

August Mardesich was appointed to the Legislature in 1950, and went on to serve as an elected official for twenty-eight years. Read the entire text of [August Mardesich: An Oral History on the Oral History Program's Web site](#).

Ms. Boswell: When you came into the Senate, you came in right at the height of the redistricting fight, didn't you? You started in 1963 and that was a big year. Tell me about your impressions of that redistricting.

Mr. Mardesich: There was no doubt in my mind that—and any number of us had the same opinion—it was obvious—that Greive was taking care of the people who supported him in the redistricting fight. He wanted to change something up here that affected Gissberg, and that was one of the things that got me into the redistricting battle. So we kind of ran a few things right over Greive's head, and took some people away from him. We'd play his game for awhile. "What do you want done to your district?" we'd ask. So we took some of the people who were supportive of him away from him, just by doing it that way. We used his own tactics to beat him.



August Mardesich

Ms. Boswell: He maintains that he really worked hard to accommodate as many people as possible.

Mr. Mardesich: He thinks he did and I don't doubt that he did, secondary to his initial objective to take care of the people who were supportive of him. And he would work hard. He worked endlessly on the problem. He had big wall charts covered with redrawn lines. Ever look at some of those districts that were drawn?

Ms. Boswell: Instead of a rectangle, it would be a thousand different little boundaries.

Mr. Mardesich: Everywhere. Oh, yes, it was: "That's a Democratic street, so I'll pick up that street." I mean it was ridiculous. There was a lot of that.

But anyway, having looked at this operation, we did some of what he did to get some of his people away from him. And we did, and I think just perhaps because they could see the handwriting on the wall, too, that the Sandisons, the Gissbergs, the Mardesichs, the Walgrens—they were starting to buck and they could see that the end was in sight. Outside of that, I'd say we probably tried to take care of our people, no question.

Ms. Boswell: What about the Republican side, the Republican plan? Slade Gorton?

Mr. Mardesich: They came to fight for what they wanted. But, of course, if you had the majority, you did what you wanted. You take care of your own people first.

Ms. Boswell: Just as long as the majority sticks together, though?

Mr. Mardesich: And there's a place where they can fall apart, on redistricting type stuff. Everyone watches for his own well being.

Ms. Boswell: Redistricting, however, is an issue that in most cases is only important to the legislators, themselves. It's not an issue that the public cares much about, is it?



Mr. Mardesich: No. Why would they, unless they have a real interest in politics and say, "They're trying to take him away from our district or us out of his district," or that sort of thing. And there were people who came down and put in their two-bits worth, even on that.

Ms. Boswell: The Legislature was mandated, at that point, that you had to do redistricting or no bills would be passed into law, right?

Mr. Mardesich: They sent something to a commission to handle. Somebody did it.

Ms. Boswell: Although it took a while.

Mr. Mardesich: It took a while, there's no two ways about that.