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Recording Overview: Television host Tom Larson interviews Louise Day
Hicks for an episode of “The Tom Larson Show”. The topics discussed include
busing, her 1972 congressional campaign against Moakley, post-congressional
plans, Watergate scandal, educational policy and questions from the audience.

Recording Transcript Begins

TOM LARSON: “Every little breeze seems to whisper Louise,” and it’s been the
campaign song for Louise Day Hicks for a number of years now. She has been
one of Boston’s and one of the Commonwealth’s most active public figures,
holding office in the Boston School Committee, the Boston City Council and as
Congresswoman from the Ninth Congressional District. Twice Mrs. Hicks
challenged Kevin White for mayor of the City of Boston, and was beaten. And
last November she lost her spot in Congress to former Boston City Councilman,
John J. Moakley.

She has, nonetheless remained active in support of those causes that she supports.
And has always stated that we know where she stands. And for the sixty minutes

that we have here today at the noon hour, we will talk with Mrs. Hicks about where she stands on some of the issues of the day. It is good to have you with us.

LOUISE DAY HICKS: It is nice to be here.

LARSON: Now that you are—I know that you are not just sitting around knitting now that you are no longer hold--

HICKS: I don't know how to knit.

LARSON: --Elective office. But having been in the thick of things for so long, holding elective offices, do you kind of miss the action?

HICKS: Well, it gives me the opportunity, actually, to be closer to the people and I enjoy this very much. Because, you know, sometimes when you get away from the people, even for a little while, it becomes difficult to understand some of the problems that they have. Now, I think one of the things that has always been in my favor has been my closeness to the problems and to the people. And being back here in Boston for a while, I certainly have been able to work with their problems and help them solve some of them.

LARSON: Isn't that interesting that not holding elective office enables you to get close to the people. When someone who holds elective office, of course, is expected to know what the people are thinking and to be able to respond, whether it be city council, mayor or school committee, congress or whatever. And that you apparently have found that you almost have to get out of the office in order to get close to the people.

HICKS: Well, you are able to be with them a lot more. And I think this has been a great, advantageous position for me.

LARSON: Political campaigns are not generally known for their purity. And yet the Watergate situation¹ goes total beyond anything in the history of our country. Are you surprised—and I guess I’m looking for some kind of a comparison in your response to some of the initial things that came out about Watergate and the extent to which it has gone now. Are you surprised at the number of high level people that are apparently involved?

HICKS: Yes. I certainly am. Maybe it sounds naïve of me to speak this way but certainly when the Watergate incident first was reported I had no idea that it was to such an extreme as it has been unfolded to us.

LARSON: Did you at first wonder whether it was even, well, whether it was even true, the report of Watergate and all the people that may be involved?

HICKS: Well, I felt it was true because I was in Washington and we had evidence that it was true. But to the extent that it has reached at this point, I am amazed.

¹ The Watergate scandal began with the 1972 break-in at the offices of the Democratic National Committee headquarters at the Watergate Building Complex in Washington, D.C. and resulted in the resignation of U.S. President Richard Nixon.

LARSON: You use the term naïve, because that was the same term, not because it was the same term but that Congresswoman Heckler² mentioned in a conversation we had with her on this program, just last week. She said that she had never considered herself politically naïve. But looking back on Watergate and everything else, she has to consider that she was naïve at that point because she never conceived that such a thing could happen.

HICKS: Well, I think that we all hold the office of the president, the office of people who are in the White House as very sacred. And when we find that these are being torn down because of the Watergate investigation, it certainly makes you feel very upset about the conditions.

LARSON: Did you ever, during the time that you were in government, any of the offices that you held, the campaigns that you were running, wonder whether someone was spying on you for informational purposes?

HICKS: Well, when you speak of that I can remember in the campaign for mayor that we did have a spy, someone who was behind a closed curtain taping what was going on in one of our particular meetings. But, you know, at that time I thought that that was part of it, part of the experience of being in politics. But, of course, Watergate has gone to such extremes that it has affected, not only our domestic policies but our foreign policies. It's the magnitude of Watergate I think that has frustrated all of us.

² Margaret Heckler (1931-), a Republican, represented Massachusetts' Tenth Congressional District in the U.S. House of Representatives from 1967 to 1983.

LARSON: Well, who? I’m sure you wouldn’t tell me. But how did you find the man behind the curtain?

HICKS: Well, one of my aides--

LARSON: Did he represent your opponent or who did he represent?

HICKS: Well, one of my aides happened to pull the curtain and there he was on his hands and knees taping.

LARSON: Was he representing your opponent?

HICKS: I never really investigated it but friends of mine told me he was closely related to my opponent at the time.

LARSON: When word first started coming out about Watergate, did you have any idea how far it would go—to a point where now on almost every other television station in Boston, the hearings are being carried and Mr. McCord is there again. You’ve had people indicted, how many people out of the White House who no longer hold the positions that they held, that it would go this far?

HICKS: No. I never did. And I think the whole matter at this time, to the American people, is just a matter of wonderment as to how far it will go. And also, the fact that it has touched into the CIA and over into the Federal Bureau of Investigation—these are shocking to us.

LARSON: Out of Watergate, too, have come the suggestions that a six-year term for the President, one term only might be a good idea. There has also come the suggestion that maybe a four-year term for members of Congress rather than a two-year term. It would seem that someone running for only, or who held office for only two years would be almost constantly campaigning, which may or may not be a good thing.

