

*From the Oral History of*  
**WILLIAM H. ROSENTHAL**

As a member of the California State Assembly, William H. Rosenthal (1907–1991) initiated and carried to passage the bill to create the UCLA School of Law in 1947. He later served for many years as a judge of the Superior Court.<sup>1</sup>

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BERNARD GALM (UCLA ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEWER): Judge Rosenthal, we're really going to be speaking about the legislation that you introduced to establish the law school at UCLA, but I would like to begin by asking you to state how you arrived in the California Legislature in the first place. What was your background prior to becoming an assemblyman?



WILLIAM H. ROSENTHAL  
*Courtesy California State Library,  
 Sacramento, California*

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<sup>1</sup> For further information, see the Editor-in-Chief's introduction on page 1 of this volume: 11 CAL. LEGAL HIST. 1 (2016).

ROSENTHAL: I was working for the city attorney's office in Los Angeles under Ray Chesebro, the city attorney at that time. I was appointed to that job in 1937. Prior to that I had been working as a practicing lawyer for three or four years. I was appointed at that time to become a trial lawyer, and I was earning the munificent sum of \$105 a month, which was a lot of money at the time. I worked from 1937 in the city attorney's office until 1942, when I decided to run for the vacancy of the State Assembly in my district, referred to as the Fortieth Assembly District, a district in which my brother, Judge Ben Rosenthal, left to be appointed by Governor [Culbert] Olson to the Municipal Court. With that vacancy I kind of decided that I should run for the Assembly, since I was somewhat politically inclined. Politics runs in our family. Both my brothers were in politics. And so I decided to run for the vacancy, which I did. After a very difficult contest I finally won by approximately six hundred votes. I started serving in 1943 at Sacramento.

The first term while I was there I was just a novice and naturally had to learn how to get around. I introduced many pieces of legislation but nothing of any particular note. The second term around I had no opposition at the polls, and I had no opposition for the next five terms, so that I was reelected without opposition, which was very helpful.

In 1945 I introduced a bill on behalf of the UCLA law school because I felt the need for boys and girls who didn't have enough money to go to 'SC [University of Southern California] or some of the other colleges at the time, as Stanford or even up to Boalt Hall [University of California, Berkeley], couldn't drive that far. So I decided it was time to have a law school in Los Angeles County near the major part of the population. I introduced it in 1945, and again being a novice, I didn't know just how difficult it would be. I didn't realize that California was the place where the law schools were maintained. California at Berkeley had all the money and dispersed it in their own way. I didn't realize, of course, that I was bucking a large organization. The bill died in committee. And again, I didn't know why, but I was young and a novice.

GALM: Now, when would you have introduced that bill? In '45?

ROSENTHAL: In 1945. I would say in January, probably, yes.

GALM: And then to what committee would that have been submitted?

ROSENTHAL: To the education committee [Committee on Education].

GALM: I see. Let me ask just one other question: What comprised your district that you represented?

ROSENTHAL: It was the Eastside, commonly referred to as Boyle Heights area, East Los Angeles. A poor district, composed of primarily Jewish people, Mexican people, Negroes, and many, many Asiatics. It was a conglomerate of different ethnic groups.

GALM: And how long had your brother served as assemblyman from that district?

ROSENTHAL: My brother Ben had served there for three terms.

GALM: So, the Rosenthal name was pretty established there?

ROSENTHAL: It was pretty much established, I would think. Nonetheless, I had a very difficult battle the first time, because I ran against the incumbent newspaperman who had access to the newspaper every day, and of course I had nothing.

GALM: Is this a Boyle Heights newspaper?

ROSENTHAL: I think it was called *Eastside Sun* if I remember correctly.

GALM: Who was he?

ROSENTHAL: He was Al Waxman. And incidentally, his nephew is now a congressman from the Fairfax area.

GALM: Henry Waxman?

ROSENTHAL: Henry Waxman. A very interesting observation. But nonetheless, I did win. I then ran as a member of the city attorney's office where I had served for three years or four years. In those days we didn't spend much money like we do today. I think the most I probably spent was \$250, only because that's all I could get — some loaned to me by my brothers, some loaned to me by friends, and very little that you could raise. There wasn't that much interest in politics. I would estimate I spent probably about \$250 in the whole campaign.

Then, as I say, I introduced the bill, and when I lost it in 1945, I re-introduced it in 1947. I introduced it as Assembly Bill No. 1361, introduced [in] the California Legislature, Fifty-Seventh (General) Session. It was numbered 1361. It was introduced by myself as the main author. Assemblyman Vincent Thomas; Vernon Kilpatrick; Glenn Anderson, who is now the congressman from that area and former lieutenant governor and, of course,

former assemblyman (we were very good friends); Augustus Hawkins, who is still a congressman from that area; Elwyn Bennett, who was the judge and retired; Ernie [Ernest] Debs, who was a supervisor and retired; Willard Huyck, I think he's in the savings and loan; Assemblyman [Alfred W.] Robertson was from the Santa Barbara area, I don't know whether he's still alive or not; and a most interesting name is last, Laughlin Waters, who is a member of the UCLA alumni. So, primarily it was only Los Angeles County members, except for Robertson, who was at Santa Barbara. It was introduced at that time: "An act to provide for a law school at the University of California at Los Angeles, and to make an appropriation therefor."

