

**Gerald R. Ford Oral History Project
John Logie
Interviewed at Gerald R. Ford Presidential Museum by
Museum Deputy Director, Jim Kratsas and
Foundation Executive Director, Joe Calvaruso
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Kratsas: I am here with former Grand Rapids Mayor John Logie. Mayor, why don't you start out by giving us your personal history; where you were born, schooling, etc.

Logie: Thank you Jim, I am looking forward to this.

I will start back far enough but brief enough. Three of my great grandfathers showed up in Grand Rapids in the 19th Century so my roots are down here pretty hard. My grandpa Logie was born here in 1881, my father, Dr. Jim Logie, was born here in 1911 and he was teaching at the University of Michigan Medical School where he had finished his surgical residency in the 1930s. My brother Jimmy and I were born in Ann Arbor although we have always considered Grand Rapids our hometown because of that lengthy history. In 1942, my Dad, who had contracted tuberculosis and gotten drummed out of the Army Medical Corp, because this was before penicillin was developed during the war. After recovering, he came back here [Grand Rapids] to private practice as a doctor. I grew up here and went to East Grand Rapids High School, started at Williams College and then transferred to Ann Arbor, where I finished. This was in the Cold War Era and so if you were healthy and you got deferments to go to college but if you were single and healthy you were going to be a Buck Private in the Army. So, I elected to go to OCS and get a chance for a commission in the Navy. I did and served on two destroyers in the Pacific. Then the Navy invited me to go teach surface tactics to the senior mid-shipmen at Annapolis in 1964. My claim to fame is that I taught Roger Staubach everything that he ever knew about surface tactics. He won the Heisman Trophy in his junior year. After five years active duty, I left Annapolis and I went back to Ann Arbor. Under the

Soldiers and Sailors Relief Act I was able to go to Law School as an in-state student even though I hadn't lived here for six years. So, it was an easy choice to go back to Ann Arbor. Along the way I picked up a Master's Degree while I was teaching at Annapolis from George Washington University. I sat on their Board of Advisors for several years while I was Mayor [Grand Rapids]. I have two Honorary Degrees; one from Central Michigan University and the other from Ferris State University. So that's my background. I discovered my wife in California. Her name was Susan Duerr and I should have met her long before. She had graduated from Michigan State University. She and three of her sorority sisters from the teaching program there went to San Diego to teach. So we met in California and will be celebrating our 50th Anniversary this August. We have three children. Our son John is a tenured professor at the University of Minnesota; we have a Korean daughter, Susannah, whom we adopted when she was four, she is now forty-four and lives here with her husband and two children; and our youngest daughter, Maggie, lives in Oakland, California. So that's basically my background. I ran for Mayor in 1991 and was elected for three four-year terms, so I served twelve years, which at the moment, am the longest serving mayor in the city's 164 year history. I joined Warner, Norcross, and Judd when I got out of law school. It was the biggest law firm in Grand Rapids. I was the 19th lawyer at work at that time, when I showed up in the late 1960s. We had one floor in the Old Kent, now 5/3 Bank Building, on the 9th floor. We were the only tenant with a whole floor. We couldn't fill it up. It was only about half full. Now fast forward to today, it still has floor 9 but also 8, 7, 6, 5, and 4. It's the second largest law firm in Michigan based on the number of Michigan lawyers. There are about 225 lawyers in 7 cities. Two and a half years ago I fully retired having been Of Counsel for a number of years. I successfully tried my last case in my early 70s; I am kind of proud of that! That's my history.

Kratsas: Alright, with that being said, you were working for Warner, Norcross in 1974?

Logie: I was the newest partner; having been an Associate for 5 years.

Kratsas: Newest partner? Young for a partner!

Logie: Not really, because of the 5 years that I spent with the Navy. I think I was the 3rd or 4th oldest law student at the University of Michigan out of 375 or so students.

Kratsas: Did you know Gerald Ford before he became President?

