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Interview with

Mary Margaret “Meg” Connolly

Conducted by Guy Lescault
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GL: The oral history interview of Meg Connolly taken at Halloween at NLADA, Portland, Oregon. Guy Lescault is conducting the interview. The topic of the interview today will be the development and growth of the regional office in the early LSC years in Region One.

Tell us, Meg, a little bit about your background before you became involved in legal aid work.

MC: Well, Guy, I grew up in Portland, Maine and I went to parochial schools there. I went off to Detroit to a Catholic women's college, Marygrove, came back -- fled back to the east coast, I might say -- to Boston College Law School from which I graduated in 1970.

I got involved in legal services, really, while at law school. I worked in the Legal Assistance Bureau and actually was on the first board and was one of the first officers of the program, and it was the first clinical program that BC had offered, and it provided a range of civil legal services to a community just west of Boston.

GL: What was the community?

MC: Waltham, Massachusetts.

GL: Was this during the Drinan years?

MC: Yes, it was. As a matter of fact, Dean Drinan ran for Congress the year I was a third-year law student, successfully, which we were happy to say. He was a very interesting dean, so the school was an interesting place to be during those years.

GL: How large was the bureau?
MC: We had about 20 students second-, and another 20 third-year students. We ran it as a student extracurricular activity. There were no credit hours given for the activity. We asked that students provide or make a commitment of about 20 hours a week. They actually did interviews with clients, handled cases, had set hours at the bureau to handle the walk-ins and that kind of thing.

The first year there was a part-time supervising attorney, and subsequently there was a full-time one hired by the law school. Since then, the program has become institutionalized in the school and credit is given for participation. It's much more now part of the curriculum.

GL: So you were on the ground floor when institutions survived all of the vagaries of legal education and law school clinics?

MC: That's right.

GL: Well, congratulations. How large is it now?

MC: Now, I think the participation is about the same level, but it's done differently. When we were there and just starting the program, as I said, it was an extracurricular activity so the student board of directors actually determined who would be able to participate by interviewing prospective candidates and making decisions really around what appeared to be commitment to providing that kind of service to the people rather than as an experience for legal education. It was probably our primary goal.

Now, it's a course kind of thing for which you apply which is limited by the numbers to allow for proper supervision of the students, but it's still very successful and very much a part of the law school's environment and curriculum.

GL: Does it interact with the Legal Service program in the Boston area?
MC: Very much so. As a matter of fact, that office in the City of Waltham is part of the service area for Greater Boston Legal Services, and Greater Boston Legal Services actually contracts with that office to provide services throughout the area on behalf of Greater Boston Legal Services as well. So they have a subcontract with them.

GL: So fired up by your law school experience, what did you decide to do when you graduated?

MC: Well, I had really intended to go into Legal Services when I went to law school; that was my intent. And I proceeded to look for jobs in Legal Services. This was 1970, right about the time the Nixon administration was trying to close Legal Services down. It seems that most of my career in Legal Services has been periods during which people are trying to close us down.

So I proceeded to look for employment, which was when jobs for new lawyers in Legal Services were few and far between in New England at that time. Programs hadn't received much new money so the only positions that were available were occasionally ones due to attrition, although the programs in New England were also shrinking during that time because there had been no increase in the national appropriation for some period.

GL: Were they all OEO programs?

MC: No, not all. There were a few in Boston, for instance. There was something called the Boston Legal Aid Society that had really been around since the turn of the century, and in Worcester there was also a Legal Aid Society separate from what was then the Legal Services program.

GL: Did you apply to them as well?
MC: Actually, I didn't apply to Legal Aid Societies. I was much more interested in the kind of work the Legal Services Programs were doing which was fairly distinct from the Legal Aid Societies at that point.

GL: What was the distinction?

MC: The distinction was that the Legal Services program work was a much more aggressive, full-service office. Both Legal Aid Societies -- I knew less about the Worcester one actually, but the Boston legal assistance did a lot of divorces; did some other cases as well, individual cases -- did not try to do much to systemic work at all.

GL: Did you have an area of interest?

MC: Yes. I was particularly interested in housing. I had done some landlord tag things when I was in law school and it was an area that I just had a particular interest in.

So I was looking, as I said. I took a little bit of time to find a job, but I did finally land one just before the end of the year in 1970. I took a job that was really an odd one, if you will. Paul Newman had been the regional director in Boston of the Legal Services Office under OEO for only a few months in early 1970, had closed a Legal Services program in Brockton, Massachusetts, which is just south of Boston -- about 25 miles south, a city of about 60- to 80,000 people. And the community action agency in Brockton had actually been the recipient of the Legal Services grant but, the grant had been discontinued. The community action program wanted to do something by having a Legal Services presence in the community -- use some of what was then called its local initiative money to hire me to do something. It wasn't at all clear what they had in mind.

GL: That was the job description?
MC: That was the job description -- come in, see what could be done.

GL: So what did you do?

MC: It was very interesting. Very shortly after arriving, I made an appointment to see Paul Newman to find out what his intentions were about any money that might be left over from having discontinued the program. And we had a wonderful meeting at which it sort of dawned on him that maybe having a lawyer in Brockton without a board and without any supervision was not the best of arrangements, and I think while I was still sitting there, he got on the phone and called Allen Rogers(ph) who was then director of -- and is still -- the Massachusetts Law Reform Institute; suggested to him that it might be a good idea if I were on his staff, and that the Law Reform staff could provide supervision and that the CAP agency would reimburse them for my salary. And it would also provide a board and malpractice insurance and all that kind of thing.

GL: Were you living in Brockton?

MC: Not the first year actually; the first six months or so I was living in Brookline and commuting down. I did move to Brockton and lived there about a year and a half and moved back to Brookline and lived there for the last year or so before I left the program.

GL: Did the agreement work out with the supervision?

MC: Yes, it worked out actually quite well. Sort of an interesting development. It -- about six or eight months after I went to work there, the OEO office of Legal Services assigned a VISTA lawyer to work with me and there we were -- I was a year out of law school and he was just graduated. We had a lot of fun. I think we did some good things. I sometimes think our work was not -- our work I think was good, but I think some of our success was often due to the caliber of the opposition on occasion rather than to our skills. But we worked primarily in the housing area although when I first went to Brockton I did a little more of a general practice. I
also contacted local lawyers, asking them to take pro bono cases because there were people in
the community who had expectation of some kind of service that -- unlike a community where
there had never been a Legal Services program at all.
And we had some small success in having people do that on some kind of organized basis, but
we didn't have the staff to provide follow-up on the cases or back-up to the lawyers so it was a
very informal sort of panel. People who had signed up with us were referred cases on a rotation
basis, and we captured a little bit of information from them about when the case was closed and
that kind of thing.

**GL:** How much accountability did you have to the local board, the community --

**MC:** The community action program? Well, a fair amount at the beginning and then
less as the relationship with Mass. Law Reform grew. Actually, what happened was there were
two or three others, I guess maybe four or five other communities in Massachusetts that also did
not have a Legal Services program, and the community action agencies decided that this was a
model that it was worth pursuing, and they ended up spending their money -- some local money -
- to hire a Legal Services lawyer to have them work through Mass. Law Reform in the same
fashion that our little model had been developed in. And they all worked in housing law, and
Mass. Law Reform finally got a grant from OEO, not the Legal Services office, but again, the
general fund from --

**GL:** Was this Paul again?

**MC:** Well, Paul was instrumental in getting that, but the money came not from his pot
but from the OEO pot to go to the Mass. Law Reform to provide for a supervising attorney,
basically, a second lawyer at Mass. Law Reform who worked in the housing area. And we
would spend -- "we," the other attorneys and I -- would spend every Friday at Mass. Law Reform
where we had organized ourselves around substantive areas that we were sharing issues in and educating one another and getting assistance and counseling on specific cases.

**GL:** Was there anything particular in terms of the housing that you remember?

**MC:** Yeah, Brockton was a very depressed city as were many of the smaller cities in Massachusetts at the time and are becoming so again. It's nice to see our progress.

**GL:** Recycle?

**MC:** Yeah, exactly. And the housing stock was terrible. We did have some really nice success around issues of habitability. We were able to work with the health inspectors, and we developed and worked, drafted -- and actually worked with the city counsel on an ordnance to -- it was an occupancy ordnance whereby the local health inspectors had to certify any unit, that it met the code standards before a certificate of occupancy would be issued. They would renew -- can't remember it now -- but every so many years. Because part of our problem was that, obviously, we would find a family living in substandard housing. Getting it corrected was very difficult -- during the time we were trying to get it corrected, the family was still living in the substandard situation, and what we were trying to avoid was having people move into those conditions.

