooms for the family, but my grandma took me up to her bedroom up on the third floor. I guess it's actually two and a half stories, and she had a room the size of a closet, walk-in closet, and a cot-like bed, a tiny dresser with a little tin radio on top. It was about [this] big, four by six, or so, and that's where she lived when she was down there, and the radio was a gift from the family to her at some point. But they got trapped by World War I and that had a tremendous impact on the lives of my mother and her two sisters.

SI: Were they working for the Hollander family at the time when your mother was still in Europe or was that afterwards?

MK: Oh, no, no. That was afterwards, after they were grown and married. I can't give you years. I mean, I was already born, and I remember it, so I must have been an adolescent, [or] maybe six years old, or so back then.

SI: What do you remember about the neighborhood you grew up in, in Newark correct?

MK: Yeah, well, no, it was in Irvington. Of course, I remember, as I said, nothing about the Bronx because they left there when I was four. One of the things I remember was that I had purportedly, according to the pediatrician, rheumatic fever, and, as a result, I wasn't allowed to go out and play with other children. So, I'm a great fan of old-time radio because radio was my companion. … I'm an avid fan. I still go to the convention in Newark once a year and I have a modest collection of old-time radio shows, including broadcasts from D-Day, and so on. I went to kindergarten at the Florence Avenue School. My brother was born [in the Bronx] … because my mother wanted the same doctor. My poor father had to drive a lady in labor all the way from Irvington, New Jersey to the Bronx, New York to deliver my brother and, fate is funny, the same thing happened to me. I was stationed at Little Rock Air Force Base in Jacksonville, Arkansas when my first son was born and I had to drive eighteen miles of two-lane, Arkansas country roads to get to Little Rock, Arkansas for the delivery of my son. He was a placenta previa [when the placenta covers part or all of the opening of the cervix], so they did an emergency surgery to deliver him and, fortunately, everything was fine. Another family who lived behind our house in base housing, little duplexes, little ranch houses, which were connected together into duplexes, and another family lived behind us, had the same problem. That lady had the most beautiful blonde, blue-eyed little boy, but she also had placenta previa, and unlike my wife who knew something was wrong, and had me call the doctor and the doctor said, "I'll meet you at the hospital, one-two-three," even though it was an eighteen mile trip, I was pretty fast. [They] couldn't get any help, there was no hospital on the base or anything, their baby was born retarded because of it. So, I have been very lucky. So now we get to the point where my brother is born, and the point of that is they [my parents] couldn't have the apartment, having another child ended the lease, because there weren't enough bedrooms in the apartment, so, we moved to a little bungalow, which had one furnace in the basement and one warm air vent coming up from the furnace and that was all the heat for the house, the entire house. I went to, I forget the name of the school, it wasn't Boylan Street School, it was a block up, and so I finished kindergarten there. My dad bought, from a widow, a house on Coolidge Street in Irvington, twenty-five by a hundred foot lot, two stories, for five thousand dollars. He assumed the mortgage, and so we moved there. Within a couple of months then I started first grade at Chancellor Avenue School in Irvington. Down the hill from there was a pharmacy where Jerry Lewis worked as a boy, as a soda jerk. I never met him, I should have, or I should tell people I did, I guess, I don't know. Then, I went to Irvington High School. Why Rutgers? Because it was close and because I knew of it. We did have a guidance counselor. I don't know why, but he didn't think I would go to college, [or] I would be accepted. He wouldn't help me apply for a scholarship. … Naturally, financial assistance would have been good. I don't even know how I did it, but I got myself into Rutgers on my own. My parents couldn't help me, but they did pay my tuition, two hundred bucks a semester for eighteen credits, and I lived on campus. I was non-Greek and at the end of my first year I got a Trustee scholarship. Then, advanced ROTC [Reserve Officer Training Corps] and, naturally, we got a modest stipend for that, and I worked at Eagleton Institute as a busboy. I worked when our new library was built. I worked packing the books in the old library. Boxing them and putting them on the truck to take over to the new library. Geez, I worked all four years, but I can't remember all the jobs. Oh, I sold programs at the football games and that was interesting. I brag about it unabashedly. I wore a fedora, with a big "Ike" button, you know, with a brim folded up against the front of the … hat. You may have seen characters in old black and white TV [shows] with hats like that and all kinds of buttons, pins all over it, and over my shirt and my favorite line was, "Get your girl a souvenir program." … The first time I was on the

visitors' side of the stadium, at the main entrance to the visitors' side, and I sold so many more programs than all the other guys that they complained that I was getting all the business. So, they moved me to another location, and, again, I sold many times more programs than the other guys, so they kept moving me all over the stadium, but, I guess, I was a good hustler because I always outsold everybody else no matter where they put me. But that was my favorite shtick, when everybody came in with a date, [I would say], "Get your girls a souvenir program," and I remember very distinctly one incident. A very well-dressed preppy-type, blond-haired, fair-skinned maiden, who told her boyfriend, "I don't need a program." It is the only time I didn't sell a program to a guy with a girl. So, that was how I managed to sell and, naturally, I yelled and made noise and attracted people. You don't wait for people to come to you when you're selling, you reach out for them, and the other guys would stand there and wait for somebody to ask for a program, you know. You can't sell that way.

SI: Had you like worked in high school or even earlier?

MK: I started when I was in grammar school, yeah. My first job was forty cents a day. At three o'clock, after school, I'd walk to a kosher butcher shop on Mill Road in Irvington, and it was my job to scrape the blocks. The way they cleaned the butcher blocks in those days was, which are those tables, very thick wooden tables, everyday that table had to be shaved with a steel brush until it was bare wood, no blood, again. So I had to shave all of those blocks and after I shaved them I swept up the sawdust. They had sawdust on the floor to absorb blood, okay, so I swept up the sawdust and I spread the fresh sawdust for the next day and that was my job, forty cents a day. There was a competition across the street, another kosher butcher, and he, for more money, he offered me a job as a delivery boy. I had to provide my own bicycle, and so I traded over to them and got a pay increase being a delivery boy. That was right by Stuyvesant Village, which was a largely Jewish community, garden apartments as they were known, and that's where the customers were, so it was not too bad. I'd fill up my basket and go to whatever homes, or apartments, that had ordered things. I did a few things in the shop, too, with the [butcher], you know, they were kosher, so they had to soak the meat in brine in order to get all the blood out, and so on. I forget, I did various things involving that, no cutting or anything, and then I traded up to Gable's Delicatessen and Liquor Store on Stuyvesant Avenue, Morris Gable and his wife, and I'd work there six days a week, everyday after school, as a stock boy. It was like a small grocery store and liquor store and delicatessen, so he had canned goods around the walls. Behind the counter on the wall shelves, he had the booze, and he had the big glass case with cold cuts and sausage, and things, and there I would actually serve customers, cutting meats and things like that on the rotary knife. That was an interesting experience because it was a liquor store. I had to go to the State offices in Newark, had to have my picture taken for a photo identification as a juvenile working in a licensed premise. They did a background check and stuff, so that was an interesting experience for me. In addition to that, I had several homes where once a week in the summer-time, I'd mow their lawn and clip their hedges, which kids no longer do. It's a business for adults doing their home gardening and such. My price was five dollars to mow and clip the hedges once a week, and then, in the wintertime, we used to go out shoveling snow, and that usually was good for five bucks, too. As far as school is concerned, I wish I could remember all their names, I had wonderful teachers. I know I owe a lot to all of them; they all, you know, put a stamp on me somewhere. I went back to visit my grammar school when I was home on leave from the Air Force one time and they still had on display this big four-by-

eight topographical map of New Jersey that I and some of my geography classmates made out of papier-mâché, painted, and then varnished, and, by God, all those years later, it was still hanging up on the wall outside the geography class, and I was touched by that, and it was in good shape, too. So, we did a good job of building that, but, of course, under the supervision of the teacher. I remember Mrs. Schweibach, "5Z" was our class, and she had a voting machine brought in once a year for her classes and she'd teach you how to vote, and so, I have voted every year since I'm twenty-one. So, that made a big impression on me and, as a matter-of-fact, when I was in the State Legislature, I looked up into the gallery at one session, and, lo and behold, I see Mrs. Schweibach there. She is with her class in the gallery of the legislature teaching her kids about civics. So, when we got a break, I went up into the gallery and said, "Hello," and gave her news about some of our other classmates that she had known, that I happened to have for her, and, you know, I gave a little pep talk to her class and that was nice. During the war, she was responsible for the arrest of a neighbor. Mrs. Schweibach was Jewish; her neighbor was German, and she noticed, over a period of time, that his basement lights would flicker and she became suspicious. In those days, like now with terrorism, if you see something strange, you're supposed to report it. So, she reported it and it turned out he had a shortwave radio and he was transmitting to a submarine, whatever it was that he had, I don't know that, but he was arrested and the radio was seized.

SI: Do you remember when you were younger, during the war, any news about the *Bund*?

MK: Oh, yes, yes. There was a lot of prejudice against German people in those days, you know. They, just like the Slovak people, had what we call a Sokol Hall, I forget what Sokol means, but it was a place where they had athletics, indoor athletics, you know, basketball and whatever, and they had a stage where they would put on plays in the native tongue and they had a bar which apparently all charitable organizations must have, a bar, and the boys, you know, would play cards and drink their beer and the ladies would all be out dancing in [the] auditorium area at the party, whatever, dinner and a play. So, they had their organizations and they were subject to prejudice and there was always a rumor about how they were plotting against the Americans. Of course, that was all hysteria. Some of the things I remember about World War II, which is what you had asked me, is the change in the Pledge of Allegiance. I'll stand up for this, let me know if you're not picking me up. When I was in first grade, I think it was true that this happened in first grade, right? … After Pearl Harbor, it took a little while for them to realize it. We were taught in school to stand at attention and we would say, "I pledge allegiance to the flag," and you'd point your hand to the flag, with a straight arm, which, of course, was the Nazi salute. So, after the government got wise, you know, shortly after Pearl Harbor, we were all taught to keep our hand over our heart, not [point] from the heart to the flag, but to keep it on the heart, so there was no Nazi-like salute involved. I remember wearing a cellulose name tag, dog tag, on a little string, which they gave us. We'd have our name and address and they would be [put] in this little slit, into this little cellulose container, and it had a hole at the end that they put a string into and they put that on and, of course, we had air raid drills and things like that.

SI: What was the tag for?

MK: For identification.

SI: In case of an attack, or did it have to do with the air raid drills?

MK: Yeah, sure, in case we were killed in a bombing so that we could be identified, that's what we were told. Fortunately, it never happened.

HA: Did you have blackouts?

MK: Oh, sure. That's another interesting experience, very minor, but New Year's Eve 1941, my parents were going to the church for the … adult New Year's Eve party and my grandmother was still living. My maternal grandmother was living with us at the time and she was going to babysit us and I asked [to stay up] and before they left my parents told my grandmother I could stay up till midnight. At midnight it was the custom for the churches to all ring their bells and for the factories to all blow their sirens, or whistles, I should say. So, my grandmother brought her alarm clock, into the living room, so we can watch the time and [we are] listening to the radio. Midnight came on the clock and nothing happened, and my grandmother [was] shaking her clock and listening to hear if it's ticking, and they're celebrating on the radio. Well, it turns out because of Pearl Harbor, the whistles and the bells were only to be used for air raids and so they didn't go off at midnight, for the first time, and that was my first New Year's Eve [to stay up] till midnight, so, it was a little disappointing. But it's another one of those tiny little bits of how your life is and the environment is affected by something like a war. The biggest thing I remember very distinctly is on the way [to school] because we would walk to school in the morning, home for lunch, back to school, and then home again at the end of school, was, of course, all the families who had people in the service had a white pennant, with a red fringe around it, and a blue star. The Blue Star Highway, Route 22, wherever it is, is for veterans in World War II. When they lost the family member, the star, the pennant was changed, and the pennant with the blue star was retired, and, again, it was a white pennant, rectangular, but with a V-point at the bottom with a gold star, and that meant that that family had lost somebody in the war. The same thing going to my grandmother's house; we'd take the bus to the corner of Hensler and Pulaski and walk down the street, and I don't know why, but I was always looking to see if any of the blue stars had changed to gold, and that made a big impression on me. I didn't see a corpse, I didn't go to a funeral, but it just stuck with me that that family had lost somebody because their pennant had changed. At lunchtime … we'd be dismissed at noon, take me a while to get home, and I'd get my Campbell's tomato soup and a sandwich from Mom and she'd be listening to the *Kate Smith Speaks* show, which was on after the five minute news at noon, until twelve-thirty, and so I'm also a fan of hers. Of course, she's famous for collaborating with Irving Berlin to make *God Bless America* the unofficial national anthem.

SI: Do you remember where you were when you heard about the attack on Pearl Harbor?

MK: I was five years old, I don't remember that. I remember V-E Day [Victory in Europe] because my father let me string tin cans to the back of the car and the whole family hopped into the car and went down to Broad and Market, [in] Newark, where it was much like Times Square, you know, the streets were covered with people and everybody was celebrating wildly. I don't remember V-J Day [Victory in Japan] as well. V-E Day was a real big deal.

HA: I know that you were really young when this was going on, but did you ever think as a young boy that maybe you would be sent off into the war in the future? Did that ever cross your mind? Was that something you worried about?

MK: I think we all wanted to go. It was a sense of obligation. In those days people loved their country. It's not like now.

ML: Do you remember rationing during the war?

MK: Oh, yes. I remember saving tinfoil, string, scrap iron. Mom would save the drippings from her bacon, or whatever, and take it to the butcher shop in the coffee can. … I remember the Victory Gardens. We'd drive to Newark and people along all the highways and byways, they'd have these little gardens on the edge of the highway and folks would come from their homes and tend these gardens. Of course, other people who had property would, you know, have their own gardens on their own property.

SI: These other ones, by the highways, were public?

MK: No, individual. Dad had a, I think it was a B stamp on his car, but I know that we had to severely restrict our driving because he couldn't get much gas, and you couldn't get tires, so you didn't want to wear your tires out. I remember, I believe it was a Sunoco station around the corner from my house, it's long gone, [gave out maps]. But we only had a car for a few years in my life, most of the time we didn't have a car, and toward the end of the war we had a car, but we didn't have one at the beginning of the war, and that came from a wealthy family that my … aunts were working for. My dad got it cheap; it was a 1936 Chrysler, faded and dented but it went. They used to, in the old days, gas stations gave out maps. You didn't have to buy them as you do today, and that was one of their promotional things for their brand. Well, during the war at least Sunoco, I guess, did; they published war maps of the world and they'd have the Pacific Theater on the one side and the European Theater on the other and, naturally, it was old news and cleansed of any intelligence value, but they would show a map of Europe and where the line of battle was and they had various symbols and they had explanations on it. I remember Lowell Thomas' picture was on the front of the map when it was folded. He was a big news broadcaster of his day on radio. I used to go to the man, and my father wasn't a customer, and I felt terrible, but I always said, you know, if he had an extra map, could I have it. He was a nice guy and he always gave me a map and I followed the war on the map. Anyway, even though I was very young, I can tell you this, World War II had a big impact on my life, maybe emotionally and mentally, or psychologically, whatever you want to say, but I felt it very keenly.

ML: Did you follow it on the radio?

MK: Oh, of course, but in those days you [have] got to understand, I mean, a long news broadcast was five minutes. The only time they did more than that was Pearl Harbor, V-E Day and V-J Day. Then, the news took over regular programming pretty much and, of course, all during the war there were bulletins. The Kraft Food Company and … Johnson Wax, these were closely-held family corporations back in those days; they weren't publicly traded. Both of those companies announced that they felt it was in the interest of morale and the general well-being of

the American public that their programs, which were comedy programs, continue during the war. They had actually been considering taking them all off the air and the decision was made to continue the programs, but both companies said that they were going to allow their programs to be interrupted for any news bulletins about the war. Eddie Cantor, I remember, I have one of his programs that was interrupted. So, yeah, I do have some shows where there was war bulletins interrupting the show. *Fibber McGee and Molly* and *The Great Gildersleeve*, that was Kraft and Johnson Wax, they were very patriotic. You know, a lot of shows about scrap drives and rationing with motivational propaganda.

HA: Do you remember when FDR died?

MK: Yes, that was a big day, very depressing. I would say it was similar to the assassination of John Kennedy. He was a very fatherly figure. He very effectively used radio on his "fireside chats" and he, I think, of all presidents, all presidents before and after, had the closest relationship with the individual American of any president, and, of course, being a war leader, it was very traumatic when he died. In addition, of course, in those days they kept secret or minimized his disability and his health, so, it was a real smack on the side of the head when he passed away.

SI: Most people were not aware of how sick he was.

MK: Everybody, when they heard it, cried. If they heard it on the radio, or somebody came up and told them, it was like losing a member of your own family.

SI: You mentioned the scrap drives a moment ago, do you remember if they or bond drives were organized either through your school or any youth groups or the church?