GALM: Now would these same men have supported the bill in 1945, or would it not have gotten that far?

ROSENTHAL: No, it didn't go far at all. I was told by the lobbyist for UC Berkeley — I shouldn't use the term lobbyist, they were representatives of the university, and, of course, it was a great university — he told me I was too provincial and that we had no right to ask for a law school in Los Angeles County. And I told him we pay half the taxes and we have half the population. I think it's time that the poor kids would have a chance to go to a law school sponsored by the state.

GALM: Why don't we also mention — what was your legal background, your legal education?

ROSENTHAL: I was a graduate of Southwestern University, where I attended law school for a period of five years, from, like, '28 to '34, almost six years. Of course, understand I couldn't go all the time, I had to drop out because of lack of money, lack of jobs: those were the Depression years. It took me almost five to six years to finish my course. So that was my legal background as far as education was concerned. I had worked for lawyers' offices during that time. I remember those days when I earned eight dollars a week working for a law office, taking papers to the courthouse, and then making additional sums of money from serving papers and things of that nature. That's all I can tell you about that.

GALM: Were you born in the Los Angeles area?

ROSENTHAL: I was born in New York City in 1907, October the third, moved to California in 1920. I'm almost a native son, I would say. I've spent [the] most part of my life in [the] Los Angeles area.

GALM: What brought you to California?

ROSENTHAL: My mother's health. She [Rachel Handler Rosenthal] was an asthmatic. We had to move out here to help her health. First, we moved down to San Diego, and that didn't agree with her. Then, she moved to Tucson, and that didn't agree with her, and we wound up in Los Angeles. It was a family of nine people, seven children — four brothers and three sisters. My two older brothers, Judge Ben Rosenthal and Samuel A. Rosenthal, both lawyers, have passed on. I still have one younger brother living in Palm Springs, named David, and three sisters [Bertha, Rhea, Mildred] in Los Angeles. My oldest sister [Bertha] just turned eighty-three today. So, I called her last night to wish her good health. And I've lived here all that time.

GALM: Was Boyle Heights in transition at that time in the late forties, or did that come later?

ROSENTHAL: No, that came later when they started highway roads, the bridges and everything. They dissected Boyle Heights. Most of those people moved over to Fairfax in that area. I left in '53. My term expired in 1953, after five [two-year terms] in the Assembly. The place was pretty well built over and under. Right now, I think it's primarily of Spanish and Negro, or Black, population.

GALM: Now, at that time, you say it was still a rather mixed ethnic [population] but predominantly Jewish.

ROSENTHAL: Oh yes, predominantly Jewish, a lot of Hispanics, Negroes, Asians. The reason that I remember the various ethnic groups is because while I was running for election the first term, I had to eat at every type of ethnic group. I had Russian food, I had Japanese food, and Chinese food, and of course Hispanic food, and Jewish food. So I say I had plenty to eat, and I ate my way through that campaign in the homes of these various ethnic groups. It was a polyglot, a metropolitan group of people in that area at that time.

GALM: Had you come from a similar area in New York City?

ROSENTHAL: I was born in Brownsville. I don't remember much about it. I left when I was about twelve years old. It was a tenement house, poor, respectable. I can't remember now. I would say most of them were of Jewish origin at that time.

GALM: Had you tried to approach, in deciding to put forward the bill, had you approached any UCLA people or university people to gain their support, or gain their interest in it, see what the interest might be?

ROSENTHAL: I'm sorry that I didn't do that, but I didn't contact anyone. I remember vaguely that I asked Joe E. Brown, the comedian, to come up to speak for me, because he was a UCLA loyalist at the time. He did come up, and he entertained and spoke, but that was, I think in 1945, rather than in 1947. But it was to no avail and it didn't pass.

GALM: Do you recall who might have been representing the Westside at that time?

ROSENTHAL: Phil Davis was the representative at that time. It probably would have been better if he had introduced the bill, but he didn't so I did it.

GALM: After introducing it in 1945, did anyone approach you from the university or from the alumni association?

ROSENTHAL: I'm sorry to say that no one did. I don't know why to this day. The only thing I can account for is the fact that I didn't live in the area, that I came from the Eastside, so to speak, and was not the representative for the Westwood area. Now, I think that is the reason, but I don't really know. I don't think partisan politics had any play because this wasn't a partisan bill. As a matter of fact, we took it up in the Los Angeles County delegation composed of Democrats and Republicans, and everyone in the delegation that I remember supported the bill. No one gave me any opposition. So, it was not partisan, since there were more Republicans than Democrats at the time. I remember we were about forty Democrats and — we were closer to twenty and sixty: twenty Democrats and sixty Republicans. So there was a time when the Republicans were in charge, and they were then of course in charge. But unfortunately I didn't contact anyone at the school and perhaps I should have, but I didn't know anyone so I didn't.

GALM: It just seems like it would have been a natural move for them, since you indicated the interest to spearhead it, for them to respond in some way.

ROSENTHAL: I think perhaps that they had something else on their mind. They were concerned with their medical school. I think that was also introduced either at the same time, in '47 or in 1951. I spoke to Davis about it on different occasions, but I got no response from him because I

think he was primarily concerned with the medical school, of which I was also a coauthor.

GALM: At this time would you have had any contact with the Regents of the University of California or with President [Robert Gordon] Sproul about the —

ROSENTHAL: No, nothing from any one of them that I can remember, except the lobbyist for UC at Berkeley, who told me that we were provincial in our request and we shouldn't ask for it.

