

ORAL HISTORY OF BRUCE TERRIS

II. GROWING UP

This interview is being conducted on behalf of the Oral History Project of The Historical Society of the District of Columbia Circuit. The interviewer is Steve Steinbach, and the interviewee is Bruce Terris. The interview took place in Bruce Terris's office on Thursday, May 29, 2014. This is the second interview.

MR. STEINBACH: Good afternoon, Bruce.

MR. TERRIS: Good afternoon.

MR. STEINBACH: We are going to focus today on background – what ultimately brought you to Washington, D.C. to work in the Justice Department, and there's a lot before that. So why don't we start with the first, which is the date you were born and the place you were born.

MR. TERRIS: I was born in Detroit, Michigan, and it was August 3, 1933, I'm told [laughter].

MR. STEINBACH: Why don't you tell us generally about your parents: where they grew up, where their ancestor's families originally came from, to the extent you know.

MR. TERRIS: My father's family came from what I think was called White Russia and now is Belarus. I know essentially nothing about that background. My father never talked about it, and I guess I wasn't smart enough to ask. They came I believe in the 1890s to New York, and they moved to Michigan. My father was born soon thereafter in 1902. They lived in a neighborhood, I am told, where they spoke Yiddish. My father, I was told, did not speak English until he was about 5. Other people in my family said that isn't right, that he did

speak English before then. Obviously I don't know. He was a very smart man. He got into the University of Michigan but his family was not wealthy at all. His father was in the scrap business, getting things from the railroads, the Grand Trunk Railroad, getting debris, things that they didn't care about and had left there, and he would sell them and that's how he made his living. He died, I don't know how old he was exactly – my father could have been in his teens, maybe a little older than that, but something like that.

MR. STEINBACH: So this would have been your paternal grandfather who died?

MR. TERRIS: Yes. I never met my paternal grandfather, and I don't believe I ever met my paternal grandmother either. So my father couldn't stay at the University of Michigan. I don't think he was there very long at all because it was too costly. He couldn't live at home if he went to Michigan, so he went instead to what was called then Wayne University in Detroit. I believe at that time he studied to become a doctor. We didn't have the system we now have of going four years to undergraduate school and then having four more years of going to medical school. I believe it was just one piece. I don't know how long that was. In the very early 20s, he got his medical degree and he went to practice medicine in Detroit. I'll come back to that in a minute.

He had five siblings. He was the oldest, and he was the only one that I believe went to college. It's possible that one of his sisters did, but she unfortunately got tuberculosis when she was very young and had to go live in Colorado and she died fairly young. I did meet her. I went out to Colorado with my father and I think I met her once, maybe more than that. The rest of

the children did not go to college. It was a family that was certainly strapped. I don't know that I would call them poor. Poverty – and this may not be the place [to say this], but my experience with poverty, with which I do have considerable experience by working on the street – in many ways has a lot to do with money but also has a lot to do with [the way] you see the world, and I have a feeling they weren't poor in the sense that they may not have had a lot of luxury but that they were very forward-looking and optimistic about where they were going.

My mother's family I think came to the New World roughly at the same time. They came from Poland. They went to Toronto and that's where she grew up. Her parents moved to the United States and to Detroit – so maybe that's when she moved to Detroit too. She was a nurse and she worked at the hospital where my father practiced[. . .]. She also had several siblings. I'm not exactly sure how many because they weren't all in Detroit.

I was born as I indicated before in 1933, and it was in Detroit, and we lived on the east side of Detroit.

MR. STEINBACH: In the city itself?

MR. TERRIS: In the city itself. That's where my father's office was, on the east side of Detroit, and that's where huge – then, not now – automobile factories were. His practice was heavily automobile workers. And at that time nobody had insurance, so he was paid or he was not paid as the case might be. Certainly we were not wealthy, certainly not in the time before I was born and even after that. They were struggling. I don't want to make this into that they

really were in difficult times. He was a doctor, he was making money, and he was doing reasonably well.

In the late 1930s, probably around 1937, just a few years after I was born, the family moved to Grosse Pointe City. There are a whole string of Grosse Pointes, and people think of Grosse Pointe as being a very wealthy place, and there were some very wealthy people[. . .]. Edsel Ford was building a place there when he died and it never got completed and that was one of the fun things for young people to do, to explore that place. But in general there were not very many wealthy people. There were certainly upper middle class people, well-off people, and we were, I would say, up until World War II, not among them. We were perfectly middle class. I've gone back to Grosse Pointe after that and I looked at the neighborhood and it was a very nice neighborhood but the houses were very small. Today there are probably few doctors in the United States that live in houses as small as our house was.

MR. STEINBACH: So you've gone back to Grosse Pointe City and looked at your childhood home?

MR. TERRIS: Yes, and I sort of remembered it not being too large, but when I saw it, I really knew it wasn't very large. My brother was born I think in 1936, my sister in 1938. We had three bedrooms. My sister had the smallest. She was, of course, by herself. The two brothers were together in one bedroom. We had bunk beds, and if we had not had bunk beds, I think the beds would essentially have occupied every square inch of the bedroom. And we had

one bathroom in the hall that [the whole family] used, and we had a kitchen and quite a modest sized dining room and living room, and a nice sized backyard. Not the way the suburbs are now, but a nice sized backyard. About the size where you could play croquet.

MR. STEINBACH: What type of practice was your father in?

MR. TERRIS: My father did everything. I always have said to people he did everything but brain surgery. He was a family practitioner, is what people would say today. I don't think they used that term then. He did obstetrics. He'd get up in the middle of night and go to the hospital. He would do surgery. His usual workday and week – I'm getting ahead of myself. I'll come back to this because I don't know what his work day and week was in the 1930s, I was too young. But when we came back from the war, and I'll explain about that in a little bit, when we came back from the war in the 1940s, I know quite well what his work week was.

MR. STEINBACH: He practiced throughout the whole time you were growing up?

MR. TERRIS: That's correct.

MR. STEINBACH: Did your mother continue working as a nurse when she had children?

MR. TERRIS: No. She was completely at home. She was a tremendously devoted mother and a fastidious home keeper. We also had help in the house. You would think we wouldn't need it for such a small house, but my mother was so unbelievably fastidious. I used to joke, when I was a little older, of course, that my mother had her hands out to catch the dust before it hit the floor. I can remember constantly being chastised and even hit in the head for having

the drawers in the room pulled out and not put back into place. My mother was a very careful housekeeper.

MR. STEINBACH: Do you recall whether your mother had formal schooling to become a nurse, or did she have college education?

MR. TERRIS: No, she did not. And my father I think didn't really have a college education. I think he probably had some courses like that. They were not broadly educated, but they were both smart and they both gradually absorbed an education. Long before they died, they were people with quite an extensive, what I would call an education, but it didn't come from a college.

MR. STEINBACH: Your father's a doctor, your mother's a nurse. No pressure on you to become something other than a lawyer?

