PENN LAW ORAL LEGAL HISTORY PROJECT

INTERVIEW OF ROBERT C. SHEEHAN, ESQ.,
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Four Times Square
New York, New York 10036-6522

by Daniel Yunger

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(Time noted: 4:15 p.m.)

MR. YUNGER: I'm Daniel Yunger. I'm here with Mr. Bob Sheehan. I'll be interviewing him for the Penn Law Oral Legal History Project, and I want to thank you, Mr. Sheehan, on behalf of myself and the school. They were really excited to know that I was coming down here to speak with you.

MR. SHEEHAN: That's great. Shall I call you Daniel or Dan?

MR. YUNGER: You can call me Daniel.

MR. SHEEHAN: Daniel, great.

MR. YUNGER: I have a series of questions.

MR. SHEEHAN: Most people around here in the law firm refer to one another by their first names.

MR. YUNGER: If you like, I can refer to you by Bob or Robert.

MR. SHEEHAN: Whichever. I think you'll probably feel more comfortable with Mr. Sheehan, but --

MR. YUNGER: Probably till I get
here.

MR. SHEEHAN: Feel free, once you're here -- and Daniel is joining us next year -- you know, you should feel free to call everybody around here by their first names.

MR. YUNGER: Thank you very much.

I clustered the questions into a series of different categories ranging from your childhood to your collegial and law school years.

MR. SHEEHAN: Right.

MR. YUNGER: And into to your experience here at Skadden and also the Skadden Public Interest Fellowships and those kind of situations.

MR. SHEEHAN: Sure.

MR. YUNGER: So let's start out with your childhood and your family and early education.

Where were you born?

MR. SHEEHAN: Well, I was born and raised on Long Island, literally, the hospital was in Manhattan, my parents,
having moved out of Manhattan in the late 30's to Massapequa, Long Island, and I was born there in 1944 and raised there and really didn't move until I got married while I was in law school.

MR. YUNGER: So you were raised your entire life pretty much on Long Island?

MR. SHEEHAN: In Massepequa, on Long Island, and I commuted, though, to high school here in the city. It was quite a trek.

MR. YUNGER: Long Island Railroad?

MR. SHEEHAN: Yes, indeed. Long Island Railroad, about an hour and 45 minutes on the way in and two hours -- because I ran track three seasons -- on the way out. So that affected my life mostly when I came to work in New York City, but I never commuted again. I live in the City.

MR. YUNGER: Massapequa, Massapequa Park, Lyndenhurst, Copague, Babylon --
MR. SHEEHAN: You got it slightly off. It's actually Rockville Center, Baldwin, Freeport, Merrick, Belmore, Wantagh, Seaford, Massepequa, Massepequa Park, where I was, Amityville, where I went to school --

MR. YUNGER: Copague.

MR. SHEEHAN: -- and was taught taught by the nuns, from -- the Dominican nuns, from kindergarten through eighth grade, and then the next towns are Copague, Lyndenhurst, and Babylon and points east.

MR. YUNGER: That's right. I'm from Lido Beach myself. That's why I know Long Island Railroad.

MR. SHEEHAN: Yes.

MR. YUNGER: Do you have any siblings?

MR. SHEEHAN: Two brothers, one two years older, one two years younger, both of whom also commuted to the city to Jesuit high schools.

MR. YUNGER: Are they lawyers now as well?
MR. SHEEHAN: No, neither. I'm the only lawyer in the crew. Married my high school sweetheart, met her when she was 15 and I was 16, and I went up to another Jesuit school. I went from Regis High School, which was Jesuit in the city. They're sort of the start up there, the secondary school system in the country, to Boston College, another Jesuit school, and then went down to Penn.

MR. YUNGER: How was it like going to parochial school?

MR. SHEEHAN: You know, it's what I knew. They were very good in teaching you the basics of writing and -- reading and writing, so I could write decently well if -- when I got out of -- even by the time I got out of grammar school.

MR. YUNGER: Did you embrace that kind of strict upbringing and that people often associate with parochial school?

MR. SHEEHAN: Oh, no, it was not particularly strict in terms of the nuns,
and my parents were always on the liberal side, in every sense of the word, so it was not a very strict upbringing.

MR. YUNGER: Where are your parents from originally?

MR. SHEEHAN: Manhattan, my father from the East 80's, in Manhattan, and he went to local, similarly, Catholic schools here and Regis High School shortly after it opened. My mother went to high school here in the city, graduated actually when she just turned 15. They used to push kids ahead in those days, had zero money, her father having died three months before she was born, leaving two older brothers, herself and an Irish seamstress, so she had it relatively rough until she went out and started work.

MR. YUNGER: I assume your ancestry is from Ireland?

MR. SHEEHAN: Yes. Some three-quarters of it, not all on my father's side, and my mother's side some came from Shleswickholmstein. Having lost to Bismark in his consolidation efforts,
they got the hell out, three brothers, thought the better way was not to debate with the winners, but to leave, and so part of the family is from there.

MR. YUNGER: How does the European ancestry still have an affect on you and how you raise your children? Is it preeminent at all?

MR. SHEEHAN: I can't imagine. No, my father -- both my father's father was born here, my father's mother came over at age ten from Ireland. There was no obvious sense of really being close to being Ire -- there was more sense now. Sort of I go back there, last four years, play golf with my sons and my brother. It wasn't a very Irish family in that kind of sense. It was -- there was very little connection to being Irish from my father's side. My mother's side, her mother was Irish on her side but her father, as I said, was from Shleswickholstein, that side of the family. So there wasn't -- it was pretty ecumenical. It was -- and my friends were mostly kids from Catholic
school, as I grew up, because I went to both Catholic grammar school and Catholic high school and the neighborhood was probably 75 percent Catholic where I grew up in Massepequa.

MR. YUNGER: Were you a good student?

MR. SHEEHAN: Yeah, sure. Well, I was -- in grammar school, certainly. We had 60 kids in our eighth grade class and I think I was first of the 60 from -- I just moved stuff from my -- around in the house from what we took from my mother's house when she died and I -- it's funny, I looked through some records, including what the record was of graduating grammar school. Within the last year or so I saw. And it was cute.

High school, I was a good student, but this was an extremely strong class of people, so full scholarship school, drew from eight million population around from whatever the Catholic percentage, and it was the school to go to, because it was free, and it also had
the reputation for being the best, so Regis High School is very strong, still is today.

MR. YOUNGER: Uh-hum.

MR. SHEEHAN: It is particularly strong then. And went to Boston College, which isn't, frankly -- maybe it is now, but then wasn't as good as my high school --

MR. YOUNGER: Were you very --

MR. SHEEHAN: -- in terms of the average quality of the kids, average child who was there.

MR. YOUNGER: If a teacher sent a progress report home to the Sheehan household, what would it have said? How was your interaction with the other children, with the students, with the teachers?

MR. SHEEHAN: I was always polite, very polite. This was -- this came from both my parents, but -- so I was never a problem kid for the teachers, but I was also the captain of this, the captain of that, of the informal teams,
sports teams, so I was one of the "guys," and the girls liked me too in the sense of I was not somebody who beat up on the girls, so I was fully accepted in both sides of the aisle. In high school, it's an all male situation, but I was talking about grammar school. I was never a kid who gave problems to those in authority.

