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ARNALDO FERRARO

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NASH: I am speaking with Arnaldo Ferraro who came to the United States in 1961 at the age of twenty-three. Today Mr. Ferraro is running for State Assemblyman of the 49th Assembly District in Brooklyn. Mr. Ferraro, where did you come from in Italy?

FERRARO: I was born in a little town in the Province of Catania, in Macouchia in the Province of Catania in Sicily, and I stayed there for a little while and then I traveled all around in Italy due to the fact that my father was employed with the government, the Italian government, and

we had to go in all different parts of the country, so I know Italy very well, and also Europe because in later years of my, you know, when I was a little older, I went around, I went to different countries in Europe, all over Europe.

NASH: How big a family did you have?

FERRARO: I come from a very large family. I am the youngest of seven children.

NASH: Could you describe what the town looked like?

FERRARO: My native town, I can say very little about my town because, like I said, I was born there, but then I had to, you know, my parents took me with them when we moved away and, believe it or not, the only opportunity that I had to see my town, my native town, was just before I came here in this country because I needed a certain certificate that I had to give to the American Consulate in Sicily and so I had to go to the town of birth, where I was born, in order to obtain the document that I needed. And I stayed there only for a few hours and I saw the town

finally where I was born. I don't remember much about it.

NASH: Where did you get your education?

FERRARO: My education was mainly in Italy, and I completed all my secondary education and I started law at the University of Catania. Then I came here and I had to start all over again. I went to college, I graduated from college and so forth and so on.

NASH: Well, what were some of the reasons that you decided to  
come to the United States?

FERRARO: Well, to be very honest with you, I never had intention to come to the United States due to many reasons. My family is not a family of immigrants in general, so to speak. Being that I was the youngest, you know, usually we say in Italy that the youngest children are those that make more trouble for the family, but I never made any trouble actually, but the fact was that I wanted to discover new ways of life. And when I finished my law school I decided to learn another kind of philosophy of law, and the only one that was different could have been

the American law because in Europe most of the law is based on the Roman law which I know very well. So I wanted to discover something different. My brother, who is already a lawyer, who was a lawyer before me, and I was working with him, he didn't want at all that I would leave the country and so forth. It just happened that in that particular time I met my wife who was vacationing in Italy. She is an American-born, and she went there to visit some relatives because my wife is also of Italian origin, and we met so you know the way these things go and I decided to come over here also. So see now I had two reasons, to study and to see my future wife.

NASH: So at that time you really didn't have any idea of immigrating. How did your family feel when you left?

FERRARO: Like I said, most of my family was against the idea because for anybody who is familiar with the way of life in Italy, they know that a person that graduates from college or from a university and he is lucky enough to have already some members of the family in that particular field, he is already well set. You know, actually I didn't need anything anymore in terms of

financial security, career and things like that. So actually my family was very much against my leaving the country and going to any other place. Not only the United States in particular, any other place. I could have settled over there and I could have stayed, but like I said, I always have my own ideas. I am a little independent in that particular respect and against, I would say, the wishes of my family, I left. But, of course, there was no real trouble, you know. When I came here, of course, I got married and I went to school and everything like that. Now I think that I belong in the American society just about like anybody else.

NASH: What were your first impressions like? Do you remember the first day that you arrived?

FERRARO: Oh, yes. I remember very well. As a matter of fact, I came by plane with an airplane from Alitalia, of course. But I was very much disappointed with Alitalia, allowed to say one thing because, you know, many people, especially immigrants, travel with Italian Company perhaps because they feel more at ease because of the language. By the way, I didn't know and English at all. I never

studied English over there. I studied all the foreign languages. But everybody, all the personnel on board, they were speaking English and so we could hardly understand each other. I figured well, I might as well travel with another company from now on. But I understand now that things have changed. They have Italian personnel traveling on the airplane. So when I came here what I was impressed mostly was the magnitude of things here in the United States, very big. The airport itself, it is very impressive. It was at the time. Nowadays, of course, I get used to the idea. But most of all, the famous skyscrapers or whatever they are called, which we call (?) in Italian, and they are very, very impressive. The view, you know, that you have of New York when you fly above it. It is magnificent. And, of course, the Statue of Liberty, which is the symbol. Yes, I was looking for it. It is the symbol of freedom and democracy in the world. It is for everybody.

