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INTERVIEW I

DATE: October 5, 1981

INTERVIEWEE: JULIUS RICHMOND

INTERVIEWER: MICHAEL L. GILLETTE

PLACE: Dr. Richmond's office, Boston, Massachusetts

Tape 1 of 2

G: Let's start with your initial involvement in the War on Poverty and particularly Head Start, how you were called in to work with the program.

R: Well, shortly after the Economic Opportunity Act was passed in the fall of 1964 and Mr. Shriver was designated by President Johnson to take on the directorship of the Office of Economic Opportunity in addition to his Peace Corps directorship, he began to put together an advisory group to look at what could be done for young children that might have some impact on interrupting the cycle of poverty from generation to generation. My interpretation of the basis of his interest was the fact that he was more knowledgeable than most laymen about the impact of environment on the psychological and social development of children largely because over the years he had been the executive director of the Kennedy Foundation. The Kennedy Foundation was very involved in supporting research programs for the mentally retarded to try to learn more about the basis for this. During the course of this it was to be expected that Mr. Shriver would also become familiar not alone with the organic causes for mental

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retardation, but also the environmental causes, what we define broadly as environmental retardation, or what I tend to think of as developmental attrition--children have been developing and then they undergo a downhill course.

When he became director of the Office of Economic Opportunity, building on his background he put together this interdisciplinary advisory committee to make suggestions as to what could be done to enhance the development of children growing up in poverty. This advisory committee was chaired by Dr. Robert Cooke, a pediatrician who was then the professor of pediatrics at Johns Hopkins. The committee suggested to him that it would be possible to try to develop a program that would provide for a comprehensive child development program. By comprehensive I mean that it wouldn't be just health and it wouldn't just be psychological, it wouldn't be exclusively educational or it wouldn't be social service, but rather it would put all of this together. And that's a remarkable document. There's a brief document, about two pages, I think, or maybe three or four, that that advisory committee submitted to Mr. Shriver, and it really laid out all of the things that subsequently came to be Head Start.

As Mr. Shriver proceeded then to think about where one could really get some help to do this, he began to look around. He had known of our work in Syracuse. At that point I was chairman of the department of pediatrics at Syracuse and I had also just become dean of the medical school. With one of my colleagues, Dr. Bettye Caldwell, who's now down in Little Rock, Arkansas, I had been developing a

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program that had already demonstrated in a scientific way that you could interrupt the developmental decline. Let me back up now and explain what I mean by developmental decline or developmental attrition. What we observed in very low income children that we were studying from the prenatal period on was that they developed by standard tests reasonably well up through the first year. But at about the first year, when language becomes more important to development and as children begin to explore their environments and interact more with others, these children underwent a rather steep decline in development, again as measured by tests. Ultimately, of course, this gets reflected over the years in school performance because all of the measures that we're talking about are basic to performing in the usual school environment.

Well, when we faced up to this naturalistic observation that these children were undergoing what we call developmental attrition, we then had to face up to the ethical question, since the parents didn't come to us for any intervention, should we try to intervene? We struggled over the ethical issues of whether we might be more intrusive than parents might desire, and we decided that it was worth trying to make a demonstration that one could in fact prevent this developmental decline, and we had demonstrated that. It was just prior to the time that the Economic Opportunity Act was passed.

But because of Mr. Shriver's involvement in mental retardation and my involvement in both mental retardation and this whole field of child development as professor of pediatrics, he was quite

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Lyndon B. Johnson Library Oral Histories [NAID 24617781]
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knowledgeable about what we had been doing. So he invited me to come to Washington. In characteristic fashion, he wanted me to drop everything that day and get down there immediately. I had some appointments to see some patients and some other commitments, so I suggested I would come down the following day which turned out to be Sunday. I flew down to Washington in what was really quite a snowstorm, one of those rare snowstorms in Washington.

We had a meeting and he essentially laid out what he was interested in having me attempt to do. At that point, I had not had any large scale public health experience and large scale managerial experience, although I'd certainly been involved in managing enterprises within the academic environment, but I had been deeply interested in public health and public health issues. So when I suggested to him that maybe he ought to try to find someone who had had more of a public health and managerial background than I had, Shriver in his rather characteristic fashion said, "Well, if I had wanted a bureaucrat, I would have looked for one." So I said, "Well, but I've just taken on the deanship and I have a lot of obligations and I just really don't know whether I could drop everything and come and do this." He said, "Well, would you like to have me call the president of your university?" And I said, well, no, I didn't think that was quite necessary, that maybe we could settle this without that.

He had done his homework. He turned to me and he said, "You know, you've been a very strong advocate of programs like this going way back to early in your career. You know in the late forties in

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Illinois"--where I was then--"you were a very strong proponent of permissive legislation for what we then called nursery schools, pre-schools like Head Start." I said, "Yes, that's true. I was and still am." And he said, "Well, now, put up or shut up."

So I found myself in Washington. The university was rather generous in making it possible for me to do this, and we then began to develop the program.

G: Had you had any input in the committee?

R: No, I had been talking to people who were on the committee, so I knew they were meeting and I was somewhat familiar with what they were trying to accomplish. But until he had called me down I had not had any direct involvement with the committee.

G: Did you ever learn how you came to Shriver's attention for this position?

R: I think from many sources. I don't think it was one. Shriver's bias, I think, was clearly in the direction of getting a medical person, and certainly Bob Cooke, because we were fellow professors of pediatrics, knew what I was doing. I was one of the few pediatricians at that time who was carrying on research that went beyond purely biological research and that incorporated the psychological and the social. I know there were many people on that advisory committee who knew me personally so I think that he probably got my name from several sources. Actually, right here at the Children's Hospital, I know he called Dr. [Charles] Janeway, who was then the chief of medicine here, in other words the pediatrician-in-chief, and Dr. Janeway suggested

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that he try to get me. So I think it sort of bubbled up from several sources.

But by the time that happened we were into early February of 1965, and I and the committee and my associate director for the program, Jule Sugarman, were struggling with when we could start the program. We started out thinking about a summer program, and the judgment we had to arrive at sometime during that month of February was whether we were going to run a program that summer of 1965 or whether we would wait until the year following. All of the experts that we talked to--well, when I say experts, I mean all of the people representing professional organizations--kept telling us, "Well, you can't do it this summer. It's already too late and you'll never carry it off," and [they said] we'd better wait a year or two or three, even. Some of them kept talking about "you don't have enough manpower and you'll never be able to carry it off." And with Jule Sugarman available to do the managerial side of this, which he had great expertise in and he had a deep, personal commitment to this kind of program, I felt quite confident that we could carry it off, even though it would be pushing communities all over the country to get applications in and all.

You can get some idea, getting even the announcements of the program out, we couldn't do that until early March. By then our timing was such that all we could do is give the communities six weeks in which to write their applications. When I again come back to the fact that these were comprehensive child development programs, not

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just preschool education--[they were] supposed to have health and nutrition and social services as well as the education components, and we built in voluntary effort and participation of the various professions and all--six weeks was really putting them under quite a gun. But that also meant that we had left ourselves only six weeks to review all these applications and process them and get these communities funded so that we could be off and running sometime in June. And yet we made the judgment that we probably could carry it off.

That essentially was how we got going. The response was really phenomenal and the response of Mr. Shriver and the President, as a consequence of the numbers of communities expressing interest, were remarkable, too, in the sense that they were so supportive. But we started out thinking we'll maybe have a hundred programs or so. Well, we sent out the letters just asking people to send back a postcard expressing interest.

G: These went to local school board officials?

