



Thanks to the extraordinary commitment and expertise of AHLA leaders, the American Health Lawyers Association continues to thrive and serve as the essential health law resource in the nation. The Association's strong foundation reflects a history that is vibrant, meaningful and worth sharing. Finding a way to preserve AHLA's history was especially relevant in light of the Association's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, which was celebrated throughout 2017.

This transcript reflects a conversation between AHLA leaders that was conducted via audio interview as part of the Association's History Project. More than 60 of AHLA's Fellows and Past Presidents were interviewed. A video documentary was also prepared and debuted on June 26 during AHLA's 2017 Annual Meeting in San Francisco, CA.

**March 1, 2017**

**JD Epstein interviewing Jim Roosevelt:**

JD: I'm JD Epstein. I'm counsel to Greer, Herz, and Adams. And it's my pleasure to interview for this project, James Roosevelt. Jim, would you please introduce yourself?

Jim: Yes, I'm Jim Roosevelt, counsel at Verrill Dana in Boston. And, I am pleased to be joining in this interview.

JD: It is my pleasure, and to really be able to interview Jim, who's not only been a long time leader in the Health Law Bar, but also he's been highly involved in health care itself as a CEO of a very prestigious institution. I have one historical comment to make. Over a hundred years ago, there was a guy named Roosevelt who introduced, or tried, the first universal healthcare in the United States. It was Teddy Roosevelt when he ran for president in 1912. I think Jim, has probably tried to carry that mantle in terms of universal coverage for Americans, as well.

So with that little short intro, Jim, why don't you give us a little bit of your career, both in and outside the private and public sectors.

Jim: Well, that's a very nice introduction, JD And it is certainly true that it has been a real privilege for me to be involved in health care in a variety of ways during this period of health care policy being such a major national focus. It's true, that every president, beginning with my great-great uncle Teddy, has tried to have national health care legislation. And we've seen incremental pieces with Medicare and Medicaid under Lyndon Johnson and many other attempts. But during this period, the opportunity to be involved in health care in the United States, when it has finally been adopted as national policy that access to health care for all Americans is recognized, that has been a real privilege.

I began practicing, what was then called Hospital Law, in the late 70's and early 1980's. And really became deeply involved in the field, representing hospitals, got my education in the intricacies of Hospital Law, which we then later on started calling health care law, to the predecessor, to the American Health Lawyers Association, the American Society of Hospital Attorneys. I remained in private practice of health care law until 1998, when I joined the Clinton administration as Associate Commissioner of Social Security for Retirement Policy. Which, is the strategic planning arm of the social security administration. I spent about a year and a half at the Social Security Administration and then became general counsel of Tufts Health Plan.

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Tufts Health Plan, at that point, was a one million member health plan in Massachusetts. I spent five and a half years as general counsel at which point the board asked me to become CEO. At this point, Tufts Health Plan was in need of a turn around, with membership having declined to about 587 thousand. I'm pleased to say that by the time I completed being CEO ten and a half years later, we were back over a million members. We were in the states of New Hampshire and Rhode Island, as well as Massachusetts for our operations. And we had not only commercial members, but also the largest Medicare Advantage plan in New England and the second largest Medicaid managed care organization in Massachusetts.

I've continued to be involved as a consultant to Tufts Health Plan since I left that office as CEO in January of 2016. But as of January 2017, I've also become counsel to the Verrill Dana law firm in their Boston office, working on matters with their other offices, who are based in Portland and other cities, as well.

JD: I know Jim, that you and I have been friends and colleagues for well over 40 years, back to the days of the American Society. And I know that you always felt the importance, and maybe you could just talk a little bit about the importance of the American Society, and then the academy. And finally, the AHLA, in terms of its programs, education, etc.

Jim: Well, for me, the society and then the academy and then the American Health Lawyers Association, really gave me the opportunity to, relatively quickly, learn some of specialized areas of practice within health law. And I think, AHCA great educational opportunities provided by this organization and its predecessors, it would have been much more difficult to really become a full time practitioner in the area. As opposed to, what I was at the AHCA, a litigator with some hospital cases.

The combination of first attending courses, and then presenting and writing materials for sessions and publications of the organization, really is the opportunity to develop in depth knowledge beyond the specifics of a particular matter. So, for me, it's been very important, and the continued strength and growth of the membership of the organizations, I think is a testimony that my experience is not unique.

JD: I know Jim, that you have been involved in the last few years in the Public Interest Sector of AHLA and maybe you could spend a minute or two talking about that as well?

Jim: Well, when I was on the board and when I had the privilege of serving as president, promoting our public interest motion, was of a particular goal of mine. And, I think the response from the organization as a whole has gone stronger and stronger. Initially, while we were always of course, committed to public interest, the resources devoted to it were relatively limited. However, even in those days, we conducted some, I think, very valuable colloquium on important topics. Like, how fraud and abuse legislation was enforced and many other areas of interest.

I think now, with more dedicated staffing, as well as great volunteer participation, public interest has become a very critical part of what is most valuable about health lawyers and what gives our members, I think, a feeling that they are not just hypothetically signing up for education, but are involved in a real joint effort for the promotion of health in America together.

JD: I think that's so well stated. I appreciate that. And I just don't want to close this without giving you an opportunity ... I know they were limiting us to 8 to 10 minutes, and I think we've

probably taken that, but I would give you the opportunity if you've got something you'd like to add to our conversation or add to maybe what you look down the future a little bit, you know I leave it a very open question for you.

Jim: Thanks JD and I would just comment, that in addition to advising clients, both hospitals and health plans, as well as other health care organizations on specific matters, I've had the great privilege of serving on the boards of the Hospital and Health Plan Trade Associations. And getting closer to health care policy issues. And I think while health lawyers is not only nonpartisan but multi-dimensional because our members represent all segments of the health care industry. I think that there is an important role for health care advocacy for health lawyers, carried out through the public interest function and also through educational programs that make clear things such as what are actual objective analysis of various programs for access to health care on both federal and state levels. I think there are new opportunities for health lawyers there. While I've enjoyed all the other ways I've continued to be involved, I'd love to be part of that effort as well.

JD: I can't think of anyone better to be part of that effort, as again, as an old friend and a colleague for so many years, I think you very much for taking this amount of time Jim. And I know AHILA appreciates it very much.

Jim: Thanks and I appreciate the great comfort that you give somebody in doing an interview like this. As you say, we've known each other for decades and you have a way of just making it comfortable to do this. So thanks very much JD