

Donnald K. Anderson

Page, U.S. House of Representatives (1960)

Staff, U.S. House of Representatives (1961–1969)

Democratic Cloakroom, U.S. House of Representatives (1969–1972)

Manager, Democratic Cloakroom (1972–1987)

Clerk, U.S. House of Representatives (1987–1995)

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“And with barely the trace of a smile throughout the conversation, which lasted perhaps five or 10 minutes, he [Ralph Roberts] asked me about how I was enjoying my experience as a Page. And I asked if he would mind telling me about what he did as the Clerk of the House. And he was forthcoming about that. And I sort of made up my mind then and there being Clerk of the House has to be the best job in the world, and my fantasy as a 17-year-old high school senior was to be the Clerk of the House—little knowing that 27 years later I actually would become the Clerk of the House.”

Donnald K. Anderson, January 25, 2006



Clerk of the House Donald K. Anderson standing in his office.
Image courtesy of Donald K. Anderson

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Abstract

Elected Clerk under Speakers Jim Wright of Texas and Thomas Foley of Washington, Donald K. Anderson began his 35 years of House service as a Page. Even before he was Clerk, Anderson's duties—running errands, operating elevators in the Capitol, enrolling bills, and serving Members in the Democratic Cloakroom—kept him close to the House Floor. In his seven audio interviews, Anderson shared illuminating anecdotes about personalities like Sam Rayburn of Texas, Hale Boggs of Louisiana, and Thomas P. “Tip” O’Neill of Massachusetts, and described in detail the old Capitol Hill neighborhood, particularly the Page boarding houses. His recollections of the advent of electronic voting, the shift away from patronage employment, and the integration of women Members illustrate how technological, procedural, and social developments have transformed the institution of the U.S. House of Representatives. Anderson's memories of his long tenure in the Democratic Cloakroom and his later rise to Clerk of the House, provide a rare look at the critical behind-the-scenes operations which enable the House to function each day.

Biography

Donald K. Anderson was born on October 17, 1942, in Sacramento, California, to Russell V. and Sally Anderson. Educated in the Sacramento public schools, Anderson first came to Capitol Hill on January 5, 1960, having been appointed a House Page during the 86th Congress (1959–1961) by Representative John E. Moss of California. After attending Sacramento State University and George Washington University, Anderson spent eight years in the U.S. Army Reserve. During the next several decades, Anderson held a variety of administrative and managerial positions in the House: He was an elevator operator, an assistant enrolling clerk, a clerk in the House Finance Office, and assistant manager of the Democratic Cloakroom. In 1972 Speaker Carl Albert of Oklahoma appointed Anderson Majority Floor Manager, a position he held until January 6, 1987, when he became Clerk of the House at the opening of the 100th Congress (1987–1989).

As Clerk, Anderson managed an office that controlled legislative, administrative, and financial operations for the House. His staff of more than 600 was responsible for House Floor operations, finance and procurement, information technology, and televised House proceedings, among other areas. One of Anderson's main achievements in his eight years as Clerk was the creation of two House offices: Employee Assistance and Fair Employment Practices.

Anderson retired from the House in January 1995. A resident of Capitol Hill, he was a member emeritus of the House Page Board and is an active board member of several charitable and educational organizations. He was invested by Pope John Paul II in the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem, a Catholic group for laypeople and clergy and the only order of knighthood of the Holy See.

Editing Practices

In preparing interview transcripts for publication, the editors sought to balance several priorities:

- As a primary rule, the editors aimed for fidelity to the spoken word and the conversational style in accord with generally accepted oral history practices.
- The editors made minor editorial changes to the transcripts in instances where they believed such changes would make interviews more accessible to readers. For instance, excessive false starts and filler words were removed when they did not materially affect the meaning of the ideas expressed by the interviewee.
- In accord with standard oral history practices, interviewees were allowed to review their transcripts, although they were encouraged to avoid making substantial editorial revisions and deletions that would change the conversational style of the transcripts or the ideas expressed therein.
- The editors welcomed additional notes, comments, or written observations that the interviewees wished to insert into the record and noted any substantial changes or redactions to the transcript.
- Copy-editing of the transcripts was based on the standards set forth in *The Chicago Manual of Style*.

The first reference to a Member of Congress (House or Senate) is underlined in the oral history transcript. For more information about individuals who served in the House or Senate, please refer to the online *Biographical Directory of the United States Congress*, <http://bioguide.congress.gov> and the “People Search” section of the History, Art & Archives website, <http://history.house.gov>.

For more information about the U.S. House of Representatives oral history program contact the Office of House Historian at (202) 226-5525, or via email at history@mail.house.gov.

Citation Information

When citing this oral history interview, please use the format below:

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Interviewer Biography

Kathleen Johnson is a senior historical editor for the Office of the Historian, U.S. House of Representatives. She earned a B.A. in history from Columbia University and holds two master's degrees from North Carolina State University in education and public history. In 2004, she helped to create the House's first oral history program, focusing on collecting the institutional memory of Members and staff. She co-authored two books: *Women in Congress: 1917–2006* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 2006) and *Black Americans in Congress: 1870–2007* (GPO, 2008).

