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## Mitchell, George J. oral history interview

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## **Interview with George J. Mitchell by Don Nicoll**

*Summary Sheet and Transcript*

### **Interviewee**

Mitchell, George J. (George John), 1933-

### **Interviewer**

Nicoll, Don

### **Date**

May 2, 2002

### **Place**

Washington, DC

### **ID Number**

MOH 351

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### **Biographical Note**

George John Mitchell, Jr. was born in Waterville, Maine on August 20, 1933 to George J. Sr. and Mary Saad Mitchell. His mother was a factory worker, and his father a laborer. He graduated from Waterville High School at the age of sixteen and attended Bowdoin College, graduating in 1954 with a degree in European History. He then served as an officer in the U.S. Army Counter Intelligence Corps until 1956. In 1960 he received a law degree from Georgetown University, and worked for two years in the Justice Department. Mitchell's political career began in 1962, when he joined Edmund Muskie's Senate staff as an executive assistant. In 1965 he returned to Maine to practice law. He was the state chairman of the Maine Democratic Party from 1966 to 1968, and was National Committeeman from 1969 to 1977. He was staff to Senator Muskie's 1968 vice-presidential and 1972 presidential campaign bids. In 1974, he made an unsuccessful run for Governor in Maine, losing to James Longley. Mitchell served as U.S. Attorney in Maine from 1977 to 1979 before being appointed to fill the remainder of the Senate term vacated by Ed Muskie's appointment to Secretary of State. He went on to win the 1982 and 1988 elections for Senate. He was chairman of the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee in 1984, and served as Senate Majority Leader until retirement in 1994. In that year, Mitchell was offered a seat on the Supreme Court by Bill Clinton. However, he declined. Since that time Mitchell has been active in international affairs, most notably for his role in the Northern Ireland Peace Accords. He has also been involved in Israeli peace negotiations, served as Chairman of the Walt Disney Company and has been active in the investigation of past steroid use of major

league baseball players.

## **Scope and Content Note**

Interview includes discussions of: personal and family background; influence of parents; Bowdoin College; first recollection of Ed Muskie; joining Senator Muskie's staff; making political connections at Bowdoin; Army years; Georgetown Law School; job in the Justice Department; and coming back to Maine.

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## **Transcript**

**Don Nicoll:** It is Thursday, the 2nd day of May, 2002. We are in the Verner, Liipfert, Bernhard, and McPherson & Hand law firm in Washington, D.C., and Don Nicoll is interviewing Senator George Mitchell. Senator, would you give us your full name, and your date and place of birth, and the names of your parents?

**George Mitchell:** My full name is George John Mitchell, date of birth August 20, 1933, place of birth Waterville, Maine. My father's name was George J. Mitchell, and my mother's maiden name was Mary Saad, S-A-A-D.

**DN:** And you grew up in Waterville?

**GM:** I did.

**DN:** And as I recall, you graduated from high school early.

**GM:** I did, I was sixteen years old when I graduated from Waterville High School, in June of 1950.

**DN:** Now, your parents both came from, not from Waterville, but elsewhere.

**GM:** Yes, my mother was an immigrant from Lebanon who came to the United States in 1920, when she was eighteen years old. She'd been born in 1902. She came to Waterville because her older sister had preceded her as an immigrant from Lebanon to the United States, and with her husband had settled in Waterville. Her older sister and her husband had a child just before they left Lebanon, and as was the custom at the time, they left the child behind until they had a chance to get established in the United States. So my mother was chosen by her family to bring her niece to be reunited with her parents in Waterville. And although the plan was for my mother to simply make the trip and return, she stayed and, in fact, became a permanent resident of Waterville.