MR. YUNGER: So in the mid 60's, you decide to leave Long Island and to move up to Boston, to Boston College?

MR. SHEEHAN: It wasn't mid 60's.

MR. YUNGER: Early 60's?

MR. SHEEHAN: This is '62 and there was a huge difference between the beginning and late of that decade, in terms of one's view towards authority and because of the war, very, very big difference between -- and after Kennedy was killed in '63.

MR. YUNGER: What was your motivation?

MR. SHEEHAN: My older brother went there.
MR. YUNGER: Your older brother had gone to Boston?

MR. SHEEHAN: Was going to go to Georgetown actually. In those days, when you got out of Regis, they would not let you go to a non-Catholic school. They would not send up your grades, much less your recommendations. I think that violated the law. They came up and apologized to us at the end of first or year of -- maybe it was early second year -- of college to say they'd changed their policy, and that they were going to let people apply and -- to wherever they felt like applying.

MR. YUNGER: So in the early 60's, you ventured up to Boston, to one of my old stomping grounds, because I went to Brandeis, right down Route 28 there, B.C. You started in the early 60's, ended in the mid 60's?

MR. SHEEHAN: Yup, '66.

MR. YUNGER: Can you speak a little bit about how politically and socially active Boston was and how that
maybe affected your education.

MR. SHEEHAN: I can't speak to Boston overall, because Brandeis, Tufts and Harvard certainly had a more liberal feel to the places and -- in many ways, and certainly politically, and I was -- I was very different, not that I was as compared with those three schools very much left of probably the center of their political spectrum, but from where I came out of Catholic grammar school, I was decidedly left of center at Catholic high school. So I was politically much more interested in the war in Vietnam and opposition to it than virtually any of my classmates. And so I -- I was in general, from my father and mother, but both of them interested in the political affairs from the time I was -- first thing I remember ever seeing on T.V. was the Army-McArthur hearings when I got home from school and my mother nearly got tossed from the guild, which is a Catholic organization, because she opposed to McCarthy, and was known to be such, and
that was almost too much to bear for the
local people, so --

MR. YUNGER: Were you drafted?

MR. SHEEHAN: No. I had a
problem with my back, which I -- I
attributed really to an injury when I was
a kid, but when I was in law school, my
wife -- I got married between second and
third year of school -- said go down to
the Penn medical, find out what's wrong
with your back, because my -- it didn't
bother me on a continuous basis, but I
knew there was something wrong with my
back, and had been for years and years,
but I ran track, three seasons, so it
wasn't terrible, but I would have a
problem with mild and gradual paralysis of
my lower back if I pulled on something,
like in the form of raking leaves; or
literally what I couldn't do, I couldn't
walk up a snowy hill when everybody else
could in college. I had to take a long
way around to get to the dorm. So I
checked it out, and, who knows, and the
doctors down there said I had spinal
alesthesia, to which I found was
something that the army wants to hear
nothing about. So I got out with a --

MR. YUNGER: Was that a relief
to you?

MR. SHEEHAN: Yeah. I opposed
the war, but I was never a pacifist. So I
was in opposition to the war, I was
probably going to have to serve over
there, and I wasn't really a conscientious
objecter. I just thought that the war was
a huge mistake and was arrogant, you know,
following on colonialism, because we were
blinded by our great war against
communism. So we were not about to see
the colonialist aspects of what we were
doing and I was not about to go shoot
people who I felt were largely fighting
for their own freedom and, you know -- but
unfortunately, there are communists and
that wasn't going to help them very much.

MR. YUNGER: If your son came to
you today -- your son, as we spoke about,
is 20, 21?

MR. SHEEHAN: I have three
children, a daughter who is 22, a son who is at Penn, she -- my daughter just graduated from Yale a year ago. My son is a junior at Penn and I have a second son, Robby, who is named after me, Robert, and Will, my youngest son, who is going off to college next year.

MR. YUNGER: If your son, who is in his junior year at the University of Pennsylvania, were to come to you and have these idealistic notions, antiwar notions, paralleling those which you maybe had, how would you respond?

MR. SHEEHAN: I would be pleased. I don't think they're quite as strong in him as they are in me, although they're on the same wavelength. I did walk the other day in the antiwar rally in New York, quietly, with my younger son. My sister-in-law, my brother, Rob, was down in Philly, couldn't come up, and it's funny because my wife was visiting my daughter Lilly over in Madrid. She went over to see her and they were off in a town in northwestern Madrid and ended up
in the middle of an antiwar march. They didn't know what was going on and they called me when I was in an antiwar march on the other end of the cell phone in New York.

So there's a consistency in political outlook, but it's not as strongly held in the next generation as it was in mine during the Vietnam War. It's a different situation, and there's -- you know, I don't -- there's more justification for fighting Saddam than there was, I think, in fighting the Vietnamese attempts to unify their country.

MR. YUNGER: Do you remember where you were on September 11th?

MR. SHEEHAN: Sure. I was in a plane, having flown from New York to Vancouver, gotten off late, it was pouring rain the night before in New York and our plane was late, we were delayed in the flight from Vancouver to Hong Kong, so that I was awakened by an announcement on the plane by the pilot saying, "We have
been ordered to land immediately, apparently due to terrorist activity in the United States," with nothing added to that, as far as I can recall, waking up. And so I was put down immediately, which was in Anchorage, because we were in a U.S. airspace, so they put us down in Anchorage, and then spent as much time as I could trying to organize getting back to New York to be here --

MR. YUNGER: How long did that --

MR. SHEEHAN: -- to our headquarters, because my role is executive partner at Skadden Arps. I have a leadership position, people look to me, and I was really in a place I didn't want to be.

MR. YUNGER: How long did it take for you to eventually come back to New York?

MR. SHEEHAN: We negotiated a plane, a corporate jet through friends in Alaska, and we kept on being told -- I guess it was two days later, it would have
been on Thursday -- you know, September... Tuesday -- and we were at the airport with the corporate jet, the owner's wife was on board and flying back three of us from Skadden and a couple of other business people that were put down with us, and we got a flight back. As soon as you got into Canadian airspace, we were fine, and we got over to Montreal and -- because you couldn't get into the U.S. air space -- and then drove down from Montreal and I got back, drove all night, got in around 1:00 in the morning to Montreal and dropped -- you know, I was probably in the office at 9:00, 10:00 in the morning, which was -- it was strange not being here, especially when people are looking to you for leadership. And unfortunately, our number two was with me and the two, three of the other -- two of the other people, the head of the New York office, was off in Phoenix and somebody else was in London. It was just not lucky for us in terms of having people here to calm people down largely.
MR. YUNGER: You noted that you were the executive partner of the firm. When did you decide that you wanted to go to law school --

MR. SHEEHAN: I majored in premed in the first couple of years and I really wasn't happy with it and switched to economics, and because of my father and mother, but mainly my father, I had an interest in sort of political economics, people used to call it sometimes, but macroeconomics and politics, and political science. So I switched my major to economics with a minor in political science, much more to my liking and interest as a child, and -- but knew I didn't want to go off to economics in grad school. I was a little bit soft a science for my taste, having started in a more purely scientific arena, and my father said, "Look, I went to one year of law school, I loved it, why don't you try that? You don't have to be a lawyer, it's a great education," and he used to go to school, never graduated from college, but
went six or seven years taking courses while he worked, so -- and he just really enjoyed going to school, and so on his recommendation that it's a good way to broaden one's background, I went.