NASH: Had you studied about the Statue of Liberty in school?

FERRARO: Yes. I would like to say in this respect that a person that is a well-educated person in Italy, he knows

just about as much as any American student about any kind of history and civilization because we do study a large program of world civilization, in very detail, I would say. I knew about American history long before I came here in this country.

As a matter of fact, I know a few things that perhaps some people don't know, I will say, yes.

NASH: Did you see the Statue of Liberty from the air?

FERRARO: I will say this. Yes, I saw it, I saw it, but, of course, it was a very small statue. As a matter of fact, I could hardly identify. But my first thing that I did, the first thing that I did was to go to Liberty Island and visit the Statue, which is very, very impressive.

NASH: Where did you go the day you arrived?

FERRARO: The day I arrived, of course, I landed at that time, was Idlewild in the national airport, and I had my wife, relatives waiting for me there, and I went with them, yes. I had no other relatives in the United States. I was the first one to come here.

NASH: So, where did they live?

FERRARO: They live right here in Brooklyn in this district. I have settled in this district, in the 49th Assembly District, and I consider this my second place of origin. As a matter of fact, one of the campaign issues with my opponent is just that, that he has lived here all of his life, and I answered back to him by saying I have lived here all my second life. So actually, we have nothing that is different between the two of us.

NASH: Did you find a lot of similarities when you first lived here, between, I guess it is an Italian neighborhood?

FERRARO: I would say this. It all depends what you mean by similarities. I would like to clarify that point and the word to. I believe that in every society and in every country there is nothing that can be different from another society because wherever you have civilization and democracy, there is always the same kind of life. The only difference that you can see is, for example, the way of living, you know, habits, tradition, customs. Now, like you said, you very well indicated that this is an Italian area, this immediate area where we are right now, but it is a very integrated area in terms of other ethnic groups, which is the right thing to have,

actually. Mostly, of course, it is Italian Bensonhurst, this is Bensonhurst where we are right now. As we know, it is the largest ethnic community of Italian background. Then we go to Bayridge, the so-called Bayridge, which is a few blacks now, and we have the Irish group, Norwegian, Scandinavian, Germans, you know, which is very good. And then if we go a little further this way here, Borough Park, we have the Jewish population. So, as you can see, it is pretty well white, you know, mostly it is white population.

NASH:           When you first got here were you kind of surprised to find such an Italian neighborhood?

FERRARO: No, I wasn't surprised to find an Italian neighborhood. Instead, I was surprised about something else, and I don't want to sound, really, I don't want to sound prejudice or anything, when I got off the plane at Kennedy Airport and I saw all the blacks and Puerto Ricans and so forth, I really felt a little strange. You see, where I come from is so close to Africa, you know, that you can see the people, the black people and so forth, but I had never seen a black person in all my life I could say. But over here you'll find any person and, of course, it is very good to have this kind and I would like to see, you know, that this people will be considered just like human beings and their rights will be respected, not as belong to a group or another, but just as americans and as active and productive members of any given community.

NASH: In what ways did you find Italian Americans different from Italians in Italy?