How far do you think that the whole Watergate thing will sift down, as far as how might we be able to change the structure of government so that we can avoid this sort of thing?

HICKS: I think primarily, and most important it is that we always have elected officials, whether they are on the school committee, city council, on a state or a federal government—because I want those officials to be responsive to the needs of the people and subject to recall by the people through the ballot box.

I certainly feel that possibly the Watergate could reach down very closely to the people themselves who are now in office that the public are going to demand from their elected officials this honesty and integrity, which are certainly—these are the things that are prime concern at the present time.

LARSON: A lot of things I suppose that have been a part of the political game and not really considered to be wrong are going to be called into question now as a result of the fact that we are very, very sensitized to the possibility of corruption at high places or corruption in elective offices. Not that we haven't been aware of that possibility and aware of its existence at various levels before.

Well, one thing, of course, is just simple testimonial dinners that we are starting to look at now, where people are starting to look at and say, “Hey! That’s not quite right that this should be done,” or requiring that people who work for someone else go out to solicit money for someone else’s campaign.

HICKS: Of course, there’s nothing wrong with having a testimonial dinner. I think we should understand this. I think where is wrong is if at any time that either the workers or the recipient himself or herself uses any kinds of methods that would be illegal, so to speak, in trying to get the income for the testimonial dinners. I think what we have to be very careful about, and particularly in this investigation, so-called, are the testimonial dinners for the Boston School Committee—is the fact that this is not a smoke screen, whereby they are going to use this sort of thing in order to try to get an appointive school board.

You see, maybe there is a great deal more behind the idea of investigating the Boston School Committee’s testimonial dinners. Because I have not heard of any investigation of a dinner that was given for my opponent, and this was 100 dollar dinner, at which many bankers attended—and he is on the banking committee. And this goes on in all testimonial dinners. So that I think we must be very careful whether or not there are other motives behind this testimonial dinner.

LARSON: I asked you earlier and you said you hadn’t seen the article. It was in *Parade* magazine two or three weeks ago by Jack Anderson—kind of a long article on how to bribe a congressman. And a lot of the article dealt with not specific bribes in the sense that, “I give you this money and you will do this in return for me.” But the kinds of ways that people will try just to influence a member of Congress. Or, I suppose it could go down to lower levels as well, like

the city council or the school committee. Have you ever had instances where you felt that someone was trying to influence you, to do something for you in return for some specific favor?

HICKS: I suppose that that there are sort of these unseen or ideas that people will give to you that help to promote their own interests. But as an actual bribe, I've not had an actual bribe offered to me.

LARSON: But little bits of influence or somehow you had the feeling that someone was trying to get at you.

HICKS: Yes. And, you know, that would move me to do just the opposite. That if I felt very strongly that somebody was trying to bribe me, then I certainly would, maybe even unjustly, move the other way.

LARSON: We talked here a week or so ago with Chester Atkins³, now a State Senator who had written a book on how to get elected. A lot of the things that he included in the book seemed to apply from what I know of your campaigns. He said that one of the important, one of the most important things you can do are have these coffee hours, which I think have always been a big part of your campaign. In fact, I think I mentioned on the program that during one campaign or another we were trying to schedule you for a program here and an appearance.

³ member of the Massachusetts house of representatives 1970-1971 and the State senate 1972-1984; chairman of the Massachusetts Democratic State Committee 1977-1990; elected as a Democrat to the Ninety-ninth and to the three succeeding Congresses (January 3, 1985-January 3, 1993)

And your people said that you had a coffee hour scheduled at someone’s house and that you couldn’t make it here.

Well, of course, we can reach more people on television than you can at a coffee hour. And you turned down this appearance in order to go to a small gathering. How important are these coffee hours? Why are they so important in a campaign?

HICKS: Well, sometimes if you have made a commitment then it’s necessary that you do keep that commitment. And possibly, in refusing the time on television, I had made the commitment and I certainly couldn’t have the hostess then call all her friends and cancel the meeting. I think they are very important because then people can talk with the candidate very closely. And you become personally involved.

In fact, even at the present time we are having meetings across the city relative to the problem of racially balancing the schools. And we have found that if we meet in small groups that people then understand the problems and they are able to converse very closely with those that are better informed.

LARSON: You mentioned racially balancing the schools. And I said right at the beginning of the program that you haven’t been sitting around just knitting now that you are out of office. And that, of course, is one of the major things that you have been involved in, which has to do with busing neighborhood schools what have you. What other issues have you been involved in? Or is that the one since you have no longer have been in office?

HICKS: No. I’ve been involved regarding veterans’ hospitals. I’m very concerned about the care given to the veterans in the hospitals. And also to care in all of our hospitals, I have been involved in this matter. I’m working with regard to day care centers for children and also I have been working to get funding for sickle cell anemia, which is a disease of children in the 9th Congressional District, in the Roxbury area. I’ve been involved in many of these problems, working with people who are constantly involved in the problems.

LARSON: That’s interesting. A couple of the subjects that you mentioned, like sickle cell anemia and working in the Roxbury area, because you’ve been plagued throughout your career with a racist tag. It’s a label that I know in earlier conversations with you that you don’t feel is accurate. And yet it sticks. Where did it come from? And why does it seem to adhere to you?