— DONNARD K. ANDERSON —

INTERVIEW ONE

JOHNSON: This is Kathleen Johnson interviewing Donnard Anderson, former Clerk of the U.S. House of Representatives. The interview is taking place in the Legislative Resource Center, Cannon House Office Building. It is January 25th, 2006, and this is the first interview with Mr. Anderson.

Before discussing your career at the Capitol, it would be helpful to focus on some biographical information. Where and when were you born?

ANDERSON: I was born on October 17th, 1942, in Sacramento, California, which is still my other home to this day. I grew up in Sacramento, was educated in the public schools of Sacramento until I received my Page appointment in my senior year of high school, which brought me to Washington initially. I completed my high school education here in Washington at the Capitol Page School.

JOHNSON: What were the names of your parents and their professions?

ANDERSON: My mother, who is still living, is Sally Anderson, a career civil servant with the state of California. And my late father, Russell V. Anderson, was a civil engineer, who died about 30 years ago.

JOHNSON: I read that in 1959 you came across a magazine article discussing the Pages of the Capitol and you subsequently wrote your Congressman, Representative [John Emerson] Moss.

ANDERSON: Indeed. In late summer of 1959, as I was about to begin my senior year of high school, I read a lengthy article in *Time* magazine about Pages in the House and Senate. I decided this was a really extraordinary thing to do. I had developed an interest in parliamentary government because my mother had worked for many years—and would for quite a few years thereafter—in the state capitol in Sacramento, not very far from our home, in the state controller’s office. And so, frequently, after school or during break periods, I’d go down to the capitol and visit Mom at her office. And I got to know many of the members of the state senate and assembly and would hang around the chambers and watch our legislature in action. I became keenly interested in the process of consensus government.

So when I read the article, I thought, well, this would be a wonderful thing to do. But the article wrongly pointed out that unless you were well connected, came from a well-to-do, influential family—the chance of receiving a Page appointment in either the House or Senate was rather far-fetched. Of course those things didn’t necessarily describe my family situation, but in the spirit of nothing ventured nothing gained, I sat down and wrote a handwritten letter, which I still have, to our Congressman from Sacramento, the late John E. Moss, expressing in the same terms that kids do to this very day, why I would like to be a Page in the House of Representatives.

JOHNSON: Do you remember what you wrote specifically?

ANDERSON: Well, that I had an interest in representative government and politics and that I developed that interest watching the state legislature in Sacramento. I felt that it would enhance my own role as a citizen if I could see firsthand

how our government at the national level conducts the affairs of the people. I wrote it in longhand, fraught with misspellings. While I flatter myself that I have a great command of the language, spelling it, however, has been somewhat more challenging than understanding it. I put a 4¢ first-class stamp on it and sent it off to Washington with the expectation that if I got a response at all, it would be a refusal. And a couple of weeks later I received my first franked envelope from Congressman John Moss, informing me that he received my letter and congratulating me on my interest in Congress and on wanting to be a Page and informing me that he was delighted to be able to bestow the appointment. Call “Miss Whomever” in his Sacramento office to make arrangements to come to Washington.

I was so stunned by the prospect of the appointment that I didn’t know quite what to do. I wasn’t sure that I really wanted to do it. I was a senior in high school at that time—big man on campus involved in all the things that seniors tend to be involved in. And did I wish to give all that up to travel across the United States to a place unknown to do something that, frankly, I didn’t know that much about? But I thought, “It’s a window of opportunity that won’t be open very long. I probably ought not to let it pass.” And so I decided I would go. My mother and my family were rather reluctant at the thought of my going across the United States to live in a strange place with people they didn’t know. It would be my first time away from home.

But in any case, I decided that it was too extraordinary an opportunity to pass up. And, furthermore, if I didn’t like it, it’s not like joining the Army. I wasn’t, after all, under contract; I could come back home. Though that certainly would have been something of a failure in itself.

But in any case, Mother and I flew to Washington on one of the first commercial jet flights. Jet transportation by air had just been inaugurated, I think, the previous year. It was a very exciting thing to do. There were no nonstops from the West to the East Coast. You had to go through somewhere, in our case, Chicago. I'd never been so cold in my life. And we landed at what was then Friendship Airport in Baltimore. (Dulles hadn't been built yet. National didn't accept jets). We arrived at Washington late at night. My first view of the Capitol was of a red dome, since it was being refurbished at the time in conjunction with the extension of the East Front, and the dome had been sandblasted down to the bare metal and primed with red lead rust-preventive paint. It was a rather extraordinary sight to see the dome painted red. So that's how I initially came to Washington. When Congressman Moss retired in the '70s after 26 years in the House, in preparing his files for archiving, he retrieved the letter I had written him long before and gave it to me as a keepsake complete with the envelope with the 4¢ stamp on it.

JOHNSON: Oh, how nice.

ANDERSON: And I have that to this day. I've been reluctant to display it much because of the misspellings that recur in it. But in any case it is a treasure, and that's how it all began. Who knew that it would lead as far as it did?

JOHNSON: Can you describe your first day as a Page for the House of Representatives?

ANDERSON: Yes. It was January 4th, 1960. Mother and I stayed at the old Raleigh Hotel on Pennsylvania Avenue, right across from the old city post office. Early in the morning, we got on the trolley car—they still had trolley cars in

Washington in those days—and took the ride up to the Capitol, getting off in front of the Cannon Building, just a few yards from where we're seated now . . . walking across the grounds to the Capitol and of course it was a thrilling experience. In those days people didn't travel very much unless they were extremely wealthy. And those of us who lived on the West Coast always had the dream of coming back East and seeing Washington just for a few days, fleetingly, and here I was coming to spend quite a while living here.