FERRARO: Well, in many ways. This was really another surprise for me. Of course, you have to realize that the immigrants that we had, the Italian immigrants through the years have changed image and so forth. I would say that the first wave of immigrants from Italy was a completely different one. I am writing a book, as a matter of fact, on this, which is called The Young Italians, where I point out the similarities and differences between the two groups of the old immigrants and the new immigrants, whereas the old immigrants were people with no, mostly I would say, by and large, of course, with no educational background, very clannish people, you know, that like to get together in their own groups and they created the little ghettos, you know, little Italy and so forth and so on, but very productive people, people that, being that they had no skills, the only thing available for them was manual labor, and which they did. They did very well. Most of the greatest buildings, constructions, highways, bridges, hospitals, and schools and so forth, they were

built mostly by the Italian immigrants of that time, so they contributed what they could at the time under the circumstances, and I think they did a good job. But nowadays the immigration it is a little different. Nowadays you have people with college degrees, with educational backgrounds, with experience, with skills, and so forth, and I would not be surprised to see an Italian immigrant that just gets off the boat the way to, so to speak, that he is hired by a big company and so forth. As a matter of fact, I do have many friends that, because of their talents, they are in charge of agencies, and even government agencies, public services and so forth, which is in a way, and I am talking in terms of immigrants, not American born of Italian origin, Italian immigrants, which is an indication that, of course, you know, with the changes of times, change all the configuration of the immigration, the qualities of immigration has increased, has become better, but not in terms--you see, I don't want to discriminate or be prejudiced against the first immigrants. No, they did what they could under the circumstances and under their own skills and preparations.

But nowadays it is different. We mingle with the other groups in a better way. There is a better understanding

with the other groups.

NASH: What were the first jobs that you had and how did you find them when you first came here?

FERRARO: That is another experience per se. Of course, like I told you, I didn't know English when I first came here, not even a word. Not that I know English better now, but I had to go through the employment agencies and, of course, employment agencies, people that run this agency, they are all Americans and they always speak English. So I went to one of them and I asked for a job, you know. I got through to him. And he said, so he looked at me and he said, "Alright, I have a job for you." Of course, I couldn't quite understand what he was saying, but I understood that he said, yes, you know, and the normal words that anybody understands. So he gave me some papers to fill out which I did, you know, because actually filling out papers, it is very easy even though you don't know the language. But more or less the information that they require is the same thing. So he sets up the appointment with the office where I had to go to and when I was ready to leave the agency, I was on my way to the

other place, the telephone rang, the man at the desk picked up the phone and he spoke some words which at that time, you know, I could not understand, and I was there waiting very politely I could say, you know, waiting for him to tell me what it was all about because he signalled for me to wait, so I figured it was about me. So he closed the phone and with a very long and sorry kind of face he told me, "I'm sorry, no job for you." So I figured, well, I have to wait for another opportunity. And he said, "No. no, the job is still open, but it is not for you." I said, "Perhaps I don't meet the qualifications," and he said, "Yes, you don't meet the qualifications because they are looking for somebody who speaks Italian." So I said, "Well, I think I do." I said, "After all, I was born there and I have an education." You know, I was trying, I was fighting for my life. And he said, "Yes, I understand that, but you come from Sicily so you don't speak fluent in Italian," which right away gave me a picture of the ignorance of the man. Of course, not only him, but also the other person that was requesting a certain qualification. Of course, I don't speak fluent in Italian. There is no such thing as fluent in Italian. You can ask me to speak Sicilian

dialect, which I do, I was born in Sicily, but the language I speak is Italian and all Italians speak Italian, which is the official language of the country. It is like asking you, "Do you speak English with a southern accent or with a northern accent," and so forth.

And you may say, "No, I don't speak English with a southern accent, I speak English from New York," or wherever you were born. So I said, "There is no such thing as Florentine Italian. It is another dialect." I had a very hard time to try to make him understand that.

Nevertheless, I was so disappointed that I walked out of the place. I didn't even want to listen to his--first of all, I couldn't understand him, what he was saying, so I left. I left and I was passing by a big building, you know, that I saw over there, and I walked in. I don't want to mention the name of the company, but I walked in and saw in the directory in the main lobby, I saw Personnel. So I went up to the 23rd floor, wherever it was, and a nice girl came over to me and said, "May I help you?" and so forth. So I said, "I am looking for a job," you know, in my broken English. She said, "Alright, sit there," and she gave me some papers to fill out, which I did. Then they put me in a little room with a, you know,

an alarm clock or something or other. They gave me a test actually. Now I know that that was a test, but at that time I couldn't actually realize I had to fill out certain papers and answer certain questions in a certain given time, which I did, and believe it or not, after I gave back the papers, not only this same girl but somebody else, another person, came over and she said, "Alright you are hired. You can start tomorrow." And I was working for this insurance company. I worked for them for three years, the time for me to go to school and graduate from college and then eventually I started a new profession.