MK: I remember doing it and, I think, we had a curb pickup; a horse-driven wagon came and we had everything out at the curb and the fellow on the wagon would pick it up and put it in the wagon. We, also after the war, continued that, because there was a black man who came around, I forget how often, and if you had any junk, they were called junkmen, and anything you didn't want [he would pick it up]. We have garage sales today, but, in those days, you would put it at the curb on the day that he was scheduled to come through your neighborhood, and he'd pick it up and put it in his wagon and then he's go to some big, centralized junkyard and he'd sell it to them and, the poor guy, that's the way he made his living. There were fellows [that] came around in those days; I remember a man with cerebral palsy. He had, you know, the conventional customary posture of somebody with cerebral palsy and so he had that one good leg and drag the other and he had what to me seemed to be a huge suitcase and, I don't know, what is that? Three to four feet long and two and a half feet deep, and he'd lug that around door-to-door and he sold thread, needles, pins, shoelaces, pot holders, that he had there for the housewives. There was a recent story about a guy, kind of like an Amway guy, I don't remember the title of it, but it was an intellectually challenged person who sold door-to-door.

SI: I forget the title, but there was a movie on TNT with William H. Macy [*Door To Door*] that may have been about the man you are referring to.

MK: He was terrific and very similar to this gentleman that used to go around our neighborhood. There was another fellow that came around with a little handcart. It had wheels on it. It was just like a steel frame, with a table on top and a grinding wheel, and, I think, it was done by pedal. I think, he did it by pedal and he went door-to-door sharpening scissors and knives and repairing umbrellas. Now, how those things come together I don't know, but that's what he did and that's how he made his living, making pennies at a time, sharpening things for the house. He had a bell that he rang as he went down the street and the women would grab a knife or a scissors out of the kitchen drawer and run out to the sidewalk and he'd sharpen it for them, or they'd grab the umbrella because one of the doohickeys was broken, or the tip was off, or whatever, and he repaired it standing out in front of your house. He made a living.

SI: Did your family maintain any contact with anybody in Europe?

MK: No. Oh, ration stamps, okay, I remember the ration stamps and how they had to go over them and figure out what they could go to the store for, in case the store had it. At school, bonds were eighteen dollars and seventy-five cents for a twenty-five dollar bond, war bond, and at school we'd buy war bond stamps and, I think, they were a dime and we had a little book and we'd buy a stamp and put it in the book, and buy another stamp, and, then, when the book was full we'd get a twenty-five dollar bond, would have eighteen seventy-five in it. So, I remember that, that was done right in school. I remember going to the movies and the Red Cross would pass a canister up and down the aisles raising money and, of course, in those days it would be a double feature, it would be a serial, you know, those cliff hangers where they showed you a chapter every week. There would be cartoons and there would usually [be] a race. When you bought your ticket, I remember when movies were a quarter. I don't remember cheaper than that. You'd buy your ticket for a quarter and they'd give you your admission ticket and then they would give you another ticket with a number on it and they would usually be, like, one through twelve and you would randomly get a number and they would have a film short, which was a race. It could be a steeplechase, it could be cars, it could be horses, it could be on foot, but it would always be full of silliness, you know, people falling down, and falling off the horse, and all that kind of stuff, and whoever won, whatever person or animal won, if you had that number you got a free candy at the counter, and they sold bonds at the theater.

SI: Did you usually go into Newark to see movies?

MK: Oh, no, no. Movies were a very local thing in those days. Irvington, which is a small, small town, a few square miles, we had the Sanford Theater on Springfield Avenue near Florence Avenue School. We had the Center Theater right in Irvington Center. We had the Liberty Theater, which was also on Springfield Avenue near the Elizabeth River, where it's channeled in concrete but it runs through Irvington. There was another theater on Chancellor Avenue. Those are the only four I remember off hand, but there probably were even more than that, so it was really local neighborhood.

SI: It is interesting that that was happening even in the very local movie theaters, selling bonds, etc.

MK: Oh, sure, sure, and whether it was packed or empty.

SI: Do you remember any of the newsreels?

MK: Yes, a lot of newsreels, and because it was audio visual, those always had a big impact. But, of course, unlike television which gives you the news before it happens, if their speculation is correct, it was all news. But it had immediate impact as a current thing, not something that was past, forgotten, and so on. It had an immediate impact as though it were happening right then.

SI: Did anything in particular stand out in your memory as being shocking?

MK: No, it's a cultural aspect of America to sanitize things. The Islamic terrorist today, they will put out on Islamic television pictures of Americans being beheaded. In America, they won't even show the pictures of the people jumping out of the World Trade Center. Death is sanitized. It's only in recent years, I'd say, starting … in the sixties, that gore was shown. You know, when I was a kid, if somebody got shot, there was no bullet wound, there was no blood. He said, "Ah!" and fell, you know that was it. It's very vivid now and exaggerated as a matter-of-fact. As you know when you bleed, you don't bleed that bright red. But the newsreels weren't gory, you know, they'd show explosions and things, but they didn't show you what the troops saw, you know, the body parts and the blood.

SI: I just remembered that in all these documentaries they point out how the first time Americans saw bodies in the newsreels it was very shocking to the public. I was wondering if you remembered any of that.

MK: Oh, they definitely showed corpses in the Pacific, always the beach scenes. … They'd have the beach scenes with the guys floating in the water and stacked up on the beach. Yeah, that [was] shown but not body parts and intestines coming out and that sort of thing, which is the reality that the guys on the ground saw.

SI: Did your family keep in contact with anybody still in Europe? Were they concerned about how they were faring during the war?

MK: They did until the end of World War II. Now, my maternal grandmother had her savings in what was called a savings and loan, and those were outfits that mainly invested in mortgages and made mortgage loans to the local people for homes and things. So, she had her money [there] and the savings and loans took the biggest hit in the [Great] Depression, so, when the Depression hit, my grandmother lost all her savings in the savings and loan. After the Depression, she sent her money back to the bank in Europe. At the end of World War II, the Communists seized her bank account and took the farm away from her. So, she lost everything, again, and yet, when she died, she had somehow squirreled away in a savings account, in a savings bank, as opposed to a savings and loan, five thousand dollars. Nobody could figure out where the heck she ever got five thousand dollars.

SI: Do you remember if they were doing recruiting in the movie theaters, at least in Irvington?

MK: That I just don't have any recollection. I don't say it didn't happen, but I don't remember it. I know some guys got drafted and some guys volunteered, but, you know, that was just neighborhood news and that's all. I know there were posters all over, all the time, you know, the "Uncle Sam Wants You" and a lot of the home front-type posters, "Keep Them Flying" and things like that for civilian workers. So, I remember recruiting posters for every branch of the service, but I don't remember where the recruiting station was. I think it was in Newark. … The draft board I remember because I actually appeared before the draft board when I was a boy.

SI: What do you mean?

MK: When you register for the draft.

SI: Back during World War II?

MK: No, that was after World War II. Sorry, I'm overlapping.

SI: Do you remember if there was any kind of stigma attached for people who were 4-F [physically or psychologically unfit]? Were there men in your neighborhood who didn't go to the war?

MK: Anybody of draft age who wasn't in the service had a stigma, whether it was 4-F, or what, yeah. "Why aren't you over there with my kid, or my husband, or my uncle, cousin, whatever?" So, socially, they had to explain themselves, you know. Once you explained yourself, then that was it. But I remember when I got out of the service I worked for Prudential and there was this little, old man, you know, very short, typical of his generation when they didn't have that much protein and a five footer, but a silver-haired, very likable, charming, elderly man and he sort of adopted me and I sort of adopted him and we were good friends. Then, I remember one time we had a conversation in which he said to me that, I maybe had asked him if he'd been in the service, or what, we were talking about World War II, and he disclosed to me that he never served because he had a hernia. So, he didn't have his hernia repaired until the war was over so that he could be 4-F and avoid the draft, and I never liked him again after that. I didn't bother with him anymore; it just disturbed me. But, he had no shame, or anything. I mean, to him, he was smart and it was an accomplishment. Hey, you know, there was black market and draft dodgers, even in World War II, which is probably the time that, culturally, America was the most united that it ever has been. You [have] got to remember there were two sides even during the Revolution [Revolutionary War]. Americans weren't all on one side, so this fighting over whether we should go to war and stay at war, or finish the war, whatever, it's as old as the origin of our country. It doesn't stop the Tories and the Loyalists from killing each other. [laughter]

SI: Well, it's interesting to hear some of the ways that played out, like my grandparents told the story about a painting yellow stripe on the guy's car because he got some way out of the draft; you know, that there was this strong reaction by the public against draft dodgers in World War II.

MK: Oh, yes, oh, yes. No sanctuary, no forgiveness.

SI: You mentioned the black market, were you aware of black market activities in your area?

MK: It was just something you heard about. I mean, there were public service announcements about it, you know, "Stay away, you'll get in trouble, you're helping the enemy" and all that sort of thing. But organized crime and even individual business people were into it. I remember my mom wondering why a certain person got a piece of meat and she couldn't get that piece of meat at the butcher shop, and the reason was that other person was a big customer and the butcher was massaging his good customer. Whereas, we didn't need as much meat because we couldn't afford it and so if that was the last one, she didn't get it, or if it was the only one of that cut of meat.

SI: Is there anything else you recall about World War II that you would like to share?

MK: Well, we didn't have, really, I don't recall any Japanese in our areas. I said it was mostly Germans. Somehow it didn't rub off on the Italians. I remember that. I don't remember the same attitude towards Italian Americans as towards German Americans. Italy, you know, their activity was mostly in Africa and I just don't think it had the same impact on Americans as the war in Europe proper.

SI: So, we talked about V-E Day and then you were still on Chancellor Avenue School until 1950.

MK: … You're right '50.

SI: Which is around the time of the Korean War starting.

MK: Yes, the Korean War, so-called "forgotten war." The thing that impressed me is I see and hear the news about these guys dying and yet there was no evidence of a war at home. World War II, we were all in the war. In the Korean War, just the poor slobs over there were in the war, and their families. You know, you didn't see any evidence of the war in any way, shape, or form, in your community, unless it was your neighbor or your relative, and that made a big impression on me; what a contrast that was.

SI: Did they still have the things such as the service flags?

MK: I don't recall that at all.

SI: So, you didn't even have that reminder in the neighborhoods?

MK: No. I don't know whether it was, I haven't thought about it before, but I don't know whether it was a conscious effort of the government at that time to downplay the war, or what? You [have] got to remember, Harry Truman always felt he was fighting World War II war fatigue and the Korean War didn't fit in with that. I often think, if Harry had been fired instead of Douglass MacArthur, whether we would be facing the anticipation of China taking over the world as we are today. No one will ever know. If he had taken them on then, when they were

relatively non- technical; you know, they just threw their soldiers into the mouth of the cannon; they didn't have any technology, military technology. Now, they have everything.

SI: Do you remember communism being presented as the big threat in the forties and fifties?

MK: Oh, sure. I have absolutely no animosity to Eugene McCarthy at all.

SI: Joe McCarthy.

MK: You're right. Wrong McCarthy by far, philosophically, too, as well as politically. But, yeah, Joe McCarthy was a hero in our time. Hollywood was the enemy. That hasn't changed. To me that's still the same, they're still the enemy within. But they were back at that time, too, with the so-called witch hunts and blacklists, and so on, and, of course, through the Rosenbergs we know that there were Americans who were selling out, idealistically, I don't think, necessarily, they got paid, but I don't know if they did it for the money, really. But, yeah, there were people that were disloyal and some for idealistic reasons. They thought communism is the utopian society. I hope everybody now knows it's not.

SI: Do you remember having to do drills against a nuclear attack in school, or how you felt about that prospect of a nuclear war?

MK: Interesting. Our World War II air raid drills we got down under our desks. Our atomic bomb air raid drills, we went out into the corridor and sat with our backs against the wall with no windows. So, the drill changed and the reason was to stay away from the radiation flash and the concussion. Now, there was concussion with high explosives in World War II, but it just wasn't the same, so we didn't have to go out in the hall; we just had to get under our desks to protect ourselves from the glass.

SI: How seriously did you take this threat of communism and nuclear war when you were in high school?

MK: I think there was a high degree of apprehension in American society. People built air raid shelters in their backyards underground and, of course, it was propagandized to scare people. Books, movies, radio shows, really promoted fear of nuclear holocaust and that was before they even knew about nuclear winter and how really bad it is. The image of the atomic bomb was mainly radiation and concussion, you know, but now we know about nuclear winter and the after effects of that.

HA: Did you or your family take any precautionary steps? Did you guys have a shelter or did you stock up or anything like that in the event of a nuclear explosion?

MK: No, we didn't. My family didn't have a stash of any kind and the bomb shelter was the coal bin in the basement. My parents, I don't think, even though everybody had an apprehension, my parents didn't have any morbid fear. They were very confident that it wouldn't happen. I don't remember their reasons, but they were confident it wouldn't happen.

SI: Were there other people in the neighborhood who gave in to the paranoia or had bomb shelters?

MK: Yes, yes but they were a minority. As I say, it was an apprehension but it wasn't overwhelming; most people just went about their daily lives. One thing you did do whenever you went anywhere, you watched for the bomb shelter signs so that if there was a need, you know what direction to run in, to get to the shelter. In those days, they had in commercial areas, they had signs there identifying shelters that people could use in commercial buildings for bomb shelters.

HA: Did they have drills to prepare people to run to the shelters if needed?

MK: Yes, the air raid sirens would go off and there was.

HA: How often was that?

MK: Not very often; nothing like World War II. World War II I remember the neighbor with … in fact I have a Civil Defense [helmet] at home. It was a World War I doughboy helmet, which is the pie-shaped helmet, with the … it was painted white and it had a red and white triangle, striped triangle, on the front, and that and his flashlight, that was his armaments for air raids and there was a warden on every block and when it was lights out, blackout, he would walk the street and chastise anybody that had any light leaking out of their house, and so on.

SI: The other thing happening in the late forties and early fifties is with the GI Bill and the growth of the American economy after the war.

MK: And growth of the American middle class.

SI: Yes, how did that affect your neighborhood and your life?

MK: I remember people who never had a car getting a car. I think that was the biggest impact that I saw. No question about more people being able to get a higher education, or learning a trade, going to a trade school. We minimized trade schools in our society but they're very important. Any day when you read the obituaries there are people in all professions, from the top to the bottom, from common laborers to CEOs in there, and all those people are part of the beehive that make the beehive work. I remember a family, a World War II veteran, lived in Metuchen, came home and he took a training course in television repair; that was a very big thing, the TV repair shop, they were in every town. He started out as a TV repairman. He got into TV sales, appliance sales, and, eventually, became the major appliance dealer in that geographical area and had a slow-witted brother that he took into the business and gave a living to on top of it.

ML: How important was education for you personally? Was it assumed you would go to college?

MK: I always assumed I would go to college. I think my parents always assumed I would go to college. In my time, education was almost worshipped. It was the most important thing in the family, getting the kids to college. Now, I don't know if that was true with all families, some families, or what, but in my family it was. I always assumed I would go to college. Now, my motivation in part came from a maternal cousin, Paul Petrucha. He was the first person on both sides of the family to go to college. He lived in Mahanoy City, [PA]. He was in college when the war broke out, and for pilots they looked at the college kids the most, along with their physical, because they wanted the sharpest guys they could get for flying and if you couldn't be a pilot then you're a bombardier because you needed sharp people for that, too. He was a naval aviator, and I don't know how he's officially listed, but he was lost at the Battle of the Coral Sea. Now, they picked up his radioman and his radioman had no idea what happened to him so we don't know if he was killed and went down with the plane, or whether the sharks got him. A lot of guys were lost; both sailors and aviators were lost to sharks. I don't remember that in the Atlantic, but in the Pacific it was very common. And that's also why I wanted to be a pilot.

SI: You mentioned in high school your civics teacher was very important to you?

MK: Well, that was in grammar school, but in high school, he just passed away, Coach Wneck. He was my history teacher, also, and, again, we weren't taught current events the way kids are now. Kids are not taught history, they're taught current events. We were taught history. But at a presidential election time, as a part of civics and history, the teachers would always talk about the campaign and the issues and things like that, not in a partisan way, in any way, but just as a civics exercise. I don't remember them getting into local elections but presidential elections were a big thing and … I couldn't vote but we had a mock campaign and election in our class … I think I was Eisenhower.

SI: So, you would pretend to be Eisenhower?

MK: I'd give speeches and, yeah, we'd have debates and give speeches, and stuff like that, and we'd have elections; the class would vote.

SI: So, would you say that was your favorite area of study?

MK: History and civics, yeah, but I liked Beowulf too.

SI: I was wondering if sciences were pushed heavily then? I know later on they were.

MK: No, they weren't. No, they weren't, okay, and neither was math. All right, now, I took all the math classes. We only went up to geometry in those days, but I remember very distinctly my chemistry teacher in high school. In those days, we'd only use soap and he taught us about a new thing that was on the horizon called "detergent" and he said, "The only reason they can't sell it," and he told us how he took baths in detergent. He says, "But they can't sell it to people because it doesn't foam," and that was, of course, a chemistry challenge for the industry, to find a way to take the chemicals that produce detergent and add to them chemicals, you know, that could be compounded together that would also cause the foaming, and detergents never caught on until they were able to chemically do that. But he told us about it, and I thought, later on I realized

how smart he was. In addition to which, I sailed through freshman chemistry, because there was nothing in freshman chemistry in college that was any different than he taught us in high school. That man gave us a brilliant education in chemistry. God bless him.

SI: What other activities were you involved in, in high school?

MK: The senior play and the marching band and the orchestra. I was second trumpet.

SI: When did you start playing an instrument?

MK: In grammar school, everybody was offered music lessons and I remember my parents digging down deep and coming up with seventy-five dollars for a trumpet.

SI: Do you still play?