MR. YUNGER: And how about Penn; when did you choose that school?

MR. SHEEHAN: Penn's a great school. As soon as I got in, I knew I definitely wanted to go there.

MR. YUNGER: Were there any other schools that you applied to?

MR. SHEEHAN: Yeah, a few. I don't remember. I remembered -- it's funny. I remembered not applying to Fordham, which I thought I might go to, because I was offended by some of the questions on their application, which were politically oriented, still their remnants of the McCarthy days, ferreting out people they didn't view as appropriate for -- much closer to Fordham day than I was there.

MR. YUNGER: Because Penn would be the first school in the sequence of
schools that you attended didn't have a Jesuit or some sort of Parochial --

MR. SHEEHAN: That was tremendous for me just to broaden the background of people I went to school with. And I hadn't gone to school much with women because they weren't in arts and sciences up in Boston College, but they were in several other schools, so -- but that was -- that was very broadening for me, the social aspects of being -- you know, having some exposure to women, although Penn didn't -- hadn't yet had much success in transforming themselves. They were only -- I would say ten percent of our class were women. I'd say fifty percent of them made Law Review. They were definitely way above average in terms of their ability and performance, so I hung around with a number of them but I didn't --

MR. YUNGER: Do you remember your first day when you walked into the --

MR. SHEEHAN: Ah, good question.

MR. YUNGER: -- old hall there
in Silverman?

MR. SHEEHAN: No, I don't. No, I don't. It's funny.

MR. YUNGER: What's your fondest memory of Penn Law?

MR. SHEEHAN: Hmm. It's interesting. Probably sitting around chatting with friends.

MR. YUNGER: Were you a very idealistic law student in the sense that you craved, you loved the Socratic method and the legal thinking?

MR. SHEEHAN: No. I enjoyed it. It was different, it was challenging, I preferred it as a method of teaching to that which I was used to in college, very clearly. I enjoyed school. It wasn't -- in some ways, maybe because of the reasons I went and my father's just general interest, I -- while I, you know, work decently hard as a student, my life wasn't wrapped up in it, not that it was involved with something else other than maybe my soon to be wife, who was up teaching school in New York, but I just -- if I
enjoyed the teacher and the subject matter, I got deeply involved in it; and if I didn't, I didn't.

MR. YUNGER: What did you think about Philadelphia, its blue collar reputation?

MR. SHEEHAN: Didn't -- well, those were days with Frank Rizzo, and I told you I was political and more left of center, and Frank Rizzo was an abomination in terms of a leader of a community, just -- it was, you know, the white backlash to the black population being given some rights and feeling that they had some rights, and the white population didn't take to it well in Philadelphia --

MR. YUNGER: What kind of --

MR. SHEEHAN: -- Frank Rizzo and in his constant needs for more armored personnel carriers to -- for the police department, was the symbol of how bad the situation had gotten.

MR. YUNGER: Do you remember where you lived when you attended Penn Law?
MR. SHEEHAN: I lived in the dorms, so -- and -- two years, and then the third year I got married, between second and third year and lived up in Elkins Park, if you know where that is.

MR. YUNGER: I'm not familiar with that.

MR. SHEEHAN: Straight north of the city, right over the border, very nice community. In fact, my wife taught junior high school there and taught Bernie Wolfman's son, I guess, in middle school. So that's kind of the neighborhood it was. Very nice, easy commute.

MR. YUNGER: What was the community like at Penn Law? Because right now the students are very cooperative, very friendly.

MR. SHEEHAN: That was extremely nice. I mean, this was -- you would hear some horror stories about law schools in different places, people hiding books and such. Not -- not remotely like that. It was extremely friendly, extremely cooperative. There was no back-biting.
There was -- you couldn't sense -- if there was competition, you couldn't sense it, at least I couldn't. I just -- maybe because I wasn't terribly involved in it, in the sense of, you know -- were my grades -- well, my grades, I'd get B, and, you know -- so, so be it. Whatever it was, it was.

MR. YUNGER: Did you do Law Review or anything like that?

MR. SHEEHAN: No. I did decently well, but, no, I didn't make Law Review. And as I -- I got married between my second and third years, so I really didn't come in practice in any firm, and didn't apply to law firms in between second and third year. I got married in the middle of the summer, and then decided really more towards -- well, maybe I knew in a second year, but I decided in the beginning of third year that I would want to work in a law firm in New York and see if I'd get some training here. Maybe -- I just didn't know what it would be like, having not worked in the summer. But I
did want to come back to New York. I had lived in Boston, I had lived in Philly, and obviously had some experience with Manhattan for -- having spent four years in high school. And I -- so I fairly clearly wanted to come up here and this was a small firm and I liked the idea of that as well.

MR. YUNGER: If you could just discuss a little bit the minority attendance at Penn Law, because right now the women are 50/50 --

MR. SHEEHAN: Right.

MR. YUNGER: -- with men in enrollment.

Speak also about African-American and Hispanics.

MR. SHEEHAN: There were -- oh, why is my memory failing? It was a brunette and there was another woman I was closer to actually, but those names I can't remember right now. There were only two black women that I can recall and I think there was a black -- one black man, who I was never close to, and I think
that's it, out of 200. What did we have? 205?

MR. YUNGER: We have about 240 now.

MR. SHEEHAN: Yeah, I was thinking it was slightly smaller. It was about 205. So that's only one and a half percent, which is obviously terrible, and --

MR. YUNGER: Any female factulty?

MR. SHEEHAN: Oh, gosh, must have been, but no one is jumping to mind.

MR. YUNGER: Do you think that attendance -- well, clearly attendance at law school mirrored participation in a legal practice. So when you got to Skadden, were there more women here or was it similar?

MR. SHEEHAN: I think I was the 27th lawyer at Skadden when I arrived, and there were -- it was either one -- certainly one -- I think just one woman.

MR. YUNGER: Are you nostalgic for the old Penn Law days and the B.C.
days and the Massapequa days?

MR. SHEEHAN: You know, I liked all of them. Not nostalgic for them. It's just a different phase of life and you do different things and you can't really project back. I mean, Penn was a very enjoyable experience for me.

MR. YUNGER: You said that you didn't remember how you felt when you first walk in. Do you remember how you felt when you left?

MR. SHEEHAN: Wait a minute. I do. It wasn't in the hall. You projected me to Silverman Hall.

MR. YUNGER: That's the big image that people have.

MR. SHEEHAN: Right. But it is, because I arrived on a Sunday afternoon or whatever, and I was tired, and I went into a dorm room, and nobody was there, and I went in and closed the door and fell asleep, and put on an alarm for later that afternoon and fell asleep and the first image I remember is I woke up, the alarm was ringing, and realized it had been
ringing a while, I turned it off, got up, opened my door, and I was in a suite situation, and couple of guys roared: "How could you possibly have been in there? We'd been pounding on that door for an hour and a half to wake you up because we couldn't stand the alarm through the door." That's my first image. And then we got along and I got along well with those people in the dorm.

MR. YUNGER: Do you still keep in touch with anyone from law school?