NASH: How much had you looked before you got that job?

FERRARO: Not that much really. I was one of the lucky ones because I was very confident that a person that has some education cannot be wrong. He has to know something. The only thing I don't know how to do is manual labor because I never done it and I don't know how I would be reacting if I would be faced to do that kind od work. But as far as any other kind of work in an office, you know, in any place in a company, working for an industry and so forth, I think I would be able, I would have been able at that

time. Of course, I would be able now to do it.

NASH: At what point did you decide that you wanted to enter school?

FERRARO: Oh, that was my first thing, from the first day I was here in this country. As a matter of fact, the second day I was here I went to New York, to New York University, the American Language Institute of the Foreign Student Center, and right away I applied to go to school. That was another experience. As I go in the office, of course, I had somebody with me who spoke English, and the two of them were talking, you know. Of course, the other person was telling the professor or whoever he was in charge of the department what was my situation and so forth, so he insisted that he had to give me a test to place me in the right test. I couldn't quite understand at that time, why they would give a test when I am telling them that I don't know anything about English, so put me at the very elementary, the beginning, because I want to learn from the beginning. He said, "No, I am sorry. We have to give you." He was right though. He proved to right because, of course, you see when we argue with something out of

knowledge, we argue only by the way things look to us, but we don't know because those people have experience with it. And that professor was very much right. As a matter of fact, they didn't put me in the very beginning of English because they said that my educational background and my knowledge of Latin was so high, which it is, Latin is my second language I would say, that I had an excellent understanding of the written language, the English language. The spoken language is a different story, of course, but the written language, I could read very well and understand it because the way the words are spelled, of course, as you know, more than 50 percent of the English words come from Latin, and my background is very good in that field. So I never had actually any problem as far as the written language is concerned. I am having problems with the spoken language. And so actually I was accepted there. I took one course at NYU. It was an intensive course for foreign students which I passed at the end. As a matter of fact, my friend and myself, we were the two highest in the school. I'll have to say that because I take pride in something like this, really, because it is your own accomplishment, you see. I am not a showoff kind of person, but I take pride in things that

you are able to do by yourself. And believe me, all my life has been like that. Whatever I have accomplished in my life is an accomplishment that I have done with my own possibilities or limited abilities, whatever I have, in which I am proud of.

NASH: How did you find the difference between a law school in America and a law school in Italy?

FERRARO: Well, this is something that deserves to be considered very deeply, of course, because the different philosophical principle that is involved here as far as systems of law is concerned. You see the Italian law and most of the European law is based on Roman law. Of course, you know, that the Romans were the masters of law. They invented the law, as a matter of fact, so to speak, or at least they collify the law, the Justinian was the greatest one, the first one that ever put the law all together in a big body to digest or so-called digest. But the philosophy of law in Italy and in Europe, of course, whoever has the Roman law, is that like the Roman's used to say, "(?)," no matter how strict the law is, it is still the law and it has to be respected. You just don't fight the law. You try to change it through democratic process, but you don't defy the law. Whereas her