So, we had, I think, a lot of fun doing that, and I think it did affect the housing stock at least for a while. We also represented some public housing tenants. That was the time when the new lease and grievance procedures were being put into place by HUD -- the first ones actually with respect to tenant participation -- and we worked on those with the clients. And I think that was also a beneficial time.

**GL:** Do you think the support and supervision structure that was among -- I've always been concerned with that isolated individual out there trying to do it without the supervision and
support. Do you think that owes to some of the benefits you were able to accomplish in the experience?

**MC:** Yes, it was. We really did have back-up when we needed it, and also we had other people with whom to share our issues who were practicing in other communities but around the same kinds of issues. I think that the model was a very difficult one and would have been not as successful had I remained isolated there, working there through the community action program. Certainly I would have done some things, but I doubt if I would have been able to stay three years in that situation, nor do I think we would have been as successful.

**GL:** Well, what happened at the end of three years to move on?

**MC:** Well, the job was an interesting job but, as I said, I think it had its limitations. After the first year with the VISTA I didn't have a second attorney there. Happily, the VISTA was still working in the community there partially funded by another grant -- the same individual, I mean, who had been the VISTA attorney, so we were able to work, continue to work collegially on some issues, but it wasn't the same as sharing an office and really working intimately that way. So I think that whole process sort of had run its course for me. And it didn't appear likely that we were going to have funds in the near future to change the structure of the office.

At the same time, really, I was recruited and offered a position as regional counsel in the Office of Equal Opportunity, and I took that job.

**GL:** Well, how does that experience compare?

**MC:** Well, that was also a very interesting experience. I should point out that I think every job I ever had -- in some instances the buildings don't exist and in all instances the offices are gone. I guess my current board should be careful when I leave --
GL: Long-term lease?

MC: I think I took a life tenancy or something. Doesn't bode well for the organization when I leave.

It was very interesting. I talked to the regional director at OEO -- this is not OEO Legal Services -- the entire regional office --

GL: Who was that?

MC: This is terrible, I am blanking. His first name is Roy. I can see him and I'm blanking. Fliesher(ph). Roy Fliesher(ph) who is a very creative bureaucrat and a wonderful person to work with; and Roy's interview with me consisted of -- which was somewhat flattering but kind of amusing as well -- "I have several people on the staff who want me to hire you, and what do you want to do?" -- was really the discussion. I said, "What does the regional counsel do?"

GL: So for your second job, you're now creating another job description?

MC: In a sense, that's true. There had been a regional counsel there at the point in which -- this is now about 1973, the end of 1973; it's November of 1973. In the earlier days of OEO there had been a regional counsel there who was very much a professional attorney and was very much a presence in the office and the program. However, in the midst of -- prior to my coming on -- President Nixon was trying to close down the entire OEO program and there was --

GL: Howie Phillips.

MC: Howie Phillips' period, exactly. All of that was going on just as I was getting out of law school. And as a matter of fact, during those years I was in Brockton was the period in which the dismantlement was enjoined and questions about regulations that were passed during that time and their validity and whatnot were all raised. Interesting that -- just a footnote, one of
the major issues with some of the Phillips' regulations was they wanted to have Legal Services keep time records. So, there are no new issues it turns out.

Those regulations, as you know, became (?invalid?) subsequently. Anyhow, when I came on to OEO, Roy also said we have no authorization and we have no appropriation. So things may have gotten better at least for Legal Services. We have one, if not the other. He said I don't know how long this job is going to last, but I assume the lawyer will be the last one out.

Someone will have to --

**GL:** Close the door.

**MC:** -- close the door. Someone will have to figure out where all the paper goes. So I went to work as regional counsel, and I was there for about two and a half years.

**GL:** So from '73 to '75, OEO -- regionally, structurally -- no appropriation or authorization?

**MC:** Well, obviously they did finally -- they got appropriations during that period finally. But at the point in which I was coming on in November of '75, I guess it was -- they did not have an appropriation for the coming year -- '73, I'm sorry. November of '73 I came on.

**GL:** So as regional counsel, did you oversee the Legal Service?

**MC:** Less, because at that point, Paul Newman was the regional director and he had been there. The New England office was one of the few offices that still had staff at the Office of Legal Services in the region --

**GL:** Paul and --

**MC:** -- David Gilbert were both there. And they had a secretary, Debra Collins(ph), who also subsequently came over to the Corporation. I worked with Paul and David on a number of issues. We had offices down the hall from one another, and Paul and I were part of
the senior staff of the office generally -- he as the head of the Office of Legal Services and I as Regional Counsel -- so we had a lot of involvement over the years. My work was primarily to oversee the legal sufficiency of grants -- other interpretations of regulations that arose -- all of those sorts of things, for OEO, for the general OEO program, for the CAP agencies primarily.

**GL:** Having been there at that time as a VISTA attorney, thank you.

**MC:** That's right. That was a big time for VISTA lawyers in New England, there's no question about that. Paul was always very creative and a wonderful advocate through all the years at OEO but certainly during those years in terms of getting or diverting other OEO resources to the Office of Legal Services in addition to the ones that were appropriated for it. So that was always kind of fun.

**GL:** At what point did -- we did the regional counsel 'til '75?

**MC:** That's right. I guess it was February of '75, so I was there as I said just over two and a half years. The office was still standing when I left.

**GL:** Did you report to anyone in Washington?

**MC:** Well, it was kind of interesting. As I said, when I first came on there had not been a Regional Counsel in the job for about two, two and a half years. The first day I was there I was hard pressed to find a current copy of the Act. Needless, I had not read this previously. Trying to find a set of regulations that were current was the task. It took me several weeks to make sure -- I was never quite sure I had all of them -- that there wasn't something else I was missing. And for some period of time of time, it was also not clear which regulations I was working with since the OEO, the Howie Phillips mess. I think when I first came on – I’m a little curious. I'm not sure there was a General Counsel, I think there was an Acting General Counsel in Washington. During the time I was there, that position definitely was filled, and we would...
have periodic meetings as a group of General Counsels in Washington -- Regional Counsels with the General Counsel's Office in Washington.

**GL:** Did you ever meet Dan Bradley during this period?

**MC:** Yes, I did because I used to -- just at the time that the Office of Legal Services people were spending a lot of time on plans for the transition and even a little before that in the development of the Act, of the Legal Services Corporation, I also was traveling to Washington a lot as Regional Counsel because that was also the time that the legislation on OEO changed, the Community Services Act. And so I was working on a special committee with two other Regional Counsels -- my colleagues in Philadelphia and Seattle -- to work on transition regulations for that organization. So I would frequently run into my colleagues at the hotel we all stayed in Washington and I would be brought up to date regularly on the developments over there since that was obviously my first interest.

**GL:** You bring up an interesting point in terms of the transition to the Legal Services Corporation. You were at the Regional Counsel for the CSA. Were you involved in the drafting of the original LSC?

**MC:** No, I was not. No. Paul was, but I was not.

**GL:** Well, I can confess up; as a VISTA attorney at the time, I was. While ostensibly doing some project in northern New Hampshire, I was probably on the same train and bus going to DC helping Drinan to write up the legislation. It was a very exciting time.

**MC:** It was indeed, for all the work that was going on then.

**GL:** So you took OLS from OEO and brought it over to CSA?

**MC:** Yes.

**GL:** Basically?
MC:  Right. And then very shortly after the Corporation was established, I moved over as Deputy Regional Director to the Legal Services Corporation.

GL:  How did that come about?

MC:  Let me see. There were so few people left at the office of Legal Services for OEO, CSA in the region that there was a transition team, as other people will report and note that process more intimately. I know it more as a secondary source now. When all those people were interviewed and offers were made to most -- not all -- of the people to move over to the Corporation, some of the people were asked to move around the country because -- to become Regional Directors because -- there were so few people at that point who knew the program and could assume those positions quickly and David Gilbert, who worked with Paul for many years in Boston, moved to Denver as the regional director, leaving Paul with a secretary in his new office. The secretary Debra Collins(ph) had been his secretary at OEO as well. Paul was then authorized to start hiring in Boston, and we talked about that and I applied as did others it turned out, and I was fortunate enough to be hired.