HICKS: Well, I think because I was the champion of neighborhood schools, although I never supported inferior education. And at that time, maybe, being a champion of neighborhood schools meant that I wanted people to stay in their neighborhoods, which was not the truth. I don’t mind where anyone lives. It’s the fact that if you do live in a neighborhood that you should attend the neighborhood school. And maybe because of that was where I first became tagged and I think very unjustly, as it has proven so in the years since the Racial Imbalance Bill⁴ became law.

You know, today, we have so many people. In fact, the House of Representatives have voted for repeal of the Racial Imbalance Law and in support of

⁴ Passed in 1965, the Massachusetts Racial Imbalance Law prohibited “racial imbalance” in public schools and discouraged schools from having more than 50 percent minority students.

neighborhood schools. So I would say the overwhelming majority of people, not only in Massachusetts but in the whole country, have approved of neighborhood schools. So if the tag was rightfully placed upon me, then it belongs to all of the people.

LARSON: Do you think you are ever going to be able to get rid of that label, that tag? It's been with you for so long. Is there a way that you can shed it?

HICKS: Well, the only thing is that I think if people were to look into the background and into everything that I have ever done, they would know how unjustly that the label has been placed upon me. Because when I was on the School Committee, I worked for all of the children. And in Congress I certainly was a member of the Committee on Education.

And at that time, the people from the Trotter School, who were not going to get the funding under the Title I⁵ funding in Roxbury, came to me. And I arranged for them to have a meeting with our committee, and also with Title I people in order to get funding. And I was one of the prime movers for the funding for sickle cell anemia funding, which will help our children in the Roxbury area.

At the present time, I have been working with the parents in the Hennigan School in Roxbury part of Jamaica Plains in order to preserve this school as a community school that the people do want in that particular area. And over then, also, at the Hurley School I have been working with the people who are the Spanish speaking

⁵ Title I ("Title One") is a section of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), which was enacted on April 11, 1965. Title I of the Act is a set of programs set up by the United States Department of Education to distribute funding to schools and school districts with a high percentage of students from low-income families.

people in our city in order preserve that school for their children as a neighborhood school, because it is what they want.

LARSON: My guest here is Mrs. Louise Day Hicks. And you may have questions of your own in the remainder of the hour, some 45 minutes. Mrs. Hicks will be here for the full sixty today. Our number is 783-9150. And the Boston area code is 617. We will be back and continue our conversation her and hope to hear from you, right after this word.

[Pause]

[Advertisement]

LARSON: Mrs. Louise Day Hicks is my guest on the program this afternoon. She will be with us right up until one o’clock, which is closing time. And our number here is 783-9150. The Boston area code is 617 if you would like to join us. Mrs. Hicks, of course, has had a fairly long political career, first of all on the Boston School Committee, Boston City Council, running for mayor, both times against Kevin White, and serving one term as a Congresswoman from the Massachusetts 9th Congressional District. Are you planning a return, where now you are holding no elective office?

HICKS: Well, certainly I feel that much has to be done in Congress relative to the needs of the people in the 9th Congressional District that are not being met at the present time. And I would feel that I should return to Congress in order to become a member of the committee on education and labor. You see, we don’t have any Massachusetts member on this very vital committee, which has certainly

been geared to meet the needs of the people—as so many of our problems are in education and labor.

And also in our committee on veterans affairs that we need representation, more representation for Massachusetts. You know, in the 92nd Congress, in which I served, we were certainly told that we had done more for senior citizens and for veterans than any other prior Congress. And I would like to see this carried on.

LARSON: Now, the opportunity to run for Congress will come up in 1972. There will be the opportunities to try for a couple of other offices prior to that at the [Boston] City Council and [Boston] School Committee, coming up this September, as a matter of fact, isn't it?

HICKS: Right.

LARSON: Have you given any thought to possibly getting into one of those two races?

HICKS: Well, I certainly have had many people who have been urging me to serve in this capacity, even though waiting a try to go back into the Congress, feeling that maybe the ideas which I have and the performance that I have given in the past would be advantageous to the people of Boston.

LARSON: You've twice, of course, tried for the office of mayor, which has seemed to be to you very important, that you really wanted that office, to be the chief executive of this city, the City of Boston. Is that now out of your mind or is that still something that you would like to be able to accomplish?

HICKS: I think at the present time that I foremost desire to be return to the Congress because I feel that even in—you were speaking with regard to the Racial Imbalance Bill and the problem that we have of busing, not only in Boston, Massachusetts but across the country. There is only one way that this problem can be solved and that is going to be through a constitutional amendment.

Now, when I was in Congress, I filed such a bill before the Congress and I also filed that this matter would be brought up before the House. And as you know, the 92nd Congress was the first and only Congress that ever passed, in the United States House of Representatives, an anti-busing bill. And I feel the overwhelming majority of people across the country do not approve of taking their child forcibly, and that is the key word, forcibly by transportation means and assigning them to schools far out of their area.

LARSON: You wouldn't oppose busing, then, if it was a matter of parental choice?

HICKS: Not at all. In fact, I approved the so-called METCO program⁶ in Boston. And also asked that the same program that it should be increased in funding and in numbers of children. If the parent involved, voluntarily wishes to

⁶ The Metco program is a grant program funded by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and administered by METCO (Metropolitan Council for Educational Opportunity), Inc. It is a voluntary program intended to expand educational opportunities and reduce racial imbalance, by permitting students in certain cities to attend public schools in other communities that have agreed to participate.

assign his child to a different school, then certainly, I approve of it, whether it takes of a means of transportation or not, as long as the children in the particular neighborhood have the first choice to the neighborhood school.