in the United States, there is another idea. Many people think they are above the law, and we have corruption, some corruption. Corruption you have in the entire world. I am not saying that corruption exists only in the United States. You have it all over the world, but over here with the possibilities, perhaps we have too much democracy here where people are too free. You know, it is not good to abuse rights. Rights are very good. They have to be provided for in any constitution, but when you have too much of something--you see, the only factor you define as too much, you know, too much is no good either. But anyway, over here the philosophy is that you are innocent until proven guilty. Now in Italy it is the opposite. You are guilty until proven innocent, which in a way brings to the point the function of the lawyer, the attorney. You see, an Italian attorney actually has the responsibility to protect the interests of his client in such a way that it is up to him now to prove that his client is innocent. Over here instead, he just has to keep the image of his client the way it is. If he succeeds in doing that, he is innocent already because that is what the law says. Very fascinating parts of the law over here. For example, the entire labor law over here, it is very good, very well organized. The corporation laws very good because, you see, I am talking now about things that are specific of this country. And, of course, this country has developed such a

beautiful, interesting body of laws for that particular corporation.

The corporation is an invention of the American people, there is no question about. So the law has to be adapted to a particular field.

Labor, you know, with all the unions and things, so I will say there are very good aspects. The first book that I wrote, it is a matter of fact, was The American System of Government as Compared to the Italian Government in terms of constitution, you know, the American constitution, the American government, etc., etc. So that was a very good experience I had.

NASH: Did you encounter any discrimination in the time that you have been here?

FERRARO: This is a very sad subject. What could I say? The only aspect of discrimination that I found was more on the prejudice side more than discrimination per se, and in view of that, even though prejudice is a little stronger than discrimination because you may discriminate against one person for many reasons, but when you discriminate against one person only on your prejudice against that particular group of people, then it is worse. But you see, in a way it is better though because prejudice applies only to an individual, to individuals. Discrimination applies to a group of people. Prejudice comes from one individual towards a group of people. So it is better to have--it is better not to have anything at all--but if we are to

face this problem, it is better to deal with one individual because the person who is prejudiced is an ignorant person. There is no question about it.

It is just a person that doesn't want to accept influence from other groups.

I have always said this, and this is the other book I am writing about, The Young Italian, it also explores this problem of prejudice and discrimination.

A person that is prejudice, just like I said, doesn't want to expose himself to the influence of other groups. Now whether the influence is good or bad is still to be determined, but it is completely out of ignorance that a person doesn't want to expose himself. If the world would have been like that, we would still be in the prehistoric era or age. So we should keep on moving and trying to understand other people, other habits and customs, and traditions. Only through that then we would be able to have a better idea, a better understanding, and perhaps the things that we think that are not good would appear to us, at least we would give a logical explanation to why other people act or do things in a different way than ours.

NASH:           What were the main misconceptions that you encountered from people who were not Italian about Italians?

FERRARO:       Well, very little. I have to say that because like I say again, those people that were talking to me, even though they might have been prejudiced or they had a little idea of discriminating against me, they always

considered the fact that I was not just anybody, you know, from the street. I had my own education, my culture and so forth which made me a little bit less to be discriminated against than anybody else. So my experience is related to this kind of--as I was saying, when I went to school I was in this English class all day long, of course, with all the other foreign students, and there were students that came from all over the world. Ant race or ethnic group you mention, you have it. And I was eager to learn because I knew that it was only through learning the customs, the language and everything of this country, I would have had an opportunity to become an active member of the community, which I have always bee, and for me would have been like dying if I would not have been able to participate in what society is all about. And I was sitting there eager to learn and I was learning a lot because the classes were conducted in English, so the very first two or three weeks and nobody understood a thing of what was going on, but that is a good way. As a matter of fact, I have to commend NYU for that. They have an excellent course for whoever wants to learn English. So I was there in that class and this particular professor that we had, our instructor that we had at that time who, by

the way, now is a very good friend of mine. We are colleagues as to speak. He never asked me or another friend of mine, the only two Italians in the class, any question, you know, the way it seems in the classroom. He was asking questions, "Did you understand this," or "give me an example. say something," to other people, but to us, never anything. So I figure this way. Either he thinks that we understand everything that we are brilliant, that we understand everything, we don't need to be checked upon or he thinks the opposite. Whatever it is, it is bad because I want to find out by myself for sure whether I am a dummy or a person that can understand things. And at the fourth week my friend and I, we couldn't take it any longer, and at one of the breaks between classes we called the instructor aside, and with our barbarian English that we were speaking at the time, we made him understand that we were in that class to learn, not just to waste any time. It was costing us a lot of money to go there, we were sacrificing ourselves, we were not working because it was an all-day affair, a full-time course, and we were entitled to learn it just like anybody else. Now in order for us, it was not for him. You see, my approach to the problem was not that I was asking him to do me a favor,

