What's New Podcast Transcript
Season 2: Episode 21: Election Day Special: Michael Dukakis
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Host: Dan Cohen, Dean of Libraries and Vice Provost for Information Collaboration at Northeastern University.

Michael Dukakis, Distinguished Professor of Political Science at Northeastern University, three-time Governor, Massachusetts.

Host: Dan Cohen: 00:00
Hey, Dan here with an editor’s note about the content of today’s podcast. Just wanted to let you know that we recorded this episode just before the horrible shootings in Kentucky and at The Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh, as well as the mail bombs. So we didn’t have an opportunity to discuss those tragic events.

Host: Dan Cohen: 00:21
Three term Governor, Presidential candidate, public transportation advocate and today’s guest on What’s New? Governor Michael Dukakis. Welcome back to What’s New. I’m Dan Cohen and it’s an honor to be joined today by Governor Michael Dukakis, who is a distinguished professor of political science here at Northeastern University. Welcome to the program, Governor.

Michael Dukakis: 00:52
It’s good to be with you Dan.

Host: Dan Cohen: 00:53
It’s a delight to have you on. This podcast will actually go live on Election Day 2018. I thought we could start with just your impressions of what this particular Election Day means historically.

Michael Dukakis: 01:06
Well it’s certainly an interesting time in American politics. People say to me, "Have you ever seen it so bad?" And I say, "Yeah, I’ve seen it pretty bad." I lived through the McCarthy period. When I was a young graduate of Swarthmore College, who had been inducted into the Army, I discovered that the Army had a file on me with every single political activity at every engagement at Swarthmore College.

Host: Dan Cohen: 01:28
Wow.
And it took us about 10 years fortunately, it didn't recommend me for an honorable discharge, which they were doing by the way, to some people. But it took us 10 years to find out how they got that information.

What do you think?

The FBI had a tap on the Swarthmore switchboard. It was recording, and in those days that's the only way you could get in and out of Swarthmore. With a phone, no cellphones and other stuff, and we had no phones in the rooms. They must've been paying somebody to take notes. And I had ... Remember, this is pre-computer America. I had a file with literally every single political activity that I ever engaged in, and I had to go through this discussion with the so-called personnel specialist about my career in politics. Fortunately I wasn't recommended for an honorable discharge and they sent me to Korea instead, which is fine. But that was happening during the McCarthy period.

Yeah, I think people forget that there have been really ugly evil experience-

And Vietnam was a terrible time in this country. Families divided. Communities divided. We lost 55,000 young Americans, killed in that war. It was horrible. Then we have assassinations, not only of the President, but of his brother, of Martin Luther King, all of them coming during that period. We've gone through some tough stuff, which doesn't make me feel any better about what's going on here and about what I think is a real challenge to American democracy in a way that ... I'm not sure I've seen in my lifetime, but we can-

So how would you compare the political polarization of 2018 with say a 1968?

Different in some ways, but the country has often gone through this. Somebody asked somebody once, "Have you ever seen it so bad?" And he said, "Have you seen the movie Lincoln? That was bad."

Right, right.

And we've weathered them but I think what bothers me and bothers a lot of us is that we kind of figured by 2018, we were better than this. And I'm not making judgements about Republicans or Democrats and liberals and conservatives, I just mean our ability to work together to find common ground ...
work with some terrific Republicans in the course of my political career and we seem to have lots of the same values. Maybe some differences on certain issues but there was always kind of a sense that, "Hey, we're in this together and let's see if we can find consensus on some of these issues." And we often did. There's less and less of that, obviously, and that's pretty distressing.

Host: Dan Cohen: 04:11 Do you have any analysis why that sort of ebbed away? We had your Secretary of Transportation, Fred Salvucci, last season to talk about the Big Dig, and he said, "There was an era, in sort of post war era, where both sides could agree on the big transportation bill that all of sort helped." Many cities get infrastructure in place that would help society more broadly and he was very disturbed that all that was left was little small things that they could do, no big trust building exercises. Is it the media environment? Is something else going on that we're missing? How would you sort of think about it and how do we move forward?