Logie: I met Jerry Ford at my Grandma and Grandpa Logie's house on Benjamin in Eastown [Grand Rapids]. She was serving Christmas Dinner. One of my connections to Ford is that my dad had one sister. She was Betty Logie. Betty Ford [Betty Bloomer] had an older brother named Bill Bloomer who was 8-9 years older than she. He married my Aunt Betty [Logie]. They used to bring young unmarried Betty [Bloomer] with them after they were married and moved to Grand Rapids. They spent most of their lives in Minneapolis. At that time they were all from Grand Rapids. They used to come see us because Grandma Logie was a great cook. They would bring young Betty [Bloomer] along and I met her when I was 10, and she was maybe 20, and I said to her "What should I call you?" She said "What do you call your dad's sister who is married to my brother?" I said "I call her Aunt Betty". She said "Well then you better call me Aunt Betty too". So...I did, all her life, right up to the last time I saw her which was not that long ago. I called her Aunt Betty all her life. So, there were two Aunt Betty's back then, it was confusing. People have asked me well, "what did you call him?" I said "well I started calling him Congressman, and then I called him Mr. Vice President, and then I called him Mr. President". Not that he was a stuffed shirt, because he wasn't, but because that's the way I was brought up; if somebody has a title, you use it.

Before World War II, Jerry Ford began a law partnership with Phil Buchen, who was my Godfather. I called him "Uncle Phil." He had polio as a child, and needed crutches to get around. Jerry went to war, and Uncle Phil joined another firm. They stayed friends the rest of their lives. When Ford became Vice President, he rated his own lawyer, and asked Uncle Phil to come to Washington as VP Counsel. So my godfather became his house lawyer in Washington.

Now let's talk about the pardon. As a young partner, I was working on a Friday afternoon, not very long after Ford had been sworn in as President. Phil Buchen had called Hal Sawyer earlier that day. Hal was a senior partner at Warner, Norcross, and Judd. He went on to four terms in Congress, filling Jerry's [Ford] seat. He was the Chairman and the lead trial lawyer in the firm. You will never know too many people anymore that have tried 100 cases to judgment, actually not settled, you either go to a jury or judge. I tried over a hundred of those. He was the best trial lawyer that I ever saw. But anyway, Phil Buchen called him and he said to Hal "I need some research done over this weekend and I need it now. I don't need anything in writing; in fact I don't want anything in writing". This is Sawyer's story to us. As best as I remember, there were 5 of us that got together on this project. We were all in the office on that late Friday morning. We met in the afternoon. Phil [Buchen] had said, "What I want from you on Monday is an oral report on what is the actual scope of the pardon power.

Kratsas: For the President?

Logie: Yes. Phil told Hal, "Now you understand why I am not going to talk to any of the big law firms here in Washington". He had been there now for a while. And he said to Hal "that they are all leaky sieves". He wanted to do this as quietly as it could be done. Which is one of the reasons why, unfortunately, we don't have any paper records because we all worked over the weekend and we met Sunday afternoon. We kind of divided up the pie among us to do some research to try and find out what the judicial precedent was. Turns out that most of that judicial precedent had to do with federal judges who were accused of taking a bribe or something else like that. There is some case law there. And, we approached it this way and I think it's probably one of the more important aspects of what we did. We decided to work backwards at that first meeting on Friday. What that meant was, we know that the President of the United States has the power to pardon almost anybody he wants to pardon and he doesn't have to give the reason. So if you have got a heinous murderer, killing someone on federal territory, or whatever, who has been languishing for 60 years in prison and he's 89 years old and if the

President wants to pardon him so he can go home to die, it's clear he can do that.

So that's what I mean by backwards: crime, tried, convicted, sentenced, and served a lengthy sentence. Could he exercise that act of clemency on that basis? Answer: Yes. Now we are going to start to move it forward in time. Now, maybe he's just as heinous but he's only served 3 years of a life mandatory without benefit of parole type sentence. Can the President step in and give him a full free pardon, walks out the door and doesn't have to look back? Answer: Yes. Ok... what happens if he has been convicted but he has not been sentenced, can the President step in? The answer was yes.

Alright...what if the trial is going on and it hasn't even been decided that he's guilty, Answer: yes. Now let me bring in Leon Jaworski.

Kratsas: Let me back up for one moment.

Logie: Sure.

Kratsas: You were going on judicial precedent?