GL:  What was the status of the programs in terms of funding or anything -- 1975 or '76 that we're talking about?

MC:  Yes, '75; around February of 1975. Yes, that's right. The programs in New England were fairly stable. They had been around now for some time, but they were all suffering dramatically from funding issues, not unlike current problems that they're facing. The programs had been around from the beginning, most of them, of the funds that were available through OEO. There had been static funding for several years prior to the establishment of the Corporation. Salaries were pretty low, and programs were not able, frequently, to replace staff that were leaving through attrition. The need to just maintain salaries or just the cost of living or
other expenses prohibited replacing staff, so they had felt very much crushed by the economic realties of what had gone on. In other respects, I think they were very healthy in that they had been around for a while. A number of them had a core of what were then experienced lawyers for legal services, five-, six-year people and even a few directors who were more experienced lawyers than that. I guess, relatively speaking, New England was in much better shape although it didn't always feel that way.

GL: What did you see as the initial tasks for you in a region that did not have to deal with expansion -- the early days of the Legal Services? What were your perceptions of your job? Did you have job descriptions or did you create that too?

MC: I think we created that as well. Most of my career has been a lot of fun that way. We were pretty much able to develop things as we went along. Although Paul and David, who had been in the office for some -- well, from '70 through '75, '76 -- knew the programs in New England. They had not -- because of their own limitations, staffing and whatnot -- been able to do really systematic visits to the program. So we spent a great deal of time during the first year or so doing those visits and really getting a handle, sort of a base data of information on all of the programs --

GL: Is it just you and Paul?

MC: No, very shortly after I came on -- I guess I came on in February -- we proceeded to hire two other people for the office -- two other professional staff. A staff attorney, Herman Smith, who had been a managing attorney at Greater Boston Legal Services, is currently a judge of the Boston Housing Court.

GL: How we move along.
MC: Exactly. Upward or something, at least somewhere. And Bill Simpson(ph) as our fiscal management specialist. The first year or so we did all the visits among ourselves, among the four of us. I should also point out that although we only had a small amount of expansion money, particularly during the first year or so, it was very easy to decide what to do with it. We had some equalization money that went to some of the programs, and we did want to visit a few of them to see what their situations were. We also assisted a couple of the other regions, particularly the southeast region, in doing some of their visits.

When the equalization money became available the first year, some programs who were geared to have received it had not been visited, and no one could remember when they had last been visited and no one -- I'm sure, in some respects we didn't all have the right addresses in some categories. Bucky Askew had taken on the regional director's job in Atlanta, and he no sooner had done that than Charles Jones had redrawn the lines for the region and he, Bucky, inherited Louisiana which had not originally been part of his region. So although Bucky was familiar with a number of the programs in the region, he was not familiar with the programs in Louisiana.

And Charles and, I guess, other people in Washington had decided --

GL: Charles --

MC: -- Charles Jones, had decided that before equalization checks were sent, we really had to do a visit to the program to make sure that it was appropriate to expend additional funds. Bucky was really most hard pressed by this because he hadn't, as I said, seen these programs, and it was hard to make a decision.

GL: Had you ever visited programs outside your region?

MC: Not any Legal Services programs.

GL: So this was your first exposure to anything beyond a New England program?
MC: That's right.

GL: Did it meet your expectations?

MC: It was quite an interesting visit, I must say. These were programs that were substantially different from those that I had visited or were familiar with in New England. Bucky asked that two of us come down to Louisiana, and it ended up being Bill Simpson(ph) and I --

GL: Did you know Bucky before?

MC: By that time, I had met Bucky a couple of times for regional staff meetings. There were a very small number of regional staff people at that point, and I had an opportunity to get to know him a little bit. And he had just called and asked for some help and we said sure. So Bill and I went down, and Bucky had asked us to visit Shreveport, Baton Rouge and Lake Charles.

GL: Louisiana?

MC: Yes, Louisiana. All in four days and that we were to meet him-- I guess our reward was to meet him in New Orleans for dinner on Thursday night to give him a debriefing basically of where things were. We also wrote reports on those visits. I'm not sure, looking back now, how we did this, but we actually interviewed every single staff person, at least what we could find in those programs, in those four days. It was really quite amazing. If we thought that some of the programs in New England had problems with regard to equipment and level of staff and supervision, our eyes were widely opened by the problems that we saw in these programs.

GL: Can you elaborate? Does anything vividly come to mind to illustrate?

MC: In one of the programs -- I have no idea -- I have not been back to any of these programs -- and I would just like to give the caveat this was some time ago. In the course of
visiting one of the programs, the attorney with whom I was speaking indicated that he did a lot of housing work. Since I had just done a lot of housing work and maintained some interest in that over the time, I engaged him in some conversation about -- I knew Massachusetts landlord-tenant law had substantially evolved and was much different than it had been even eight or nine years previous -- and I was asking really kind of comparative questions about the sorts of defenses available. And I was rather astonished to learn not only weren't those defenses available, the attorney had never heard of them. I'm not really sure what his idea of housing law was or what kind of defenses that he raised. I think simply he would go to court with a client and say they needed time to move out was what the practice consisted of.

**GL:** My experience had been the Napoleonic code was the defense of ignorance.

**MC:** That was. It turns out, it was really interesting, people are sometimes concerned about the need to know the procedural law in a particular jurisdiction, it really turns out that to get a handle on the type of advocacy that's going on, it is really not necessary to have taken the local bar.

**GL:** What synopsis of a report did you make to Bucky, and were you able to eat your dinner?

**MC:** We did have a nice dinner. How can you not have a good meal in New Orleans? I must say, I recommended strongly that at least two of the programs not get the funds until he had a chance to kind of work with them a little bit. We really felt, unfortunately at that point, that it was an inappropriate expenditure of the funds. My recollection is that we suggested that the third program receive the funds but with some conditions.

**GL:** Well, I think I recall it all, too, because around January of 1970, I was recruited to join the Atlanta regional office and that was my first exposure and experience to non-New
England programs, and I, too, was assigned the task of going to Louisiana and following the
steps of Meg and Bill to see if in fact they had perhaps overstated the case, and I reconfirmed
what they had found. But the regional problems we were dealing with in Atlanta were so much
different that we were starting from scratch, creating programs. What were you doing back
home?

**MC:** Well, back home, interestingly enough, I think in the first three or four months I
was at the regional office, Paul said, "There is a program in the region that I have reason to
believe has a number of problems."

We used to actually receive calls from people in the region, usually staff in the program,
sometimes staff in a neighboring program or whatnot, and sometimes a director in a neighboring
program or whatever would talk to us, confidentially, that they had seen some issues they
thought needed to be addressed -- get our attention as funders. And Paul had a program that
apparently had been waiting for attention, and we went to the program, he and I, and spent a day
or two there interviewing all the staff. We didn't have a protocol really for monitoring at that
point, but what we did was go and visit with all the staff, interviewing them all individually.
Sometimes we would share the interviews frequently, and we would divide and compare our
notes, not at all unlike other kinds of monitoring that developed subsequently.

**GL:** And sharing it with the program?

**MC:** Yes, and sharing it with the program. Interestingly enough, there had been a
history with this program that Paul was privy to which he was filling me in on the drive there. I
will remember -- and Paul will always tell this story this way, and he has at least a number of
times subsequently -- I remember sort of cautioning him. He seemed to have sort of made up his
mind -- it appeared to me that he had made up his mind about how things were at this program
and what conclusions should be drawn before we got there. And I remember cautioning him that maybe we should keep an open mind and whatnot. His story always is that when we were finished, and we sat down and talked to each other, I was more rabid than he was about the situation. He looked, as he frequently does look, the calmer person between the two of us. And, in fact, what resulted was an interview with the director in which Paul suggested that he resign. This was basically my introduction to visiting Legal Services programs.

GL:  This suggestion of resignation occurred while the quote monitoring --

MC:  During the -- well, at the --

GL:  -- the conclusion: it's been nice visiting you, and you ought to really resign?

MC:  That's right, that's right. There had really been more of a history previous to my arrival than that. It wasn't really a monitoring visit in the same way we have them today. It was really responding to some concerns, and Paul had talked to the director before we came down and explained that we had reason to have concern, and we wanted to come down and visit with the staff and see what was going on. And it turned out that from the information we gleaned at that visit, given the previous information Paul had at his disposal, that we were really just confirming what appeared to be the case.