And if a parent wishes to send her child across county boundary lines and a school department in another city wishes to so accept the child, then certainly, this is parental choice. I just do not want to see children taken from the control of their parents. And I think this is what the whole story of assignment by forcible means is all about.

LARSON: There is a lot made, too, of supposed danger of busing, of traveling to school by bus. Sometimes that escapes me as to what is dangerous about buses.

HICKS: Well, of course, I mean people have talked about dangerous street crossings and dangerous means of travel by bus. But this is not what is of the grave concern to me. It is the fact that parents are losing control of their children when any part of a government can come in and state that your child is going to go far away from you, particularly the very young children—and that you no longer are going to have the control over where your child is going.

LARSON: Going back to an earlier question and earlier response, when you were talking about a number of people were urging you to perhaps seek office, either as a member of the School Committee or as a member of the City Council. What is it that will determine whether or not you do? And when would you be able to, do you think, make a decision to say, “Well, I guess I will” or, “Well, I won’t.”

HICKS: Well, the decision must be made within the next month because, as you know, nomination papers must be taken out and filed. And, of course, the primary election will be in September. And I would just have to know whether or not that I could better serve out of office this year, in this coming year or better in office, making preparation for returning to the Congress.

LARSON: Is a part of the decision that you have to make a matter that you have, from time to time been criticized for jumping from one office to another, to assess the impact of announcing, let’s say within a month, that you were going to seek one of those offices, one of those two places. And as you’ve expressed here, you would really like to go back to Congress. So within another year or so announce, again, that you are going to run for Congress. Is that a part of your decision?

HICKS: Very definitely part of the decision because I would not want anything to actually deter me from returning from the Congress. But I certainly wouldn’t want either returning to the Congress to deter me from doing what I felt was right and in the best interests of the people in the interim.

LARSON: We are at 783-9150 if you would like to join us in our conversation here. This is Louise Day Hicks my guest, right up until one o’clock. We have lines available if you would like to join in. Yes, and you are first. May we have your question for Mrs. HICKS:, please?

CALLER: Hello.

LARSON: Hello. Can we have your question? Turn your television set down first. [Pause] Can we have your question? Mrs. Hicks is right here.

CALLER Yes.

LARSON: Go ahead.

CALLER: Mrs. Hicks.

HICKS: Yes.

CALLER: I’m asking concerning your ideas on neighborhood schools. Now if this should mean inferior education, are you opposed to busing the children out of the district per se, even though it is against the parent’s will?

HICKS: I don’t think that we can use busing as a smoke screen to hide deficiencies in a school—that we should do something about these deficiencies right at their source. If inferior education is given to any child or group of children in a neighborhood school, that we should correct that right at its source.

LARSON: A question I suppose that hasn’t come up directly Mrs. Hicks is there benefit as you see it to having black children and white children going to school together? Is there educational benefit for children of both races? Is it worth it bringing them together and having them in a classroom situation together?

HICKS: I totally believe in an integrated school education because I think the school education should reflect the life that we are going to lead as people. And we certainly are an integrated community of a country and state and city. But I do not feel that forcible means would be, should be used to justify the end.

LARSON: What kind of means could be used? It wouldn't be forcible one way or another that wouldn't be dangerous to children both black and white and transporting them from one place to another—to get them together in this classroom situation. What kind of means could be used then, if the goal of education, integrated education is a valid one and a good one, then how to go about it?

HICKS: Well, as a member of the school committee at that time, I had invoked the idea of having children attend classes over at the Museum of Science and now, of course, it would be at the Aquarium or over at the Fine Arts Museum—and any place where they could come together, all races, for a part time of a school day. And I feel that this would be a great experience for all of the children.

And, as you know we had, at least when I was on the School Committee, in the Boston Public School system, the so-called Afro days when people would come from the white areas into the black areas. And the children would go to school at that time. And the other children would be interchanged of the students for that period of time. But this was done with the consent of the parents.

LARSON: Line two is next. May we have your question for Mrs. Louise Day
HICKS: please?

CALLER: Yes. I live in South Boston and I would just like Mrs. Hicks to know that I think she is doing a very good job on the busing issues. I've been to all her meetings at the Gavin School and every place. And I think she is doing wonderful work. I'm all against busing.

HICKS: Well, I think that the sentiments expressed by this caller are the sentiments of the overwhelming majority of the people, not only the city of Boston but the state. And this has been reflected in the vote that has been taken in the United States, in State House not the United States, yes, the United States House of Representatives when I served—and they voted for the anti-busing bill. And just recently that the bill which Representative Flynn filed for me in the State House for repeal of the Racial Imbalance Law was voted overwhelmingly in favor of repeal. And it has now gone into the Senate.

LARSON: What is it, ma’am if I may ask you just a quick question here while you are on the line, what is it that most upsets you about the concept of busing?

HICKS: Just the idea that my kids would have to go to another neighborhood, to a different school. My kids are very young. I have a five-year old and a six-year old and an eight-year old. But I would not like to see them going by bus anywhere. I don’t even let them go away from their home. You know, they stay right around the house. I wouldn’t like to see them be put on a bus.

I’m not against other people coming to our schools. They have the right to do that if they want. But I would not do it. I wouldn’t send my child someplace else.

LARSON: All right. Thank you very much.

HICKS: Thank you.

LARSON: Again. Lines available here at 783-9150 for our conversation and hopefully yours with Mrs. Louise Day HICKS: between now and one o’clock. May we have your question please?

