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## Oral History Interview of John Lynch (OH-011)

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### Oral History Interview of John Lynch

**Interview Date:** May 24, 2003

**Interviewed by:** Paul Caruso, Northeastern University, HIST 4263- Spring, 2003

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#### Interview Summary

In this interview, John Lynch, a volunteer on Congressman John Joseph Moakley's early campaigns, discusses his work on Moakley's 1950 and 1952 campaigns for state representative; his friendship with Moakley from the 1950s until Moakley's death in 2001; his memories of other friends of his and Moakley's, as well as other Boston political figures; and Moakley's feelings in the aftermath of the 1970 Garrity decision that called for forced busing of students in Boston. He also provides numerous anecdotes that give insight into Moakley's character.



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### **Subject Headings**

Busing for school integration

Lynch, John, 1929-

Moakley, John Joseph, 1927-2001

Political campaigns

### **Table of Contents**

<b>Lynch's early campaign work for Moakley</b>	<b>p. 1</b> (00:36)
<b>Lynch's friendship with Moakley</b>	<b>p. 8</b> (13:47)
<b>Moakley's reaction to the 1974 Garrity decision</b>	<b>p. 10</b> (19:33)
<b>Anecdotes related to Moakley's campaigns, political career and personal life</b>	<b>p. 11</b> (21:25)
<b>1952 campaign work</b>	<b>p. 15</b> (31:05)
<b>The "busing crisis"</b>	<b>p. 16</b> (32:41)
<b>More on Lynch's campaign work</b>	<b>p. 17</b> (35:03)
<b>More anecdotes related to Moakley's political career and Lynch's friendship with Moakley</b>	<b>p. 19</b> (39:48)

**Interview transcript begins on next page**

This interview took place on May 24, 2003, at the Moakley Law Library at Suffolk University,  
120 Tremont Street, Boston, MA.

**PAUL CARUSO:** [first words cut off]—an oral history interview for the Moakley project of John Lynch at the Suffolk Law School library on Friday at ten o'clock in the morning.

(long pause—background noise)

Perhaps we could start our discussion by you telling how you got to know Joe Moakley, or how did you meet him?

**JOHN LYNCH:** Well, Joe Moakley ran from this—decided to run for office, and that was in 1950.

**CARUSO:** Which office?

**LYNCH:** Pardon?

**CARUSO:** Which office?

**LYNCH:** Representative. And so I chummed around with a bunch of fellows, and we all decided to help. So that's how it started. And the original people that talked to him about running for office, which I think is interesting, is a fellow by the name of Martin Carter, who is now deceased, and Henry Doherty, who is now deceased. And Henry's nickname was Looper.

**CARUSO:** Looper?

**LYNCH:** Looper, L-O-O-P-E-R, or whatever. So Henry—he just passed away within the past year. So I heard from Joe Moakley's brother about the funeral. I didn't get a chance to go to the wake, so I went to the funeral Mass. And it was at St. Augustine's. And there were three priests on the altar. There was the father, the St. Augustine's pastor, and I think his name is

MacDonald. And then the priest from St. Vincent's, Father Tanner(?). But the priest that did the homily was Father Lane who was—I don't know, he grew up in South Boston. He graduated in around the same time as we did. So he knew the ins and outs of it.

But when we used to have class reunions he sometimes came to ours. And in the homily he said—and I thought it was interesting because he knew what he was talking about. He said, “Henry and Martin Carter were the ones that told Joe that he should run and become a”—you know, run in politics. So those were the two that started the thing.

And so now, just another little aside, but I was glad I went to the funeral because there were a lot of people there I hadn't seen in years that were—but that first campaign was a hectic one. It was a good one; we had a lot of fun with it. But on the way out, Father Lane, he saw—I made sure that I stayed on the aisle because I wanted to see my friends. And as he was going out he said, “Hi, Sleepy, good to see you.” And that was my nickname.

**CARUSO:** Your nickname was Sleepy?

**LYNCH:** Yep. But when we came out to the back of it, Father Lane said, “Well, this is John Lynch” to Father MacDonald. And he said, “Oh, I know him,” he says. “He was Moakley's campaign manager.” And I said, “Well, the word is out.” But that was what he said.

And when Joe ran the first time in 1950 we were just a bunch of kids. I was twenty-one so I could vote that year; that was my first time, or something like that. I got in there because I was born in 1929, so in 1950 I would have been twenty-one years old.