MK: No. No. You got to keep that lip, you know, it's got to be a strong muscle for you to play. I stopped playing after high school. My dad also played the trumpet. My mother gave my wife, who gave my oldest son, a gold piece he [my dad] got for playing trumpet at one engagement.

SI: Was it difficult to balance these extracurricular activities and working? You're working in the deli at that point.

MK: I started in grammar school, and I was, yeah, I was working for Morris Gable when I was in high school, but the school became overcrowded and went to two shifts a day, so there would be a morning high school and an afternoon high school. Then, I was able to get a full-time/part-time job, and I went to work. … I don't think that was till my senior year and I went to work for the Prudential Insurance Company. That's when I learned about taxes. [laughter] Oh, and I worked for the recreation department, playground employee, you know, doing crafts with the kids and sports. I was part of a barbershop quartet during the election campaign for Edward J. McKenna in Irvington. They had those phony non-partisan elections, you know, in those days, form [of] a government.

SI: So, what would you do, sing campaign songs?

MK: Anything, anything, we were just along for the ride, just make noise and entertain the people at the party, the various campaign stops.

SI: How did you get involved with them?

MK: Oh, I was on the board of directors for [Cat's Corner Canteen?]. We ran a dance every Saturday night at Florence Avenue School and I remember what a big deal it was when we finally got a vending machine and we could sell cokes. We had a big Wurlitzer jukebox and the board would pick out the records we would buy to keep the juke box up to date with the current songs. In my time, we only had one chaperone, a little old lady, and never had any kind of incident, fight, or problem of any kind. It was a happier world. They had abandoned them, because even a cop couldn't keep control. That was years afterwards, of course.

SI: How did you get involved with the campaign?

MK: Oh, I was also a Boy Scout and a DeMolay in high school. I started Scouts in grammar school and I started DeMolay in high school.

HA: What is that?

MK: Demolay is like a junior Masons.

SI: Did they have fraternities at your high school?

MK: No, not that I remember. We had clubs.

SI: Did you have any interaction with Rutgers before you actually came here? Did you ever go down to a football game, for example?

MK: Never went to a football game; went to all the high school football games; tough to be in the marching band without doing that. That was my first race riot, when we played Asbury Park in Asbury Park. There was a huge fight, started with the team, and then, of course, the people poured out of the stands. I remember having two groups of friends, one were the kids that were all going to college and the other ones were all the kids that weren't going anywhere. I don't remember why or how that happened and I have always felt, again, very fortunate that my friends who were college bound had the bigger influence on me, or I might have gone to the "gray bar university" instead of Rutgers. I remember, I do know kids that did end up in prison for a variety of things, including one of my neighbors. What do you want to hit next?

SI: That was interesting that it was one of these neighborhoods where you were either going to make it or you are not going to make it.

MK: Yes, yes.

HA: Was the neighborhood split fifty-fifty this way?

MK: Yes, I think, as I recall, half the kids went to college and half of the kids didn't.

HA: What kind of things did the kids that stayed behind do?

MK: Well, some of them would go into their family's business, if they had one, and the others would just get a job. You know, it's great if you love what you do, but, really, at least in my time, you weren't looking for happiness. You were just looking to have enough money to live. The old studio system in Hollywood, those people were all employees on a payroll, even if they were stars, and even though they lived much better and made much more than the average person, it wasn't obscene like today. You know, where people get ten million dollars for a single motion picture, or something. They lived a much more routine kind of life. They might have a

boat, they would get to visit Europe, or something like that, but that's about it. It wasn't having a home on every continent, your own private jet, and all that.

SI: Same thing with athletes.

MK: Oh, yeah, athletes. Joe DiMaggio's highest pay was a hundred thousand dollars. Ted Williams, I don't think, ever made more than a hundred thousand dollars, and there are guys that had, you know, could have a four hundred batting average; not these guys who are heroes when they got a two-eighty batting average and they're millionaires. Remember, logic has nothing to do with it.

SI: What do you remember about your first days at Rutgers?

MK: Very easy. We had no car, at the time, so my parents had arranged with somebody to take me to Rutgers and that was done and we came here; first time I'd ever been in New Brunswick. We came on Route 27, which was the way to come, in those days, and Route 3. The Parkway wasn't the Parkway yet, but a section had been built in Essex County… Route 3, it was called, and so we took that down to Route 27, and Route 27 into New Brunswick. We got to College Avenue, near Somerset, and … there was a building, it said "Admissions" at the top of College Avenue, by Somerset Street. It was just half a block in. So, I saw "Admissions" and I said, "This must be the place where I come for registration." I had a suitcase, a laundry box that was also a suitcase. I used to mail my laundry home to Mom and she'd mail it back to me and it was a big fiberboard box with straps around it and a little metal frame that you would slip Mom's address [in] and then you'd pull it out and flip it over and it had my address and, you know, it'd cost cents to mail it in those days. I had a radio, so, both arms were full. I go to the admissions building and it's locked. Well, it turns out registration was at the old gym. So, I had to schlep all the way down College Avenue to the old gym to register. So, that's how dumb I was. Don Taylor will tell you he got off the train, from Pennsylvania, grabbed a cab, and the cab driver took him all over the Heights, and everything else, before he finally delivered him and took the only five-dollar bill he had from him. [laughter] Ask him about that if he doesn't fess up to it. So, you know, we were green kids, naïve, unsophisticated in large part, and so our college years were really very important as being formative in our lives. In the college years we had guys who volunteered to go fight for Castro because he was a hero, before he finally took over. Batista was a terrible dictator. I remember being in the Commons having dinner while the Hungarian refugees from the Hungarian Revolution were getting their free meal on one end of the Commons where they all sat together. There wasn't really any intercourse that I recall, or socializing between us. We looked at each other across the room, so to speak. They would all be wearing hand-me-down clothes that were given to them. I remember we had a lot of Korean War vets and a lot of them lived out on the Heights in veterans' housing, and had families, and they were the best students. They were very serious students. We looked up to them. They were almost father figures to us, heroes.

SI: From people who were in the classes with the World War II vets they said that it really changed the dynamic of the classroom; how just a regular freshman would see a professor as almost a God-like figure, whereas, the GIs would not talk back to them, [but] challenge them, challenge things they said, bring up different ideas.

MK: Closer in level, you know, between the average guy and his professor there was a huge difference in level intellectually, socially, and so on. Whereas, the GI was much more sophisticated and knowledgeable and, therefore, you're right, and more adult and, therefore, there was more interaction with faculty.

SI: Would you see that in your classes, would the GIs speak up?

MK: Yes. But we did, too. I mean, I can't say [all], there's always classes where there are certain students that, you know, they just want to put in their hour and get out, but, yeah, I remember having discussions with faculty, answer questions, or ask questions when they called on us. I had no problem with that. I enjoyed it. Didn't really do a lot of it, but when I would be able to be alone with the [professor] and have a conversation, I always enjoyed the heck out of that. There was more distance between us. It's not only the level with the vets, it was also lateral distance. The faculty and the average guy were farther apart laterally, as well, and you didn't really, outside of the classroom, get to spend much time with faculty, whereas, the vets also took advantage of that.

SI: Some of them would live where the faculty lived?

MK: Yeah, and socialized, or at least in, you know, the teacher student relationship, have extracurricular social contact.

SI: When you first came to Rutgers.

MK: And I think the [professors] looked on them differently, too. Let's understand that, you know, that they were more mature, that they've been through more. They were treated with, I think, more deference by the faculty.

SI: When you first arrived on campus was there any kind of freshman hazing?

MK: We had to wear the dink and the tie and we had some crazy scrimmage in what is now a parking lot behind the old gym, that was a dirt field. I think it was supposed to have grass on it but it was a dirt field, and the freshmen, I think, it was freshmen against freshmen, but the university arranged a scrimmage and the entire freshman class was involved in pushing this huge rubber ball around the field. I mean, the ball had to be like six feet in diameter, or something, and you'd have half of the class on one side, half on the other, trying to push the ball and everybody falling in the dust and the sweat, you know, made the dust stick to you and turn to mud and all. As a matter-of-fact that day, after the scrimmage, the coach of our hundred-fifty pound football team asked me if I'd go out for hundred fifty pound football, and I told him I couldn't because I had to work. So, I was never involved in sports, or many extracurricular activities here at school, and, again, I can't remember all the jobs. I remember behind the old gym there was a Hungarian couple [who] ran a luncheonette and in the evening, I'd go and you'd get, maybe, a hotdog, or a hamburger patty, or a couple of slices of beef or turkey breast, mashed potatoes and a vegetable and a glass of milk for a dollar. Nice people.

SI: Did you mostly eat in the Commons, or did you go to these luncheonettes?

MK: I mostly ate in the Commons, oh, I don't know, the first couple of years, and then when I started to get … I used to eat in the dorm, too. I had a hot plate and I have corned beef hash or stew, canned stew. If I wanted to go and have a beer at the CT [Court Tavern] on Saturday night I had to skip a meal during the week to have the money to do it, you know.

SI: So, was it mostly financial reasons why you didn't join a fraternity or was there other reasons?

MK: Yeah, financial reasons, yeah. You know, there was an initiation fee, and all of that stuff, and I didn't have the money for that.

SI: How important was it to be a part of a fraternity then, or was there a split between the non-fraternity guys and the fraternity guys?

MK: There were a lot of non-Greeks. Back in the old days, we lived in the Quad which was a real nice close-knit community. Demarest Hall was the next new building and then, finally, the three towers. I think, my senior year, I lived in Livingston Hall. I don't remember what floor but I had a nice view of the river, it was nice, Johnson Park. It was a treat to get to go to that little Hungarian place, you know, that was a treat to go there and have a meal. That was a night out, so to speak, but not alone, you know, [there would] always be somebody from the dorm, a roommate, or somebody down the hall or whatever, you know. One of the things I liked best about college is what I call rap sessions and that is a bunch of guys would get together in one of the rooms in the dorm and we'd just talk about current events and our courses and what we were curious about, or thought we learned and it was really great to have that kind of socialization on an intellectual level. We also talked about girls and sports, but a lot of it was really current events and philosophy.

SI: You mentioned that some people actually volunteered to go fight with Castro. Politically, where do most of the students fall? Were they conservative or liberal?

MK: I don't remember the students being Republican or Democrat. I do remember that there were communist sympathizers, socialists philosophically. I took [political science] so I knew students that were of that philosophy, but I don't remember, really, political lines and, in those days, I don't recall liberal and conservative really being key words. It was more socialist or capitalist.

SI: Did you actually know any of the people that went to fight with Castro?

MK: Nobody did. It was just, you know, spontaneous reaction amongst the students, you know, when we'd have our rap sessions and everything and guys would say, "I would like to go to Cuba and fight with Castro." Nothing ever came of it.

SI: Okay, so nobody actually went.

MK: I don't know whether it was a bravado, or what, but it was philosophical thing; freedom, democracy, that was the goal.

ML: Were you politically active in college? You said you wore an Eisenhower badge on your hat.

MK: I did not associate with a political party until I went to law school, and that was after my military service. Politically, the way I always thought of myself was an American. Authors weren't trying to break the clay feet of our idols in those days, you know, and you didn't think of your historical leaders as Republicans and Democrats. You thought of them based on their achievements without regard to affiliation.

ML: So, you would support Eisenhower because he was president, not because he had a certain viewpoint?

MK: Right, right, and, of course, he was unique because of his leadership in World War II. In one sense, he did a great job, but, you know, I can find fault with the way he managed the war. I always thought General [Mark] Clark should have been at least not promoted for what he did at Anzio. Of course, he [Eisenhower] really surrendered a lot to Churchill and Montgomery, even though the government made the Soviet Union a mock ally, the relationship wasn't the same as the relationship between the United States and England, of course, and thank God. So, I don't really remember that much impact by Eisenhower on the Soviet or Eastern Front. I remember that when our troops landed in North Africa that the French forces fired on them, so I never considered France an ally.

ML: Now, in your classes, did your teachers have a certain political slant?

MK: I never sensed a political … Mrs. Schweibach taught us how to vote; she didn't mention who to vote for or why. Stanley Wneck, he taught history without any political slant, and civics without any political slant, very fair and balanced.

ML: How about when you got to Rutgers?

MK: I sensed and this is where conservative and liberal does come in. I considered the engineering professors conservative and the liberal arts professors as liberals, philosophically. I hadn't thought of that in years. It just popped into my mind now.

SI: Did you go into political science immediately as your major?

MK: My freshman year I believe I was a, I don't even know if we had majors the freshman year, but I was going to be a physics major. When I couldn't handle calculus, that took care of that. So, my sophomore year I became a [political science] major. Everybody told me I should be a lawyer, even in high school they were telling me that, but, of course, I wanted to be a pilot. My senior year of school, I took flying lessons and earned my civilian license. We were the first and, I don't know, to my knowledge, maybe even the last class of ROTC students, who had to get our private pilots license in order to go to pilot training in the Air Force on active duty. It was

provided to us for free, but if you couldn't get your civilian license, then, you weren't going to go to pilot training. We had Army guys, they flew out of Hadley Field, which is now a shopping mall and I flew out of North Brunswick airport, which is now an industrial park, and I flew an Aeronca [Aeronautical Corporation of America aircraft] and I can't even find a model of one. They are as obsolete as the B-47 [B-47 Stratojet jet bomber].

SI: Was that an Aeronca Chief [a single-engine, two-seat, light aircraft from 1945]?

MK: All I remember was Aeronca, I didn't know Chief, or anything else. All the planes were the same at the field and they were all called Aeroncas, so the Chief may have come later. I do remember that no matter how you landed, you had to come over wires and drop into the field because it had a short runway, so a lot of times you'd crab in, in order to fall faster.

SI: What is that?

MK: Crabbing. You would cross your stick and your rudder, almost like to go into a spin, and that would increase your rate of descent so your approach to the field was much steeper. Princeton airport, I don't know about now, but when I was still flying, when I flew out of Princeton airport, it was the same thing; you had to come in over, I don't know why, I guess the wires came after the fields and on the approach, if you know, the wind was from the West, you had to drop in, steep descent, use full flaps.

SI: So, when you first came to Rutgers, ROTC was mandatory for the first two years.

MK: Yes, the draft existed. Everybody knew they were going to go into the service, because we were going from the Korean War to the Cold War, so there was a need for people in the military in large numbers, at that time. The first two years, ROTC was mandatory and, after that, you had to be accepted into advanced ROTC to continue. But, you know, I believe, I'm trying to remember, on our graduation day, in the Air Force alone, a hundred to a hundred-fifty students were commissioned as officers in the Air Force. I mean, now, if you get one or two a year it's a lot. I remember very distinctly my junior year talking to my flight, nobody wanted to be in ROTC except for that handful of us that were going to go on in it, you know, talking about [it to] the guys, you know, spit shine their shoes even though I told them I knew they really weren't into it at all but as a matter of pride, you know, shine up those shoes for the parade. We used to go to Buccleuch Park; you'd have thousands of kids there parading around doing drill and ceremonies and all. I was here when the Scarlet Knight … the Chanticleer was retired and the Scarlet Knight became our school mascot and that was initiated by the Class of 1958. We became a state university, of course we're not anymore, we're just a state-assisted university, but back then half the budget was from the State. Now, it's only like one-third, so I don't think they've earned having an "NJ" on our football helmets yet. I guess that's about it. We actually had a poll here. I voted against becoming a state university. I guess because as a poli sci [political science] major, maybe not as a poli sci [political science] major, maybe as a political creature, I believe in small government. I didn't think it was really, economically it was virtually necessary, but I wasn't for us becoming a state university. I felt that it would be more trouble than it was worth and in some ways it has been. Based on the way the University President was countermanded publicly and rebuked by the Governor, over the union organization of middle management on

campus, I have every confidence the politicians will do for Rutgers what they did for UMDNJ [University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey] and turn it into a political patronage pool.

SI: It is interesting to hear that the students were so involved with that change. Does anything stand out about that changeover?

MK: Well, of course, even in the university, amongst faculty and staff, there was a division. I remember one other big thing that happened, though, was the *Targum*, which was a weekly [student newspaper] and I don't know whether I could say censored, but, naturally, it was much more reserved in those days, non-controversial, and there was a big photograph on one edition and it was a picture of a girl from the neck to the waist in a tight sweater with a three-quarter profile, naturally, the bosom being the point of the picture and that was one heck of a scandal when I was in school. Can you believe that? There was no skin even, all it was, it was a picture of a sweater with a body in it and it was a scandal, absolute scandal. The editor and staff of the *Targum* went through hell and, you know, we couldn't see what the heck is scandalous is about that. [laughter]

SI: So, the *Targum* would mostly focus on like sports and things like that?

MK: Yeah, sports, and, you know, constructive things. What this team was doing, what that club was doing, what this student was doing, what this faculty member was doing, you know, it was really reporting. In the old days, the *Targum* and your local newspaper, the editorial pages were the opinions but now it's an opinion from the front page to the last page, there is no news anymore.

SI: Would they comment on things like the change over to being a state university, or any particular bond drive going on?

MK: Yeah they reported on it, but they didn't engage in the controversy about it at all, you know, just the facts.

SI: Within political science, did you develop an interest in any one particular aspect, or have a particularly favorite professor, or course?