CALLER: Hello.

LARSON: Hi. How are you?

CALLER: Yes. I would like to speak to Mrs. Hicks.

LARSON: She is right here. Go ahead.

CALLER: Okay. Hello, Mrs. Hicks

HICKS: Yes.

CALLER: First of all, as a parent of a Boston public school child, I would like to thank you for all the work you have done on behalf of us parents and the children of the City of Boston.

HICKS: Thank you.

CALLER: All right. Now, first of all, to Louise I have observed that you have been at many of these marches. You’ve been at the State Board of Education. Was it about five weeks you sat--

HICKS: Yes, I did.

CALLER: --On that short-term plan.

HICKS: Right. I did.

CALLER: Great. Yes. Now I will tell you what my gripe is about busing. There is no guarantee at the end of this bus ride a better education for our children. Now, take for instance the Trotter School. That is supposed to be such a superb school in Roxbury. The reading scores of the Trotter School where there is thousands and thousands of federal money flooded into that school—also, there are three teachers to each classroom.

The school that my youngster attends has higher reading scores than that of the Trotter. So you see, Mrs. Hicks this is why parents feel that their neighborhood school is better for their children. That busing does not guarantee better education.

LARSON: I think, if I can just bring in a couple of points here—and obviously, reading is terribly important. That there are a lot of other things that go into determining the education of a child.

CALLER: Right.

LARSON: Well, more than just reading. It’s a valid argument and it’s a valid point. But I think there are a lot of other things to be considered. I don’t think you can take that one point and say, hence, this indicates that education in that particular school is worse than what I have in the neighborhood school.

CALLER: Well, yes, reading. I think reading is a very, very important factor.

LARSON: Oh, I agree with you. I’m not arguing that.

CALLER: Yes, and so doesn’t the educators of the City of Boston feel. Now, if I feel that my child is getting a better education and can walk from her home to school, I’d rather leave my child at the school that she now attends—and having no reading difficulty and the scores being higher than the school that perhaps she would be destined to go to. But that is just one of my reasons. And, again, thank you again, Mrs. Hicks

LARSON: Thank you for calling.

CALLER: Keep up the good work.

LARSON: Thank you for calling.

CALLER: Bye. Bye.

LARSON: I guess Mrs. Louise Day Hicks if you are on the line please stand by. We will be back and take more of your questions and comments in our conversation with Mrs. Hicks right after this word.

[Pause]

[Tire advertisement]

LARSON: Well, let’s go back to the lines. Which one shall I take here. I will hold some of my questions for later on. Thank you. Hello.

CALLER: Hello, Mrs. Hicks

HICKS: Yes.

CALLER: I just wanted to call and to compliment you for doing a magnificent job. I’m a mother of four myself, four small ones. My children are very safely tucked away in a parochial school. But I sympathize with the public school mothers. I’ve been on the marches myself a few times. And I think you are doing a fantastic job because it is a terrible, terrible thing that we have to be told what we have to do with our children. I think it is absolutely disgusting that we have to be told to send our children, wherever they want us to put them—whether it is a problem with the black and white, which I don’t believe, anyways. I don’t believe in that either.

I feel like the same as woman that called earlier. Anybody that wants to come here, fine, if they want to let their children come this far. But I don’t believe that any of us should be made to take our little children, put them all together on one bus and God forbid anything should happen to this one little bus, all the children that would be involved. I don’t think we should be made to do this. And I think you are doing an unbelievably beautiful job. And keep up the good work. You show great concern for your fellow Americans.

HICKS: Thank you very much.

CALLER: And that’s what it is all about.

LARSON: Can I ask you to expand on something?

CALLER: Sure.

LARSON: What do you mean by safely tucked away in a parochial school?

CALLER: Well, people think—I have heard from a few neighbors, “Oh, what do you care? What are you marching for? Your kids are in parochial school. They are not going to have to be told what to do.” And they feel like my kids are safely tucked away. You know what I mean? Well, in a way I feel this, too. They are not going to tell me where to send my children because mine are in—this doesn’t affect the parochial school at all.

HICKS: Right. That is exactly it. You see, the Racial Imbalance Law only affects public school children. So, therefore, if your child is in a private or parochial school you do not come under the purview of the Racial Imbalance Law. And you will notice that those people that are very much in favor of the Racial Imbalance Law, that their children are no part of the Boston public school system. The overwhelming majority of people who live in Boston and whose children attend the schools, they want their children to remain not under the law of the Racial Imbalance Law but in the neighborhood schools.

CALLER: Right.

HICKS: I have never talked with any mother who has ever said that, “We refuse to have any children come into our neighborhood, if there is a seat available for them. And these very same mothers have stated that what they want given is quality education for every child.

CALLER: For everyone, right.

HICKS: Every child.

CALLER: That is so true. I feel the same way. I don’t think I’m a prejudiced person. I try to be open minded about everything and everybody. And if these people want to come in here, if these parents are willing to let their little ones, whether they be black, white or whatever color—if they want them to travel, it should be their own decision. But I feel we shouldn’t be told. It upsets me so much that mothers have to be told, “Let go of your children. They are going to go so many miles away.” It’s the most uncomfortable feeling. It has to be.

Many mothers have gotten calls, “Please come and get your child. She threw up today,” or “She is not feeling good.” And they have other little ones. And how in the name of God are we going to get across the city to pick up these other child, make arrangements to have someone come. It is just not right, period.