MR. TERRIS: No. There was no pressure, but I wanted to become a doctor. I really had this thought – now this was of course a little later when I was in junior high school or maybe the beginning of senior high school – that I wanted to become a doctor because I wanted to practice with him. I was enormously close to my parents and I just thought that that would be the most wonderful thing in the world. Unfortunately something happened. I believe it was in 9th grade they had something called “career book” in which the students would go out and they would research the subject that they wanted, the profession, the job, or whatever they wanted to become. I was an enormously dedicated student even at that age, so I wrote the whole history of medicine, but one of the things I did besides going back to Galen and the Greeks and all those kind of people is I went to see my father in his practice. So [I went to] see

him operate. Well I saw him operate, and one of the two operations he did that morning was a goiter operation. A goiter operation is enormously bloody. When that operation was over, I was finished [laughter]. I couldn't be a doctor anymore.

MR. STEINBACH: Did he know that at the time? Did he regret having brought you in that day?

MR. TERRIS: I don't think so. He didn't really care that I become a doctor. He really cared that I become somebody, but I never got the impression that I broke his heart that I wasn't going to practice medicine.

MR. STEINBACH: So you probably have no recollections of growing up in the first four years in East Detroit?

MR. TERRIS: No I really don't. The one thing I do remember is we had rhubarb in our backyard and I used to go out and eat it [laughter].

MR. STEINBACH: What was your neighborhood like when you moved to Grosse Pointe City, when you were growing up?

MR. TERRIS: There were all these small houses. It was just being developed, the portion of Grosse Pointe that we were in. Many, many vacant lots. Quite near our house, only a block or two from our house, was something called Snake Woods. The children in the neighborhood, of which there were many, used to troop over and thought it was quite exciting to go into Snake Woods. There was enough room so you could play baseball on vacant lots. In the beginning, when we were really small and couldn't hit the ball very far, we could play in our front yard, which wasn't a very big front yard. Once we hit a ball through the neighbor's window. It was a very laidback neighborhood.

It was a totally, totally segregated neighborhood, but it wasn't just segregated between whites and blacks. There were restrictive covenants in Grosse Pointe that barred Blacks, Italians, and Jews. I don't know what happened about the Jews in our case, but I assume the reason is that my name is not Jewish, and at least my father did not look at all Jewish. My mother, somebody might, if they were thinking about it, decide that she was Jewish, but they probably wouldn't have been thinking about it because they probably would have thought that no Jew would even think about coming to Grosse Pointe. Now the fact is there were not many Jews in the whole east side of Detroit, so it wouldn't have been in a real estate agent's mind. To the best of my knowledge, there were three Jewish families in Grosse Pointe out of about 75,000 people in the 1950s. Since there were not that many people in Grosse Pointe in the 1930s, the number of Jews would have been considerably less.

MR. STEINBACH: So this is not a Jewish enclave in the Detroit area; just the opposite it sounds like.

MR. TERRIS: Jews were on the west side.

MR. STEINBACH: Did you know growing up that you, I guess, weren't supposed to live there? Did you know that as a child, and did that matter to your experiences?

MR. TERRIS: I doubt that I knew, but the question really relates to a lot of other things. I certainly knew that the community wasn't Jewish and that, for example, in high school there was a Hi-Y club that had a Christian orientation to it. The people in the neighborhood of course were going to church, observing

Christmas and all that kind of thing. I certainly knew I was different, but I don't think it really bothered me a great deal. My family was in many ways very Jewish. I always used to joke, it wasn't quite accurate, that my father never said a sentence that he didn't have a few Yiddish words in it. He did that a lot. His friends and my mother's friends were all Jewish. They were from the west side of Detroit and they were very Jewish. We were almost totally non-religious, almost totally. The only thing we did religiously was I think most years we went to a Passover Seder, where interestingly enough my father always presided. I don't know whether he knew all the words or not or what they meant, but he used to say the service at a speed that was beyond the way a human voice can normally move. I can't speak English at the speed he could speak this Hebrew. I suspect he didn't know what he was saying, but I could be totally wrong. We also lit the Hanukkah candles, and that was about it, until the time that I should have been bar mitzvahed, but I wasn't, and I was confirmed. My mother took me all the way across town twice a week to get a very poor religious education from a Reform synagogue. So they did care about it, but our home certainly [did not have] a very religious atmosphere.

MR. STEINBACH: Did you grow up – by being Jewish in this community, as a very small minority member I guess – did that ever affect you in your relationships with your friends, or was that something that you ever had any experiences with that stick in your mind at all?

MR. TERRIS: I never felt in the slightest bit discriminated against, treated in a different way. Now I don't know how many people knew I was Jewish. Certainly some people did, but I think in the entire time that I lived in Grosse Pointe, I can remember one anti-Semitic comment being made to me. If they didn't know I was Jewish, they wouldn't have directed it particularly to me, but I didn't hear anti-Semitic comments. So no, I really was not affected in any significant way.

MR. STEINBACH: What was your elementary school like. Neighborhood school?

MR. TERRIS: Neighborhood school, about five or six blocks from my house.

MR. STEINBACH: Public school?

MR. TERRIS: Let me back up. I couldn't speak until I was three. I'm almost sure that the reason is I have a very poor ability to distinguish sound. I am horrible at learning language. I got A's in Spanish in high school and at Harvard. If they ever taught those courses so that you had to speak or understand Spanish, I would have gotten an F. But in those days they did it on paper. I was in great shape. Occasionally they'd speak a little bit of Spanish in class, and I understood none of it. And I've never been able to learn Hebrew, although I've spent an enormous effort to do it, and never could learn to speak it. I could read it a little bit but I couldn't speak it and couldn't understand it.

MR. STEINBACH: But you couldn't even speak at all until you were three?

MR. TERRIS: I couldn't speak. But in the meantime, my mother, who as I told you was about the most devoted mother around, first carted me off to a neighborhood

nursery school, and then she found, I think at about age 2 – I don't know what to call it, nursery school wouldn't be the right word – something called the Merrill Palmer Institute, which was completely across the city and it was I believe for gifted students. Don't ask me how anyone would even know I was a gifted student, particularly since I couldn't say anything. My guess is my mother and father were worried. So she used to spend, it must have been three hours a day, taking me and then coming back and getting me at the end of the day. And for the next couple of years, that's where I spent my time. I can remember very fondly what a challenging atmosphere it was. I don't remember the details of course, but I do have this remembrance of doing puzzles and things like that.

So when I got to grammar school, Richard Grammar School is what it was, I was quite far ahead of the other students, and much of the time I didn't spend in class. I spent time doing workbooks. Then they tried to deal with it, my being ahead, I think it must have been around my second year. In Grosse Pointe at the time, one group of students came in in September, and another group of students came in February, so there were children in September who were in the middle of the first year, middle of the 10th grade, etc. They jumped me a half grade so in September, each year, I was in the middle of the year, not the start of it. I guess I went to Richard up until the time I was 9.

MR. STEINBACH: So this is before high school. You stayed at Richard all the way?