My father was born in Boston, his name at birth was Joseph Kilroy. His parents had emigrated from Ireland to the United States. My father never knew his parents. Apparently, as best we know, and I don't know the full story, his mother died shortly after his birth; his father could not care for the several children they had, so all of the children were placed in orphanages in Boston. At the age of four, my father was adopted by an elderly couple, who themselves had been immigrants from Lebanon, and who, on entry into the United States, had adopted the American name of Mitchell. They adopted my father when he was four years old, and they eventually settled in Waterville. They were neighbors of my mother's sister and brother-in-law in an area of Waterville known as Head of Falls, which was a place where primarily immigrants lived. First, French immigrants from Quebec, but then later, as there was a group of immigrants who came to the United States from Lebanon, Lebanese immigrants. All of them, the immigrants, French and Lebanese, tended to congregate there because it was an area of tenement houses. They were low-income factory workers. And it was directly adjacent to a textile mill, the Wyandotte Worsted Mill, which was right there in the area of Waterville known as the Head of Falls. And so my parents met in that way in Waterville, were married, and that's where I was born.

**DN:** And you had several siblings.

**GM:** I did, three older brothers; my brother Paul was the oldest, then my brother John, then my brother Robbie. I was the fourth boy, and then I have a sister, Barbara [Mitchell Atkins], who is

younger than I. So there are four boys and one girl. My brother Robbie died of cancer in 1996, just about six years ago.

**DN:** And Paul and John and Barbara are still in Waterville.

**GM:** Still living in Waterville, as Robbie did while he was alive. So I'm the only member of my family who left Waterville and didn't permanently reside there.

**DN:** What was your parents' education?

**GM:** Well my mother had no formal education. She could not read or write English. Although she could obviously speak, read and write Arabic, her native language. My father's education was very limited. He attended a parochial school in Waterville at St. Francis. And in later years, after his death in fact because he never spoke much about his early years to us, we discovered that the church records had burned in a fire some years later. So we, despite our efforts to do so, we could not find records of his early schooling. But the best we could determine is that he left school probably after the fourth grade, or possibly the fifth grade, so he had a very limited education and then went out and worked after that.

**DN:** What kind of work did he do?

**GM:** My father worked first as a laborer in the Portland area. Then he went to an area of western Maine, which we would know now as sort of northwest of Farmington, to work in what was called at the time 'in the woods'. As you know, Maine is a very heavily wooded state, and cutting and hauling trees is a big business. And my father worked in the woods for many years as a laborer cutting and hauling trees. And it was there that he mastered French. My father spoke very fluent French, and many of the men with whom he worked in the woods were French, and so he became a very fluent French speaker. And because of his relationship with his parents, he became very fluent in Arabic. So my father was completely fluent in three languages, English, French and Arabic.

**DN:** He was educated, but not formally.

**GM:** Educated but not formally. He was a very interesting man because he was not well educated or rounded, and he had many areas of which he knew nothing. But when he was really interested in a subject, he tended to study it and read a lot and become very well informed.

**DN:** Now, all five of you went to college.

**GM:** We did, that was my father and mother's great dream and really their purpose in life, as they said many times, was to see that their kids got the education they did not. And all five graduated from college, I graduated from Bowdoin, my sister, Barbara and my brother, Paul graduated from the University of Maine, and my brothers John and Robbie graduated from, what is now, the University of Rhode Island; at the time they went it was called Rhode Island State University.

**DN:** And they were great athletes, as I recall.

**GM:** My three older brothers were great athletes. Paul, Johnny and Robbie were all very famous, and I was not.

**DN:** You were the scholar.

**GM:** Well, that's sort of a revisionist history which a lot of people engage in. I was I would say a mediocre student throughout high school and college. Tended to do quite a bit better in law school when I was a little bit more mature. I think it's more accurate to say I was the non-athlete, wasn't up to the skills and ability of my brothers, and it bothered me for a long time.

But I must say, since you talked about my father, he was not an educated man, and he was not what you would call a communicative person. I don't think, I can't remember more than two or three times in my life we ever had what you'd call a father-son talk. But he was a perfect father for someone like me because he kept, well. . . While he supported my brothers in their athletic activities, he kept saying to me and to them, "You got to study, that's what's really important, don't worry about the sports, you study and things will take care of themselves." So, although I had a tremendous inferiority complex, it was not aggravated or reinforced by my father's attitude. His attitude was just the right one for me, because it enabled me not to sink too much into despair at my lack of athletic ability.

