



Nevada Legislature Oral History Project

MOURYNE B. LANDING DINI
Chief Clerk

Assembly, 1973 – 1998

JUNE 25, 2009
YERINGTON, NEVADA

Nevada Legislature Oral History Project

MOURYNE B. LANDING DINI

Chief Clerk

Assembly, 1973 – 1998

JUNE 25, 2009

THE DINI HOME

YERINGTON, NEVADA

Interview conducted by
Dana R. Bennett

Filmed by
Gwendolyn B. Clancy

Transcribed and indexed by
Jean Stoess

Get Consensus, LLC
Under contract to the Nevada Legislative Counsel Bureau

SUGGESTED CITATION:

Mouryne B. Landing Dini. An oral history by Dana R. Bennett. Carson City, Nevada:
Legislative Counsel Bureau, 2009.

The record copy of the interview transcript is printed on archival quality paper and on file with the Research Library of the Legislative Counsel Bureau in Carson City, Nevada.

PROJECT INTRODUCTION

The 2007 Nevada Legislature approved an appropriation for a project of conducting oral histories with former state legislators, and in the summer following the conclusion of the session, the Research Division of the Legislative Counsel Bureau (LCB) conducted a competitive bid process to identify and obtain a contractor to carry out the project. A committee consisting of LCB and other state personnel with expertise in Nevada history and politics evaluated and ranked the proposals received. In January 2008, a contract was signed between LCB and Get Consensus, LLC, for an 18-month program.

Administered by Donald O. Williams, Research Director, and coordinated by Amber Joiner, Senior Research Analyst, the Nevada Legislature Oral History Project consists of video- and audio-taped interviews, which have been transcribed, edited for readability, and indexed. An initial list of suggested interview subjects had been presented to the Senate Committee on Finance when it considered Senate Bill 373, which proposed an appropriation for the creation of an oral history of the Nevada Legislature. Using that as the starting point, LCB staff considered several factors—such as age, length of legislative tenure, contributions to the State of Nevada, and whether a formal oral history of the individual had been published or was underway—when identifying the former legislators who would be interviewed. The final list provided to the contractor revealed a careful balance of legislative house, political party, and geographic distribution among the interviewees.

After LCB staff acquired the written permission of each subject, the contractor would proceed with scheduling the interview at a time and place convenient for the former legislator. Each interview was simultaneously filmed and audiotaped. The audio recording was transcribed verbatim and then edited by the contractor for readability. Each interviewed legislator was provided the opportunity to review his or her edited document, and any misstatements or errors in the videotape were corrected in the text. The contractor produced three copies of each final product, which includes the text and a DVD of the interview film. Copies were presented to LCB's Research Library and the State Library in Carson City; the subject legislator also received a copy of his or her interview. The repository of record for all digital film and audio files is LCB's Research Library.

Together, these interviews make a significant contribution to the annals of Nevada politics and provide incomparable context to the state's legislative history. The official legislative record outlines the chronology for actions taken by Nevada's lawmaking body; these oral histories vividly portray the background and circumstances in which such actions occurred. Invaluable for understanding Nevada's politics in the latter half of the twentieth century, these interviews present interesting explanations, entertaining stories, and thoughtful observations that might otherwise have been lost.



Mouryne B. Landing Dini
June 25, 2009

MOURYNE B. LANDING DINI

Mouryne B. Landing Dini worked for the Nevada Legislature for 30 years, serving as Chief Clerk of the Assembly from 1973 until her retirement in 1995. Because of her long-standing service, she was included in the Legislative Oral History Project during an interview that occurred on June 25, 2009 at the Dini home in Yerington. Mrs. Dini first worked for the Legislature as a Committee Secretary in 1965; she later worked as Assembly Journal Clerk and Assistant Chief Clerk and was named Chief Clerk by Speaker Keith Ashworth (D-Clark) in 1973. Her initial posts were all temporary hires for session only as neither house retained staff at that time. She went to work for the Assembly full-time in 1983 when both the Chief Clerk and Secretary of the Senate became permanent positions. Previous Chief Clerks sometimes won and lost their jobs through political patronage, but Mrs. Dini was retained by every Speaker regardless of political party affiliation.

Throughout this interview, Mrs. Dini explains how the legislative process evolved during her service from an entirely manual system of recording, often via shorthand and through the physical ink-stamping of original bill documents, to the fully automated and electronic computer system in use today. She explains how the secretarial pool functioned, and how staff was selected. Mrs. Dini notes that prior to her tenure, legislative staff was interviewed and hired by committees comprised of the elected representatives themselves. The position of Chief Clerk is elected by the Assembly and is responsible for parliamentary procedure as well as record-keeping. Mrs. Dini discusses her love of tradition and precedent, and how that proved useful throughout her career. She notes several instances where precedent and the decisions of the Clerk impacted legislative action. In particular, she discusses the divided house in 1995, when Republican and Democrats were equally represented. She reminisces about her work with several Speakers, as well as Secretaries of the Senate Leola Armstrong and Jan Thomas.

Mrs. Dini was active in the American Society of Legislative Clerks and Secretaries, serving as its president in 1990. She was also active with the National Conference of State Legislatures and was a member of its committee that revised *Mason's Manual*. She also traveled extensively for professional development and to help others in similar positions. Mrs. Dini was included on the Assembly's Wall of Distinction in 2007.

Born in Salt Lake City, Utah, in 1928, Mrs. Dini attended Henager-Stephens College of Business. She married Delbert T. Landing in November 1947; they had two daughters. The couple moved to Carson City in 1963, and Mr. Landing died in 1991. Mrs. Dini speaks with genuine fondness of her courtship by Speaker Joe Dini after the death of his wife. Mouryne and Joe Dini were married in October 1995, following her retirement.

After the formal interview, Mrs. Dini provided additional information that expands on various parts of the conversation. Some of her later comments have been woven into this transcript and are identified as having been offered after the conclusion of the interview.

Dale Erquiaga
September 2009

Dana Bennett: Good afternoon, Mrs. Dini.

Mouryne Dini: Good afternoon.

Bennett: Tell me how you got involved in the Nevada Legislature.

M. Dini: Well, it was really by accident. It was in 1965. I'd never lived in a capital city before. I was actually taking my husband's secretary's place; he'd lost his secretary. He hired this girl, and she said, "The only thing I hate about taking this job—I was just over at the Legislature, and they hired me." I asked about it, and at that time, it was about a two- to three-month job. I didn't want to work full time—I had a family—so I went over and applied. I went to work my first session as a secretary. The next session, in 1967, I was the Journal Clerk. It was my first time on the desk.

Bennett: In 1965, how many committee secretaries were there?

M. Dini: As far as standing committee secretaries, I believe there were only two. It was a totally different ballgame. The Legislature was in the old Capitol. We had a committee room for Ways and Means. We had a committee room for Judiciary. There may have been one for Government Affairs, but I don't believe so. Each of those two committees had their own secretaries. Other than that, we had maybe two—three at the most—very small committee

rooms. They didn't take minutes at most of the meetings. If the legislators did decide they wanted minutes of the meeting, they would call back to the secretarial pool, and a secretary would come out and take the minutes for the meeting.

Bennett: Explain how you would take the minutes. Obviously, you didn't have a tape recorder.

M. Dini: I took shorthand. [chuckles] The first time I did, I thought, "Oh, this means verbatim." So I was just breaking my neck to get it verbatim, and when I typed up my minutes, I thought, "They're not going to like this at all." But he was so pleased.

Bennett: Who was he?

M. Dini: Assemblyman Art Olsen. He was Chairman of the Insurance Committee. So that got me started. Now, the legislators had no offices at that time. The building was so completely different—a legislator's office was his or her desk on the chamber floor. If they wanted to dictate a letter, they called the secretarial pool, and a secretary went up, sat at their desk, and took her dictation and went back to the pool to transcribe it.

Bennett: Where was the secretarial pool?