MR. SHEEHAN: Yes. But my close friend Denny Drabell, who I roomed with first year, is the main one. My second closest friend died of a brain tumor a while back. I just saw Denny. I was -- I gave -- at the Supreme Court on Friday night, I introduced Justice Ginsberg to a reception in the Great Hall of the Supreme Court, and so it was a big event for me, so I invited my friend Denny and his companion, Mike Bell, and my wife came down, my sister-in-law, one of my children, and so I just -- and that's
common. All of those people meet two or three times a year, so we've kept up very close personal relations with them.

MR. YUNGER: Could you ever see yourself sitting in a classroom and then 30 years later coming back to the law school as a member of the board of overseers?

MR. SHEEHAN: Oh, no, no, not even remotely.

MR. YUNGER: What was --

MR. SHEEHAN: Couldn't project ahead that way. Didn't even know -- didn't even have a feel of what a law firm was or what it did, because I hadn't worked there in the summer.

MR. YUNGER: So when Bob Sheehan was sitting in the classroom, what was --

MR. SHEEHAN: Politics probably. I would say, if I had to guess what I might do, I would never -- I knew I'd never run for anything, I don't particularly -- I knew I wouldn't do that, but I would have expected that somewhere in my career I would have gotten involved
with electoral politics, you know, behind
the scenes more. And I didn't do much of
it. Did it right in '69 as we came up.
Both my wife and I actually campaigned for
a Republican for Mayor of New -- so it
wasn't that far off political extreme, but
Mayor Lindsey, who later switched to
liberal Democrat, who was running against
a machine Democrat, who didn't have a lot
of vision, so as soon as we got up here we
started working for Lindsey.

MR. YUNGER: You mentioned that
you didn't work in a law firm in the
summer. What was the students' position
then, because knowing myself as a second
or third year, we're always thinking about
firms and firm's firms. How did students
back in those days view life after law
school?

MR. SHEEHAN: I don't know. I
mean -- vastly less knowledge back then
about what life as a lawyer was like in a
law firm, unless you had a relative in it,
than I think than today, because there was
no American Lawyer, there was no gossip
sheet, there was -- very much less information than I think exists today.

MR. YUNGER: Why did you join Skadden?

MR. SHEEHAN: Frankly, because they offered me a job and -- but especially because John Feerick, who came down to interview, it was late in the season, as usual Silverman Hall was under renovation, and very major one at the time, and so the rooms that the interviewer were in were actually in what was the dorms, which was a horseshoe, which is now where your cafeteria is.  

MR. YUNGER: And the library?

MR. SHEEHAN: The library. That was dorms and I was in like in the second floor and they had to use the common rooms of the dorms to interview in and I interviewed with them and the fellow signed up after me didn't show up, and I sat and interviewed, talked to this guy John Feerick for, oh, two or three interview times. I had to go off to a class, I came back to a class, and this
was my dorm, again, that he was in, the Economy Mug (phon.), and he was still there when I came back from the class, I stuck my head in, and I said hello and we chatted and we just talked for another hour and nobody ever showed up. And, in fact, there was a note came down, which was posted on the bulletin board, a letter from the dean to Skadden Arps, to John Feerick, apologizing for the fact that nobody showed up for the interview. So, you know, sometimes you get blessed by no competition because they offered -- they asked me to come up and offered me the job and I really liked the guy and I stayed close with him in the first couple of years there and he always was the guy who went to bat for the young associates when they had problems. He liked young people. Indeed, what did he do? He left us and became Dean of Fordham Law School and was the longest serving dean in the country of the law school, until he retired last year.

MR. YUNGER: What was your
impression of Skadden? Because the
impression of Skadden now is probably --

MR. SHEEHAN: Well, John -- what
was I influenced by? I was influenced
mostly by John Feerick and John Feerick
was a kid who went to Fordham
undergraduate, I guess, and Fordham Law
School, was head of the Law Review, and he
said he came to Skadden because he was
interested -- his father was a bus driver,
came over from Ireland, immigrated, was a
bus driver and he wanted to do something
for unions in labor law from the union's
point of view. Very unusual for a Wall
Street firm. And also because of his
interest in constitutional law, he wanted
to be promised that he could do a heavy
dose of constitutional law, and people --
he's a very engaging person, I'm sure he
was as a kid, and so they said sure, and
they lived up to that and he -- one of our
oldest clients is the Pressman's Union.
To this day, the New York Stereotypist
Union -- I think they may have changed the
name to Pressman's now -- has always been
a client and John was just amazing. As a kid -- I guess when he was in last year law school, maybe first year out, he wrote -- this was in sixty -- late -- late '62 or early '63, he wrote an article for the Law Review on presidential succession and proposed that the rules were antiquated and we needed a constitutional amendment because it would be inappropriate to have a quasi-elected vice-president serve for several years if a president was elected early in his term, he was disabled or died, and then if the second -- if the vice-president, who became president, died, it would just not be good to follow the statutory schemes of Speaker of the House, et cetera; and, lo and behold, shortly after that, President Kennedy was assassinated and they looked around for articles that had been written, and John's article, as young as he was, was the most important piece of literature in the field and he immediately became in demand, he went down saw Birchby. Birchby, who had just been elected to the
Senate, was put on the Constitutional Laws Subcommittee, took John's amendment, proposed it as an amendment to the Constitution. John, as a kid, was put on the head of an Ad Hoc Committee for the Association of the Bar of the City of New York, he became head or co-head of the ABA's committee to consider the constitutional amendment, went around, Congress passed it, he went around to most if not all of the 50 states of the union proposing it. And so he was really, by the time he was still in his 20's, the principal author of an amendment to the Constitution of the United States.

It was Skadden who came through for him and he came through for Skadden. That's just amazing. And, you know, so he -- they put him -- he forever after, that was the head of the federal legislation committee or constitutional law committee, various commities of the Bar Association, headed up the Bar Association, in fact, here in New York.

MR. YUNGER: What's it like
MR. SHEEHAN: And he was the spirit of the place and he's what attracted me. Plus other people I met here. I like very much Jim Levitan, the head of our tax department. I immediately -- well, when I met with him in the interviews, I was enthralled. And Peter Mollin who ran the place at the time, administratively, was a delight, and so I knew for sure this was the place that --

MR. YUNGER: You said --

MR. SHEEHAN: -- that I should go to.

MR. YUNGER: You said there were 27 attorneys when you started.

MR. SHEEHAN: I was the 27th, I think.

MR. YUNGER: How does it feel in this office alone, having 750 plus attorneys?  

MR. SHEEHAN: Yeah, maybe even more. You know, when you start in an organization like that, you rapidly know
every other lawyer, senior to you, you know all the lawyers senior to you, and then -- but I also knew all the secretaries and I knew the filing staff, I -- you knew the operation, very easy to get in and around an operation of that size, and after, it just grows laterally. You know, some lateral partners come in and you get to know some other people senior to you, but -- and you get to know the people you work with, so the organization doesn't seem all that large, when you grow --

MR. YUNGER: -- with it.

MR. SHEEHAN: -- up with it, yes. It never really does. You don't get to know the people outside New York. That I -- unless you deal with them. The people in Washington, when we opened the Washington office, fairly easy to get to the -- a lot of coordination, because I was a corporate lawyer with the securities law, and they tended to be SEC types, who started the place. So I knew the Washington people and the Boston people,
when we opened there, the head of the Boston office, sat next to me as an associate in the New York office, so I knew that office well too.

