ORAL HISTORY OF
JOHN ALDOCK
First Interview
April 8, 2010

This interview is being conducted on behalf of the Oral History Project of the Historical Society of the District of Columbia Circuit. The interviewee is John Aldock, and the interviewer is Judy Feigin. The interview is taking place in John's office in Washington, DC, on April 8, 2010. This is the first interview.

Ms. Feigin: Good afternoon.

Mr. Aldock: Good afternoon.

Ms. Feigin: Let's just get the framework of time and place, so tell us where and when you were born.

Mr. Aldock: I was born on January 20, 1942, at Doctors' Hospital in Washington, DC.

Ms. Feigin: And did your family live in Washington?

Mr. Aldock: When I was born, they lived in Suitland, Maryland.

Ms. Feigin: Before we get to your immediate family, let's go back a little bit to your ancestors and see how far back that goes and what you know about them.

Mr. Aldock: Not much. I lived with my mother and maternal grandfather for a couple of years during World War II in Silver Spring when my father was in the infantry in the Pacific, probably for two or three years. And then my grandfather died. I never knew either grandmother. They were deceased, I believe, before I was born.

Ms. Feigin: Had your grandparents been born here?

Mr. Aldock: My grandparents were not born here. I think they came from someplace that was either Russia or Poland, depending on what day it was. I believe they came

through Ellis Island. Although I've always meant to check that out, I have not, as yet, done so. I really had no relationship, or memory of a relationship, with grandparents on either side.

Ms. Feigin: Without having a personal relationship, do you know anything about their history, about their coming over, or life before they came over? What they did or anything about them?

Mr. Aldock: I don't. Almost nothing. We really didn't talk about it, which is surprising in hindsight.

Ms. Feigin: Then let's move to the next generation which is your parents. Tell me something about them.

Mr. Aldock: My mother was born in Scranton, Pennsylvania, and grew up in Norfolk, Virginia, and then moved to Washington, DC, before the war. My mother went to college at William & Mary, but I'm not sure if she graduated. I think she left before graduation because of the war.

My father grew up in New York City. He went to CCNY (City College of New York). He took a correspondence course and got a CPA as an accountant. He came to Washington to work at the Civil Aeronautics Board in the early 40s. My father met my mother in DC. They were introduced by my father's cousin who lived here, and they were married here. My father went off to war shortly after I was born in 1942. He served in the Pacific in the Philippines with General

MacArthur. My father told me nobody liked MacArthur, because he left the Philippines and the troops there, including my father, to continue fighting.

Ms. Feigin: Did your father talk about that?

Mr. Aldock: Yes. He was not a big fan of MacArthur, both because MacArthur "deserted" his troops and because of his later insubordination to President Truman. My father was a sergeant in the infantry. The Philippines was a rough theater of the war.

Ms. Feigin: Do you know any stories about how rough it was?

Mr. Aldock: No, he wouldn't reminisce about the details. He would talk about that "sonofabitch MacArthur," what a publicity hound MacArthur was, and how MacArthur's uniform was always impeccable, while all the soldiers wore uniforms covered with dirt. Those were the stories I remember.

Ms. Feigin: Was your mother working during those war years? What was she doing?

Mr. Aldock: Yes. My mother was a legal secretary for a patent lawyer. My parents socialized with the lawyer and his wife. I do not remember his name, but I knew my mother's boss growing up.

Jumping ahead, my father worked for a long time for the Civil Aeronautics Board (CAB). He rose as high as one could go without being a political appointee. Then my father left and started a business, a transportation consulting firm, mostly for the airline industry. He often testified as an expert witness at CAB hearings on airline routes. All of the small airlines – feeder

airlines – were his clients. These airlines over time merged into the larger airlines, e.g. Ozark, Republic, Mohawk, etc.

Ms. Feigin: When did he leave the agency?

Mr. Aldock: In the late 50s. When Kennedy was elected president in 1960, my father got a call from Kenny O'Donnell, who was the chief White House appointment man. O'Donnell told my father that Kennedy was going to appoint him to be Chairman of the CAB. At the time, my father was at the Aviation Club with some of his clients, and one of them said, "You should hold a press conference right now." My father said, "Why would I do that? Of course not, that would be rude." The client said, "You don't understand Washington. Hold the press conference." My father said, "No, I'm not going to do that." Twenty-four hours later, O'Donnell called back and said, "I don't know how to tell you this, but we went to Sam Rayburn (then the Speaker of the House of Representatives) and it turns out, Mr. Aldock, that you are registered as an Independent voter. Rayburn said, 'If he's a Republican, we get credit. If he's a Democrat, we'd be doing something for one of our own. He's a goddam Independent, so he's worthless. Pick somebody else.'"

Ms. Feigin: [Laughter] Oh, no!

Mr. Aldock: O'Donnell said, "We can't give the chairmanship to you, but we've got a short time frame to pick someone else, so you can tell us whom to pick, and we'll likely go with your choice, because we don't have time to check out anybody else." My father suggested Alan Boyd, who subsequently became the CAB Chairman. My

father stayed with United Research Corporation, the company he had founded. Some of that CAB history got out as part of the lore, and it made my father a very popular person to hire for a CAB matter. He had a successful consulting business for the rest of his life.

My father died very young. He was a smoker and, at age 62, was diagnosed with lung cancer which subsequently metastasized to his brain. My father's health declined quickly, and he died within a year or so of the diagnosis. Shortly before he died, my father had a meeting with his airline industry group in Nashville, Tennessee. He very much wanted to go and make a final speech but was in a wheelchair and couldn't possibly travel alone, so I agreed to go with him. My father got out of his wheelchair and held onto the podium to make his speech which lasted for more than an hour. He was quite eloquent, and you could hear a pin drop. Everyone knew he was dying. The speech focused on the future of the airline industry, particularly for smaller airlines. Essentially he said, "You're being sold a bill of goods on deregulation. You all think you're going to be bought off by the big airlines. You're making a mistake. If you rally the small cities which will lose service, we can defeat deregulation. Deregulation is not going to be good for the public; it's not going to be good for small town America. In the end, it's not going to be good for you. You are being schnookered. Don't buy it. If you fight, we can win."