MR. TERRIS: No. Up until junior high school and then across the street from Richard was Brownell Junior High School, but I didn't start at Brownell because during the war, almost the entire time, I was going to school at numerous schools all over the United States.

MR. STEINBACH: Okay, let's save that. Let's focus on the years before the war starts, I suppose, while you're in grammar school equivalent.

MR. TERRIS: Up until age 9.

MR. STEINBACH: Okay. I'm going to start with your home life during that time period. What was your family like? What were the evenings like? What did your parents emphasize in values? However you want to tackle that.

MR. TERRIS: I remember all that very clearly for the period after the war.

MR. STEINBACH: Then generally, however you'd like to respond to that.

MR. TERRIS: Let me try to put the two together.

MR. STEINBACH: Okay.

MR. TERRIS: Before the war, my father's practice struggled. A lot of people didn't pay him.

MR. STEINBACH: This is the Depression decade?

MR. TERRIS: It's during the Depression. The reason I know people didn't pay him is because after my father went in the Army, which we'll talk about in a minute, my mother got the assignment – my father was in Florida actually at the time in training – and my mother got the job of going from patient to patient to try to collect the bills that they owed my father, and I got the job of going with her because I guess maybe it was seen as too dangerous for my mother to go

all by herself. So I know that there were lots of debts owed my father. After the war, however, when my father came back from the Army, he built an enormous practice, an enormous practice. His day really informed the rest of our days, other than obviously I went to school and the other children went to school. He'd be out of the house at about 7:00. In those days, he at least, and I think doctors generally, made home calls. He would make home calls for a while. At least two or three days a week he would go to the hospital, both visit patients, and do one or two surgeries a day. Later in the day, probably around noon or something, he'd start on his office hours. He would see an enormous number of people, probably 40 or 50.

MR. STEINBACH: Was it still mostly auto workers at that point?

MR. TERRIS: Yes. Same practice. He'd come home at 5:00 sharp. Dinner. Everybody's to be there at dinner. We'd have dinner for about an hour, he would then go back to the office until about 8:00 or 9:00, and he'd make more home calls. So I probably wouldn't see him again that day, maybe if I stayed up particularly late doing studying or something I might, but otherwise I wouldn't. Then on Saturdays he'd work half a day – sometimes we did things like go to the University of Michigan football games or do something else together. Often I went with him on his house calls on Saturday and Sunday. He made house calls on Sunday. Not all day by any means, but probably a couple hours. And that was what he did during the week. His interests were he read medical magazines and he played the stock market. That was his great challenge, to play the stock market. Because now he was

making money and he had something to invest.

I left out something about my mother that I think would tell you something about how careful she was at bringing us up. Every day in the morning, all the way through high school to the day I went off to Harvard, we'd line up, we'd have breakfast. We'd have a full, enormously healthy breakfast. Every meal was enormously healthy. We would then line up and the three children would be given a dose of cod liver oil. Every single morning until I went to college.

MR. STEINBACH: And you did the same with your kids?

MR. TERRIS: No [laughter]. If I tried that with my kids, they'd run away from home.

MR. STEINBACH: So when you had these family dinners promptly at 5:00 – discussions? I guess you did it up until age 9, but then after the war you'd be 13 to 17 until you go off to college.

MR. TERRIS: I think we had a lot of discussions. Starting at least when I was 11, I would say, I started reading the newspapers quite thoroughly. I also started reading – this may have been a little older than that but not much older – books about anti-Semitism in the United States. I've forgotten his initials, but [Gerald L.K.] Smith. There was a very famous anti-Semite. Father [Charles] Coughlin, worked out of Royal Oak, Michigan, so I read books about all that and what have you. I know that there were discussions at the table. My parents were certainly intelligent people, and so, yes, I think we had a fair amount of that. I remember, for example, when I was in, I believe it was in 9th grade, that I did a big project on the Yalta Conference, and again I

probably overdid it. I used to go downtown regularly and not only take the clippings from the *Detroit News* and *Free Press* but clippings from all over the country that were on the Yalta Conference.

MR. STEINBACH: Then that would have been in high school, right?

MR. TERRIS: It would have been around 9th grade. It could have been 10th, because let me think, Yalta was 1945 so I was only 12 years old, so it was probably 8th grade actually.

MR. STEINBACH: Before we start on the war, the 1930s was obviously the decade of the Depression, although by the end of the 1930s you're only 6 or 7. You probably don't have a personal sense of that.

MR. TERRIS: My family did not seem to be operating on the basis of the Depression. My father may have worried about it. Sometimes he would be paid in eggs or things like that, so I'm sure he was worried, but at home there was no reason for me to be, that I felt anything like that. I did not feel as a little kid that anything was being denied me.

MR. STEINBACH: So Pearl Harbor happens when you're probably 8 years old. Do you have any recollection of worrying that a war might come prior to that?

MR. TERRIS: No, not prior to it, but I can remember the exact moment that I heard about it. I was at my maternal grandparents, who lived in Detroit at that time, and I can remember this old radio – I guess it probably wasn't old then but it was one of these things that kind of looked like a looped top that sits on the floor – and hearing Franklin Roosevelt's speech, the great speech of Franklin Roosevelt about [Pearl Harbor] being attacked. Of course I couldn't

comprehend quite what that effect was going to be on me and my family, but obviously I could feel the enormous tension in our room together and of course in Franklin Roosevelt's speech.

MR. STEINBACH: How did your dad get involved in the Army or whatever he actually did during the war? Was that an aftermath of Pearl Harbor?

MR. TERRIS: Yes.

MR. STEINBACH: What happened?

MR. TERRIS: He never would have been drafted. He was 40 years old, and I believe that the draft age for doctors was 40. In other words, below 40 they would be drafted. He joined the Army I believe in December 1942 and he was 40 at that time. From a selfish point of view, going into the Army was crazy. Now he really had the opportunity for the first time in his life to make a substantial amount of money. Lots of doctors were leaving. He could have had a tremendous practice. People were flocking to Detroit, factory workers were getting paid far more money than they used to, all that kind of thing. He felt an enormous debt to the United States, an enormous debt. I don't know how much he knew about his family's situation in Russia, but he felt this enormous debt, and it was increased by the kind of feeling that he and a lot of other Jews had about Franklin Roosevelt and that this country was fundamentally not anti-Semitic and that this was just a marvelous thing for Jews like him to have a fair chance. So he joined the Army, and he was assigned and had his early training in Florida.

MR. STEINBACH: And you stayed in Michigan while he went to Florida?

MR. TERRIS: For about a month we stayed in Michigan, then the rest of the family got on a train and we went down to Florida. Now I didn't go to school – I think he was in Florida for only about a month or two more. I didn't go to school in Florida, nor did my brother. My family got the two of us – my brother was three years younger than I am – got us Army uniforms and the units that were in Florida used to march around Miami Beach. They were in Miami Beach in the fanciest hotels probably in the United States. I don't know if they were fancy when the Army took them over, but they were inherently a very fancy place, and these units would march around the streets in cadence, all the commands, left, right, all that kind of stuff, and we would go out in the street with our Army uniforms and salute them. We would walk from block to block, there were no cars on the street, there were only these units marching around, and these two punk kids were out there saluting them. That's my recollection of that. From that point on, we went place to place with my father until the middle of 1945 when the war ended.