Logie: Case law. We were lawyers; we were trained to go into the books and read established case results to guide what we were looking for - justification for issuing a pardon to Nixon now! We were assigned to find precedent so that if somebody wants to challenge President Ford once he has done what it sounds like he was going to do, or intending to do, based on our advice, that he has the full power to do it. That was the real heart of the question that we were being asked to answer.

Calvaruso: Before I forget, because it might be interesting for historical purposes, who were the five attorneys in the room?

Logie: I am quite sure they were Hal Sawyer and myself, plus Lew Engman, Joe Neath, and Tom McNamara. They are all dead now. I was the youngest, both from the point of service and in age, I believe. These are more experienced trial lawyers than I was although I had tried a lot of cases during my five years with the firm. We all did separate research. We really only met twice, I believe. Once on Friday afternoon when we took the assignment and then

once on Sunday afternoon when we sat down and decided what Hal was going to say to Uncle Phil [Buchen].

Ultimately, we had a third gathering when Guy Vander Jagt, who was then the shoreline Congressman and had been an Associate at Warner, Norcross, became President Ford's messenger. He [Vander Jagt] was never going to be a good lawyer; he figured that out himself, but he was a good congressman, and good friend to all of us at the law firm, all of his life. His wife Carol was also a good friend. Anyway, he came, and this is really part of the story, but it is out of order. I like to tell people that we got paid for research that we did for the President of the United States. He [Ford] had been a member of the Peninsular Club, now defunct, in Grand Rapids, when he was a young lawyer, before the war, and after the war when he was at the firm. Remember he and Phil [Buchen] were lawyer partners before the war. And Phil was practicing law when I came back. He did a lot to get Grand Valley State University up and running, that was one of his personal projects; he was general counsel for the planning and implementing of that.

So, talking backwards, it was clear that the President had the power to pardon somebody even before he had been convicted of anything. But...Leon Jaworski who was the second Watergate counsel knew Nixon was smart. Nixon never met with Haldeman and Ehrlichman together, because if more than two people plot together, it's a conspiracy. He knew that. He [Nixon] was a smart lawyer too. So he would meet with Haldeman or he would meet with Ehrlichman, but not together, because the tape machine was running under the desk and all of that stuff. What Jaworski did to get at Haldeman and Ehrlichman, and he got them, and he got them convicted, was he named Nixon as an "unindicted co-conspirator". That's a nice technical phrase but what that meant was that he could either force them to talk or suffer the penalties for refusing to talk because he had that lever, which I thought was brilliant.

The next point, I think, was one of the key points in this; Nixon had never been accused of anything. Even after the "smoking gun", even after he resigned, nobody had even begun to prosecute him. Could a President step

in... and the answer to that question was Yes! As near as we could tell, the President's power working backwards in time, and there's only two people who know (the perpetrator and the President) that a crime had been committed, and the President wants to pardon him, he can. And that was the answer to Buchen's question to Warner, Norcross, and Judd. How far back can you go because they didn't want to give a pardon and then find out...No, we can still prosecute him over here. [President] Ford wanted to put Nixon on the sidelines.

In later years, he and I discussed this. He knew I was one of the guys that had participated in the project. When he came back to Grand Rapids, I would often see him. As Mayor, he and I cut the ribbon on the public museum together.

Anyway...that was our conclusion and Hal [Sawyer] did call Buchen on Monday morning and gave him that advice. But there is a little side story.

Uncle Phil [Buchen] was a long-time member and actually wrote a history of Fountain Street Church, which is an independent non-denominational church in downtown Grand Rapids. I didn't even know this fact, because of my mother's early demise, but my name is John Hoult Logie and there is a beautiful stained window in this church, as you are facing the pulpit that was given by the Hoult family there, given by my mother's family. The then Head Minister, Duncan Littlefair, was in full flower at that time as the minister of Fountain Street Church, a very liberal non-denomination church, then and now. He ended up on the *Today Show* and going to New York. He had his own statue. Well, according to Littlefair, and I talked to Uncle Phil [Buchen] long after the fact. Buchen thought it might help Jerry [Ford] make the right decision to meet and talk with Duncan [Littlefair] because Duncan was very much in favor of a pardon. His reasoning, at the time, was get him [Nixon] off-stage. If we put him in the dock he's going to be making nasty news for God knows how many years. It would look like a capital murder case...27 years on death row and they still wouldn't be able to solve it. That was his thinking.