My father and I were very close. He was very dear to me. I saw him for lunch or dinner once a week during my entire professional life and, when I married and had children, my family saw my parents every weekend.

Ms. Feigin: Was he bitter about the CAB?

Mr. Aldock: No. My father had a saying that I adopted in private practice. The client has a constitutional right to be stupid. He felt the same way about Sam Rayburn.

Ms. Feigin: [Laughter] Tell me something about your mom. Did she continue to work when your dad came back?

Mr. Aldock: She stopped working when my father left the government. I don't remember my mother working after I was a child. In later years, she was a docent at local museums, including the B'nai B'rith museum and the Kreeger Art Museum. She volunteered for a number of things. She played canasta, mahjong and bridge. My parents were members of a square dancing group; that certainly was not my father's idea.

My parents moved from Clearview Place, Silver Spring, where my mother lived during the war with my grandfather, and built a house at the corner of Indian Spring Drive and Wire Avenue, also in Silver Spring. My father designed the house – he saw himself as a little bit of an architect. I lived there until I left for college. The house is still there, and it looks great.

Ms. Feigin: Your parents went to college, as you said. Do you know anything about their college experiences because, obviously, college then and college now is quite different.

Mr. Aldock: CCNY was a different world. My father would say it was the best education you could get, but it was a city school. If you could get in, it was free. The students

were high achievers. There wasn't a lot of going to bars, parties, football games and activities that I and my contemporaries did in college. My father had a whole set of law books that he read even though he never went to law school. He just thought it was useful for him to know about the law. Getting his CPA without an accounting background took considerable work. I considered him an intellectual. He and my mother read a lot, and both were active in public affairs. They were strong Democrats. My father worshipped Adlai Stevenson – I have all of Stevenson's speeches and several biographies. I remember sitting up with my father during the first Eisenhower-Stevenson campaign, and my father kept saying, "It's going to turn." I said, "I'm tired, I want to go to bed." "No, no, it's going to turn. Stevenson is going to win."

Ms. Feigin: That was 1952?

Mr. Aldock: Yes. As we know, it wasn't even close. Then in 1956, my father thought, "Well, OK. Adlai's back." My father's view was that, while Adlai didn't win the first election, surely he would win in 1956. "The public can't be that stupid. They're going to go with Stevenson, because he's the smartest candidate we've ever had." My father was quite interested in politics.

Ms. Feigin: Was he active politically?

Mr. Aldock: My father was very disturbed by the Senator Joe McCarthy "Red Scare" period, but other than giving money, writing some letters, and voting he was not politically active.

Ms. Feigin: And just to complete the college years, do you know anything about your mom's college years or what it was like being at William & Mary in that era?

Mr. Aldock: Not really. My mother was very close to her two sisters, and something about the college years, or her early years at some point, caused these three sisters to change the order of their birth. When my aunt died and my cousin obtained their birth certificates, it turned out that my mother's birthday was not on the day that we always had celebrated and, indeed, the year was wrong too. The order of the sisters in terms of who was oldest turned out to be quite different. They all are deceased, and we never unraveled the plot, but it was pretty intriguing. One of my cousins theorized that my mother was a couple of years older than my father and didn't want that to be known. My wife, Judy, shared that speculation, but it is purely a hypothesis.

Ms. Feigin: Could it be the order in which the women married?

Mr. Aldock: Yes, it could have been. We also had an oddity with my father's last name. His name – which was an Ellis Island name – was originally Oldack. When my father tried to enroll in school, it turned out that his sister had graduated as Aldock, because somebody had inverted the "o" and the "a." She was getting married and didn't care. [Laughter] So that's how we got our name.

Also, my father had no middle name or middle initial until he was drafted by the U.S. Army. The Army told him that he needed a middle initial, so he picked "I." That worked well until, at some point, the Army said, "You can't have just an initial. You have to have a name." The sergeant was not interested

in my father's story that Harry S Truman only had an initial. [Laughter] So "Ivor" became my father's middle name, but it was devised on pain of 50 pushups or KP duty.

Ms. Feigin: Interesting. Let's talk about your childhood with your parents. Was the family – which was not overly political – a religious household?

Mr. Aldock: Not really. My parents were Jewish, and they were married as Jews. We went to synagogue on the High Holy days, but not otherwise. At some point, I was told I was being bar mitzvahed and I memorized a portion of the service in Hebrew, but I didn't understand what it meant. That was not a memorable experience for me, and I did not participate in services after I was bar mitzvahed. My parents continued to go to the High Holy day services, and we celebrated Passover dinner. That was about it. I am not religious in terms of formal religion, although I do consider myself a believer in a supreme power. My daughters were not bat mitzvahed and they had no formal religious training, although I did undertake, as a promise to my mother, to teach them the Jewish holidays and the Old Testament. We had lessons every Sunday at home for quite a few years, and I think they enjoyed it; I certainly did. However, we do not belong to a synagogue.

Ms. Feigin: Let's talk about what it was like growing up in Silver Spring in the late 1940s and 1950s.

Mr. Aldock: It was very nice. It was pleasant. It was pretty laid back. There was little pressure in the public schools. No one sought to be a super achiever. Some people did well; others did less well. No one seemed to care all that much.

Ms. Feigin: Who lived in the neighborhood? Was it a mixed neighborhood ethnically, racially, religiously? What was it?