M. Dini: The *entire* attaché pool was in the little rotunda of the Capitol Building on the second floor—

Arthur H. Olsen (D-Clark) served in the Assembly from 1964 to 1966 and again from 1970 to 1972. An attorney, he chaired the Assembly Committee on Banking, Insurance, and Corporations in 1965.

Assembly attachés and Senate attachés. The Assembly secretaries had one room, and the bill clerks had another room. It was the same on the other side of that little rotunda for the Senate. As I say, the legislators didn't have offices, but the chairmen of those two committees had their own offices. There was no office for the lobbyists, so there was no getting away from the lobbyists. If the Assemblymen decided to go off the floor, the lobbyists were right there.

I'm sure you've been up in that Capitol Building, and there was a stanchion across the front separating the lobby from the Assembly Chambers—that was the *bar* of the Assembly. So that's the way our forms are written up, and that's the way it had always been written up in the *Journal*. I remember when we went to the new building, Keith Ashworth—he was the first Speaker who asked me to be Chief Clerk—used to give me a bad time about being such a traditionalist because he'd say, "We don't have a bar in the Assembly anymore. They come through the door." I insisted that, according to tradition, it's the *bar of the Assembly*, so I hope it's kept that way. He humored me and gave in.

*Keith Ashworth (D-Clark)
served in the Assembly from
1966 to 1976 and was
Speaker in 1973 and 1975.*

Bennett: Who hired you initially?

M. Dini: In 1965, the process was altogether different. On the first day of the session, they had no attachés other than the front desk. They had all the applicants come and sit in one big room, and one by one, they would interview them. They would hire them like that, on that first day. Geraldine Tyson was the Chairman of Legislative Functions, and she and her committee were the ones who interviewed us.

Geraldine B. (Gerry) Tyson (D-Clark) was appointed to the Assembly to fill her husband's seat after his death in 1963. She was subsequently elected to the office and served in the Assembly until 1970.

Bennett: So you were interviewed by a legislative committee?

M. Dini: Yes. The Committee on Legislative Functions did the recommending, and then, of course, the attachés had to be hired by resolution.

Bennett: Were they considered patronage jobs at that time?

M. Dini: No. No, they weren't. As long as I was there, I don't know of any of them being patronage jobs, other than the Chief Clerk and the Sergeant-at-Arms.

Bennett: Then in the next session you came back as a Journal Clerk?

M. Dini: Yes. There was a gentleman by the name of Nate Hurst who had been Chief Clerk for several sessions, and he invited me to be the Journal Clerk. So, of course, I jumped at the chance.

Nathan Hurst was Chief Clerk of the Assembly in 1949 and again from 1959 through the 1968 Special Session. His tenure is second in length to Mrs. Dini's. Hurst ran as a Democrat for a Reno seat in the Assembly in 1966, but lost.

Bennett: What did the Journal Clerk do?

M. Dini: They don't take the minutes, but they record all of the official action, and that's what makes up the bound *Journals*. It's all of the official action that happens on the floor.

Bennett: You were sitting at the front counter, or what would have been like a counter in the old Assembly Chambers?

M. Dini: Yes.

Bennett: Were you taking down the actions in shorthand?

M. Dini: No, I didn't have to take down the actions in shorthand, unless there was something special, because we had forms. I'd fill out these forms on what was happening, who made the motion, what the bill number was, and so forth.

[After the interview, Mrs. Dini provided the following explanation to be included at this point.]

The *Journal* is the official record of all that happens during the session from the time we convene until we adjourn for that legislative day. It includes who is presiding, who makes the motions, any amendments to the bill or resolution, who debates the bill or motion, and the final action taken on that particular bill or resolution for that day. Quite often a legislator requires that his or her remarks be entered in the *Journal*. Those are transcribed by the

Minute Clerk, and the Journal Clerk enters them in the *Journal*. The *Journal* even lists the visitors who have been introduced that day.

The History Clerk is responsible for putting together the *Daily History*, which shows all action taken on bills or resolutions to date.

In those days, everything was done manually. Even the Printing Office used hot lead type.

[The interview with Mrs. Dini continues from here.]

All of the History Clerk's work was done on a little yellow tablet. All of it was done by hand—bill numbers, what happened to the bill. She had a stamp that noted whether it was amend and do pass, or whether it was introduced, or read second time, or whatever the action was. She had these little stamps. We had to stay when the session was over until all of that was done, and then a page would get it over to the printing office. If we didn't, nobody would know the status of the legislation the next morning because there was no computer, there was no way to tell where anything was except by the *Journal* and the *History*.

Bennett: So you literally, physically, stayed in the building after each floor session ended and after *sine die*?

M. Dini: At our desk. We'd finish our work, and then we'd check it all out. It was *totally* manual. I always thought it was interesting: the Minute Clerk is the one who runs the recorder, and if anything has to be typed verbatim, she does that. The first or second year I was there, we had an old Dictaphone that had a plastic sleeve that went on a cylinder, and it would go around, and I think it would punch holes. I wish I knew what they called them. I'm sorry that I don't. Then if it was something that they wanted transcribed, the Minute Clerk would take it upstairs to a little office like in an attic, and type it up. So it's gone from this little cylinder to the reel-to-reel to the tape recorders to now computers. There's been a big change in that 30-year period.

Bennett: So Nate Hurst was the Chief Clerk when you started. [**M. Dini:** Yes.] Compare what he did with what you did. What sorts of similarities or differences were there?

M. Dini: Basically, he did pretty much the same thing. He did all the reading of the bills, was the parliamentarian, and supervised the staff. The thing that he didn't do was stay after session. When we adjourned for the day, Nate was

through. He said, “The rest of you take care of doing the proofing.” He didn’t do any of the proofing. We’d get it all done, and he would just take it and go, “Looks okay to me” and send it over. But he was partisan. He was a Democrat, and he’d been in office for several sessions.

But the 1969 session was Republican, so they didn’t rehire Nate. They hired a Chief Clerk by the name of Terry Loy who had been the Assistant Clerk. Terry was there for two sessions. She was the last Chief Clerk in the old building and the first one in the new building. I became her assistant when she became Chief Clerk.

Theresa Loy was elected Chief Clerk in 1969. In 1973, she became the Director of Planned Parenthood of Washoe County.

Bennett: In the transition from the old building to the new building, what happened in terms of duties and responsibilities?

M. Dini: I think our duties were pretty much the same. Our staff grew. Another thing that happened was when I was first asked to be Chief Clerk, Keith Ashworth, who was the Speaker, asked if I would do the interviewing. I was working on another job, but the man I was working for said that would be fine, so I could do the interviewing. So I did the interviewing and then recommended to the Assembly those who I thought would be qualified. I got a lot of flak over that. I got a *lot* of flak.

Bennett: From whom?

M. Dini: Assemblyman Mello. [laughs] It had always been done by legislators. He was the Vice-Chair of the Legislative Functions Committee, and he felt he should be doing it. Well, it was all right with me. I didn't *want* to do it, but that's what the Speaker had requested. I did get a lot of flak over that.

Donald R. Mello (D-Sparks) served in the Assembly from 1963 to 1982.

Bennett: How did you find the attachés?

M. Dini: I never seemed to have to advertise for them at that time. They knew the session was starting, and there were just a lot of people who wanted to work for the session, so they would put in their applications. Then you'd pick those that you thought were most qualified.

When I was choosing, it was important to me that they knew how to type, that they knew how to do certain things, but I didn't give a test. I might have them go in another room and type something for me, and I could tell, by listening, whether that person knew how to type or not. Then the rest was just by personal interview. I'm sure that a lot of my decisions were the rapport that I had with them. Is it someone that I'm going to be able to work with? Is it someone who's going to work well with their co-workers? I think that was one of the most important things to me. I was very fortunate.

Bennett: How big was your first staff in 1973?

M. Dini: Thirty-seven. That included the bill clerks who were upstairs; that included four little gentlemen who ran the public bill room, the Sergeant-at-Arms staff, and the secretaries. I had a small office—a real small office—right across from the Assembly Chambers, and the secretaries were all in that room.