Littlefair snuck down to Washington and met with President Ford and Buchen, who was his long-time friend at the church. He came back and he delivered a sermon not too long after all had become public, but after it was over, from our pulpit and I was madder than hell at that point because I didn't think he [Nixon] should have been pardoned. I was angry at him going back to 1962. It's a little-known fact now, but I was a young officer in San Diego in 1962 when Nixon, having lost to Kennedy in 1960, ran for Governor of California against Pat Brown, the father of the current Governor, who is in his second time around. He was in his 40s and now he is in his 70s. The Democratic Party of California got so mad at the dirty tricks that Nixon's people were playing that they sued them in State Court for breaking campaign rules. The Nixon team was good enough to prevent that coming to a head before the election. And everybody sort of assumed after that, that the Democrats having won, they'd just let it go. No! They got a judgment against Nixon personally and a guy named Haldeman personally that they ended up paying. I kept waiting through Watergate to see that come to life again. And I don't believe it ever did and I don't quite understand that because I was living in San Diego in the fall of '62, and it never came to light, but I saw it happen. Anyway, you guys can tell me just how long after that conversation, it took Jerry, not very long, to issue a full and unconditional pardon. I remember talking to him [Ford] and Uncle Phil [Buchen] which was my actual nice name for him, my Godfather, and he, Buchen, told me that he had given orders to the guys that were going to go out and try to broker the deal with Nixon out in California that they had to get something in writing from him and not come home without it. The short answer is they came home without it, which opened the door for Nixon to try and rehabilitate his image for the rest of his life, which is what he actually did.

Kratsas: So, let me back up a little bit here. How soon after Ford was sworn in as President were you contacted at the firm, or was the firm contacted?

Logie: Somewhat educated guess...it wasn't very long, I would say it would be less than a month, might have been a couple weeks.

Kratsas: The pardon was issued a month after he was sworn in, so it would have to be in that time frame.

Logie: Yes, I don't think they waited long after they got our advice. It was on a Friday, that much I know, if I had to put a timeline on it, less than 2 weeks after he had become President.

Kratsas: And it would have been after his first press conference when Ford went to the press conference and all anybody wanted to ask was ...What are you going to do with Nixon? Are you thinking of pardoning him? And President Ford wanted to talk about inflation, or the economy.

Logie: He didn't want to answer that question. Well, it may have been that he didn't have all those pieces in place. He didn't have us at that point.

I think that was, after the fact Uncle Phil [Buchen] said that we were concerned that if we made this move this fast, he knew it would create a huge fallout, but Ford was hard-wired to get this thing done. And it wasn't because he made any deal. Anybody who knew Jerry Ford knew he would never have made any "deal". Nixon was a bad-enough guy to try to do that, and I have heard third-hand that Nixon did try through one of his henchmen.

Kratsas: I know Al Haig had brought it up to Ford.

Logie: It was Haig that I was thinking of. He's dead now too isn't he?

Kratsas: Yes. But it was President Ford's speechwriter, Bob Hartmann. I know Hartmann told Ford to back away as soon as Haig would want to talk to him and so on about a possible deal.

Logie: Well, you know, I have to tell this story. When Ford was being vetted to be Vice President after Spiro T. Agnew, Agnew was the Baltimore County Executive when I was teaching at Annapolis. Everybody already knew he was on the take with the road builders. It was cash dealings. The reputation of Maryland's state government was not great. His predecessor had a huge yacht that he spent most of his time on, called the J. Millard Tawes, (his own name) and all he did was bring parties and liquor on his big boat. I left the Navy in August 1966. Agnew was elected in November, 1966. By that time I

was a law student back at the University of Michigan. But Agnew's taking payments from the Maryland road builders was an open secret. So the Baltimore County Executive was kind of like the guy in Oakland County, strong leader kind of thing. But then he became Governor and he had the road builders come right into his office with cash and then he became Vice President and they went right into the Vice President's office with cash and the FBI caught them. Wired, sent them in to make the transaction and talk about it on the tape. The first thing the guy said as they were waiting for him... "I just bribed the Vice President of the United States right on the tape". So they said to Agnew, you don't get to go through impeachment; we can put you in the slammer. He quickly and quietly resigned.