Mr. Aldock: Well, it was certainly mixed religiously, but there was no real black population at that time in Silver Spring. In high school at Montgomery Blair, there was a scandal when the football coach had a man hired as a janitor because his son was a great quarterback. He was our first African American student. Then we got a few more male black students, but they were usually athletes; I do not recall any black women until maybe my senior year. I would say that, when I was growing up, the neighborhood and at least my high school – I don't know about the other local schools – was at most 10% Jewish. This percentage grew to be 25% by the time that I graduated because of white flight from Wilson and Coolidge high schools in DC to Blair in Silver Spring. At Montgomery Blair, about 50% of the people went to college. At Bethesda-Chevy Chase High School, which Judy attended, it was close to 100%.

My elementary school was probably a more interesting place than my high school. I went to Parkside Elementary in Silver Spring. It was, and I believe still is, in Sligo Creek Park. Parkside had a very unusual principal who eventually was driven out by Senator Joe McCarthy and his crowd because she was controversial. One area of controversy was the principal's view that students should have freedom cards starting in the fourth grade. We were awarded a freedom card by a vote of the students, and there was no teacher veto. The students who received freedom cards were not the goodie-goodies or the cutups, because their classmates wouldn't vote for them. A freedom card entitled us to

leave the classroom at any time there was not a test being given as long as we didn't leave the school grounds. We might be handed a rake when we walked out, but we didn't have to use it. We were to commune with nature and spent a lot of time outside. As a result, I print because I never learned to write in script.

Ms. Feigin: You're with the modern generation.

Mr. Aldock: Some kids took their freedom cards very seriously. Many years later Ben Stein, of TV fame and a Parkside alum, wrote an article for the *Washington Post* on his freedom card: how much it meant to him and how he carried it in his wallet as an adult. Whenever it rained, we'd go outside to build dams and see if they flooded. It was great fun, but a problem developed when we got to junior high. I remember getting up from my desk the first week and starting to walk out of the class. The teacher said, "Where do you think you're going?" [Laughter] I said, "I'm bored; I want to clear my head." Consequently, I was sent directly to the principal's office.

We had safety patrols at Parkside. In tune with the times, the patrols were mostly boys. At the high school level, there was home economics for girls and shop for boys.

Ms. Feigin: The patrols were for traffic on the street?

Mr. Aldock: Crossing the street. That was the most prestigious job in elementary school. Everyone wanted to be a patrol.

My elementary school principal had a special playground built. It was like the JFKennedy playground with poles that you could slide down and ramps of cinder blocks that you could walk up. She enlisted the parents of the students. The idea that the parents would construct the playground and donate the materials was part of Senator Joe McCarthy's view that this woman was a Communist. It was incredible. She had been the principal for about 20 years, but they drove her out. Eventually, her protégé, who was one of my teachers, became the head of the Board of Education in Montgomery County. Many years later, he spoke as if people considered her a saint.

Ms. Feigin: What was her name?

Mr. Aldock: I can't remember.

Ms. Feigin: And what was his name?

Mr. Aldock: Alan Dodd.

Elementary school was idyllic. We were outside half the time. The patrols had a softball team. That also was a big deal. There wasn't much social mixing of boys and girls; we were much less advanced than the kids today. Through elementary school, a boy would have been considered an oddity if the friends he hung out with included girls.

Ms. Feigin: Do you remember what kind of games kids played then?

Mr. Aldock: We only played sports. We would shoot baskets; basketball was very big. Softball also was very popular. I don't think kids played football other than touch football. They played real football in the Catholic schools but not in the public schools. As a result, the public schools always lost those football games in later years. Some boys played hardball in Little League, but I didn't know anybody who played hardball at that age. The focus was on team sports, including track. Very few played tennis or golf. That was considered something the "rich country club set" did.

Ms. Feigin: In elementary school did you play games like marbles and collect baseball cards?

Mr. Aldock: Oh, yes. Marbles weren't so popular, but baseball cards were very big. I had a great collection of cards that my mother later threw away, only to find out that a friend sold his for good money around the time that I went to college.

Ms. Feigin: [Laughter] Did your house get magazines? Do you remember the type of things that came into the house?

Mr. Aldock: We got all the news magazines. My father subscribed to *Time*, *Newsweek*, *US News and World Report*, *Business Week*, and others. We also subscribed to *Life* and a few magazines of that type. My father brought home several papers from work, including the *New York Times* and the *Wall Street Journal*. We had the *Washington Post* delivered to the house. Maybe that's why I became a news junkie as an adult; if I don't read two newspapers a day and watch the news on public television, I feel out of touch.

Ms. Feigin: Did your mom get magazines?

Mr. Aldock: I think *Life*, *Look*, and other such magazines were hers. But I don't recall any other women's magazines or those that were labeled as women's magazines.

Ms. Feigin: Living in Silver Spring, was Washington a place you came to in the early years in elementary school?

Mr. Aldock: Not much. Occasionally, if we were going out to dinner, since the possibilities in Silver Spring were more limited. Not that the choices were so great in DC, but there were more restaurants. To the extent we ate out, we tended to eat at O'Donnell's, a seafood restaurant in Bethesda. Once or twice we ate at Mrs. K's Toll House, which still is located in Silver Spring, although I think you have to have blue hair to eat there now. [Laughter] There was a Chinese restaurant that served chow mein, but it was Chinese-American. Maybe it was in junior high when we were eating out, we would go to the Peking or the Yenching Palace in DC, which were considered exotic Chinese restaurants, because they were frequented by embassy people and had dishes other than chow mein. Sometimes, my father would take us to a steak place downtown.

Ms. Feigin And we should say there was no Metro then, so how did you get from Silver Spring to DC? Did you have a car?

Mr. Aldock It took a while. We did have a car, and in summer the drive was hot without air conditioning. I remember my family only had one window air conditioning unit in the house, and it was in a room that I didn't go in. So I grew up without air

conditioning which my children find absolutely astounding. We had a dog, and neither I nor the dog were allowed in half the house. My mother had the view that you didn't use the living room or the dining room for family. [Laughter] They were off-limits, so the house seemed much smaller. I didn't mind, and being an only child didn't bother me either. I couldn't understand what the advantage was to have siblings. My mother asked me once what I would think about a brother or sister and, as she told the story, I put the kabash on that possibility. [Laughter] Apparently it was an open question at the time. [Laughter] I didn't know – for me it was just a question.