We went to Carlisle, Pennsylvania, which I can still remember is the coldest place I can remember in my life. It was probably February of 1943, and we went to other places; I don't know the sequence, it's probably not important anyway. We went to Kalamazoo, Michigan; we went to LaCrosse, Wisconsin; we went to Takoma, Washington; we went to Elsinore, California; we went to San Francisco, California. I think that we went to all of them, and I went to about ten schools. One of them I went to for one day, one for three days, and others for a year.

MR. STEINBACH: This was because the Army was constantly reassigning your father to be the medical doctor for trainees or recruits all over the country?

MR. TERRIS: All kinds of people. And he also made matters a little worse because when my father saw things that he thought were not appropriate, he protested. When he protested, he got transferred. I can remember in LaCrosse, Wisconsin, they had him and some other people training by crawling over the ground while there was live machine gun fire over them. A soldier fairly close to him got killed, and another soldier was wounded. My father had some things to say about that, and before long we were not in LaCrosse, Wisconsin, anymore.

MR. STEINBACH: So from your perspective, was this fun and exciting to move from place to place, or very difficult because you were constantly changing schools and losing friends, or what was it like?

MR. TERRIS: I think exciting probably would be closer to it. First of all, I was with my family. My mother was spending full time taking care of the children. My father lived with us so it wasn't like the family was broken up. I did well in school, so it really wasn't that hard. In Kalamazoo, Michigan, I think I was there only about ten days and I won the spelling bee in the school. I got a promotion for another half year beyond where I was because one of the schools, I'm not sure which one, didn't have half grades like we had in Grosse Pointe, so they either had to put me back or put me forward, so I got put forward another half grade. That's why I ended up graduating from both high school and college very young. It was fun, and it was fun to go to

different places. I mean San Francisco, when we ended up there, was terrific. For a few months – we lived downtown before our apartment got completed, it was under construction – I sold newspapers on the cable cars. I'd get on the cable car, sold some newspapers, and the cable car would go down a half mile, and then I'd get off and get on another cable car coming back. For a young kid, this was pretty exciting, so I loved it. It probably did me a lot of good and I learned an enormous amount about the United States. We always drove, except for that first trip to Florida, and we went to all kinds of places that I'd never see at that age.

MR. STEINBACH: That's fascinating. I think you told me it was around this time you started to read the newspaper and follow current events.

MR. TERRIS: I followed the war particularly. I followed the war across the Pacific, from island to island, I followed the war in Russia. I read the newspaper quite carefully.

MR. STEINBACH: Recollections about what it was like to grow up during the war? Do you remember anything changing besides the fact that you're moving from place to place? Did it affect your daily life, your family?

MR. TERRIS: My mother was such a tremendous home keeper. She really prevented probably any of the stresses that you would say to yourself it must've been stressful to do this or this, but it really wasn't. It really wasn't. And some of it was actually almost luxurious. I forgot that another place we were at was Fresno, California, at Hammer Field. My father was an officer, a medical

officer, and we spent the whole summer at the Officer's Club swimming pool. For kids, you can't beat that [laughter].

MR. STEINBACH: Did you ever worry that we might not win the war?

MR. TERRIS: I don't think so. But, of course, at that age I wasn't too acute. I mean certainly at the time of Pearl Harbor, there was reason to be worried. I might have had a little bit of worry because I was reading the newspaper soon after that and certainly there were things in the newspaper that weren't going so well. I can remember reading about the German campaign being quite successful in the Soviet Union. So I think I had some worry, but not enough so you could say this was really having a significant impact on me.

MR. STEINBACH: Is this before you wrote your report in 9th grade on medicine?

MR. TERRIS: Yes, that was back in Grosse Pointe. So was the Yalta conference report.

MR. STEINBACH: Did any of the war experience or your involvement in life in the Army as a child in any way sort of make you want to pursue some sort of public service career?

MR. TERRIS: I don't think at that time I really had gotten to that point. I think the closest I was getting to that point was when I was in high school, once I began to develop actual political attitudes.

MR. STEINBACH: Recollections of Franklin Roosevelt as President?

MR. TERRIS: My family was enormously supportive of him for the reasons I said before. I can remember, we did come back to Grosse Pointe a few times for relatively short periods, and I can remember in 1944 that there was a straw poll in Richard Grammar School . . . between Dewey and Roosevelt. The vote for

Dewey was 7 to 1. That vote tells you a lot about Grosse Pointe. I was among the one. My family was Democratic, and I became even more to the left when I was in high school, but I didn't have discussions with people in Grosse Pointe about my political views [laughter].

MR. STEINBACH: You must remember the excitement when the war ended.

MR. TERRIS: Yes. We were coming home. It had the same excitement as everybody else in the country, plus it meant we were going home. My father, of course, was very excited, he was going to resume his practice. One interesting thing about what happened during the war is we spent, as I indicated to you, we spent much of the war in different places in California, and my father decided that he probably wanted to come back to California. This was a very difficult thing to do because half of the doctors in the Army who had been in California had the same idea, and so they were giving oral exams [to get a California license] and passing almost nobody. The doctors in California were not looking forward to thousands of additional doctors pouring into the state. My father was one of the very, very few who passed, and the question he thinks determined it was, "What was Rocky Mountain spotted fever?" Don't ask me how he knew that. He had never practiced in the Rocky Mountains, but he knew a lot of medicine, and he got it right.

MR. STEINBACH: So you had just turned 12 a few days before the war against Japan ended in 1945. Your family goes back to Grosse Pointe. Your father resumes his medical practice.

MR. TERRIS: And we went back to the same house. We had never given up the house.

MR. STEINBACH: Who took care of his practice while he was away?

MR. TERRIS: Nobody. It was gone.

MR. STEINBACH: So he managed to get many of the same families to come back?

MR. TERRIS: He came back in the first instance to be a very junior partner with a doctor who had a practice. Fairly soon, he went out and started a practice by himself. He had a tremendous bedside manner. The proof of this wasn't really Detroit, because there he had people who knew him, but when he went to California years later, in 1954, he built another practice almost instantly. All he had to do was put a sign up and the first person came in, that person would tell everybody in the world. So he had an enormous practice.

MR. STEINBACH: So you return, as I said, when you're about 12. Can I ask you before you we go further, do you have any recollections of the atomic bombing at the end of the war?

MR. TERRIS: Yes. I can remember that and how completely puzzling that was. Probably to almost anybody it must have seemed like an overwhelming thing – what is this kind of thing? For a child of my age, that's what I can remember, what does that mean that there's a bomb that wipes out a whole city? What is this? And then, of course, some thoughts about the moral – not in any tremendous depth, I don't want to pretend about that – this incredible number of people being killed.