Kratsas: You weren't privy to what Hal Sawyer told Buchen?

Logie: No, it was one-on-one.

Kratsas: Can you recall anything that you stated orally to Hal Sawyer that actually got incorporated into the pardon itself.

Logie: No, but Hal knew that I thought a pardon was a bad idea. I wasn't the only one that felt like that. And if he had been convicted it would have divided the country by people who didn't think he did anything wrong and the people that did. Ford was smart enough to know that. I wasn't, but time has proved that President Ford was right.

Kratsas: He was a lot smarter than the rest of us. It was only a shame that the White House, the Press, (and this might have been the problem of Jerry terHorst leaving right away) that they had not made it clear that when Nixon accepted the pardon that he confessed his guilt and that's all I think the majority of the American people wanted -- was to find him guilty and him to say "I'm guilty" was good enough. The acceptance of the pardon is most often seen as an admission of guilt.

Logie: I thought it was bad for the country to let him off the hook. But as you say that was 40 years ago and I was only 35 years old.

Kratsas: You said that Phil Buchen did not contact any other law firms in Grand Rapids. Had you heard or did you know if Phil Buchen had called others outside of Grand Rapids?

Logie: There was another issue. I think it was about the Nixon records. Roger Clark from our firm told me, he was a couple years ahead of me, but he said, he was not on the team that I was on, but he was on a more publicized group of lawyers from three different firms that were all bunched together and Roger was part of that team. But that was a separate issue about the legalities dealing with Nixon's papers.

I remember that and I think that issue went right up to the Supreme Court and I think the decision of the Supreme Court was unanimous that these are "our" records not yours. I think somebody has a copy of the newspaper article about that. I don't but somebody does.

Calvaruso: Was Law Weathers, Buchen and Richardson ever involved in any of that?

Logie: I don't think so.

Calvaruso: Was Law Weathers at that time a fairly small firm?

Logie: No...it was Law Buchen before it was Law Weathers. When Uncle Phil became White House Counsel, his name came off. The firm of Ford and Buchen was dissolved by the war and Phil Buchen went into what is now Law Weathers. After the war ended, Jerry [Ford] joined Phil's [Buchen] firm. Julius Amberg was its leader. He was Jerry's mentor in his race for Congress because he was well connected to Republican politics.

Calvaruso: Was it Dick VanderVeen?

Logie: Dick VanderVeen... no. Dick ran against Ford in 1958 and he also is the one Democrat to have been elected to our seat in 100 years. There was a bi-election to fill the remainder of the term and Sawyer and I both helped Dick VanderVeen, who was a friend to both of us, win that seat against the Republican and then 9 months later he won a full 2-year term. Then Hal Sawyer came to my office, because I helped people get elected to public office(s), and he said he wanted to run for the seat even though he also helped

support Dick. We were all angry about Nixon as a lawyer and a crook. I told Hal, I said “Why do you want to do that, you don’t even like to meet and greet people”. Most of the people I help win public office around here like to do that. He said, “Yeah you are right, you need people like that”. It was interesting because Ford won comfortably in the high 60s and maybe occasionally in the low 70s. Sawyer won all four of his elections, 51.2%, 52.1%. It wasn’t that he was a bad Congressman; he simply did not, could not put himself out to people. If you are going to be an elected politician you have to like shaking hands and talking to people. So, they were all skin-of-the-teeth wins, but he won four elections in a row. His health went to pot.