R: About forty thousand communications to commissioners of health, education and welfare [at the] state, county, local level insofar as we could get lists. So by the time we totaled all of that up--and professional organizations and whatnot--I think forty thousand letters went out. And these cards started coming back in. I'll never forget, there was a very interesting fellow who was on Shriver's staff and we came into his staff meeting--he used to hold a staff meeting early in the morning, three mornings a week. This fellow flipped through these

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cards and he said, "Why, we haven't heard of places like this since [Estes] Kefauver ran for the presidency in 1952." (Laughter)

People came out of the woodwork manifesting their interest and then what happened was that we had to undergo kind of a role reversal, that is people like me did, who are accustomed to going through grant review processes for the National Institutes of Health, or whatever, where your whole objective was to determine what the very highest quality were and then you discarded the rest and it was a very ritualized process. And when I say role reversal, in this process we had to keep thinking of how we could get those communities that needed the programs the most and had the least capacity to write an application into the program. So it was exactly the opposite of what we had traditionally been accustomed to.

G: So then did you gauge the need on the basis of how bad the grant application was?

R: No, and I give Jule Sugarman really the credit for all of this and I tried to describe it in one of the little pieces I did in that book [Project Head Start, Ed Zigler, editor]. What we did, I think it was my idea to focus on the three hundred poorest counties in addition to everything. We said if this program is to be succcessful, we ought to try to get the poorest counties in the nation and not just those that know how to write grants and always get in on all of the programs. Then we begin to think, well, how would you go about doing that? We decided that what we needed were some people in Washington who were knowledgeable about those districts and could stir up the right

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Lyndon B. Johnson Library Oral Histories [NAID 24617781]
More on LBJ Library oral histories:
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people, you see, and try to get their attention and interest. What we decided was that the way to do that would be to get the congressional wives from those districts, but we then developed an organization of congressional wives. Mrs. Johnson did play a role of catalyzing that. Marge McNamara was also quite activist as one of the cabinet wives and Mrs. Arthur Goldberg--he then was a Supreme Court justice. Those were the kinds of people, you know, that saw this as just a very important thing to do. But Mrs. Johnson sort of stirred them up. I can recall the mayors of cities one hundred thousand and over having a meeting in Washington and [being] invited to dinner at the White House. The wives were then invited to a meeting at which I spoke and laid out the program, and of course in the areas of great need, they went back to their home cities and promoted the program with enthusiasm.

Getting back to the congressional wives, what we had them do then was to identify key figures, whether it was the health commissioner or school superintendent or whomever back in those districts. But that wasn't enough, because all they had was six weeks and you couldn't expect people with very little capacity to develop the capacity in a hurry. So Jule Sugarman, who knew the federal government much better than I did and what potential resources there might be, got the notion, since the Economic Opportunity Act specifically indicated that you could provide technical assistance to communities--and again, that was different from other grant programs where it's hands off; you just put out the guidelines and then they go at it and you're not supposed to intervene. But here we had this option of providing technical

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assistance. Well, how do you provide technical assistance to three hundred communities across the nation? But there were more that wanted technical assistance.

Well, Jule got the idea of drawing on the management interns. There are interns in all of the departments of government. They're generally young, generally very enthusiastic. So he got the idea of tapping in to them as resources for the administrative side of the program so that they could go out to communities and help communities understand how you dealt with a budget and what the guidelines were and how you set up managing the enterprise in order to have accountability and all of the proprieties in that sense. The way we brought them up to speed was we had an intensive evening course. We sent word out--and there's a very good grapevine among that group--so all of those [would] know, whether they were working in Interior or Defense or wherever, if they were interested in young children and wanted to do something, they could work on this program. Strictly on their own time and all, we weren't interfering with their jobs.

So we would train them nights and then they would go out weekends and we would team them up with a professional from a university. By that time we had established a bank of professionals--psychologists, social workers, early childhood educators, pediatricians who knew something about children in the substantive aspects. So we'd have two go out to a community on a weekend and they would literally sit with the people in that community and write the grant application. So we didn't get all three hundred in that first summer, but I think we got

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something like a hundred and eighty-nine or thereabouts, so there was quite a yield.

G: Was there an effort to strike a balance between rural and urban in these first--?

R: Well, we didn't really have to face that issue. I said earlier that the response of Mr. Shriver and the President was very remarkable in this sense, that as we kept getting more applications and we worried about whether there would be enough money, they kept saying, "Okay, we can go that high." It was a period of expansiveness so that you could do this. So we never had a ceiling put on, you see.

Now, let me sort of get the final numbers. What we had come in were about thirty-three hundred applications and we ended up with twenty-seven hundred of them being funded for programs that summer. There were some that if they just didn't indicate that they could carry it off we couldn't in good conscience, no matter how great the need was, provide the funds. But by and large, the communities were in need and the populations had to be clearly defined.

G: So really you were at both ends of the grant application process. Your management interns were at the preparation end as well as you at the evaluation.

R: How do you process thirty-three hundred applications in six weeks? Here again, Jule Sugarman and I struggled over how you could do this, and we decided, well, you'd break the processing down into component parts so that it was manageable. But then we needed a staff and you needed a staff that would be available on a short-term basis, because

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Lyndon B. Johnson Library Oral Histories [NAID 24617781]
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we couldn't hire several hundred people to do this processing and then keep them employed in Washington indefinitely. There'd be no need for them after we got the programs funded. We thought where do you get people who could work on a short-term basis that intensively? And I think it was Jule who got the idea, and it turned out to be a brilliant one, of tapping in to the substitute teachers in the District who were generally not fully employed. The school district down there went along with the idea, so we brought all of the substitute teachers in to work on this processing line. Their educational level was such that they could be trained rather readily and it turned out to be a very workable sort of thing. They appreciated the employment and we needed their competence, and so it was a good match.

Just to show you how the thing ran, I was on a program one evening at the Mayflower Hotel--it was a conference on day care--and the head of the Child Welfare League of America, Joe Reid, and I were on that program. This was about ten o'clock in the evening when the meeting broke up. Joe said, "What are you going to do now? You want to have a drink or something?" I said, "No, I'm going back to the processing line." He said, "The processing line? What do you mean?" I said, "Well, we're processing the grant applications." He said, "Mind if I come with you?" And I said, "No." So we went down and, you know, the lights were blazing and people were working and things were really revved up by then. By this time it was about eleven o'clock at night. His eyes popped. He was a marine in World War II.

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He said, "I haven't seen anything like this since World War II." And that's about the way it went and that's how it took off.

G: Did you have a pilot program or a model that you could look to where a Head Start operation had actually taken place?

R: Well, the program that Bettye Caldwell and I developed in Syracuse on a very small scale, one of my colleagues up there called that the pilot plan for Head Start and in no small measure it kind of was.

G: It really was?

R: Yes.

G: Did it contain all of the different elements in the original--?

R: Yes, it had all of these ingredients but it had a much richer mix because we were using this for research purposes as well, so we probably had more staff. But it was very important to have had that experience.

Just as one example, the things that might seem like small decisions that can have great significance, the third or fourth day I was in Washington, Jule Sugarman said--well, we'd been projecting the following number of teachers per child and they had gone on the basis of what elementary schools usually have, one teacher per twenty or thirty children. And I said, "No, we can't have that." They said, "Well, what do you suggest?" I said, "I would suggest one trained teacher and two teaching assistants per fifteen children." They said, "You've just more than doubled the budget for teachers." I said, "Well, if it's necessary that we do a program for half as many children this first year, that's what we ought to do. I don't know

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Lyndon B. Johnson Library Oral Histories [NAID 24617781]
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whether we'll succeed if we have one teacher per fifteen children with two assistants, but I know we'll fail if it's one teacher with twenty to thirty children. One of the most important things about a new program is that it succeed and demonstrate successes." And I said, "If that means reducing the scope and size of the program, then that's what we'd better do."

Well, it turned out we didn't have to do that because, again, of the response of the President and Mr. Shriver. Incidentally, each of these times I'd up the ante and go to Mr. Shriver he'd say, "Well, let me talk to the President," and the next day he'd say, "Fine." So you know it kept going up and up. When we started announcing the grants, it was very interesting. We generally would go over to the White House and the President would announce them in the Rose Garden before cameras and all. It was quite a festive occasion so he personally played quite a role. I've got some pictures at home of Mrs. Johnson with some of the children that were brought in for the day he announced the first set of grants.