GL:  And what was the response of the director?

MC:  It was a rather angry response. I have been privy to a couple of these incidents since then. This one was perhaps the nastiest one I had ever been involved in.

GL:  You had not met the individual before?

MC:  I had not met him before at all. I think, frankly, had I not been there it would have probably been more unpleasant. I think it was somewhat tempered by my presence, simply being a third person. It may be even have been being a woman that tempered his response.
What we ended up doing was talking with the board chair, trying to lay out the concerns and the issues and the staff's concerns that they had been raising with us and realizing that it was really the board and the board chair's role to make this decision if he did not choose to leave on his own.

What in fact did happen was Paul spent a great deal of his time dealing with the board chair who then also spent a lot of time negotiating with the director, and they came to an agreement under which the director left -- some months later, I might add. It took six to eight months, I think, in my recollection.

**GL:** So in this period with the four staff, how many programs?

**MC:** We must have had about 18, I think; pretty much what we have now, 18 or 19.

**GL:** How would you describe -- would you just describe with every program trying to tighten things up?

**MC:** Yeah, there was a great deal --

**GL:** So the monitoring was more of pumping up what had may be inability to in the past?

**MC:** That's right. There was a lot of emphasis on fiscal systems. Programs were not terribly bad off in New England, but they were not awfully sophisticated in some instances, too. It was uneven, obviously; some of the programs had more sophisticated administrative staffs than others. I do remember being in one program with Bill Simpson(ph) early on, and Bill is a very bright fellow and can ask questions perhaps in a somewhat arm's length way, but the last thing he was trying to do was to hurt anyone's feelings or upset anyone, and he was just mortified when he came out of meeting with somebody and left her in tears. It was a bookkeeper who did this -- among her other chores in the program -- and he was going down what we had developed
then as a checklist really for fiscal accountability, and this was really a level of sophistication substantially above hers with regard to financial matters. She was basically a secretary who was managing the books which was not that unusual. And he was simply asking her questions, not drawing conclusions or bludgeoning her in any way, and she became so upset that she didn't have these systems that she was reduced to tears. It took us a little while to get Bill to go back and ask the same set of questions to another person.

GL: Did Bill get most of the work with Fabio in putting the account -- Fabio de Latoya(ph), the first controller?

MC: Right. He did work with them a lot on that. Fabio -- much of that was really done in Washington and was really pulled together by them. I think among a number of the contributions of the early staff at the Corporation was a very sophisticated professional financial shop. I think the auditors and the training programs that were developed through that shop really filled a major vacuum in programs and, I think, the soul, or substantially reason the programs are as well organized as they are today. That was a major leap in program administration achieved by that office. I think it's a really commendable kind of effort. I think what was also brought home to us, or so impressed us, as lawyers and not financial people -- and I was thinking of them as sort of people who are uninterested in program development or just looking to how you dot the "i"s and cross the "t"s -- was how supportive that staff was in that office to development of good structures in the programs and not judgmental in a negative sense but were really very constructive assistants in developing the skills that were needed rather than being judgmental evaluators, and it made a big difference.
GL: Since we were all reporting to the same Charles Jones in field services but some with different assignments and tasks and priorities, how did you see your role as that relation with field services in those early Legal Services, late '70s?

MC: I guess we saw our role, particularly I think the people who had been at OEO, since they had been functioning on their own for years because people were -- certainly in the years immediately prior to the Corporation's establishment -- people in Washington, the office of Legal Services -- were sort of in a revolving door situation. There wasn't much direction or accountability being called for from Washington, so I think that the regional offices that did exist at the time were used to dealing fairly autonomously and were really the policy developers along with the field people. And so I think there was some change, but I think that our offices continued to assume we were more autonomous than perhaps the Washington office preferred for a while.

There was a great deal of effort with Charles with the smaller regional staffs at the beginning to meet regularly and to have input to policy decisions and that, I think, was very helpful. So we felt in many ways, even when we had disagreements, as partners in policy development. And because we did move around from region to region in terms of helping and assisting at the beginning, I think there was -- even while there were differences of opinion -- a fair amount of collegiality among the regional staff.

GL: From your OEO and CSA background, you described and the new Corporation and its efforts of Charles, how did you feel that you were perceived? You said "autonomously" by the field, but did you feel that you were a monitor or assistor, an implementer?

MC: By the field?

GL: Um-hum.
MC: It was perhaps all of those things, and it depended perhaps on what we were doing within any given program or whether we were engaged in a difference of opinion as to either the quality of the program or an interpretation of a regulation or whatnot. One of the major differences between functioning under OEO and functioning under the Corporation was that -- you may remember that under OEO in terms of the office of Legal Service there was -- I believe it was a subsection of the Economic Opportunity Act which simply enabled OEO to spend money on Legal Services. There were no regulations directed at Legal Services programs other than just some general OEO regulations around audits and that type of requirements. With the Corporation, there were now a set of regulations to be interpreted and applied. There were restrictions within the Act in terms of activities that could be engaged in or not engaged in, a use of funds, those kinds of things. And there were also standards regarding financial accountability that had to be met. At the same time, we were in the programs more often. We had more time to spend on issues around all the kinds of things I just mentioned but also around program management, supervision, development of skills for the attorneys and the staff, all those kinds of issues. So many times we were seen as a partner in terms of building the program, if you will, -- both nationally and individual local programs -- assisting them, helping sometimes to come in with a local funding source, explaining what our needs were, why the program needed to be independent, why certain reporting requirements were inappropriate for a Legal Services program.

In other instances, we were engaged in a grantor/grantee relationship where we had responsibilities to be accountable for the funds and enforcing regulations, and we had to do that occasionally.

GL: Well, the ultimate sanction --
MC: -- was defunding.

GL: Did you do that?

MC: We actually did engage -- we engaged in a lot of special conditions on grants, we engaged in a lot of handling discretionary funds in a way that was used both as a carrot sometimes and a stick, not giving them when programs were not moving in directions --

GL: This was your discretion as a regional office?

MC: That's right, when we had some discretionary funds and each year we usually had a small pot of that. And also really assisting programs to improve in areas where we had mutually identified the need for improvement by using those funds to assist them and perhaps assist them in hiring a director of litigation and whatnot. In other instances, we -- Paul perhaps more than I -- was known as the merger king or whatnot, who encouraged, frequently, program mergers where he felt that the smaller programs were not able to survive or garner resources in the community in a way that would be more effective for the clients. And he, early on, also when I arrived at the regional office, was well on his way already in dealing with a group of programs in Connecticut and that ended up, although it was -- originally it was joined as a voluntary piece of discussion around merger and the possibility of mergers with a number of the programs in Connecticut -- it ended up being that several of the programs decided not to voluntarily merge, and Paul actually did proceed with defunding against them with the idea of merging them into a larger entity.

GL: How did that play out?

MC: We went through defunding hearings, and they were merged, but we did have to go through the hearing process. We simply did not -- we didn't defund them -- we refused to refund them so that the standard was somewhat different.
GL: Do you recall, was this the first under the new Corporation?

MC: I think it was because Paul was already engaged in the whole negotiation over this when I came on in February of that year, and these hearings were held in the fall of the same year to the best of my recollection, anyhow. So I think that would have been very early on. Don Grahallis(ph), who was then the director in New York, the regional director in New York, was the hearing officer for these.

GL: Impartial.

MC: Impartial hearing officer for these. I don't think he had ever been to New England before. Certainly hadn't been to Connecticut.

GL: You name some of the strengths in your opinion, the accounting systems being put in place, the regulations being implemented. In retrospect, which is always easier and with your CSA and OEO, what things did we do wrong in creating the Corporation; or maybe we should have put more emphasis on?

MC: Well, I think that one of the big mistakes happened early when Charles reorganized the regions. That may not have been a mistake by itself, but he based the reorganization on factors that changed dramatically practically two days after he finished the plan. He redrew the regions to be different from the federal regions which I don't think had any particular impact except it moved some states around that may or may not have had some natural affinities with one another. And he drew it largely based on the number of staff attorneys in programs, and then placed regional offices based on the availability of travel access and that kind of thing.