He [Sawyer] was on the second Warren Commission; he was the most experienced lawyer in Congress. He had more actual real law experience than any of the other 534 people in the Senate and in the House. They recognized him, finally, in his 3rd or 4th term. When Paul Henry (Sawyer’s successor) died, I was still a pretty new Mayor. Some of my Republican friends wanted me to run for that job. I said, I had just taken a contract here a couple of years ago to be the Mayor of this city for 4 years and I don’t think I should leave. I have been given an opportunity by the people to really help shape and mold this community and this was in the 90’s where you can look out some of these windows and see. I would love to take credit for it but I became Mayor in good economic times. Here is the problem, I helped Sawyer win that job and he was the most seasoned lawyer in the whole place and they walked in and because of the seniority system basically gave him toilets to clean the entire 8 years that he was there. He finally got to be the number-two guy in some subcommittee of the Judiciary Committee. I said I’ve got more muscle than that right here in Grand Rapids. It’s a bad trade for me. I respect Congress and the importance of the job, but I am staying home.

Calvaruso: When you split up the research duties on the pardon, what was your expertise, what part of the law?

Logie: It wasn’t about expertise; it was about experience in court. We made a list of the things that we thought we ought to have answers to. I honestly don’t remember at this point what my specific piece was. There were 5 of us

counting Sawyer. I don't think he did much research, but the rest of us did. We cut it up into different bites and then we went to go find case law that supported outcomes on that issue so that we could find precedent, lawyers need to find precedents to hang their hats on, to reach a conclusion. Most often, I remember reading a couple of cases, where Federal Judges, not necessarily Supreme Court Justices, but lifetime appointee Federal Judges who were on the take, or something like that, or lied under oath or whatever and they could be gotten to. There were other cases too. I was working on the judge issue which is why I remember this and what could we do with these judges that had lifetime appointments.

Calvaruso: I know people weren't happy that President Ford pardoned Nixon, but at the time was there any legal challenge to the pardon?

Kratsas: There was the attempt by Congress to hold hearings about it. That's when President Ford went to Congress to discuss. He was the only President since, I believe, since Lincoln that went before Congress to testify and he went up there. The amazing part is Ford went up there, no notes, no advisor, nothing. He sat down and they said we want to know if there was a deal on this. He said there was no deal for the pardon, that's it, next question. It was one of the shortest meetings of all time. But I know Buchen, Hartmann, and every one of them said to him "do not go up there alone" and some said not to even go. Ford said "No, I'm going". And he did.

Logie: Yes. That's a great story. You know, a couple of other Ford stories: When Ford was being vetted for Vice President, the steely-eyed guys with badges on their lapel were all over Grand Rapids trying to find dirt on Ford. And Lloyd Lieveny was a tailor here in Grand Rapids, who made suits for gentlemen from scratch, and it was called Lloyd's, very well-known, and civilians liked his suits. The steely-eyed guys got wind that Ford supposedly got two new suits every year he was in Congress made by Lloyd. I heard this story from Lloyd who is dead now, and they came calling. They said to him "We understand that you make two suits a year for Congressman Ford". They said "Do you keep records of how they are paid for?"...looking to see if some booster was bank-rolling him or whatever they were looking for. Lloyd said

“Yes, I do.” They said, “Would you mind if we take a look”. And of course, they were all paid for by Ford, personally.

And my other story, which I eluded to earlier, a little more personal to what I got involved in. We got paid for our research. Our pay was a dinner at the Peninsular Club where Ford was now an honorary member after he went to Congress. With membership you get privileges. Guy Vander Jagt came and told us, called ahead, and was deputized by Ford to hold a dinner for the group of us that had worked on the pardon issue at the Peninsular Club and I found out after the fact that that dinner was paid for with a personal check from President Ford. He paid for our dinner. So trying to find dirt on...you look at all of the bad guys with the wife problems, Clinton, everybody else like that. Ford was there for 25 years and when the steely-eyed guys were done with their investigation to vet him as Vice President he was so clean they couldn't believe there wasn't some dirt there somewhere.

Kratsas: There was even the story that they talked to somebody he played football with, against in high school that Ford had tackled late and got a flag on the play. The gentleman was asked if he thought Ford was a dirty player and he said no, he didn't hear the whistle, and I didn't hear the whistle either.

Well, I have gone through all the questions that I have for you.

I did think of one last question for you. Did you know Benton Becker at this time?

Logie: I didn't and I don't know him now. He's around my age and he was a young lawyer. I was very; very unhappy when it came out that whoever went out there got a verbal we'll-take-care-of-that and they danced on him perfectly.

Kratsas: Thank you.