GALM: What about USC, the University of Southern California law school? That, of course, was the law school in the South.

ROSENTHAL: That's right. At that time it was the only one, practically, outside of Loyola, I think, that was a daytime school. I heard nothing from them either.

GALM: Did you ever sense that there might be resistance upon their part to have a new public law school?

ROSENTHAL: No, I didn't have any of that feeling at all. I think the main objection came from the North, from Berkeley, and of course they wanted to have control. I can't blame them for that. But never did I feel any resistance from anyone.

GALM: Were there a lot of legislators that were USC lawyers in [their] background at that time?

ROSENTHAL: There may have been, but I really don't know. Laughlin Waters attended UCLA, and he gave me all the support that he could. But each one of us had our own little number of bills, and we were just interested in those things ourselves. So when I had the law school [bill], someone else had something else; Phil Davis, I think, at that time had the hospital. They were concerned about their own legislation, and I was concerned about this because I believed in it, and I wanted to have it. I realized that it was going to be a tough battle, because at that time the Senate consisted of forty senators, and still does, but we only had one senator for all of Los Angeles County. Just think, half the population was represented with one senator, and thirty-nine senators for all the rest of the state. Well, you know, I anticipated a fight over there because the North, again, would not give anything to the South if they could avoid it. Senator Jack Tenney was the lone senator

up from L.A. I expected his support if I ever got over to the Senate side. But no opposition from anybody except the North. Even San Diego and San Bernardino opposed it at the time, I remember that. They didn't want the law school in L.A. They would have preferred it in San Diego or probably in San Bernardino. So that was the opposition. It was a local-pride thing. But never any opposition from UCLA, never any opposition from USC or Loyola or any of the schools, not even from Southwestern, my alma mater, so to speak. So no one really opposed it; it was just a matter of getting it through by having the number of votes.

GALM: At this time, was there any discussion about where the law school should be located, other than its affiliation with UCLA? Whether it would be a downtown law school? Or what did you envision that it would be?

ROSENTHAL: No, I didn't get that far in my thinking. I just wanted it to be under the UCLA auspices. I knew that they had enough land out there to justify it, and I knew once it was decreed that UCLA should have one, they would provide space for it.

GALM: Do you feel that you probably thought of it as being on the Westwood campus?

ROSENTHAL: That's right. That was my thought at the time. And probably a night school downtown, as USC had for a while; Loyola had that for a while, a night law school for the downtown citizenry, so to speak, who couldn't afford to go to day school. I probably envisioned that at the time, realizing that Westwood was still a far piece from metropolitan downtown. But my prime motive was to get the law school for UCLA. The other problems would come up afterwards.

GALM: So then, how did the struggle develop?

ROSENTHAL: Well, in 1947 I introduced the bill, as indicated, in the latter part of January. In March it was referred at that time to the education committee. I was a member of the education committee both times. I don't know why, but I was. I observed that there was a bill in for Hastings law school at San Francisco, that they were asking \$1,600,000 for an addition to Hastings College. At the time, I wasn't quite sure that they were even part of the state system. I was unaware of that. I've since learned, of course, many years ago that they were part of the state system. It occurred



to me that one sure way of getting my bill through was to take the Hastings bill and introduce it into mine, and then I would get the North behind me. The North was interested in Hastings because it was a prominent law school. Boalt Hall was there, of course, but Hastings was the one that had the bill in.

So, I amended the Hastings bill into my bill. It was amended in the Assembly June 2. Now I introduced my bill originally on January 29, but it wasn't until June that I discovered the request by Hastings University. I amended that school request for \$1,600,000 into my bill. I've indicated here the total sum of \$2,400,000 "to be expended by the Regents of the University of California to provide and equip adequate buildings for law schools for the use of Hastings College of the Law in the City and County of San Francisco and for the use of a law school or college to be maintained as a unit of the University of California at Los Angeles." And so I had my \$1,000,000 request, and they had their \$1,600,000. It was all computed into \$2,400,000.

Then I took the bill and amended it in committee, and it went through, of course. The North didn't want to jeopardize Hastings College. The Senate, most of them being from the North, wouldn't jeopardize Hastings College, and many of them were graduates of Hastings College. So they didn't want to jeopardize their bill, so they carried mine along with it. Or I carried theirs along, whichever way you want to do it.

The bill then went out of the Assembly, successfully, both Hastings' and UCLA's new building. It went over to the Senate side. They all wondered why I had them both together, and I said that's probably the only way that I could get my bill through. The senators were old friends of mine, and they passed it. It went down to the governor's desk.

GALM: Was there any resistance in passing it in the Senate?

ROSENTHAL: No. They didn't want to [resist] because they wanted the Hastings bill.

GALM: Had this been a tactic that had been used before by any legislator as far as the university was concerned, you know, tying an appropriation to an appropriation for Berkeley?

ROSENTHAL: It was common practice but not insofar as the college was concerned.

GALM: So there wasn't any real precedent that you were aware of?

ROSENTHAL: No. It was a practice. You could amend any bill, you can tie into any bill, you can add to it as they do now in Congress and in the Legislature very, very openly. It was the farm bill that was just amended into some other bill, as you know, and they both were vetoed by the president.