The problem with that was -- he did that very early on in his tenure and with the next appropriation -- I don't remember the figures and how they grew -- there was a substantial
increase of funds, most of which were available for equalization and expansion. And those were going into regions unevenly, of necessity, because of where the programs were located. And so, for instance, we had the inequity of the Atlanta regional office having a staff of whatever it was, three or four people, and the Boston regional office having four people. Atlanta had to not only establish a group of new programs, it had more equalization money to oversee and the tasks were really disproportionate to the staffing, and that pattern was not recognized very early on in terms of compensating for that. So I think that was very important mistake.

I think the second mistake, and it's one that we talked about when we were in the regional office, and we are frequently accused of some self-interest, and, obviously, I think there was some there. But I still I think, looking objectively now, looking back, we were right to a degree, which was that we asked that while new money was going in on expansion to establish new programs -- we totally agreed with the thrust of that and with the thrust of equalization -- that programs, for instance, not be given the total grant award in the first year since they had start-up costs that would slowly build to having full staff and that kind of thing, so they were appropriately spending the full amount of the grant. And we suggested that we be able to develop basically one-time pots of money with the funds as they came through that way. We would commit the money to the program, for instance in Mississippi, for a new program, commit the full amount of the funds, but during the first six, eight, 10 months they would receive a gradual increment until they received the full grant perhaps in the second year, thereby allowing a one-time pot of money to be available to the Corporation which we thought could be used for programs that were not getting this kind of additional new money and could obviously --

**MC:** In New England. But not just in New England but in other parts of the country and would allow them to kind of deal with the problems due to the level of funding they had been receiving all those years. I think, to some degree, we were proven right -- at least that's my opinion, in some respects -- because of the fund balance problems that occurred in some of those programs and became a big issue in '80, '81 to the point where we had to enact a regulation regarding a cap on fund balances. And I think that it was difficult for any program in the country to see a substantial fund balance when another program was laying staff off. So I think that those were issues that I think could have been handled a little differently. I guess those were two of the ones when I look back on it.

**GL:** Did you feel consulted in some of the policy -- I mean, you may disagree with the --

**MC:** -- with the outcome. But, yes. I felt, particularly, both regional and deputy regional directors were hired -- in all the regions eventually -- and we met regularly with whether it was Charles and then subsequently with Clint and Bucky in Washington either twice a year or quarterly; I'm forgetting. I think it was quarterly. And then there were also regional meetings, I mean regional staff meetings, that met once a year or twice a year where all the regional staffs got together and had training opportunities. But the regional -- deputy regional director meetings really did deal with policy, and I think we had a great deal of input into it. As I said, we did not always prevail in our opinions, but I think that we were heard.

**GL:** Was there any change in direction with the Atlanta Mafia hitting field services?

**MC:** I think that, although interestingly enough, we used to disagree with Bucky a lot over the policies that I had just mentioned -- and Clint -- I think that we continued -- we got on with them very well, and we felt we still had a great deal of access and probably more access
than with Charles. I think there was a tension with Charles in our office before he left, and so I think we felt we had much more access with Clint and Bucky even though, ironically, we were the ones that use to most disagree with one another at regional meetings.

I think the other -- perhaps, there were a few other things that we might have done differently at the beginning --

**GL:** I'm sorry. No, go back.

**MC:** -- yeah, at the Corporation. I'm just thinking about it. I think the need to spend a lot of time holding the regional offices accountable for their regions would have been time well spent. I think it was an uneven situation throughout the country.

**GL:** For the staffing pattern?

**MC:** Not just the staffing pattern, but the accountability for the directors in those regions or the staff in those regions, to carry out what were mandated activities, for instance: the monitoring visits, expansion, those kinds of things. I think that was uneven and I think, in terms of performance, there were uneven performances -- there always is in any organization, and I think that -- certainly as a manager now -- you suffer from not dealing with that ultimately, and I think that was a problem from time to time in the Corporation. And I think it left us vulnerable occasionally, politically, because of that -- because we didn't have the information on certain programs as issues arose. We couldn't respond to it as quickly as we might have wanted to. And I think that was very important to have done that. I think that may be the last. There's probably something else; I can't remember what it is.

**GL:** Well, I was just curious if the monitoring process, once you'd done your M and As and got that shored up, had that changed?
MC: Yes. That changed, too. Once -- we were lucky -- once we got a data base on the programs, we were able--

GL: -- although we didn't call it databases at that time.

MC: No and I don’t mean it in that sense. Once we were basically able to describe the programs--

GL: Who they were?

MC: Who they were, what the structure was like, what kind of staffing they had, you know, where the offices were, how many of those they had and sort of confirm that their fiscal systems were meeting minimum standards and that kind of thing -- we did, as I said, the very early year or two years we did most of the monitoring by ourselves -- but very soon after that, within the second to third year, we had started to invite other Legal Services program staff to assist in the monitoring. And we did this for a number of reasons. I think it made the visits to the programs much more -- the staff of the programs found the comments much more credible. They were getting them also from people who were currently practicing and dealing with these kinds of issues all the time. The other side effect -- had we been clever and thought of it -- it just happened to be a side effect -- was that the people who accompanied us on these visits realized that these were not boondoggle visits any more. They realized it's a very tiring job to visit a program and to interview a lot of staff and to try to be giving good feedback, constructive feedback, so people really can develop further and whatnot, and to do it in a constructive fashion. And I think that around the region, because we invited experienced people from a number of different programs to accompany us, obviously, out of their states, we developed a lot of respect from some of the staff for the work we were doing. And that, I think, again, made the visits even more credible so when we had something to say people tended to listen.
Secondly, it meant that we got to know people in the programs well, and people felt comfortable calling us with issues. So there were a number of very good things that occurred through that process, and I think we had better monitoring because of it. I think we were able to speak much more authoritatively to programs because of that process. So that was both fun and, I think, did something positive in terms of the monitoring process.

What also occurred was we were able to -- subsequently after we did these routine visits pretty regularly -- because our region was smaller and we were staffed up during this period, we were pretty much able to maintain the schedule we were supposed to have. But at one point we were finally able to do focused visits. And I think that again was a good move. We had a lot of information on the programs, we knew how they were performing, it was very easy to go back and confirm some regulatory issues very quickly. And then what we were able to do is work on new issues the program was involved in. I remember once that Vermont started a new housing unit. We may have even given them some special needs money or some special project money to help assist in it, and they were trying some different things. So when we went to do that visit, we brought two or three experienced housing people from different parts of the region on the visit. They were able to better evaluate the effort than we could have, were able to have a good exchange, to learn some things themselves that they could bring home. We were able to spend a brief amount of time doing the check-up with whatever lingering issues were floating around, and I think it was a very interesting, good exchange -- very focused. We were able to ensure programs were in compliance but, at the same time, be of assistance to them.

**GL:** And create a network.

**MC:** And create a network – exactly -- around the region. And I think the other thing we did -- we always talk as managers about the kind of rewards we can give staff when we can't
give them money -- and the opportunity to come on a monitoring visit. It sounds sort of silly in a way, but first of all, that they were chosen; that we would think they should be invited because we would value their opinions is a nice compliment to them and their skills. Secondly, it does get them out of the office for two to three days, and they do get to see another program, and it is a nice little reward in a way. We found it very helpful and, frankly, we were able to do that because of visiting programs regularly we met staff, and we would spot somebody, and we would say, "Oh, he would be a good person," or "She would be a good person to include in a monitoring visit sometime in the future."

By the way, I should point out we did it, and we didn't pay them. The programs, again, saw this as somewhat of a collegial effort in improving all of the Legal Services programs, and we paid their expenses, and they wrote a report. We wrote the ultimate -- the final report -- monitoring report, incorporating their reports in it. And they came for no pay as long as we agreed to not keep hitting the same program inordinately in terms of staff away.

   GL: Well, I think that you're correct. I remember in New Hampshire I had never seen -- I referred clients to Vermont, and I referred clients to Maine, but I had never seen an office of either program, so my knowledge of legal assistance was limited to the Granite State during that period of time. My gripes might have been lessened by my exposure to other programs.

   MC: Uh-huh. I think it's true.

   GL: I think it's a broadening --

   MC: -- experience, yeah.