MR. YUNGER: When you started out in the late 60's, I often hear stories of how lawyers were very generalized in their knowledge and their practice.

MR. SHEEHAN: So today.

MR. YUNGER: Now everything is a specialization it seems like.

MR. SHEEHAN: I started out as a just sort of general corporate lawyer, and actually we started out as a firm that did a lot of aviation law. We broke off from Skadden Arps and Slate -- that was a long story, I won't get into, but Skadden, Arps, and Slate were three associates at Ruth, Clark & Valentine I guess? Which later became Dewey Valentine when Governor Dewey joined the firm, and he actually -- Arps was the protege of the Just -- later Justice Harlin, John Harlin. John Hylan was in the Eighth Army Air Force over in -- I can't remember the name of the --
Highbridge, maybe, over in London, and his protege back at the law firm was a senior associate. He crooked his finger and Les Arps went over and was with him in the war, and then for some reason or other Harlin didn't get his position back at the end of the war in the law firm he was in, got shunted aside, so Les, he was going to make partner through Harlin, was --

MR. YUNGER: Wasn't Les Arps the -- wasn't he the first lawyer here?

MR. SHEEHAN: Well, three of them. Arps --

MR. YUNGER: -- Skadden, and Slate?

MR. SHEEHAN: -- Skadden, and Slate all left Ruth Clark roughly the same time, just after Cleary Gottlieb had broken off from -- and Judge Friendly, Henry Friendly, was the main person (inaudible) and they were very supportive.

Remember, not many at Cleary know this, but Henry Friendly was very supportive of the guys who -- because they
were -- Skadden, Arps, and Slate, and especially Arps and Slate, because Slate was the general counsel or president even of a helicopter subsidiary of Pan Am and Henry Friendly's main client was Pan Am. So...

MR. YUNGER: How is the firm culture different today than it was 30 years ago?

MR. SHEEHAN: Well, you know, we have very little bureaucracy. So for a firm our size, amazingly thin bureaucracy, but, you know, I knew every person, I knew every other lawyer when I started. It was certainly within three months I knew everyone, to varying degrees. And we've preserved key elements of our culture, and frankly that's why we've succeeded. We grew, and obviously you can't grow internally from 27 people to 1800 lawyers, but we've never merged with anyone, and only once did we take on more than three partners to join us laterally at one time, because -- and when we grew laterally, we put people from one of our central
offices, usually in New York, out with those people and the new ones who came and the veterans of the old firm effectively passed the culture. You can pass a culture fairly easily that way, because people are reacting to the center and getting used to its ways. If you merge with the best firm in Germany -- they have a hundred and -- probably 300 people in the German office and you put in a good contingent of our own, whatever, you will pick up the German's firm's culture automatically and there's no way that you can affect it on the edges, but you'll pick up their culture. The way we grow, our culture is transported fairly uniformly and it's easy for people to accede to the ways of the tribe and, you know, so it's not a fight.

MR. YUNGER: You became a partner in 1978?

MR. SHEEHAN: Yes.

MR. YUNGER: And then executive partner in 1994?

MR. SHEEHAN: Yes.
MR. YUNGER: What was the biggest challenge facing the firm in '94 and how did you go about correcting it or addressing it?

MR. SHEEHAN: Oh, we had come through the only real slump in the legal business in many, many years, had occurred after actually Saddam invaded Kuwait in August of '90 and all the business people in the country said, well, you know, why don't we see what happens. Things were still going fairly well, even though in October '89 the junk bond market broke because the Japanese banks pulled out of the financing of the UAL deal, so there had been -- there was a significant negative affect, followed by that slow-down where nobody did any business until whenever. When did we end up winning the war? February, March of the next year? There was six or nine months where all the business people decided to wait and by the time they looked again to see whether to build that factory or buy that other company, they were now in the
middle of a recession, because nobody had done anything much new for six or seven months, so things turned down, and the legal business turned down. And that caused people to actually try and figure out what life is like when they're not spurred on by 20% growth a year, and it's the first time they got used to it.

So, as I came in the bottom had, you know, been reached and we were just starting up again. So basically it was nurturing the operations which we had started but hadn't yet matured into, you know, fully, you know, going on all eight cylinders. And that nurturing process and protecting the investments that we had made over in Europe and Asia, you know, a little bit outside New York, but most of the American offices were doing fine; not great guns, but fine. My biggest job was to get to know people. I didn't realize that. I focus a lot of times, in looking at the compensation system and looking at the foreign offices, to see what was how deep the investment was, how well it

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was doing, because people didn't have a good sense of it, and I reported to the partnership on that and just did nothing more than a bit of tinkering and a lot of encouragement and we continued on in --

MR. YUNGER: Did you see --

MR. SHEEHAN: -- in building overseas.

MR. YUNGER: Do you see any parallels between those times, war time, and now?

MR. SHEEHAN: Sure. We're sitting here deciding whether or not we are going to go into Iraq and business people are holding off. But we're on the back end of a much deeper downturn in the securities market. How many trillion dollars have been lost on the NASDAQ in the last three years?

MR. YUNGER: Why is it that the firm is still striving, thriving?

MR. SHEEHAN: Because we learned from the time of the last down-turn people had spent up until just before 1990 largely dealing with new business by
closing the transom as tightly as possible, you know, lest yet another deal come through and people couldn't handle the work they had, and basically our history, from with only weeks at a time different, was fending off, you know, the amount of business -- the marginal business so that we could do what we had, because we continuously had to get more people to do the business we were doing. And then when things turned down in the hostile takeover arena, people who had largely tried to make their lives a little sane by not reaching out for any new business went and made -- reached out to their contacts whom they dealt with in so many of these hostile transactions, the toughest of all fights. You make a decision and 24 hours later you're in federal court defending the business. I mean, it's really the height of making judgments on the spot that will be sound and hold up and yet had to be bold, too. So, it was a great business and we had garnered a tremendous amount of support in
many corporate counsel's office. And when the litigators turned and saw that that worked, they got up on the tax people, turned and sought to broaden their spectra of work, they received the work, so that we were much stronger in the end when you came through it, because our businesses were now vastly broader. And simultaneously, we had started -- we literally started it back around nineteen seventy -- '78, about as I came in to intentionally broaden the services that the firm got involved with, but it took sometime to get involved with most of them and it took sometime for them to mature within our system, so that many of these new businesses in terms of new offices, and in some cases, new businesses in those offices, new businesses in New York, in terms of some of the legal services, needed a few more years to mature before they were, you know, fully integrated or running at top efficiency. And, you know, that wasn't quite so at the time of the down-turn, but it certainly was in the
process of maturing, and by the end of the mid -- mid '90s to late '90s every -- you know, there weren't that many new things that we were doing relative to that which we were already doing. So, in other words, there wasn't as much drag as you put new businesses on line. And so things were getting better and better and better and better, and also overseas the Americans were better accepted, in part because -- especially in London, our biggest office, because the investment bankers succeeded in their competition with the indigenous investment bank and they liked the style of the advice that American lawyers gave as compared with the advice that the English solicitors gave. So we had a choice which one you used, and they tended to look to American lawyers, and that was a big help.

MR. YUNGER: If I so much came in and said to you, "Mr. Sheehan, what's the first thing that comes to mind when someone says Skadden lawyer --"

MR. SHEEHAN: Hard -- you know,
hard-working, energetic, enthusiastic.