LARSON: Very good. Thank you for calling.

HICKS: You know what I think is the sad part about the Racial Imbalance Law is that it has become so divisive in our city that it has polarized our city to such and extent. And this is all wrong. And I just wish that in some way that we could

bring quality education to every child. That should be our goal. And these so-called neighborhood schools should be community schools, opened up to the entire community for a period of 24 hours a day—so young people could come in the evening and use the facilities, and that senior citizens could use them, the whole community.

You know, the schools should be an integral part of the community. And it should be a very viable organ that could work for the advantageous participation of all the community. It could be such a wonderful means of bringing people together.

LARSON: 617-Oh, I’m sorry.

HICKS: I hope we could use it that way.

LARSON: When you say that quality education should be the goal, that is not to say, is it, that that isn’t the goal of the other side, the people who are in favor of busing. Wouldn’t you say that everyone who is really involved in this thing, really does want quality education.

HICKS: No question about it.

LARSON: And it’s a matter of simply how to go about. I mean there is no argument on quality.

HICKS: Not in my—I feel that those people who are interested in the busing program, feel that this is means of bringing quality education to children. But it has never been proven so, that it is necessary that children must have a totally

integrated or a racially balanced situation—that quality education cannot be brought into an all white school or an all black or even a school that is predominantly white or predominantly black. I think it would be fine if all of the education could be brought into the integrated situation.

But in order to achieve this, I don’t think that we should place measures upon people that will so divide them with a forcible busing program by a forcible assignment of their children.

LARSON: There have been people who have said that the schools have taken a lot of the burden of trying to integrate our society and trying to bring members of the two, well, the two major races, black and white, together so that we can come to a better understanding, one of the other. Would you agree? Do you think that there might have been more emphasis placed in other areas?

HICKS: Well, there is no question that in public housing, over which many federal dollars have been spent, that there has not been any total integration of these public housing facilities, which would absolutely reflect in the schools—that this has not happened. And in the realistic light of things we found that when a predominantly one race comes to a particular housing project, that there is the flight of another race.

And this is why we must have repealed the racial imbalance law in order that we do not have this tremendous white flight from the city. Now, you noted that today or yesterday there was a decision from the United States Supreme Court whereby they were going to refuse, in Maryland, to have the children bused out of county.

Now this particular decision is only for the State of Maryland because it was a four to four decision.

But, you see this is another way that people have tried through metropolitanization to racially balance schools. But now, the Supreme Court from Maryland has stated almost that we must do this within the confines of the city itself.

LARSON: Line four here. Yes. Your question, comments please for Mrs. Louise Day Hicks.

Line two. Hello.

CALLER: Hello.

LARSON: Yes. You’re on the air. Mrs. Hicks is right here.

CALLER: Good afternoon, Mrs. Hicks.

HICKS: Yes.

CALLER: I would just like to ask a few questions on this. I’ve been very involved in the anti-busing movement for the last three years. Now I understand that you have been filing the bill for the last seven years to repeal it. And you are about the only person who felt this way or the only person who would publicly state they felt that way. I would like to know what you attribute the change. We had many thousands up there this year on March 1st. And now it seems the House

of Representatives is going to pass the repeal. What do you attribute the change in the public stance now?

HICKS: Well, I think when the bill first was enacted into law that people did not feel that the only way to implement the law was by a busing program. At that time I stated the only way to implement the Racial Imbalance Law is through a forcible busing program with an interchange of students. In 1965, when the bill was enacted people felt this would never come to be in Boston, even though all through the years I had filed for repeal—because I knew that one day that the State Board of Education would demand that we have a forcible busing program.

I feel the fact that this has come into being, that we now have a plan before the State Board of Education, which is a massive, cross busing by forcible means, of children in the City of Boston—and parents have been touched now and their children are part of the plan. And they have certainly now become incensed to the idea that their children will be taken away from them forcibly. And I think this is what has brought about the concern coming out into fruition, so to speak, of the people of Boston.

LARSON: You said you had several questions. Can we get the others fairly quickly because we’ve got a lot of people waiting on the line.

CALLER: I would just like to thank Mrs. Hicks publicly for all the work she has done on behalf of the people of Boston and the parents. Thank you very much, Mrs. Hicks.

HICKS: Thank you. You must realize, too, that not only should parents be concerned relative to this forcible busing program but taxpayers, too. You know, it is going to cost an awful lot of money, If we are going to put all of these buses on the streets of Boston. And the so-called environmentalists, they must be gravely concerned when they think of all the fumes that are going to come from these many buses. You know, when you come down to it, really and truly, we must ask ourselves, just who does want forcible busing in the City of Boston and why do they want it?

LARSON: Line three. May we have your question please?

CALLER: Yes. I’m definitely against busing because—I would like to see with the parents consent, all right.

LARSON: I think so far, everybody who as called has been opposed to the concept of busing.

CALLER: Well, the reason I want to say, I have two children that get car sick and bus sick. You know, every time we go for a ride they get sick or I have to give them pills if we go for a long ride. So I would definitely be against busing. That is my question, the two children, one five and one eight.

LARSON: It is not one of these very deep things about black, white and about safety. It is just a matter your kids are liable to vomit if they are on the bus everyday.

CALLER: That’s right.