GALM: Ethiopian aid, I believe.

ROSENTHAL: Yes, yes. So that one dies, and both died because they're tied in. It's got to be something that was acceptable to the bill itself. It couldn't be different. Now, the Congress was different entirely, but [in] our laws then it had to be something that was in some way connected with the original bill to which you attached your bill.

And so it went through the Senate, went through the Assembly of course, went to the governor's desk. Then, of course, I was sitting and waiting. I was worried about what the governor would do, since he was from the North, Governor Earl Warren. I thought perhaps he would adopt the philosophy of the North that we weren't entitled to a law school. I think about a week or two had elapsed, and I got a call from his office, asking me to come up. I, of course, went up. The governor calls, you usually go. He was a very fine man, Governor Earl Warren. We visited for a little while, and then he said, "Bill" — he addressed me as Bill, you don't say Assemblyman Rosenthal — Bill — we were friendly — "I've got your bill here in which you've got Hastings College of Law and UCLA law school, and I don't feel that I can give each one the attention that it needs. I don't know whether yours is a good bill or Hastings' is a good bill, or if one is bad, or the other is bad. I'd like to be able to exercise my own judgment on each bill individually." Of course, I thought I would never be able to get my bill through the Senate, or even through the Assembly, because the North predominated, as well as the counties outside of L.A. Of course, that was my purpose, primarily, of putting them together, to get support from the North. So, he said, "Bill, I'm going to send this bill back to the Assembly." Which, of course, left me feeling very, very badly at the time.

I said, "Governor, of course you have to do whatever you think is right." He said, "I'd like you to try it again." Which was fair because he could have vetoed the whole thing and left us both out in the cold, but then, of course, it would have hurt Hastings. As I indicated, what President Reagan did:

He vetoed the bill and killed the Ethiopian thing. It went back to the Assembly and returned for reconsideration. Before that happened, I amended out the Hastings portion of my bill. I believe I did that on June 20. “An act to provide adequate law school facility” — instead of facilities — “for the University of California, and to make an appropriation therefor. Then, it was my bill entirely. We eliminated the Hastings College of the Law, and we just put in the amount we wanted — \$1,000,000 to be expended for the UCLA law school. I was concerned about that because I didn’t know how they would react to it.

Well, I had acquired some political knowledge at the time, and I realized the only way I would accomplish what I set out to do would be to put out my bill from the education committee first. I passed it, and I put it out on the Assembly floor. Then, I proceeded to get a vote on it. And I was asked, “Where is the Hastings bill, where’s the Hastings bill?” I said, “As soon as my bill passes here, I assure you that the Hasting bill will come out of the committee.” Of course, I was trusted . . . and they passed my bill in the Assembly.

The same thing happened over in the Senate. I went over there to speak on it, and again they asked, “Where’s the Hastings bill?” And I said, “I will bring out that bill just as soon as this one passes the Senate.” They understood of course, I believe. They passed my bill, and it went to the governor’s desk. Then, I hurried back to the Assembly committee, and I got the Hastings bill out. And something I never have understood is, what happened to the author of the Hastings bill? I don’t know yet who was the author. There was never any complaint by anyone that I had misused them or anything like that. No one objected, no one did anything. So, then I took the Hastings bill, and ran it through the Assembly, and ran it through the Senate, and up to the governor’s desk. I got my request for an appropriation of \$1,000,000 from the finance committee, and that requires a two-thirds vote. We got it in both houses, and both of them, then, sat on the governor’s desk.

Then, I was concerned as to whether or not the governor would play politics with the North against the South and possibly sign the Hastings bill, and not the UCLA bill. I think about another week or two had elapsed, or something of that nature, and I got a call: “Come on up, Bill, I’m signing your bill. We ought to have some pictures taken.”

I found a little cutout from one of the legal journals [*Los Angeles Daily Journal*], where it says, “The Rosenthal bill (A.B. 1361) now on Governor Warren’s desk provides for a law school at the University of California at Los Angeles. An appropriation of \$1,000,000 is provided for in the bill to secure buildings and facilities for the law school. Assemblyman Rosenthal said” — and I’m reading from this article — “yesterday that a large library has already been donated for the law school by former Senator Clark.” Off the record, I don’t know who Senator Clark is at this time. I can’t remember. He wasn’t of the California Senate because we only had one, Senator Tenney. So, he must have been either a U.S. senator, and I can’t remember anyone by the name of Clark at this time. [Senator William Andrews Clark] Continuing: “He added that a building, with the exception of a few alterations, is now available for the law school; said that if the Governor signs this bill, in all probability the law school will be open in time for enrollment at the fall semester in September.”



GOVERNOR EARL WARREN SIGNS A.B. 1361, JULY 18, 1947, PROVIDING \$1,000,000 FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF A LAW SCHOOL AT UCLA. STANDING (L.-R.): ASSEMBLYMEN ELWYN BENNETT, WILLIAM ROSENTHAL, RALPH DILLS, AND JULIAN BECK, AND STATE SENATOR JACK TENNEY.

GALM: How did you determine the size of the appropriation, the \$1,000,000?

ROSENTHAL: I figured that was the most I'd be able to get. [laughter] I figured let's get enough for a tent, if necessary, and then we can always add to it. Of course, at this time I'm sure we're getting probably \$20,000,000 a year from the state, probably more. I don't know exactly, but I'm sure it's a very large appropriation for the school, including the law school, and medical school, and so forth.