So we used to—in those days you could go around and knock on people's doors, and go out there—and they're the answer, you know. And so we used to gather at the headquarters and they had a place at the corner of Dorchester and Eighth Street. There was a store there that they used as a headquarters then, get out and—we'd gather there and somebody would—there was a fellow by the name of Pat Loftus who was there and he would assign you to what streets they wanted you to knock on doors on.

And Pat never left the office, he was a, you know—. (laughter) So anyway, that's how Pat worked it. There was a lot of hemming and hawing, "Why are you in the office tonight?" But it worked out good. It was all in fun, you know?

One comment I would like to make on that—it's so funny. On one of the nights I'd go and I knock on a door and I said, "Would you mind giving Joe Moakley one of your two votes?" Because in that scheme, you could vote for two reps. So this fellow said to me, "Well, do you know who I am?" I said, "No, I don't know who you are." He said, "Well I am so-and-so McColgan." Well, his brother was running against Joe. And I said, "Well, you got two votes. You could still give Joe one," and I got the heck out of there. But that was my last word.

**CARUSO:** That's very funny. Did he commit to the vote?

**LYNCH:** Say that again?

**CARUSO:** Did he commit to the vote?

**LYNCH:** Oh, who knows, you know? I'm sure that if he set foot in—he probably called me all kinds of things after I left. But that was good. That was something I remember.

And then we would go around, do our thing, and then we would end up back at Dorgan's [a restaurant in South Boston], down at—the usual, you know, and have a few beers and shoot the breeze and everything. And that was fun. Dorgan's has burned down now, and that was the gathering place for everybody.

**CARUSO:** How do you spell the name? Because I'm not familiar.

**LYNCH:** Dorgan's?

**CARUSO:** Yeah.

**LYNCH:** D-o-r-g-a-n-'-s.

**CARUSO:** It was a pub?

**LYNCH:** Oh, yeah. It was a pretty good one, right—in fact, I'll tell you—I want to give you a menu from there [attachment A].

**CARUSO:** Oh, very nice.

**LYNCH:** And I guess maybe you could check it out and—it was a real favorite spot of everybody, and they used to have—on the weekends they'd have singing, like an amateur night, I guess you'd call it.

**CARUSO:** Yes.

**LYNCH:** And actually that's where we had a bachelor party for Joe Moakley when he married. I don't know what year that was, but he got married and we had a bachelor party at Dorgan's for him. And that was a lot of fun.

**CARUSO:** You can get a martini for seventy-five cents.

**LYNCH:** (laughter) Oh, you can have that, it would be fun to read.

**CARUSO:** We'll put this with the notes, and—that's great, thank you.

**LYNCH:** Okay. So anyhow, the procedure was that in those days we would do that, and then afterwards we would meet at Dorgan's. Another night we'd go out again, and we'd have a different area that we were trying to cover. So we had it pretty well organized. It seemed like we were doing good. And if we hadn't, we usually made a stop. Like we'd go to Edward Everett Square corner [in Boston's Dorchester neighborhood], and we would stop and we would

let people know we were coming, and we'd have a little rally. And that would be at Edward Everett, and there was another one at Upham's Corner [also in Dorchester], anyplace like that.

And usually what would happen was that Joe, in those days, was not a speaker. He was a very humble guy. So I happened to be the one that would—I would get up and extol his virtues and all that. Then he would come up and say something, and away we went. So we did a lot of that.

The picture I sent you—I don't know if I sent it. I sent it to—there's a picture in my office. And that's the—what they called—in those days it was the German Club. And we were having a rally. Now that picture goes back to 1952 because we lost in '50, and in '52 we were—the picture I have says “runner up.” And it has Joe up against—he's sitting there, and a couple of other people. And I had sent it to—something to you people anyhow, so I have that in the office. It was just a great, great picture. I saved some of them. I think my wife took the picture, and we saved it and blew it up.

Now I used to—I'm just rambling here.

**CARUSO:** Go right ahead, this is excellent.

**LYNCH:** All right. Later on in years, I would invite him to several parties. I belonged to—I was a golfer, not a good one, but I liked playing, so I invited him to come out to the Sharon Country Club [in Sharon, MA]. I had an outing there for my help, and Joe was the guest. So the way I introduced him is that, “In 1950, Joe lost. He also lost in 1960 and in 1970.” So Joe would get up and say, “John forgets to tell you we won every other time,” which we did. So that—it was kind of interesting.