Ms. Feigin: What about junior high? Any particular memories?

Mr. Aldock: I went to Eastern Junior High. We discovered girls then but mostly were involved with sports. At Eastern I was a good athlete, in part because I was my full height and weight in the sixth grade. That was a decent size so, in junior high and during my first year in high school, I spent a lot of time doing sports. I played touch football and basketball; we played interschool. I also played in the school band and in a Dixieland band. Junior high was easy; I didn't spend a lot of time on homework.

Ms. Feigin: What instrument did you play?

Mr. Aldock I played the clarinet and saxophone. My parents encouraged music; they did not play instruments, although my mother played piano as a child. I liked music but, by the end of junior high or early high school, I figured out that I didn't have enough talent to pursue it further. I could play jazz and could read music put in

front of me but, when I was told to play in the key of G and to improvise, I had no idea what to do. That was the end of my music career. My mother sold the saxophone when I went to college. Another bad economic move because it was worth a lot of money. [Laughter] I've been interested in listening to music ever since, particularly jazz.

Ms. Feigin: Was it as segregated as you remember elementary school?

Mr. Aldock: Yes, I don't remember any African Americans. I don't remember anybody whose first language wasn't English. We certainly didn't have what Montgomery County today has: a host of international people. The county schools when my children attended had lots of children of diplomats and IMF, World Bank, and embassy parents. This must have been a later phenomenon, at least for Silver Spring. I didn't know anybody with a foreign background.

Ms. Feigin: And where did you go to high school?

Mr. Aldock: I went to Montgomery Blair, which, at that time, was not a magnet school but just the neighborhood school. I rode my bike in the early years before I turned sixteen. It wasn't that close, but it wasn't that far, either. I participated in a lot of sports the first year. I did JV football, JV basketball, and track. I had stopped growing so I was too small for the football team. I broke some bones tackling and hitting the tackling dummy.

To give you an idea of the county, I do remember one JV football game. Blair was playing Walter Johnson High School, which just had been built. Walter

Johnson was named after the famous Washington baseball pitcher. To get to the school we took a bus over dirt roads for hours. The game was delayed to get the cows off the field. Today, of course, it is a suburban area in North Bethesda. I remember that game because, when the coach sent me in, I wasn't wearing half my pads. I played so infrequently that it never occurred to me to be ready, and I went in there thinking that, if I had to tackle somebody, it was going to be rough. That was the end of my high school football career.

I stayed with track a little longer and was quite successful at it. I could run a very fast 100-yard dash, but I had asthma and, when they tried to move me from a 100-yard runner to the 220- and 440-yard distances, it did not work. I could finish but I would vomit after every race. That seemed hardly worth the effort. I believe my school athletic career ended by my sophomore year of high school.

Ms. Feigin: Do you remember stores, restaurants, Peoples Drug Store? Do you remember them being segregated in any way?

Mr. Aldock: No, but I think they were not segregated because there were no minorities trying to get in. I was a soda jerk on weekends at a pharmacy in Four Corners in Silver Spring. I drove a little jeep to deliver the prescriptions and the ice cream. We also made hamburgers behind the soda counter, probably my first and last effort at cooking.

Ms. Feigin: You delivered to people's homes?

Mr. Aldock: Yes, we delivered to people's homes. I never saw a black person inside or outside, but that particular pharmacy wouldn't have been segregated – I knew the man who owned it; that would not have been his way. I'm not sure the county was tested. I know my wife, Judy, who is two years younger, moved from Alexandria, Virginia, because it was segregated everywhere, and her parents couldn't tolerate that. They pulled her out of school after eighth grade and moved to Maryland. In third grade, Judy was told to stand in the corner because she didn't go to church. In Judy's experience, it felt like attending school in the Deep South. This was Virginia in the 1950s, but I didn't see any of that in Maryland high school.

Ms. Feigin: So you graduated in 1960?

Mr. Aldock: I graduated in 1960. I gave little thought as to where to go to college. My father insisted that I go, and I agreed, but the guidance counselors were not helpful. At Blair, 50% of the students went to college, and half of the college-bound went to the University of Maryland.

Ms. Feigin: Before we get to where you went, I want to ask one more question about the 50s. Rock 'N' Roll, any impact on your life?

Mr. Aldock: Yes. There was a DC version of Philadelphia's *American Bandstand* called the *Milt Grant Show*. I was on the *Milt Grant Show* on television on more than one occasion, and I was a good dancer. We called it the "Jitterbug." The idea that you would dance without holding your partner's hand so that, if you were separated, you could have been dancing with somebody else would have seemed

odd. I still dance the same way. I haven't learned a thing or lost a thing. I never learned the styles like the "Twist" that started when I was in college and have continued today. I thought modern dance was crazy and the hell with it. Music and dancing were very popular, and I still have the hit records and many of them on CDs which I have received for donating money to public television: Frankie Avalon, Buddy Holly, Bill Haley, Roy Orbison, etc.

Ms. Feigin: In those days, of course, before the iPods and all the new technology, everybody walked around with transistor radios.

Mr. Aldock: I had a transistor radio. Listening to sports was popular, and I would listen to the baseball games. The Washington Senators were as bad as the Nationals but they were our team. [Laughter] Football wasn't big; the Redskins mania came later. At least I don't remember those games. We would listen to the transistor radio for baseball and rock music. My parents had no problem with rock music; there were no issues. They didn't like it but didn't care that I was listening to it. They would shake their heads the way parents always do about the music of their children.

Ms. Feigin: "Kids these days!" [Laughter] How did it come to be that you went to college where you went?