GALM: Do you recall whether there were any public hearings connected with this bill as to whether a law school might be needed in the South?

ROSENTHAL: I don't remember any. It was just in committee, and of course in the committee we had a majority of Southern Californians, and so all I just said is we need a law school at the University of California at Los Angeles for the many, many young men and women who would like to attend a state university. And of course, the committee passed it and brought it on the Assembly floor.

GALM: So, as far as you know, was this based on your own recognition of the need, rather than as a result of some study that might have been done to, say —

ROSENTHAL: I hate to say that's true, but it is true. And I don't want to claim all the credit because it took forty-one members to pass it in the Assembly, and fifty-four to get the appropriation, and in the Senate as well. But I was most interested probably. There must have been a lot of interest at the time, but apparently I took it upon myself to push it along. But it took a lot of votes to do it and a lot of moral support, and the Los Angeles contingent gave me all the support that I needed. But very little opposition outside of the North and the one bit of opposition from the University of California at Berkeley, who indicated that it was not needed, provincial, and so forth, small-town stuff. So that's how it came about.

GALM: That's how it came about. Do you recall, once it was passed and it was signed by the governor, did you have any contact with UC people after that?

ROSENTHAL: Not very much. Not very much. It just passed, and I understand that they had a building almost in 1951; they started the law school.

They had some facilities in — well, let me check back a little back now. They had a groundbreaking. I don't know when that was.

GALM: Nineteen fifty-one was —

ROSENTHAL: Nineteen fifty-one. It was a groundbreaking at the University of California at Los Angeles. [Lieutenant] Governor Goody [Goodwin] Knight called me and asked me if I would like to come out to the groundbreaking. I said, "I would like to very much." So, Judge Julian Beck — former Assemblyman Julian Beck — joined us in [Lt.] Governor Knight's car. We all drove out to UCLA, where they had, I think, a tent, and —

GALM: Now, that groundbreaking would have been earlier. The building itself was occupied in '51, so probably —

ROSENTHAL: It must have been a little earlier than that.

GALM: Probably '49.

ROSENTHAL: Probably '49 or '50. Anyway, it was after the session was over. So, it may have been sometime in September or October. And we met in this large tent. Assemblyman Phil Davis was the master of ceremonies. I remember that everyone was introduced. [Lt.] Governor Goodwin Knight was introduced. Then he got up, [Lt.] Governor Goodwin Knight, and said, "I'd like to introduce to you the author of the creation of this law school." And he said, "I'm proud to introduce Assemblyman Bill Rosenthal, to my right," and I got up of course and sat down. Then he introduced Judge Julian Beck. Then the meeting continued. I remember one thing that I don't even want to discuss about it, so I won't.

GALM: I have a photograph of that [groundbreaking] event. It took place on February 15, 1950.

ROSENTHAL: Nineteen fifty. That's interesting.

GALM: I assume that that's what you're referring to.

ROSENTHAL: Dean [L. Dale] Coffman, I think, was the first dean. That's right.

GALM: Right, Dale Coffman.

ROSENTHAL: Where did you get this?

GALM: That's out of the history of UCLA, [*UCLA on the Move*].

GALM: Were you ever on the campus during the building phase of the law school? Or when did you return to the law school again?

ROSENTHAL: My only time was when I received this plaque by the present dean [Susan Westerberg Prager], which was given to me on September 24, 1983, when I was presented with the plaque: "Honorable William Rosenthal, With the appreciation for his efforts in sponsoring the legislation which created the UCLA School of Law." It's a very beautiful plaque, about an inch wide [thick], perhaps six inches long and three inches wide, in Lucite. It was given to me by Dean Prager, who is now the dean of the law school. I spoke out there at the afternoon meeting of the [law school] alumni. It was presented to me by the Board of Regents member. I can't think of his name at this moment, a very prominent citizen right now.

GALM: Ed Carter?

ROSENTHAL: No.

GALM: From the area, though?

ROSENTHAL: From Los Angeles, he's a member of the Board of Regents [Sheldon W. Andelson]. He knew me as a judge. He knew me as a lawyer. He used to appear in my court. He was very pleased to present it to me, saying that he had always wanted to become a judge like myself. I was very proud at the time. Judge Norman Epstein, I think, was the president of the alumni at that time. He also read from the Assembly bill, which he had in his hand. At that time, he asked me, "Where is Hastings in the bill?" What he had was the last bill; he didn't have the first two. So there was no evidence in the last bill that I had erased that in order to present it individually at the request of Governor Earl Warren. But that's how it happened: I had to take it out and present it to the governor individually, or he wouldn't pass on it at all.

Of course, I was thinking that if my bill died in the Assembly, I'm afraid Hastings' bill would have died too, because I wasn't about to let them get away with that. I was always fearful of what they would do to Los Angeles. There was no reason for it. We represented half of the state, half of the population, more than half of the taxes; we were entitled to have a law school from the state, by a state, and for a state university. It was really needed by many young men and women who were obviously unable to

go to 'SC, or Loyola for that matter, and some of them couldn't even go to Southwestern. I attended at night school. Both my brothers attended night school.

GALM: Judge Rosenthal, I think, in reviewing the notes that I have, probably the occasion that you were speaking about was the dedication of the [law] building in 1951. There was a luncheon meeting connected with that, in which Lieutenant Governor Goodwin Knight was present.