We walked into the Capitol, and of course in those days there was no security whatsoever. The Capitol Police officer at the House door was engrossed in a newspaper, and we walked in and asked where the Doorkeeper's Office was, which was where I was to report. He directed us. The famous Doorkeeper of the House, "Fishbait" Miller, was in charge of the Page program. We went to his office, I did my paperwork, and was given a list of approved rooming houses in the Capitol Hill area where it was suggested that Pages live, since in those days there was no official housing for Pages. I was also told to come over to the Cannon Building and see Mrs. Cram, who was the secretary to the Democratic Patronage Committee, to pick up my letter of appointment directing the Doorkeeper to put me on the Page rolls. In those days this was a patronage culture. Virtually every single position in the structure of the House was appointed by somebody through patronage. So I came over, picked up my letter, brought it back to the Doorkeeper's Office, and that took care of the sign-in procedure.

Then Mother and I went off in search of a place for me to live. Of course, Capitol Hill had not gone through its renaissance—most of the houses were still pretty much as they were in the 19th century when they were built. In fact, some of them looked frighteningly close to something out of Charles

Dickens. In any case, we agreed that Mrs. Duckett's rooming house at 322 Maryland Avenue would be the right place for me to live. She, like most of the elderly ladies who took in roomers, was an old southern lady, a widow of the Baptist persuasion, and had some pretty traditional and old-fashioned views about manners and morals and other societal issues. As she was wont to say, she ran a good Christian home and wouldn't put up with any racing or running or carrying-on. So Mother was satisfied that I would be in a stable, well structured, and well supervised environment. She was a dear old lady. I think of her fondly very often. And I shared a room with a graduate student at GW [George Washington University] who was a Capitol policeman at the time. The Capitol Police in those days fell into two categories, either graduate students or military veterans. Scarcely a one of them had any real civilian police training. Of course, keeping in mind, that was still our age of innocence before assassinations or terrorism. The Capitol Police certainly weren't asked to do very much. What they did, they did rather well, considering that there was no threat at all.

Then the next morning about 6:00 a.m., I went off to Page School for the first time. It was a bitterly cold January morning. And even though I had bought a topcoat for living in the East—something that in California I really didn't need, it was still awfully hard to get used to being that cold. School started at 6:10 in the morning.

JOHNSON: And school at this time . . .

ANDERSON: The school was where it is now, on the third floor of the Library of Congress. It was called the Capitol Page School and provided education for Pages of the House, Senate, and Supreme Court. In those days we had four Supreme

Court Pages. There were 51 House Pages and 26 Senate Pages. Something that was very interesting about the transition to the new school—not only its small size and extraordinary location, being in the Jefferson Building of the Library of Congress, clearly the most magnificent high school campus in the world—but it was all boys. And not just all boys, but all white boys. Integration hadn't come to the Page program and wouldn't for several more years. Class began with a prayer and a reading from the New Testament. We did not have prayer in school in California; it was my first exposure to it. I must say I rather liked it at the time but, thinking back, it had to be uncomfortable to the handful of non-Christian Pages that we had because it was so patently Christian. We had the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag and then began our class day, which extended until about 10:30 in the morning, with a midmorning break at 8:00 for 15 minutes during which we would pile in the elevator and go down to the basement coffee shop, where a blind vendor ran a coffee bar operation. We would have a snack and a cup of coffee.

Of course, everybody in those days—including us—smoked, even though in the Page handbook, which was scarcely more than a small pamphlet, we were forbidden from smoking. But everybody did, and in the school itself, which absolutely blew me away, the one place where you could smoke was the principal's office. There were several filthy ashtrays on a table. I don't think those ashtrays had ever been washed—just emptied. If you preferred not to go down to the coffee room in the basement you could go into the principal's office and smoke. And I don't know how Dr. [Henry L.] DeKeyser stood it, since he was a nonsmoker. The room often looked like an old-fashioned pool hall in the middle of the morning, with maybe 30 guys in there puffing away.

But I discovered quickly that everything in the Page booklet was not exactly what it appeared to be.

JOHNSON: Do you have another example of that besides the smoking?

ANDERSON: Well, of course, drinking was forbidden. Of course, in those days young people did not, I think, drink excessively. It was more the thrill of the chase than it was the idea of getting absolutely blown away. On weekends we'd occasionally get on the trolley car and go downtown. A favorite gathering place was the old Bavarian restaurant, a German-style place on 11th Street, where the Marriott is now, that had German oompah music and beer in big steins, and we'd often go down there for dinner and a couple of German beers. But it was never with the thought of getting drunk—just to get away with it. In those days, there was an 18 legal age for beer and wine in the District of Columbia, which made the operational drinking age more like 15 or 16. Enforcement was, shall we say, uneven in most establishments in Washington. And most of the bars and restaurants near the Capitol on the block facing the Jefferson Building where the Madison Library now stands, and beyond would gladly enough serve us if we went in for a beer. I generally tended to be kind of cautious about that, because they were frequented by Members of Congress, not that they particularly cared either, but we tried to confine any activity that was at least nominally illicit somewhat further away from the building.