Mr. Aldock: I looked through a lot of catalogues. I came to the conclusion that it should be a coed school with a student body numbering 3,000 to 7,000. More than 7,000 seemed like a lot of people even though I went to a big high school. Schools of

less than a couple of thousand seemed too small. There weren't many schools that fit that profile.

Ms. Feigin: We should say, because I think the younger generation may not know, that most of the Ivies were all male.

Mr. Aldock: Yes, there were few coed schools in the Northeast. While I had very good grades, I had mediocre SATs. I was active in my class. One of the schools I applied to was Cornell.

Ms. Feigin: That was a coed Ivy.

Mr. Aldock: Also, I applied to Stanford and Northwestern. I didn't get into Stanford, and my parents, I think, weren't interested in Stanford because it was too distant. I'd never been far from Maryland.

Ms. Feigin: So not much travel when you were growing up?

Mr. Aldock: We went to Vermont on vacation, New York, and maybe to Florida one time. I went to several summer camps in New England and worked as a waiter. Card playing was the main pastime for the waiters. Apart from camp, we also played a lot of poker and learned to be quite adept at it. We played with other students who were wealthy but weren't good, and it paid.

Ms. Feigin: In college?

Mr. Aldock: No, in high school. We would play weekly within our own social group, but we also would back one of our group to play in games with kids who had plenty of money.

Ms. Feigin: Where would you find the rich kids?

Mr. Aldock: There were some well-off folks in Bethesda.

Ms. Feigin: Back to college.

Mr. Aldock: I didn't get into Stanford; I was accepted by Cornell, Michigan, and Wisconsin, but they were too big. So I went to Northwestern. I had never been to Chicago and didn't know anybody there. Some classmates from my high school went to Duke, which was popular as was Wisconsin. A few went to the Ivies. Others went to small New England schools. When I went to Northwestern, it was my first trip west of West Virginia.

Ms. Feigin: You were there at an incredibly tumultuous time in the country's history. First thing was the election in 1960.

Mr. Aldock: My father was a bit nervous about John Kennedy. He did not like Joe Kennedy Sr; he thought Joe was pro-Nazi and corrupt, so he was worried about the son. Kennedy was very articulate and charismatic. My father, however, still wanted Adlai Stevenson to run again even though he knew that wasn't going to happen. My parents supported Kennedy but not with enthusiasm. I was more excited. I didn't know much about Joe Kennedy Sr, and John Kennedy looked great to me after eight years of Eisenhower.

Ms. Feigin: Was it a big deal on campus?

Mr. Aldock: It was a big deal on campus, but the student body at Northwestern in those days was both conservative and apolitical. I considered myself middle-of-the-road – a relatively conservative Democrat – but most students at Northwestern were the children of Midwest Republicans. I remember a history professor who basically said that Franklin Roosevelt was a Communist which was unbelievable! Generally, we had good professors, but he was an exception. The students were not wrapped up in the 1960 election and also not that focused on the civil rights issues of the time. There was a minority group who followed all of this, but I don't think it was the majority.

Ms. Feigin: Was college well integrated?

Mr. Aldock: College was well integrated for athletics. Northwestern had Division I sports teams and therefore needed African Americans to be competitive, but you were hard pressed to find more than a few African American women. All of the athletes were on scholarships. We did have a decent percentage of foreign students, including a handful of Africans and others of color. The sports teams at Northwestern found it difficult to compete with the larger state schools, although Northwestern did have a couple of good years with Ara Parseghian as the football coach. He beat Notre Dame twice, which is the reason Notre Dame later hired him as their coach.

The fraternity dominance at college came as a surprise to me, which shows how much research I had done on the college I was going to. [Laughter]

There were fraternities and sororities which Jews could not join. That was a shock to me. I never had encountered anything like that and I was not ready for it. I went through rush week and met some nice guys who asked me to join their fraternity. I accepted, but the next day they said, "Oh, my goodness, we didn't realize that you were Jewish. We can't take you." I remember calling home and telling my father, "I picked the wrong school. Can I leave now?" He said, "Well, I think you've got to stay a while." [Laughter]

Ms. Feigin: So that was your first real brush with anti-Semitism?

Mr. Aldock: Yes. I had heard about anti-Semitism in high school, but it never had any real consequence for me. I just thought that that guy was a boor and moved on. But it was the first time I had experienced it personally. I didn't care that much about the specific fraternity; I just didn't like the idea of being rejected.

Ms. Feigin: Did you join another fraternity?

Mr. Aldock: I eventually joined another one that was largely Jewish and had the only African American in the fraternity system who was not a member of the all-African American fraternity. During my third year, I became president of the Intra-Fraternity Council. At a Greek school like Northwestern, it was second to being student body president. One year ahead of me, our student body president was Dick Gephardt, former majority leader of the House of Representatives (1989-1995). I am not sure why I ran for the office except that I thought I could win. Also, I was offended by the hazing, which wasn't terrible but was stupid. I ran on the ticket of abolishing fraternity hazing, so I was the faculty candidate if nothing

else. We actually were largely successful at cutting it out the year I was president. In my final year, I moved off campus with a friend and essentially dropped fraternity activities.

My girlfriend through much of college belonged to Kappa Kappa Gamma (KKG). She was the social chairman, and her sorority would arrange dinner dances with my fraternity. The national of KKG brought pressure on her to stop having social events with a largely Jewish fraternity.

Ms. Feigin: Because her sorority wasn't Jewish?

Mr. Aldock: Yes. We all thought it was amusing. None of the students took it seriously.

Although Northwestern was not political, Kennedy's assassination was a major event. Most of the students were children of upper-class Republican business executives, but the death of Kennedy moved them.

Ms. Feigin: How so?

Mr. Aldock: I don't know. Perhaps because he was so young and charming, Kennedy's death was traumatic, while the deaths in the civil rights movement of people they did not "know" were not.