ROSENTHAL: It probably was.

GALM: I think they also then referred to your participation in bringing it about. Had you already earned the title of "Father of the UCLA Law School," or did that just come with the years?

ROSENTHAL: No, everyone referred to it. We had an article in the local paper about two columns wide. They first learned about it recently when I told them about the plaque that I received from UCLA. They wrote a big article calling me the founder or father or whatever you want, but I have been called that for many years by people who knew me, members of the Legislature, judges, and so forth.

GALM: Were you involved in any other appropriations for the university or for the UCLA campus?

ROSENTHAL: Except that I was also a coauthor of the medical school, which Davis authored. But nothing other than that.

GALM: I know in my research for the history of the law school that they soon saw that that appropriation wasn't really large enough.

ROSENTHAL: I'm sure that once I would have gotten this, I would have no problem later on. I suppose later on they were getting a proper appropriation for the school.

GALM: But, as you recall, once you had authored that bill and it had been signed, no one came back to you later for —

ROSENTHAL: I left [the Assembly] in '53. Forty-three to '53.

GALM: What prompted you to leave at that time? What event?

ROSENTHAL: I'd served ten years. We had a young adopted daughter [Lisa] who was about six years old. One day she said to me, "Dad, where



do we live?” Because we went from Los Angeles to Sacramento for the month of January, and then came home in February. Then, we went back in March and stayed there until June or July, and then we came home again. And during the interim, I was appointed to several committees, traveling throughout the state, acquiring information for bills, legislation.

GALM: What were some of the other areas of legislation that you pursued before you left the assembly?

ROSENTHAL: Well, as I've indicated before, I had introduced a bill to abolish segregation in schools. That was unheard of at the time because we didn't know about the South's problems of segregation. But in Orange County, they had two schools, one for Hispanic children and one for the Caucasian children. It was brought to my attention, and I introduced a bill to abolish segregation in schools, particularly aimed at Orange County. I didn't think it was right, proper, or fair. I missed it that session; it was defeated. But Congressman Glenn Anderson, who was then assemblyman, took it up when I left, and he passed it and ultimately got it signed by the governor. So, it takes time to evolve these things. You start it; someone else continues it. My segregation bill in cemeteries was fought terribly by the cemetery people. I won't mention any names. I heard from someone that some cemeteries wouldn't allow Blacks to be buried there, or Hispanics, or even Jews. I fought that, a blistering fight. All the big cemeteries fought me. I think, ultimately, it was signed, passed.

The [fire] sprinkler system, I was interested in that. Big hotels and big buildings didn't have any. Many people died as a result of it.

GALM: So, you made the decision though that you were going to —

ROSENTHAL: When my daughter asked me, “Where do we live, Daddy?” I'd been traveling up and down the state. She'd go to school in Los Angeles, in Sacramento in February, back in Los Angeles in March. Later on when I traveled around, she was taken out of school. Finally she said to me, “Daddy, where do we live?” It got to me thinking that it was time that I took care of my child. I adopted her. I loved her deeply. I still love her, of course. I thought it was time then to come back to Los Angeles and make a home for her, which I did, of course. I didn't like doing it, because I loved the Legislature; it was the place which I enjoyed very, very much. As I indicated, it was a challenge. You could create new ideas and

new thoughts, new principles, new philosophies, just by introduction of a bill. There was that challenge, which one person could do, and so it was enjoyable, friendly.

GALM: Of your colleagues, who do you recall most as leaving behind? Anderson?

ROSENTHAL: Glenn Anderson and Julian Beck. They were closest to me. Gus Hawkins was very close. Vincent Thomas was very close to me. Laughlin Waters sat in front of me in the Assembly.

GALM: Was there a strong camaraderie or feeling among the minority representatives?

ROSENTHAL: Gus Hawkins, being Black, Glenn Anderson, and myself — all represented the minority groups. Julian Beck, representative of San Fernando, which was mostly Hispanic. I was very friendly with the San Francisco group; Tommy [Thomas A.] Maloney. On St. Patrick's Day, for example, they used to elect the speaker for the day, and we all exchanged names. I became Patrick O'Rosenthal. [laughter] Tommy Maloney became Isadore Maloney. We had a vote to nominate the speaker for the day. I always won. Patrick O'Rosenthal. When I tried to get on the speaker's platform, Tommy used to fight me off with a[n] Irish shillelagh, wouldn't let me get to the speaker's thing. We had fun. Jack Tenney used to play the piano: "My Wild Irish Rose," which was his song that he wrote [correction: the song, "Mexicali Rose"]. Someone else played the organ. It was a fun day, St. Patrick's Day. Everybody had a green carnation. I supplied most of them, because I was having a lot of fun. There was a lot of camaraderie.

We worked very hard in those days. We used to work until midnight, mostly at the tail-end of the session, because we loafed too much at the beginning. And that's the history even now, you know. Somehow, you introduce the bills and you play around and you don't go anywhere. You go to meetings, which breaks up the legislation day. But near the last month when time was getting closer, then we worked like the devil. Committee meetings every day, every night till midnight, and later.

GALM: In reading the background on the bill, I got the impression that it was [passed] because it was introduced late in the session, and that's not really so, is it?