   GL: You used the term "rewards." Where did you find your rewards during this period?
MC: I guess we talked a little bit about the problems of being in a one-attorney office and the supervision and all those issues. I think having had that experience, I had very strong opinions about the kind of support lawyers should get in Legal Services programs, and I very much cared about the programs and the kind of services we could provide to clients. So I think there were a lot of rewards in the sense of seeing programs getting better, that we could really see some results, and we did see results. We were lucky in New England in that we had some strong programs. It turns out that they all needed some assistance of one kind or another. It was great when we had special project money, and we were able to provide it in areas where we had already ourselves been convinced that there was a need. So that was good because we really saw results during the period. It was fun; it was rewarding to be part of a new endeavor in the sense of the new Corporation in helping, in policy development, in those kinds of things. So there were rewards like that, and we also got to travel around the country a bit and see other programs and see how things were done differently in other parts of the country. So I think there were a number of built-in rewards.

GL: How did you feel with the election of Ronald Reagan as it applies to Legal Services Corporation?

MC: To the degree that I could, I think I was more depressed than I was the night Richard Nixon won the election, or the morning I woke up to find that that had happened. It was devastating. It was truly devastating. We had barely gotten to the point where we were getting new money; programs were developing. We were, I think, we were feeling we were on the edge of dealing with long-term issues like retention of programs, developing the right kinds of support structures for programs, having training available, all those kinds of things we saw as very supportive, we saw immediately threatened -- let alone the entire program threatened -- its very
existence threatened; couldn't imagine anything worse happening for Legal Services, let alone the country. I think we proved to be right in those concerns.

GL: What did you set about doing in that region for that period?

MC: Well, we had been in Legal Services for a long time already at that point. Paul had pretty much been in from the beginning of the program, and he was only four years older than I was so we had sort of grown up, as it were, with the Legal Services, Federal Legal Services program. So we were quite committed to doing whatever we could to maintain the delivery system and the integrity of the delivery system. So we were interested in staying on as long as we could to work with whomever came on. Paul, who was always extremely optimistic, remembered back during the Nixon period and was really, I think, driven somewhat by the idea that we had a board created that, in fact, I think, people were very worried about originally -- turned out to be an extremely supportive and aggressive board of directors for Legal Services Corporation. Paul thought it was not unlikely that that scenario might be repeated. Well, he's not always right it turns out. But I guess that drove us for a while, that we were willing to kind of wait and see and to help programs manage the situation.

What the first problem was, of course, was the devastating cuts in '81. We were again fortunate being in New England because of both the small number of programs, the geography was manageable among the programs, and people had known each other. We had regular regional meetings for the directors over the years we were there. So we were dealing with a group of people who felt comfortable with one another, and what we ended up doing during this period was meeting almost monthly with the directors for one-day sessions, really sharing and updating one another about what they were having to do around managing a 25 percent cut to their programs. We tried to provide them some professional advice on things like some labor law
advice; some issues around affirmative action and labor law issues regarding lay offs; issues around self-insured unemployment compensation programs. There were just a number of management issues these program directors had to face at a time when they were also spending a lot of time trying to assist with the survival efforts that were going on nationally and trying to maintain a program that was servicing clients during this period.

I think that while I had some differences of opinions with some of the things that were done in Washington and some decisions made during that period, I think that a study of how the Legal Services Corporation managed the 25 percent cut and assisted their programs in managing it, is really quite an admirable achievement. It's kind of sad to have to preside over that, but...

**GL:** Not to skip around, but immediately preceding that, and in your own role now, what's your perspective of the PAI and how that played out because my recollection was that there was a woe and cry, "This was our money and you're taking it away and giving it to the private bar."

**MC:** There certainly was a woe and cry. Your recollection, I think, is pretty accurate. It was seen as another blow on top of a 25 percent cut. People were interpreting it, in fact, as a 35 percent cut because of that, that we had to find ways to use 10 percent to involve the private bar. And people, obviously, were not convinced in many programs that this was a useful thing to do and many of the directors were not convinced and, I would say, 80 percent of the staff in any program was not convinced, and that's being kind.

**GL:** Were there any projects prior to the mandate?

**MC:** Yes, there were. The one that I'm currently directing in Boston, the Volunteer Lawyer's Project. And there actually were several. There weren't lots of them, but there were several. As part of the delivery system study that the Corporation embarked on right after its
establishment, there were eight programs left from that study around the country that were regularly funded by the Corporation. One of the them is the one I'm in. There were two others in New England. We got three of the eight, I guess it was, New Hampshire pro bono legal assistance in New Hampshire which is a statewide pro bono program and then there was a component program, ad judicare component, in Vermont Legal Aid. So these three pieces already existed. It wasn't as if this was an unknown effort in Legal Services prior to this. In addition to that, there had been some special funding provided a year or two before -- I guess '79, '80. Two programs around the country that were interested in developing some kind of a private attorney piece and the Worcester County program in Massachusetts also had one of those grants. And a number of the programs in New England had worked at one level or another with their bar associations around these issues -- not as formally, obviously, as the regulation required.

GL: What were the relations, would you sum up?

MC: In many, I would say -- in New England on a whole, they were fairly good with the local bars, but there were exceptions. People always assume that in New England all of the bar associations are liberal, and all the lawyers are supportive of everything, and that turns out not to have been the case. There were some very strained relations in some parts of the New England area but, by and large, they were fairly good. People had been pretty sophisticated about working with the bar. Obviously, these programs had been around a lot longer than some of the others, and they had had -- the early tensions had been worked out prior to this in respects.

GL: Was that part of your role then at the regional office, to oversee the development of that expenditure?

MC: Yes, it was. And that was yet another thing in the middle of all of this, to see what was going in, to see how people were going to do this, to see what was going to work, that
kind of thing. By and large, people found ways to spend the money, and we had some time to spend to try to figure out whether there was an appropriate way to do it. We didn't have as much time to do that given everything else that was going on in that our own staff was cut as well during that period.

**GL:** What were you down to?

**MC:** We were down to -- we had -- I think it was, sorry, we had a regional director, a deputy regional director, two management specialists and a staff attorney and two and a half support people.

**GL:** For regional training?

**MC:** Regional training coordinator. Absolutely, one of the better ones. And we subsequently were down to a management specialist and a regional and deputy regional director and secretary. And then, subsequently, we were down to a regional director and deputy and a secretary. So we were having a hard time getting some of this work done, even in a small region. We did spend some time though on the private bar piece, there is no question about that. Obviously, as I said, that needed more attention in some parts of the service area than others.

**GL:** What are you proudest of in this period?

**MC:** I guess what I'm proudest of is having worked well with the programs. If anything, a common enemy does bring people together, there's no question about that. We went from situations where we spent parts of regional meetings discussing the tensions between us, with facilitators occasionally, to being as one on issues around survival and those kinds of things. That part, I think, in feeling that we were assisting programs, managing the situation, I think, we're very proud of. And I think we're very proud of, and I'm proud, that we were able to stay as long and to protect the programs, to protect them while behaving legally.
GL: Now how long did you survive?

MC: I was there until February 28, 1985, which is quite a long time. It seemed a lot longer, I think, looking back. I forget. It's only four years but it was a long four years. For the first year or so, things didn't change dramatically internally in the Corporation in the sense that Clint was director of field services, and then we had a transition and Clint was acting president for part of that time. So that dealing within the Corporation we worked well with one another, and we were of like mind in terms of caring for the survival of the program and the integrity of the program, and so it wasn't until after Clint left that things became dramatically different. I should also say that we, of course, during this period, had to preside over the reduction of staff internally in the Corporation as well. So that was a difficult piece, but we did all of that as well. Things very dramatically changed, obviously, with Clint's departure; that's a part of history at this point. And the new board.

GL: How? Can you give some --

MC: Sure. There was a steady erosion of the authority of the regional office. Prior to this, as I said, the regional offices were ___ but also had a lot of autonomy. It was recognized by the Washington staff that we were the people out there who knew the programs, we were the ones who had to exercise the judgment over what made sense, they trusted the staff that they had hired to do this, basically, and trusted us to consult with them when it was appropriate so that they, one, wouldn't be embarrassed and, two, we wouldn't be in some way developing policies that were not consistent with the Corporation's position on something. The new Corporation constantly eroded our authority. It began probably most over monitoring and requiring that all monitoring consultants be approved by them and that created -- started to create a -- at first, it was routine and then it was -- except that it took more time to get anything
done, obviously, when you have to go through all sorts of vettings, and then it became less routine, and we were having people turned down, and we wouldn't know it until two days before a visit. It was creating a lot of disruption, really getting in the way of our work.