MK: Well, Professor McCormick was always the most popular. He was history and, you know, all the poli sci [political science] majors were very deep into history, as well as the specialized poli sci [political science] classes. I'm terrible about names. I always marvel at some of my classmates when we get together how they can snap off names. I have a very bad time doing that. I can see their faces, but, I can't think of a professor I didn't respect. I disagreed with some of them because of their political philosophy, but, I can't think of a professor I didn't respect, and I think of most of them very fondly. Oddly enough, the one guy I didn't like very much was Colonel Walter S. Hammond, the professor of, what did we call it in those days? It's aerospace studies now, but professor of [PAS?], aeronautic studies. He was a SAC [Strategic Air Command]-type. He walked with a riding crop, wore the aviator glasses. I always wondered why he didn't have a corncob pipe. You know, he was a MacArthur-like figure and I got my first taste of military politics. We had a speech contest and my speech was on intercontinental

ballistic missiles, as a brand new thing then, but I made the mistake of saying they would replace piloted aircraft. Well, of course, they never did and the reason is, they weren't as effective a deterrent as aircraft. When the Soviet Union would tick us off, we could send our bombers up flying all around and the Soviets could see them. They can't see that missile silo in Missouri so, psychologically, the bomber and, of course, the B-52s [Boeing B-52 Stratofortress, long-range, strategic bombers] are still in the business of deterrence and delivery. So, Billy Austin, to become an All-American the next year in football, Billy Austin's speech is "What ROTC has done for me." See he was more politically astute. [laughter] He knew what would play to the profs didn't he? So, he won the award, but the award committee was three officers, the colonel, and two captains. One was Captain Hudak, real nice guy, and, believe it or not, the two captains came up to me and told me that they felt I gave the best speech, but to please understand that they had to vote the way Colonel Hammond wanted them to vote. I thought that was really something, for an officer, professor to come to a student and say that, don't you? I was really impressed with that. Their honesty and their desire, you know, to motivate me and let me know that they appreciated what I had to say. Of course, intercontinental ballistic missiles became a primary factor in mutually assured destruction.

SI: Was this a topic you picked because you believed in it or were people assigned topics?

MK: Oh, I remember, as I do to this day, reading the paper and getting the news on the radio, as well, and I always kept up with current events and that was simply scientific reporting in the news media and I used the data I collected from the news media to create my speech. I remember even using the audio visual aids because in the paper they had like half-page pictures of a ballistic missile being launched from Iowa, or somewhere, and going over to Moscow and the track and the political geography, and I used that during my speeches [as] an audio visual aid. We didn't have much in the way of audio visual back in those days, so having a large picture like that was helpful to me.

SI: You mentioned the refugees on campus eating in the Commons. Can you tell us what you remember about them coming into the area and any other places where you saw them?

MK: Well, they reinvigorated New Brunswick's existing Hungarian community. As you know, for the whole country, the Hungarian Heritage Foundation is right here in New Brunswick on Somerset Street. There are still a couple of Hungarian delis available in the area. The Hungarian restaurants, I don't know if there are any left in town, are there? In those days there were three or four.

SI: I know Robert Wood Johnson [University Hospital] just displaced one.

MK: Oh, yeah, the one downstairs … yeah that was the last one, I think, wasn't it? And of course then there was Aranka's out on Route 27. Oh, I remember once, very real big occasion for me is Dean [Howard J.] Crosby took me to dinner at Connecticut Farms, not Connecticut Farms, Colonial Farms, it's now an Irish restaurant out on, yeah, you go out Hamilton and it becomes Amwell Road in Middlebush, it's an Irish name. See that? I told I'm bad with names, but it's not Steak and Ale. Anyway, if you get a chance, go there, it's a nice place and they have good food [O'Connor's Beef 'N Chowder House]. But I remember Dean Crosby taking me there

and I was very impressed with the place. It was a little more formal and a little less pubbish, it was more restaurant and less pub, back then, in my recollection anyway.

SI: It was Hungarian?

MK: No, that was American. I just thought of that because Dean Crosby was a great guy. You have to remember there are fewer students and we did have a closer relationship with staff than anybody can have today and, you know, Dean Crosby was one of the guys. We all looked up to him, but he was a guy nobody was afraid to talk to and he was interested in everybody. Of course, I also, oh, another big thing in my life here was my encounter with the president and the provost. Provost being Mason Gross of television fame, and the president was Lewis Webster Jones. I had purchased, for seventy-five dollars, a '47 Ford with no shock absorbers, and the clutch wasn't too good either, and it was visitation day. High school kids came to the campus and had tours, and all of that, and I met a high school girl and she had some friends and I had some friends and my '47 Ford had about six or eight kids in it and the car had a small rear window like this. Anyway, but, in addition, to go into reverse I couldn't release the clutch, I had to pop it or it wouldn't catch, so I thought I was clear. I was nose-in, behind the Commons, and I was going to back up, so I popped the clutch and gunned it. Wham, caught just the left rear end of Mason Gross's car. No damage to my Ford but his left rear was smashed in. He jumped out of the car; I got out of my car; all the kids got out of my car, and you never heard a sailor let out a string of profanity like Mason Gross. He was bright red. He was cussing up just one word after the other, some I don't think I ever heard before. [laughter] And here is Louis Webster Jones, pulling on Mason Gross's arm, trying to get him away from me. They had topcoats on, he's pulling the sleeve of his coat and telling him, "Calm down," and he's trying to pull him away. So, this went on for sometime. Oh, the kids were scared to death. They thought I was going to be killed and so the president finally gets him to leave and he says under his breath, he says, "I'm trading it in for a new car anyway," and so he didn't take my name or any information and he just drove away. But I think it's also that he had calmed down and realized in front of these high school girls, and everything, that he had somewhat overstepped his bounds and so I got off with nothing. He didn't even know who did it. That was funny. [laughter]

SI: That is the different side of Mason Gross.

MK: Well, it's part of my college life. I mean, I got to meet the president and the provost up close and personal. [laughter]

SI: It's interesting how close you can get with the administration like Howard Crosby. He was Dean of Men then, right?

MK: Yes.

SI: Were you involved in any activity that would bring you closer contact with him or you just got to know the students better?

MK: Well, I actually met him because I got in trouble. We used to have an annual event, which was a boat ride to Bear Mountain on a cruise ship, and I got drunk as a skunk. You know, I had

never had much to drink as a kid and, if anything. I don't remember anything as a-matter-of-fact, and so, I was stupid and I got drunk on the boat ride to Bear Mountain. So, Dean Crosby sort of got in touch with me afterward to see if he had a drunken skunk on his hands in the class, or whether it was just a matter of over-partying, which it was, so we sort of became friends because of that. Because that would have been his job, if I was a troubled student, it was his job either to get rid of me, or to straighten me out so I could be a functional member of the class.

SI: Can you tell us about your senior year, when you had your obligation to ROTC coming up, what was going through your mind? Did you think that you wanted to get it out of the way right away? You mentioned that you really wanted to be a pilot. Did you have anything lined up, for after graduation like people often do now?

MK: No. You don't know where you're going, or you don't even know when you're going to go on active duty. I went on active duty August 27, 1958 and I couldn't even get a job after graduation, because everybody knew I was going into the military service, and so I ended up working for my Scoutmaster's family in their print shop on Mill Road in Irvington and then that almost knocked me out of flying, because one day I was casting lead ingots for the linotype machine, and I leaned over a little too far and a bead of perspiration dropped from my forehead into the mold, and the lead exploded in my face and I got it in my eye. They immediately rushed me to an eye doctor and, fortunately, I didn't have any burn, or anything. The moisture of the eye cooled the lead quickly. I closed my eye fast, my eye was sealed by the lead, couldn't open it, and I had no eye damage. I was very lucky. I had a lot of luck in my life. I could have walked away from that blinded and never been a pilot. So, no, I had no plans except to be a pilot, that's all I knew, and so I was called up in August.

As I said, nobody knew when they were going to be called up for active duty. Usually within a year, but you didn't know when and you wouldn't know where you were going, except Lackland because everybody entered through Lackland, that was called the gateway to the Air Force. So, everybody went there for their one month of orientation and it was kind of funny. Here you've been an officer drilling the troops at Buccleuch and you go there and some noncommissioned officer is drilling this bunch of shavetailed lieutenants, it was funny. They got a kick out of it. That was a fun job for an NCO to be able to tell a bunch of officers to "halt" and "attention" and everything else.

SI: Do you think they were a little harder?

MK: No. I never found drill and ceremonies in any way onerous, or difficult at all. We were the first class that had a ceremonial drill team. I was on that; I remember going to Andrews [Air Force Base] for the national competition. It was the first year of drill and ceremonies team at Rutgers and we came in second and they really, they were very proud of us, that we were able to do that in our first year.

SI: Was that the Pershing Rifles?

MK: No, the Pershing Rifles were the Army. What was our name? The Scarlet Rifles. It's different now isn't it?

SI: There is a number of different …

MK: Queen's Guard.

SI: You guys were the Queen's Guard?

MK: No, you have a Queen's Guard now, don't you? Then, it was us, we were the Queen's Guard then.

SI: Yes, they existed from the 1950s.

MK: I know we're the opposite of whatever is now, or different than whatever it is now. So, if it's not Queens Guard now, then it must have been that. I remember the Scarlet Rifles but you know I was an active alumni and I go to the reunions, so I may just be confused in the sequence of the names. I'm trying to remember. I think, we were exclusively Air Force though. I don't think we were merged with the Army cadets.

SI: How much time did that take up?

MK: Isn't that interesting? I never felt I didn't have enough time. I may not have been in a fraternity but I was involved in all kinds of things, including work, and I really never felt a lack of time. So, I really can't say. I know we had a practice frequently. I think, we did it behind the gym and in the gym. I can't remember it as a time; it's just part of everything I had to do, everyday.

SI: We have spoken with Joe Carlani from the Queen's Guard and he was explaining how you would do these drills, which you would do. Get graph paper, plot them out, and everything had to be very precise. Apparently, a lot of engineers got involved with it because of the precision and having to plan it out and all that.

MK: We didn't. It was all oral. This is what we have to do, this is the count and this is the command, and you memorized it, and that was it.

SI: So, how long were you at Lackland?

MK: I was there twice as long as you're supposed to be there. I was there for two months and the reason was I couldn't cross my eyes. One of the tests in your vision examination, is they put a ruler up against your nose that has a slide with a little metal frame and letters in it and you have to be able to read those letters within a very short distance from your nose, which requires you to virtually cross your eyes, okay? I couldn't do it. That meant I couldn't be a pilot. Probably one of the best summations in my life, I got the doctors to extend me for a month. Again, where that luck came from I don't know, but the doctors agreed to extend me for a month and they gave me eye exercises to do. At the end of the second month, I go back for the eye exam. Those doctors used penlights, pencils, pens, sticks, everything imaginable and after like fifteen minutes, I crossed my eyes, they passed me, and I became a pilot. You're never going to have your face

that close to the instrument panel unless you're going to crash, you know[laughter]. But it was a requirement and all they required of me is to cross my eyes once and those guys signed off on me, I love those doctors, there were about three of them, all in there trying to help me because, I guess, I impressed them with how much I wanted to be a pilot and how could I ever thank them for what they did, beautiful people willing to bend the rules? I had to do it but it wasn't quite the way it is usually done, and so, then I went on from there to pilot training.

SI: Other than that, Lackland was just young officers training?

MK: The most impressive thing about Lackland were the drainage ditches. All over the field, you've got these ditches that are like ten-feet deep, with steep slopes, and boardwalks across them where the sidewalks run. I had no idea what they were. I thought, you know, maybe it's like a military trench or something in case of an attack, or whatever. It's for flash floods. They had to have that kind of huge drainage system and, as you know, to this day you read in the newspapers about tragedies in Texas from flash flooding. They don't get much rain, but they tend to get it all at once and you can't really build a drainage system for the peak, and so they had all these open ditches surrounding the field where all the runoff had to go in the event of a flash flood. That was an interesting little bit of trivia. I joined the Kelly Bank, which was known as the Air Force Bank. I bought a car and another young officer, a kid from Denville, New Jersey, bought himself a used Corvette and got rid of his car, which was a customized, white, 1954 convertible, with black and white leather upholstery. I don't know what he paid for the Corvette. I paid him a hundred-fifty bucks, two hundred-fifty bucks and with that. I drove from Texas through New Orleans to Spence Air Base in Moultrie, Georgia. The biggest thing that happened in Moultrie when I was there is they landed a faucet factory, so you didn't have to be in the pig business to make a living, you could do something else.

SI: Was this your first time in the South?

MK: Yes. I still have Ku Klux Klan literature somewhere in my basement that I picked up at the newsstand. They had Klan literature on all, you know, freebies, at all the newsstands. I think, I picked that up, though, not in Moultrie. I did have a little problem in Moultrie because I dared to date a local girl. You got to remember that back in those days in the South, the word "nigger" not only included black people, it included Catholics, Yankees, and Jews. So, I got some heat for dating a local girl.

SI: Did somebody call you that?

MK: Yeah. My instructor, Spence Air Base was a civilian field. We had military personnel, but we only flew with military pilots for check rides. Our training rides were with civilian, almost all military reserve pilots. So, my instructor was a redneck and he tried to wash me out because of this local girl. But I passed my check ride, and they just gave me another instructor, and I had no problem; I finished up. It was a different South in those days, and the same thing, when I got to survival training at Stead Air Force Base in Nevada. When I first arrived, somebody tried to single me out and the other prisoners hid me. We were, I don't know how many of us in the cell, shoulder to shoulder, belly to belly, no room to move; it's part of the, you know, the training, and

so they were looking for me and the other guys pushed me, and it wasn't easy to do, you know. They, eventually, slid me to the back of the cell where they couldn't reach me and whatever it is they were planning for me didn't happen. Oh, and I got in trouble at Spence because of the word "mother." On a social evening, one of the wives of one of the officers did a belly dance, and, you know, it was a small place, you know. We were sitting on the floor and she was, you know, three feet away from us, and I said, "mother," and an officer called me in after that [and wanted to know] why did I offend the lady by calling her a mother, and I explained to him it meant, "wow." That was a slang word when I was young and, I guess, that eventually evolved to "MF" unfortunately, but it meant at the time and you said it, "mother," you know, and that meant "wow." So, I explained that and I said I wanted to apologize to the lady directly, but he said it wasn't necessary so he apparently had a good explanation for it and he didn't care. I got golf lessons at Spence, but I always enjoyed chasing the ladies more than chasing the little ball so I took my lessons and moved on. But that was part of being "an officer and a gentleman" in those days.

SI: How much of a social world was there in the Air Force in the late 1950s?

MK: Oh, very, very important. Your wife had to go to the cocktail parties that the base commander's wife threw at the Officers' Club; had to play bridge. We would take turns, squadrons, putting on a floor show at the Officers' Club once a month. I was the MC of ours while I was there. My wife went to her first cocktail party and she wouldn't drink the sherry because she was pregnant. She didn't believe in drinking while you were pregnant, never was a drinker, but, you know, she would drink cognac and wine, but not when she was pregnant. Then, she got seated, she wanted to play bridge, but the base commander's wife wanted to play canasta so my wife said, "I don't know how to play canasta," and she said, "I'll teach you and all," so they're sitting together and the base commander's wife says, "What rank is your husband?" My wife said, she said, "He's a lieutenant," and the base commander's wife went, "Oh," and her nose went up about a foot, and my wife says to her, "and he's a lot younger than your husband." Holy cow and, yet, I was offered a job as supply officer for the entire base. I could never figure that out. I would have thought that she would have told her husband to give me latrine duty, or something, you know, but again, a lot of luck in life. I didn't get the job by the way because they were cutting the orders. What had happened was I was a combat crew member in the Strategic Air Command. I married a naturalized American. I knew that meant I'd be stripped of my clearance, top secret. You had to be top secret. Now, my squadron commander, who, with his wife, had introduced me to the lady I married, had moved on to what was called the "Missile Site Activation Task Force." They were going to put missiles silos in Arkansas and he was going to be in charge of that, so he left our squadron, and we got a new squadron commander. I didn't like him much, but I went to him and I said, "Look, I'm marrying a naturalized American, I'll lose my clearance, and I just wanted you to know." [He replied], "Oh no, nothing will happen. Don't even worry about it." What's wrong with this guy, you know? So, I go to the chapel. Now, at the chapel, one of the jobs of the chaplain is this marital orientation for people, but they don't do it for officers, just enlisted men, that's part of your social class distinction, okay. I told him I voluntarily wanted to do it and he agreed to do it. So, I went through marital orientation with the chaplain. There are forms that are filled out, he signs things, I go to my squadron commander. He says, "You didn't need to do that." Life continues. Well, I don't know, a month or so after our marriage [tilt?], I'm stripped of my clearance; I'm taken off combat crew duty.