ROSENTHAL: No, because all the bills had to be introduced in January, and we were just allowed two additional bills, as emergency measures, to be introduced after March.

GALM: So, it wasn't as though it —

ROSENTHAL: It was introduced in late July. Nothing like that.

GALM: I guess the other thing was: after it became a bill and the school was established and so forth, you did mention that on one occasion you did meet Dean Dale Coffman, who was the founding dean. Do you recall the occasion of that?

ROSENTHAL: He visited Judge Thaxton Hanson at the Superior Court in Van Nuys. He didn't visit me. I don't know for what reason, but I happened to be sitting in Judge Hanson's chambers. He came in, and I was introduced to him. I told him, "Hey, that was great. You're the dean. That's the school that I created in Sacramento." He looked at me sort of in amazement. I don't know why he did, but apparently he didn't think that was true necessarily. It was that kind of a thing, and as you see, by accident. Many of them didn't know about it.

GALM: So, did you get into any real conversation with him at that time beyond that? Or do you recall?

ROSENTHAL: No. Of course, he was leaving. They were going to lunch, so I just let it go. I kind of get the feeling though that perhaps I should have consulted with him instead of just doing something out of my own whim. Again, I was naive, I was young, and I thought I could do it. And I felt that I had to do it. I didn't know anyone else that wanted to do it.

I see by the little document here, the *San Fernando Valley Bar Bulletin*, the evening that they gave me my retirement dinner, that I also supported a bill to abolish the selling of babies. They got here: "While an assemblyman [supported] a law that outlawed 'baby selling' and one creating the UCLA School of Law." I coauthored a bill. At that time it was easy to buy babies, so to speak. If someone wanted to adopt a child, they found someone who was willing to give it up, and they would buy it from some source, maybe a lawyer or someone else. I supported a bill forbidding that, and ordering all the adoptions to go through the California adoption society of the state, the state adoption department [Bureau of Adoptions]. Because you

never knew who the parents were. You would deal with a third party who would arrange with the mother of the child to have a baby, or if she was having a baby, that party would look for someone who wanted a baby. And there was some quid pro quo, I didn't know what it was, money of some kind. I thought that was bad, because the person who adopts the child — we adopted our child — didn't know who the parents were. And never know what background they had or anything. But when you go through the Department of [Social] Welfare, I think it was, they would take a history of the parents, male and female, father and mother, and that would be presented to you, so that you knew who the parents of that particular child was. I successfully introduced that bill, or worked with others who worked with it. I don't know whether I was an author or coauthor, but I had spoken on the bill many, many times. I thought it was very much needed. It passed, of course.

**GALM:** When did you join the Superior Court?

**ROSENTHAL:** I left [the Assembly] in 1953. I went into private practice, and I practiced until 1958, at which time I was the state chairman of the Democratic Party. I was successful in getting the Democrats elected: Governor Pat [Edmund G.] Brown, Lieutenant Governor Glenn Anderson, and every other state officer, including a majority of Democrats, which we didn't have in California at that time. Soon thereafter, Pat appointed me to the Municipal Court, 1959, on January 16, I believe. After serving about a year and a half on the Municipal Court, Pat appointed me to the Superior Court — 1961 or thereabouts — and I served on the Superior Court from 1961 until I retired in 19 — Let's see —

**GALM:** And you then retired in 1977.

**ROSENTHAL:** And I've been retired ever since. Soon thereafter, we came down to Palm Springs. Since then, I've been working on assignment by [the] Judicial Council to San Diego, Vista, Ventura, wherever they needed someone to work during the hot summer months, [when] you couldn't live very well down here. I've worked on and off everywhere that they have wanted me, and then since last June I haven't worked at all. I was just invited to serve in Vista again, but I told them I wasn't well enough to do it, and I didn't want to work anymore.

MRS. [LILITH] ROSENTHAL: You're well enough.

ROSENTHAL: My wife, to the contrary, notwithstanding. But I worked the Superior Court in Ventura for two to three months and tried some very interesting cases, criminal cases, very, very bad ones, which is the plight of all judges who are assigned to little counties. The judges seem to save up all the stuff they don't want and push it on the visiting judge. I had a lot of those. I tried an awful lot of jury trials. The same is true in San Diego and in Vista. I don't blame them. If something is close to the people there, they don't want to be considered bad, so they'll give it to a visiting judge who doesn't have to run in that area. Let him suffer the consequences.

GALM: During your years as Superior Court judge, are there certain trials that stand out in your career?

ROSENTHAL: I tried ever so many trials I can't tell you how many. I was assigned primarily to the criminal department. Having worked in the city attorney's office as a prosecutor, somehow you get into [the] criminal law element. By that I mean, you study criminal law primarily because you're in a prosecutor's office. When you go out in private practice, the people that knew you as prosecutor come to you for help. Then my practice became more criminal than civil, although I handled the other civil matters, domestic relations, corporate law. But mostly, it was criminal law. So wherever I went, I was always assigned to the criminal department. I was presiding judge of the criminal department in Van Nuys, well, since the building was created.