G: Were there any significant differences between your program in Syracuse and Head Start, simply because of either the politics or the administrative differences?

R: Mainly in age and mainly in numbers of people and mainly also the fact that as the programs operated, they couldn't be research programs like ours were and where we had much more data. But basically, the program orientation, philosophically and operationally, was very similar. When I say there was an age difference, in Syracuse for reasons

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Lyndon B. Johnson Library Oral Histories [NAID 24617781]
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related to our research, we started with infants as young as six months of age and went on up. With Head Start that was another major decision that we had to make early on, are you going to cover all of the preschool years from birth on up or will you focus? And the advisory committee and I decided we would target at the children who were the year prior to school entry. The reason I put it that way is that not all schools across the country entered children at the same age because some had kindergartens and some didn't. Only about half the children of the country at that time had kindergartens. So in some instances we were dealing with the four-year-olds where there were kindergartens, and other places we were dealing with the five-year-olds. The reason for that was we felt that even though our resources were fairly good, that if we distributed them thinly over all of the preschool years we wouldn't have an impact on any one age period.

G: Did you feel that this was the most critical year of a preschooler's [development]?

R: I don't think we could say critical, but I had the feeling that if we were going to impact on the children with a carry-over to the school years, that it would be better if there were not a gap between the time they were in the program and the time in the school. There still isn't any good, absolute proof for that, but that just more or less on a common sense basis was the way we decided to go.

G: At Syracuse, have you also incorporated parental involvement in the program?

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R: Yes, very much so, and that again was one of the reasons why we built that in to one of the basic ingredients of Head Start. Bettye Caldwell and I had had enough experience with parents to know that things went better if the parents were involved. We also learned that parent involvement with low income families was not necessarily what it would be with middle class families if you were going to have some impact, although I think we've learned subsequently even for middle income families that they do better if they're involved. The point of difference that I'm getting at is that with middle class families there had been a history of parent education. That is parents had some motivation, they wanted to learn about child development, they would be willing to sit in a classroom and have somebody talk to them about child development and the needs of children. We found that getting them involved in the actual program, letting them see what was happening, or letting them see how teachers worked with children was much more important.

We didn't have a clear idea of what we really wanted to see develop when we said parent involvement, and we tried not to be rigid about what communities submitted because we thought over time we'll empirically find out what seems to work better as communities explore this. But we didn't use the word parent education advisedly. It was on the basis of my experience in Syracuse and the best term that I could think of was involvement, so that's what we stayed with.

G: Did you ever consider requiring, say, a certain measure of parental participation in order to enter the kids in a program?

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Lyndon B. Johnson Library Oral Histories [NAID 24617781]
More on LBJ Library oral histories:
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R: Well, again, we didn't want to rule children out who were living in the worst circumstances. Our advisory committee was very alert to this. During that first summer and toward the end of the first summer, they kept saying, "Well, are we really getting the children who always fall between the cracks in those families that never get into programs?" We paid a lot of attention that first summer on how to contact such parents. For example, rather than relying exclusively on printed materials and the print media, we tried to do a lot over radio where we had some reason to believe that these families were more in tune with radio than they were with the print media. So we did everything we knew how to do, but we still had not satisfied ourselves at the end of the first summer that we were really getting the most needy of the children.

G: In retrospect, did you feel that parental involvement was all that it should have been? Should there have been greater parental involvement? If so, how would you [have accomplished it]?

R: Very difficult to know quantitatively, you know, whether we were getting as much as one would want. Since we didn't have a clear idea of precisely what would work best, I suspect communities weren't quite as determined. I think communities in general tend to do a little bit better if you give them something that's more structured to go by.

But I think by and large there was a lot of activity and I think it turned out to be better than we expected is the way I would put it. But if you asked me to quantify it, I wouldn't be able to do that.

G: Do you recall the origin of the name Head Start?

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Lyndon B. Johnson Library Oral Histories [NAID 24617781]
More on LBJ Library oral histories:
http://discoverlbj.org/exhibits/show/loh/oh

R: The origin as I got it--and Jule Sugarman has the details on this better than I do--a group of people working in OEO and who had learned something of the notion of what we were trying to do, were sitting around and they were talking about things like "Kiddie Care" and nothing seemed to be appropriate. They were tossing all kinds of names in the hopper and as Jule recollects it, it was a person who had come over, I think, from the AFL-CIO to work in OEO--

G: Jack Conway?

R: No, no, no. It wasn't somebody at that level. [It was] somebody working in one of the programs. And he said Head Start. Once it was said, apparently everybody in the room agreed that's it and there never was further discussion. But that was already pretty much set by the time I came on the scene. So I didn't have anything to do with arriving at that terminology.

G: I notice that the year before there had been a pilot program in West Virginia for rural preschool kids that was referred to as an Even Start program. Were you familiar with this?

R: Only in retrospect, because I'd heard about it and the wife of the Governor of West Virginia--it was Governor [Hulett C.] Smith and Mrs. Smith had been very interested in this, and so when I went up to West Virginia I talked to her some about it. But I have always been inclined to say that the students in the civil rights movement--the summer before when they went into the South for voter registration, one of the things they did was to start preschools. So I think that also seeded the [program]. And to me that was kind of interesting

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because they didn't have any formal commitment or training, but they just knew that something like this would be good for young children and I think just set out to do it. I think they were called Freedom Schools.

G: In Head Start as it evolved when you came on, was part of the thinking to provide some sort of day care or did you consider what the parent might be able to do in terms of employment or generate income or something while the child was [at school]?

R: Oh, yes. Well, it had mixed goals and mixed objectives, and when I say comprehensive, if one pulls out the original pamphlet describing the program, though, and really what was sent out so that communities could respond, you get some of all of these objectives. Those that were child-centered, those that were oriented toward the parent, and particularly in relationship to social services, we proposed not to try to replicate what was available to families in the community. But we did specify that the Head Start program try to guide parents to the resources in the community: employment resources, welfare resources, social agencies that might be helpful beyond Head Start, the medical facilities in the community beyond Head Start. So all of these issues were initially part of the program, but I wouldn't say that we specifically designed Head Start so that mothers could be free to work. We felt it was inherently good.

G: You must have talked to Lyndon Johnson about the Head Start program over the period that you were associated with it. I just wonder if he ever talked about the program from his perspective, what he thought of it.

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Lyndon B. Johnson Library Oral Histories [NAID 24617781]
More on LBJ Library oral histories:
http://discoverlbj.org/exhibits/show/loh/oh

R: I didn't have a great deal of conversation with him personally, more with Mrs. Johnson, but there were a couple of encounters that I had with him. At the time we made the first set of grants and I described our going over to the White House and his announcing them in the Rose Garden, Mr. Shriver and I went into the Oval Office together and he kind of shook his head and said, "You know, this whole thing is where I came in." I did a double take, and he said, "Well, you know, I'm a schoolteacher, I was teaching Mexican-American chidren. This program is designed to do what we were trying to do way back then and it just adds to what might be currently available." He, of course, was very intrigued, and interested and very committed. Then a little more than a year later, it was in March of 1966--no, it was March of 1967. By this time we had developed in Head Start a film on a young Mexican-American child.

G: Pancho.

R: Pancho. That's the film. They were to have the first showing in the White House, and Mrs. Johnson had arranged for the President to be there. They had arranged to give me an award. I had developed tuberculosis the previous fall, that's [why] when I talked about dating it, I could date it in terms of that episode. This is when I was sort of getting back into circulation, and they had decided to give me an award and it was on that occasion that they had the showing. I was sitting just a little behind the President and they had Pancho and his parents there, and as the film began to be shown and he looked at it, he turned around toward me and with tears in his eyes, saying, "This

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is all of what I used to see when I was teaching school down there in South Texas." So he clearly was very touched by it, and Mrs. Johnson used to keep him posted on the program, so he knew a lot about it. But I had not had a lot of personal contact with him over that time, just these occasional things.