Bennett: That's where the secretarial pool was in the new building?

M. Dini: Yes. My secretary was also supervisor of the secretarial pool. The next session, they moved the pool upstairs, so my secretary had a choice: she didn't know whether she wanted to stay with me or to stay with the girls. So she chose to stay with me and be my secretary.

One of the ladies I interviewed was Pat Hatch. I'd never met Pat before. She'd never worked for the Legislature, but I just had a feeling about her, and I asked her if she would be the supervisor. I couldn't have gotten a better person. She was supervisor from 1973 through the 1993 Session. She was just wonderful. The girls all loved her. If there was any work to be done, she was right there helping them. It was fun. We had fun. We were like a big family. We celebrated birthdays; we had good times. She had the staff meeting, and I'd come and sit in, and maybe talk to them. She

was just perfect. Everybody loved her. I was always very fortunate with my staff.

Bennett: What sorts of directions did you give the staff in terms of rules or protocol during the session?

M. Dini: Of course, we had a dress code. We wore dresses; the women attachés did not wear pants. [chuckles] The women legislators may be able to wear pants, but the attachés did not wear pants. We had that rule.

It was very non-partisan. I always let them know that I didn't care what party they belonged to, but when they came in the back door, they left that party outside. They also were not to lobby. They were not to try to influence their Chairman or whatever legislator they were working for. Those were the main rules.

I also told them to be very careful about the socializing, because there were legislators up here who were going to be here for several months away from their families. There was a lot of partying, and you wanted to be careful and not get involved in anything like that. I couldn't tell them, "No, you can't go to a party." If a legislator invited them, I wasn't going to say, "No, you can't go." But I did always give them that warning.

Bennett: When you became Chief Clerk in 1973, did you make any immediate changes to the procedures of the office?

M. Dini: No. I can't think of any. Like I said, I was very much a traditionalist. You can look at the 1995 *Journal* and take it back to the 1965 *Journal*, and it will be basically the same. I don't know about the *Journals* now, but we tried hard to keep everything the same. My right hand was Carol Moore. Her father had been Chief Clerk years before in 1945 and 1947 and had also worked at LCB [Legislative Counsel Bureau]. I think he was the assistant director for a while.

Bennett: What was his name?

M. Dini: Jeff Springmeyer. He was a wonderful parliamentarian. Carol had a lot of his background, and that first session, if we had a problem we'd call Jeff, and after that we'd work it out. But she was someone that I could sit with and really thrash things out. If we ran into a problem, we'd get out our *Mason's Manual*, and we'd talk about the way we thought it should be done. We would look back in the *Journals* and the *Histories*, do some researching, and almost always come to agreement on it.

Bennett: How often did you have to do that sort of deep study to resolve a problem?

M. Dini: When I first started, very often. *Mason's Manual*, the *Journals*, and the old histories

*At the end of each session, the Assembly produces a publication titled **The Journal of the Assembly**, which lists the official actions of the Assembly in chronological order. The Senate also publishes a **Journal**.*

J.E. (Jeff) Springmeyer was the Legislature's Legal Counsel from 1947 through 1963. He was LCB's Deputy Director until 1967.

*The Nevada Constitution authorizes each house to set its own rules, which, among other things, specify the precedence of parliamentary authority. Since 1947, the Assembly has relied on **Mason's Manual of Legislative Procedure** as the last word on proper parliamentary procedure*

were very important to me because this was new. I'd been on the *Journal* but never had been on anything else. All of a sudden, I was the parliamentarian and was expected to know the State Constitution and the *Nevada Revised Statutes* as they pertained to the Legislature, the legislative rules, and *Mason's Manual of Parliamentary Law*. So we would reference them quite often.

Bennett: What surprised you the most when you became Chief Clerk?

M. Dini: What surprised me the most? That I could do it, I think. [laughs] When Keith Ashworth asked me to be Chief Clerk, I said, "Oh, Keith, I don't think I can do it. I've never been Chief Clerk before," and he said, "I've never been Speaker before." But he said, "They don't know that. We might not know something, but they'll never know we don't know it, and if it's something that is too serious, that we can't just come up with an answer for, we'll just call a recess." So he was wonderful. He really was great. We kind of worked through it together.

Bennett: What is the interaction between the Chief Clerk and the Speaker?

M. Dini: Very close. The Chief Clerk is the parliamentarian, and until Joe Dini was Speaker in 1987, we changed Speakers every session. Some were there for two sessions. But before the 1980s, I

don't think anyone had served three. So the more familiar I would get and the more I would learn, the more valuable I would be to the Speaker. You have to help them with the procedures. You have to follow the *Constitution*. They were busy studying the bills, so they didn't have time to look all that up. So you do work very closely with the Speakers and letting them know what they can and cannot do.

Joseph E. Dini, Jr., (D-Yerington) served in the Assembly from 1966 to 2002 and became the first Speaker to serve four sessions with his election in 1991. Ultimately, he was Speaker a record eight regular sessions and named Speaker Emeritus in 2001.

Bennett: With the Speaker changing so often, was your position as Chief Clerk in jeopardy every time the Speaker changed?

M. Dini: Actually, yes. Another thing that was interesting to me was that the Chief Clerk they'd had before me was a Republican, and it was in a Republican house. When Keith asked me to be Chief Clerk, I said, "Keith, I'm honored, but I'm the wrong party." He said, "I didn't ask you what party you belong to." So nothing was ever said about it. Every time I had a new Speaker, I made sure that they knew that I belonged to the Republican Party. I didn't want to be an embarrassment to anybody. They kept me on. In fact, 1985 and 1995, when there was the split house, were the only times I worked under a Republican Speaker.

Byron (Bill) Bilyeu (R-Elko) was Speaker in 1985. Lynn C. Hettrick (R-Douglas) was Co-Speaker in 1995.

Bennett: Explain a little about how the Chief Clerk is elected.

M. Dini: The way it's written up in, I think, *Mason's Manual* is that the Chief Clerk is actually an officer of the body. But it's the only non-elected officer. That means that they are not elected by the public. However, they *are* elected by the body. Basically, it's up to the Speaker and the majority party to pick the Clerk, but then they do have to submit that name. After the Speaker and the Speaker Pro Tem are elected, then they elect the Chief Clerk. So, yes, I was at the mercy of whatever Speaker they had. Plus the fact there's nothing that says that they couldn't nominate someone from the floor.

Nevada law specifies that the Chief Clerk is elected by the members of the Assembly as an officer of the body.

Bennett: Did that ever happen?

M. Dini: It didn't ever happen to me, but it happens in a lot of states. In a lot of states, people campaign to be Chief Clerk.

Bennett: When you were first elected, in 1973, was it a full-time job at that point?

M. Dini: No. I'd do a lot of the interviewing while on my other job, then I would come in about a month early and do all the preparatory work. I would usually be there a month or two months after the session, and then I would go back to my other job.

[After the interview, Mrs. Dini provided the following additional information: As time went on and the work and technology became

more advanced, we needed to come in sooner and stay a little longer. There were many years that I took the *Journals* home and finished proofing them on my own time so that I could get them to the printer to be printed and bound before the next session.]

Bennett: When did it become a full-time position?

M. Dini: 1983. But the time was getting longer all the time. We'd have to come in a little earlier and stay a little later. Then in 1983 at the end of the session, Speaker Vergiels and Senator Gibson asked us to be full-time.

Bennett: So both you and the Secretary of the Senate became full-time at the same time?

M. Dini: Art Palmer, who was the Director of LCB, called me in before then, and he told me that there was talk about keeping us on full-time. But he said that I'd be working for the Counsel Bureau in the interim and then I would be Chief Clerk during the session. I said, "No, I have a good job as an office manager, and I'm not going to do that." To me, there is a conflict there. You don't work for the Director of the Counsel Bureau and then become Chief Clerk because it's two different entities—three, counting the Senate.