HICKS: You know, I’ve had many parents say they’ve become gravely concerned if their children are taken far away, that if they do become ill, they are not families with two cars—they don’t even have one car. And if they do have one car that the working parent takes that car with them and they just don’t have any way of getting to the children if they are ill.

LARSON: Thank you for calling, sir.

CALLER: Okay. Thank you.

LARSON: And back to line one. Louise Day Hicks is my guest. That was an interesting insight into the busing problem.

HICKS: Well you know, I’ve heard that repeated many times. Parents don’t want their children so far away from them that they don’t have complete control over them and able to get to them when they are needed.

LARSON: No kid is going to be able to enjoy school if they are going to throw up on the way to and from.

HICKS: No.

LARSON: That is not something to look forward to.

HICKS: That is very valid. But, of course, I think the main thrust of the whole idea is taking control away from the parents.

LARSON: Can we have your question for Mrs. Hicks, please? Hello.

CALLER: Hello?

LARSON: Yes.

CALLER: Hello, Tom.

LARSON: It’s Rita Warren⁷, son of a gun. How are you?

CALLER: Good. How are you? I want to ask Mrs. Hicks a question. I know she is in love with the children, you know, the education of the children. And I would like to know, how does she feel about, not only the children are told they’ve got to take a busing to other schools, which is really unnecessary—but also, children seems to be told many things, it is depriving their rights they should have.

You know what I’m leading up to. I’m leading up to the school prayer. How does Mrs. Hicks feel that a child, you know, a little prayer in school is going to hurt her or him? And yet, the Supreme Court seems to send out the rule that deprives the freedom of our children. And I don’t think they are right because we are the taxpayer. We are the one that support the schools. And these are our children.

LARSON: What you want to know, Rita, is Mrs. Hicks’ position on prayer in the public schools.

⁷ Lobbied to have a school prayer referendum in Massachusetts

CALLER: In the public schools.

LARSON: Thank you very much.

CALLER: Thank you, Tom.

LARSON: Right.

HICKS: Well, in Congress I voted in order that prayer could be returned to the schools on a non-denominational measure. And I think it is most necessary that our children should have part of their schooling a prayer, whether it is in the beginning of school or what time in the school.

LARSON: Line four is next. Your question for Mrs. Hicks, please.

CALLER: Mrs. Hicks?

HICKS: Yes.

CALLER: I want to tell you that in my book you are the greatest. And I think you are doing wonderful work for everyone. This isn't a question. It is more of a statement on my part—is that what do they mean by quality education? I always felt that it is the teacher that gives the quality. I don't understand what other quality education is. If the teacher has the initiative to teach her class quality education and she has gone to college and graduated. Why isn't she then qualified for quality education in any school?

HICKS: I don't think that it's a problem that any teacher is not qualified if she has received the necessary education. But I think what we have to realize, that each child has a different—there is a difference in children. Each child should be educated to his fullest potential and that many children don't need the same education as other children. But they need more because of circumstances under which they live and over which they have not control.

And for these children who live under the so-called ghetto conditions, that they should receive this compensatory education to compensate for the conditions under which they live. And this is why that I have always voted for and I have even filed legislation in Congress in order to bring to these children the necessary education. I think a teacher is very important in the life of a child. But I think, also, that we must understand the needs of each particular child and educate that child with his particular needs.

LARSON: You get into something else, too, when you talk about quality education that is different than busing. In that you have different tools, each teacher, depending upon the school system, different thing to work with. Some school systems have more dollars that they can put into their school system. And the teachers have more to work with. And it does make a big difference, one district to another, which is the whole property tax debate. So it is much more than just a teacher.

I will agree with you, and I'm sure we've all had them, a teacher, one good teacher can do one heck of a lot without much as far as tools are concerned. But

not everybody is going to be that good a teacher. Then you are dealing with humans again.

CALLER: Well, what I meant, this was in the lower grades that I think that the quality education, comes primarily from the teachers. In the higher grades, then, every school has like so much more curriculum, depending on the funding and all.

LARSON: But there is so much that you need, even in a day care center in the way of teaching tools and in kindergarten. In fact, you may need more in the lower grades, in a lot of cases, than you do in the upper grades.

HICKS: And that is why the federal funding is so very important coming into these areas where the need is so great, the Title I, II, III, IV funding that has been cut off where funds have been impounded by the Executive Office and the United States. That is why we worked so hard when we were in the Congress. And I served on the Committee on Education to bring these funds.

And I did file a bill in Congress also to sort of equalize the payments across the state, you know, whereby the federal government would come in and pick up a share and the state would come in and pick up the rest of the cost. So that the city and the real estate tax payer would not have to bear the burden or financing education for the children in the public school systems. I think this would be a much better way.

But I want control and I think this is very important. Control must remain on the local level in the hands of an elected school committee.

LARSON: I need to take a break. Ma’am, thank you very much for calling.

CALLER: Thank you.

LARSON: We will be back with Mrs. Louise Day Hicks right after this word.

[Pause]

[Advertisement]

LARSON: Mrs. Hicks, the total and exclusive content of the phone response and so far to day has been the subject of busing. And if I may take just a moment to jump off to a couple of other things, quickly, and we will get back to the phones—looking back on a couple of campaigns, those that you lost, the second run for mayor in which you were rather badly beaten, as a matter of fact, and the loss to Congressman Moakley—what do you think brought about those defeats?

I’m sure you have examined both campaigns to try to determine what went wrong or what didn’t go right—so that you don’t make those mistakes again. In those two campaigns, what do you think caused or contributed to the loss?