My squadron commander is down a crew; he's going nuts; I'm in the clear. I did everything I could to tell the man I was going to create a problem and he absolutely refused to see it. So, I was on ground duty and they made me personnel and equipment officer and that meant I was responsible for the parachutes and survival kits for the aviation crews. I had a great NCO [non-commissioned officer]; he did all the work, I was just, you know, a nominal head. I had to sign certain things and authorize certain things, but, you know, they packed the chutes and kept the supplies and the survival kits current, and so on. The one thing I did accomplish is, we used to have to go to personnel and equipment before our flight to pick up our chute, and the survival kit was built into it. It's a fanny pack parachute, not a backpack, and it was, actually, the upholstery for our steel seats, and then at the end of a flight, which was often eleven or twelve hours, you'd have to schlep back there lugging this sixty-pound chute and turn it back in, and it was a real burden on the crews. So, I had flown into a couple of other bases because of weather problems, runway problems, whatever, and gotten to see how they did it, and at one base, they would have a truck come out and bring your chute to you, and pick it up when you parked. At another place, the chutes were in the aircraft. They weren't assigned to a person; they were assigned to an aircraft. So, because of staffing, money, various things, what I managed to establish is, we kept the chutes in the aircraft. You didn't have to lug them back and forth anymore, so I was very proud of that. Today, you'd get a medal for that, I didn't get any medal or anything. I didn't have a ribbon for it, but, anyway, I was very proud of that. So, I spent six months on the ground. I didn't lose my flight pay. They let me fly four hours of qualification with the local ground pounders, you know, staff-type people who weren't on combat crews, and get my flight pay that way. Then, at the end of the six months, I went back on crew duty, but, in between, because of the way I was performing as personnel and equipment officer, apparently headquarters noticed it. They lost their supply officer, so they offered me the job of supply officer for the base and I accepted. The orders were actually being cut at wing headquarters and I, again, go into the squadron commander's office to tell him. He threw me out and got on the phone and that was the end of that. So, I didn't become the supply officer; I stayed on got crew duty. I can understand his position, but it's just I was so naïve. If I didn't tell him, once it happened, it might have been harder to, you know, undo it, but I was honest and I told him and he pulled it out from under me. The reason it made a difference to me is combat crew duty is a lot harder on the family. You know, we had at Little Rock Air Force Base, we had a mole hole, which is an underground alert barracks, so to speak, reinforced heavy concrete and covered with earth, and that's where we would live for a couple of weeks, so you were isolated from your family completely.

SI: The loss of the clearance was only for six months?

MK: Yeah, until they could run a complete investigation of my wife.

SI: When you first joined the Air Force on active duty, did you want to be a bomber pilot?

MK: I wanted to be a fighter pilot. As a-matter-of-fact my highest scores in pilot training were in formation flying, in aerobatics. We would actually go out in a formation of four planes and three of us would be solo and the lead plane would have a student and an instructor pilot in the back seat and he would score us all. I remember distinctly one of the other officers told me nobody ever got that high a score before and I was flying the tail position. We flew in a diamond and I was in the tail position and I hung in with them all the way, see, you don't know it, but

what he's doing, he's doing loops, rolls and everything else. All you're trying to do is stay on him so you're flying visual, you're not flying instruments, so you don't really know what he's doing and so it's challenging and I loved it. I loved it. So, it turns out I chose bombers because I felt the Strategic Air Command was the crème, and they were. I mean, they worked harder than anybody else in the air force. I came to rue that a little bit but I felt they were sort of the difference between the Army and the Marines; the Strategic Air Command was the crème of the Air Force so I chose Strategic Air Command. I wanted to go into B-52s but I ended up in B-47s. I wanted to go to a northern base; you get to make three choices, you know, first choice, through the third choice. They sent me to Little Rock, Arkansas, the instructors had a laugh. I didn't get anything I wanted. It wasn't even on my list, you know, either the assignments, geographically or functionally. So, what else you want to know?

SI: How many bases were you in training before you went into the SAC?

MK: Well, according to my discharge, four. Spence, they have it down as Air Force Base, it was called Spence Air Base, because it was really civilian quasi-military, but they have it down as AFB here, which is in Moultrie, Georgia. I went there … it says here, "dates from to" right? Now, what does it say? It says October '59 and I think that's when I left it. I don't think that's the starting date. McConnell Air Force Base and that's a leaving date I know, February 1960. That was ground school for B-47s, okay, and then Little Rock Air Force Base, which had two wings, one was a training wing and one was an operational wing, and I went to the training wing for my in-flight B-47 training. I left there in June of '60 and went down to the other end of the field to the operational wing, and, according to this, I also went to McConnell Air Force Base for thermo-nuclear weapons delivery something. It's kind of strange, you know, the principle of "need to know." Even if you have a top secret clearance, you shouldn't be told anything unless you need to know it. They gave us intensive weapons training. We had to memorize the wiring diagrams for a hydrogen bomb. We had to learn all the mechanical parts. We had to learn where every part was. You couldn't access the bomb bay in a B-47. You couldn't take one screw out of that bomb and do anything to it, and, yet, we spent hours and hours, and we took written exams, every alert we had a written exam. We spent hours in instruction and I never could figure out why; except I think I know now. I have the feeling they taught us wrong information so that if we were captured, we'd tell the captors the wrong thing, because what other purpose, even sending me [on temporary duty] to McConnell, I couldn't do anything but drop it. So, I only suspect it must have been part of some kind of a disinformational campaign, because there was no reason for us to know. "Need to know," we didn't need to know anything, just how to drop it. Big mystery. I never really talked to anybody, to find out, who might have known. I know my old squadron commander, again, who with his wife introduced me to my wife went on to the Pentagon. He retired when he found out he wasn't going to get a star and he retired a full bull and he's living in Florida in a military retirement community and he called me. I went to law school, five years, nights. You could go four, five, or six years, nights, and get a law degree, so I chose the middle of the road. I needed one night a week with my family, so I had that one night a week with my family, which ended up being a study and library night, anyway, but he called me my third year out of the five and said, "I can't tell you why but pack a bag and don't make any long range plans." That was at the time, as you know, Lyndon Johnson did bomb the North during the Vietnam War, but, I guess the State Department convinced him if he wanted peace, he had to stop doing that, so he stopped bombing the North. When Nixon was elected, he intended

to bomb the North again and so they were doing feasibility studies on how to do that. One of the plans was, I had flown my plane to … Davis Mothan Air Force Base in Arizona, which is the bone yard of the Air Force and that's where old planes that are being retired from duty go and are put in mothballs. Then, when [at a] certain time the bureaucrats have decided it's totally obsolete, then it becomes beer cans. One of the times I almost got killed was coming back from there. We delivered the plane there, and I forget the point we were working on, that was a digression.

SI: We were talking about the Vietnam War.

MK: Oh, yeah, and the bombing. All right the feasibility study was, at that time the B-47s were in mothballs. The B-52 was the only nuclear bomber. They didn't want to have to decrease the strategic fleet to use them in Vietnam. On top of that, the B-52 is a high-altitude bomber, which with modern missiles makes it a sitting duck. Then, why are they still flying? Well, the cruise missile eliminates that risk. They can get to fire their bomb from hundreds of miles away so antiaircraft missiles aren't really a consideration. That's why it has survived. But, at that time, it didn't have the cruise missile yet. It did the high explosive carpet bombing in Vietnam. But that was a risky deal diverting, I think, it was seventy-five B-52s, from the strategic fleet. So, they were doing a feasibility study on taking the B-47 out of mothballs and bringing back all the B-47 crews on active duty and putting them back in the plane. The B-47 had the advantages; we were a low altitude bomber. We went in on the deck all manually. We didn't have any electronics in fact, except for [Very High Frequency Omni-directional Radio Range], we shot the stars and the sun in navigation on long flights. We didn't have any of the electronic sophistication. They might have put it in when they took them out of mothballs, but we had the advantage here of going in under the [surface-to-air missiles] and we'd do a pop-up maneuver, that is, we'd climb to altitude, drop the bomb, it has a parachute on it to slow the descent, and then we'd drop back down and get the hell out of there. So, it would have been perfect for hitting Hanoi and the harbors. But the problem was our bomb bay carried one bomb and that bomb could kill five million people, but it wasn't practical. They were going to not use nuclear weapons and so it couldn't carry enough high explosive to justify the cost. So, they actually diverted them and, as you know, several of the B-52s were shot down because they are sitting ducks. That was apparently why he called me and he probably was working on the study, but it didn't happen, so I got to finish law school and have the life I had. I knew guys that had been in World War II and wanted to stay in and they were "riffed" as it was called, reduction in force, because naturally after World War II they had to cut the military way back. I knew guys who were riffed even though they wanted to stay in after World War II, who were recalled for Korea, and those were the older guys I got to associate with in training, especially POW and prisoner escape innovation training. And when I did leave, I remember guys coming up to me and wishing me luck and saying they wish they had the nerve to do it but they didn't feel they can start over again you know. So, it's kind of, again, we are like corks on the tide, feathers on the wind. Our lives are impacted in so many ways by things beyond our control and, as I say, I feel very lucky in the way the wind blew and the tide went in and out for me.

SI: When you went into the Air Force, did you consider making it a career?

MK: Yes, I intended to make it a career, until I got married. My wife told me she'd rather be married. See the friends she met all told her that I should have been a lawyer, so she says to me one day, "I'd rather be married to a lawyer than a pilot." You know, she knew what the risks were, and everything, and she didn't like it and that's why I didn't become an airline pilot when I got out. I could have been, but she didn't want me to fly and so I said to her, "Well, if you want to be married to a lawyer, I'll go to law school. It's cheaper than a divorce, you know." So, that was just a joke between us, but so I decided to go back to civilian life; five years is a fair return to Uncle Sam on his money and I felt I did my part. It was the same with politics. I told the reporters I didn't want a career in politics, I just wanted to be, you know, a civilian soldier passing through. We have essentially, I love them, they're the best Americans in the world our military, but they are a mercenary force, they're all volunteers and I remember being taught that, not in class but in conversations with the officers, the philosophy behind ROTC was to have a non-professional military with civilian soldiers constantly passing through to prevent a dichotomy between your military population and your civilian population. We don't have that anymore now and there is an attendant risk to that.

ML: Did you go to law school while you were in the military?

MK: No. As a matter-of-fact after I graduated, I tried to get into the active reserve or the National Guard. The National Guard were flying F-102 interceptors [Convair F-102 Delta Dagger, the first supersonic interceptor and first operational delta wing fighter of the USAF] and, unfortunately, they were crashing rather regularly and the reserves were … the four-engine long-range transport, I forget which one was the main force in those days, but they would fly material to Vietnam, pick up wounded, return and hop around the States, dropping the wounded off at various [Veteran's Affairs] Hospital locations, and then back home after, and that was a two-week tour and you don't go to law school while you're doing two weeks flying back and forth from Vietnam and the [F-102] guys were all flying these late night flights and, you know, for a guy working full time and going to law school and commuting by train, it just wasn't feasible, but I tried when I graduated to change my AFSC [Air Force Specialty Code] and become a Judge Advocate. Well, I found out there was an Air Force regulation that prohibits that. Once on a combat crew, always on a combat crew, you can't do anything else in the Air Force. When I was finally discharged from the inactive reserve, a condition, I was a regular officer, so a regular officer can only get out by permission and for them to get permission to leave the Air Force, I had agreed an extended tour of inactive reserve and be re-commissioned as a reservist, so I tried to change it to Judge Advocate and I couldn't. Senator [Clifford P.]Case got an offer for me to do some legal work. They have contract lawyers who do legal work for personnel, and all, but I didn't go into that. I have a friend who does a lot of that and he enjoys it, still wears the uniform, and it still fits him. He has a much nicer toupee than he used to have, but he spends a lot of time down at McGuire doing legal things for troops and he gets compensated for the contracts somehow, and gets to be on reserve duty, but I couldn't do it. I would have done it if I could have done it but doing it as a civilian. He does it as a military officer as a reserve duty. I would have had done it as a civilian as a contractor and I didn't want to do that.

SI: Can you tell us a little bit about the first time when you were becoming familiar with the B-47? What was it like the first time you flew it? What was unique about it, what did you feel about it?

MK: Well, first of all, ground school is kind of a fascinating story, too, because you learn every valve in the hydraulic system; you learn every switch in the electrical system. I mean you get to learn every rivet in that aircraft in ground school and, I think, we did have continuation courses in meteorology and some other things, too, but it was mainly engineering. When I came back to civilian life, I came to the Rutgers placement office to help me find a job. I was discharged on two weeks notice. As I said, a regular officer is only released with permission, so I had no idea when I would get out of the Air Force, only when they said I could. They only gave me two weeks notice to get out with a kid and a pregnant wife and no job. I wasn't admitted to law school and I was discharged April 16th, of 1963, and by July 13th, I had a mortgage, a job, and was admitted to law school. Don't ask me how I did it. My wife and I talk about it, we can't imagine how we did it, but we did it. At any rate, I interviewed for three jobs. The best one was with General Electric and that would have been to become the officer in charge of military procurement, who is buying all the supplies for the military corporations in General Electric. That was a real biggie. Unfortunately, it meant the first six months of the job, I would move with an attaché case and a suitcase from plant to plant in General Electric. I had a pregnant wife, I didn't have a home, I wasn't admitted to law school. I couldn't do it, so I had to turn it down. I would have been on "easy street." Another job I was offered, I went for an interview and an exam, a written exam at Johns Manville, in Manville, New Jersey, and I went for the position of what they call a junior engineer. They offered me the job on condition that I go to engineering school because I didn't have any engineering education. But I got the highest score on their exam that anybody ever got, so they offered me the job of full engineer at full pay and seniority, but on condition that I go to engineering school. So, I had to turn that down. So, I took a lousy job with the Prudential Insurance Company of America, low pay doing contracts, and across the street from Seton Hall Law School. So, my wife had a twenty-five dollar a week budget for food and I remember distinctly going to the supermarket with her. My brother and sister-in-law were in banking and we didn't have calculators yet, but she had a plastic mechanical device that was an adding machine and we would go to the supermarket, my wife would have a list, and we'd start at one end of the store and work our way across, and every time she took something off the shelf she would enter the price, and we'd get to the other end of the store and twenty five dollars and she still had things on her list. My job was, when she decided what she needed the most, my job was to take the things she was giving up in order to get something else back to its place on the shelf, and so it was interesting. I used to take the family out to dinner once a week. We went to a fast food place called Humphrey's, which doesn't exist anymore. It was a hamburger chain but we'd go there on Saturday night and they would give you twelve shrimp, French fries, and a soda for one dollar and it came in a box, like a box lunch, and Manuela and the kids would get their shrimp, and I'd get a hotdog because it was the cheapest thing on their menu. So, I ate a lot of hotdogs, and it was fun.

SI: That was all five years of law school?

MK: Yeah, yeah. I mean even on our anniversary we couldn't afford to go to a restaurant or anything. One anniversary, we spent our anniversary, we treated ourselves to a movie and we saw *Dr. Zhivago*. Okay, what else would you like to ruminate on?

SI: You had started talking about the ground school and how intense the training was.

MK: Yeah, that engineering education that I got in ground school is the reason I snockered that exam at Johns Manville. I owe a lot to my ROTC and military training in my life. That's how intense that was. Then, of course, in flight school, going through your procedures and going out on flights with instructor pilots sitting in the crew chief's seat; it's not really a seat; they sit on a step in the belly of your plane below the pilots. The B-47 is tandem seating. You got the navigator in the nose, and the first seat in the cockpit ,the aircraft commander, and in the second seat in the cockpit, the pilot, and you can climb into the plane up a ladder and then there's a space in the belly where a crew chief can sit, and when we went on reflex, we'd always have an NCO in that seat to take him to Africa. It was never empty, but on regular flights we didn't have anybody with us unless it was an inspection flight.

SI: Was that the first time you flew a jet?

MK: No, at Spence Air Base you spent six months in what they call primary pilot training. In my day, you started out in a T-34 Mentor [Beechcraft T-34 Mentor, a military trainer aircraft], which is a smaller, lighter aircraft and when you've mastered that, they shift you over to a T-28 Trojan [North American Aviation T-28 Trojan, a military trainer aircraft], and that was a tactical aircraft used by the South Vietnamese Air Force during the Vietnam War and they were all lost. I don't want to digress again, but, well, we were, I was taking the family to Carlsbad Caverns and we were somewhere in the middle of nowhere, and I jammed on the brakes and scared the heck out of my family. I saw a T-28 in a little, local airport alongside a hangar, so, naturally, I had to go there and my wife took my picture. It had the South Vietnamese Air Force markings on it so somehow that had been retrieved from the Vietnam War, but that's the only one I've ever seen after pilot training. On the same base, Spence Air Base, there was a squadron of Iranian pilots. They were called cadets, they weren't officers yet, and they took their pilot training there. I don't know what they did for advanced pilot training but, you know, we had a very close relationship with Iran before President Carter decided not to anymore and gave us the *Ayatollah*. So, you went into T-28s and that was a flying engine. It had a huge radial engine, and it had this aluminum plane behind it, and it was really powerful. I remember the first time they had me take off under the hood, the torque, you know, on that engine is tremendous and, literally, you're not conscious of it when you're VFR [flying with Visual Flight Rules], but when they put the hood over your head and you can't see outside the plane, you have to take off on instruments. I couldn't believe at how my direction changed on take off because I didn't have the rudder into the firewall and the plane was just turning like crazy for torque. So, you quickly learned to master that. Then, after that six months, you graduate to advanced pilot training and for that I went to a place you may have heard of, Selma, Alabama, to Craig Air Force Base; that's where I picked up the Klan literature. I, again, had a little problem with the locals over a couple of girls. … We flew T-33s [Lockheed T-33 Shooting Star jet trainer aircraft], which are the elongated F-80 [Lockheed P-80 Shooting Star, jet fighter]. The F-80 was the first operational tactical jet in the United States Air Force. Its handicap was it was straight-winged instead of swept-winged and that's why it couldn't compete with the MIG-15 [Mikoyan-Gurevich MiG-15, Soviet jet fighter], and the F-86 [North American Aviation F-86 Sabre, a transonic jet fighter] became the hero of the air war in Korea. But, incidentally, by adding the second seat also in tandem, one pilot behind the other, they discovered the Coke-bottle effect which permitted supersonic flight. By elongating the F-80, they discovered the change in airflow, which permitted them to break the

sound barrier. It was serendipity, but a big achievement accidentally. So, we flew T-33s. I had a buddy who became a prominent attorney in New Jersey. He was married and I was behind him and I heard him radio in his first solo flight in the T-33 and he was on the taxiway and he was in position to get permission to take the runway and they called him and he said, "I can't do it," and he taxied back in and was washed out of pilot training and finished his time in some ground job. After that, I went to escape innovation and POW [Prisoner of War] training at Stead Air Force Base in Nevada, which is now a housing subdivision, and that's when I got the things like rabbit kidneys and porcupine legs. You can't chew a porcupine, absolutely guaranteed. Unfortunately, I was there in the wintertime. First of all, it tastes like turpentine because it eats pine bark and pine needles and, secondly, if those are muscles they're not like any muscles you and I have, they're like ligaments, you know, it's so leathery and I chewed on mine for a half an hour, but I couldn't swallow anything. I just got the nutrition out of it by chewing on it. In escape innovation, we had time in a prisoner of war camp, I did manage to escape, and I did get to smuggle a knife in and then we went also on escape innovation in the mountains and, naturally, they start us off at the edge of this huge open field. Well, you know, you can't escape and evade by crossing an open field, but it meant miles of walking around this huge, huge mesa, or what the hell ever it was, and, on top of that, it was surrounded by mountain, so it was vertical as well as horizontal distance. So, naturally, all the wise guys tried to sneak across; you get caught right away, but they forgive you your first capture, so, I guess, apparently it was a very common thing and then you got to climb the mountain around this open area and we managed not to get caught. I was with, I don't know, I teamed up with one or two other guys and we managed to get through without getting captured, but, even though you're not captured, you have to go through the POW camp anyway. So, if you get captured, you go right away and if you don't get captured, you get to go at the end of that course and I got to eat caterpillars … and ants, not caterpillars, grasshoppers, and for that, for everything that happened at that [temporary duty], I give credit to the Boy Scouts. Even though I was a city slicker, I knew more than some of the country boys about survival, and all of that stuff, so, it was for me, it was an easy course, both the academic portion and the operational portion.