G: Was Mrs. Johnson ever useful in advancing the cause of Head Start with the President? Do you recall?

R: Things were just moving forward so rapidly and the whole period was so expansive that while we kept in touch with her--and Liz Carpenter was just enormously helpful in sort of opening doors and all--that it just never seemed to be necessary. Now it may be that it wasn't necessary because she was informally paving the way all the time, and I'm sure there was a lot of that. But I think that President--it was just so much a part of his overall commitment to the anti-poverty effort that I think we just were supported almost to the limit of what we could do. I think our limitations during the period were only on what it was humanly possible to get going.

G: Were you alarmed by the fact that they were encouraging this rapid expansion? Did it seem to be expanding too fast for a good administration?

R: No, I never really felt that it got out of hand in any way. You had occasional transgressions across the country, a report of somebody's misusing funds or something, but by and large certainly the early period was one of great enthusiasm across the country. Our concern was really more--not because we were moving so fast, but of not

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over-promising. A lot of people several years later said, "Well, they promised so much." "Well, if you go back to all of the early statements about Head Start, there were no false promises. We always said you need to be cautious, we always said that the health component was just as important as the early educational component, and of course we did all ultimately get caught up in all the talk about cognitive development, but that was not part of Head Start's doing. The media kept pressing, you see, what do we know about IQ points and all, and we used to joke about how much it costs to raise the nation's IQ level one point and things of that sort, because we didn't see that as the primary objective of the program.

So I think we were not seduced into making extravagant or inappropriate claims as I see it. But there was, of course, the perception that IQ points were going to rise and these children would be forevermore able, cognitively, to master anything.

G: This is a point in the [Edward] Zigler book [Project Head Start] that you've gone into.

R: Yes.

G: Well, originally, the program was designed as a three-month program, is that right? A summer [program]? Wasn't there some question as to whether it would continue to be a year-round program?

R: That's right. But while we got started, we began to lay the groundwork for a year-round program, because we were quite convinced from the onset that it would be better if these children had this kind of environment throughout the year rather than only during the summer. I

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don't think we could have mounted as large a program during the school year. That's another point that I didn't bring out in terms of our confidence that we could run a program in the summer. We knew that we could tap in to a pool of teachers, you see, that were ordinarily underemployed in the summer and who would be interested in doing this. This involved giving them some short, intensive courses to bring them up to speed to working with younger children. But that worked out I think very successfully. But if we had had to start on that scale for a year-round program, I just don't think we could have carried that on.

G: Can you outline how the decision was made to continue year round?

R: Well, just largely through our discussions--that is, when I say our, Jule Sugarman and I--with the advisory committee, bringing this to Mr. Shriver and then beginning to develop the design for this.

G: Do you think that the arrangement of working through Title II or the Community Action Program was satisfactory? Should Head Start have been another provision?

R: Well, that's a very interesting question, and it relates to Mr. Shriver's managerial style, because even though we were part of the Community Action Program, managerially he never dealt with us as though we really were. He dealt with us quite directly, so we never felt as though we were being constrained by being in the Community Action Program. We tried to exercise the proprieties of going through the director of the Community Action Program and on a formal basis as budgets would go up and things of that sort, we dealt with those

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formalities. But in terms of major program decisions and all, it was really right out of Mr. Shriver's office in effect. That occasionally made for some abrasions. Some of the Community Action people, particularly if they had come out of the old federal bureaucracies, thought that that violated all of the proprieties. Yet it was very functional. This is what always causes me to describe Mr. Shriver as the world's best anti-bureaucrat since he really didn't pay all that much attention to the proprieties.

G: You didn't have any chain-of-command problems with the Community Action Program?

R: Once in a great while, but Mr. Shriver was in such close touch with what we were doing that nobody could really essentially second-guess us or undercut us in terms of the momentum that we had going.

G: How about at the local level? Here did you have problems with the Community Action agencies?

R: Well, I think early on everything was moving so quickly that there wasn't much of that. Here we had something to learn and we took this as a plus that we were in the Community Action agencies at the local level, because they had had experience in mobilizing people in the low income communities, they had had experience in how you get people to work on boards and that's what we were about. So I would say by and large at the local level we found the arrangement to be rather helpful. So I think at the local level the proprieties were exercised much more than they were at the central headquarters level. It's an interesting point. I hadn't quite thought of it that way, but we

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talked a lot about the fact that we were in the Community Action Program out in the field and by and large we always--I think Jule Sugarman and I at any rate--felt that that was more of a help than a hindrance.

G: Do you think that it served to bring new elements into the Community Action Program on a local level?

R: Oh, yes. No question. Yes. Because we were tapping into resources in the community from the educational establishment, the social services programs and certainly the field of health which [meant] we had people coming in that never would have had anything to do with this program if it had been the broad-based Community Action agency. So the fact that these programs had to have boards of their own and had to have consultants of their own in the community I think made an enormous difference and brought a lot of people in that never would have known about Community Action.

G: What about the professional-class volunteers that seemed to be associated with Head Start programs in various places? Were these people, do you think, drawn into the Community Action operation?

R: I'm trying to get clear as to what you mean by professional-class volunteers. People from professional, middle class backgrounds?

G: Right. Right. Yes.

R: Yes. Well, they, again, kept coming out of the woodwork when the program was announced. We had difficulty even estimating accurately whether we had a hundred thousand or four hundred thousand volunteers in Head Start that first summer. My guess is that it was probably

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somewhere midway between. But we had people volunteering to do the driving, to work in the kitchens and all that.

Incidentally, working in the kitchens reminds me, again, another specification of the program, since we wanted to insure the best quality nutrition, we thought a way of doing that would be to specify that there be one hot meal because we felt if you didn't specify that, there wouldn't be all that much attention to the food that the children got. But if you were providing a hot meal, you had to pay some attention to setting up for it and getting people interested in what was going in that meal preparation rather than just putting out a little cereal and milk or whatever. So again, it was a nuance.

But we were able to attract all kinds of people from communities into the program. I often said in speeches about that time, to me it was the best evidence that the American people do have a deep interest in their children if you just give them some way to manifest that interest. This was a very good example.

G: Anything else on the relationship between Head Start and Community Action Program?

R: No, we had a lot to do those days with Dick Boone, who was the head of program development or whatever his office was called. What that served to do is to feed in a lot of ideas because people from all over the country would phone in with this, that or the other kind of suggestion. He was a great advocate of the Foster Grandparents notion, developing that as a separate program but also bringing in the notion of grandparents as volunteers in Head Start. Many other program ideas

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tended to come to us from that source and I think the interaction was very helpful to us. So I think it worked out quite well.

G: The one celebrated example of a Head Start program was the Child Development Group of Mississippi and I want to ask you to recount the controversy there and the decisions that were made in [inaudible] to some extent.

R: Well, some of the shifts in the funding came after my time, so when it got to a high level of controversy, I was pretty much out of the picture. So I can't really comment there, but in the early days we were very interested in getting a program going in Mississippi. We didn't have the notion of integrated programs and integrated schools in the South as an operational notion at that time. The Governor was not particularly receptive but he couldn't impede the development of the program because of a very creative, in my view, notion that we had generated. That is that we would make the grant to an institution of higher education, which meant that the Governor couldn't veto the program. And so that's how we got to Mary Holmes Junior College. And the question at one point--an amusing sidelight came up, is it an institution of higher learning? Then I had to begin to try to define what is an institution of higher learning. I learned from the Office of Education that a loose definition they had was that if their credits had ever been accepted at an accredited institution, that it then would be regarded as an institution of higher learning. We couldn't find many students whose academic work had been accredited at traditionally accredited institutions, but we did find that there had

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been precedent, that there had been some, so it was an acceptable institution.