**DN:** Did your mother push you also?

**GM:** My mother really was the dominant person in my life, and in our family. She worked all of her adult life, I think for nearly thirty-five years, as a weaver in the textile mills in the Waterville area. There were many such mills at that time. And she always worked the night shift, she worked from eleven o'clock at night until seven in the morning all of the time that I lived at home, until I left to go to college and beyond that. My father worked most of the time, he was unemployed for a period. But in the custom of the day, when he came home at four o'clock, his workday was over. He didn't, he never lifted a finger around the house in any way. So my mother would work all night in the mill, she would come home, she did all the cooking, the cleaning, the washing, everything you could think of in relation to home. So my image of my mother is as a very strong, really inexhaustible energy. And she was very, very supportive of her children. That's really all that mattered in her life. I can remember often, my mother went to my brothers' athletic events. When Waterville High School played in basketball and my brothers were playing, my mother went to every game; my father never went to a game.

**DN:** Is that right?

**GM:** Maybe two or three times in his whole life, did he ever go. My mother, of course, didn't know a basketball from an airplane. She didn't know anything about the sport at all. But her boys were playing and she was rooting for them and so she was very enthusiastic about everything that any of her kids did. And in my case, although it was not sports, although I did play at sports, just not well, she was always enthusiastic about anything I did, going to school, studying, whatever.

**DN:** Did your folks attend at all to the public affairs of Waterville or the state?

**GM:** There was very little discussion of politics or government in our household. It was almost entirely focused on the kid's school, sports, things of that type. It did emerge that my father, like many people of his generation, had his political attitudes formed by the Great Depression and the difficult time that they had. And so he became a devout follower of Franklin Roosevelt and a Democrat through and through because of that. And what little political discussion I can remember about my father, it was almost an idealized version of Franklin Roosevelt, which as you know many people of that generation had. And I do remember that in his later years he had an absolutely intense dislike of Richard Nixon. And I can remember this very clearly, that whenever Nixon came on television, my father would leave the room. He literally would not sit and listen, or he would turn the television off, one or the other. I think he regarded him as the antithesis of Roosevelt. At the time, there wasn't really a lot of discussion about it, but I remember that, I have that visual image of him doing that. But there was not a great deal of discussion.

My father did strongly encourage me in public speaking. He was very interested in the concept of public speaking, and it began at the local church. There is, as you know, a Maronite Catholic church in Waterville. The Maronite rite is an Eastern rite, Eastern denoting what was originally the Byzantine church, and then later became the Greek Orthodox church. And the Maronite rite was an offshoot of that named after a Lebanese monk by the name of Maron, who lived a few centuries after Christ. And for most of history, it was part of the Eastern church, and then, I'm not sure when but perhaps the 17th or 16th century split off and became affiliated with the Roman church, as many Eastern, small Eastern rites did. So it was essentially a Catholic church, although an Eastern rite. My mother was an absolutely devout Maronite Catholic; after she retired from work she went to Mass every single day of her life and really did live according to the Gospel. My father, who was less overtly religious, nevertheless participated in church activities. And I was an altar boy, and at the time the Epistle at the Mass was read by altar boys, was not read by either the priest or lay people, as is now the case in the Catholic religion. And so my father was insistent that I be the best reader of the Epistle. And we would practice, I remember this very clearly, on Saturdays, church then was all on Sundays, there weren't Saturday Masses as there are now. I would stand at one end of our home and he would sit in the living room at the other end, and although we couldn't see each other because of the configuration of the rooms, the doors were open so he could hear me. And I would have to read the Epistle over and over again until he understood every word sitting at the other end of the house. And that was my first experience at public speaking, and I did become, I guess, you'd call it the best of the Epistle readers at the school primarily because I spent more time at it. And I can recall every Sunday I would get up there and read the Epistle in church; my first experience at public speaking.

**DN:** Did your family have an interest in encouraging you to become a priest?

**GM:** No, there was no discussion of that. We had, by an unfortunate coincidence, my father lost his job when I became a senior in high school. So my last year at home, before I went to college, was a very difficult one. And there was really no discussion about the future or going to

school. My father became very depressed, his self esteem declined dramatically during that year as he searched in vein for work. My mother continued to work and that supported us. My three older brothers had left to go on to college. So my father and I had a very difficult time at that point, we argued often, clashed often, and there really was no discussion of school of any kind.