And then in 1970 he lost against Louise Day Hicks.<sup>1</sup> So in '72 he hired these consultants, political ones. I can't remember the names of these people but they were very smart and astute.

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<sup>1</sup> Louise Day Hicks (1916-2003), a Democrat, served on the Boston School Committee from 1962 to 1967 (serving as chair from 1963 to 1965), ran unsuccessfully for the mayoralty of Boston in 1967 and in 1971, and served on the Boston City Council before being elected to the United States House of Representatives in 1970. She represented Massachusetts' Ninth Congressional District for one term. It was in the 1970 election that Moakley lost his first bid

Joe had a lot of money for them to come up with some kind of a recommendation. So they said—and I was called to his office. At that time it was 149 Dorchester Street [in South Boston]. Now that used to be where I lived because when I grew up we had that house. His office, really, was my living room, or our living room.

But he called me in one day and he says, “John, I want to see you.” So I go in and he had this big manila folder, three-ring binder and all the information. And he said, “Now I’m showing you this but you can’t take it with you. I want you to know what’s going on. And I thought it through,” this and that, he said, “and I’m going to run as an independent.”

And basically that’s what happened because these people advised him that if he did it again, he’d still have the same problem; there were too many people running. Whereas if he did it as an independent he could probably do it. So that’s how that thing evolved. But that’s just a little thing.

Now, as I told you, on the golf, he liked to play golf, and so what sometimes happened—Dedham was in our district when he was a congressman, so I can remember they were having a parade there, and so I met him at Sharon. I picked him up and we played golf at Sharon; that was it. Then after we played golf we got in the parade. I had a Buick convertible at the time so that was nice, and we were going along. We had been in the parade—we were maybe halfway through, then he said he had to go to Logan [International Airport in Boston], so I took him over to Logan.

But in those days, I used to meet him—to talk about things, I’d meet him at the Norwood Diner [in Norwood, MA]. He liked that; that was a good place. I wrote down something here that I thought was funny. A very good friend of mine, he was a good customer. His name was George Anastasia. He had a son by the name of Charlie Anastasia. He had a bunch of kids, but this one here—Charlie Anastasia’s sister had a son [in the military] that wanted to be transferred from someplace down in Georgia up closer to home. And it seemed to be there were some physical

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for Congress, in part because Hicks was an outspoken critic of forced busing in Boston, while Moakley did not take a strong stand on the issue. Moakley defeated Hicks in the 1972 congressional election when he ran as an Independent so he wouldn’t have to run against Hicks in the democratic primary.



problems or something; I think that he might have been—a breakdown, I don't know. But I called up Joe and asked him if there was something he could do. And nothing happened for a few days. So I called up Joe again and he said, "John, this is a general I'm talking to. I'm a congressman; I'm talking to a general!" So it happened, but he wanted to be sure—.

Now my nephew is Stephen Lynch,<sup>2</sup> who's a congressman.

**CARUSO:** Right, yes. He's on his way to Iraq today.

**LYNCH:** Yeah, that's right. I was talking to my brother yesterday. I was over there to see him last week when they were down there. He was originally supposed to go to Russia, congressional, because they announced that at the St. Patrick's Day breakfast, that he was going to go there. But with all the war and everything, he cancelled that out.

He's a good kid, you know, even though he is my nephew; just a sharp kid. Because you know he gave part of his liver to his brother-in-law.

But anyhow, they had a breakfast at the Lithuanian Club in South Boston, and this was for Stephen. So I went to it, and Joe Moakley was there and we sat at the same table. There weren't that many—but my niece, Sean Maddox, she came over and she wanted to know if she could—I said, "Sure, sit next to Joe and I'll move over, and you can talk to him," because she was a nurse, and she wanted something. And I noticed that she had something on her wrist, and I thought she might have had the carpal—

**CARUSO:** Tunnel.

**LYNCH:** —tunnel. And she said, "No, Uncle John, that's the lupus." Well, low and behold, the poor kid, she passed away.

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<sup>2</sup> Stephen F. Lynch (1955- ), a Democrat, has represented Massachusetts' Ninth Congressional District in the U.S. House of Representatives since the death of Joe Moakley in 2001.