Michael Dukakis: 04:50 Hard to say, I have enormous respect for Fred. He was my Secretary of Transportation for every minute of the 12 years that I was Governor, and we did incredible things with his leadership and the direction of the people that he brought in with him. He happens to have a great eye for talent and we had incredibly good people working with him. I'd like to think that in my administration, especially the second two when I finally learned how to be a governor, we understood the importance of consensus building but what does that mean? It means bringing people together who often times don't agree, at least initially, and see if you can come to agreement, at least stand on what the problem is. In my experience if you can come to agreement on what the problem is you're halfway to a solution. And it's just a question of coming up with details. Not easy, but who doesn't think today that Boston's got a traffic problem? I mean, my friend Barry Bluestone,

Michael Dukakis: 05:52 one of the distinguished members of this faculty, said the other day that in another what? Six years, average speeds on the Southeast Expressway at five in the afternoon will be three miles an hour. Well if you're facing that, you can't wait ... What is it that the Department of Transportation is talking about? 2040. 2040? I'm not going to be here. I hope you'll still be here. But we haven't got time for that. And there's no excuse for sitting around taking forever to get these projects done. But I know personally I became a much better consensus builder.
That's interesting. So in the '70s you sort of felt like you were still learning on the job a little bit, as what I heard?

Well, I was the lead over the young Turks, used to to drive my Greek immigrant father crazy when he'd hear about this. So I'd say, "Dad, it's just a figure of speech. It's just a figure of speech." And he was born, by the way, in a predominately Greek town in Turkey. But the government that I walked into in 1963 as a young legislator was one of the three or four most corrupt in the country. A lot of us, Republicans as well as Democrats who were kind of young reformers, spent an enormous amount of time trying to clean up that mess and we did a lot during that period. But I was not a good ... I was kind of a fighter and a rebel. And when I became Governor I didn't exactly toss that off, and for my troubles I got beaten the first time out in the re-election.

Mm-hmm (affirmative), right.

Well, defeat is a teacher. When I came back, I really understood that A, I had to listen more and talk less, and use my position as Governor to reach out to folks and bring them together around some of these tough issues. Lo and behold, with very few exceptions, Dan, it turned out that if you did that, brought legislators into the process early and advocacy groups and so on and so forth. We're genuinely interested in trying to reach agreement on things. You can do so. Salvucci was amazing at this.

Oh, he was incredible. When we had him on the podcast the number of individual meetings that he had with people to advocate for this project was amazing. He said he would hop in a car if 10 people decided they would be at a bar and wanted to talk to him, he would hop in and go talk to them instead of call.

And then he would call me at midnight.

Yeah.

And he'd say, "Mike, yeah, you awake?" I'd say, "I am now Fred." But he was remarkable at doing this and the bringing just about everybody into this process and it's amazing when you do that, you can achieve a lot of agreement.

You still in fact go to town hall meetings. We'll talk about some of the big public transportation projects that you've advocated for more recently, but there's still this sort of retail politics. It seems really key. Is it your concern that in an age of social media
and our polarization that we aren't actually physically together
to talk about things that we might indeed mutually care about.
Better transportation. Better cities. Better ways of working
together?

Michael Dukakis: 09:27 Yeah, although I think this has been an ongoing problem for a long time. It’s just not the fact that we have social media. How do you get close to the process? How do you get into the process? A vast majority of people, Dan, actually don't know. They don’t realize that this is the most open political system in the world. If it weren't then this Greek kid from Brookline, whose parents came over on the boat, would never become Governor to say but at least a chance to win a nomination as the presidency. Bill Clinton grew up in a house without indoor plumbing and he got to the White House. It really is very open but for whatever reason it’s tough to convince a lot Americans that this a system that you can have an impact on. That you can participate in. And a lot of what I do at Northeastern as you can imagine, in addition to teaching, is trying to encourage my students to do that.