MR. STEINBACH: Obviously we all look backwards knowing about the Cold War. When the war ends, do you think all is going to be well, or are you and your family already sort of worried about future relationships with the Soviet Union?

MR. TERRIS: I'm a Leftist at this point. I'm not a Communist, but I'm a Leftist. I took – you probably know because you're a historian – there was a newspaper called *PM*. I took that – and when I say I took that, I literally mean I, not my family because they didn't particularly read it – and at least for part of the time when I was in high school I took it. There was a teacher in high school who had the same sort of ideas who became to some degree kind of my mentor, so at least part of high school I was very into that kind of thing, so there certainly was a period there where I was very sympathetic to the Soviet Union and wasn't worried. I don't know when that changed.

MR. STEINBACH: How does someone who grows up in a town that is 7 to 1 in favor of Dewey end up, in high school, no less, becoming a "Leftist"?

MR. TERRIS: The mentor probably had something to do with it, but I also think that I have an innate skepticism, to a certain degree, [a sense] of rebellion. I think some of those characteristics are very Jewish characteristics, so my being at least ostensibly Jewish, and in a real way culturally Jewish, because my family was really culturally Jewish.

MR. STEINBACH: Let's focus on your high school years, which I think would be about 1946 to 1950, approximately? Since you're in the college class of 1954.

MR. TERRIS: That's right.

MR. STEINBACH: Tell me the name of your high school, where it was, what you remember.

MR. TERRIS: It was Grosse Pointe High School. Brownell was across the street from Richard, and Grosse Pointe High School was next to Brownell, so it was all one big complex. It was a very good high school, public. The upper middle

class kids in Grosse Pointe went to private schools. At that time I think my father probably had the money to pay for me to go, but it would have never crossed his mind. And my brother never went to private school. My sister did, but that's because she got herself into a little bit of trouble so my parents thought that getting her out of town, nothing really terribly serious, but from my parent's point of view, it was trouble. It was a very good school, and it was really pretty uneventful. I was the sports editor for the school newspaper for a semester. I played tennis. I got on a very good tennis team that when I was there it had won something like 250 out of 251 dual matches, won every dual match the year I was there. I came close but didn't beat the second ranking tennis player in Michigan. I was nowhere near as good as that suggests, but I had a good day, almost a really good day. I had been appointed by somebody, I don't know who did that, to be the chief justice of the supreme court of the school. It was supposed to deal with honor issues. My recollection is there were very, very few [issues] that I dealt with. I got very good grades. I was second in my class, and I was tied for first until the last semester. Never could deal really with literature courses [laughter].

MR. STEINBACH: What did you excel at?

MR. TERRIS: I think I was probably just pretty good at everything. There was certainly, I can remember in mathematics there was a guy who was better than I was and really was a wiz at it, but it wasn't that difficult for me to get A's, and so I got all A's except for one. It was a pretty uneventful high school career.

MR. STEINBACH: What did you do in the summers?

MR. TERRIS: When I was younger, I went to camp I think for a few weeks for at least several of the summers. When my father was in the Army, nothing happened except for that one glorious summer at the Officer's Club swimming pool. During high school, I believe one of the summers, I think this was when I was in high school, I got the assignment of re-painting the white picket fence in our back yard, and I painted it at the speed that Rembrandt would have done it. I was so careful with the painting I was doing that it took almost the whole summer. My parents were not overjoyed by that.

In 1946, I spent much of the summer after school let out by getting on the, I believe it was the trolley. Detroit was only one block from our house and so I walked up there, got on a trolley, went down to Briggs Stadium, and saw virtually every home game because my hero, Hank Greenberg, was there that year. Unfortunately, they traded him after that year, and I never quite fully forgave them. I think other summers I really don't know exactly what I did. I went to the lake which was about a mile from the house and swam some days. Certainly near the end of my high school time, I spent a lot of time playing tennis. One summer I won the junior championship for Grosse Pointe. Probably a lot of people would say I goofed around [laughter].

MR. STEINBACH: You graduated from high school, do you remember what year?

MR. TERRIS: 1950.

MR. STEINBACH: Did you know at that point or think what you might want to be when you had a career?

MR. TERRIS: I thought about going to law school. People then, children then, knew so much less than they know today and have done so much less thinking about it than today. It's just amazing. I didn't know anything about colleges. I really didn't know anything about what kind of work [I wanted] to do. The reason I say I may have thought about law is I wasn't going to be a doctor – so it was almost like, and I know it sounds absolutely ridiculous, what else is there to do? It's a profession. I didn't really think about teaching. Maybe I should have, but I didn't. And I almost didn't have any idea in my head what I was going to do. I knew I wasn't going to be a carpenter. I was a complete klutz with my hands. So vaguely law was something I was thinking about.

MR. STEINBACH: How did you end up at Harvard College?

MR. TERRIS: That supports the point I just made almost in spades. I was going to the University of Michigan; that's the only college I applied to. I had gotten in. Virtually every student in my high school who had grades above a certain level went to the University of Michigan. If you got grades a little below that, you went to Michigan State. If you got grades a little below that, you went to Kalamazoo or Albion or Wayne. Nobody went east to school. There might have been a couple of people going to school in Ohio. That was really being adventuresome, going some distance. I think I calculated there were three people, other than myself, that went to school in the east. From the private schools, they were all going east, but in the public high school, the only people that went east were people whose families were the occasional family in high school that were upper middle class. Other than that, nobody

was going east. One guy went to Harvard. They recruited him to play football. So it never even dawned on me.

There was a patient of my father's – it's kind of interesting I still remember his name because I probably saw him only two or three times in my life – his name was George Cobb. He was a rare patient for my father – he was an engineer. My father always did a lot of bragging about his children in between talking to his patients about their medical problems. And I'm sure he bragged to George Cobb that I was doing well in school, and George Cobb said, "Well, if your son's doing so well in school, the best school – this guy had gone to Cornell – the best school in the country is Harvard, so why doesn't your son go to Harvard?" It never dawned on my father either that his son go to Harvard. So my father came home and said, "George Cobb said that Harvard is the best school in the country. You have good grades, why don't you go to Harvard?" Well I took the College Boards and I got, I think, in the top 1%, and I applied to Harvard. It was also the only other school I applied to. And I got in. So I went to Harvard [laughter]. I had never been there, and knew nothing about it other than George Cobb.

MR. STEINBACH: You accepted without having gone there, and the first time you visited is when you showed up as a freshman?

MR. TERRIS: My father and mother drove me there, dumped me off, and that was that.

MR. STEINBACH: Describe, I guess, your college experience. Let's start that generally, and we'll go from there.