SI: When you were there, did you have people training you who had actually been in POW situations?

MK: Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah, and guys were buried alive; I got beaten up. They didn't get me when we first came in to the cell, but they got me later. They came to our, we were in these underground huts. They dug a square in the earth, a ramp down into it, and they covered it with wood, and whatever, and that's where we lived, packed in there, and one day they came and they just, inspection search, and so they decided to beat me up. One of the captains yelled out that if they didn't stop he was going to contact his congressman, that they shouldn't be doing that, but nothing came of it. I didn't get buried alive, some guys got buried. I did get the closet. They have a closet, which has trays in it, and they put you in there and, every time they don't like you, they slip the tray into a higher notch and they shortened the closet so you end up doubled up in there. We had an escape route and that was in a latrine and you didn't know which one was a real latrine and which one wasn't. Now, I was told I was to escape on a certain night and to jump into this latrine. You had no way of knowing who really were the leadership. Everything was on faith into which whatever, so that night I managed to cross the road in the camp to that latrine without being seen and when I got in I couldn't remember which was the right latrine for sure,

but I jumped in a latrine and it turned out to be the tunnel, not the excrement, and then, oh, my God I crawled, it took me hours, hours. When I got out the other end it was sunrise; I crawled all night. You couldn't get on your knees, you had to crawl on your belly; it was just wide enough for your shoulders and high enough for your head. I remember I had to urinate so badly about halfway through the tunnel that I had to just let go. I got to the end of the tunnel and it was already dawn so it was the light out and I thought sure they'd nail me. They didn't; I made it back to the Quonset hut, which was our regular quarters, but it was padlocked and I couldn't get in; I wanted to get stuff to smuggle in. So, I, finally, I thought about going into town but because I had pissed all over myself, and I was muddy and filthy, I decided it wouldn't be fair to hitchhike into, town or anything, so I went to the base office, where we were supposed to report if we escaped, and I went in there and when I was in there I found a knife and I hid it and I managed to get back into the camp without them finding the knife. But they found out about it anyway, so they punished one of the older officers that I was with because of it and I had to watch them. Anyway, then it was McConnell for the ground training, and then Little Rock, from one end to the other, and then to civilian life, so there wasn't much, it went fast. I did get two weeks in Salinas, Kansas where we did our gunnery training and I still have the prop from the drone I shot down. We had two radar-controlled twenty-millimeter cannons. The B-52 had fifty-millimeter machine guns and I have a couple of cannon shells and the prop. In fact, I forgot to take it [to my son]. My son in Pennsylvania has always wanted that prop and I was going to give it to him and I forgot to take it. Yeah, you used the radar and, actually, the biggest profile you see is the propeller, because it's just a little drone aircraft that they use for economic reasons, obviously, and, you know, you have no visual; you just have the radar, and some guys shoot them down and some don't. I managed to knock mine down, but I don't remember why it took two weeks to do that, but, I guess, again, I probably learned every bolt in the cannon and how it's attached to the aircraft, and everything is part of the training, a lot of ground school. I remember the snow was so deep that we went sledding in my car. I had in Selma, an officer who had been stationed in Europe, and had a growing family. [He] had a car he needed to get rid of and it was a '56 Porsche and he sold it to me for two thousand and fifty dollars and I bought that. When we went to Salinas, the snow was so deep I would run the car up, as fast as I could go, and then go into a field and the Porsche has a solid undercarriage, it's all enclosed, so I could skid on the snow, and the guys would fight with each other to go out there with me and do that. That was some of the diversion we had. When I was at ground school in McConnell, Bob Hope came and put on a show, and his warm-up act was a kid called Debbie Reynolds. The way he did his show Bob would come out and do, you know, five minutes of one-liners, base commander jokes and all of that kind of stuff and then he'd introduce his warm up act. Debbie Reynolds comes out from behind the curtain, practically running to the microphone and Bob Hope, and she takes a header. I mean, that poor gal hit that stage with such a thud. Well, people ran out from behind the curtain; I think she was unconscious for a moment. Bob Hope knelt down beside her, talked to her; I couldn't hear what he was saying. It took [several] minutes for her to [respond], probably knocked the wind out her, too. Finally, she struggled to her feet, he helped her up. He stayed with her at that microphone for about five more minutes making jokes, just to give her time to regain her composure and do her act. I thought that was magnificent, and she did her act; she got a standing ovation for being a real trooper and then he came out and did his act. Well, Debbie Reynolds did a nostalgia show at the Hilton in Atlantic City and my wife and I went to the show and after the show I wrote her a note, and gave it to the desk, about having seen her when she was a young girl with Bob Hope at McConnell Air Force Base in Wichita and, believe

it or not, about, oh, I'd say, a month later, and she explained, she wrote me this two-page letter explained that she didn't get back to me sooner because she was on the road. Atlantic City is often a warm up for a tour and, of course, she went on, to Las Vegas and Reno, and did her tour and when she got home she wrote me a reply and a very nice letter. I didn't expect to hear from her, but my wife said it's because she's one of the old stars who appreciated their audience. As you know, the stars today they dislike their audience, they pester them, but in those days they cultivated their audience, their fans. So, she wrote me a beautiful letter and we have that as a souvenir. All these things you know, they connect, why, I don't know. Here I am a young lieutenant at McConnell doing ground school training and I see this performer and then, all these years later, I see her again and just drop her a note and she's nice enough to reciprocate; your two lives touch even slightly through chance. … The first time I almost crashed, I was a passenger. I was in the ROTC and we were being flown to basic pilot training base in Orlando, Florida, which is now Disney World. I just remembered the base being called Orlando. Well, we weren't taking the ocean. You know, most airliners fly off the coast to go back and forth to Florida. We were flying a land route and that meant crossing Chesapeake Bay. Now, two of the Air Force ROTC professors were the pilots. They're both fighter jocks from Korea, right, and they're both about five foot two. We were in the middle of Chesapeake Bay and we lost an engine. The emergency procedure when you lose an engine on, it was a C-47 [Douglas C-47 Skytrain, a military transport aircraft], when you lose an engine on one side, there's only two, is throw in the trim because you're going to have to have a lot of rudder to keep it straight because all your power is one side. So, they forgot to throw in the trim and both of them with all their strength couldn't push the rudder all the way in because they were too short, so we went into a spin and here we are spinning into Chesapeake Bay, and, finally, they realized and they rolled in the trim and they recovered before we hit the water. But you had eighteen green Air Force ROTC cadets in that plane. Anyway, they landed and we got another plane and finished the flight. The next time was in pilot training in advanced, in the T-33. All through pilot training I was taught to fly a pitch out. That's a military combat maneuver and that is you streak over the runway, pull the throttle back completely, and do an oval, a tight oval, right down to the runway and that's so that you're not exposed to ground fire for any length of time. Well, it's dangerous, so the bureaucrats prevail and they decide when you're not in combat you shouldn't do combat maneuvers. So, they took the pitch out and turned it into almost a holding pattern. You would cut back to fifty percent power, you'd make a gentle turn, and do a large oval around to final, and in. Nobody was allowed to do it until they did it once with a check pilot for obvious reasons. Anytime you haven't done anything before, you'd go for safety. Well, I was sitting in the briefing room and the OPS officer says, "Anybody want, I got a bird, anybody want to take a flight?" Well, hell, you never turn down a flight, so I said, "Me, me," and they gave me the plane and I took off and you do military, we did a forty-five out of traffic, instead of a ninety degree the way the civilians do. So, I did my forty-five and, on my forty-five, I did an aileron roll, which was definitely not allowed. I was feeling my oats and then, while I was horsing around, I ran into some T-28s with Navy markings from Pensacola and I chased them. So, then I came back to land and I said, "What the hell is that guy doing?" Somebody was landing in front of me, and he's doing his big slow turn and I'm following him all around to final. He lands, and I was only a few hundred feet off the ground and the stick went dead.

That meant I was stalling. I looked down on my air speed, I don't know, it was like ninety knots or something. I know I'm in a stall, and I made a mistake; I pushed the throttle to the firewall. I

had to get power, or I was going to crash into the trees. Well, it takes longer for the engine to catch. If I would have gone to fifty percent, let it catch, and then the firewall, it would have caught sooner for me. So, I did the only thing I could do with no power, and that is, I aimed the nose for the tree line. I thought about pulling up my gear but I decided not to, so I aimed for the tree line. I cleared the trees, I hit the runway and the engine finally caught. So, here I am, on the very edge of the pavement, but my tail is behind my wheels so the full force of the blast hits the ground and blows up. It looked like a tornado, such a cloud of dust, and they thought I did a desert landing, which means off the runway, but it wasn't. It's just that the engine didn't catch until then. So, after the graduation ceremony, one of the officers took me on the side and he asked me what had happened. I told him the whole truth, the aileron rolled, the T-28, Navy T-28s, and then the landing problem and he almost fainted. If I had crashed, it would have been their fault because nobody checked me out in the new landing pattern and everyone of those officers' careers would have been over. So, that was interesting. Then, when I took my plane to Davis Mothan for mothballs, I was being ferried back on a C-119 [Fairchild C-119 Flying Boxcar, a military transport aircraft], again, by ground pounders doing their four hours a month, and we were coming back over the Rockies. We lost an engine. Well, we're sitting in the back, three of us, and these two pilots are fighting over whether to turn east or west, because they have to get out of the Rockies in one direction or the other; you can't go north and south. You can only go east or west and the big fight was, were the higher peaks to the east or to the west? Because we were going to constantly loose altitude and they didn't know whether they could get off the Rockies. We listened to them argue, to me it seemed, what a minute, but we're losing altitude fast and once we lose enough, we aren't going to get out of there, no matter what. They can turn in either direction and we're going to crash. I put on my parachute and I went to the door. I said, "You guys have thirty seconds. If you don't decide which way to turn, I'm out the door," and they decided which way to turn. They turned east, which is the direction we wanted to go in, and we managed to clear the mountains. So, that was the third time, and then the fourth time was, well, actually, that was the fourth time. The third time was we took off with a low overcast. Well, what we didn't know was there was also a high overcast. That's a phenomenon where you get two cloud levels that are thousands of feet apart, but, they're both solid overcast. Well, what happened was we broke through the low overcast and the sun was setting on the overcast, not on the earth, but on the overcast, the low overcast, so there was this gorgeous sunset and all the colors and shadows. It was gorgeous and both of us were distracted and we went VFR [Visual Flights Rules], you can't fly a B-47 VFR. It can be dry, clear, unlimited visibility; you got to fly on instruments because your wings are behind you and you have no reference point to know which way the aircraft is going. Well, we were distracted. Well, we looked down at the instrument panel; we've red-lined it on airspeed. We're going down like a rock, in a dive, and the reason was, which is very common, the clouds were at an angle, but we were lined up with the angle of the clouds because we were off instruments. That was our visual reference and we thought we were level. We were actually in a dive, and a turn, and we were very lucky; we managed to pull it out without tearing it apart. So, that was a close call, too, because you know B-47 drops like a rock and, on top of that, the airspeed was way over the red line, which both made it hard to pull out, and, which was also putting, you know, excessive stress on the aircraft. So, those were fun incidents. You don't want to repeat them, but you learn from them. The way I met my wife is that she had met my squadron commander and his wife in England. His wife had opened up a little gift shop in Jacksonville, Arkansas, off the base, and she used to go to Dallas, Texas on shopping trips, buying trips for her store. They'd have an

exhibition, or something, and she'd go down there and she went to Nieman Marcus and she met my wife. So, she didn't have to get a hotel room whenever she went to Dallas; she stayed in my wife's apartment. My wife's father was Italian, her mother's family were French Jews and she was born in Bucharest, Romania. So, Nolan and Kathleen considered Manuela to be Jewish. Because I had a New York accent, they thought I was Jewish, and, so, the two of them decided we'd be perfect for each other. Neither of us was Jewish, but, anyway, they brought her up to the base the night we put on the floor show. Now, during the floor show I pretended I was drunk. Foster Brooks, or some guy, had that routine on television, in the old days, where he would pretend he was drunk and that was his shtick. Well, I had done it both ways and the squadron decided I should do the MC job as a drunk, that was funnier. So, I pretended I was drunk. Well, when the show was over, I got drunk; you know, to relieve the tension and everything, so I had a few, and Nolan is dancing with a girl and he comes up behind my chair. I had my back to the dance floor, at my table, and he introduces us. I don't get up, or anything, and say, "hi," and all and they leave. I didn't know anything that goes on behind us. Then, comes New Year's Eve. I was dating a buyer at the local department store in Little Rock. Every town had its own department store in those days, cities, anyway, and I was dating a buyer there. I called her to tell her what time I'd pick her up, and she said she wasn't feeling well, and so I said to her, "Well, look, if you're not feeling well, fine, don't worry about it, it's okay, you don't have to come," but she insisted she wanted to come. So, I drive into Little Rock; I pick her up we drive, I was with a finance officer and his date, who he eventually married, and we went to the Little Rock Country Club; talk about a tomb. I don't think they had anybody under the age of fifty there, you know, and it was stiff, not exactly what a young guy would consider a New Year's Eve party, right? So, we stayed there for a respectable time because we were with local girls, and then we said, "Let's go up to the base." We talked to the girls and they agreed, "Let's get the heck out of here." So, it was, I don't know, eleven o'clock, or so, we headed out to the base, it took us about a half hour, so we get there about eleven-thirty and we're drinking and eating, and whatever, and conversing and dancing. One minute to midnight, my date says she's sick and she has to go home. I said, "Okay, I'll see if I can get you a cab." "No," I have to drive her home. Well, I did a really rotten thing. I wasn't always a nice person. You got to get old to be nice. I didn't want to take her home you know at midnight on New Year's Eve. If she would have said you know, "I'd like to leave in fifteen minutes or something." So, my roommates, I was living off base at that time and I was living with a navigator and a finance officer, the three of us had a little ranch house, and, so, I got her together with the navigator. I get up and I leave the table. Well, it hits midnight while I'm right in the middle of the dance floor trying to cut over to the lounge. It was like V-shaped and in the front was the bar and lounge, straight out to the left was the dining room and then this wing was the dance floor and tables, and so on and so forth. So, I'm kissing all the girls "Happy New Year", and I get across the dance floor to the lounge, I don't know if you've ever been in a crowd that you can't get through and all of a sudden an aisle opens up? An aisle opened up, and at the end of the aisle sitting on a stool was the most beautiful woman I'd ever seen. I shot down the aisle and I kissed her "Happy New Year" and lo and behold sitting next to her is Kathleen Potter, my squadron commander's wife and she says, "I see I don't have to introduce you two." We were going to get married in September, we decided to move it up to June, we married March 11th. Now, what happened in between was that Kathleen and Nolan gave us an engagement party at the Officers' Club, a Valentine party. Then, we were told we were going TDY [temporary duty assignment] to Europe for six weeks for runway repair. Our runway was like ribbon candy, I mean, I'm amazed the planes didn't fall apart, so they had to fix