Keep in mind, in those days society was not fraught with the perils that it is today. As I say, drinking was not binge drinking, the kind of thing which seems to be so prevalent among young people today. Drugs simply were not there, they weren't part of the culture. It was not a question of choosing

whether to use drugs or not; nobody did, because they weren't around. Neither did people have the same casual attitudes about intimate behavior in those days. It was still an age where there was such a thing as shame. And it was not a double standard. It was viewed as just as shameful for guys as for girls to engage in intimate behavior. It simply wasn't done among decent young people.

So our lives were actually pretty tame by contemporary standards. Of course, if we did go out for a beer, we had to be very careful not to run into our landladies when we came in because, as I said, they were good Christian ladies, mainly of the Baptist persuasion, who would not put up with drinking, and if [you were] caught, there would be two phone calls regardless of the hour of the day or night—one to parents and one to sponsors—to point out where “Little Johnny” had failed. I wasn't that much of a drinker, so it was not something that I really had to live in dread of.

JOHNSON: Going back to your education, can you describe the curriculum at the Capitol Page School?

ANDERSON: The curriculum at the Page School was pretty much focused on the three Rs, as it is today—the kind of education that was necessary for college admission: language, history, science, English, mathematics. The faculty was really outstanding. Most of them had day jobs at local colleges and universities, and they were all highly tenured teachers and really excellent. Class sizes then, as now, were small, and so the education was very focused. Page School in those days was a four-year school, like any other high school. We had very few freshmen, but we did have a handful of them. Most of us tended to be either juniors or seniors, and most of us served for a year, maybe two years, as

Pages; while there were some that stayed for the full four years, there weren't very many of them.

I ought to point out that the Page program was not as formalized as it is today. It would probably be more accurate to describe it as a program now than it was then. Congress had an ancient tradition of employing young boys in their service, and because minors are required to be educated by law, the Congress had made arrangements to educate the boys that they employed. More of the boys that attended in those days came from the greater Washington area than they do today. Probably a quarter to a third of the Pages were natives of the Washington metropolitan area; the rest of us came from further away. So many of the boys that stayed longer than a year really weren't living away from home. They lived at home and got up extra early to catch the trolley car to the Library of Congress to attend classes. As time passed, fewer and fewer of the boys came from the Washington area, and it became a more national program, which it entirely is today. We might have four or five Pages from the Washington area now, and most of them come from all over the United States and even its territorial possessions.

JOHNSON: Were there any courses or guest lectures or any other type of exercises to prepare you for what you were going to witness on the [House] Floor?

ANDERSON: No. The education of the Pages was surprisingly quite separate from the work experience. Nowadays, of course, a very great effort is made to tie the formal education at the Page School to the work experience and to the business of government, but there was no connection whatsoever. The school was freestanding. It was operated by the public schools of the District of Columbia by direct reimbursement through a congressional line-item

appropriation to the D.C. government to provide education for our Pages. We had no guest lecturers, we had no field trips, we had no activities that were school-sponsored, save for a winter dance and a spring dance. And that was really sponsored by the school parents' association, and since we did have a number of parents that lived in the Washington area, there actually was a viable parent-teachers organization. Which, of course, wouldn't be possible today because the parents simply aren't in the area. I don't suppose I thought too much about it at the time, but as the years went by, I and others thought that we ought to make a greater effort to tie the work experience—which is why the Pages come here in the first place—to the formal education program administered by the school. We like to style our Pages as student-employees, “employees” being the noun and “student” being the modifier. We bring Pages here to be employees of the House of Representatives, but they are students as well and there ought to be a real connection—which there certainly is today—to tie the two together and to provide an explanation of what they are witnessing as Pages to the academic setting and bring in people from time to time who can share an insight through their own personal expertise into those things.

JOHNSON: Switching focus to your work experience, can you describe a typical day for a House Page in 1960?

ANDERSON: Well, it was absolutely heaven compared to how hard the kids have to work today and the long hours. We would come over from school usually at midmorning, about 10:30, quarter of 11:00, put our briefcases in the Pages' Cloakroom, the same one which they still use today down on the terrace level of the Capitol—along with our coats and whatever we had with us—and

then report to our work assignments either on the Democratic or Republican side.

We had some jobs in those days that don't exist today, simply because of the changing times. For instance, we had newspaper Pages that would rack the hundreds of daily newspapers to which the House subscribed that came by mail, largely, and so were hopelessly out of date by the time they got here—from all over the country. We had tall, sort of A-frame easels all over the Speaker's Lobby, and the newspapers had to be put on rods that hung on those easels that were categorized by states and regions so that Members, when they came over, could find their local newspapers where they ought to be. The Pages then kept the lobby tidy during the day, re-racking the papers after the Members had read them, and as new papers would arrive by mail—sometimes a week or more out of date—putting the new ones up and taking the old ones down. We don't have but a few papers in the lobby now, because Members now have information that is immediately available from all over the country, and there's just no need to subscribe to newspapers anymore.

We had door Pages that sat with the doorkeepers at the various doors to the chamber. And they would actually look for the Members when they had callers. The doorkeepers, who tended to be middle-aged and beyond, kind of sat there and made sure that no one entered the floor of the House that didn't have the right to be there, but the Pages would actually look for the Members on the House Floor. Other than that, the duties are essentially unchanged.