**GL:** Did it hamper your relations with the program?

**MC:** Not particularly. The programs understood what was going on. When we called and had to say --

**GL:** Hey, ain't us.

**MC:** -- this is what happened. We heard it yesterday and we're telling you today. Or, we heard it this morning and you're getting it this afternoon. People understood that, so it did not hamper the relations. What it did hamper sometimes was getting stuff done for people. We still tried to act as an intervener. We still assumed we had authority until we were told that we didn't. So we continued to approve by-law amendments or this or that -- whatever we had normally done -- purchases of equipment -- until we were simply told directly that was no longer in our purview. As I said, over a period of time, all of those routine things were removed from our purview.

Finally, I guess it was around February or March of 1984, we had a couple of monitoring visits in the work schedule to be done that month or whatnot, and we were called and told -- or Paul was instructed to cancel them, and that was, I think, the end of our monitoring in New England. We were also told that to be visiting programs without prior approval in Washington and -- of course, prior to all of that, our decision about when and where to go was our decision. We had to clear that within the confines of budget allocations, obviously.

**GL:** How were you feeling about this point?
MC: About this point, things were pretty unpleasant. Up until then, I think we felt that we continued to do something worthwhile. So, come that spring, we were really starting to sit around looking at one another, not sure what was making sense. It was one of those sort of crazy things where programs were directed to do something, and we would ask for clarification so we could let them know whether they were supposed to send stuff to us or to Washington --

GL: Or a shredder?

MC: -- or a shredder. We would send out a memo and the next day they would call and tell us it was wrong, and we had to send out another memo to correct the first memo. We did a lot of that kind of nonsensical stuff, or spent a lot of time trying to get them to call us back to tell us something that we had asked about. So that got really rather unpleasant. The region, the people in the region, the directors particularly, however, continued to be amazingly supportive of us which was rather heartwarming, frankly.

GL: What do you attribute that to?

MC: I think they saw we were there for a reason, and we were trying to do our jobs even though many of them had had disputes with us previously over issues. They really saw those disputes were of a different nature, obviously, than what was going on now. And in fact, what was particularly heartwarming was that the group, the region, threw a surprise party for us. It was, I think, in May of 1984.

GL: You and Paul?

MC: We weren't gone. We were still in the regional office. There's nothing like a thank-you while you're still there. This was sort of a funeral. But, yeah, for Paul and me and for Deann(ph) -- Deann Feldman(ph) was our administrative assistant and still there -- and we were kind enough to see, not kind enough, but had the perception to see that Deann was part of this and that
she was also doing a job and that was helping and being supportive of them, and they included her in this and provided us each with framed statements that they had each signed, thanking us for staying at the office during this period. It was a nice surprise luncheon. It was really quite nice. So that was rather rewarding.

GL: It is a very nice reward. How did you feel on February 28, 1985?

MC: I went through a lot before I got to February 28. By the time February 28 came, I felt very empty. It was a very tough day, frankly. Paul Newman had been fired on August 10, 1984.

GL: Shortly after the party?

MC: Yes, shortly after the party. I think they probably heard about the firing -- directly attributable to his departure -- and the months after he left, I basically was sent to the southeast region again to do monitoring visits. Basically, I guess the idea was to keep me out of New England as much as possible. And I had made a decision to try to stay on through the grant process; the refunding process was happening that fall. And I didn't know whether I was going to be able to get up in the morning and stomach it and managed to do that. And I had given myself sort of a deadline to leave about at the end of the year, but just prior to that, the job that I'm currently in became available, and I was in the process of applying for it. So I stayed on until February. I knew I had the job and then I went on vacation. Leaving on February 28 was very difficult. It -- I had spent nine years at the Corporation and even though every place I had worked previously had closed, when I left, I had a party -- some acknowledgment that I had been there -- there was something going on. The way I left that office was -- I had, during the previous week, finished -- all that I did do, I did all the draft monitoring reports, had them all into Washington before I left, and had done the refunding applications and the previous week had
started to clean up the office. So, actually, on the 28th there was nothing left to be carried out except a few pens and the top of my desk and Paul came up -- Paul Newman -- and Deann was still working there -- it was just Deann and I those last few months. Paul came up and David Collins who used to work with us in the beginning, and the four of us went to lunch, and that was the end. I came back and got my few belongings and left. And that was the end of the day.

GL: But it's nice that the people that went through it all remembered -- said that you can bear the hurt from the lack of any support from DC?

MC: Absolutely.

GL: Well, Meg, you started with Legal Services, you went through the cycles of OEO, CSA, LSC and you still remained in Legal Services?

MC: Yeah. Yeah. I guess I should tell you one story which I just barely hit upon which is probably one of the worst stories that we had at the end of the time I was at the regional office, and that was the day Paul was fired. It's a horrendous story, and I don't think it is one we will ever forget because of the way in which it happened. It also involved the firing David Gilbert, too, at the regional office at the end of the same day.

Gene Potak(ph) was then the director of field services and Paul was very much engaging the national office on issues. We weren't just sitting in our office waiting for them to tell us things. We were constantly asking them for clarifications or suggesting that things were not moving along exactly well, and that things might be done differently. So, there was a lot of engagement with the Washington office from our office. And Paul had suggested to them that he was way overdue for his evaluation. He was months overdue; maybe eight or nine months overdue. And finally some time in early August, Gene Potak(ph) had called and said he was going to come up on August 10 to do an evaluation. Just prior to that, Potak(ph) had assigned to the Boston
regional office a group of programs in the southeast to monitor, and I was sent down to Atlanta for a week to meet with the staff there and to get files and familiarize ourselves with the programs.

When I came back -- this thing was scheduled for the following Tuesday or Wednesday. I forget which day of the week it was now. I remember the date but not the day of the week. And as the couple of days of the week went on, we became more and more -- it was very tense. We would laugh and there was a lot of guillotine humor involved in this, but we knew that this could be it, frankly. Potak(ph) arrived in mid-morning with -- I thought I would always remember the kid's name --

**GL:** Made an impression, huh?

**MC:** It was a kid anyhow. I remember him carrying his bag. And the first thing he asked, I think it was of Deann, was to provide him with documentation of the fact that we had had the door lock changed back in March. I forgot to tell you that Mass. Law Reform had a fire in August of the previous year and, like some of the Boston law firms, we made available to the staff at Mass. Law Reform some temporary housing. One law firm took in the housing unit, we took in the training unit. We had all this space available in our office.

**GL:** No staff.

**MC:** No staff, lots of space. The Washington office was surprised that this had happened. In fact, they conducted a monitoring visit of the training unit while they resided in our office, so this was not a hidden agenda or whatnot. So, apparently though, when I was on vacation in March for a week, I came up on Monday morning trying to get into the office, and the lock was changed. Finally, Deann and Paul arrived and I said, "What's going on? My key doesn't work."
Well, it turns out, the week before, they had been called summarily -- Paul had been called by Gene -- and told to get the regional training unit people out of the office by the end of that day. Paul discussed that this was probably an unreasonable request in that they had nowhere to go. He relented only to the end of the week. So they were to be out -- I guess this was a Monday or Tuesday -- they were to be out by the following Friday, and we were to change the locks on the door so they could not get back in -- that this was a conflict of interest, and they had access to or were privy to confidential Corporation files in the office, and, in fact, the regional training office had sued the Corporation as a group over a defunding issue. Paul pointed out that the real issue was didn't we have access to their files since we didn't fund the regional training unit side of New England, we didn't have much they could get on the lawsuit. This didn't help anything, so they had to be out by the end of the week and the door locks changed.

**GL:** Made Howie Phillips look reasonable.

**MC:** Absolutely. These were the most crazy kinds of discussions. And they were dealing with this as though they had found out about it the day before. So I came back to having had the door lock changed on me. So that was in March, so when they were there in August they wanted to see documentation that that had occurred. So Dee provided that to them. Then they asked for, I think it was two or three years reading files. We had chronological files of all correspondence that went out of the office, and this was after the fact that in June or July of that year they had raided the regional offices and removed almost all of the files from the regional offices. This was done as a military undertaking. We were there one morning and, noontime, these people arrived at the office and identified themselves as having come from the Corporation and that they were to go through the files and seize files related to programs and whatnot. And Paul said who are you, and he called Don Bogart, the President of the
Corporation, and said, "Who are these people, and are they who they say, and what are you
doing, and am I ever going to see these files again?"