**CARUSO:** I'm sorry to hear that.

**LYNCH:** Yeah. Well that was one of the things. And that was like—Joe Moakley got up and said—you know, he said, “In the audience, there’s John Lynch, my first campaign manager.” And you know, that was kind of nice, for all the nieces and cousins who didn’t know who I was, to that extent. But I enjoyed that.

Now, the other thing I thought was funny—he used to call me up and say—you know the registration plates? He said, “I got a plate for you.” I said, “I don’t care about a low-numbered plate. You’re gonna take it. I don’t want it. Give it to somebody you’ll get more votes out of, you know? Give it to somebody who will appreciate it.” But anyhow, the first time he gave me H705 which was a (inaudible) designation. But then one day he called me up and he said, “Come on down, I want to see you.” And he took me down to the Registry [of Motor Vehicles], and I ended up getting 6428, a four-numbered plate. And it was kind of him, you know.

**CARUSO:** Sure.

**LYNCH:** But since then, I wish I had pushed a little harder, because I might have gotten a three-number. But I really didn’t care about that. Because he could get more from somebody else; I was there.

But I used to play golf with him at Sharon Country Club, and we played Wollaston Country Club a couple of times. And there, we were in a hotel, [with] Joey Ridge. He graduated with the class of ‘46 [at South Boston High School], which I was class president of ‘46. But Joey was in our class. And Joe was a couple years older, and he’d just had a birthday but he’s about four years older.

Now, I might be repeating some of this; I don’t mean to. But at the time they had the busing, Joe was really down, because it almost looked like he was going to have a breakdown over it. I mean, really, it was terrible. He had neighbors that wouldn’t talk to him, and people were crossing the streets so they wouldn’t have to say hello to him. It was really too bad.

So one day, I don't know why, but I just felt kind of—I just went over to see him in his house on Columbia Road. And he was down. I went there and I said, “Joe, you know, you got to—.” He said, “Well, John, I can't fix the law. I have to go by the law.” And I said, “Well, you got to snap out of it. You can't be moody in this—you know, they don't know any better. You're doing it right.” You know, what else could I say?

But when I left there I called Bill Shaevel who was his [law] partner at one time and now is his treasurer.<sup>3</sup> And I said to Bill, “You've got to do something with him. He's going to have a breakdown if you don't.” And he said, “You know, I think I ought to get him to see someone, just to get him out of this.” And sure enough, whatever they did, I don't know, I never followed up on it. But I know that Bill appreciated it, and he said he would take care of it. Bill is a pretty sharp guy.

And I told you that he had the bachelor party at Dorgan's.

**CARUSO:** Right.

**LYNCH:** Now, another time he wanted to just get out of the area. He said, “Let's go someplace where I won't be recognized.” Now how are you going to do that? I don't know. But we took a ride all the way up to Gloucester, and he came into this bar or whatever it was. Sure enough we just go in and there's somebody, “Oh, I know you!” I said, “Well, that's the end of that.”

**CARUSO:** Right.

**CARUSO:** I used to go down sometimes to Washington, D.C. to see him. And mostly they were like junkets, but everybody wanted to meet him. And so I used to go down and we'd go out at night and do things. But he took me one time to a place where the waitresses wore roller skates. And he thought that was great, so I said, “Okay, fine.”

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<sup>3</sup> William H. Shaevel was a member of Moakley's State Senate staff from 1967 through 1970 and his law partner. He is the treasurer of the Moakley Charitable Foundation.

One time, after one of the nights that we had been campaigning, I said, “Now, Joe, what the heck do you want to—what are you in this for?” Because we usually got people calling us and saying, “Can Joe fix up a ticket?” You know, parking tickets and speeding. You know, what do you need that for? But he said at that time, “I want to be a congressman, and I want to take John McCormack’s<sup>4</sup> place.” And I went, “I don’t know.”

Now, here was another thing that I think was interesting, too, because a lot of people that didn’t know him wanted to know why he really never went to Jimmy’s [Harborside Restaurant in South Boston] too much; he always went to Pier 4 [Anthony’s Pier 4 Restaurant, also in South Boston]. And the reason—and we may have to edit this out, I don’t know, but at least we’re going to say the truth. The reason he did—right at the beginning when he did become rep, and then go on to become a senator or something, he never was treated with any respect down at Jimmy’s.