And then one day, my father said to me, "Mr. Fogg would like to see you." There was a man named Hervey Fogg, it's an interesting spelling, H-E-R-V-E-Y, who had been my father's superior, his boss, at his previous job which was at Central Maine Power Company. And I didn't know Mr. Fogg, but he liked my father, felt sorry for my father, and liked me, took an interest in me. And Mr. Fogg, I went to see him, I had no idea of what he wanted to see me about. My father didn't say anything to me, just said, "Mr. Fogg wants to see you, go see him." And Mr. Fogg said to me that he had gone to Bowdoin, and that he wanted to know what plans I and my parents had made for my going on to college. And I said, "None, because my father wasn't working," it was a very difficult time. This was in the spring of my senior year in high school.

**DN:** This was what year?

**GM:** This would have been 1950. And he said, well, he said, "I think you should think about going to Bowdoin," and he said, "in fact I've made an appointment for you with the director of admissions, a fellow named Bill Shaw, in Brunswick," and he wrote down the name and address and the time and he said, "You go down there, it's a week in the future," he said, "and Bill Shaw will talk to you." And my parents didn't have a car, didn't have any money, so I hitchhiked from Waterville to Brunswick. I remember very clearly because I didn't want to be late so I left early in the morning, and I got a ride five minutes after I got out on the highway. I told the man my story and he was very kind, he took me right to the campus, so I got there about six hours early. I spent the whole day walking around the Bowdoin campus, and I went to see Bill Shaw. And he's a wonderful man, who said, "We'll take care of you." I said, "Well, my parents have no money," I said, "They literally can't pay anything, not a dollar for a book or anything like that." He said, "Oh, if you're willing to work we'll find a way." And he got me a, he and others got me a series of jobs at Bowdoin so I worked at a wide variety of jobs and got through school. So it really was through the help and intervention of a man named Hervey Fogg, who I hardly knew, and who I think really did it because he felt very sorry for my father.

**DN:** Now, you were quite young, you were sixteen?

**GM:** I turned seventeen on August 20th of that year. So by the time I got to Bowdoin I had just turned seventeen.

**DN:** Had you skipped a grade in school?

**GM:** I had, yes, in, at St. Joseph's Parochial School. It was a small school, no longer exists, this, I'm not certain of this recollection, but there was more than one class per room. There may have been as many as three classes per room. And I did fairly well, and so the nuns, who ran the school, had me skip one grade. It really wasn't, it sounds more significant than it was, because you were all in the same room anyway. But I did end up graduating from high school at the age of sixteen. Which at the time I really resented, because one of the reasons I wasn't as successful



in athletics as my brothers is that I was two years younger than all the kids that I was playing with. And when my brothers graduated from high school they were all eighteen, when I graduated I was sixteen. And so we later had many arguments about this in which I made the point I'm just now making, and of course, they ridiculed it and said that I would have had no more success if I'd been twenty five when I graduated from high school.

**DN:** I think it's fair to say that none of your brothers is a shrinking violet.

**GM:** That is for sure, none of my brothers were shrinking violets. You will get no disagreement on that.

**DN:** Now at Bowdoin, did you have any sense of what you'd like to major in?

**GM:** I didn't when I went there. I have to say that I was as naive and uninformed as anybody could be entering school. To a degree that now to me is alarming, and I think of how lucky I was the way things turned out because they could easily have turned out in another way that wasn't as good for me. After I got there, I met, and I don't really remember how I met him, probably through one of his courses, a Professor Ernst Helmreich, who was even then quite elderly. He lived until recently, into his mid nineties. And he was kind of a gruff, at first seemed forbidding type person, but he became like a, I wouldn't say a father figure, like a grandfather figure to me. And I became very, very fond of him and I think he was fond of me. And so really because of him I decided to major in modern European history, which he taught. And my goal became to become a history teacher, like him. He sort of became my model that I thought if I could get a degree, and I recognized after talking to him that I would probably need a master's degree, and get to a place like Bowdoin and teach history, then that would be a very satisfying career. That was my objective. In fact, I recall he and I talking about the possibility of my going to Northwestern, which he said had a good European studies program to get a master's degree. Now, of course, you need a Ph.D. to even get off the ground in that field, but at the time it seemed like it would be sufficient. So that was my objective going through school, and it wasn't until later that I got sidetracked into the law.