To which Don confirmed they were -- and apparently they arrived at the east coast at noon so we
couldn't call the west coast and let them know that this was coming. They somehow thought that
we had --

**GL:** Networks?

**MC:** -- networks, and piles of files hidden in these offices that were going to give them
the evidence of what had been really going on in Legal Services programs. This is a real cops
and robbers -- crazy cops, I should say -- encounter since they came in with all this military
strategy worked out. The next day they both went to lunch by themselves and left us in the
office. It was the craziest -- so they were there for about three days packing up files. So this had
all happened.

So they arrive again in August and here we are with them wanting to have the documentation --

**GL:** The office is real empty by now.

**MC:** Oh, yeah. The files are wiped. Chronological files are pretty much all we've got
left so they ask to see those, and then they sequestered themselves in one of the empty offices
and spent several hours going through these files, reading files. And we tried to do other things
while this was going on. I was trying to set up yet another monitoring visit in the southeast and
whatnot. And about noon or one o'clock, Potak(ph) stuck his head in my office and said, "I'm
going to meet with Paul now, and I've instructed Deann that you are not to make or receive any
phone calls until I'm finished."

I was taken aback. I said "uh-huh."

**GL:** How does that affect your meeting with Paul?
MC: I said, "Just a minute, I'm trying to set up these meetings that you told me to do and these visits, I'm expecting calls back, can I take those?"
"No."
So, fine. I proceeded to sit and basically twiddle my thumbs during this period, and they were in and out. Once, I guess with Paul, they interrupted and made a phone call or something. In the middle of this, I'm walking back and forth out to Deann periodically -- the two of us sitting there waiting to find out if we should pack up our books as well. The phone rings, and Deann's talking and "Yes, no. They're still here," hangs up, gives me the high sign, we go into my office. She said, "That was David Gilbert," and I said, "Oh." He wanted to know if they were here, and they had just fired him over the phone.

GL: In Paul's office?

MC: In Paul's office.

GL: Well, that's diplomatically --

MC: They had gone into the library with Paul and, at some point when they had broken for a minute, they had gone to a phone and they had called David Gilbert and they fired him, told him he was not to take anything out of the office, and put somebody else in charge -- it was all very bizarre -- and wanted to know if Paul had been fired. We said not yet, who knows what's going on?
Well, the next thing I knew, I was in my office and I heard somebody saying something to Deann and Deann saying, "What?" It was an exchange, and I came out and the exchange was that Gene Potak(ph) was telling Deann to call the police, and Paul was shaking his head "no." And they were both at the door of the conference room across the room from Deann, and I came out and told Deann not to do it and I said, "What is going on?" And Potak(ph) said that Paul would be
leaving the office and that he was to leave right then, and Paul said that he had belongings in his office and wanted to take those with him. And Potak(ph) had told him to leave without them and was calling the police to have Paul removed from the office. Well, this was quite --

**GL:** Potak(ph) was the director of field services at that time? It's hard to keep the names straight.

**MC:** Yes, I'm sorry. That's who this was. He was a very difficult person to deal with to say the least. And I'm going to say this on the tape, most people have some interest in being liked so you can reach them at some level. I think not only wasn't he interested in being liked, he decidedly wanted to be disliked -- certainly behaved anyhow in that fashion, gave off that impression. I just think my interjection at that point, asking what was going on, and finally Potak(ph) said, "All right, you can take some things and you can get in at another time to get --" Paul had said I have personal belongings I want to take out of the office. So at that point, Paul went into his office and I with him, and the fellow that was with Potak(ph) began to get boxes ready. Paul was taking things out of his desk, and I knew they wanted copies of some things Paul was taking. So that young man was doing this, and in the course of pulling things out, Paul was saying, "This is my personal file, my own checkbook file," or something like that and he would identify things as he would take them out. So this went on for 15 or 20 minutes, maybe even longer while he was removing things. At one point, Paul said to Potak(ph), "Explain to me why, if you were going to fire me today, did you assign to this office these four or five or six visits to the south?"

Potak(ph) responded to the effect that, well, if I hadn't given you something to do, the next thing I would have known was that Barney Frank would be putting a rider on the appropriation telling us what the role of the regional offices was. He had maintained -- he had assumed -- that
somehow Paul was basically telling Barney what had to be done, that he was in constant communication. It's a very interesting kind of exchange.

He then had Paul leave and he had Deann and me sit down with him, and he said that, of course, that I understood the result of this might be litigation so we should be careful in terms of our contacts with Paul. Then he just turned to me and said, "You're a lawyer. You understand what I mean."

GL: Huh?

MC: And we had to -- oh, I should have said that leading up to this whole process while Paul was meeting with Potak(ph) in the conference room, was that Potak(ph) came out after reading the con files and told Deann to call the locksmith again to change the lock on the door, and then when the lock was changed, the keys were to be given to him.

GL: How were you to get in and out?

MC: I was assuming we were all going at that point. I was assuming that when we had this little tete-a-tete, he was about to tell us we should be gone by the end of the week or something. I'm sorry, this was Friday. I do remember it now. It's all coming back as we speak. Paul had gone downstairs and said he would wait for us because Potak(ph) said, "We are packing up now. We are all going to leave. I'm taking the keys with me. On Monday morning there will be someone here to let you in."

GL: Have a nice weekend.

MC: Basically, you got it. It was mid-afternoon or something. I finally had the presence of mind to say, "Do you know who that might be?" So I might know what I might encounter on Monday morning. And he told me Frank Murphy, I think it was, was coming out. There upon, was one of the worst evenings I spent in my life. But the three of us, Deann, Paul
and I repaired to a nearby bar. Paul, who is not noted for his drinking habits, downed two scotches and made a call to his wife. David had already called Judith having known them from previous years. It was quite an afternoon.

The next week was probably even -- not more bizarre -- but it was something from the Twilight Zone. Frank Murphy -- I sort of dragged in there, not knowing whether I was going to get up at all on Monday morning -- dragged in there to meet Frank Murphy in the hall --

**GL:** From LSC?

**MC:** From LSC. Never met him before. Didn't really know this chap; he had only been there a short time.

**GL:** Irish name.

**MC:** I will only give him this, the poor fellow, I really don't think wanted to be there any more than we wanted to have him there, if that could be possible. He did have the good taste not to use Paul's office. So he took one of the empty offices. The point was, Paul was supposed to be allowed to come in and remove things but let Frank see what he had taken, etcetera. Well, the irony after all of this was, during the next week, Paul was in and out of the office regularly. Half the time Frank wasn't there. One afternoon Paul was sitting there just packing some things up, and Frank had gone out and left him in the office alone, and David Gilbert called from Denver doing the same thing, and when David called he got Paul on the phone. Paul was supposed to be fired and out of the office. It was a very strange kind of week. But, anyhow, that had all happened. So that was all preparatory to the last six months of being at the regional office.
GL: That's a very enlightening story which I don't think I have heard in that detail and I appreciate that. The transition to the former now being a grantor, when did the regional office go?

MC: Apparently it actually went around the time -- what I did, I took a six-week vacation right before I came on, and I believe the regional office was gone, I think, by the time I got back. The day I was leaving the regional office, somebody -- his name escapes me now -- showed up that day, and said he was going to be the acting regional director. I think I talked to him for all of a half an hour. He was there, I guess, when I wandered in that morning, and I said that I have a few things to finish, and I would talk to him when I finished them, and I finished the last two or three pieces of correspondence, they were sitting on my desk, and must have talked to him for all of a half an hour. And that was the transition. Deann took a job about three weeks, four weeks later and she was gone, and there was no one there. That fellow apparently -- from what I heard from Dee later on -- was gone pretty much. He was only in a day or two after I left and that was the end of it.

GL: With the shoe on the other foot, do you have any -- do you miss not having a regional office?

MC: Yeah, in a lot of ways -- well, I think we don't miss it with the current Corporation, to be honest with you. I think having them closer would probably only make them more intrusive. I think that there's something lost in the loss of the regional offices in terms of the ability to provide support, to create -- and we've had to assume a number of things ourselves. When I say "ourselves," I mean the other project directors, that the regional office could carry for us. Everything from convening and organizing regional meetings to trying to provide training
opportunities, particularly management training, among ourselves. So there was a host of supportive things the office could do that we have to find ways to do ourselves. So I think it's a loss in the long term in terms of a network of supporting programs and really having information about the programs and being able to -- I think there was better accountability with regional offices than there can be out of Washington.

**GL:** I thank you, Meg, that was very enlightening.