We wore blue suits and black neckties and white shirts, not the more attractive blazer outfits which the young people wear today. If the House wasn't in session, we could wear clothes other than our navy blue suits as long as it involved a jacket and tie of some description or a sweater and a necktie, but always with a tie. And if the House wasn't in session, or had adjourned early, we quit work at 3:30 in the afternoon—the kids work at least until 5:00 today. Night sessions were more the exception than the rule, as they have long since become, so we usually had the opportunity to get home, get our homework done at a reasonable hour. Most of us ate in boarding houses. I ate at Mrs. Eberhardt's boarding house, which was a couple of doors from where I lived on Maryland Avenue. She cooked meals for the many transient men who lived in the neighborhood. We had a lot of seasonal workers in construction and that sort of thing that would live in rooming houses, kind of follow the work wherever it led them, most of them highly skilled craftsmen, like marble setters and stonemasons. She would have two or three evening sittings and, as I recall, it was \$1.10 for dinner, which was eat-all-you-want-home-cooked food. Of course, you only had 30 minutes in which to eat it because she had to turn the table. It was in the dining room of her house. She could get about a dozen people around the table for each sitting. But you know when you're hungry, and particularly when you're young, you can pack a lot of food away in half an hour, but there was no lingering at the table for coffee and conversation. Up and out, so the next group could come in and eat.

And so we'd go back to where we lived, finish our homework if we had any left, and get to bed at a reasonable hour. We didn't have the distractions in those days that we have today. You know, some people had black and white television sets, but there really wasn't a whole lot to watch. You know, we

didn't have our personal music players and the other things which nowadays we can't seem to live without, so life was kind of unadorned and more focused than it is now. We focused on the things before us, which was our homework when we finished the day. We never went out on a weeknight; those things were reserved for the weekend—going to the movies or to the amusement park or whatever it was. But a school night was a school night, and since we had to get up around 5:00 in the morning, we were usually in bed fairly early, by 9:00 or 10:00. People just didn't stay up late in those days so the days were pretty focused.

JOHNSON: A few minutes ago you mentioned some of the assignments that Pages typically had. And I saw listed in your Page yearbook that you were in charge of telephones.

ANDERSON: I was a telephone Page. We would now call that a cloakroom Page. I was assigned to the Democratic Cloakroom on my second day as a Page. Congress didn't spend nearly as much time in session each year, and the Page program was not a year-round activity. Congress would often finish its work by mid- or late summer and simply would go away for several months. The Pages were only paid to the end of the month or two weeks after adjournment, whichever was the longer, when Congress finished its business for the year—which meant that only the Pages by and large who lived at home in the Washington area could stay on, because they weren't paid. And they would continue to go to school. The school operated year-round, like any other school. Many of the Pages would find work on Members' payrolls and work in Members' offices until Congress began the new session, in which case they'd switch over to the Page role again for their compensation.

So we'd often lose a lot of Pages after the final adjournment each year because they'd have to go home because they weren't getting paid. So when I arrived, I was immediately assigned to the Democratic Cloakroom, which was considered a rather prestigious position, because it was totally floor-based. I was faced with the daunting responsibility of learning very quickly—not 435 Members, but then about 280 Members—which then made up the rather substantial Democratic majority in the House. We learned to recognize the Members from the little picture book, which was small black and white, usually hopelessly out-of-date photographs of the Members. We often used to jest that many of the pictures were so old, they were probably high school graduation or first Holy Communion or bar mitzvah or whatever photographs.

JOHNSON: Was this the *Congressional Pictorial Directory*?

ANDERSON: *Pictorial Directory*. I still have mine. The Members were not required to submit current photographs, and so many of them didn't. They preferred to be ageless for their official photographs in the *Pictorial Directory*. We'd cut up directories and paste the pictures on 3 by 5 cards to make flash cards with the names on the back side so that we could practice recognizing the Members from those.

And it was a little easier, because Members spent much more time on the House Floor. We didn't have electronic voting. And the committees didn't sit nearly as much. And Members would often spend hours in the afternoon sitting on the House Floor, not necessarily following debate but socializing with each other, visiting, sitting in the cloakroom telling jokes and stories. And so there was a lot of exposure to the Members. We actually got to see

them up close and personal. It became much easier to learn who they were because they weren't just running in and out every hour or so for a vote, where it was entirely possible, as it is now, to hardly ever see some Members of Congress who just nowadays aren't floor people. But in those days the floor was a much busier place all day long than it is now.

The communications in those days, of course, were considerably less complicated than they are today. The 14 phone booths in the Democratic Cloakroom are still there. The phones were, of course, rotary dial, but when you picked up you didn't get a dial tone, you got a cheery Capitol operator who would say, "Capitol," and then you'd tell her if you wanted an outside line or a long-distance operator or to be connected to a certain Member's office or support office. And using the huge board with all the plugs that we see now only in antique photographs of switchboard operators sitting at these huge switchboards actually plugging cords into the board in front of them, that's how they would set up and take down phone calls—simply tell the operator what you wanted and she would make the connection for you. And because the Members were somewhat more accustomed to being waited on in those days, Members would simply walk in the door and say, "Get my office," and you were expected to know who they were. They didn't like being asked who they were; they expected the Pages to know who they were when they walked in. So it was all the more important to be able to recognize the Members so that when Congressman Smith walked in and said, "Son, get my office," we knew it was Congressman Smith, and if there were more than one Smith as there sometimes were—which one he was. And then we'd get on the phone and tell the Capitol operator, "Congressman John Smith's office, please." He would stand outside the booth until the call was set up, and then you'd step out and politely hand the Member the phone, and he

would get in and be sure to close the door behind him as he sat down on the stool in the booth.