There's the Senate, there's the Assembly, and there's the Counsel Bureau. You have a Secretary of the Senate, you have a Chief

John M. (Jack) Vergiels (D-Clark) served in the Assembly from 1972 to 1984 and was Speaker in 1983. James I. Gibson (D-Clark) served in the Senate from 1966 to 1988 and was Majority Leader from 1977 to 1985.

Arthur J. Palmer directed LCB from 1972 to 1984.

Clerk of the Assembly, and you have a Director. I didn't think it was right, and I didn't want to do it. To me, it was a conflict of interest, and I didn't want to do that. So I told him that I'd consider it if they want to make Chief Clerk a full-time job. So they did.

Bennett: What was the interaction with the Secretary of the Senate?

M. Dini: When I first became Chief Clerk, Leola Armstrong was Secretary of the Senate. Did you ever meet Leola?

Leola H. Armstrong was Secretary of the Senate from 1958 until her retirement in 1981.

Bennett: I did, yes.

M. Dini: She was a very good Secretary of the Senate. She really knew the business. She was more partisan than I was, but she had gone through both parties, too. She was gruff. Very outspoken. But she was my mentor, and we worked together so well. She'd come down, and she would say, "You know, it's too bad you don't have a little bit more of me in you, and I don't have a little bit more of you in me." [chuckles] But we just got along beautifully. If there was something that came up that she thought we should have, she never went ahead and got it for the Senate without asking me about it. We got the same things. We did things the same way, and vice versa if I thought of something. We really worked well together. There are telephones at both desks, so I'd keep

very close contact with the Secretary of the Senate. Then when Leola retired, Jan Thomas took over. Jan was there a long time, and we had that same working relationship.

Janice L. Thomas served as Secretary of the Senate from 1983 until her retirement in 2000.

Bennett: Had there always been a phone at the Chief Clerk's desk there in the chambers?

M. Dini: Yes. Right there in the Chambers.

Bennett: Where the Chief Clerk stands and then where the Secretary of the Senate stands?

M. Dini: It seems to me that there always was, but I can't say for sure that there was in the old building. But I would think so because there are so many things that have to be synchronized. To me, there was always a phone there because we'd call and say that we've passed this bill and ask if they were ready to receive it or tell them about a conference committee. The house of origin is supposed to always adopt the conference committee report first. If we weren't the house of origin, we would get on the phone and say, "We're ready to adopt that conference report. Have you adopted it yet?" If they hadn't, then we'd wait until we heard from them. So there was a lot of communication with the telephone, and it worked well.

Bennett: It sounds like, administratively, that the two houses actually worked fairly closely together.

M. Dini: They did, yes. There's always been some competition between the two houses—I noticed it more in later years—but there's always been some competition between the two. I think that's natural.

Bennett: You worked with some interesting Speakers over your career. [**M. Dini:** Yes.] Talk a little bit about those different individuals.

[After the interview, Mrs. Dini elaborated on some of the Speakers not mentioned during the interview:

During my entire tenure with the Legislature, I worked under 11 Speakers, but only eight as Chief Clerk. When I first started, Bill Swackhamer was Speaker. I loved watching him preside. He brought so much dignity to the Chambers and to the floor sessions. Next was Mel Close—another man with dignity and fairness. Everyone knows what a fine man Lawrence Jacobsen was. He was the first Speaker in the new building. He had a part in designing the building and had a great love for it.]

M. Dini: As I say, my first Speaker, while serving as Chief Clerk, was Keith Ashworth, and Keith was a good Speaker. Now I can't speak from a legislator's standpoint, but to me, it always seemed that he was fair. He was very good to the staff. If I needed to talk to him about

William D. Swackhamer (D-Lander) was in the Assembly from 1946 to 1972 and was Speaker in 1957 and 1965.

Melvin D. Close, Jr., (D-Clark) served in the Assembly from 1964 to 1970. He was Speaker in 1967.

Lawrence E. Jacobsen (R-Douglas) was in the Assembly from 1962 to 1978 and was Speaker in 1971.

something, he always had time for me. He was a great Speaker. And then, Paul May. Did you know Paul May?

Paul W. May, Jr. (D-Clark) served in the Assembly from 1966 to 1984 and 1986 to 1988. He was Speaker in 1979.

Bennett: I did not, no.

M. Dini: Paul—like Joe had mentioned before—was a brilliant legislator. Paul’s biggest problem was that he mumbled, and sometimes he was hard to understand. He’d whisper down to me, [whispers], “Mouryne, can you understand me all right?” [chuckles] But he was another one of those who was just a very kind man, and I enjoyed working for him.

Speaker Vergiels was very different. He did his own thing. He’d call me into the office, and I’d go in to talk about a bill, and it probably would be an hour before I’d get out because he would tell me the full process of how to be a legislator. [chuckles] I worked for some good Speakers. I enjoyed them all. Of course, the *best* one was Joe Dini.

Bennett: And that’s even without a bias, right?

M. Dini: That is without a bias. It really is without a bias.

When he was new as Speaker in 1977—when the session went so long—they would forget. Of course, the way the session was run did not depend on the staff, but we would be there at least three hours after they adjourned.

If they worked there until midnight, we were there until 3 o'clock in the morning. So we'd talk to them and try to get them to let us out early, and so many times Joe would say, "We'll work right through. We won't take any dinner break, and we'll adjourn about 5 o'clock." And then about 5 o'clock or so, we'd hear, "Have a recess for a dinner break." We probably could have cried because that hour's dinner break would turn into a couple of hours; and when they came back, they were just brilliant. And they were so funny. And they wanted every word in the *Journal*. Now that had to be all manually done, and you had to get it over to the printer before we could leave because they had to have the *Journal* the next morning.

Bennett: So when you say it had to be manually done, when they were giving their speeches, was somebody taking it down by shorthand?

M. Dini: What we called the Minute Clerk at the time had a recorder. She didn't do it in shorthand. There was a tape recorder, and she would transcribe off of the tape recorder. But that was a lot of transcribing. Then the printing office would be there just waiting for us. We'd have to have somebody run it over—usually one of the pages would wait and run it over. In 1987, when Joe threw the gavel at Virgil Getto and the session went so long—we were getting ready to *sine die*—we didn't check as closely

as we usually did since we weren't having floor session the next day. We sent the work over right away so that they would have some way to know how it ended up. I remember going home that morning, and as I walked in through the front door, my husband walked out the front door on his way to work. He was not very happy. [chuckles]

Joe became a great Speaker. We worked together so long, it was like a machine. He knew what I was thinking; I knew what he was thinking. If I needed to go to another order of business, I would just hold up a little piece of paper that no one else could see, but he would look down and see that, and he'd go to the next order of business. I really noticed it when we had the divided house. Lynn Hettrick did a great job as a Speaker, he really did. But when Lynn was in the chair, I had to be a little more alert and make sure that everything was going well. When Joe was in the chair, then it just went like a clock. I didn't have to say anything or do anything.

Bennett: Speaking of the divided session, what was your role leading up to that session in terms of preparing for what was going to be truly a historic session?

M. Dini: Very unpopular. I almost retired before that session, but I decided to stay. I knew that if

Virgil M. Getto (R-Churchill) served in the Assembly from 1966 to 1976, from 1978 to 1980, and again from 1982 to 1988. Both men tell the gavel-throwing story in their interviews for the Nevada Legislature Oral History Project.

Lynn C. Hettrick (R-Douglas) served in the Assembly from 1992 to 2006. He was Co-Speaker in 1995 when the Assembly was evenly divided between Republicans and Democrats.

they had a history-making split house and I wasn't here, I'd be so mad. [chuckles] But I was not popular with the Democrats because I go by precedent. I was trying to go by the rules. Precedent is one of the most important parts of the rules.

As you know, there were two Democratic seats being challenged. We had had several challenges, and always before when we had a challenge, that individual's name was blacked out at their desk. They were not seated. They were not even counted until after everything was formed, and the committees were appointed. Then they would have a recess, and the Legislative Affairs Committee would study the credentials and come back and give the report, and then whoever won was sworn in. That's the way it had always been done.