So we made the grant to the college, and it developed the Child Development Group of Mississippi. There was a great deal of imagination and energy and vigor in the program, and that first summer they were operating, I think, in eighty-six different communities across the state. We were highly enthusiastic about the program, but there were a number of problems that were developing down there. I decided to make a visit--this would have been, I think, in late July or early August of 1965. I went down there and the program really was exciting. We traveled from community to community, often with cars loaded with rednecks following us, talked to some of the young people who had come from the North as volunteers in the program who would be standing guard at night over their buildings with rifles and things of this sort. It was really a tense situation. One of the most beautiful programs we saw had been operating out of a wonderful little black church, I think it was in Dalewood [Daleville?], and it was burned down the day after we visited the place. The next day it opened under a tent. People in the community were willing to go ahead and we provided the authorization for them to proceed. So it was that kind of situation.

The program at that time was being directed by Tom Levin, who had come from New York, a psychologist and person I had known somewhat fortuitously. For a variety of reasons I had some apprehensions about whether the program could go on for any significant period of time

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with that outside leadership and I think there were some other problems developing.

G: Were these political problems by and large?

R: Some political, some personal conduct, just a variety of things. But I felt if we didn't make some change in the administration of the program that we might be headed for some major embarrassments.

G: Had you received any pressure from the Mississippi congressional delegation at this point?

R: Well, we had been under considerable attack by Senator [John] Stennis shortly after we got back to Washington. I incidentally invited to go with me Dr. George Gardner, who very fortuitously a number of years later I succeeded as director of the Judge Baker Guidance Center in Boston and chief of psychiatry in this hospital. But he was with me on that trip, and when we got back to Washington it was announced that Senator Stennis was going to hold hearings. So George Gardner came down. He and I and Mr. Shriver were in the hearings; the program was under very considerable attack by the Senator. They had sent an audit team down, and I think out of the million and a half dollars that we were expending that summer, there were about twenty-six thousand dollars that they couldn't identify receipts for. And that became a very large cause celebre for the Senator.

G: Were you satisfied in your own mind that there had been some financial mismanagement or misuse?

R: Oh, no, after all, twenty-six thousand dollars in a state where a black man couldn't ask a white man, a white vendor, for a receipt and

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expect a response, so I was a little taken aback that it was that low. We had cautioned people about getting receipts and documenting everything, because we knew that sooner or later this kind of thing would come up. But to me, that was a ridiculously low figure not to have receipts for when you're expending a million and a half dollars and particularly under those circumstances. So I viewed this as kind of a Star Chamber proceeding.

G: How about participation in civil rights activities?

R: Well, there was a lot of that kind of activity. For example, we were cautioned--I was--by some of our security staff people, people from our Inspector General's Office about the problems of our riding in integrated cars, and I mentioned the rednecks. We were riding in integrated cars, but with the recognition that it was a very hazardous thing to do there at that time.

The contrasts, of course, are so great. Nine years later I was invited back to Mississippi to a governor's conference on education and youth and I decided, well, it'd be interesting to see how much change had taken place. Of course I went back and at the hotel in Jackson, Mississippi there was the Governor with blacks on the platform and a lot of interaction. The whole meeting was integrated, the hotel was integrated and you had integrated professional staffs working in programs and all. So in nine years it was just a transformation.

So I mention that by way of indicating that the atmosphere was tense. The staff particularly that had come in from outside of the

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state was involved in civil rights activities. They viewed the integrated effort as an important step in civil rights.

G: But was there a situation where they were, say, using Head Start funds or automobiles or things like that to promote civil rights activities that were not authorized?

R: Well, that kept coming up, and I just had the feeling that since these people were involved in civil rights activities in addition to their jobs that it would be extremely unlikely that if in the evening or something if these were the only conveyances they had, that they might not be used to attend some civil rights meetings. But I think that it was too much to expect that these people would not some way or other be involved. We tried again, cautioned all of the staff people through directives that they were not to misuse federal funds or to be carrying on other activities when they were on their employed time. But I just wouldn't be able to know to what extent that may have been violated.

G: Was the fact that the program was largely a black program, that it was in fact segregated, did that create problems for you?

R: Well, it did in that we had intended for it to be an integrated program and we couldn't get it integrated. I think there was a sincere effort to get the poor white community to participate, but the climate of the times was such that, you know, there was no way poor white people were going to participate in a program that was predominantly black down there. So we never could quite turn that

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around until school integration really started to take hold in the South.

G: So in any event, the hearings were held, as you've indicated. Then did the pressure go directly to Shriver at this point?

R: Well, there was a good deal of pressure on Shriver which I think he tended to absorb and tended to buffer. I don't think he just sort of transmitted all of this to us and never indicated to us it was our problem and not his and that we should cease and desist doing various things. Now, after a time the conflicts developed down there, and I never followed in any great detail why another group emerged and why there was controversy about who was to be funded and those issues, because I was not. . . .

G: Do you now or did you ever get any indication that the White House encouraged the formation of that other group, the Mississippi Action for Progress or whatever the name of it was?

R: I think it was MAP. No, as I say, by that time I was sufficiently out of the picture so that I wasn't following it very closely and really it was largely a newspaper knowledge of what was going on then.

G: Is there anything else on that chapter, the Child Development Group of Mississippi, that is important to the decisions that were made?

R: Well, of course you never know how much trouble you avoided. There was plenty of controversy and difficulty earlier. My own feeling was that if we hadn't made the administrative change--and that was a very

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traumatic thing for the people involved, for Levin himself who had invested so much of himself in the program. But my feeling has been that if we hadn't made that change that there might have been some major difficulties. But that again is speculation, because the kind of difficulties that I was anticipating if we hadn't acted never did develop. So it's like so much of prevention, when you say you've prevented something, one can always challenge that by saying, "Well, how do you know something would have happened if you hadn't acted?" That I can't be sure.

I don't know, in some of the documentation in Ed Zigler's book, I didn't look specifically to see whether anybody ever really described that period and that incident relating to the removal of the leadership and the redevelopment of the program then in any detail, because I think the perceptions of that would vary greatly in terms of how the motivation for that was perceived. I don't know whether you've ever looked at a book written by Polly Greenberg. There is a book on Head Start--

G: I have seen that. I have it.

R: --and I think her perceptions would be very different, because she was down there working with Tom Levin at the time. And I think their perceptions were that we were unduly intrusive and there was no risk and no problem.

G: Was it primarily for personal reasons that Levin was removed rather than--?

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R: Well, personal reasons that had to do with what was going on in the program. And if the personal things couldn't have had any spill over into the program, then I think it might not have been a problem. But I think the feeling was that the survival of the program was so important you couldn't afford to have any incidents that might be interpreted as being very embarrassing to the program.

G: Do you want to elaborate on that?

R: I don't think I could. I think that--

G: I have that impression.

R: But when I say it was very traumatic, you see, when we got back to Washington, there are some dimensions to this that are kind of intriguing that I think I've never talked about before. Clearly the people who came to work in OEO certainly at the central level by and large are people deeply committed to the program. The people who were working in Mississippi were deeply committed and they really had a lot of communication back and forth, and the people working in Washington for the program were advocates, of course, for the people down there. Their perceptions, you see, were those of those people, and their biases, to the extent that there were biases, tended to be theirs. It became very difficult for us to consider making changes, you see, without having all of this immediately transmitted down there. So we had to develop a whole private communication system in terms of trying to make judgments about how we were going to deal with what we perceived as some of the problems down there without its being completely undercut. For a long time, we couldn't figure out why some of the

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things we wanted to see done by way of program improvement didn't quite happen down there, and it became apparent to us that a lot of the things we wanted to communicate sometimes didn't get communicated or got communicated in other ways.