Of course, there was no such thing as direct dial long distance. Members would come in and they might give you a number for an out-of-state city, and then you'd have to ask for a long-distance operator. Once connected to the long-distance operator tell her who was calling so she knew how to bill the call and who was being called and where. And then she would have to get a long-distance routing to set up that call. And those of us who were clever would often write down the routing for frequently called places so that we could save that time by giving the long-distance operator the routing. And, of course, they were often amazed how would someone know what the routing for a call was. I'm not quite sure what that meant, but it was in telephones that only a telephone operator would understand, but we would write down routing for places like New York or Chicago or San Francisco—cities that were frequently called—then place the call for the Members.

The other duties were, we had running Pages, of course, like they still do, the kids that actually ran through the hallways delivering things amongst the Members' offices. In those days we only had two office buildings because the Rayburn Building was a hole in the ground; it was under construction. It wouldn't be finished for another five years. Its namesake was still the Speaker of the House of Representatives when I came. [Samuel Taliaferro] Rayburn was a Speaker, not an office building. We only had the Cannon and Longworth buildings, which in those days were called the Old and New House Office buildings; they had yet to be named. And so we had a much smaller physical plant to cover. We didn't have the annex buildings that exist today. Pages once in a while would be called upon to deliver things

downtown, like to the White House or maybe one of the executive agencies, in which case we would usually be sent by streetcar, given carfare to do that. But that didn't happen very often. We didn't do much off-site.

The same old buzzer system on the Members' seats still exists that we used to respond to Members' buzzers when they wanted service on the House Floor. The overseers sat behind the Page desks and would call out numbers as the Members pressed their buttons, and using the little cards that we carried in our breast pockets we could locate where that button was and go down and see what the Member's need was. More often than not, he wanted a copy of whatever was pending before the House. Sometimes he'd say, "Go and call my office and tell them there'll be a vote shortly and I'll come back after that vote is completed." Members used to have somewhat more flexibility since, when we voted by roll call, votes averaged 25 to 35 minutes. If their name was early in the alphabet, they could vote right away and leave with the security of knowing that even if another vote occurred, they'd have the better part of an hour to come back. Roll call votes weren't as frequent because they were so time-consuming, but when they occurred, Members had more time to get to the House Floor to answer than they do today with electronic voting.

We had then, as now, the one Page who was first among equals, who was the Speaker's Page—who was the Speaker's personal attendant at all times—and, of course, it was quite extraordinary to be so close to the legendary Sam Rayburn all day long, following him around. He had been Speaker for so very long, that he was probably almost as well known nationally as the President of the United States.

I remember when I got here I expected Sam Rayburn would be a rather giant, looming fellow. Of course, we didn't have the mass media that we have now; you saw people mainly in photos in newspapers, where it's kind of hard to make a judgment as to how big they are unless you have some solid reference point. And I thought Sam Rayburn would probably be over six feet tall and a giant of a man, and when I first laid eyes on him, he was scarcely five [feet] six—a rather smallish man—though very broad in the shoulders. Of course, with his absolutely bald head, he was very intimidating, and he was fairly old at that point and in declining health. He was kind of a solemn figure, very intimidating. We looked at him with almost a religious awe. The Speaker had such a huge persona and dominated any setting in which he was to be found.

In fact, whenever he would come to the cloakroom for a cup of coffee or a sandwich or just to sit in the back and smoke a cigarette, the Sergeant at Arms would usually come to the cloakroom first to announce that the Speaker is coming, so that we were all prepared and braced up at attention. Nowadays, of course, Speakers come and go, and nobody pays much more attention to them when they go to the cloakroom than they would to any other Member of the House, but the appearance of the Speaker in the cloakroom was an occasion that required some preparation, and so his messenger was sent in advance to announce that he intended to come to the cloakroom, which meant that if the snack bar was busy, room was made in case that's where he wanted to go, so that he would have room at the counter. Or, if all the chairs in the back were taken, some Member, usually a more junior one, would get up to be sure that there was an armchair for the Speaker in case he decided to sit, and when he would come in, we would all say very politely, "Good morning, Mr. Speaker" or "Good afternoon, Mr. Speaker." And if we were very lucky, he might acknowledge us with a glance

and a harrumph, but he was never one to stop and visit with the employees; in fact, he didn't visit that much with his own colleagues, except some of his more senior pals.

JOHNSON: What about the other Democratic leaders, John [William] McCormack and Carl [Bert] Albert?

