



The Art of Backscratching in Chicago: Driving with Ed McElroy (Chicago Shorts)

Neil Steinberg

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“Ed McElroy, clear of eye, sound of mind, and eighty-three years of age . . . guides his black Cadillac down Halsted Street.” So begins longtime Chicago journalist Neil Steinberg’s nuanced homage to Ed McElroy: an old-school, behind-the-scenes backscratcher who has driven the rich, powerful, and well-connected around the city, doing favors and calling them in, for decades. Helping a young Steinberg understand the city, McElroy and his take on how a Mayor’s son gets to be Mayor and how a wily up-and-comer marries the daughter of a powerful alderman and later becomes governor would enthrall even the most seasoned Chicagoan. In this drive around town and through time, Steinberg ultimately serves up audacious and funny anecdotes about how it helps to stay connected, to know a guy, and to help people out when you can.

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