

Edmundo Vargas Carreño on Lister's unique role in connecting the Chilean opposition to the State Department

At that time was the President Carter and for those who were against Pinochet and were organized against Pinochet. But when the administration changed and President Reagan took office, those friends disappeared and then the role of George was really very important. I think that he was our best friend in the U.S. government. Through him we had access to more important offices such as Mr. Abrams, who was, at the beginning of Reagan, in charge of human rights and then he was in charge of Latin America. The only access to him was through George. George was a really good friend of ours. He facilitated the contact with those political leaders of Chile that were invited to the United States for a reason or came to Washington. And they asked me or other Chileans who were living in Washington at that time how we can reach to the State Department and I mentioned, "I have a very important friend there, George Lister!" So I call George and say, "George, here is Former Senator, let's say, Anselmo Sule, can you receive him?" "Oh yes!" And I came with the senator—at that time, of course, he wasn't a senator; he had been a senator in the past and he became a senator when democracy was restored in Chile. But he was an important political leader and he was very impressed because George would receive him. And after, he told a journalist, "I met a very important officer of the State Department." So, this was very important for us. George was our friend in the State Department. He facilitated this contact with high offices and, with respect to Chileans, allowed us to say we have some contact with the State Department.