Host: Dan Cohen: 10:22 Yeah. So how do you encourage them to? You actually wrote a book on how to get into politics and why. What do you say to a college student who's interested in this?

Michael Dukakis: 10:31 Well the first thing I say is go to Northeastern because of the co-op program. And other schools wouldn't because this is one of the few institutions, as I think we both know, we're in fact actively working and participating in the adult world while in school, is not only encouraged, it’s required. And it has an enormous impact, as we both know, on the students themselves. I just had one of my students in the other day. Thought she wanted to do journalism and did a co-op at the Globe and had a good experience there, but she's now majoring in political science. She's in my course where I use case studies extensively. I don't lecture all day long. I want my students to get into these case studies which are real live situations that people have gone through. Then you combine that with co-ops and these kids really start getting, not only interested, but develop the kinds of skills they need and begin to realize, "Hey, I can make a difference."

Michael Dukakis: 11:42 I say to them, "Look, there's nothing like being in the position where you can make a real difference in the lives of your fellow citizens." And they see that in action. That's not theory. That's not reading in a book. Sure they read a lot of books but they're also out there doing this kind of stuff and a remarkably high percentage of them as we both know, not only go to work for
their co-op employers but they get deeply and actively involved in what they're doing. I must have now, of course I been here 28 years, I must have hundreds and hundreds of former students that are now doing great work out there, and as you know I do winter quarter at UCLA and one of my UCLA students just got elected to Congress by 20 percentage points in California. This is a kid whose parents came from Mexico illegally in the '70s. Were legalized under the Reagan amnesty bill that people forget in the '80s. His mother is still cleaning houses in Riverside, California. And Jimmy Gomez is a member of the Congress and a terrific one. I'll take a little bit of the credit for encouraging him when he showed up in my classroom, but he was an extraordinary kid in many ways, and he's going to be an extraordinary member of Congress. What could be better than that?

Host: Dan Cohen: 12:58 That's an amazing story. Are you encouraged more generally by the number of first time candidates that we're seeing in this election cycle?

Michael Dukakis: 13:05 I'm encouraged by the number of women. The number of veterans who are running. And you know what was interesting? Needless to say, I'm not a fan of Donald Trump's, but Trump himself is responsible for a huge increase and interest in public service. I see it with my students.


Michael Dukakis: 13:27 In an interesting kind of way, that's a good thing.

Host: Dan Cohen: 13:30 Yeah. And it seems like it's affected sort of all levels of the political structure of the [crosstalk 00:13:35]-

Michael Dukakis: 13:34 Indeed.

Host: Dan Cohen: 13:34 You didn't add the town level, or even the school board or smaller roles.

Michael Dukakis: 13:40 Yeah, anything. Yeah and look, most of us after all. Most of us didn't vault into this system from the United States Senate. I started as a town meeting member in the town of Brookline.

Host: Dan Cohen: 13:49 Right.

Michael Dukakis: 13:50 Knocking on every door at my precinct and standing front of the polling place for 13 hours. Which is one of the reasons why I am such an advocate of precinct based grassroots organizing. But
that's how most of us begin. Again, a lot of people just don't understand how open this system is. You don't have to kiss anybody's ring. You don't have to buy a ticket of admission. All you got to do is get out there and start connecting with the people.

Host: Dan Cohen:  

14:16 Right. How about those in our audience who might not want to be a Congressperson, but just want to get involved in the political system. Are there mechanisms that you think are particularly effective after this election day if things go right or wrong or however you feel about it? How should they move forward?

Michael Dukakis:  

14:35 A lot of them do get involved and stay involved.