ANDERSON: John McCormack and Carl Albert were much friendlier much more approachable than the Speaker [Rayburn]. They both spent a lot of time on the floor. Of course, that's where Members were to be found all day long. The Members tended to spend much more time on the floor. The cloakrooms were always very crowded, and if you had a chance to stand in the corner and listen, just to hear the jokes and the stories . . . We had wonderful storytellers in those days that would just tell stories all afternoon, and the Members would all sit there and laugh uproariously and, of course, it was a very much inner sanctum for the men. The handful of women Members of the House never sat in the back. They would come in occasionally for a refreshment at the snack bar but never linger because it was like going into the men's locker room.

JOHNSON: Can you provide an example of any of the stories or the social interaction among Members?

ANDERSON: Well, some of the greatest storytellers who would sit there by the hour were [Donald Ray] Billy Matthews from Florida—these are all very senior, older Members—George [William] Andrews from Alabama; [Lucius] Mendel Rivers from South Carolina; [Thomas] Hale Boggs, [Sr.], from Louisiana, who eventually became a Majority Leader of the House, [Elijah Lewis] "Tic"

Forrester from Georgia; “Fats” Everett—his name was actually Robert [Ashton] Everett—from Tennessee, but he weighed about 350 pounds, and he had the nickname “Fats.” There were perhaps a couple of dozen of them who would just spend most of their day in the cloakroom. Members weren’t under the same strictures of pressure or time constraints that they are nowadays. You know, people didn’t come to Washington or the Hill in the numbers they do now, so they weren’t keeping endless appointments in their offices all day long. When they’d come to the floor in the afternoon they generally planned to spend much of the afternoon there, or their callers would be sent over to call them off the floor to visit in the hallway.

But some of the stories were reminiscences about political events and happenings, others were just stories that guys tell when they get together about their pastimes: hunting, fishing, going to the racetrack, whatever. I can’t say that much of it was particularly lurid or had, you know, a sexual connotation to it. Members’ speech was rather more pure, like everybody’s was in those days. There were some topics that were just off-limits amongst gentlemen—or if they were discussed, they were discussed with a certain amount of reserve and delicacy, but not with the no-holds-barred approach to things that people have a tendency to take today. Rather interesting, considering that the place was overwhelmingly male-dominated, that the language and the conversations would not have been somewhat more lurid than they actually were, but it was just interesting to hear the stories about how Members interacted with Presidents in bygone times, how various pieces of legislation that were considered landmark came to be, as they rehashed their involvement in some of the things that they held to be most dear.

JOHNSON: You alluded to the handful of women that were Members at this time.

Do you remember any of them? Martha [Wright] Griffiths and Edith [Starrett] Green come to mind.

ANDERSON:

Sure. There, as I say, weren't very many of them. Maybe 15 or 20, max. Most of them were widows of Members. That was the usual path that brought women to Congress, was succeeding deceased congressional husbands. Every once in a while, Members—women—would succeed on their own, but usually it was through widowhood that they came to the House. They were all pretty tough, hard-nosed people; they had to be to survive in that kind of environment—not abrasive, not strident or shrill, but they had to be assertive to demonstrate that they could hold their own in an overwhelmingly male environment. Otherwise they would be regarded as kind of cute little things, not to be taken too seriously.

But we did, because of the seniority system, probably have a surprisingly equitable distribution of chairmanships, because seniority tended to be color- and gender-blind. In those days where Southern Members were extremely senior and solidly Democratic, if chairmanships were chosen by secret ballots, as they were for a while in the Democratic Caucus much later, we probably would not have had black committee chairmen or even women committee chairmen because the attitudes that prevailed in those days would not have accepted that sort of thing. But because Members rose on the basis of seniority, which had its good and bad points, it ensured that we did have some black committee chairmen, as Adam [Clayton] Powell, [Jr.], and Bob [Robert Nelson Cornelius] Nix, [Sr.], and [William Levi] Bill Dawson were—all outstanding legislators. And certain women eventually became chairmen of the committees of the House, such as Leonor [Kretzer] Sullivan was chairman of the Merchant Marine and Fisheries Committee—that

immediately comes to mind. But the women by and large left the cloakroom to the men. They did not intrude, other than to come in for a cup of coffee or a sandwich, but never sit in the back.

In the '70s, when Helen [Stevenson] Meyner of New Jersey was elected to the House—and of course she came with a rather extraordinary political pedigree—her husband, Bob Meyner, was a longtime, extremely popular governor of New Jersey, and she was a first cousin of Adlai Stevenson, her maiden name being Stevenson. She one day saw a vacant couch in the back, and she decided to stretch out on it as the men had always done. And to see the looks on their faces, and it was just the shocked silence as they were all staring at Helen Meyner lying on her back taking a nap on one of the couches. It had never been done before. The idea that a woman would take off her shoes and lie down on a couch like they had been doing for generations was just stunning. And I don't think she ever thought about it. I don't think it was any conscious effort on Helen's part to integrate by gender the back area of the cloakroom. She was tired and decided to take a nap.

JOHNSON: Right. Did the logical thing.

ANDERSON: And she just did it. And I didn't even hear any particular discussion about it. And she started doing it on a more or less regular basis. I can't recall that I ever saw any of the other congressional women taking a nap in the back, but Helen Meyner frequently did.

And it's kind of like so many things: once the ice is broken, it's no longer exceptional; the next time it happens it's less remarked upon and less noticed and very quickly becomes accepted, but the first of anything is always the

most difficult. After that, the adjustment is generally much easier than anticipation of the adjustment.