**CARUSO:** Really?

**LYNCH:** No. At that time they were more in favor of John Powers who was the senator<sup>5</sup>. So I think it bothered—in fact, I know it bothered him [Moakley] because if I met him at all, it would be at Pier 4. And he did have an affinity with Anthony [Athanas, founder of Anthony’s Pier 4]. In fact, I think Bobby Moakley worked for Anthony.

**CARUSO:** Oh, he did?

**LYNCH:** Yeah, Bobby ended up being one of the maître’s.

Now the other thing—he [Moakley] had a dog, Twiggy. I don’t know if you knew that. (long pause) And Twiggy would sing. If Joe had a couple of drinks, he would sing. He would, you

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<sup>4</sup> John W. McCormack (1891-1990), a Democrat, represented Massachusetts’ Twelfth and, after redistricting, Ninth Congressional Districts in the United States House of Representatives from 1928 to 1971. He served as Speaker of the House from 1962 to 1971.

<sup>5</sup> John E. Powers (1910-1998), a Democrat, represented South Boston in the Massachusetts House of Representatives from 1939 to 1946 and in the Massachusetts State Senate from 1947 to 1964. He served as Senate President from 1959 to 1964.

know, “Ah-ooh.” As a matter of fact, he was on Larry Glick’s show with Twiggy, and Joe—and they would go to—he was very friendly with Larry Glick. It was on WBZ, I remember that.

But I called him up in Washington one day and I said, “How’s Twiggy doing?” He said, “Geez, I wish to hell we had Blue Cross/Blue Shield for him, because it’s costing me a lot of money.” The dog was having trouble. But then they got that straightened out.

But I was at Pier 4 with him and there was one other fellow with us, Ross Martin. And he said, “Do you want—any of you want a dog?” At the time my kids were small so I said, “Yeah, I wouldn’t mind having a dog.” And he said, “Go over here to so-and-so’s place.” I said, “What kind of a dog?” “Just like Twiggy, you know, one of those poodles.” Well, I went over to Mattapan, there was a place around the corner, and I went in and I got my dog. It was a little tiny French poodle, but it was a dog. See, that dog usually just wouldn’t—because I tried to get him from Mattapan down to Weymouth. The dog was in and out, under the—I was afraid he was going to get electrocuted on the way. Anyhow, that’s how we got our little dog. But it wasn’t a big one like he said.

Then another time he was on the Channel 2 [Boston’s PBS station] Auction, and I bought a weather vane one year. Then another time he had some stuff on, and it was a painting. And he loved the painting himself. But I bid on it; I didn’t realize he wanted it. But we were going to a show that night, and my wife and sister got relieved, and we didn’t wait for them to call us back. So I missed out on the painting. And he called me the next day, and he wanted to swap the painting for some Washington memorabilia. I said, “Sorry, Joe, we didn’t do it.”

Do you want to stop, or—? You look like you’re—

**CARUSO:** A few more minutes. Yeah, yeah, absolutely.

**LYNCH:** All right. I don’t want to just keep going on this thing.

Tom Moakley was his brother; he was the treasurer of a reunion party we had at South Boston High School. And I was class president in '46, so we kept going. I was class president in 1946.

Now another little story I'll tell you: At one of the parties that we had for Joe, and I think it was down at the Firemen's Post, and I could be wrong, but that's where it was. And I met this guy. I started talking to this fellow; his name was Basil Quirk who was a very good friend of Joe's. And he was a longshoreman, so he lived near Joe down on Dorchester [Avenue, in South Boston]. Well, Basil was thrilled over the fact that he had just been written up in *Newsweek*, or something, and it was about pigeons. And if you saw this kid—he was a big, strapping longshoreman but he liked pigeons, and he gave me a whole, big education.

Frank Quirk was another one. He used to run the rallies where we had torchlight parades, and Frank, he'd get it organized, and we'd have that thing, we went around. And Joe's uncle worked for the railroad, so we used to get railroad friends to use it. But we had a pretty good thing.

I told you about Henry Looper [Looper Doherty], Martin Carter. Oh, another one was Davey Keefe. Now Davey Keefe, he since has passed away, too. But he was in charge of signs, and he knew where every sign that Joe put up was in South Boston, or wherever they had them. So at that breakfast at the Lithuanian Club, Davey Keefe came in. And he's only a little, short guy but he's got a son that's a tall kid. And I said, "Boy, am I glad to see you." But I'm talking at the table. We're talking about how Joe won, and this and that. And so Davey [said], "Yeah, but we lost that first time, Joe!" And I'm going, "Oh, geez, forget about it."