Host: Dan Cohen:  

14:38 Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Michael Dukakis:  

14:39 Now how do you get into it? One way is the way I started. Run for town meeting or a precinct. Ring every doorbell. Stand in front of the polling place. Chances are you're going to get elected. Then you start getting involved in your local community. You can be a member of your party's organization.

Michael Dukakis:  

14:58 I'm a huge believer in precinct based organization, what does that mean? A precinct captain, a six block captains, making personal contact on an ongoing basis with every single voting household. That's the way you win elections and that's the way, by the way, that you encourage folks to not just work in the precincts, but start thinking seriously about maybe their serving in some form of public office.

Host: Dan Cohen:  

15:20 Right, right. It's got to be hard for most people see everything almost nationalized, right? Our political situation and I think what you're saying is bring it really down to the local level. Frankly just to a manageable level that you can actually knock on every door in the precinct as possible, right?

Michael Dukakis:  

15:36 Not only of that. No matter what people think or feel about the kind of administration or previous administrations or subsequent administrations, it is kind of remarkable. At least at the domestic level, let me put it this way. We've got 50 state governments. We've got hundreds and hundreds of local governments. All of them out there working hard to make their communities better places. The quality and caliber of the folks that serve in state and municipal governments is light years better than it used to be. Why? Because institutions like this one and the one I teach at out in California and others now have
schools with public affairs and programs of this kind. We didn't have that back then. One of the reasons I went to law school was because there wasn't a Kennedy school. If there had been I'd probably would've much preferred to go to that.

Michael Dukakis: 16:28 This is making a huge difference, let me tell you. In terms of just the quality and caliber of the people that are working in public life, we've got a big non-profit sector these days. A lot of the skills that you need in government are also important in the non-profit world. So lots of folks, some of my best people in state government, have kind of moved back and forth between government on the one hand and non-profits in the other, and as you know non-profits are doing an awful lot of the work that has got to be done here.

Michael Dukakis: 17:01 There are just great opportunities and I'm just tickled to death that my students these days particularly are really interested in exploring those possibilities. I think it's just great and I love being able to work with them on this stuff.

Host: Dan Cohen: 17:19 Yeah, you can really feel it and especially this fall. There are just ... the energy level has been higher than I've certainly seen in my life. So you seem somewhat optimistic that the system can kind of correct itself. I feel that others this fall have sort of been writing about the breakdown of the American democratic system and worries about things like the electoral college, and these things falling apart because they're no longer matching up with votes. Do you share that kind of pessimism about our system not being self correcting?

Michael Dukakis: 17:51 Maybe it's being on this planet for nearly 85 years and having seen a lot of this stuff. Am I concerned? Yes I'm concerned. I'm appalled by the Saudi Arabian thing and our reaction to it. I can't believe this. Talk about a sordid horrible series of events with folks lying all over the place. And our government questioning whether it ever happened and kind of accommodating the Saudis and being concerned because we can't sell them arms and we were already the world's biggest arms dealer, which doesn't please me to begin with.

Michael Dukakis: 18:34 I'd like us to be the world's biggest peace maker, not arms dealer. So of course I'm unhappy about this but remember, I grew up in a country that was racist. That was anti-Semitic. Where, when Kitty and I were in Brookline High School, everybody talks about how great the schools were back then. Don't you believe it. Over half the kids in this country, when
Kitty and I were in high school, never finished high school. We didn't even talk about a dropout rate to look at that in the 25%.

Michael Dukakis: 19:09 People of color couldn't live in my town. 15 minutes from downtown Boston. I'm talking about Birmingham here. That was the world that I grew up in and frankly, I think those conditions had something to do with the fact that for whatever reason this nine to 10 year old kid began reacting very strongly to this obvious injustice that was going on every single day. We've got eight terrific grandkids and four more we inherited, and one of them is now a sophomore at Tufts. He's 6'4", I don't know where he came from. We don't have any 6'4" people in our family. But he's a wonderful kid, he's a great tennis player.