the runway. They wanted to replace it and they decided just to excavate and re-lay a runway. They didn't build a new one; they just leveled out the bumps and filled in the valleys. So, we only went on two weeks TDY but because it was six weeks, we decided to get married right away. So, we decided on a Thursday to get married. It meant getting the blood test, the license, and all of that. Well, I got my blood test, Manuela got a lawyer who got them to waive the three day requirement and get us a license. I got out there what, I got out there Friday, before closing time, and the lawyer took us to the courthouse and got us our license. Friday, Nieman Marcus gave my wife a wedding shower and altered her wedding dress the same day. Saturday morning, on the way to Scofield Church, I have to go to Nieman Marcus and pick up the wedding cake, which was made by Helen Corbit, the chef of Nieman Marcus restaurant, and we got married. We don't have any pictures, because her friend's daughter was taking the pictures and, for some reason, she didn't get any pictures at the church; we got pictures of the reception. We had the reception at her friend's house and we went to a motel in Fort Worth. I think it was the Western Inn. We had a one-night honeymoon. I went back to the base, she went back home. I had arranged for housing [but] because I wouldn't be there, she had to move in alone and gradually things began to come out. First of all, I didn't remember that I'd met her previously when Nolan introduced her to me. At that time, I had a mustache. Nolan issued an order to me to shave my mustache off. "It's a regulation mustache. I don't understand what you're doing." I wouldn't shave it off. He gave [me] a little time, he says, "Okay, you're being transferred to the 547th." I was in the 544th; 547th was the bad boy squadron. Then, actually, I didn't want to go, but I didn't believe him, so I went to Wing headquarters and they said, "Yes, we're cutting the orders for your transfer." I had a Saturday morning briefing. Before the briefing, I shaved off my mustache. Nolan was tickled pink. I was pissed off to beat the band. So, what happens is, on New Year's Eve Nolan threw a breakfast party at his house, after New Year's Eve, when I had kissed Manuela, and I went to that. They asked me to drive them to the train station. They were taking the Jacksonville car to the Cotton Bowl game; a real big thing, Arkansas/Texas. Okay, so, the town actually got a car for the people in that town out of Little Rock to Dallas. So, I drove them there, I got on the train, it was sitting there for a while until all the cars filled up with the Arkansas people, and they keep telling me to stay on the train. Finally, the train is rolling. I didn't have a toothbrush, I didn't have clothes. They wanted me to go to Dallas because of Manuela and I didn't know that. I finally jumped off the train when it was moving. I said, "I got to take your car back to the base, you know." I just didn't get it. So, she went home without me. My next alert tour, I show up at the gate and identified myself and they refused to admit me. I says, "You're going to screw up my crew. You know, I'm going to get court-martialed." They wouldn't let me in. I go back to my house in Jacksonville; standing at the front door is Manuela. My squadron commander had arranged to bring her up, and changed the alert schedule, so I didn't have alert duty. So, that was our first date. I thought that's really great of him to do something like that. Later, I learned that she had met me through a picture. I had been dating a show girl in Reno while I was at Stead. Well, it turned out she decided to retire from show business, so she was going to marry somebody, and it was either going to be a guy in Dallas, Texas that she knew, or me. I didn't know anything about this, of course. She shows up. I rented a motel room in Little Rock; there was nothing around the base in those days, it was woods, and I visited her a couple of times. I did not want to get involved. I did take her for a trip to Hot Springs for the day, I mean, I felt an obligation, and I kept using, you know, my military duty as an excuse for not seeing her. She must have stayed a week at least and then she, finally, left. So, I find out that Manuela had gone to a party in Dallas and she met a girl that said

she was either going to marry this guy at the party, or she was going to marry the guy in the picture and she shows my wife a picture. Now, Manuela didn't know it then. I didn't know anything about this until after we were married for years; it was my picture. That guy didn't offer to marry her so she came to Little Rock hoping I was going to ask her. So, we really got to meet through a picture first. Then, Nolan and Kathleen invited her up; Nolan introduced me. She didn't like me one bit, I didn't stand up when she was introduced, I had a mustache, I was too old for her; she didn't want anything to do with me. I didn't know this. She didn't really know I was the guy in the picture. So, then, they asked her to come up for the New Year's Eve, when there was going to be another party and we aren't going to be flying and she said, she declined. She had a date with some guy in Dallas for New Year's Eve. The guy comes to her apartment and said, "My mother's sick, we have to fly to California," and Manuela says, "Well, I'm sorry your mother is sick. I hope she'll be well, but I'm not getting on a plane with you." She called Kathleen, she said, "Would you still like me to come? I'll babysit the boys." They had five boys Kathleen and Nolan. [Kathleen replied], "No, no, you just come up. We're going to go to the officers' club." [Manuela said], "Well, I don't know if I can get a plane." The only plane that flew from Dallas to Little Rock was Braniff Airlines, which doesn't exist anymore. Manuela called, they had one flight left, with one cancellation. She flew to Little Rock, Nolan arranged to have her picked up at the airport, brought her out to the base, and we met again and it was love at first sight, except it was really third sight; the picture and the first introduction. So, I owe a lot to Kathleen and Nolan for that. We were married forty six years now. … Oh, McConnell. It was December 7, 1959, Pearl Harbor Day. It was my first day at McConnell. We had an orientation, you know, a bunch of lectures; settled into the [bachelor officers' quarters] and then, I think, there were about two dozen of us, and as I said, included some guys re-upped after Korea. I think it was a major, a major took all of us into this room, it was like a small aircraft hangar, it wasn't a Quonset hut, and in this room there were three bombs. Now, one was "Fat Man," [plutonium] which was dropped on Nagasaki, I believe, and "Little Boy" [uranium] which was dropped on Hiroshima, and a Mark 20 hydrogen bomb, and he told us about the weapons and then he said to all of us, "You're expected to kill five million people. If you can't do it, you have until seven o'clock in the morning to report to my office. You'll be reassigned, it will have no impact on your career." Now, we didn't know each other, we were from all over, so I don't know if anybody did that. I went back to my room, I didn't even eat supper that night, and I thought about it. Well, both my faith and patriotism carried me through. Now, I am not a neo-Christian such as we have today. I believe that in Genesis it said, "God gave man dominion over the earth and everything that is therein." In other words, I don't believe in praying to God to do it for me, I believe I have a responsibility on this Earth, and one of those responsibilities is to fight evil. Secondly, I never believed we would do it first, so I knew that if I had to do it, there was no United States; my family was dead, "Tough, they deserve it." So, you know, I just reported to class the next morning and went through the training. But it made a big impression on me, I guess, because of my religion, mainly. It's a big responsibility. I went to the National Association of Court Managers' Annual Conference at Albuquerque, New Mexico. I was president of the American Judges Association at the time and my responsibility was to make an appearance at all the Judiciary of the United States, when they had their meeting and so on and so forth, for the AJA. So, I took vacation time and went out to the conference in Albuquerque. Well, I'd heard that Kirkland Air Force Base, outside of Albuquerque, had an excellent museum. We had an afternoon off during the conference and I said to Manuela, "How about grabbing a bus, instead of renting a car, and going somewhere, how about hopping on a bus and going out to

Kirkland Air Force base and looking at the museum." Well, Manuela doesn't like museums, but for me, and I told her, you know, "We can look at the local neighborhoods and everything, and get to see the real city instead of just the hotel and the commercial district." So, we took a bus ride, just the regular local bus out to Kirkland Air Force Base. They had two stationary display aircraft outside the museum. We get off the bus, and we go in, and it's a series of three Quonset huts, end to end, and the first one is the gift shop and some displays, and all, and we browsed around and then when you go through the Quonset huts, there are two aisles so that there is a display on the right, a center display, and display on the left on the other side. Well, it turned out that Manuela was really fascinated. It was a good museum and she fell behind me, while we were walking because a lot of things were familiar to me, so, I didn't have to read the little cards and all. I was in the second Quonset hut and in the middle of the Quonset hut, there's an aisle crosses over between the two long aisles, and I reached that and I looked up and, you know, ten or twelve feet off the ground on the gurney, which is what they carried them in, is a Mark 20 hydrogen bomb and it was like getting hit with a bolt of lightning. I fell to the floor on my butt and I started crying and my wife thought I had a heart attack or something, so she came running down the aisle to me and asked me what was wrong and I regained my composure and I said to her, "Honey, that's what I used to carry," and that I said a prayer to thank God I never had to drop it. In Strategic Air Command our motto was "peace is our profession." It was all based on deterrence, that we had to be bigger, better, and faster than them, and we were, so they never took us on. During the Cuban missile crisis, it was really tough. When that started, it only lasted two weeks in civilian life. For us it lasted nine weeks. We were on special duty the whole time, one hundred percent of the Air Force Strategic Air Command on alert. We went to bases that were not SAC bases for the first time. We had to carry our firearms at all times. We had to carry our code books, and everything, at all times, and stay away from the other Air Force personnel and special military police guarding us and our planes, but when it started, I was in Africa at Nouasseur Air Force Base on alert duty. Well, naturally, we were on top alert, and we were in our barracks, and the klaxon horn, which was our alarm signal, went off. The signal was erratic. We didn't know why, we suspected sabotage, but, naturally, we all heard it and go to our aircraft because that's the launch signal. We rushed out to our aircraft, started up and we were taxiing to take off. I had a target at that time in the Soviet Union; you never knew what the other guys' targets were. Not one plane took off. Forget these Hollywood movies. We got our coded message; we deciphered it, and we were recalled. Nobody actually took off. It happened so quickly. It was a false alarm. There wasn't a single malfunction on any aircraft. There wasn't a crew member that didn't respond exactly the way he was supposed to respond. I do know there was a major who messed his pants and, I think, some of the guys cried. I didn't; I was just too busy, it wasn't because I was heroic, or anything, and, see the problem was, we all thought our families were dead. So, we thought there was no USA anymore. But, fortunately, it didn't happen and it blew over, but that was for the military, especially the Navy and the Air Force and I would suspect for the Army in places like Europe and Korea, that was really a pucker time and the earth is very lucky that it didn't come to be, because Khrushchev was a maniac. He could have done it; it came pretty darn close. Of course, you got to understand, we didn't win. We didn't have a nuclear war in that sense we won, but we didn't win. We agreed to withdraw our ICBMs [intercontinental ballistic missiles] from Turkey and other places. Some people would like to minimize the concessions, but they were face saving concessions for Khrushchev, as you know he didn't survive long after anyway, but face saving measures that Khrushchev could give to the *Politburo* and definitely things that we gave up on our side. All in all, I would say it was a

fair deal, but it wasn't a win, and I think it was very fortunate, unlike the depiction in the movie [*Thirteen Days*], that Curt LeMay was there to put the president's feet to the fire, because once those missiles became operational in Cuba, it would have completely changed the course of the Cold War. Once they're operational, there's nothing we could have done, because you couldn't have taken that risk to the civilian population of having those things fired. You had to nip it in the bud and, eventually, that did happen.

SI: The false alarms were at the beginning of the crisis?

MK: At the beginning of the crisis, yeah. We knew we were on DEFCON 2 [expectation of imminent attack] or whatever it was, our top alert status, and that we were on the verge of a nuclear war. The B-52s had already, they were on airborne alert. They didn't even land. They stayed in the air, with constant aerial refueling, and in a large holding pattern three miles off the Russian border. We were, again, on ground alert because we didn't have the aerial endurance that a
B-52 had, so they stayed in the air and were the most visible, and we were moved to forward bases. We changed our call sign everyday and did all we could to confuse them about where we were. So, part of the Cuban Missile Crisis I spent in Africa and part of it I spent in the States. I don't remember the names of the bases, they hopped us around. Every week we'd be at a different base, and that went on for several weeks. I did get one visit with my family during the several weeks of the Cuban Missile Crisis for us. I was able to celebrate my son's first birthday at the Officers' Club. We were only there, I think, an hour, passing through, and we were allowed to see our families at the clubs, as long as the crew all stayed together and so we had a birthday party for his first birthday at the Officers' Club, and then we went back out to the flight line and flew to another base, but that was nice. Another one of the reasons we got out of the Air Force is when my wife would go out with my son and he would say, "Daddy," and point to anybody that had a flight suit on, male that is, [that] had a uniform on and that hurt her.

SI: Were you only in North Africa for the crisis or were you stationed over there?

MK: No, we had a thing called "reflex" and we would go over there for a month, and we'd be on alert for one week, or two weeks, have a week off, because it was twenty-four hour duty, we'd have a week off and then we'd have the other week, or two weeks, on the other side of that, so it was a month with three weeks on, twenty-four hour, seven-day-a-week duty, and the in-between week, you could go sightseeing, or anything. But it was the Algerian War at that time and it wasn't safe for military people to go anywhere, so the only R&R we did was to Spain. You couldn't go around North Africa safely, so we couldn't go sightseeing in Morocco or Tunisia. We would just hop a plane and spend a few days in Madrid, or somewhere, and then come back.

SI: So, when you were on the twenty-four hour duty, would you be on the ground or would they send the planes up?

MK: No, no, because we didn't have the range … we were always on ground alert. We would be in Little Rock, as I said, we'd be in that underground facility and spend two weeks there. In North Africa, we just had Quonset huts, but we were always on the ground, but always ready to take off immediately. You could never separate crew members. We had to be in the same

building at all times. For instance, it was my practice, and it still is, when I travel to any city, I want to go to a church in that city and I did that even in Casablanca. I went to a Catholic Cathedral in Casablanca and I went there to pray, and we had a base chapel where I would go to pray everyday, and my crew, nice guys, they were nice enough to go with me because we could never separate. So, even though they had no motivation to go, they'd go with me. I would just say a prayer, a few minutes, and then we'd go back to the barracks.

SI: How large was the crew?

MK: Three, aircraft commander, pilot, and navigator. Navigators had the toughest job because the way the aircraft was designed they had to eject down. When I was at Little Rock, one of the pilots had his flight physical and then took off; died of a heart attack on take off. In that case, the whole crew was lost. If you see a modern airliner and they take off [with a quick ascent]. We took off [differently], very slow ascent, much smaller engines than they have. If they hadn't cut up and crushed the B-47s, they could still be using them, putting the modern engines on them and the modern electronics. So, that crew was lost, but there was an incident. A buddy of mine was involved in an EWO [Emergency War Operations] exercise with the NORAD [North American Aerospace Defense Command] and the Canadians, and he was in the backseat when a Canadian 102 collided with their aircraft and it tore off the rudder and the vertical tail plane, so they had no tail, and the plane went into a violent spin. The aircraft commander said he turned on the alarm, which means eject. He says "Eject, eject, eject," three times on the radio and also hits an alarm switch. Unfortunately, he ejected first and I'll explain why they knew that. The navigator never got out; he was killed. My buddy did not eject, but, apparently, he either didn't have his lap belt fastened, or he managed to get it open and he was thrown out of the airplane. Now, he would have been killed by the tail ordinarily but there was no tail, so he survived. The pilot in the front seat survived, but he lost, he was court-martialed and he was taken off flying duty. Ended up being a missionary in Nicaragua. Could have been pure religion, could have been CIA [Central Intelligence Agency], I don't know which. He and his family were never heard of again. They were good people. Probably what happened was when they lost the tail and went into the spin, and the pilot said so, he could barely eject himself because of the centrifugal forces on the body. In order to eject, you have to pull up a lever, which is a circular lever that has a trigger in it. That arms the trigger and then you have to pull the trigger. When you're undergoing several Gs of force, that is a very difficult thing to do. My buddy couldn't even do it, he couldn't eject. If he hadn't been thrown out by an oscillation of the plane, he would have been lost, too. The only one who ejected was the pilot in the front seat and he got court marshaled for living. Probably, maybe, he didn't hit the alarm switch or say the alert things, but anyway, he paid the price. My buddy was married, his wife had a baby, they decided to get out of the Air Force after the accident, he didn't fly B-52s anymore. He flew KC-97 tankers [Boeing KC-97 Stratotanker, strategic tanker aircraft] and he decided to get out of the Air Force. So, he had a one-month-old child, he was being discharged, and his wife flew to New York to find them a place to live. She was in a civilian airliner that crashed and she was killed. Not everybody is as lucky as me in this world. There's a lot of tragedy and it doesn't all happen on the battlefield, it happens in ordinary life, just like the murder and kidnappings and rapes you see on the seven o'clock news. Why that person has to be the one, who knows, but it could happen to anybody ,but it doesn't, it happens to that person. Part of the mystery of life.

SI: Did you always have the same crew members or was it switched around?

MK: No, unfortunately that was a sad part of my career. The B-47 was being phased out, even as I was training for the B-47. B-52s were going to stay but the B-47s were going to go and that's because they had more and more missiles and because the B-47 had the shorter range. You see, to get to our targets, we would have to have an aerial refueling; B-52s didn't, but what was never spoken about is that there would be no aerial refueling coming back. The tankers would all be expended, either destroyed or their bases destroyed, or whatever, so they would never be able to come back for us. What they told us and what we had on our maps were secret airstrips in the Middle East, Afghanistan. Well, you know, how popular an American pilot would be in Afghanistan back then let alone now, and fuel stores, JP4 [jet propellant four] in five- gallon drums. We were supposed to somehow get that five-gallon drum up on top of a wing twenty feet off the ground, open the valves and everything, and using five-gallon cans fill the fuel tanks of a B-47 so that we could fly home. I don't know if there were such fields. I doubt it very much. We were never taught how to open the fuel valves. We were never taught how to refuel. What kind of equipment would we have had to move that JP4 around? Nothing that we knew of, so we felt it was a fiction and that it was a one way mission, just that. Everybody understood that but nobody said it. B-52s wouldn't get back either because they need refueling to come back, so for the Strategic Air Command that was strictly *Banzai*. I guess that maybe went through some guys minds, too, when we had that false launch signal at Nouasseur, not only were their families and the USA gone, but we were gone because we weren't going to ever make it back. But I really never thought about it until after I was out of the service.