I think those are a lot of the notes I have on him.

**CARUSO:** Okay, why don't I turn the tape over—

**LYNCH:** Alright.

**CARUSO:** —and we'll talk about some of the specific campaign issues that you guys worked with.

(long pause)

END OF SIDE A

SIDE B

**LYNCH:** (inaudible—problems with tape)

(long pause—recording picks up with Mr. Caruso)

**CARUSO:** —in the '52 elections when Joe was running for state representative. What were the issues of the day? What were the campaign issues or things that the voters were concerned about, that the campaigns were structured around?

**LYNCH:** Well, it was mostly personalities. Joe was a new kid on the block, and we were just out there to get his name up. And that's what we tried to do. And in the '50 campaign we did a good job. But we forgot Dorchester; we really didn't put enough effort into Dorchester. So in 1952 we went out into Dorchester and we put his name up there. And it was just name recognition, that's what did it. And we pestered everybody in Dorchester as much as we did in South Boston. And it worked out.

**CARUSO:** You went door-to-door?

**LYNCH:** Oh, yeah, we did that. We always did that. (laughs)

**CARUSO:** So if you'd come to my door in 1952 and you knocked on it, you'd have said you want me to support Joe Moakley. And I'd say, "Why should I support Joe Moakley?" What would you have told me?

**LYNCH:** Because he's an honest, sincere person, and he'll do the right thing for us. That was basically—most of the people, they just—they didn't ask us any questions. But I told you about McColgan's brother. That was a different one.

**CARUSO:** Later on we had to deal with the issue of the busing crisis in Boston. You remember that period pretty well?

**LYNCH:** I remember that Joe was in—that was in, I guess, 1970, in that area. And as I said, the biggest thing on that was that he was a congressman and he was going by the law, but he wasn't going to do any different than that. And he really got upset with his neighbors, and—

**CARUSO:** What were they expecting from him?

**LYNCH:** That he would go against Garrity's judgment,<sup>6</sup> you know, or whatever. I don't know how you phrase that. But he felt as though the letter of the law said they're going to do this, and a judge put it in place. And all his friends and neighbors in the area said, "No, we don't want the busing," you know? And they had some pretty stiff arguments about it.

**CARUSO:** What did you think about the whole thing?

**LYNCH:** On the busing?

**CARUSO:** Yeah.

**LYNCH:** I think Joe was right; I felt that way. But on the other hand it divided people terribly. My sister had—I had moved out of South Boston.

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<sup>6</sup> On June 21, 1974, Judge W. Arthur Garrity ruled in the case of *Tallulah Morgan et al. v. James Hennigan et al.* (379 F. Supp. 410) that the Boston School Committee had "intentionally brought about and maintained racial segregation" in the Boston Public Schools. When the school committee did not submit a workable desegregation plan as the opinion had required, the court established a plan that called for some students to be bused from their own neighborhoods to attend schools in other neighborhoods, with the goal of creating racial balance in the Boston Public Schools. (See <http://www.lib.umb.edu/archives/garrity2.html> for more information)



**CARUSO:** Where did you go to live?

**LYNCH:** I went to Weymouth [MA, about twenty miles southeast of Boston].

**CARUSO:** Weymouth?

**LYNCH:** So I wasn't as close, but my sister had kids in school. I remember going up to knock on her door one day, and there was like an arm and, you know, "white power." Jeez. And I was kind of disturbed about it because some of them took it too seriously. And Joe, I think, did the right thing. But Garrity said, you know, "You got to do it." And it really decimated the whole South Boston area. There wasn't much Joe could do about it, other than say, "It's the letter of the law and you have to do it." And it hurt him to do it because he had good friends that he wanted to stay friendly with, you know, and that (inaudible).

**CARUSO:** Did those relationships repair over time?

**LYNCH:** Oh, yeah, I'd say so. Talk about relationships, though—as I told you, when we started in 1950 we had a group. Now, in 1950—he lost in '50, and now in '52, some of them said, "Well, we're going to go with a winner." So they were good kids, but they backed a fellow by the name of Foley, who was running for city councilor at the time. And they liked him, they said, "We can't help you with this, Joe. We did the best we could." Well, Foley lost and then Joe took them back without any—no hesitation at all; he never had a problem with it. So he was a forgiving person.