**DN:** While you were at Bowdoin, in Maine, there were some political shifts taking place. In the year, you graduated Ed Muskie was just getting ready to run for governor. Were you at all conscious of those developments?

**GM:** Barely. I do recall, I first heard Senator Muskie's name when he came to the Bowdoin campus in that year, it was the senior year, and there was either a sign or somebody said, a candidate for governor is here. I did not attend the event, but that's my first recollection of overhearing his name. And I really didn't participate in, or, and wasn't conscious in any way of the political process at the time.

**DN:** Some of the Bowdoin faculty who were very active in politics during that period included Herbert Ross Brown, Professor of English, and Paul Hazelton, and I believe, although not active in politics, David Walker had arrived sometime in that period. Were you exposed to any of them?

**GM:** I don't recall Dave Walker or Paul Hazelton being on the campus at that time, they might have been. Professor Brown was. But there was one other professor who I was exposed to and who later played a key, if accidental, role in my life, and that was Professor Abrahamson. Jim Abrahamson, as you recall, was a professor of economics at Bowdoin. And he was, in a way that I don't know, friendly with Senator Muskie, or became friendly at some point. And this is jumping ahead in the story now, but years later, as you recall, Don, after being contacted by you and meeting you first, I joined Senator Muskie's staff in the spring of 1962. And I had been trying, since I graduated from law school a couple of years earlier, to get a job with a law firm in Maine. And I couldn't get a job. When I graduated in 1960 from law school, I'd written to about fifteen Maine law firms, I'd gotten only two interviews and was not offered a job by either of those who interviewed me. And I took a job at the Justice Department in Washington. And then when I joined Senator Muskie's staff, I believe it was in April of 1962, within just a few days after I was in Senator Muskie's office, with you and others, Jim Abrahamson came in to visit Senator Muskie, and you I believe, I think you were a good friend of his. And I'll never forget this, he looked at me and he said, "What are you doing here?" And I said, "Well, I work here," I said, "What are you doing here?" He said, "Well, I'm a friend of Senator Muskie's." Because I had taken a course from Professor Abrahamson, had known him at Bowdoin, not well, but I recognized him and he recognized me. and when we got to talking and I told him that I had tried to get a job in a Maine law firm, couldn't get one, he said, "Well," he said, "I know a firm that's looking for someone." And he went back and contacted Mert Henry and Ken Baird, with the firm then of Jensen & Baird, and they contacted me. And I told them that I had made a commitment to you and Senator Muskie, that I had to stay at least through the next election, which was two and a half years away, but we maintained contact and I ended up going with that law firm. It was just one of those, it's another example of the huge role that chance plays in life, but it was Jim Abrahamson who I'd met at Bowdoin, who I saw again in Senator Muskie's office the first week I was in that office.

**DN:** Jim was an interesting fellow, he was a Republican but -

**GM:** I didn't know that.

**DN:** Quite liberal, and he had contacts in both parties, and I think he had close connections with Senator Margaret Chase Smith. And I think, and this is something we can check along the line, but I think he worked with Senator Muskie on the OPS.

**GM:** Oh, that may have been the connection. I didn't know what the connection was.

**DN:** I think that was the first connection, during the Korean War, he was serving either as a consultant or worked part time for OPS in Maine.

**GM:** Right.

**DN:** The other question I wanted to ask you about the Bowdoin years, there were several people you got to know among the student body who were later friends and political associates of yours. I think first of Paul Brontas of Bangor.