MR. TERRIS: First of all, half of the Harvard class at that time – I’m not really sure if I have it right – I believe half the class had gone to eastern prep schools, and there were of course many, many other students who had also gone to private schools beyond that. The number of public school students was very low. I think there were 100 people in my class of roughly 1,100 from Exeter and 100 from Andover. That’s where Harvard got its students. And of course from the moment I got there I thought to myself to some degree, I’m really kind of over my head. These people seem to know so much more than I know. I had been to a very good high school, but in comparison, it seemed like they knew everything and I hardly knew anything. I came there with the attitude, I was not going to do that well. I don’t mean to say I was going to flunk, but if I were in the middle of the class, that would be perfectly good. After all, it’s been said to be the best school in the country, so if I got in the middle, that would be good. So I started and I can remember one class – about the greatest books. John Finley, a great classicist, taught in Sanders Theatre, this enormous place with probably 500 students sitting there, and he lectured on *The Iliad*, *The Odyssey*, the *Aeneid*, Dante, Milton. That was it. The next semester, now I’ve gone blank on the teacher [Thornton Wilder], which is really bad, but you’ll know immediately because he was a visiting professor and he was the author of *Our Town*. We read *Don Quixote*, *War and Peace*, *Great Expectations*, *The Red and the Black*, and *Our Town*. That was just an overwhelming course. I had read *War and Peace* before because I had done a paper in my senior year in high school on *War and Peace*, *Anna*

Karenina, and *Resurrection*, the third novel of Tolstoy, which had gotten a B [laughter].

MR. STEINBACH: In high school?

MR. TERRIS: In high school. And I got a B in this course too, in literature again [laughter]. And in my first year at Harvard I took a political science course and I took Spanish and a course in writing in which they were attempting to improve my writing. I had almost no extracurricular activities at Harvard. I just worked harder than anybody at Harvard. Nobody has ever out-worked me in school, I can tell you that. There have people that have worked as hard, but nobody has out-worked me. And that's why I got good grades, not whatever is in my head. To show you the extremes of this, I took a political science course, Political Theory, starting with Aristotle and Plato and running up to date. [The book for the course had excerpts from the great thinkers.] At the beginning, I thought – this seems so incredible that I would've ever thought this – [. . .] I said to myself, “well I have to really work hard at this so I'm going to read the whole book” [laughter]. Well there are only about twenty pages from Plato or Aristotle or what have you in the textbook. In a couple months I had to give that up. That was impossible. I think what happened is the excerpts started getting shorter and shorter and the books [longer and longer]. So I surprised myself and I did better than I thought I would the first year. I got half A's and half B's, and then the second year, except for one half course, that was the only B I got, and that came from – I'll never forget this to this day – taking calculus, and it was a three-hour exam and I was

finished in an hour, but I could not get one problem [laughter]. I just simply could not get one problem.

MR. STEINBACH: I'm sorry this process is bringing back bad memories [laughter].

MR. TERRIS: I died that I couldn't get one problem. I got a B. From that point on, all my grades at Harvard were A's. My experience there, I worked enormously hard, I had a small group of very close friends, they expanded my horizons very, very substantially. Just one small indication, they loved to go to good movies, so I went with them. I probably saw every good English movie that came out during those years. Alec Guinness and all the rest of them. Then my junior year, instead of taking four courses I took five because I wanted to take three my last year so I could write my thesis. I really didn't have any idea what I wanted to write it on.

MR. STEINBACH: Tell us what you decided to major in.

MR. TERRIS: I majored in History, with particular attention to American. I also took European History and also took Chinese and Japanese History. I took American History, with unbelievably good professors. The two Schlesingers [Arthur Sr. and Arthur Jr.], [Oscar] Handlin, who was an expert on immigration, and Frederick Merk, who was an expert on the Westward Movement. Those lectures were just wonderful. I took Economics, basic economics, which I'm certainly glad I did. I took Constitutional Law from a historical point of view, not of course the way a law school would teach it. Those were probably most of the courses I took.

The mentor for my thesis was Sydney Ahlstrom, a very young man at

the time who later became a foremost authority on American Protestantism. He's the one who suggested that I write my thesis on the foreign policy views of Charles Beard. I put an enormous amount into this thesis. I rented an apartment – it wasn't really an apartment, it was one room – and I used to go there every afternoon. I'd go to class in the morning, go to the apartment in the afternoon, and come back to the library and study for my classes in the evening. I read I believe everything that Beard ever wrote, and he wrote a lot. My trouble was, and I've always had this trouble, trying to be too comprehensive, and there was a limit on how long your thesis should be. It became apparent that I was going to exceed it, and so I had to change the thesis title to the Foreign Policy Views of Charles Beard Prior to World War II. I finished the thesis, and there was a three-person oral exam in which [Samuel] Huntington was on it and the younger Schlesinger, and I've forgotten the third person. I was so stressed. I can remember the most stupid answer that I gave because they asked me – and why I couldn't have anticipated this I don't know – what was my favorite American novel. Well I was exceedingly poorly read, as I've said to you before about how bad I was at literature anyway, that the only novel whose name came to my mind was *Moby Dick*. The most standard answer that anybody could ever possibly give. Anyway, that's my recollection of that oral examination.

Before that I had become a member of senior Phi Beta Kappa, which means that after the group of the first eight, I was in the 16 after the first eight, which was based entirely on my grades, and this was not going to

mean what my honors were going to be. And the question was whether I would get a *summa*. I went home after my final exams and had an operation for a polynoidal cyst, and as I was coming out of my anesthetic, my mother was standing there, and she said to me, “You got a *summa*!”

MR. STEINBACH: That was a nice recovery [laughter]. That’s great. Other college memories?

MR. TERRIS: As I say, I did very little on an extracurricular basis. I tried out for the freshman tennis team. I didn’t make it. I really wasn’t even close to those other guys. I learned to play squash, which I could play reasonably well, but unfortunately I haven’t played since. I enjoyed school really a lot.

MR. STEINBACH: Did the Korean War affect your college experience in any way?

MR. TERRIS: Not really. I had an exemption, and after the war it was possible I would be drafted. It turned out they didn’t draft me because of my eyesight. But no. I paid attention to it. The bigger thing during college was McCarthyism.

MR. STEINBACH: Good, I was going to ask you about that.

MR. TERRIS: That certainly was a big thing among my small group of friends. At that point I think, as I said to you before, some of my political views were based on rebellion. Since everybody that I was dealing with were liberal Democrats, I became a moderate Republican [laughter].

MR. STEINBACH: Fascinating.

MR. TERRIS: I didn’t defend McCarthyism, but the very fact that I wasn’t screaming in the halls about it – I can remember the hearings and all that kind of stuff; it was constantly being talked about – the very fact that I hadn’t gone berserk about it made me seem to be a fascist to my colleagues. That was probably the big

political event. The interesting thing was that I was enough of a moderate Republican – it's kind of interesting compared to what happened later when I got out of college, got out of law school. I for a brief period of time did some work for John Kennedy's opponent in the Senate race [in 1952] who I believe, I'm not sure of this, was [Senator Henry Cabot Lodge, Jr.]. But that shows you how much of a rebel I am [laughter].