During my college years there was a whole culture of young college students going south to protest segregation. Nobody from Northwestern that I was aware of was participating. Students were into the folk songs and protest music but not really involved in the movement itself.

Going to Chicago was part of our nightlife as much as events that were happening on campus. Everybody was into alcohol even though it was then a dry campus. We had to go into Chicago or keep it hidden in Evanston. We basically went to bars in the city that would serve us. We went to Second City, which was the predecessor to "Saturday Night Live". We enjoyed Unos and Dues deep dish pizza which, for me, was a great eating experience.

I made life-long friends at Northwestern. My freshman dormitory hall housed about twelve students. Six of them were on full, non-need based scholarships. They were bright guys. I was not one of them. While we were in different fraternities and were active in different things, we kept in touch during those four years and have continued our friendships during the past 50 years.

After graduation we wrote letters to each other every Christmas. We would Xerox and then mail them, because there was no e-mail. Today, we e-mail and also get together with spouses for a long weekend every year or two at some nice venue. This September we are meeting in Asheville, NC.

Even though all of the people in the group are from different backgrounds, we are very close. One is a Mormon, who runs a mutual fund in Salt Lake City, Utah. The others include a professor at Boalt Law School, a high-tech entrepreneur who works out of his house in upstate New York, a retired business professor, a financial adviser, a former GE labor executive, and a couple of lawyers. We had a favorite professor join us for a few of the early reunions. I've kept all of the annual letters which are interesting to read as a reflection of the

changes in our lives. We all were going to be millionaires or president at the beginning. Then people got married and had children, and the letters focused on family. There was also a period when satire and humor dominated the letters. Now, everybody is thinking and writing about what they are going to do after retirement.

Ms. Feigin: Before we leave college, what did you major in?

Mr. Aldock: Northwestern at the time – not anymore – had an undergraduate business school, and I thought that made practical sense. Since I wasn't sure, I enrolled in the undergraduate business school but also majored in literature. I had read a bit so I thought I was pretty good in literature. But I encountered a freshman English teacher who asked, "Who's read this? Who's read that? Who's read this other book?" The other students' hands were going up, but I hadn't read any of the books that she mentioned. [Laughter] She noticed that I hadn't raised my hand so she assigned me a reading list. As a result, during my college years I read from Jane Austen to Emile Zola. I became very well-read. I also took courses in European literature. Before college I never had heard of Camus, Proust, Mann, Kafka, Malraux, or Gide. I really enjoyed those classes.

I had a favorite professor named Gene Lavengood, who taught business ethics. He was the one who came to several of our reunions. In later years, Professor Lavengood used to give fundraising lectures for Northwestern entitled "Did JP Morgan Go To Heaven?" [Laughter] I think he was the biographer of Wright Patman. Lavengood was a delight.

Ms. Feigin: When you graduated, the Vietnam War was raging. Was that any part of the college experience?

Mr. Aldock: No. It was very minor in college. It became huge in law school, particularly when students started being drafted out of my class. That focused our attention. But in college it was less of an issue, even with me, and I was more political than most.

Ms. Feigin: Did you work summer jobs?

Mr. Aldock: I worked every summer. I was a soda jerk at a pharmacy in the early days. I sold sewing machines in Anacostia during my first year in high school; I was on commission and made a lot of money. It made my parents laugh that I was a salesman selling sewing machines, since I couldn't sew on a button.

Ms. Feigin: Was this a door-to-door thing?

Mr. Aldock: Door-to-door, but there were leads. The customers had expressed some interest. Almost all the neighborhoods I was assigned were in the black community. I'm not a great driver, so the fact that I found my way around was remarkable. Then I worked several summers for Senator Hubert H. Humphrey.

Ms. Feigin: Tell me about that.

Mr. Aldock: I worked for Humphrey during college and law school. In 1963 during my junior year of college, I went abroad for the first time. That was a significant event. There was an organization called AIESEC, which is a French abbreviation. It still

exists and is an exchange program for business students. At the time, American students got jobs in Europe, and Europeans got jobs in the United States. Several of my friends applied, so I signed up. I was sent to Rotterdam in the Netherlands.

Ms. Feigin: This is during the academic year or summer?

Mr. Aldock: Summer of my junior year in college. This was my first trip abroad. I arrived in Rotterdam on a Sunday. I had the name of somebody to meet but, of course, the school was closed and nobody was there. I met a Dutch student who took pity on me and took me out drinking all night. I got awfully sick. Monday, somebody who recognized my name showed me to my housing.

I worked for The Holland American Steamship Line. I would take a ferry out to the offices which were in the middle of the port. The company had sponsored a Dutch student who got a job in Chicago, and I got the job there. It was not a serious job, and I had no real duties; I was supposed to observe and have a good time.

I did have one task. The Holland American Line provided ships to bring U.S. American Field Service students to Europe. All the high school students who were going to Europe would come over on an old World War II troop transport ship. They would arrive in the port in Rotterdam, and I would be in charge of the group meeting them. I had a megaphone and a carnation. I would supervise a Dixieland band and Dutch students who wore carnations and carried their bags. When the U.S. students got off the boat I would say, "How about those Yankees?" or whatever. [Laughter] The kids would say, "The Dutch are

unbelievable. He sounds just like an American. He's absolutely fluent." [Laughter] Since there was only one boat arriving every other week, my boss suggested I travel every week to a new city. I essentially traveled for three months. On several of these trips, I joined other Northwestern AIESEC students.

We took one trip to East Berlin, where we ran out of gas on the autobahn and had to be pushed through Checkpoint Charlie. That experience was memorable. Although the guards thought it was pretty funny, we didn't. That week we saw people get shot trying to climb over the Berlin Wall. We heard Willy Brandt give a speech that was interrupted by gunfire while we hid under a car.

Ms. Feigin: Did you have any trouble getting into East Berlin?