MR. YUNGER: From the bottom to the top, from associates to partners?

MR. SHEEHAN: Right. Some -- you know, my -- recognize my history in which largely was done in the M & A department as I grew up, so I'm colored by that, even though that's only 20% or so what have we do maybe by these days, but still the images of someone who really enjoys competition, and just thrives on it.

MR. YUNGER: What makes a lawyer successful at Skadden?

MR. SHEEHAN: Someone who enjoys competition and thrives on it.

MR. YUNGER: Is that what you think has set this firm --

MR. SHEEHAN: Competition outside, not internally.

MR. YUNGER: Is that something that you think has set this firm apart from other firms?

MR. SHEEHAN: What it set us apart was the culture of helping one
another out. As I often call it, it's -- it is -- when you did an unfriendly takeover fight, in the old days there weren't as many bureaucratic rules, Hart, Scott, Rodino, that slowed things down, there were no poison pills that slowed things down. You could do a takeover in a week, and, accordinglyly, you needed to find something to slow the process down so that the client and the investment bankers, etcetera, could reach out and get a competitive bid, if you're representing a target, or the other side, you want to shut down the amount of times, so there was no time, and so you would have to find arguments in 48 hours, get into Federal Court, and that's 24 hours; finally slow it down, somehow, have the shareholders have the opportunity to get another bid on the table, and so you would have to -- when the bell rang, people, like firemen, hit that pole, on the run, and that kind of cooperation, when the bell rang, you know, you just jumped, and that spirit has largely somehow stayed with the firm. And
people don't say, that's not my area, you know, it's Friday. That doesn't exist. We did a lot of work, as reference work from other firms, referral work from other firms, for years when I was here earlier, and I'll tell you, you got a lot more referral work on Friday afternoon than you did on Monday afternoon, and that's a difference. And we were willing to just, you know, go through the wall and help the client out. Now that exists much more I think across the firms, the competition today, and, in part, you know, we embued that into the culture. But it came from the nature of the deal. If your client was going to be taken over, in a week after he called you up unless you got them some alternative, everyone has to react. And you'd get people on planes heading to a half a dozen different cities around the country trying to get the -- some federal judge, particularly sometimes you had to resort to a state judge, to try and give an injunction because you had operations there, something that would get affected,
you'd find some state law that arguably could have some application. Eventually the courts got sophisticated and didn't allow you to slow it down, but then the bureaucracy came in and Hart Scott Rodino finally came in, and so there was -- you got 30 days to do something, even if there wasn't a second request, and then poison pills and other delaying tactics got developed so nobody could force you to do anything until the court really gave the okay. So life changed, but what didn't change was the attitude, as if this is just a week, and when people picked up the phone call and said they needed help right away, they got the help right away.

MR. YUNGER: Do you miss that? Do you miss that environment since you've taken on work?

MR. SHEEHAN: I miss the environment of not doing deals, sure. I mean, personally. I mean, administering a firm is dealing with, you know, a great moving middle, and it just continues on at its own pace. You affect things, speed of
which you do various different things, but
the life of a deal, a beginning, a middle,
an end, the story of a deal has, is an
invigorating thing; you enjoy it.

MR. YUNGER: How have you
managed quality of life? You said you
have a lot of children, a lovely wife.
How have you managed that with regards to
work and the demands?

MR. SHEEHAN: I've always
respected vacations and protected them for
myself. I don't -- I think I've always
gotten my full vacation. You got a month
to start with. In part, I lived in
Styvesanttown, which has no air
conditioning in the summer, and so I was
in Europe basically for three to four
weeks in a row in the middle of the
summer, and we didn't have European
offices in those days, so they'd let me
go. You know, if they had a problem
they'd deal with someone else.

MR. YUNGER: How does the young
associate --

MR. SHEEHAN: And -- go on.
MR. YUNGER: I just wondered how a young associate balances the demands of work with the demands of life.

MR. SHEEHAN: It's hard, but you have to, you know, do some of your own protection as a kid. I never lost my vacation, because somebody had asked me if I could take something on and invariably said yes, but if I had a vacation coming up and I knew the length generally speaking of how long it takes to do a deal, and they'd say, "You want to work on this?" I'd say, "Absolutely," because, you know -- "How long is it going to take? Four, six weeks?" I said, "Probably." I said, well, I have a vacation in -- starting on X date, two months from now, and, you know, that's important to me. So, "Oh, no problem." So -- you know, you know half the time it was going to be a problem, so three or four weeks later, you remind the person and say, "You know, I have a vacation on that date." You know, he said, "Oh, no, that's all right." And then a week later, you start -- you know, you go
to one of your friends, you say, "Can you cover me?" And then you tell the partner, "Hey, you know, I'm going on vacation on that date and --" but -- and they, "Oh really? (inaudible) "Yeah, you told me," and you say, "Well, you know, Dan Stoly (ph.), he's agreed, he'll cover it for me." He said, "Oh, great, no prob."
And that's what we do. You just make sure that one of your friends is there and -- who is at roughly your level, a little ahead of you would be great for the partner, but behind is okay too, as long as it's somebody realistically handle whatever the job was, and I told you, I never lost a vacation and all the years I had people working for me, I think once I asked one person once to delay one week and he went and -- now most people can't do that and you're in the midst of litigation, but in the corporate side, busy as I tended to be, I was always able to do that. Now if -- I didn't have my kids till I was a little bit later, so I was already a partner for two years, by
the time I had my first, so by the time they got out on the sports field, you know, I'd been a fairly established partner, had run already, founded and ran my own small department, M & A, in the bank and thrift field, and had a couple of younger partners made by that time, or they were senior associates, and I coached the kids' Little League team and I -- and I was there, oh, pretty much all of their key activities in the band and the dance, but mainly on the sports field I was there, unless I was out of town.

MR. YUNGER: How does this firm, in particular, view the work that associates do, particularly young associates, individuals coming straight out of law school?

MR. SHEEHAN: You know, people are trainees and some people learn fast, some people learn a little more slowly. But, you know, the -- everyone is smart enough and it's just how they acclimate themselves to the particular environment. I mean, frequently, I give a little talk,
when I knew somebody was doing their first job, I frequently say to them, "You know what I expect you to know on this to do this deal?" And they'd look at you a little nervous and I'd say, "Nothing." And so, you know, but I'd say, "But obviously you know more than nothing, so -- and, you know, just hang around the deal, be as helpful as you can, watch what people do on the deals, and, you know, just attention to detail; just make sure it's a perfect work product when it goes out, and, you know, be attentive and you'll learn how to do the deals, and, you know, you need to be a student now, and that's what you're an expert at, so feel comfortable."

MR. YUNGER: You spoke a little bit about the multi-functional aspects of the firm. If we could just talk a few minutes about public interest pro bono work here at the firm, and you're a key player in that, so if you can just discuss your role and how much value you put into it.
MR. SHEEHAN: My role is importantly to encourage as much pro bono work as the firm can do, and I've been pretty good about that. I alluded before to the fact that I introduced Justice Ginsberg at a reception in the Supreme Court. Well, that was at the Pro Bono Institute's reception. Pro Bono Institute is an arm of the ABA which is designed to encourage law firms to meet certain goals, voluntary goals that they ascribe to in the pro bono challenge, and I'm the co-chair of the law firm advisory committee. That's why I was there. So I do go around, not only here but out to other cities where pro bono isn't as embedded in the culture as it is in, say, Washington or San Francisco or New York or Boston, Wilmington, Philly, where we came from. Some other cities, it's just not that way. And so I helped the head of the institute go and talk to the heads of those firms and the pro bono coordinators in those firms, explaining that it really doesn't interfere with the conduct of the
practice of law to do pro bono work, and --

MR. YUNGER: Why is it so important for a private firm like Skadden to have its associates and partners actually doing the pro bono work, rather than just contributing funds?