G: How did you deal with it? Just setting up a different chain of command or different channels?

R: Well, yes. Just kept things at a more confidential level and in relatively few hands. But the people who went from Washington to communicate the need for making administrative changes down there, you know, had a real tough time. That was a tough job for those people. One of our lawyers--can't quite think of his name at the moment--sort of bore the brunt of this and it was a very, very tough meeting that he had with the senior staff down there, indicating that some change would have to take place. So it was a very difficult period.

G: Did anything come out of that in retrospect you would have done differently with that sort of program? Were there lessons learned here that were important?

R: I think that by and large, things were phased very well. I think we were able to minimize the impact of the Governor's concern about the development of these programs and the whole technique of using Mary Holmes Junior College and developing a core--I think it probably could have gone better if we hadn't had to rely on some people from the North coming in to sort of provide the professional structure for the program. But we really didn't have many options there. These days one wouldn't have to do that because you have a core of professionals

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down there who are indigenous to the area who could take the initiative, but in that era you couldn't.

So I think in general, its design and its implementation were really quite effective in terms of carrying it off. The apprehension of the white power structure, I think, was in a sense quite understandable in that at least it was commonly said by people down there that within a few months we became the second largest industry in Mississippi. I don't know whether that really was true or not, but if you come into a state like that with a million and a half dollars in the mid-sixties you were creating a very large enterprise.

G: Let me ask you about the genesis of the Head Start follow-through program. Do you remember how that originated?

R: Well, we were always interested, the advisory committee was, in that original document. It laid out that what goes before and what comes after are important. I was often inclined to say in that first summer that the Head Start program might do more for elementary education than almost anything that had ever happened. Because what we were doing was demonstrating a model that was very functional, that is a favorable teacher-to-child ratio, favorable curriculum development, favorable training programs and all. What we were beginning to generate, and we anticipated that this would happen, was the demand on the part of teachers all over the country who were teaching kindergarten, first, second and third grade saying, "Well, we could do just as good a job as Head Start does, if you just give us the same resources." I think we then began to generate some ferment and so we also, in order

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to make it more attractive to schools to do something with the Head Start children, began to wonder how we could institutionalize and bridge this and follow through as our effort to do that. So you'd give the school some funding for this. Since Title I of the Elementary and Secondardy Education Act had come along at the same time, the same session of Congress, it also was to provide funds to do similar things. So many times it wasn't very clear as to which was to do which.

I think developing a follow-through program, in many ways, was much more difficult because the schools were already there and they had their patterns of activity. Do you give them money to do things for after-school things, or if you supplement the school curriculum are you in a sense being intrusive in relationship to curriculum development? So we, I think, wanted to go slowly with this and explore it and that's how the whole notion of alternatives in follow-through [developed]. Various options developed with the idea that no community knew precisely how to do this. It was called planned variation instead of just ad hoc variation in which you'd encourage communities to go different routes in terms of what they would add to the child's daily experience.

G: Is there any substance to the story that Shriver was to make a speech in Milwaukee and needed something to say and just explored the idea then that Head Start, there should be some follow-through to it?

R: No, I would say from day one we were talking about something like follow-through. No, a lot of mythology often develops about how

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something got started, but, gee, I think the first day I ever met Jule Sugarman we probably began to talk about something like follow-through. We may not have called it precisely that.

G: Did it address the problem of--I don't know what the educational term is. It's some sort of relapse, or the child after they had been out of the Head Start program for a while backsliding some.

R: Yes. Yes. This, of course, in the later concerns about Head Start, the attrition of the effects, became a fairly central kind of argument, and initially a lot of that focused around IQ test points and things of that sort. The interesting thing about that was that virtually all of the programs, even with the very brief summer programs, by all conventional tests, while the children were in programs [they] would show a spurt in development and then there was some decline over time. Of course various people--and I think early on when [Daniel Patrick] Moynihan was in the White House he was one of them who tended to say, "Well, these children don't perform better forevermore, therefore it didn't work." Well, that is what I tended to call the immunization model. You know, you give them one shot and they're all right for the rest of their lives. Of course, our interest in follow-through was precisely because we anticipated that there would be attrition if there weren't some enrichment program. So we were very interested in enrichment, and follow-through was just one way of accomplishing that. But we had hoped that the schools generally in low income neighborhoods would do more of this, and I think to some extent they've been trying with whatever resources are available.

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But studies then began to emerge indicating that there was some wash out effect and that was a term that you might have been searching for, because that's what commonly was used. Well, that turned out to be entirely true because over time as other studies developed, it's been clear that some children retain some gains indefinitely, and if there is reinforcement in the schools, it's understandable that they would do even better. So the long term effects have been much more favorable now that we have rather long term effects measured in a variety of studies. It's been a very encouraging facet. But I think Ed Zigler was inclined to feel very strongly that even if these children had gotten nothing more than the medical and the dental and the nutritional benefits, that one could have said that the program was well justified. But we think it has done considerably more than that.

The study that attracted most attention was the Westinghouse Study. We felt even before they started the study--when I say we, Dr. Urie Bronfenbrenner at Cornell and I made a trip to Washington to talk with the then-Acting Director, Bert Harding, about the study and it was stimulated to some extent by the fellow who was in--I've forgotten what they call the research unit in OEO. He was a social psychologist by the name of John Evans who I think is still at the Office of Education now. We tried to point out that the design was such as to homogenize any differences. If you didn't look at subgroups of children, you'd get a leveling of differences. So that's just what happened with the Westinghouse Study. It was a one-shot measure. They didn't know what had happened to the children in the program. They

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just took them a year later and compared them with controls. And there were so many criticisms of the design of that study that it spawned a whole cottage industry of studies, reanalyzing even those data showing that various children did indeed show significant gains. So the program just reflects the need for being thoughtful in relationship to designing a program of research and evaluation.

G: Let me ask you about the relationship with the religious organizations, the churches and things like that. Did you have a problem keeping the religious activities or symbols or things of this nature out of the Head Start training?

R: Not significantly. There were some interesting developments. The New York Times, for example, would run an editorial emphasizing that there ought to be separation of church and state in this program as in all others. And on the other hand, they would run an editorial saying you must be sure that these programs are integrated. Well, in the South you couldn't have it both ways. That is, if we were going to have integrated programs, church buildings were about the only buildings that were available to us and so a lot of the programs ran in church buildings. But we tried to emphasize that that was only a site for the program and that these were not religious programs and that there was not to be any religious orientation.

G: Were you successful in keeping religious training out of the programs?

R: Well, we thought we were, but we rather imagined that there might be people who could cite at the local level some chapter and verse indicating that we might not have been. But we thought that [we were

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successful]. As a matter of fact, in all the time I was Head Start director that never surfaced as a major national issue.

G: How about the participation of non-poor in the Head Start program? It evidently did appeal to a lot of people who didn't fit into the poverty bracket.

R: Well, the whole preschool educational movement, you see, it always had great appeal to middle class people and there just never was enough of it to satisfy their demand. So when this came along, we began--as a matter of fact, some of the most intense meetings I think I'd ever had were from middle class groups who said, "Why should the poor be the only ones to benefit from programs like this?" And that was a hard question to deal with. It was just more on the basis of need because we knew that middle class children would in the overall develop reasonably well, even if they did not go to [Head Start]. As a matter of fact that was an interesting thing. Bettye Caldwell and I had reviewed the data on early childhood education for middle class groups, and it was very difficult to see that it had really enhanced the development of the children. Their parents wanted it, and we didn't come out and say, "Well, you don't need preschool education for more affluent groups." But they do reasonably well even without such, although one could talk about social development and whether it doesn't add something.