Michael Dukakis: 19:51 When he was 14, he and his dad began playing in the national father and sons tournament which takes place in Longwood. And Kitty was driving Niko out there. And she said to him, "you know Niko, when I was your age I couldn't step foot on the tennis court at Longwood." And he said, "Why not?" He calls her GiGi. She said, "Because I was Jewish." Of course, she subsequently discovered she had an Irish grandfather, that's a whole other story. And he couldn't understand this. What difference does that make? But that was the world we grew up in.

Host: Dan Cohen: 20:22 Yeah, not so long ago.

Michael Dukakis: 20:23 Not so long ago. And it's still out there. We've obviously made great progress here, but when I think back to those days, how do I feel about America? A lot better, but I'm obviously very concerned right now with I see is a lot of stuff that bothers me. I really think, as I said earlier, we had put behind us that thing. And Charlottesville, these neo-Nazi's walking around. I was a kid when six million people were gassed to death. This is not some kind of joke here, and somehow I had hope that we were by that, and I guess we aren't so then I keep working at it.

Host: Dan Cohen: 21:22 So if I could, I'd like to turn in the remaining time we have to another real passion of yours, which as I understand, also started when you were young and that you've really pushed on through your life which is passion around public transportation. And indeed it's ways that interacts with everything we've just discussed. How people are connected in the city.

Host: Dan Cohen: 21:42 It's actually been one of the major themes this podcast, not only Fred, But we've had Ted Landsmark on, to talk about how cities are developed and zoned and these sorts of things. We've had a
researcher from Northeastern talk about even the circulation of garbage in cities and how that works, because that also really affects our lives and tells you about the different neighborhoods and how they're connected. You've been such a passionate advocate for your entire career about public transportation. Can you maybe just tell us why in your words you feel it's just so critical to a city like Boston or any other city?

Michael Dukakis: I'll try to keep this brief. Needless to say it's difficult. Look, we hadn't built a single new car in about five years during WWII, and I was a kid during that period. There's a lot to be said for automobiles. It's a way to get around. And so there was this explosion after the end of WWII of interest in cars and so forth. I remember when the first new car arrived in our neighborhood. I think it was a Studebaker. Nobody knows what a Studebaker is these days.

Michael Dukakis: All of us kids excitedly gathering around this thing and touching this new car. We hadn't seen one, you know, it's obvious. They were pretty inexpensive. So we decided, hey we're going to start making the cars and they're going to want to buy them. And we did. Only to discover that there is a limited amount of space in which you can fit these things before so many people want to drive that you can't get around. The response was not to take our existing public transportation systems, and every major American city had them, so did European cities, so did Asian cities.

Michael Dukakis: But it was to build super highways, starting with the freeway system in California, which was thought to be a marvel at the time. By the time I arrived there in 1960 just to attend the Democratic National Convention, it was obvious in Los Angeles at least, that the freeways weren't working. Backed up until 3:00 in the afternoon, and a polluted atmosphere that was horrible. I mean you couldn't wait to get out of the place. Your eyes are burning and tearing. It was terrible. In a city that has a wonderful natural environment, you don't pollute it.

Michael Dukakis: The Nashua River was a floating fire hazard up here. I mean, Boston Harbor was full of raw sewage. And particularly when it came to these automobiles, tear down historic neighborhoods and ram an eight line expressway through, which three years later would be jammed with traffic. Don't ask me why, because I was riding those old wooden street cars when I was five or six around here, but it just seemed to me this was terrible. I also moderated a public affairs debate show on public television called The Advocate, it was quite popular and stuff. One of the
things we did was go to Stockholm and do a series of shows with Swedish television.

Michael Dukakis: 25:03 I had a chance to spend a week in Stockholm. Here was a city that was lovely, no super highways, a great public transportation system, and people were moving around a lot more easily and a lot more comfortably than they were with these super highways. I came back to Boston and said I'm just not going to do this to my favorite city, which has such charm. With all of the problems we had in the 50s and 60s and stuff, where we were tearing down beautiful pieces of this place to do what? To accommodate the automobile, including by the way, something called a central artery right through historic North End of the city and so on.