no. I was doing him a favor because he was there to serve me. That is the way my idea of a public servant is all about, which implies anybody, anybody that is doing a job and is paid for that particular job, that person is there to serve you, not you to do them a favor. So this is my attitude, and I may sound aloft by saying that, but I believe in that. When I am doing my job, I am there to serve the people, whatever job I am doing because I get paid for that particular job. If I do it on a volunteer basis, then it is a different story, but I don't think that nowadays we have too many volunteers for things, which is shame by the way. But anyway, so in a very polite but strong way we made him understand that we would have liked to have some questions also, which he did. From then on he did, and we were very pleased. He was very pleased. And we understood that there was something, some of his experience in the past that gave him the idea of doing that with us, but he was wrong and he admitted it. He is an intelligent man. This man was intelligent and he still is. As a matter of fact, now he is much higher than when he was before and I know him very, very well. We are very good friends. We call each other on the phone every once in a while and he is in charge of a

certain department, I don't want to mention, of course.

NASH: I what ways has your being an immigrant affected your,  
well the whole idea that you are campaigning for office?

FERRARO: Well, this is again something that I would like to strongly urge, every immigrant to become actively involved in the problems of the community in which they live. An elected public official represents the community. I don't urge everybody to become a candidate for office, but to be involved. I never had in my mind, at least due to the circumstances, to run for office. I'll tell you a little bit about--when I was in Italy I was involved in politics and I have been involved in politics since the age of ten because I always liked to work with people, to understand problems and so forth. As a matter of fact, my friends in Italy, they used to call me the uncle, (?), in Italian they say. And those that understand Italian, you know, to be called like that is an indication of respect in a way because it is a person that knows a little bit more than the average. But you know why? Not because I am smarter than them, but because my friends were all older people, so I learned from the

experience of those people before the same age group that I belonged to. And I was involved in politics. As a matter of fact, I left my town with the nomination to run for mayor of my town at the age of twenty-three. I would have been the youngest mayor in Italy perhaps if I had stayed there because the election was just coming. And when I came here I already had in mind that my coming here, besides an improvement for myself should have meant an improvement of the community, of the ethnic group at least, that I belonged to. And I started to organize groups. I founded many organizations in the United States. First small groups such as the Association (?) Americans (?) Edria.

NASH: What does Edria mean?

FERRARO: Edria is a Greek name. It is Edros, which means order. And it is the old name of a town in Italy from which I come lately. I was not born there, but I lived in that town, so the people that came from that town over here, some of them knew me when I was over there. They asked me to organize this club for them which I did and I was the president of that association, the founder and

president for many years, for three years. Then I went, I moved over to other organization and I have been president, past president of other groups. What is amazing in this respect is that I have been president of organizations, of people who come from a certain town in Italy where I wasn't even born in there. And this is a great indication because usually Italians, you know, they group themselves together according to the town of origin.

But I have been even president of certain groups that I wasn't even born in that town. Of course, I was born only in one town, right? But there is no such group. I have never met anybody that comes, that came from the same town. And then I went over to bigger organizations. This here, where we are right now, is the headquarters of the National Federation of Italian American Societies Incorporated, and this organization, I will give you some brochures later on about the aims and objectives of the organization, was founded in 1964. It is one of the first, I would say the first, as a matter of fact, if you excluded the Sons of Italy, the oldest Italian organization, the first organization that was organized with the specific purpose of putting together all the Italian groups in one big family. Because, you see, I

believe in Americanism. I believe that once we are here and we become American citizens, we are Americans, and much more so, if you don't mind my saying, I will say that I am a better American than the average American. I will have to say that because I am American by choice, not just by the way of a chance of birth. I wanted to become an American, which should be appreciated by those people that were just merely born here, just because their parents or their grandparents at one time, they decided to migrate and come over here. But anyway, they are Americans too. But to group all this together and have a strong community, ethnic group, which could be heard and could participate in the activities of the society, the American society, and try to make them better American citizens, let them become citizens first, registered to vote, and explain to them their rights and their obligations and everything, actually be part, active part of this country.