So we did, however, feel that it would be desirable to have some mix and because we didn't want to be criticized for making it a program for the more affluent we limited that [to] 10 per cent. Then

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there was some criticism of that. We did that with the notion that you wanted children from those backgrounds to interact with low income children and that that might be beneficial to both in social terms, but also in learning terms beneficial to the lower income children. But the data for really establishing that firmly had not been very good. We did that on the basis of impressions and judgments.

G: Was there a policy of 10 per cent non-poor to be allowed in?

R: I said 10 per cent was the figure we arrived at.

G: Would their support have to come fron non-Head Start funds or non-federal funds, do you recall?

R: Well, at first we had no way of really receiving the funds and all, but over time that did develop, that if the family could afford it, funds would be collected.

G: Let me ask you about the administrative relationship between the public school systems and Head Start. Did the local school boards and school systems tend to take over some of the programs and operate it the way they wanted to?

R: Well, we tried to minimize that by insisting that the programs, even if they were operating under a school system, that there be a Head Start board and that it have the policy responsibility. I think certainly early on that seemed to work reasonably well. I just have the impression, but I don't have any data for this, that over time that tended to get eroded. As is true of so many programs, after they're running for a while people aren't quite as activist about them. It may well be that over time that the school boards became

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more dominant than they may have been in the earlier period. But a great many of the programs did operate under the school auspices. I think in that first summer it was something like 70 per cent, in spite of the fact that we made a concerted effort to get other community groups to sponsor the programs rather than the traditional school systems.

G: Do you think that Head Start served to focus a Community Action Program's attention on the local education and improvements that needed to be made?

R: Oh, I think it did. I think it certainly got people at the local level involved, first in looking at Head Start and then they began to look at the schools.

G: Do you think that Head Start was too big for OEO to run?

R: Well, my philosophy generally, not just about this thing--

Tape 2 of 2

R: My philosophy has always been that you can manage any size program if you have a design for doing that and the resources, and so I was never really concerned about our capacity to manage Head Start in OEO. So I guess I just never regarded that as a major problem.

G: There seems to have been a pressure to fund Head Start at higher levels because it was a popular program than perhaps people in OEO would have liked. Is that correct, do you think?

R: No, I don't think I ever got that perception, but of course, whether something like that would have happened later on I don't know. But I never felt that we were getting beyond the need and getting beyond

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communities' capacities to meet that need. As I indicated to you earlier, we were making a very determined effort to get the communities with greatest need in, and we didn't want to discriminate against the communities that had somewhat better resources and capacity to write grant proposals and to develop programs. And so if you were trying to get a lot of counties and school districts in that had never had these kinds of resources, then you were of course making demands for more funds than programs otherwise would. If we had just sat back and waited for these communities it would have taken a long time.

But I never had the feeling that we were being pressed to spend money, and that's why I described the situation as going quite in the reverse. We would be apprehensive about whether there was enough money for these additional programs that we were coming up with, and we would go with considerable apprehension to Mr. Shriver, you know, not knowing what the ceiling might be. But each time, after checking with the President that first year, he came back and said, "Well, we seem to be able to do that." Now I think the way in part they were doing it, as it was explained then, was some of the other programs were not taking off as fast, and there was a little tension within OEO. There were some of the people in the other programs that didn't have the visibility and the popularity, who I think felt "Well, gee, if they weren't getting all that money, we'd be growing faster." But I never saw any good evidence for that, and I never saw any evidence that we were really taking it away from them.

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G: Was there an intent, do you think, to ultimately spin off the Head Start program to, say, HEW or one of the main--?

R: Well, we were always very conscious about the fact that OEO programs were not to stay in OEO forever, that it was an innovative agency. Oh, yes, this was a clearly expressed notion, at least as I understood it, from day one. Mr. Shriver always articulated that, that it was an innovative agency, it was to develop these new things, get them started and then they'd be turned over, we assumed largely to HEW. It didn't necessarily have to go that way. And of course later on, all kinds of things began to develop in other agencies because [there were] the multiservice centers operating out of HUD and even some health programs out of HUD funds. You began to see Agriculture begin to develop some programs for the rural poor that they hadn't had up until then. So there was considerable impact. But we kept talking about the fact that these programs would end up largely in HEW.

G: Was there a resistance, do you think, on the part of Sargent Shriver to turn the program over? Did he want to keep it--?

R: I couldn't make a judgment about that because I wasn't there that long, you see. They were all still in their relatively early stages when I was there, so I never saw any evidence that there was any resistance to that.

G: You may answer this question the same way, I'm not sure, but do you think that Head Start was kept longer simply because it was a good shield for the less popular programs?

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R: Gee, I don't know how to answer that. I think it just took quite some time to get it all gelled so that it could be moved over, and I think it moved over, what, in about 1969? And I would guess that the timing was about right. I think if one would not give it that kind of incubation period that it might have been premature in terms of its survival to move it. But I thought the timing was about right.

G: Do you think that Head Start, before it was turned over, had done a significant amount to focus HEW's attention on the poor more than it had been?

R: Well, I think OEO's presence generally did, because early on in connection with Head Start, I would go over and talk to people in the Children's Bureau and obviously they kind of wished that it'd all been developing there, but under the circumstances it couldn't. So I think they were very interested and concerned about what we were doing and I think anticipating that some day it would come over. But it was also true of the health programs that we began to develop. I remember Mr. Shriver and Mrs. Lee Shorr and I went over to brief Wilbur Cohen and his whole staff on what we were doing by way of developing neighborhood health centers. They went around the table, his staff did, talking about how many programs for the poor they had, and it turned out it was very few and the Assistant Secretary for Health walking out of the room said, "Damn it, forty thousand people in the Public Health Service and nobody working for the poor." So it clearly began to focus their attention on doing more for the poor.

G: Could the Children's Bureau have run Head Start?

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R: Well, again, I think if you have the right people and if they develop the management skill and capacity, the organizational structure I think could. But the Children's Bureau at that time wasn't being terribly innovative. I think they were sort of going along with all of the programs that had been developed in the earlier decades of the century and I think the momentum probably was something that wasn't entirely compatible with the kind of working style that had set in there. So I think they might have had difficulty just thinking of moving that quickly.

G: Now in January 1966, OEO added a requirement that Community Action agencies could spend no more than a third on Head Start programs. Congress, on the other hand allocated I guess more of the appropriation to Head Start, so that you had a conflict here. Do you recall anything about these two decisions?

R: I don't recall--again, as I indicated to you, people in the Community Action Programs and in OEO generally, I think, were hoping that they could get more funds, and many of the Community Action agencies had a lot of political entree and were developing a fair amount of political clout, so I think this was somewhat a reflection of that. But that had to be balanced, as you indicate, by the congressional situation where they saw Head Start as unique and successful, so they wanted to support it. And interestingly enough that happens to this day with all of the proposed cuts in social programs, the one thing that seems to survive with an increased appropriation is Head Start. [I] shouldn't

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say the one thing; it's one of the few things that no administration has succeeded in cutting.

G: Let's talk about the medical aspect, health aspects, of Head Start. Was it able to provide treatment and see that treatment was provided by a diagnostician?

R: Well, we had an interesting internal debate going on about that because a lot of the lay people involved in Head Start thought that well, if we're going to get involved on the health side, then clearly if you identify children, you just go ahead and take care of them. I was very concerned about that, because first I recognized that if you started using the Head Start funds for medical care, you'd soon use them up at a rate that would have made it a medical program, essentially, for relatively few children. So that was one reason why I didn't, I just felt in terms of the resource situation that it was untenable, so for the first summer I said, "No treatment." That was an enunciated policy.

G: Was that categorical?