Well, this time there was too much at stake, so when I was saying, "That's not the way it's done. Do it this other way. Those two people cannot be seated." Well, they wouldn't go for that, of course, because then the Republicans would have had the majority and would have then had full control. So they decided that they would let the two contested legislators be seated, and they could do anything but vote on bills. That's how that was decided. So I lost that battle to Barbara

*According to the Assembly Standing Rules, "custom, usage and precedence" comes before **Mason's Manual** in determining parliamentary authority.*

The elections of Jan Evans (D-Washoe) and Christina R. Giunchigliani (D-Clark) were challenged unsuccessfully.

Buckley. [laughs] But even at the time, I agreed that's the way it should have been done.

Bennett: How did that divided house affect your role during the session?

M. Dini: It was really fun. We were concerned about it at first, but we had a very compatible group. The legislators were always wonderful to us. The only difference was that I had to remember what day it was and which Speaker was going to be in the chair, and what day a certain chairman would be chair. I did have to keep track of that, so that I wouldn't be getting reports from a chairman who wasn't chairman that day. But other than that, it really didn't make much difference. It was one of our smoothest sessions.

Bennett: What's the interaction between the Chief Clerk and the floor leaders—the Minority Leader and the Majority Leader?

M. Dini: They would come to us for questions on procedure, on how to do something. I was always very fortunate in that if there was something unusual that was going to be done, they would come and discuss it with us, which made it nice because then we could be prepared for that to happen.

Bennett: What were some of the floor sessions that stand out in your memory? You mentioned the

Barbara E. Buckley (D-Clark) has served in the Assembly since 1994. In 2007, she became the first female Speaker in Nevada.

throwing of the gavel. Are there other floor sessions that stand out?

M. Dini: One of them involved, I believe, a veto override on the helmet bill, and the whole balcony was full of black leather jackets. We had security around. At that time, Speaker Dini was presiding, and they did *not* override the Governor's veto. These people were very upset, but we had security, and they filed out nicely, but I do remember this one man who looked down, and he said, "We'll get you at the polls, Dini." [shakes fist] That one always kind of stood out in my mind. [chuckles]

On March 31, 1977, the Assembly sustained Governor Mike O'Callahan's 1975 veto of A.B. 7, which would have allowed adult motorcyclists to ride without a helmet.

We—the girls on the desk—just had a lot of fun. If it weren't for Carol, I don't know what I would have done. And the others, too. They were dedicated workers, and they knew their work. When I first started, the sessions were limited to 60 days, but that was as far as pay. They would usually be over in maybe 63 days. But as time went on, they grew longer and longer.

I remember this one session that was 92 days. They'd never had a 92-day session. So the girls on the desk all dressed in black, and we got big, black balloons with "92" on them that we put on the counter, and we had dishes with black candy—licorice. That always stood out in my mind.

The 1969 Session was the first to pass the 92-day mark. It ended on the 95th day.

The things that stand out to me are the fun things. I didn't get involved in the legislation. I wasn't interested in the battles. Another thing that to me is a big change—we didn't used to have floor statements. Very rarely would they have a floor statement. When they got up and discussed a bill, the chairman would discuss the bill. If anyone had questions, they would ask the chairman, and the chairman was able to answer. If not, either the Majority Leader or Minority Leader would be able to answer those questions.

Bennett: So they didn't have prepared statements?

M. Dini: No, they didn't. They didn't have prepared notes. They really knew their bills and studied their bills. That's one thing that stands out to me. The floor statements just came about gradually.

Bennett: I think now there's a floor statement on every bill.

M. Dini: I think that's all they do.

Bennett: From your perspective as a staff person, what made an effective legislator? What were some of the qualities that seemed to be similar among effective legislators?

M. Dini: I think honesty and integrity. Their word was so valuable—it was like a handshake back in the days when they had a handshake. If they

know how they were going to vote—and I’m just speaking to my knowledge, I can’t speak from a legislator’s standpoint—but to my knowledge, if they didn’t know how they wanted to vote, they wouldn’t tell somebody they’d vote for a bill. They’d tell them that they’d have to wait until they’d heard both sides because they hadn’t made up their mind because if they committed to something, they’d follow through on it.

Bennett: One of the primary duties of the Chief Clerk is to read each bill as it’s introduced, and you were famous for reading through those things in a very quick fashion. Were you paying attention to the content of the bills as they were going by?

M. Dini: No, I’m ashamed to say. In fact, I think it really did some damage to my reading [chuckles] because I’d notice that people would come up and ask me if such-and-such a bill had been introduced. Now if it was a bill I was interested in, then I would remember and say, “Yes, it’s over in the basket.” But if it wasn’t, I’d have to look in the basket and see if it had been introduced. Finally I realized that when I was reading all these bills, I really wasn’t reading. My eyes were going ahead, and I was saying the words. I was just saying the words. Nobody was listening to me, anyway.

Bennett: You were usually cut off, weren't you, by either the sponsor or somebody in getting the bill referred before you'd actually read all the way to the end of the bill?

M. Dini: No, they don't make the motion until I get to the end of the bill.

Bennett: Or end of the preamble?

M. Dini: I'd say, "Section 1, end of Section 1," and then I'd go down to whatever the last section was and say, "Section 25, end of bill." That's when they would make the motion, but it was so routine that some of them might be reading the paper or some of them might be studying their bills. [chuckles] They just didn't pay that much attention, as a rule. The State Constitution requires that each bill be read three times from first to last.

Bennett: As all of those hundreds of bills were going by, could you get a sense, as you were reading the bill, that something might be getting a little bit more attention than some of the others?

M. Dini: Oh, yes. Now I would do that. I don't mean that I didn't pay any attention to the bills; I did. But if there were a lot of them going by, unless it was something that I was interested in or familiar with or it sounded like it was going to be something important, then I wouldn't. But yes, I could tell by reading a lot of them.

Bennett: That's why I was wondering if perhaps you could get a sense right at the introduction if the bill was going to be back eventually on General File or if it would be headed out the door.

We were talking earlier about some of the changes that came to the Assembly during the time that you were there, for instance with the boards. Explain what the boards were.

M. Dini: All right. This is the way they did it when I first started, and it also carried over into the new building. We had two big blackboards in the front of the Chambers, and either the Sergeant-at-Arms or the Assistant Sergeant-at-Arms would print the numbers of all the bills they were going to act on that day and list the bills under "Second Reading" or "General File" and note whether the recommendation on the bill was a "do pass" or "amend and do pass." Even the public, then, could see what was going on. As a bill was acted upon, they would cross them off on the board.

In the old building, we had a Sergeant-at-Arms named Diamond Tooth Miller, and he had been in France during the war. He had a girlfriend who gave him a diamond, and he had it put in his front tooth, so that's why he was Diamond Tooth Miller. He took so much pride in his boards—I mean that lettering was just perfect. I don't remember what happened—I

*Dean "Diamond Tooth" Miller joined the Assembly staff in 1957 after serving two terms as a New Mexico State Senator (D-Gran Quivira). He became the Nevada Senate Sergeant-at-Arms in 1965, a position he held until at least 1977. From 1958 to 1976, he published the political newsletter, *The Nevada Democrat*, in Las Vegas.*

think he might have gotten mad at Nate Hurst—but he left the Assembly and went to the Senate. This was right before we went to the new building. When we went to the new building, we had a young man who was our Sergeant-at-Arms, and he was doing the boards. Diamond Tooth would come down and train him. He would do the boards just as beautiful as anybody. They were really nice. People could actually tell what had happened.

Then we computerized, and they went to the electronic boards. They're nice, and they're faster, but you really can't tell as much about what's happened to a particular bill after it's been acted upon. Voting was then done on electronic boards, too. They said, "It's a lot faster," because before that I would call the roll—each person's name—on each bill. So I timed it. And the boards were no faster than I was. [laughs]

Bennett: So it didn't save that much time to go to electronic voting?

M. Dini: It didn't save that much time. It did a lot of other things, and the system they have now is wonderful. I can't complain about it. It's really made the desk's work a lot easier and given them much more information. So it's been a good progression, but all the nostalgia is gone.