MR. STEINBACH: So you had some political activity in college.

MR. TERRIS: Very minor.

MR. STEINBACH: Right before you graduated, I guess, the *Brown v. Board of Education* [347 U.S. 483 (1954)] decision came down. Do you remember that at all?

MR. TERRIS: I remember it, but I'm not sure exactly, I can't even remember the date in comparison to my graduation. My graduation was, of course in college was 1954, so it's got to be the same time. It could have been after I graduated.

MR. STEINBACH: It was in May I think of 1954.

MR. TERRIS: We weren't lawyers. Most of us didn't even care about being lawyers.

MR. STEINBACH: When was the [Lodge]-Kennedy election?

MR. TERRIS: I think it was relatively early after I came to Harvard. It might have even been 1950, right after I came.

MR. STEINBACH: Did you ever tell Bobby Kennedy that you did that?

MR. TERRIS: No [laughter]. He might have thrown me out.

MR. STEINBACH: If you have the indulgence, let's take you from college to law school. When did you first start thinking about law school as somewhat of a certainty?

MR. TERRIS: I don't know if it was a certainty, but at the time when I took the Constitutional Law course, that was the reason for taking it.

MR. STEINBACH: Do you remember who taught that?

MR. TERRIS: [Robert McCloskey.]

MR. STEINBACH: But that was part of planting the seed that maybe you'd be interested in law?

MR. TERRIS: The course wasn't really a good test because there's a huge difference between constitutional law as a historical phenomenon and constitutional law as a lawyer. But I was interested in the course, and I thought it was something of a decent test.

MR. STEINBACH: So you decided to apply to law school. You went straight through from college to law school?

MR. TERRIS: Exactly.

MR. STEINBACH: So you would have had to have applied during your last year or two of college.

MR. TERRIS: Correct.

MR. STEINBACH: What took you to Harvard Law School?

MR. TERRIS: I never even thought of any other place. I knew it was an awfully good law school. I knew Cambridge, and I liked Cambridge. The details of trying to find a place to live, to have somebody to live with, all those kinds of things would be much easier. It never even occurred to me to go anywhere else.

MR. STEINBACH: Before you started Harvard Law School, did you have any sense what you might do with a law degree?

MR. TERRIS: That's kind of a hard question. I don't think I really thought I was going to go into a big law firm, but again I knew almost nothing. It seems amazing today, everybody knows so much. I didn't know anything. I didn't know the structure of the law world in any real sense – how big law firms, smaller law firms, government operate – I knew almost nothing about that kind of thing, so I didn't think in any kind of detail, even moderate detail, about what I was going to do. I was going to become a lawyer and then I'd figure it out.

MR. STEINBACH: So Harvard Law School, from 1954 to 1957 – give us an overview from a very sort of high level of your experience there.

MR. TERRIS: Again, maybe even more than when I went to college, you'd think I was tremendously confident, I had done well at Harvard College. I wasn't. Before classes started the first year, there was a meeting of all the first-year students. The Dean loved to say at this meeting before classes started, [. . .] look to the left of you and look to the right of you, two of the three of you are not going to be here at the end of this year [laughter]. He then said, that isn't quite the way it is anymore. In any event, I was quite scared, am I going to be able to do decently? I guess I thought I wouldn't be a dropout or fail. When I went to Harvard Law School – and I'm still a tremendous believer in the Socratic method; I've taught a year at law school – almost everybody taught the Socratic method. That, for somebody like me, was enormously stressful. I think probably to everybody, but it was very stressful. You say to yourself, "They're not telling me anything. What are the rules? What are the principles? What are all these questions?" And never an answer. Very

frightening. The great master of this, Warren Seavey, taught me Agency. Most of the other people too, Professor [Benjamin] Kaplan was probably the greatest professor I ever had. It was just very difficult to put your arms around it and say, "I understand. I've got this."

Then in the middle of the first year they had practice exams which were graded by second-year law students. I was very mediocre. I never volunteered in class. It seems strange, isn't it, I'm a litigator for 50-odd years, and I'm basically an introverted person, and I never volunteered. My first year, they had you sit in particular seats so they could call on you, and they went around the room systematically so I had to answer. After that, I never sat in my assigned seat, I always sat in the back. I think it may be true that I never said a word in class my second and third years. I won't swear to that, but that may be true. So I went through the year, I studied enormously hard, as I said before, nobody ever out-worked me, took the exams, studied very hard for the exams, went back to California, my family had moved there – we haven't come to that yet. My family moved in 1954 when I graduated from college. My father set up his new medical practice. I found out my grades, which were very close to the top of the class, and then I found out that I had been elected to the Harvard Law Review. So that of course changed the world considerably.

The second year, I didn't do quite as well on the midterms. I did well enough, but not quite as well. And then in the end of May or June, whenever the exams were, I essentially physically collapsed, undoubtedly from the

strain of the work. I used to go to class in the morning, I'd then go to the Law Review from probably 1:00 after eating lunch and stay there to 9:00 in the evening, except for eating dinner, and then I would work from 9:00 to 1:00 or 2:00 in the morning on my classwork. And I did that every single day. Obviously the weekends I didn't have class. I literally collapsed. At the time when exams started, my father the good doctor, found me a doctor in Boston who happened to be a Nobel Prize winner. I went into Peter Bent Brigham Hospital, and there I was lying for the next couple of weeks during exams and the Vice Dean (many jokes about the term "Vice Dean") Livingston Hall came to visit me to make sure that I was really not faking [laughter]. They didn't require me to take the exams over again – I think believing that since I had done so well the first year that maybe there was a possibility that I really was sick [laughter]. So I went back to California and immediately my temperature went to 105. So I did have something very serious.

MR. STEINBACH: Do you know what it was?

MR. TERRIS: There was some talk that it was hepatitis. I don't think probably that was what it ended up. It was some virus.

MR. STEINBACH: This is the end of your second year?

MR. TERRIS: Yes. The end of my second year. I had forgotten, I had been elected to Article Editor of the Law Review in the spring, so I had to come back to Harvard for the Law Review early to start work on putting out the initial editions. I worked very hard during my third year too. Fortunately I did not

get sick. My grades were approximately the same. I think they went down a couple of places in the class. But I enjoyed Harvard Law School, even though I was working tremendously hard. I found it fascinating, challenging. I found the Law Review enormously challenging. The work on my case note and the broader note taught me an enormous amount about writing, going over every single word. I mean, the number of hours that we spent going over my note that ended up I think being six pages of the Law Review, we probably spent 20 to 30 hours going over it. We took apart every sentence, every word, "Why did you do this, why is this word here, why did you choose this word not that?" It was done, when I was a second-year student, a third-year student working with me on it.

MR. STEINBACH: What was the topic?

MR. TERRIS: It was a totally dull, horrible topic. I can't even remember what it was exactly. It was a terrible topic, as to which I had no choice. They were assigned. So that's pretty much how law school ended.