R: Yes. Across the board I said that. I think it was entirely observed, because if there were some communities where children couldn't get care in other ways we tended to authorize it. But that didn't happen very often. The other reason why I took that stand was that for decades the American Medical Association and other groups in the field of health were always saying nobody needs to lack for medical care, that income is no factor, that everybody in the United States has access to care. Of course they were referring to what essentially

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were charitable contributions that people might receive from the health professions. And I wanted to really highlight the issue, that you really had to develop a design for more comprehensive health services. What began to develop in communities all around the country was that medical societies were saying, "We can't take care of all of these children; you're just giving us this terrible load." And my retort to that was always two things: one, you've always said that nobody needs to lack for medical care because they're poor, and secondly, remember, we didn't generate the need for medical care. All we're doing is generating the demand for medical care.

We didn't really have too much conflict about that that first year. But you have to remember that was also the session of Congress that time when Medicaid was passed, and it was not yet in place as an operating program. I had this in mind, too; that was the third reason, you see, for not just putting all of this money into medical care indiscriminately, because it would have set a precedent and it would get gobbled up. By the next year, Medicaid was coming in place and then we began to relax and to say, "Well, look, if these children need medical care, you should be able to get the medical care supplied through Medicaid." That was difficult to do because Medicaid was predominantly administered by the Welfare Department, who looked at it as it had Head Start as somewhat of a rival and an upstart and why should they be putting money into another federal program.

So there was some tension in the system, but there was a little give both ways. First of all, there were these resources that could

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be tapped into and also we began to relax. If there was no other way for children to get medical care then we could fund it. But if you start paying for hospital care, you can just consume vast quantities of money and that's mainly what I was trying to avoid.

Actually these children got a lot of care at the local level because once something was identified, when we prohibited the use of funds for treatment, communities found some ways of caring for these children.

G: There also seems to have been some controversy over the reports that were required, and how extensive and time-consuming some of the reports were.

R: Yes. I think there that may have been probably the area where there might have been the most justified criticism of the management of the program. Again, one can understand how some of this came about, but that didn't mean it was appropriate.

We were determined to have good accountability, so we tried to set up reporting systems that would assure accountability. We also wanted to try to collect data on whether the program seemed to be having an impact or not, so we tried to use--for example my colleague Bettye Caldwell developed what was called a preschool inventory to see if we could get teachers to use this to rate the children and see whether they were making progress. Then we wanted to get health data, so we sent out a lot of health forms and we just loaded that system with far more than they could manage. If you were taking care of the children, you couldn't spend a lot of time filling out forms. I think

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that was clearly our inexperience. But we kept being pressed, you see, and to some extent this was important. We kept being pressed to come up with data to show that the program was effective, and we kept struggling with how are we going to do this. The answer was try to get them to report and so we were killing the goose that laid the golden egg.

We hadn't yet developed a design for sampling. Mr. Shriver, for example, was very conscious of this, and he wanted a national sample. We did raise the question, "Well, you know, we could do just small samples." "No, we ought to sample the universe," you see? But this was inexperience. Everybody had very good intentions, and it was later on that we learned that it was better to sample youngsters on what was going on in programs around the country rather than trying to draw on the universe. We did some innovative things that way. We funded some thirteen centers, thirteen university-based centers, to give consultation to programs regionally to develop training programs for teachers and things which did have a rather significant impact and and also to stimulate the collection of data.

G: There was also a mental health provision, as I understand it. Was this actually set up and incorporated?

R: Well, again, in the desire for comprehensiveness, we encouraged communities to develop mental health components of the program and to bring in psychiatrists, psychologists and psychiatric social workers as consultants, to try to develop some patterns for being helpful. It's a little hard to institutionalize that because there are

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shortages of such personnel with specific preschool experience all around the country. How to build it in became a problem, so I think in the summer of 1966 we had a conference of mental health professionals to try to see if we could arrive at some consensus as to how one could do this better. Then various communities did reasonably well. There's a great deal of variation in the extent to which that component was built in.

G: Let me ask you about Head Start as a tool for racial integration. You've touched on this in some cases, but do you think it was in general effective as such?

R: Yes, I think the fact that we came in in contrast to the public schools which historically had patterns set, we could learn from what had developed by way of segregation and try to minimize that. So we started out with a very conscious determination from day one to try to develop integrated programs. As I indicated, in some places we weren't initially successful, but we highlighted the issue and we kept working toward this and communities kept learning that we were serious about this. And we had our Office of Civil Rights with some people who were very ingenious. I began to learn the technology of civil rights enforcement, because they would tell me, "This application indicates they're going to run a segregated program," and I'd say, "Well, how do you know that?" They had built into our application form a map of how the bus routes would go, and they could tell from looking at a community, you see, whether that was going to be a segregated program or not. And that's how we didn't squander our

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meager human resources because we didn't have very many people who could go around and look at communities, but they could pretty much smell them out. I'm not sure, certainly it couldn't have been a hundred per cent successful.

G: Were you successful in making segregated Head Start centers desegregated centers?

R: Well, we kept working at that. We wanted them to be integrated from day one, but you couldn't always accomplish that. But where they weren't, yes, we kept working at that. And over time I think there was reasonable success.

G: Were you satisfied with the quality of Head Start teachers?

R: Well, yes, by and large I think it worked out very well. You see, when we started, there weren't very many really trained early childhood educators, because there hadn't been careers. Prior to Head Start, there were settlement house nursery schools, very small in number; there were co-op nursery schools, largely middle class where parents got together and pooled their resources, and there was university campus nursery schools. And that was it. So there weren't career opportunities, and relatively few people went into such careers, and when Head Start opened up, people began to see careers. The universities then began to teach it, and so we had the burgeoning of career opportunities. It became very exciting for many people. Jule Sugarman and I tried to develop a career ladder sort of things so that people might come in as workers in Head Start centers who didn't even have a high school certificate and while working, could work

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toward that. We had many anecdotal stories of people who had ultimately gone up through their collegiate experience and had emerged as trained teachers. So we had a design for increasing the numbers, and we've been in that sense largely successful. I think the quality on balance was really remarkably good.

G: Could Head Start have benefited from a larger funding level?

R: I don't think initially we could honestly have said that. I think the mix was very rich in terms of three adults per fifteen children with supporting staff and all.

G: In terms of funding more projects, perhaps? Providing the medical [care]?

R: I don't think we could have put more projects in the field early on. Later on, I think for year-round programs my guess is that, yes, I think that became a problem as we moved into year-round programs because then the funding constraints were really the issue with them.

G: There were efforts to eliminate padding and to really tighten up. I believe there was a southeast regional plan that imposed standards for controlling how much was spent on X, Y and Z. Do you recall the effectiveness of that?

R: I really don't.

G: This may have been after you left.

R: Yes, I think it was. It wasn't during my time.

G: Anything that we haven't touched on with regard to this facet of the War on Poverty?

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R: No, I think I would say that there was a lot of national commitment to it all the way from the top down to the grass-roots to the program that helped make it successful, from the President's commitment, Mr. Shriver's commitment, to the outpouring of volunteers. And in part, when I say the quality of the teaching was good, what you got essentially were teachers who were deeply committed, and of course that's a good part of teaching is the commitment that people bring to the task as well as the skills. And then the ingenuity of people to improvise. Again, if you just take physical facilities, I mentioned you couldn't use public schools in the South to begin with, so you had to find facilities of all kinds. And you had programs operating in just all kinds of improvised facilities, not always at a standard we would have liked, but workable nonetheless.

Then I would say people like Jule Sugarman were just remarkably imaginative and innovative in the way they went at the task and made it possible for something like this to happen so quickly. So I think it's a good demonstration of the fact that it is possible to change programs and change directions fairly quickly if a need is perceived and there's a design and if there's imagination and commitment.

I think one other point that I would make is that it's a lot easier to start programs from scratch then it is to turn old ones around to do new things. Having recently been in HHS for four years, the contrasts are striking, but of course part of it is the contrasts in the periods: the sixties being a period of expansiveness, the

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seventies one of constraint. But other than that, I think we've covered it pretty well.

G: Well, I certainly appreciate it.

[End of Tape 2 of 2 and Interview I]

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