**CARUSO:** So you worked in the '50 campaign, the '52 campaign. How many campaigns of Joe's did you work on?

**LYNCH:** I only worked a couple.

**CARUSO:** Just those two; the original ones?

**LYNCH:** Yeah, the original one and the '52. And then after that, I had enough things to do, myself. But what I was doing then was I was in the construction industry and I worked as a sheet metal worker. So then I would get parties together for him. So down at The Yankee Fisherman [a now-closed waterfront restaurant in Boston], we had a big party for him there. And I had customers, and we'd make contributions, do things like that.

And in those days, there were a lot of things you could do without getting in trouble. So for instance, if he needed a secretary, I'd put a secretary on my payroll, we'd do it that way. But you couldn't do that, not today.

**CARUSO:** Not today.

**LYNCH:** And the other thing is, he had a friend who had a printing shop. So we'd go in and they'd let us print his stuff for him. Those things went out the window. But, you know, that was part of the game.

**CARUSO:** Now there were other politicians in the city at the time. There were people in power, the mayor and whatnot. How did they respond to Joe in his early years, running for office?

**LYNCH:** The one he had—I remember he ran against Johnny Powers. That was a tough fight. I can always remember; it was Upham's Corner, and they're up there. John Powers was speaking and then we came after. And he had a slogan, "Take a walk, Moakley." Oh, geez, that was something that bothered Joe and bothered all of us. It was a tough fight.

But then Powers ran for mayor and everybody in the city thought he was going to make it. And we were sort of helping him if we could, in the Moakley thing, but we never thought Collins<sup>7</sup> would beat him. That was really a big switch there.

**CARUSO:** How did Joe get along with Mayor Collins?

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<sup>7</sup> John F. Collins (1919-1995) was mayor of Boston from 1960 to 1968.

**LYNCH:** Oh, I'm sure he made out all right. He knew how to handle that. But at the time the right way to go was with Powers because he was in our area. And he really was—he really thought that he would walk a cakewalk to do that, but—

But one of the other things is we went out in the Dorchester area. Now after you speak of John Powers, you speak of (inaudible). And we'd gone down the street, and there was a representative out there, who the name escapes me right now, but he said, "We're with you, Joe, 100 percent, and we'll back you, no lie." And we go around the corner and there's people giving out cards for Powers. (laughs) So he was one of the ones who you couldn't trust. But anyway, it was all politics.

**CARUSO:** Yes, an unclean business from time to time.

**LYNCH:** Yes. But the other thing that was interesting was, Joe Moakley had two brothers, Bob and Tom. Tommy was not into politics at all. Bob was definitely into politics. He was a good advisor for Joe. And one of the things that comes to mind is that Joe would be—Bulger<sup>8</sup> would have that party.

**CARUSO:** On St. Patrick's Day?

**LYNCH:** Yes. And Joe would have some jokes to tell. And Bob Moakley was the one who got the jokes ready for him. But poor Joe, he'd get up and start telling a joke, and then Bulger would interrupt him and throw him off. (laughter) So one year he said, "I'm not going to do that anymore. No more jokes." He just said, "To hell with it." So Bulger threw him off-track. But Bob Moakley was the one who used to get him all that stuff.

**CARUSO:** Did he get along with Bulger?

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<sup>8</sup> William M. Bulger (1934- ), a Democrat, served in the Massachusetts House of Representatives from 1962 to 1970, in the Massachusetts State Senate from 1970 to 1978 and as State Senate President from 1978 to 1996.

**LYNCH:** Yeah, he got along with Bulger. He didn't have any problems. They all came from the same school. And he got along with everybody. He knew how to rock and roll, you know, be on the good sides of all of them.

**CARUSO:** Sure, sure. Now you stayed—even though you stopped working on the campaigns after a while, you stayed in touch with Joe?

**LYNCH:** Oh, all the time. In fact, I'll tell you what happened to me. I was in the construction business. I worked for—I started as a loader(?), then an apprentice. And I worked my way up as a custom (inaudible) salesman, and did the whole thing in sheet metal. And I worked for one company, and another company. One company, I worked for a lot of years. But then, that company went broke and I went to a couple of others.