Michael Dukakis: 25:47 I became deeply involved with the folks that said we just can't have this, and we had a 10 year battle down over this thing. I mean, we were going to have an eight lane expressway right through Frederick Law Olmsted’s Emerald Necklace, in front of the Gardner Museum. [crosstalk 00:26:04] think about it. [crosstalk 00:26:07]

Host: Dan Cohen: 26:06 Think through from where talking, yeah.

Michael Dukakis: 26:07 And of course it would have been backed up with traffic until 2:00 in the morning if we'd ever built the thing. But it was a titanic battle. Fortunately, A) We've started convincing people that it didn't make any sense, and B) We had somebody named Thomas P. O'Neil, in the United States Congress, who happened to represent Cambridge, which was going to have two of these super highways rammed through it. Tip was the guy that made it possible for states that didn't want more of that highway money to use it for public transportation, and this state was the first state in the country to be able to use federal highway dollars for public transportation. And I happened to be Governor at the time.

Host: Dan Cohen: 26:45 Right. I remember you sort of rerouted a few billion dollars from the highway system into public transportation.

Michael Dukakis: 26:51 Like $3 billion.

Host: Dan Cohen: 26:52 Yeah.

Michael Dukakis: 26:52 And did all kinds of stuff on the public transportation system, which modernized the T and expanded and extended it and stuff. I think it's fair to say by the time I left Governor's office we
had maybe the best public transportation system in the country and what it had done was to refocus attention on not the transit system, but the communities through which it passed, and started attracting people to say, "Hey, maybe those are the neighborhoods now that we want to live in?" And one of the reasons Boston today is almost too successful is that we did that, and stopped this highway stuff which, in many other communities, destroyed all kinds of historic neighborhoods.

Michael Dukakis: 27:41

Now, we've got a management problem these days. We're not managing our public transportation effectively at all, and we're not investing not a huge amount of money, but sufficient amounts of money to modernize it to connect our two train stations, for God's sake. They're a mile apart. And complete the Northeast Corridor with that, but at the same time build a first class regional rail system using the existing network. I mean we're not talking about an awful lot of new construction here. We're talking about modernizing what we've got and fully integrating it, and making it work, and connecting it with the rest of the world.

Michael Dukakis: 28:18

That should not be difficult, and I don't know why we're having so much difficulty convincing some of the folks that are responsible for these policies that we shouldn't moving ahead on this.

Host: Dan Cohen: 28:30

Yeah, I was impressed when Fred was on the podcast. He really emphasized what a big pay off these public transportation projects have, regardless of how many billions are, they pay off 10 or 100 times in regional [crosstalk 00:28:45]-

Michael Dukakis: 28:45

I mean we extended the Red Line from Harvard Square to Alewife. Now that's basically the North/South rail link, only it's another half a mile longer, right?

Host: Dan Cohen: 28:52

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Michael Dukakis: 28:56

I think we did it primarily to build a public transportation system, but in the course of it completely revived and revitalized an important part of Somerville, which was hurting badly and is now an extraordinary neighborhood in so many ways. That's what happens when you invest in public transportation. If you do what California did, then you'll end up with sprawl all over the place and you lose the charm and the value of cities, and especially historic cities like this one.
Host: Dan Cohen: 29:29 Yeah, you mentioned 2040 and I thought I'd just a final question. Where do you see Boston in 2040?

Michael Dukakis: 29:36 Well I hope long before 2040. First, we're going to connect those two railroad stations and take about 80,000 cars off the road every day, which was what will happen if we unify and modernize our-

Host: Dan Cohen: 29:50 Yeah, for our distant listeners, this is the North and South Station, which somehow have never been united there, they're the two big rail stations you have to walk between them or [crosstalk 00:29:58]-

Michael Dukakis: 29:58 Every other city in the world has connected to those stations with underground connections, and here's Boston still sitting around.