MR. SHEEHAN: Well, we contribute, obviously, quite a bit of funds, particularly through the Skadden Fellowship Foundation, but they're not Skadden employees. That is a very important program we're extremely proud of, but it's on top of doing the work ourselves. Why? Several reasons: One, lawyers, you know, should give something back through some pro bono work. You know, it's easier for litigators than nonlitigators to find those opportunities readily, but anybody can, if they search, because it's -- even if you're a transactional lawyer like me, doing something that gives you direct client contact early on in your career can't be substituted for your dealing with large
corporations or other similar entities. So it's to the advantage of the individual as well, and you learn how to deliver advise to a client, even if the client is extremely unsophisticated relative to you. Nonetheless, you're a person, you're trying to explain something to, and in a corporation, one of the things you find rapidly is that you're that -- you know, this person is very impressive across the table from you and they've achieved a lot in life, ubt as you talk about the subject that you've gotten no know, you realize just how little they know about it compared to you, and it's a skill to communicate your knowledge to someone who needs to rely on that to make a business decision.

Similar skills, even dealing with someone completely unsophisticated who has a landlord/tenant problem and who couldn't possibly read a lease, nonetheless, the skills in dealing with giving that person advice that they need to rely on that's important to them, is in
many ways transferrable, and that's --
having clients is a good thing to practice
doing. So it's good for the lawyer, it's
good for the person. Society, you know
asks it of lawyers, and it makes you feel
good, too, to do something for a person
who otherwise wasn't going get the help
and leave themselves to totally to fate.
So it's enjoyable as well. I'm trying to
let people know that, that it is enjoyable
to do it, is important.

So I think students, generally
speaking, enjoy the process of doing pro
bono work and I encourage them strongly to
try their hand it. Some do it a lot, some
not at all, unfortunately, but we don't
force it on people, but we strongly
encourage it.

MR. YUNGER: You spoke about
giving advice and counseling. What's the
most recent or memorable advice you gave
to the Penn Board of Overseers?

MR. SHEEHAN: Hah. That's --
that's difficult to say, to pick out
anything in particular that I suggested to
them that -- I don't know how to answer that question.

MR. YUNGER: What do you think in your role as a member of the overseer could be done to benefit or enhance Penn Law right now?

MR. SHEEHAN: In my role? Just encouraging the university to continue on the tack it really is already on, I think, trying to marry different schools within the university to the law school in terms of some, you know, cross-fertilization to get deeper expertise in the substantive side to work with the law on the other side. It's a marvelous university with very strong business school, medical school, nursing school, communications schools, et cetera, and most other universities don't have the physical closeness, even if they have the expertise someplace else in the university, and I think that makes Penn stand out.

MR. YUNGER: Did you ever take any courses at the Wharton School or anything like that?
MR. SHEEHAN: I don't think I did, and obviously, given my background, where I enjoyed economics, it would have been valuable to me to do it. And also the Constitutional Law Center that's being built in Philly. And that should be a natural somehow in the history, whether through history or just directly through the law school, some combination of efforts with that entity should be of special benefit to Penn to make it stand out from other law schools.

MR. YUNGER: Your son is a junior at Penn. What's drawing the Sheehans to the Penn campus?

MR. SHEEHAN: Oh, I don't know. I think we like the northeast, for one thing, and my daughter went to -- one's going to Boston, one went to New Haven, and one went to Philly. So we all stay pretty close to home, which I strongly encouraged. So I think -- I think none of them wanted to go to school in New York City, even though all of them deeply love the city. I hope they will spend their
MR. YUNGER: Speaking about the future, what's the future for Skadden, five to ten years down the road?

MR. SHEEHAN: I don't think you'll see a great deal of difference. I expect our overseas branches will grow somewhat faster than the New York and the other U.S. branches because they're newer, the field is more open to them, there's greater room to compete, but I think you will see, you know, an occasional new emphasis and practice here, probably more intellectual property than you see today, because that's the way the economy is going. Even if NASDAQ fell apart, doesn't mean that productivity is emanating anywhere else but from using computers and software that goes with it.

So I expect, you know, prosecution and defense of patent claims will be a bigger part of what we do than are today, but it's very marginal compare to an 1800 person law firm. I don't think you're going to see any dramatic change in
the law firm.

MR. YUNGER: Do you think 30 years from now --

MR. SHEEHAN: We're not going to merge with anybody.

MR. YUNGER: Do you think 30 years down the road from now, we'll have 3600 lawyers?

MR. SHEEHAN: Oh -- well, how many years?

MR. YUNGER: 30 about.

MR. SHEEHAN: Oh, sure.

Absolutely. Unless -- unless there becomes an extreme backlash against the -- in the areas of being narrow on conflicts and not allowing corporations the freedom to choose whether or not they want to waive a conflict that you're seen to have. Because the corporations are happy to waive them. You can't control necessarily the development of law, though. They may lose their opportunity to do it if prospective waivers are narrowed, because they say you can't anticipate the events and, therefore, even the most
sophisticated general counsel is not allowed to give you a waiver for the future, because that would be a difficulty because there are so many things you can't ask for permission for because they need to be secret to the new client coming in for a period of time, so they just have to go to another counsel, they can't choose their first choice of counsel, because if you had a narrowing of the right of people to give a prospective waiver -- that's the only really negative thing I can see to drive growth, because 30 years, you're only at 2 percent net growth a year, one and a half, I don't know what the compound is, you're going to get to 3600. It will happen even -- I don't think we're going to have a merger. I never will speak out more than two or three or five years in the future. So it's not going to be up to me.

MR. YUNGER: It's interesting though how long --

MR. SHEEHAN: But there is no desire for a merger inside the firm.
MR. YUNGER: It's interesting though how Wachtel remains small.

MR. SHEEHAN: We chose not to do that back -- I said there was, at the end of the 70's, there was quite a conscious decision was made to grow, quite intentional. They looked at every area of practice of the law that they thought we might get into and had committees take a look at to prioritize and throw out some, and I looked at it, back in '93, what we had done back in the end of the 70's, and we had identified -- now, this isn't exact, but we had identified something like 21 areas of the law we thought we might get into that we had very little, in some cases usually no, contact with, and we had gotten involved with all but two of them by the time I looked ten years later, and indeed we had got involved in three or four more that we didn't know existed at the time we had done that study. That kind of growth doesn't exist now. I mean, we're involved in pretty much everything, other than a little niche here or there or
the other place.

MR. YUNGER: What is Bob Sheehan going to be involved five years, ten years personally for --

MR. SHEEHAN: Ten years I'll be retired. Five years I might be retired. I don't know what, you know, what I'll do then. It's hard to go back to the active of law if you're not a litigator, because I loose contact with my clients; my other partners have taken over those relationships. I injected them into -- inserted them into the relationship long before I took the job actually, so it was an easy tranceization.