MR. STEINBACH: Any other memorable professors? You mentioned Professor Seavey and Professor Kaplan. Did you take Archibald Cox?

MR. TERRIS: Yes. I had him as a teacher in Labor Law. There were a lot of awfully good professors. When they were electives, I tended to choose my courses by the professor. I took all of Kaplan's courses. I think I took Patent and Copyright.

MR. STEINBACH: Just because he taught it?

MR. TERRIS: Because he taught it. And [Louis Loss], who had been head of the SEC. I chose him because he was so good as a teacher. I didn't care about securities litigation. I had Paul Freund. I also had Henry Hart.

MR. STEINBACH: Was the Justice Department, Internal Security Division, is that the first job you had out of law school?

MR. TERRIS: Yes it was, but before that, I was going to go to Cravath after my second year. I don't know why. I think I wanted to find out what big law firms were like, but because I got sick, that got cancelled. Then my third year I decided I wasn't going to a big law firm. I tried to get a clerkship. Then, clerkships in the Supreme Court were directly from law school. You didn't go to a Court of Appeals clerkship first. So I applied to two or three Supreme Court Justices. Strangely enough I can't even remember whether I had an interview. I think I didn't, but I'm not really sure. I also applied to about three court of appeals judges, two or three, where I did have interviews. These are the people I wanted, and I didn't get those. I didn't try to get anything else. I wasn't really that interested in a clerkship, but obviously a Supreme Court clerkship is one thing, or a Judge David Bazelon clerkship, or a Skelly Wright, that's a different ballgame. But I wasn't as such interested in a clerkship. It's not surprising that I didn't get the ones where I had interviews. I graduated from [high school] when I was 16. I graduated from law school when I was 23, and I was a basically fairly immature 16 and 23. There would be a lot of people coming out of Harvard Law School who would have done a lot better than I would. So despite my having good

grades, and of course other people would have good grades too, it wasn't terribly surprising. I was only interested in coming to Washington. The young woman who I was interested in had come here, so whether I would've come to Washington otherwise, I'm not sure. It's conceivable I wouldn't have. It's conceivable I would have gone to San Francisco. But there of course there was no obvious place to go unless it was a big law firm, and I wasn't that interested at the time.

MR. STEINBACH: I think we should save for next time your starting in the Internal Security Division of the Justice Department. I just wondered if there was any employment you had after law school before you entered the Justice Department.

MR. TERRIS: No. I can tell you why I ended up there and we can go on next time. The Justice Department, and they may still have this, had something called the Honors Program. Obviously it's intended to attract people who had done reasonably well in law school, so I decided that I did want to go to the Department of Justice and I wanted to deal with constitutional-type issues. There was no such thing as a Civil Rights Division then. It was a section of the Civil Division, and if you went to the Civil Division, you couldn't be guaranteed you'd go to the Civil Rights Division. I didn't want to go to the Civil Division if it wasn't the Civil Rights Division, so I decided – and there have been a lot of comments about this over my career since then – I chose to go to the Internal Security Division, which did deal indeed with constitutional issues [laughter].

MR. STEINBACH: That will be fascinating to explore next time. Can we do just one other area very tangentially? Maybe we'll come back to this, but since this is the part in the oral history that's focused on more of your personal family background, can you tell me just briefly about your wife and your children, your family?

MR. TERRIS: Sure. First of all, I've had two wives. My first wife, Shirley DuVal, was a Catholic, and a deep-seeded part of my personality I think is to be very interested in religion. I'd actually gone out for a fair length of time with a Catholic girl before I went out with Shirley. I met Shirley in law school, and we got married a year after I came to Washington. I had become very deeply immersed in Catholicism and I became a Catholic, and this caused an enormous rupture with my father, who did not talk to me for two years, and only because of my mother's strenuous activities, we got back together, and we did fully get back together. I was a practicing Roman Catholic through all the time that my wife lived, and she died very suddenly from an aneurism. Very suddenly. Within hours.

MR. STEINBACH: Did you have children at that point?

MR. TERRIS: Yes. We had three children. They were adopted. The two older are girls, and the youngest is a boy. We lived here in Washington. We lived in Crestwood, which is not a segregated community. Quite the opposite. The children went to private schools. The oldest daughter went to where you teach, Sidwell, for high school. I think she may have gone to public school before then. I think that's possible. I can't actually remember exactly. The next daughter went to a Catholic school, and the son went to Beauvoir and

then later went, after I returned to Judaism, went to Charles E. Smith, the Jewish school.

MR. STEINBACH: How old were your children when your first wife died?

MR. TERRIS: I thought I had it written down.

MR. STEINBACH: We can look and come back to this.

MR. TERRIS: The children – the oldest daughter was around 15, and the boy was I think about 8.

MR. STEINBACH: Then you subsequently remarried after your first wife's death?

MR. TERRIS: Correct.

MR. STEINBACH: And your current wife's name is?

MR. TERRIS: Sally Gillespie. She also is not Jewish, but she is not practicing anything, and she's the person that said, "If you're a Jew – I had at that point stopped being Catholic – if you're supposedly a Jew, why don't you do something about it?" And that led to a whole sequence which we can talk about in more detail because that's a long story.

MR. STEINBACH: Okay. And tell me just quickly what your three children do today.

MR. TERRIS: My daughter went through nursing school and became a midwife and now works for an insurance company in managing difficult medical cases. In other words, what kind of care they get so that they get good care and also I guess don't bleed the insurance company. I suspect that's how it would be defined.

The second daughter doesn't work. She did work as a secretary in a Jewish school. Her husband is a patent draftsman. The children are scattered

all over the place. The oldest daughter is in San Diego. My second daughter is in Seattle.

My son is in Berkeley. He, I suppose in some way influenced by me, went to law school and he graduated from Berkeley. He had graduated from Hebrew University as an undergraduate, and then he went through Berkeley, went into a private law firm, which he detested, and then decided he was going to be a therapist, so he is now a therapist, which he loves. So that's what the three of them do.

Sally Gillespie has a daughter named Sally Phillips, and she is a fairly senior official in the Department of the Treasury. She runs a unit there. She was deeply involved in the bailouts of the banks over the last few years. So except for my second daughter, all of them have a lot of education. The daughter of Sally Gillespie, who I regard fully as my daughter, because she came to live with us when she was still a teenager, she has an MBA degree, and my son has [law and therapy degrees]. My oldest daughter has a nursing degree from Case Western.

MR. STEINBACH: I guess I should ask you about your current wife's profession or career.

MR. TERRIS: The reason I got to know her is she was the office manager of this office.

MR. STEINBACH: Your current law firm?

MR. TERRIS: Yes, this law firm.

MR. STEINBACH: Well why don't we leave it for now, Bruce, and we'll pick up next time with you coming to Washington and joining the Eisenhower Justice Department,

and we'll go from there through the Kennedy years and it should be quite interesting.

MR. TERRIS: Okay. I hope so.

MR. STEINBACH: Thank you so much.