Bennett: Did the change in technology impact procedures in any way? You talked about being a traditionalist. How did technology affect the process?

M. Dini: I can't see that it affected the actual process too much because the process of passing a bill is in the *Constitution*. It's read the first time, it's read the second time, it's read the third time, voted on, could be amended through that, voted on; then it goes to the other house, goes through the same procedure. So I can't say that it has affected the actual procedure, but it's really simplified things. I mentioned before that it was manual, and we'd be there for three hours after everyone was gone. Now it doesn't take them as long. They may not get all the remarks on the floor typed up, and they may have to hold up their *Journal* for that. But as far as the process, it gets over there and gets in the histories and in the *Journal*.

Bennett: With the time demands required of your position with the Legislature, how did your legislative service affect your family?

M. Dini: Not too well. My girls were in school, and their graduations came during sessions. I can't say that I missed anything that was necessary for me to go to, but I was gone a lot in the evening. It bothered my husband—really bothered him—especially when I came home when he

was going to work. It's hard on a family; it's hard on any family. Some families are understanding and understand the procedure, but if they don't understand the procedure, it's hard to say why you have to be there until 3 or 4 o'clock in the morning. "They adjourned four hours ago. Why does it take you so long to get home?" So there's a strain on a family.

Bennett: Did that create an issue with your attachés? Did it make it difficult to find people to fill positions?

M. Dini: I don't believe it did. Now the secretaries didn't have to stay that late, but in those days, they stayed as long as we were in session. But it affected the families in that it went on and on. We worked weekends, and we worked holidays, like Mother's Day and Easter. There were times that I can remember working on those days. And yes, that affects the family. But it gets in your blood, and almost all of them, if they can, want to come back. They love it. Either they like it, or they don't like it and they say they'll never come back.

Bennett: What was it that you enjoyed the most about the process?

M. Dini: I think it was the camaraderie, and I think it was the pressure. I also think it was the excitement and all the friends I made. You're in a world of your own; you don't know there's an

outside world. You have to be careful of that with your family because it's just all-encompassing. If somebody calls or you see somebody on the street and ask, "What have you been doing lately?" you think, "Don't you know the Legislature's in session?" It's amazing to find out how many people aren't even aware of what's going on. Or people would call me and say, "We'd love to come down sometime. Is there any way we can come down and watch some of the proceedings?" And I'd tell them, "This is your building. You can come to any of the committee meetings; you can come to the floor sessions; you can come to anything."

Bennett: What sorts of interaction did you have with the press? Did the press contact the Chief Clerk much?

M. Dini: Yes, especially in the older days. When we'd adjourn for the day, the stanchions were moved, the doors were opened, and they came in to the desk. They'd look through the bills because we had the original bills before they were printed. They'd look through those, and they'd ask us questions about things. Really, we became pretty good friends, and it was the same with the lobbyists. Then in the new building, they gradually cut it back, and they had the ruling that no one—no lobbyist or the press—could come on the floor during

sessions. So then they would come in after sessions. Finally, it got to the point where they couldn't come on the floor at all. We did miss that; we really missed that.

Bennett: That is quite a change.

M. Dini: Yes. Because we sat at the desk. We didn't have an office. That's where we had our lunch; that's where we worked. We were there all the time until the last few years when they remodeled the building. Then we did have a room in back of my office where we could go and take our lunch and do some of our work.

Bennett: So in the old Assembly Chambers, was there a counter in front of the Speaker similar to what is in the new building?

M. Dini: Yes, but much smaller. Much smaller. The History Clerk had a desk down on the floor over at the left, and the press had a table on the right. They were on the floor then. But they had to stay in their press area. I think that just the Journal Clerk, the Minute Clerk, the assistant, and the Chief Clerk were on the desk. It was basically the same.

Bennett: Was there any involvement in Third House?

M. Dini: We didn't take part in it, no. We'd usually go, and they might come and ask us questions while they were writing it and tell us a little bit about what they were doing.

Bennett: That would be the press?

M. Dini: Yes, because it was always put on by the press. If I remember correctly, there was only one year, while I was there, when they didn't have Third House. It would be very interesting. It was funny. Sometimes they went a little too far, but what they were talking about was all true. It was fun.

Bennett: What are some of your fondest memories of your career with the Legislature?

M. Dini: My friendships. Of course, one of my fondest memories was my last session when Speaker Dini asked me to go to dinner.

Bennett: That was during session?

M. Dini: That was during the session. I don't know whether I should tell the story of that or not. Is that wrong?

Bennett: I don't think so. [chuckles]

M. Dini: We had a fun courtship—we really did. I had been widowed several years before, and then Joe had been widowed. He really was lonesome. Betty Day had been his secretary for a long time, and so she told him that he should take somebody to dinner, he should get out. He said he didn't know who to take, and she said, "Well, why don't you ask Mouryne." He said he might. Then she asked me if I would go if he asked because she said she didn't want to push

Purported to have started by Mark Twain when he was a reporter covering Nevada's Territorial Legislature, Third House has typically been written and performed by members of the press near the end of the regular legislative session to poke fun at the people and issues of that session. It was a traditional part of Nevada's twentieth century legislative process and usually consisted of a series of skits, although in 1923 it consisted of an epic poem written by staff.

it. I said, “Certainly.” But nothing was said, and he’d come in in the morning and she’d say, “Did you ask Mouryne to dinner?” “Well, not yet.” A couple of days later: “Did you ask Mouryne to dinner?” “No, not yet.” So then one morning, he came in and she said [chuckles], “Joe, you’re only asking her to go to dinner. You’re not asking her to go to bed with you.” [laughs]

I’d usually wait until 5 o’clock when everybody was gone, and then I’d go in to the Speaker’s office and go over any questions I had or the next day’s business. So I went in this one night, and we went over everything. He was sitting there at his desk and before I left, he said, “I’ve got a deal for you.” I said, “Oh, what’s that?” and he said, “How about going to dinner?” I said, “Okay, fine. When?” “Tonight.” I said, “Oh, all right,” and he said, “I’ll meet you at Adele’s at 7 o’clock.” And that’s what we did. I drove my car down; he drove his car down; we had dinner; I went home in my car; and he went home in his car. [chuckles]

But we did have a good time because nobody knew that we were dating at all. We weren’t dating a lot—maybe every two or three weeks, we’d go to dinner. Then one of our lobbyists had a 92nd birthday over at the Ormsby House, and they had invited all the

In 1977, Paul and Adele Abowd opened Adele’s Restaurant and Lounge in Carson City. It has been a popular legislative gathering place for over 30 years.

legislators, all the lobbyists, all the staff, and everyone over to this party. Joe asked if I'd like to go with him, and I said, "Sure." That was the first time we had really a public appearance, and when we went to work the next day, it was like a fire that had gone through the whole building—"Did you know that Joe is dating Mouryne?" [chuckles]

The only ones who did were our little pages; they said they weren't surprised. The reason for that is that was the split house, and so one day Joe would be presiding. The next day he would be sitting at his desk in the front row, and he'd send a note to me, which was not at all unusual for the Speaker and the Chief Clerk to send notes back and forth. He'd send this note, and pretty soon I'd write and send one back. The pages were just sitting there watching all this, and they knew that there was a little more note passing. One time, they saw him wink at me, [chuckles] and so they said that they had known it all the time.

But it was fun. It was a lot of fun. Everybody was so nice to us. We went to some of the dances—the year-end dances—and it was really a fun courtship.

Bennett: Then you were married not long after that?

M. Dini: We were married in October. The session was over on July 3 at 1:20 a.m. I didn't officially

retire until September, and then we were married in October.

Joe Dini and Mouryne Landing married on October 21, 1995.

Bennett: Looking back at your career from starting in 1965 as a spontaneous secretary to your retirement in 1995, how had the Assembly changed during that time period?