HICKS: Well, I think first of all in the recent campaign for the Congressional seat that the 9th Congressional District had been redistricted. And I had great strength in the Dorchester wards that has been removed from me and suburban towns into which I had never campaigned, actually, have then been added to the 9th District. I had maintained 100% voting record in Congress. I felt it was most

important that I remain in Congress voting on these measures, which were of grave concern to the 9th District.

And therefore, I was unable to come back into the new Ninth District to meet the people and have them meet me, relative to the problems that were before us. Therefore my opponent at that time was free. He was here in the area and able to get out into the districts. And he wouldn't meet me on our party platform as a Democrat. But he circuited it and he went in as an Independent, which meant that I actually had two contests to have to make.

And at that time, also, it meant that I needed a great deal more funding in order to meet the two different primary, and then in the election. As you know, in the primary we had some formidable candidates and it was necessary that we expand our funds in this particular area. And therefore, when we were coming into the final election, that we were short of funds, whereby that he has saved all of his money and been able to use it in this part of the election.

LARSON: So are you using, in a sense, the time that you have now to kind of build an organization, to build a relationship then, in the Ninth District, looking forward to another run against Mr. Moakley.

HICKS: Absolutely. And, in fact, I was very pleased the other day when a group came to me and asked if they could have a reception in my honor relative to Friends of the Neighborhood Schools, which will stretch our far beyond the City of Boston into other areas. Now maybe this will be coming in under one of your testimonial dinners. But, believe me, I hope that this is thoroughly investigated because it will show how concerned parents are.

And, of course, this fee isn't a \$100-dollar dinner. It's a \$5 dollar minimal charge, which will be expended back on the people who participated.

LARSON: What caused the overwhelming defeat in the last run for mayor?

HICKS: Well, you know, as mayor of the City of Boston, this is an office that has great power. And the mayor used all of the power of the office in order that he would demand from the people whom he had placed into office a reciprocity program. In other words, that he had all of his little city halls working for him across the city and other programs that he had put into operation and people into office. And it's a great machine the mayor's office is able to put together. And I felt the power of that machine against me.

LARSON: You were simply overwhelmed, then.

HICKS: Well, I think it was very difficult in order to match him, as you can see, by the things that have been filed in the State House, City Hall, the funding in this particular case and, as I say, the great power of the office. It's just tremendous.

LARSON: Let's get back to the phones. Line three. May we have your question for Mrs. Hicks, please?

CALLER: Yes. I'm a young girl very much interested in politics. And I was wondering what your views are about young girls going into a career of politics.

HICKS: I'm sorry. I didn't hear your question.

LARSON: A young girl very interested in politics, want to know your views on women going into politics.

HICKS: Well, I’m very delighted that you have even called showing your interest and your concern relative to politics for women. I was a great advocate of the Women’s Lib Movement and also voted for the amendment to the Constitution for women. I think that women for too long have sat back and have not become involved sufficiently in the political process.

And I hope young people such as you will become involved so that you will run for office and take office because we need a great deal more women, not only on the local level but in the Congress where I have seen so many able women presenting their views. I congratulate you on your interest and I hope that you are going to be able to have more of your friends become involved. Work for a candidate that you believe in and become a candidate yourself.

LARSON: Would you call yourself a feminist?

HICKS: Well, I believe in the Women’s Liberation Movement in the respect that I feel women have been discriminated against in job opportunities and in advancement. I maybe don’t come into the entire Movement because I am not an advocate of abortion and, also, I feel that I’m very friendly, so to speak, with many men. I think men have a great place in our great Commonwealth and in our country. But I do feel that women, too, that they should be equal and should be considered as equals of men.

LARSON: Mrs. Hicks we are going to run out of time before we are able to get to another call. Would you be willing just to talk with the two people, well, now three, who were on the line at the time of the closing of the program--

HICKS: Yes, I would be pleased to.

LARSON: --So they can get an answer to their questions?

HICKS: Certainly. Thank you.

LARSON: I would appreciate that. Meantime, what do I have here that we can do in about one minute? It's very difficult to ask you a question that you can answer in one minute. Were you surprised at a report this morning, I heard it on the radio, that five members of the Black Caucus, in the Massachusetts State Legislature were apparently considering switching parties, switching from the Democratic Party to the Republican Party?

HICKS: Well, actually, why should I be surprised about that? After all, my opponent switched from the Democratic Party to an Independent Party. So therefore, I guess that everyone has the right to switch from whatever party they wish and find their rightful place in the political process.

LARSON: So we have done our hour. There are two people on the line, still, who we weren't able to get on the air. And if you would talk with them as we close out--

HICKS: I would be delighted.

LARSON: I appreciate it. In fact, just to close out the program and give you an idea of tomorrow’s list of guests, right after this word.

[Pause]

[Advertisement]

LARSON: My guest today, Mrs. Louise Day Hicks and tomorrow at noon my guests here will include Sondra Gorney, one of the authors of the new book called *After Forty*. It is intended for women realizing that medical science has increased life expectancy to something like 75 or 80 years now—and deals with the question, can those 35 to 40 years after 40 be happy and productive. My other guests here, Dr. S. Norman Feingold of B’nai B’rith and Arthur Slade of the Animal Rescue League. And on Thursday, Mr. William Loeb publisher of the *Manchester Union Leader*. Thank you for your time today at the noon hour. We will see you here again at noon tomorrow.

END OF PROGRAM