SI: What would you guys talk about? Did you talk about either the realities of a mission or as you said, this was unspoken? What would happen after the mission was over?

MK: Well, missions were only discussed at briefing and debriefing, because it would be a different mission every time, different target every time, different maps, and everything else every time, and, like I say, we were at one table, another crew was at a different table. We had no idea what their mission was, or their target was. There was no need to know, so, even amongst ourselves that was always secret. What we talked about was family, sports; there were always the card players on alert. When I was at Hunter Air Force Base in Savanna the last year, I had a navigator … Oh, we were talking about crews, was it always the same crew? Because the B-47s were being phased out, there was a constant turnover on personnel. I must have flown with, I think, at Little Rock I was on three different crews and at Hunter I was on at least two different crews, because the personnel kept changing, guys were being transferred, guys were getting out and so on. One of my navigators when I was, yeah, at Savanna, right, because I remember his card games in Africa. He was what they called in the trade a "card counter". He could memorize the entire deck. So, he always knew from the cards dealt, what his odds were for a certain card. He always won. He was also a bridge master and, when he retired, he was going to become bridge tournament judge. That was what he was going to do. What I remember very distinctly is I never played, I just watched for entertainment. I didn't say anything, I wasn't a *kibitzer*. I kept my mouth shut, but I used to watch him, and they'd play for hours and when they'd quit, this guy would say, "How much did you lose?" [The response was], "Ah, nothing much. I broke even, I won a little bit." He always broke even. There was one guy who I flew with, he always won. He, the other pilot on our crew, he always won. He used to lose his shirt;

he was a terrible poker player. But what the navigator did, gee, I wish I remembered the guy's name, nice guy, while he's playing, he would always skim his winnings off the table, not so anybody else would notice. I would notice because I was studying him and he'd pull the money down into his lap and in a flight suit you got lots of zippered pockets and he'd put the money in there. So, he never had more than his original poke on the table. He wasn't one of the guys that chatted, didn't say much, had no facial expression. Then, he'd come back to the room and I'd pretend I was asleep and I'd hear all these coins. He had coins in every pocket, he was emptying every pocket and here's this pile of money, paper, too, on his bed. It was a funny ritual. I got a real big kick out of that, that he took them all; he took them all.

ML: Did you ever talk politics?

MK: No. No, a lot of guys didn't even vote in those days. I found them to be apolitical. I was always political. I always voted absentee ballot. Another one of the things that encouraged me to leave the Air Force was, in the Strategic Air Command, we got intelligence briefings and they were motivational briefings. I mean, you ask somebody to kill five million people you got to motivate him a little bit. So, we got intelligence briefings … that weren't strictly need to know. They were motivational briefings and, I guess, you'd call them political, cultural, social, intelligence as opposed to merely hard, military intelligence. We got an order from the Commander In Chief; we could no longer, he cancelled the intelligence briefings, and we could no longer refer to the Soviet Union as the enemy, and I said, "Up yours, John Kennedy. You go kill those five million people. I won't kill people who aren't the enemy." I think that was the final straw that convinced me to get out.

ML: So, you noticed the difference in motivational propaganda from when the administration to change over to Democratic?

MK: Well, what was he doing, incorporating the military into the State Department? I don't know what his motivation was. Was it because of the Cuban Missile crisis? I don't know, but I knew I wasn't willing to kill people who aren't our enemy and I felt that if that's the way he felt, he should do it himself. I wasn't going to do it for him.

SI: Could you see General LeMay's impact on the Strategic Air Command when you were in it?

MK: Okay. I disagreed with World War II General LeMay. I disagreed with all of them. I don't believe the mass bombings on the civilian population really shortened the war by one day. There are people who can honestly and legitimately rebut that, you know, war production and all that sort of thing being considered. I thought Dresden was sinful, but I love my country, but I don't think it's perfect. It's just a human country run by human beings, so it's not perfect. A lot of mistakes were made in World War II. Nobody got impeached for it. The press didn't talk about it. Ernie Pyle didn't talk about it. War is hell, and hell isn't nice, so a lot of un-nice things happened, but I didn't think the mass bombings of the cities were justified, or fruitful, and naturally, originally when I was in Strategic Air Command, the national policy was deterrence. We had to be bigger, faster than them. Later, after, and this was a change caused by the Cuban Missile Crisis, the national policy became Mutual Assured Destruction, MAD, a very appropriate acronym. It was the full intention if we did strike, not only to wipe off the face of the earth every

military target, but to wipe off the earth any two bricks on top of each other in the Soviet Union. Total destruction, not merely military targets, or political infrastructure and communications. Originally, that was the goal. But, of course, if you had as a military target Moscow, you're going to kill five million people because that was the population of Moscow, and you weren't using a needle to hit the target, you were using a weapon of mass destruction.

SI: I was thinking more of like things I've heard about General LeMay like his intensity, a lot of training…

MK: Very intense.

SI: What about that? Did that trickle down?

MK: I can easily say that in a way, he was a crazy man, okay, but people say that about MacArthur and MacArthur had the least casualties of everybody in the war. He was great, LeMay was great, he was crazy, but he was great. Yeah, he did those crazy things like landing in a plane and faking them into letting his plane land there, when they shouldn't allowed it, as you saw in the movie *Strategic Air Command* with Jimmy Stewart, an excellent film, very realistic. Yeah, I learned afterward why the Strategic Air Command was the crème and that was everything was discipline. Like I say, we got a false launch, not one crew member failed to do what he had to do when he had to do it. The ground crews had everything on those planes operational. We didn't have the failure of an alternator, a generator, a switch, a warning light, nothing. Everything was working perfectly, but it takes total discipline. We didn't sit on alert and play cards. We could in the evening, but, during the day, we were in class, we were being instructed; we were taking written exams. We worked and the day started at seven in the morning and ended at six o'clock at night. So, it was necessary, like Patton. Patton would have been a failure as a civilian, but he was the right man, in the right place, at the right time, and even though he was politically unacceptable to the civilian politicians and the military politicians, he was the best in Europe. He was the best; there was nobody better than him. Just like in the Pacific, there was nobody better than MacArthur. Great people have to be egomaniacs. They have to be eccentrics if not, you know. Rich people are eccentrics or powerful people and the rest of us are insane. They have to be. They have to be compulsive obsessives about some particular goal in order to do what they did. Churchill had to do that, he was an eccentric, he was unpopular. They only wanted him during the war. He was in politics, but not particularly successful before the war, and he was kicked out of the job right after the war, but he was the right man for the war. The key to God's success is diversity. Not only did we have all these species and genders and everything else in Creation, even within the human race, at all times under all conditions, there is a right person for that time, that place, and those events. I used to kid with my brother, my brother is over four hundred pounds, you'll note I'm stout. I used to kid him that the reason God created fat people was that in the event of the famine the skinny people would have something to eat and, as you know, if you've watched the History Channel there's a whole history of cannibalism in the human race and sometimes as a result of emerging conditions not cultural conditions or even economic or food conditions. One day, he gave me a rejoinder that he had thought up and that is, no, I apologize, I used to say we were fat so we would survive a drought or a famine by living off our fat and he's the one that eventually came back with the rejoinder, "No, he made us fat, so that the skinny people could eat us during

the famine." It made me think this, that God created human beings like snowflakes, so there would be the right snowflake at every particular time, place, and event. That's the success of the human race. We could be in a given situation, you can be a genius, when outside of that situation, you might be a dolt, and, I think, it's part of what do they call it today? Intelligent design…

SI: Can you discuss your life after getting out of the military?

MK: We touched on the five years of law school. While I was in law school I joined the Metuchen Republican Club. I was elected president of Metuchen Republican Club. I won a primary, against opposition, to be the Republican candidate for the New Jersey Assembly. I was elected and I only served one term because the Democrats got themselves back together again by the time I ran for reelection. As you know, Middlesex County is a distinctly Democratic County. But it was a very educational experience. I did sponsor as prime sponsor five bills that were enacted into law. I got nice editorials from the *Home News* [*Tribune*] and WCTC [radio station].

SI: What were the years of your term?

MK: I was elected in November of 1969, inaugurated January 20th of '70, and honorably, I hope honorably, discharged January 20th of '72, inauguration day. I really didn't want to win again. I believe in compromise, but I don't believe in hypocrisy. It's very difficult to be in politics. Guys like [Frank] Lautenberg and [Tom] Kean, [Christine Todd] Whitman, [Jon] Corzine, they're independently wealthy so they can pretty much survive with their own will intact. A great many politicians are really just employees of a patron. Politics is all about money today. Frankly, I don't think we have a democracy anymore. I don't think it's the vote that determines the winner, I think it's the money that determines the winner, and, also, determines what that person is going to do over the course of their term. It has nothing to do with the bull crap they give us during the campaign. During the campaign, they say what they think most of the people want to hear. After they're elected, they do what their patrons ask them to do. I'm very concerned as a poli sci student. I'm very concerned about the state of democracy in the United States. I believe it's been prostituted and diluted incredibly.

SI: You were working at Prudential when you were going to law school.

MK: Law school, yes. One day at work, and that's where I was when JFK was assassinated [November 22, 1963]. They had to send everybody home because the women were all hysterical and plenty of guys were crying, too. I wasn't a fan of his, but I thought it was a terrible thing of course. I was drafting amendments to contracts, that's how you start out. One day, I was the only newcomer and I was the first college graduate, it had been a high school graduate job up until then, they decided to upgrade the job. I was the first college graduate hired for group annuity contracts. That means pensions and profit sharing plan contracts, group not individual, Teamsters' pension plans, GM [General Motors] pension plans, so whenever they changed a contract, I drafted the amendments to the contract, along with several other people doing the same thing. Now, they were all high school, they weren't all high school graduates, I lied. There were some college graduates, it was a mixed bag. But, anyways, one day the guys that had been there called me over and formed a group at one of the desks, and I felt intimidated immediately.

It was kind of strange to sort of call a union meeting in the middle of the work space, during working hours, out of the clear blue like that, and with everybody together and me alone being invited over. So, what was I told? I was told to take off my jacket, roll up my sleeves, and work slower. Holy cow, I was shocked. You know, I didn't know anything was going on *sotto voce* [Italian for "under voice"] amongst my co-workers, or anything. I said, "Jesus, how do I get out of this?" because I didn't want to do any of those things. So, what I said was, "Fellows, please forgive me, you know, I just got out of the military, I'm used to being in uniform and I feel like I'm undressed if I don't have my jacket on and my tie tight. But I'll try to change." I said, "And what I can do is I'll try to work slower from now on." I didn't do any of those things. Over a series of several promotions, I was promoted over all of them and I was only there for five years. So, that military discipline, again, stood me in great stead. It was a race between entering private practice and being made an officer of the Prudential and if I were made an officer, that would have meant giving up my legal career and I wasn't going to do that. Next.

SI: I wanted to know where you went after the Prudential. Did you go into private practice?

MK: I went into private practice with a Republican lawyer with a strong family name associated with the law. After I saw him come in and vomit before every trial, I decided I wasn't going to stay there. It was a one-man firm and me. I ended up doing almost all the paperwork. I met another young Turk Republican who invited me to go into partnership with him. I was just an employee of this older attorney, and, so I went into partnership with him so we were a two-man office and then we merged with another Republican lawyer in a two man firm. It was him and an associate, the senior partner had died, and then the youngster was made a partner too. I became a judge and that young guy became a judge. He's retired now, too. So, we got two judges out of the firm. One partner is still working and one is retired to Florida. It was a general practice. I did semi-specialized, on occasion, depending on the volume of work. I specialized in appellate practice for a while, did all the appellate work for the firm. There was a time I did all the matrimonial work for the firm. I was involved in politics as part of the firm policy. I was with the firm while I served in the legislature. Funny thing is, if I had stayed with Prudential and been elected to office, the Prudential would have been my oyster because they would have taken very good care of me. I didn't think of it that far in advance, or anything, and I often wondered, if I hadn't gone to law school and I had gone with GE [General Electric] as head of military procurement, what that might have led to? I think to a dead end, because my job, according to the president of General Electric, was to move purchasing out of the green eyeshade era. Now, you associate that with bookkeepers and accountants, green eyeshades. In the old days, they used to shield their eyes with a visor, not a cap, but a visor over their eyes, and it was green cellulose, so that's the green eyeshade thing. But I could see where very shortly, even if I had succeeded and really attained the position after those six months and managed to hang on to it, we went into the electronic age. I was not prepared for the electronic age. There would have been somebody much better than I suited for that. Now, whether I would have been promoted up, or up and out, or whether I would have just been kicked out, I don't know; I can only speculate, but I've always felt God has been very good to me, I've had a lot of good luck, and probably it would have been the wrong thing to do, even though it would have been a very remunerative thing to do. So, I actually got moved from the Washington Street building and the operational department into the corporate home office building, where the executives of our department worked and a small working staff, you know, secretaries, typists and clerks. And

they were asking me, you know, "What do you want to do, Marty? Are you going to be a lawyer or do you want to go on into the field?" I would have been on the spot very shortly. So, I didn't really prepare well for going out into practice. It just never occurred to me to go with a big firm and be an employee. I wanted to be a hands-on guy, you know, and when it's just one guy and you even though you're the employee, you're a hands-on guy, as I was. The reason I left that lawyer is because my first trial was Judge John C. Demos, who became the assignment judge of Middlesex County, and died prematurely of cancer. The judge who interviewed [me] when I was nominated for judgeship, he called me into chambers and told me it wouldn't be good for my career. "Don't stay with that lawyer. He wasn't good." So, that's when I decided to go with the other guy, and, after I got out of the legislature, I was asked to become the general attorney. That's attorney general transposed, because it's an independent authority, not really a part of the State government. [I was] general attorney for the New Jersey Highway Authority, which at that time operated the Garden State Parkway and the Garden State Art Center, not a PNC [Financial Corporation] Art Center, and that was a fun job because it was a corporate-type job and I got to do what I call, preventive law. The first six months, I just did things the way they were done in the past and sized everything up, staff, procedures, and all of that. Got to know everybody, win their confidence, and then I started making changes, and what I did was I systemized the office. It had just grown by appreciation and there weren't, you know, a lot of systems application in the department. So, I did that. I upgraded our safety engineer. I got him a CPR [cardiopulmonary resuscitation] dummy, a Heimlich Maneuver dummy. I sent him out into the field to train people. I set up a defensive driving course, anybody that had an accident had to take a defensive driving course with our safety engineer, because that was within my law department. Of course, all the benefit plans and all of that were administered there. We maintained the records of the Authority minutes and resolutions and what I did was, after six months of getting to know everybody, I'd have a little confab with the head of each department, and what I did was asked them what problems they had, legal problems, in the course of their career, and they would tell me their problems and I would amend all the contracts and license agreements to try to cover their problems where I could legally do it. There are certain things you can't do, like, I couldn't change the insurance clauses the way I wanted because you couldn't get insurance if the clause said that you know, to make our insurance cheaper and so on. I discovered that our insurance defense attorneys were not in pleading in our law suits, they were not in pleading the Tort Claims Act, although we were expressly included in the Tort Claims Act in New Jersey, and, therefore, they were settling every case so anybody who sued the Highway Authority got money. So, I had to disabuse them of their ignorance and I pointed out that we were not an individual policy holder; we were a major corporation giving them a very big premium and we expected more for our money, and, after that, they didn't pay on any cases, we won every case except, we settled one case. A couple were driving down the Parkway along the southern part, it had been a snow day the day before. As they approached an overpass, the girl took off her glasses. A lump of snow embedded with gravel fell off the overpass, went through the windshield, and into her eyes, and she was blinded, a young woman. We had no liability. We built the overpasses, but they were serviced by the State, County or Municipality, whichever the appropriate jurisdiction was, so we had absolutely no liability, but, I agreed with the defense attorney, as a matter of compassion, to give her a hundred thousand dollars, but once I straightened them out on the law and everything we won everything, even a contract case with the *Star Ledger*. So, I enjoyed that a lot. Preventive law I call it; head them off at the pass. I systemized the collection system. A lot of people don't realize if you crash on the Parkway and destroy any Parkway property,

including guard rails and that sort of thing, you have to pay for that. But that was mainly a fight between me and the insurance companies, you know, very seldom were the principals that were involved. The amounts never justified litigation and it was just a matter of convincing them that what I was telling them the cost was, was fair and reasonable.

SI: Well, I do not want to take up anymore of your time today because it is getting close to four o'clock.

MK: All right, so you actually want to see me another time? I was no hero and I was not in combat, I mean, most of the stuff we've been talking about has been fun for me, but I don't really consider it military history, but I'll be willing to give you as much time as you want.

SI: Well, you can see now the mix of military history and social history and personal history.

MK: Well, I would consider my interview mostly bull, but, you know, what do you want to call it, reminiscing.

SI: Well, that is what we are asking you to do.

MK: I've seen the CD, the DVD, so I know some guys really have something important to say, but I appreciate your interest and, again, I'll give you as much time as you want.

SI: Sure. Well, for now, thank you very much. This concludes our interview with Judge Kravarik on October 31, 2007. Thank you very much.

----------END OF INTERVIEW----------

Reviewed by David Fulvio 5/2/08
Reviewed by Sandra Stewart Holyoak 7/4/08
Reviewed by Greg Flynn 9/18/09
Reviewed by Martin E. Kravarik 3/10/10