Host: Dan Cohen: 30:05 Right, okay so connecting the South and the North together in the city-

Michael Dukakis: 30:07 But more than that.

Host: Dan Cohen: 30:09 Yeah.

Michael Dukakis: 30:09 This state, and this region, New England, need a modern, unified, comfortable, relatively high speed, it doesn't have to be 200 miles an hour, but it's got to be a lot faster than 30 miles an hour, rail system which not only by filling that gap, connects us fully with the Northeast Corridor and the rest of the country where I hope we're going to be able to do the same thing. But at the same time, brings back what we're calling our gateway cities, the old mill towns and cities which were at the heart of New England's birth in the first place, but deteriorated and declined badly during the 50s, and 60s, and 70s.

Michael Dukakis: 30:53 I mean we had unemployment rates when I first got elected in some of those cities that were in the 20s when those Depressions stuffed in. [inaudible]

Host: Dan Cohen: 30:58 Oh, wow.

Michael Dukakis: 30:59 But take a look at Lowell and what's happened there. Why? Well, lots of good people working and that kind of thing in a historic city. But it's got an important rail connection to Boston, and will I hope in the not to distant future have a rail connection to Concord, New Hampshire, and maybe to connect to Canada because high speed rail from Boston to Montreal, what do you
think? Three hours? I mean two great historic cities? Those are the kinds of things that are possible when you do this. In the meantime, obviously, we've gotten so successful at this, now we've got a housing problem. But we know how to build affordable housing, and we ought to be using some of the gains and some of the property tax revenue and other things that come from urban revitalization to provide people of low and moderate income with decent housing in the city of Boston, and there's no reason why we can't do both.

Host: Dan Cohen: 31:57 That sounds like a great future to aspire to, and to achieve. Governor Michael Dukakis, thanks so much for joining me.

Michael Dukakis: 32:02 Thanks for having me, Dan.

Host: Dan Cohen: 32:12 What’s New? is a production of the Northeastern University Library, with engineering by Jon Reed, and production assistance by Evan Simpson, Debra Mandel Jonathan Iannone, Deborah Smith, Sarah Sweeney, and Brooke Williams. You can catch all of our episodes, show notes and transcripts at whatsnewpodcast.org. And we’re available on iTunes, Google Play, and anywhere else you get your podcasts. You can follow us on Twitter @PodcastWhatsNew. We’d love to hear your thoughts and feedback. I’m Dan Cohen, see you next time on What’s New?

Michael Dukakis: 32:47 I did a lot of running.

Michael Dukakis: 32:48 God. Really?

Michael Dukakis: 32:49 It’s an interesting, story Dan. The first time Kitty and I ever met, I wasn’t aware that we were meeting. But she was. I and one of my cross country running buddies at Brookline High in 1951, having watched the marathon since we were three, decided we would do the marathon. Both of us were going out of New England to school. She to Duke and me to Swathmore.

Host: Dan Cohen: 33:15 And you had never run a marathon before?

Michael Dukakis: 33:17 No, but I’d done a lot of running and I was a basketball player, so I was in pretty good shape. And then we trained for, what was it about six or seven weeks after the basketball season before the 19th of April. In those days there was no shoe made for running on hard surfaces.