I don't know what I will do, don't have a particular goal, but I also hope -- I always tried to -- I always tried to not rely on what I was doing as the sole reason for being, whether I would take up competitive bridge, which I gave up because of its time commitments years ago, or some of that, together. It was just a lot more reading, maybe teaching, maybe going on a board of directors or
two, maybe working with quasi-charitable organizations, maybe coaching baseball with one of the charities that I work with that both teaches kids how to get through the young educational process and attract them with a baseball program, which works very well.

MR. YUNGER: Sure.

MR. SHEEHAN: So I have -- that and going to watch Mets games with my families.

MR. YUNGER: Are you going to opening day?

MR. SHEEHAN: Sure. I always -- I always have tried to go to opening day. In the old days I used to miss it most times. I've had season tickets since '86. Before that, I'd always try and go, but make it about one of four years. More recently -- I get a little more control out of my own schedule when I run the firm. So, for years and years, one of the associates who worked for me, a fellow I was very close to, had died on 9/11. He left here and went to work for, first,
Merrill Lynch doing bank and thrift, M & A, just when you -- you know, the legal side, and one of his jobs they gave him quite expressly was to hire me to be his boss and so we used to consult on it once -- at least once a year, out in Queens, in a box that we got together. We shared a box at Shea. Still did until his death.

MR. YUNGER: Would you like your children to go into the law?

MR. SHEEHAN: Up to them. My daughter is applying to grad school for modern English literature, I guess with the hopes of being a professor. I want her to do whatever she enjoys doing and the same things with the boys. I mean, it's fine. I do -- I wouldn't -- I wouldn't direct them away from it because -- I direct -- definitely direct them to go to law school, just as my father directed me. What they do with those great tools that you receive, particularly in first year of law school, up to them. But -- so -- I'm not so much
intrigued by them being lawyers, but I would like them to be able to think like a lawyer.

MR. YUNGER: Two final questions. What was it that -- three final questions. What was it that law school taught you that you embraced --

MR. SHEEHAN: To think like a lawyer.

MR. YUNGER: -- so much so?

MR. SHEEHAN: To think like a lawyer.

MR. YUNGER: What is it to think like a lawyer?

MR. SHEEHAN: Oh, to be very precise in one's thinking, to understand the rebuttals to one's arguments, to be able to create the surrebuttals and project all of that quickly together so you take care of it the first time you speak, protecting against the rebuttal. There is a precision of thought that forces you to deal with society the way it is, even when you're thinking about the way you would like it to be, and deal with
reality. That is all there is -- the law is a question of precedence and an accretion of rights over time. Understanding where they came from and why they came about the way they did is very instructive, and just about social and political questions, as much as about the practice of law. I think it's very important to being a well-rounded person to be able to think like a lawyer.

MR. YUNGER: What advice would you give to a young aspiring attorney?

MR. SHEEHAN: Enjoy it (inaudible). Throw yourself into it and enjoy it, take chances. I mean, I basically -- I think there's something in life you will see that's peculiar kind of cycles that we were brought up with. We go to junior high school or high school, whatever, three, four years at a time, college four years, law school three years. You'll find after three or four years, probably (inaudible) you're saying -- get this itchy feeling, it's just some time to change. And I would
just say, you know, relax and don't hesitate to take a risk, whether it's changing your area of practice, whether it's changing firms. I left and went and worked on Watergate in seventy -- first week of -- weeks of '74. I went down and worked with Liz Holtzman who was then serving on the House Judiciary Committee and kind of knew I probably wouldn't come back, but, you know --

MR. YUNGER: To Liz or to Skadden?

MR. SHEEHAN: Either, but I just needed a change and I had that interest in my background from the time I was a little boy watching the Army-McCarthy hearings. There was something that was important in the political process that was going to draw me to the center, and did in that case, and I used that opportunity. But I didn't want to come back into the law right away. I left a week after Nixon quit, I left Washington, and, I mean, just helped a small client establish a business. My strength is on the
mathematical side. I set up a leasing business for him, as well as generally being general counsel, but I knew within weeks of starting that that there wasn't enough intellectual stimulation and -- around, that I needed to get back into a law firm to do it and I knew -- I figured it would be Skadden, but I wanted to decompress a little bit and accomplish the building of the business that I went there to do for him, which I did, in a little over a year, year a half for him, and then came back to Skadden.

MR. YUNGER: Sure. Final question. How do you feel when you walk into the firm now?

MR. SHEEHAN: There is a difference, but it's not just now. I'd say having my first child, my daughter, was the biggest change in my life since I've been here and changed my attitudes. First thing in the morning that I would wake up, I would think about what I had to get done that day. And my wife, wisely, after the child was about ten months old,
could stand up and climb up on the bed, and she'd have her climb up on the bed and kiss me awake, and that's a different way to come about looking at your day, and that change was very important to me.

How does it look now versus when I practiced law?

MR. YUNGER: Ten, fifteen, twenty years?

MR. SHEEHAN: Well, I mean, the difference is, you know, I still think about what I have to accomplish for the day, the week, whatever. There are certain guide posts that are different in the life of the administration versus the life of doing a deal. So I think you'll find your life is pretty much focused on how to succeed in what you're doing on the particular matters you're working on at the time, and that's going to involve -- did involve my life and will involve your life at the law firm here.

Administration is very different. I mean, I might have longer term jobs, more than short-term jobs, but
I need to deal with what am I doing at the board meeting of the firm in two weeks and what do I have to do between now and then to get the information on the table that I want to have in front of them, and the decisions largely teed up for recommendation by then. So, it's not quite the same as being a lawyer, not working on deals.

MR. YUNGER: When you leave this office every single day in the evening, do you have any regrets about the past 30 years or so of being --

MR. SHEEIHAN: Na, no --

MR. YUNGER: -- at Skadden?

MR. SHEEIHAN: -- no, no, just never do that. You know, whatever you're doing in life, there's no point in regretting. Whatever you did, you did. I mean, occasionally, I do, I'm a bad person that turns up post mortems, kicking myself. You learn from what you did wrong. You don't learn as much from what you did right. You learn from what you did wrong. So you can kick yourself too
hard for the mistakes you make, and
probably -- you know, I couldn't count my
mistakes, somewhere in the thousands, but,
you know, you just get by it. I mean, you
make a fool of yourself at times and you
learn from it.

MR. YUNGER: If this tape were
translated into like an A & E biography
and they had to make one blurb and the
answer to the question was -- the question
was, "What is the secret behind Bob
Sheehan's success?" What would the answer
be?

MR. SHEEHAN: Umm, I don't
know. Probably trying to find the best in
people and to work with that, something
like that.

MR. YUNGER: Sounds good to me.

I want to thank you,

Mr. Sheehan --

MR. SHEEHAN: Sure.

MR. YUNGER: -- it's been a
pleasure.

MR. YUNGER: And --

MR. SHEEHAN: Good.
MR. YUNGER: -- I'll take --

MR. SHEEHAN: I hope you enjoy --

MR. YUNGER: -- the message back to the law school.

MR. SHEEHAN: I hope you enjoy it when you come up here.

MR. YUNGER: Thank you very much.

MR. SHEEHAN: Thanks for doing it.

(Time noted: 5:17 p.m.)