2013

Former ESTL mayor gives back to alma mater

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Recommended Citation

Romero, Aldemaro Jr., "Former ESTL mayor gives back to alma mater" (2013). CUNY Academic Works.

https://academicworks.cuny.edu/bb_pubs/790

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Mr. Gordon Bush during one of his public engagements.

Historically plagued East St. Louis make it one of the most difficult to head up any American city. Crime, financial woes, envi-

contended issues and political upheaval are just some of the city's challenges. Bush said he knew there were many issues to tackle, but he realized that he had to first deal with the severe environmental problems left behind by the heavy industry that had abandoned the city. Mayor environ-

tamental problems are very expensive to remedy. He explained, as an example, he pointed to the former American Steel Foundry.

"There are still remains of what they left there," he said. "And the same with the 1600's housing. They just left it there. Just a little of cleaning up still to do. When I ran for mayor, we had a million stories about the city. The same came to help, and SIUE and the University of Illinois did some things. We had 40,000 tons of lead from all over the city, because there was no trash pickup for years.

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tonomous problems were very expensive to remedy. He explained, as an example, he pointed to the former American Steel Foundry.

He told me, "If you're concerned about this small-town community, you have to be a part of the community. What do you want me to do?" And so I said, "How can I be part of the community?"

"I was a high school senior and my father was working at the Alcoa aluminum plant in East St. Louis," Bush said. "We would get ready to shut down the whole city on Friday. And about three o'clock you would see the workers come out. And you'd know they were done for that week and they'd go home."

"And there weren't worried about it, kind of a sick feeling," Bush said. "If you have a job in the city-planning department and you may not be able to affect change and stop these things from happening."

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"I was part of the local police, and we had some ideas at the police department," he said. "I had a lot of experience with the city planner to ask why they had the same problem in the city. They told him that they were leaving, and had their own jobs.

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