As a judge in the Municipal Court, I tried to consolidate all the municipal courts into one Municipal Court, instead of twenty-nine, to save a lot of money. We have courts in places where they're not even needed, but they're Municipal Courts, and they all get Municipal Court salaries. We took the Justice Courts and consolidated them and made Municipal Courts out of them. So, where they were getting probably \$500 a month, they got the judicial salary of a Municipal Court judge. I handled the legislation, as a matter of fact, when I was an assemblyman, to create the Municipal Court system in the state of California, to abolish JP's wherever they weren't needed and consolidate them into Municipal Courts, in Los Angeles particularly where we had a justice of the peace, police courts, and another type of court — all Municipal Courts actually. I turned around

and consolidated all them into one Municipal Court, making the Municipal Court get more money, and create some basis for disposing of the small courts, which were not needed in many places. The only place we kept the JP, justice of the peace, was in Catalina. We had to have a court there. He doesn't do much work, but he's still a JP there. We couldn't make that a Municipal Court, not justifiably. We had one in San Fernando, a justice court, which we converted into a Municipal Court.

I handled all the legislation for the judiciary up and down the state, from the Supreme Court to the Municipal Court, on changes of the law, on salary increases, on creation of new judges. I handled all the legislation for the Supreme Court through Phil Gibson, who was then chief justice, appointed by Culbert Olson. I handled all the salary increases for the District Court of Appeal, Supreme Court, Municipal Court, and the Superior Court. I handled all the clerks' salaries — Municipal Court clerks, Superior Court clerks.

I handled legislation giving the Superior Court the right over juvenile cases. Juvenile courts used to be handled by JP's, I think, at the time. I'm not sure. But I put them under the supervision of the Superior Courts so that a Superior Court judge has to work on the new juvenile court, all the juvenile courts. That was a very important function. Juveniles were a terrible problem at that time. They were handled slipshod. Oh, they were handled, excuse me, through the probation department and not through a regular court. So at the time, I remember, it was a big fight on probation. They [the probation department] wanted the job because it meant more jobs for probation officers. The Superior Court wanted it. One third body, who I can't remember now, wanted it. But I turned it over, when I was in the Assembly, to the Superior Court. They're responsible for the juvenile courts now and still were.

GALM: Well, certainly during your time on the bench, you must have come in contact with UCLA law graduates, both as colleagues and legal —

MRS. ROSENTHAL: The young man you talked to in Sacramento who gave you — he came from UCLA, too.

ROSENTHAL: When I called Sacramento to get a copy of the bills, I'd forgotten all about it, and then you called me, and you wanted me to have some information; I thought I'd better get it correct.

GALM: We did have his card here. I don't know whether we still do, but we'll put it in the records so that he gets due credit for supplying them.

ROSENTHAL: Yes, I spoke to Robert D. Gronke, principal deputy and legislative counsel, Sacramento. When I called him to get me copies of the bills, I asked for a copy of the bill I introduced back in 1945 and '47. He didn't find, apparently, the 1945 bill, but he found the 1947 bill. He says, "By the way, I'm a graduate of the UCLA law school." I said, "Thank God, I know one who has graduated from the school that I helped to create." He sent me all these copies that I have given to you.

GALM: How do they stand up as graduates?

ROSENTHAL: UCLA law school is marvelous; they have a good record for passing the bar, and they're very fine lawyers.

GALM: So there's been a continuing relationship with the UCLA law school over the years?

ROSENTHAL: Oh, yes. Since that meeting I have had much more contact than before.

GALM: I'd asked you about President Sproul. But it came as a great surprise [to me] that when the legislation came before the regents, President Sproul actually voted against the law school. I don't know whether you know that.

ROSENTHAL: I didn't know that. I can understand now what happened, why I was not so avidly sought out.

GALM: And there was some thought that maybe there was a —

ROSENTHAL: But no one presented that to me. No one indicated any opposition to it. I was entirely unaware that there was any opposition. I was naive obviously in the way I proceeded. But it was my second term there, and I was feeling my oats. I wanted a law school, so I presented it. I probably should have gone to UC and asked whether they wanted one.

GALM: There was some thought that maybe Sproul was honoring a stand that USC president [Rufus] von KleinSmid had taken, asking that a law school not be established.

ROSENTHAL: I was never aware of that, you see.

GALM: You weren't aware? You never ever heard any rumors about —

ROSENTHAL: No one ever consulted, no one ever talked to me about it. Neither the president of the university, or chancellor, or anyone. Of course, there was no dean at the time, so they couldn't oppose too. I didn't hear of anyone turning it down though. I spoke with several deans on the telephone sometimes, and I tried to help recommend someone for admission. But it was very rare, one or two instances, when people said to me, "Hey, you're the so-called sponsor of the law school? Can you get my son in?" I said, "I don't think I can, but I can recommend him."

Of course, as it says in your little document here, by accident they wound up with a law school. It probably was, as far as they were concerned. But I was not cognizant of it. If anyone had told me that they didn't want a law school, I probably would have abandoned any effort. I think I would. I don't know. I was a pretty tough little kid in those days.

GALM: But it was something that you clearly saw a need for and went for it.

ROSENTHAL: I saw a need for it, and I wanted them to have it. I thought that young men and women should have an opportunity to go to a state-sponsored law school. At that time, all they could go to is 'SC, and that was a nice school, I think. I'm talking about the poor kids. Loyola, who has a law school. Then they had to go to Berkeley or Stanford, and of course the people I was talking about couldn't afford Stanford any more than they could afford going up to Berkeley, both being in the North.

GALM: Well, it certainly has provided an opportunity for many men and women to enter the legal field.

ROSENTHAL: I'm very glad of that.

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