I ended up—in one of the last companies—in the second-to-last company I worked for, the guy was up against it and he said, "We've got to cut back." And I said, "Well, lay me off. Let the other, younger fellows stay," you know, being the hero. And I said I felt I could get a job. Now I was getting older and I'd been around. So I went searching and I didn't get anything.

So I went home one day, and so who the heck calls me but Joe calls me from Washington. He said, "Why didn't you give me a call?" I said, "I didn't want to bother you." And he said, "You get your behind in there, and you go see so-and-so, and I'll make arrangements." It took a few days but he arranged it, and I went in for the interview at the MBTA [Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority]. And that's how I landed in the MBTA.

**CARUSO:** How long ago was that?

**LYNCH:** 1989. So I've been there ever since, and it's through him that I got it. I started as a staff assistant and worked my way—

**CARUSO:** Almost fifteen years.

**LYNCH:** Yeah. And they laid me off one time, too. (inaudible—shuffling papers) I got laid off. In those days, Kerasiotes<sup>9</sup>, he was there. So he decided to lay a bunch of people off and I happened to be one of them. And I don't know whether it just happened—my name got on that list, anyhow. And Joe heard it. Joe was upset, and I mean rippin'. But somebody told me that he was in his office, and he called Jim up and he blasted him, and he said, "What do you think you can—you're not going to get any more money for that," and this and that. So anyhow, I was out of there four months but Joe got me back in again.

**CARUSO:** He was a good friend.

**LYNCH:** Yeah, he was a great friend, and just a marvelous man, really. And Evelyn was a great lady, too. And she knew how to turn the buttons on him.

**CARUSO:** All that.

**LYNCH:** Ah, yes.

**CARUSO:** Quite a relationship.

**LYNCH:** Yes. But I really had a good friend in Joe, and I think it was a mutual thing. If he had a chance to work in the business end of it, he would tell contractors, "If you could help John Lynch, he's with McCuster Company(?), I would appreciate it." Sometimes it worked, sometimes it didn't. But it didn't cost anything. Joe was that type of guy. And another time, he called me and said, "I want you to be at a party I'm going to have in Norwood. There'll be some people you'll meet." There'd be swimming, and all that. And it was a money thing and there were a lot of people there. And he introduced me to one, you know, just to be sure, and—.

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<sup>9</sup> James J. Kerasiotes was chairman of the MBTA from 1992-1997.

I was surprised at some of the people there, though. One of them, the guy that used to announce for the baseball, the Red Sox [Sherm Feller]<sup>10</sup>? You know, “Now batting for so-and-so.” And for me, that guy was like a nothing and he was very abusive as far as drinking and stuff like that. And I didn’t really think he was a good—But I guess he was, and I just didn’t know the guy that well. But Joe knew him, so he was a good friend.

**CARUSO:** Very interesting.

**LYNCH:** Yes, I can’t think of his name. But he was very fond of Larry Glick.

**CARUSO:** On WBZ?

**LYNCH:** Yes.

**CARUSO:** Well, I want to thank you very much for your time, sir.

**LYNCH:** Beautiful.

**CARUSO:** And we appreciate the donation from Dorgan’s; that provides color to the interview.

**LYNCH:** All right. And how about this? Did you see that? [shows documents to Mr. Caruso]

**CARUSO:** Oh, yes.

**LYNCH:** Those were—I laminated those from the party I went to [attachment B].

**CARUSO:** This was from the Norwood party?

**LYNCH:** Yeah, (inaudible—speaking at same time).

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<sup>10</sup> Sherman “Sherm” Feller (1918-1994) served as PA announced for the Boston Red Sox at Fenway Park from 1967 to 1993.

**CARUSO:** Excellent. I (inaudible—speaking at same time) kept these, as well.

**LYNCH:** Okay.

**END OF INTERVIEW**



## Oral History Interview of John Lynch (OH-011)

Moakley Archive and Institute

[www.suffolk.edu/moakley](http://www.suffolk.edu/moakley)

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### OH-011 Attachments

- Attachment A** Photocopy of menu from The Captain's Room and Cocktail Lounge (n.d.)
- Attachment B** Laminated invitation to the opening of John Joseph Moakley: In Service to his Country Traveling Exhibit, Monday, April 28, 2003