And then after that we founded also the National Italian Committee for Political Action, which is the very first state-wide, nation-wide committee that will organize eventually all the Italians in a political group without specific party affiliation, but in a political body which will endorse and support candidates, independently from

their background, ethnic background, but on their merits. We will suggest, we will indicate, point out certain people to be endorsed and to be helped and supported by the groups. So as you can see, my activities here have been many since the very first day I was here in this country. I have always been involved in community activities. Then in 1969 I was approached by certain political leaders of the areas and I was asked whether I had an interest in running for office, and I was so much surprised, to say the least, that these people would come to me. Who am I, I'm only an immigrant. I had been there at that time only eight years, I had been here in the country. From 1961 to '69 is eight years. I said, how could you be an immigrant for eight years, and being asked to run for office. But I did accept them. If anything else, for the experience that I would have been exposed to. And I did, but, of course, I was faced with a primary at that time and I didn't know all the gimmicks, you know, of a political campaign in this country and so forth because I had never been involved here, and I lost the primary against the other opponent. We gave a good fight, but we lost and two years later I was again given the designation to run again for the Assembly. This time I

had a primary again against the so-called regular organization, and we scored such a big victory, which was picked up by the local press and everything like that, unbelievable that an independent candidate, you know, could score such a big victory against the regular organization, and we did and we went on to the general election. Unfortunately though, we see the factions in the political party here were and still are in a way a little bit difficult to be settled. You know, the misunderstandings or the conflicts of interest and so forth, and besides, two years ago was not the right year for any Democrat to run for office except in certain specific areas. This area is a highly conservative area, so McGovern didn't actually stand a chance. And even though we did succeed in increasing the voting power of the Democratic Party here, as I won over all the other candidates whether in office or not in office, running in this district, yet we were not able to upset the opponent's power. But the indication that we gave were so good that after now, this time, I was endorsed by all the political factions, Democratic factions, in the area. As a matter of fact, I don't have a primary, and this has been the first time in the history of the Democratic Party

in this district, which gives me an excellent chance to be elected for public office. By the way, I met another person that I understand that you have interviewed before, Mike Pesha. I met him a long time ago when he still was in college and I met him in certain events. We were involved with the Congress of Italian American Organizations, which is called Ciao, of which I am a charter member, and since then we have developed certain interests together. We are very good friends and very close friends. We worked together in many issues, as a matter of fact.

NASH: You have been a lawyer? Is that your occupation?

FERRARO: No. I don't practice the profession because since when I first came here, when I went to college I graduated from college and I had a teaching license, so since then I have been involved in teaching and I have been and I have been teaching college and high school, and that is my profession now. I am a teacher because I'm, you know, now it seems to me that it is my second occupation where I have dedicated most of my time since when I came here and I have already developed all the skills, you know, and

equipment that is necessary for that particular job, and I like to do that. I like to work with people. As a matter of fact, when I was teaching at Queens College, I had developed a very high degree of rapport between myself and the students over there. I like to work with college students because this generation nowadays, they need to be understood and they also need to understand. And I believe that I am lucky because I am in a situation where I am not too old not to understand them and I am not too young not to understand the older people, so the middle of the road I would say. And I am in a very good situation.

I can understand one and the other so I can work and be like a, what could I say, a mediator, between these two groups, and I succeeded and I used to have a great rapport with my students.

NASH: Okay, well thank you very much.