Mr. Aldock: We were told that it was a bad idea although, if we went only to certain places, didn't stay overnight, and had the right currency, it was plausible but stupid. So we went. When we ran out of gas on the East side, we were thinking maybe they were right.

Ms. Feigin: We should say that Willy Brandt was the mayor of West Berlin at that time.

Mr. Aldock: He was. I remember leaving Vienna and chasing some French nurses. We eventually lost them and arrived at a border town between Austria and Yugoslavia in the middle of nowhere. The guard was asleep but, when he woke up, we were detained there for quite a while. It was scary since the guard did not speak English and probably suspected that we were spies.

Ms. Feigin: Again, for people who may not realize, Yugoslavia was then behind the Iron Curtain.

Mr. Aldock: Yes. It was scenic and cheap and friendly to Americans and a wonderful country to visit. Judy and I went to Greece and Yugoslavia for our honeymoon. Those three months addicted me to travel. Since 1963 I've taken trips abroad at least once a year: first alone, then with Judy, and then with Judy and the children from a very early age. We still travel every year. In 2010 it will be to Egypt and Jordan, and 2011 will be our second trip to India.

Ms. Feigin: What did you do the summer after your first trip abroad?

Mr. Aldock: I think I worked in Hubert Humphrey's office.

Ms. Feigin: What office did Humphrey hold then?

Mr. Aldock: He was a senator. I went first to Senator Eugene McCarthy's office, because somebody I knew had an "in" there. McCarthy's aide interviewed me and said he did not have an opening, but Hubert might. At that point, McCarthy and Humphrey were pretty friendly, unlike the split between them later over the Vietnam War. I got a job with Humphrey as a gofer, and I kept getting hired again and again.

Ms. Feigin: This was a summer job?

Mr. Aldock: Yes.

Ms. Feigin: And when you say you were hired again each summer, you would go back?

Mr. Aldock: Yes. Each summer until, if we jump ahead, I ended up with Humphrey in the '68 election. That's because I had the prior history that allowed that to happen. I had worked for him at least three summers in college and law school.

Ms. Feigin: Can you tell us anything about him?

Mr. Aldock: Humphrey was a great man. He talked too much and was too loyal, but he was a great politician. Humphrey would keep a person on his staff despite an alcohol problem; he just didn't want to fire anybody. That was a fault, but those are good traits. He was a very caring man and a public servant of the highest order. He was smart and public spirited. Unfortunately, we do not have people from either party of his quality today in the United States Senate. John Kennedy stole the West Virginia primary in 1960 from Humphrey, and then Lyndon Johnson destroyed Humphrey's candidacy in '68. But for those events, Humphrey would have been president and he would have been a good president.

Humphrey was a natural politician. I remember my mother was in a crowd at a Humphrey political rally. It was clear she was going to go up and talk to Humphrey and say, "Of course, you remember my son," which, of course, he did not. But Humphrey had the knack of knowing that this woman was staring at him and had something to say. So he walked down to her and said, "Good to see you." She said, "You remember my son?" Humphrey said "Of course I do, a great young man." [Laughter] As far as my mother was concerned Humphrey and I were best friends, even though he had no idea who I was.

Ms. Feigin: Do you have any memory of what the Senate itself was like in those days?

Mr. Aldock: Well, the Senate was packed with giants of both parties. You had Jake Javits, Fulbright, Proxmire, Russell, and Moynihan. These were serious people of stature. Today, we have a bunch of pygmies.

Ms. Feigin: And when you say men —

Mr. Aldock: Yes, there were no women.

Ms. Feigin: You worked for him through college and then —

Mr. Aldock: While in law school I had one legal job, and the others were with Humphrey. My first year in law school I worked for one of my father's friends, Ray Rasenberger, who was a CAB attorney. The DC firm was Scoutt & Rasenberger. They were terrific lawyers and great guys. While both have retired, I believe the firm still exists. I think I worked for Humphrey my second and third years.

Ms. Feigin: Tell us about your choice of law school and how it came to be.

Mr. Aldock: I gave a little bit more thought to law school than I had given to college. I had very good grades and mediocre LSATs. Not bad but not good enough for Harvard, Yale, or Stanford, which I perceived to be the best schools at the time. I was competitive at the next level: Columbia, Pennsylvania, and Michigan. I wasn't interested in a DC school. That was out of the question. When I got into the University of Pennsylvania, I accepted even though I had never been to Philadelphia.

Ms. Feigin: Just to back up for one minute, we should say that the draft was going on then, correct? The war?

Mr. Aldock: Yes, the draft was going on but, for my first year in law school, they were honoring educational deferments. That soon changed.

Ms. Feigin: Not continuing academically was not really an option in terms of the draft, was it?

Mr. Aldock: Right, but I didn't go to law school for that reason. I always was going to go to graduate school. In those days, students didn't take off time between college and graduate school. I was going to get a graduate degree, and I already had an undergraduate business degree. What else was I going to do but go to law school; I was not going to medical school or to become a professor of English literature.

Actually, for a brief moment I thought about being a writer. While at Northwestern, I had a tutorial with Bergen Evans, a well-known professor who had a TV show at the time. It was one of these great courses where the student meets with the professor every week and talks about what to read, reads the book, and then returns to talk to him about impressions of the book; each week he suggests another book. If I liked an author, Evans would give me a book I had never heard of and say, "This one is better." I remember telling him I might be interested in being a writer of fiction. Evans said to me, "You don't have much time to think about that." I asked why. Evans replied, "You'd better drop out of school now and start driving a milk truck. If you get any more education, you won't be able to write anything. [Laughter] You'll sound like all the people you

read. If you think you're going to go to graduate school and then write, forget it." So, like my music career, my literature career ended there.

I subsequently took a course called "Law and Politics" with Professor Rosenblum, who also taught at the Northwestern University Law School. The course was taught at the professor's house, and I enjoyed it. My father was pushing law school. His view was that, since I had a business degree, an MBA made no sense, and I should go to law school.