**GM:** Yes, yes.

**DN:** And who were some of the others?

**GM:** Leon Gorman, who of course later became the chief executive officer of L.L. Beans. Leon and I were fraternity brothers. I think he was, Leon was a year or maybe two years behind me in college, but I got to know him. We have remained friends over the years, not close, I don't, I've not seen him often, but in recent years we've seen each other more often in a social and other sense. Paul Brontas of course, who you mentioned. A few others with whom I've kept up contacts over the years but not in a political sense. They're just people who you met in school and see from time to time, and friends.

**DN:** You graduated from Bowdoin, and did you go directly to law school, or did Uncle Sam intervene?

**GM:** The Army intervened. While at Bowdoin, one of the ways to earn money was to join the ROTC, and so I joined the ROTC. And at that time the Bowdoin unit was assigned to the transportation corps. And then I recall some time in my senior year, and I don't remember when, those of us in the ROTC were called to a meeting with an Army officer who told us that the Army had a surplus of transportation officers and asked for volunteers to be assigned to other branches of the Army. One of the branches was the intelligence service, which sounded interesting, although I knew nothing about it. There was a huge disadvantage with signing up for the intelligence service in that you were subject to being called up on two weeks notice, but you didn't have a firm call up date. Whereas if you stayed in the transportation corps you knew you'd be called up by a date certain, usually within a month or so after graduation, then you could serve your two years of active duty commitment and then get out. Well, as a result of that indefiniteness of the intelligence service, not many of the students signed up for it. But I did and another fellow who was a friend of mine and fraternity brother, we signed up for it. And as a result of it, I didn't get called up until December 27th of that year

So I had to spend from June to December hanging around waiting to be called up. I went to work on the grounds crew at Colby where my father by then had gotten a job as a janitor, and he got me a job mowing lawns and painting. It was sort of a come down for someone who had just graduated from Bowdoin to be mowing the lawn.

**DN:** Particularly at Colby.

**GM:** Yeah, at Colby. My father, who had a good sense of humor, used to get a big kick out of telling people, "You see that kid over there," and they'd say "Yes," he'd say, "Well he's a Bowdoin graduate," he said. "Now Colby has reached such a stage of excellence, that you need a Bowdoin degree to get a job here at Colby mowing the lawn." And so, and he'd tell them I was his son. But I, so I signed up in the intelligence services and I got called up and reported for duty in Baltimore at an Army intelligence school, Fort Holabird in Baltimore on December 27th, 1954. And I spent two years in the Army, most of it as an officer in the U.S. Army Intelligence Service in Berlin, Germany. Then when I was discharged, it was about the, it was in November, I got back I think it was about early December 1956.

I had, by then, become interested in the law. And while in Berlin I met a fellow who became a good friend, he was really a wonderful guy, his name was Charlie McElvey, he was from Pennsylvania, he later practiced law very successfully in Williamsburg, Pennsylvania. He had just graduated from Georgetown Law School and he told me, well. . . I had talked to my brother Paul about going to law school but I didn't have any way to do it financially. And Charlie told me that, well, he said, at Georgetown, they have a night program, you go to law school at night. I was unaware that you could work days. So while in Berlin in the service, I'd applied to Georgetown Law School, been admitted for the mid year semester beginning in January of '57. So I left Berlin, came back home for a few weeks and then came down to Washington and started Georgetown in January of 1957, going at night and working days.

**DN:** What did you do during the day during that period?

**GM:** It's interesting, while I was in the intelligence service in Berlin, I was getting a little bit more mature. I had done very well in the Army Intelligence School, and I did well in the work and I became acquainted with the CIA station chief, or I guess I should say I came to his attention. And I worked with, in some respects, with the CIA and he recommended that I come to Washington and apply to go to work for the CIA while going to law school, which I did. But I'll never forget it, I came to Washington, I had a hundred dollars, and so I knew I had a limited amount of time to find a job and get settled. I got a hotel room right here in downtown Washington, it was ten dollars a night so I knew I might, I was figuring to the penny how much I had. So the very first day I went to the CIA for the interview. And the interview went quite well and the man said, "We're very much interested in you but," he said, "it will take several months to process this." I said, "Well, I've got to get a job," so I walked out. I bought a newspaper, I read the want ads and I saw an ad for insurance adjustor. I went, it was at Travelers Insurance Company, and I got hired right on the spot. So in one day, I did the interview with the CIA. Now later, about six months later, the CIA contacted me and offered me a job, but they wanted me to quit law school, they said, "You have to devote full time to it." And by then I'd done a semester in law school and I really didn't want to leave, so I continued as an insurance adjustor with the Travelers Insurance Company.