Host: Dan Cohen: 33:37 Wow.
Michael Dukakis: 33:37 None.
Host: Dan Cohen: 33:39 So you wore Chucks or something?
Michael Dukakis: 33:40 We wore low Ked sneakers.
Host: Dan Cohen: 33:42 Yeah.
Michael Dukakis: 33:42 Thank you, that's great.
Host: Dan Cohen: 33:44 Thank you, Debra.
Michael Dukakis: 33:45 And we knew nothing about exercise science. Right?
Host: Dan Cohen: 33:49 Right.
Michael Dukakis: 33:51 And you never drank water in a cross country race.
Host: Dan Cohen: 33:53 Right, right.
Michael Dukakis: 33:54 That was two and a half miles. Right. For in college.
Michael Dukakis: 34:00 So we're moving along at about a 6:50 mile for the first 10 miles. I mean we're in full run.
Host: Dan Cohen: 34:05 Really?
Michael Dukakis: 34:06 Yeah. And doing fine, and saying hi to the Wellesley girls and all that kind of stuff.
Host: Dan Cohen: 34:09 Right. Right, right.
Michael Dukakis: 34:11 By the time I got to Newton, I was beginning to feel it. Okay, fine. We had run a 10 miler and a 12 miler in advance because my tennis coach, I was the captain of the tennis team, my tennis coach didn't want me to run in the worst way. He had been a world class hurdler at Dartmouth and almost made the Olympics in 1932. So he was a track guy. Anyways, he said, "Why don't you run the-" there was a Hyde shoe race, it was a 12 miler, and a so-called Cathedral race. Boston was the 10 miler. Of course, 10 and 12 is not 26.
Michael Dukakis: 34:45 And we just had a ball. Wonderful. Fine, the crowd's [crosstalk 00:34:50] in our low Keds sneakers, right? Anyway, I begin to feel very thirsty. In those days, you didn't have a lot of stations
around and people were giving out half oranges. So I grabbed one. It was the best tasting orange I had ever had. But then developed an even greater thirst. I mean then I wanted a so ... By the time I hit Beacon Street in Brookline, and half the high school was out there waiting for us, I'm dying of thirst.

Michael Dukakis: 35:23
So we're coming down and in those days you had drug stores with soda fountains. They were these kids, "How are you?" "I'm dying of thirst. Get me water. Get me water." So they're running in and out of ... and there was a Brigham's just before Washington Square as you're heading down. Kitty was a freshman. I didn't know her. In fact, my high school girlfriend was the one who eventually introduced us and is one our dearest friends. She ran into the Brigham's and apparently got me a cup of water and gave it to me. I took it and drank it.

Michael Dukakis: 35:55
I have no recollection of that, but she does. Years later, through lots of interesting stuff we connect thanks to my high school girlfriend, Sandy, but it was interesting. So what happens? To close this off. Finished, three and a half hours. Not bad.

Host: Dan Cohen: 36:20
Wow.

Michael Dukakis: 36:22
And that brought you in at 57th, now it's 5,000 okay? But there it was a record field of 300.

Host: Dan Cohen: 36:29
Wow.

Michael Dukakis: 36:30
But they'd never had 300 runs before. I go home, fall into bed and I sleep for 12 hours. Get up at 7:00 or 7:30 in the morning. I've got to be down at the Dean Road playground tennis courts to play Malden Catholic, fortunately it was Malden Catholic, not a tennis power at 9:00. And my thighs have kind of locked on me. So I hobble to the bathroom. My mother in the meantime is getting breakfast downstairs. I can't walk down the stairs.

Host: Dan Cohen: 37:03
Yeah, the stairs are the worst part-

Michael Dukakis: 37:04
Oh, I mean I can't walk down.

Host: Dan Cohen: 37:05
After a marathon, yeah.

Michael Dukakis: 37:06
I'm sitting there and is like, "Oh my God-" my [inaudible 00:37:09] she was, "The coach is going to kill me and I'm the captain." I finally sat on my rump and just bounced down the stairs. I had my breakfast. I showed up. We beat them eight to one. I don't have to [inaudible 00:37:22] the one was. I literally
couldn't move laterally. All I could do is serve and come to net. And the guy figured it out. He hit it one foot either side. I was out of luck. It took me about a week to get back to it.

Host: Dan Cohen: 37:36 Yeah.