Ms. Feigin: So you applied to?

Mr. Aldock: I don't recall but at least Michigan, Columbia, and Pennsylvania.

Ms. Feigin: And why did you choose Pennsylvania?

Mr. Aldock: I think it was the highest-rated law school that accepted me. I didn't know anything about Philadelphia. It was smaller than Michigan, and I'd been in the Midwest. So I thought I might as well go East and probably did not give it that much thought at the time.

Ms. Feigin: And by the time you got there, there was the war issue on campuses, I think. Was that an issue at Penn?

Mr. Aldock: Yes, very much so. The students came from mostly East Coast schools where political consciousness was much greater than at Northwestern. The first year all we did was work. The idea was to make the Law Review and, in those days, the

Law Review was the top 20 students by grades. Everybody worked hard and it was very competitive, but I got lucky and made the Law Review.

Ms. Feigin: Before we get to the Law Review, tell me about your class. Were there women?

Mr. Aldock: There were four women in a class of several hundred. They were considered oddities. The women were not crusaders. They were quite laid back and less competitive but they all did well. They probably were more qualified than the men. There were two African Americans. I didn't know anybody who spoke another language as a native language.

Ms. Feigin: What about the faculty?

Mr. Aldock: The faculty were all white males, not a single woman. It was a reflection of the times that nobody thought it was odd.

Ms. Feigin: What about Law Review?

Mr. Aldock: The rule was that we had to write a long note and a short comment for the Law Review. It soon became clear to me that the Law Review experience was going to be miserable. We all were going to write something obscure that nobody would read. We were going to obsess over footnotes and how to do the Blue Book citations. I decided to meet my obligations and move on. I picked as my note topic, "Due Process and the Selective Service System." It was a mediocre piece of work but became a best seller. [Laughter] I got calls from people that I'd known years ago asking whether there was anything in the article that would get them out of the draft.

Ms. Feigin: So this article was published?

Mr. Aldock: Yes, it was published. I have a copy. Nobody else does. [Laughter] But it was a big seller at the time. All of my fellow students were trying to figure out our game plan for dealing with the draft, just in case. Some of us took the exam to be Navy officers. Several of us knew we couldn't pass the eye test. If we wore glasses or contact lenses we had to be able to pass the test uncorrected, so we memorized the eye chart and qualified. That was our fall-back. Unlike conservative Northwestern, Penn was antiwar, like most places by then in terms of our age group.

Ms. Feigin: And were you involved in the antiwar movement?

Mr. Aldock: Only intellectually. I knew I didn't want to go. It seemed like the wrong war but, at that point in time, I wasn't 100% sure. I read a lot about both sides. On balance, it seemed like the wrong war, but I didn't think it was a plot to put us into a war we shouldn't have been in and I didn't know at the time that the Gulf of Tonkin incident had been trumped up. We certainly did not appreciate at that time how big a mistake the war would become.

I was pretty bored with law school by the second year as most of my classmates were. The third year of law school is, in my view, unnecessary, and probably there for economic reasons. In my last year, I hooked up with a professor named Tony Amsterdam. He was at the time the brightest man I had ever met and maybe he still is. Professor Amsterdam was very young, probably not much older than we were. He had published French poetry, graduated first in

his class in law school, and clerked for Justice Frankfurter. He ran a course where we spent every Friday or Saturday night, or both if you could handle it, driving around in police cars. We would go all night from 9:00 p.m. to 8:00 a.m. the next morning. The law school had an arrangement with the police department that the students weren't allowed to testify unless we were subpoenaed, and we would not talk about anything we saw except in the class. The police department made that demand as a condition of allowing us to be in the police cars. I'm sure they assigned us the very best cops they had. We would go into neighborhoods where husbands were beating their wives. Since we wore ties, everybody would say, "He's a detective." [Laughter] Occasionally, the police would say, "Under the seat, kid!" [Laughter] It was fascinating. I'd never witnessed urban violence, and there were incidents every single night. Mostly domestic or neighbors; some of it was drugs.

Ms. Feigin: And did this course impact your career choices?

Mr. Aldock: As part of the course, we also worked for the Public Defender. I was not enamored of the Public Defender's Office. Virtually all of our clients were clearly guilty. We nevertheless had to come up with arguments. It was very creative, but ultimately I found it depressing.

In some ways I think it made me more interested in being a prosecutor later, although at the time I wasn't thinking in those terms. I was thinking about not going to Vietnam. I graduated without being drafted. There was no lottery yet, but it was imminent. I was under 26 and single and from Silver Spring,

Maryland, where there were no enlistments. I applied for a university scholarship to Oxford in the UK in political science, philosophy, and economics (PP&E) and I got it. My draft board said, "You're switching fields. You're out of law. Forget it." I then researched and found that the Maxwell School at Syracuse University had a program for law students to work on revisions to the Ethiopian constitution. I reasoned, "It's law." My draft board thought that was very funny. [Laughter] "Yeah, sure kid. Forget it." I was worried that this wasn't going well, so I applied for judicial clerkships. My choice was between Judge Leventhal, which would have been the more prestigious clerkship because he was a Court of Appeals judge on the DC Circuit, and Judge Youngdahl on the DC District Court. Leventhal was a great intellectual and I liked him a lot. Humphrey had suggested Youngdahl, who had been a Republican governor of Minnesota and was a giant of a man. In the end, I thought that an appellate clerkship was too much like Law Review. The district court clerkship seemed more real like driving around in police cars. My contemporaries thought I was nuts. In the back of my mind I assumed I was going to be drafted anyway. The Youngdahl clerkship turned out to be a great experience.

Ms. Feigin: I think we'll stop now, do the clerkship next time and go on with your legal career. Thank you so very much.

Mr. Aldock: Thank you.