**DN:** I'm afraid we're going to have to end it there because -

**GM:** No, let's keep going for a few minutes.

**DN:** Okay, and you went, how many years did it take you in law school?

**GM:** I spent four years in law school, all, going year round in the evening, that's summers and all. And I graduated in the, well let's see, I started in February of, January of '57, and ended in July of 1960, I graduated then. And as I said earlier, and I'll double back to where I applied to fifteen law firms in Maine, and only two even invited me for an interview. I went for the interviews and was not offered a position, and so I was quite discouraged. And one day I got a letter right out of the blue, literally out of the blue, from the U.S. Department of Justice. I had done very well in law school, I had finished third in my class, and they announced in this letter to me that there was something called the Honor Law Graduates Program. I don't think that's the

precise title of it, but that's what it was. And if you finished in the top five percent of your class of a certain category of law schools, you were offered a position in the Justice Department. And so of course I accepted it, but only after I had tried with the Travelers. When I couldn't get a job in Maine in a law firm, I applied to transfer with the Travelers to Maine, and I said I'll take a job anywhere in Maine, I just want to get back to Maine. And they didn't have any vacancies in Maine so they said, "you either have to stay here or leave." So I accepted the Justice Department position and went to work as a trial attorney in the anti trust division of the Department of Justice, and I think that would have been in July of 1960.

**DN:** Did you have a sense of why you were turned down in Maine at those two firms?

**GM:** At the time there was still a stigma associated with going to law school at night. I think the feeling was that you, it was an inferior education and that you just couldn't do it. I remember one of the firms, of course it's a firm that I'm now affiliated with, which is Preti, Flaherty, Beliveau & Pachios, and it was then Berman, Berman, Wernick & Flaherty. And I was interviewed by both Bermans, it was Jake Berman and Eddie Berman, and they narrowed it down to two people, myself and another guy, with whom I later became friends, and then they offered him the position. And of course I was disappointed at the time, but life has a funny way of -

**DN:** Later they were eager and delighted to have you.

**GM:** Yeah, yeah, the firm has of course grown tremendously, and it's worked out very well. But at the time I was very disappointed, but I then went to the Justice Department, and I tried not get in the anti trust division because I still had my hopes and dreams set on returning to Maine. That was my goal, I wanted to live in Maine and practice law. But, and I didn't think anti trust offered me much opportunity there. And in fact, while there I was offered a couple of positions with large law firms, one in Washington, one in Richmond, Virginia, but I declined because my hope was still to go back to Maine. And then when you called me and I came up to talk with you and Senator Muskie, you probably don't remember this but I do because it was important to me. I told you and Senator Muskie that I really want to do this, but my real goal is to get back to Maine and that I would try to do it. And I remember Senator Muskie saying to me, "Well now, you've got to make a commitment of a couple years." I said, "Yes, the understanding is the election, I'll stay through the, at least through the election," which was satisfactory to him and you because it was nearly three years away, and it was just a few days later that Jim Abrahamson walked into the office. So, I mean, it was just incredible. I had tried all these years, for so long, to get a job back in Maine, without success, and then like an angel from heaven Jim Abrahamson walked into Senator Muskie's office. And within a few days Ken Baird came to Washington, and I remember meeting him in the Senate cafeteria, we had a cup of coffee, we had a very nice discussion. And they were so kind to me, Ken and Ray Jenson and Mert, because I was obviously interested, I was eager. I mean I made it very clear to them that this is what I wanted to do, but I said, look, I've made a commitment to Senator Muskie and I can't even think about this for what is now nearly three years. And they said, "Well, let's keep in touch." And they made it rather clear, without making a commitment to me, that unless something untoward happened, there would be a position for me after the 1964 election, and there was.

**DN:** Thank you very much.

**GM:** Okay, thank you, Don.

*End of Interview*