M. Dini: Oh, it had changed a great deal. Mainly the technology had changed, but also the camaraderie and the way the legislators would work together. They were elected on a party basis, but once they were elected, they were serving Nevada. I think that's changed. The first session I worked, there were 37 Assemblymen and 17 Senators. Every county had a Senator, and every county had at least one Assemblyman. That's been a big change.

Now it's all in the South, and the South has total control. So there's been a big change there, and I don't think that they have the fun that they used to have—even the staff doesn't. It used to be that the secretaries and the bill clerks were all in one big room, and they became really close friends. We'd have parties, and we'd just have good times. Maybe they still do that, but now every legislator has a secretary in his or her office, so the staff doesn't have that much contact with each other. Some of the legislators have two and three secretaries. I just don't think that the same warmth is there that

we had, but I guess we're all prejudiced to our own times.

Bennett: When did the secretarial pool go away?

M. Dini: Now let's see, we had it in 1973, and we had it in 1975. I don't think it actually went completely away until all of the legislators had offices large enough to each have a secretary. **[Later, Mrs. Dini elaborated:** We still had a small secretarial pool in 1995, but most of the secretaries were housed in the office with the legislator for whom they worked. It was a gradual process, changing as the building was remodeled.]

Of all the years I was there, I've never known one interim when there wasn't some remodeling, so when it had been remodeled to the point where each legislator had a secretary sitting there who could answer the phone, there was no need to have a pool.

Bennett: Before that, though, wasn't there a telephone center?

M. Dini: We had a telephone center.

Bennett: Were you in charge of that as well?

M. Dini: It started in the back of my office, and I was in charge of it at that time. **[Later, Mrs. Dini explained:** Then it was decided that since they served both the Senate and the Assembly, the message center and the Public Bill Room

should be under the Legislative Counsel Bureau.]

Bennett: So your staff consisted of the secretaries, the bill clerks, sergeant-at-arms, and not necessarily the phone message group?

M. Dini: No, no. They didn't have the phone message group at first. The phone messages would go into the secretarial pool, but then they got the phone message group, which worked a lot better.

Bennett: Thank you very much for your time this afternoon.

M. Dini: Oh, you're welcome. Thank you.

Bennett: It's been great.

M. Dini: It's brought back lots of memories.

Bennett: Oh, good. I'm glad.

After the interview, Mrs. Dini provided the following description of other experiences during her tenure as Chief Clerk:

I will always be grateful to the Legislature for allowing me to be an active member of the American Society of Legislative Clerks and Secretaries (ASLCS) and the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL), two organizations that allowed me to meet with and learn from my counterparts throughout the United States and Canada. I served as President of ASLCS in 1990; served along with 15 other Clerks and Secretaries on the first *Mason's Manual* Revision Committee after Paul

Mason had given the copyright to NCSL; and served on the NCSL Executive Committee. I was invited by the European Exchange Association to be one of ten Clerks and Secretaries to visit the Netherlands, Belgium, and France to meet with government and business officials, including NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization), to exchange ideas and create a better understanding of each other. I was also included in a group of seven legislators and two staff members from across the nation that visited several Parliaments and businesses in Germany. These are experiences I would never had had were it not for the Legislature. Incidentally, the travel abroad was not at the expense of the State of Nevada!

INDEX

- Abowd, Adele, 36
- Abowd, Paul, 36
- Adele's Restaurant and Lounge, 36
- American Society of Legislative Clerks and Secretaries, 40
 - President, 40
- Armstrong, Leola H., 17-18
- Ashworth, Keith (Assembly, Speaker of Assembly; Senate, Senate President Pro Tem), 3, 8, 13, 14, 19-20
- ASLCS. *See* American Society of Legislative Clerks and Secretaries
- Assembly, 8, 15, 16, 17, 30, 34, 38, 39
 - split house, 14, 22-24
- Assembly Chief Clerk, 3, 4, 7, 8, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16-18, 24, 27-28, 33, 34, 37
 - Assistant Chief Clerk, 34
 - election of Chief Clerk, 15
 - full-time position, 16, 17
 - half-time position, 15
 - officer of the body, 15
 - relationship with floor leaders, 24
 - Republican, 14
 - working three hours after daily session and *sine die*, 6-8, 20-21
- Assembly Committees, 1
 - Banking, Insurance, and Corporations, 2
 - Government Affairs, 1
 - Judiciary, 1
 - Legislative Affairs, 23
 - Legislative Functions, 4, 9
 - Ways and Means, 1
- Assembly History*, 6, 12, 13, 31
- Assembly Floor Leaders, 24, 26
 - Majority Leader, 24, 26
 - Minority Leader, 24, 26
- Assembly, Journal of the*, 3, 5-6, 12, 13, 16, 21, 31
- Assembly, Speaker of the, 3, 8, 9, 13, 14, 15, 19-20, 22, 34, 36, 37
 - changed Speakers every session, 14
 - Co-Speaker, 14, 22
 - first female Speaker, 24
 - Speaker Pro Tem, 15
- Assembly staff, 37, 38
 - assistant sergeant-at-arms, 29-30
 - attaché pool, 2
 - attachés, 3, 4, 9, 11, 32

- bill clerks, 3, 10, 40
- history clerk, 6, 34
- Journal* clerk, 1, 4-6, 34
- minute clerk, 5-7, 21, 34
- pages, 37
- parliamentarian, 7, 12, 13
- phone message group, 40
- public bill room clerks, 10, 38
- secretarial pool, 2, 10, 39, 40
- secretaries, 1, 3, 10, 32, 38, 39, 40
- security, 25-26
- Sergeant-at-Arms, 4, 10, 29-30, 40
- size of staff, 10
- Assembly Standing Rules, 23

- Bar of the Assembly, 3
- Belgium, 41
- bills, processing of, 27-29
 - amend and do pass, 29
 - do pass, 29
 - forms filled out to record Assembly actions, 5
 - General File, 29
 - introduction and first reading by Chief Clerk, 28-29
 - order of business, 22
 - reading of bills on floor by Chief Clerk, 27-29
 - second reading by Chief Clerk, 29
- Bilyeu, Byron “Bill” (Assembly, Speaker of Assembly), 14
- Buckley, Barbara E. (Assembly, Speaker of Assembly), 23-24

- Capitol Building, 1, 2, 3
 - Assembly Chambers in, 3, 5, 10, 34
 - Little Rotunda of, 2, 3
- Changes in Assembly over time, 38-39
 - blackboards, 29-30
 - camaraderie, 38
 - computerization of, 30
 - electronic boards, 30
 - electronic voting, 30
 - technology in, 31, 38
- Close, Melvin D., Jr. (Assembly; Senate, Senate President Pro Tem), 19
- conference committee, 18
- Constitution, Nevada, 12, 13, 14, 28, 31
- courtship with Joe Dini, 35-37

- daily schedules of staff, 32

dances, year-end, 37
Day, Betty, 35-36
Democratic seats challenged in split house, 23-24
Democrats, 8, 22-23
Dictaphone, 7
Dini, Joseph E., Jr. "Joe" (Assembly, Speaker of Assembly), 13, 14, 20, 21-22, 25
divided session. *See* Assembly, split house
dress code, 11

Easter, 32
effective legislators, qualities of, 26-27
European Exchange Association, 41
Evans, Jan (Assembly), 23

family, effect of being Chief Clerk on, 31-32, 33
first session, 1
fondest memories of serving, 32, 35-36
France, 41
friendships, 35

gavel-throwing incident, 21-22, 25
Germany, 41
Getto, Virgil M. (Assembly, Senate), 21-22
Gibson, James I. (Assembly, Senate), 16
Giunchigliani, Christina R. "Chris" (Assembly), 23

Hatch, Pat, 10-11
helmet bill, override of, 25
Hettrick, Lynn C. (Assembly, Co-Speaker of Assembly), 14, 22
Hurst, Nathan "Nate," 4, 7-8, 30

Jacobsen, Lawrence E. "Jake" (Assembly, Speaker of Assembly; Senate, Senate President Pro Tem), 19

