

**Interview Subject: Dan Gelber, Prosecuting Attorney, State Legislator,  
son of Seymour Gelber**

**Date Recorded: 9/14/13**

**Location: Temple Beth Shalom, Miami Beach**

**Date of Birth: 11/26/60**

**NARRATIVE:** Racial incident at Beach High during integration. There was a big meeting and parents said some very racist remarks. A student friend of his stood up and spoke out, shaming the parents.

He tells about debating Anita Bryant about homosexuality.

Talks about his parents views about giving back to the community. He followed in their footsteps.

Beach High had a lot of high performing kids and excellent teachers. His mother taught there.

Miami Beach politics; it attracts people with a lot of money and aspirations.

Dad's reputation is very good. Very honest. Previous mayor was Alex Daoud who was corrupt. So his father came in and cleaned up.

His father's style re politics. He was terrible at asking for money. He didn't had typical politician qualities which was probably why he got elected. Talks about the pressures of expensive real estate and people wanting to come and make big money.

Tells about his Dad in the back yard painting his shoes with a spray can of paint. Very frugal.

His mother was a much better politician than his Dad, he says. She spoke a lot of languages and loved talking with people.

Father's area of expertise was campus security. His Dad was a liaison with the groups who came to protest during the 1972 conventions. He was a mediator between the city and the protestors. His father never got upset by anything and he didn't judge.

Dan talks about his political career. He was a prosecutor, then was chief counsel for the Senate Investigative Committee. His found some declassified information

one day and saw his Dad's signature regarding an investigation of a Miami connection to the Kennedy assassination.

Dan talks about his years in the legislature and his recent run for state Attorney General.

He discusses Florida legislature issues of redistricting and centrist politics.

When he was in the legislature Miami Beach wasn't as diverse as it is now. You have billionaires with people struggling to get by.

Miami Beach is an island community so its somewhat insular. The residents over the decades have often wanted to keep it that way. There was always an element that wanted to be away from everybody. They didn't want poor people here or put them where they don't have to look at them. Unfortunate because the diversity is a virtue.

Large amount of liberal or progressive voters. When his Dad came in his chances weren't good. He was an outsider and had no big money behind him. His biggest supporters were in the gay community. His dad was very open minded and excepted their endorsement. When he won, he cleaned house and started from scratch. He appointed lots of gays to positions of power - planning, zoning, etc. He started integrating them into a lot of committee and commissions, as well as Hispanics. Human rights ordinance. His father mediated with Orthodox Jews who were opposed and managed to get it passed. It was very groundbreaking. A fascinating moment.

He was mayor at an age when he had a lot of life experience. He was the right guy at that moment.

Uniqueness of Miami Beach. Its physical attributes to a great extent defines the community. Yet its not like any other city or town. We're sort of a community like any other but overlaid with a world resort, conventions, shows, celebs. Looking back I never thought it was different.