LCB. *See* Legislative Counsel Bureau
Legislative Building, 19
Legislative Counsel Bureau, 12, 16, 39-40
 Deputy Director, 12
 Director, 16-17
 Legal Division, 12
 Public Bill Room, 39-40
Legislative sessions, length of, 25-26
lobbyists, 3, 33-34, 37
Loy, Theresa "Terry," 8

marriage to Joe Dini, 37-38

Mason, Paul, 40-41

Mason's Manual of Legislative Procedure, 12-13, 15, 23

Mason's Manual Revision Committee, 40

May, Paul W., Jr. (Assembly, Speaker of Assembly), 20

Mello, Donald Ray (Assembly, Senate), 9

Miller, Dean "Diamond Tooth," 29-30

minutes of meetings, 2

Moore, Carol, 12, 25

Mother's Day, 32

National Conference of State Legislatures, 40

 receives copyright to *Mason's Manual*, 41

NATO. *See* North Atlantic Treaty Organization

NCSL. *See* National Conference of State Legislatures

Netherlands, 41

Nevada Democrat, the, 29

Nevada Legislature Oral History Project, 22

Nevada Revised Statutes, 13

Nevada, State of, 38, 41

North Atlantic Treaty Organization, 41

O'Callaghan, Donal N. "Mike" (Governor), 25

offices, 2, 3, 38, 39

old Capitol Building. *See* Capitol Building

Olsen, Arthur H. "Art" (Assembly), 2

Ormsby House, 36-37

Palmer, Arthur J., 16

parliamentary authority. *See* *Mason's Manual*

patronage jobs, 4

Planned Parenthood of Washoe County, 8

prepared statements on floor, 26

press, the, 33-35

Printing Office, State of Nevada, 6, 16

proceedings, open to public, 33

protocol for attachés, 11

public attendance, 32

public bill room, 39

recording machine, 7, 21

Republican Party, 14

Republicans, 8, 14, 22-24

Senate, 3, 16, 17, 30, 39

 Secretary of the, 16, 17, 18

Senate attachés, 3
Senate, Journal of the, 12
Senators, 38
shorthand, 2, 5, 21
sine die, 7, 21
Southern Nevada, power and control of Legislature, 38
split house. *See* Assembly, split house
Springmeyer, J. E. “Jeff,” 12
Swackhamer, William Delaney (Assembly, Speaker of Assembly; Secretary of State), 19

telephone center, 39
telephone in Assembly Chambers, 17-18
Territorial Legislature of Nevada, 35
Third House, 34-35
Thomas, Janice L., 18
Twain, Mark, 35
Tyson, Geraldine B. “Gerry” (Assembly), 4
Tyson, L. E. “Ty” (Assembly), 4

Vergiels, John M. “Jack” (Assembly, Speaker of Assembly; Senate), 16, 20

Women
 Attachés, 11
 Legislators, 11

RELEASE FORM
ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Nevada Legislative Counsel Bureau

I, Mouryne (Landing) Dini hereby authorize Get Consensus, L.L.C. to
(Interviewee) (Interviewer)

record my oral history for purposes of the Oral History Project of the Nevada Legislature conducted by Get Consensus pursuant to an Agreement between the Legislative Counsel Bureau (LCB) and Get Consensus, L.L.C., signed on January 10, 2008. I understand that the purpose of the Oral History Project is to collect digital audio tapes or video tapes, or both, and written transcripts of my interview. In addition, I understand that I may provide to the interviewer selected related documentary materials, including, without limitation, photographs, manuscripts and other memorabilia. I understand that the audio tapes, video tapes and written transcripts will be deposited and archived in the permanent collections of the Research Library of the LCB or transferred by the LCB to an appropriate entity within the State of Nevada for permanent storage as determined necessary by the LCB. I further understand that any documentary materials provided by me may, as determined necessary by the LCB, be deposited and archived in the permanent collections of the Research Library of the LCB, transferred by the LCB to an appropriate entity within the State of Nevada for permanent storage, or returned to me.

The audio tapes, video tapes, written transcripts and documentary materials produced as a result of my interview, may be used for research, scholarly and educational purposes and may be used by the Nevada Legislature and the LCB in public educational presentations, including, without limitation, books, audio or video documentaries, slide-tape presentations, exhibits, articles or presentations on the Internet or successor technologies. I agree that the LCB may use the audio tapes, video tapes, written transcripts and documentary materials produced as a result

of my interview to compile the Oral History Project of the Nevada Legislature and that such compilation may be made available for sale by the LCB. I further agree that the LCB may use my name, video or photographic image or likeness, statements, performance and voice reproduction, or other sound effects, for purposes relating to the Oral History Project without further approval on my part. I understand that when the material is used, proper acknowledgment regarding my contribution to the Oral History Project will be made.

By giving permission, I understand that I do not give up any copyright or performance rights that I may hold and that this permission does not preclude any use that I may want to make of the content of the information contained in these recordings. I do not give permission for my oral history and related materials to be used for purposes other than as specified in this Release Form without further written permission.

I herein warrant that I have not granted exclusive use of my oral history or related documentary materials to any other person. The only conditions which I place on the use of my oral history and related materials are as follows:

Mousumi B. Pandey Dini 5-23-09
Signature of Interviewee Date

Address: 104 N. Mt. View (775) 463-2669
Yerington, NV 89449 Phone Number

NEVADA LEGISLATURE ORAL HISTORY PROJECT
Biographical Information Form

Full Name: Mouryne Burton (Landing) Dini

Date of Birth: February 28, 1928 **Place of Birth:** Salt Lake City, Utah

Parents: Cloma Taylor Burton & Ralph Shipley Burton

Date of arrival in Nevada (If not native born) December, 1963

Spouse name and date of Marriage): (Delbert T. Landing, November 1947); Joseph E Dini, Jr., 10-21-1995

Children: Sheryl Diane Seaman and Lisa Mouryne Menath

Religious affiliation: Protestant (Methodist)

Education: Degree from Henagar-Stephens College of Business, Salt Lake City Utah

Military Service: N/A

Occupation(s) while working the Legislature (please include years of service): 30 yrs. Service with LCB: 1965 Committee Secretary; 1967 Assembly Journal Clerk; 1969 thru 1971 Asst. Chief Clerk; 1973 through 1995 Chief Clerk.

Activities and hobbies while working at the Legislature: Member of American Society of Legislative Clerks & Secretaries (ASLCS); served as President in 2000, served in all other ASLCS executive offices while working through the line; member of the first ASLCS committee to revise

Mason's Manual of Legislative Procedures; served as a member of the NCSL Executive Committee; chosen to participate in a national legislative tour of northern Germany.

Occupations, activities, and hobbies after leaving the Legislature:

Married Speaker Joseph E. Dini, Jr. (now Nevada's only Speaker Emeritus)

Worthy Matron of the Order of the Eastern Star.

Active member of P.E.O. (philanthropical Education Organization)

Active church member.

Personal and professional achievements: _____

Recipient of Nevada Assembly Wall of Distinction Award – 2007

Other information:

Two daughters, five grandchildren, 3 great grandchildren.



ABOUT THE PROJECT TEAM

Get Consensus, LLC, is owned by Dale Erquiaga who serves as the project's manager and conducted some of the interviews. Dale is a native Nevadan with an extensive background in Nevada politics, having served as Director of the Nevada Department of Cultural Affairs and Chief Deputy Secretary of State. With both Nevada and Arizona clients, Get Consensus is based in Phoenix.

Dana Bennett is the project's leader and has conducted most of the interviews. Currently a PhD candidate in public history at Arizona State University with a particular interest in the women who served in the Nevada Legislature between 1919 and 1960, she has also conducted oral histories with former Arizona legislators. Prior to returning to school, she was part of the Nevada legislative process for many years.

Gwen Clancy is the project's award-winning videographer. Based in Reno, she hosts and produces the documentary series, "Exploring Nevada," which is seen on local TV throughout the state.

Jean Stoess transcribed and indexed the interviews. A long-time Reno resident, Jean is familiar with Nevada politics in both elected and appointed capacities and has indexed several Nevada history works.