JOHNSON: What about the African-American Members at the time? You mentioned Powell and Nix, and then also Charlie [Charles Coles] Diggs, [Jr.], was in the House.

ANDERSON: Charlie Diggs was in the House.

JOHNSON: Did they spend a lot of time in the cloakroom?

ANDERSON: Yes. Bob Nix, who was from Philadelphia, was definitely a floor Member. He spent his entire afternoon on the House Floor. When not sitting back in the Pennsylvania corner, which still exists to this day, he would often sit in the cloakroom wearing his sunglasses, which he was never without, and puffing on his pipe.

And he always seemed to be embraced broadly by his colleagues. I think if there was racism—well, there was no question about racism—but it was not terribly overt. As a matter of fact, I was often surprised that some of the worst racist remarks that I heard from Members of Congress weren't from the Southerners but were from some of the Northern liberals that would use some of the magic words which nowadays would be so offensive and career-killing if anyone were to be heard using them. But I heard Northern liberals often using some of those slurring words regularly—and, of course, being careful to notice who was around, but rather unguarded about it—where I heard frankly rather little of it from the Southern Members. You know,

whatever their views or prejudices might have been, they kind of did what they did without giving a great deal of voice to it.

JOHNSON: Adam Clayton Powell was very flamboyant. Did you have any interaction with him?

ANDERSON: Adam Clayton—well, I don't know that I would call him flamboyant. He was an elegant man. He was a very tall, handsome man, a really imposing figure. I mean, he would have drawn attention in any setting where he happened to appear. He was always very well and tastefully put together, paid a lot of attention to his grooming and his ensemble. He was a real gentleman, a very warm, friendly person, very approachable. He was viewed very fondly by the staff, and he was one of the best legislators in the House. I don't think anybody, regardless of their personal views of Adam Powell, questioned his ability as a Member and his understanding of the complicated subjects that he dealt with. He was chairman of the House Education and Labor Committee, which had a very broad jurisdiction. And he handled that with great adroitness, a great depth of understanding of the issues within the province of that committee. He had, of course, his own personal problems with, after a while, not showing up very often to attend the House, and he was under a certain legal situation in New York where he had accused someone of something and was under threat of subpoena if he showed up in New York, which he could only do on Sunday, when the process wasn't served.

JOHNSON: Right.

ANDERSON: So he would come into the city on Sunday. He was pastor concurrently of the Abyssinian Baptist Church, which was and remains one of the biggest and most important black congregations in the city of New York—a very important power base in Harlem. But he was sure to be out of town after Sunday and then after a while he didn't attend the House much at all and kind of took up residence on the island of Bimini. And it became an issue of nonattendance. He clearly had the worst attendance record in the House—probably historically one of the worst ever, but his genius was respected.

I always had a great fondness and personal respect for him, mainly because he was so warm and so genteel and I always felt him to be quite genuine. My bottom line with judging Members of Congress has always been how did they treat the help, as opposed to what they believe in or do philosophically. You know that was never my business to pass on what Members did legislatively or what their approach to government was, but basically were they kind, appreciative men and women who validated those who served them by kind expressions and gestures, and he always did.

JOHNSON: Earlier you mentioned “Fishbait” Miller, Doorkeeper of the House.

ANDERSON: Oh yes, “Fishbait.”

JOHNSON: What do you recall about him?

ANDERSON: Now “Fishbait” absolutely was flamboyant. As you can imagine, with a nickname like “Fishbait,” there has to be a character that goes along with it. “Fishbait” Miller was a native of Pascagoula, Mississippi. And he came to Washington as a 20-something under the patronage of Bill [William Meyers]

Colmer of Mississippi, who represented that area along the Gulf Coast, which he did for more than 40 years. Mr. Colmer brought him up as a clerk in the House Post Office. And like so many young people who come to the Hill, he kind of turned that into the beginning of a long career—rather like myself—that spanned decades. He eventually became the Doorkeeper of the House, which until a dozen years ago was one of the officerships of the House. The Doorkeeper was primarily responsible for a variety of services to the institution: the barbershops, beauty shops, the folding room, the document room, the Pages, the doorkeepers, the prayer room, things like that. And “Fishbait”—his name was actually William M. Miller—kind of created an aura about himself and about his office that probably didn’t historically go with it. He created a national image. He was highly visible. He kept an extremely high profile, which of course nowadays would be most unwelcome among the servants of the House, and I’m not sure ever was encouraged. Throughout my career I always felt that anonymity was my great shield. The less publicity I got, the more effective I thought I could be and the better I could do my job. So I avoided press exposure; I did not like to see my name in print or my face in the paper or on television.

But he loved it. He absolutely thrived and fed on publicity. There wasn’t an event of any dimension here that he didn’t show up at, and usually very intrusively. He was kind of a caricature of a Southerner, and, as a matter of fact, towards the end of his career he became so much of a caricature, that the Southern Members, who should have been his natural constituency, viewed him with an anxiety that he was the essence of what Northern people thought they all were like and really weren’t—you know, a yahoo sort of a hick, an uncouth sort of clownish individual, redneck. And that’s where he lost his natural constituency, the Southern Members.

He always carried a cigarette lighter, even though he didn't smoke and didn't like the habit very much. And would obsequiously light cigarettes for anyone that pulled one out. And, of course, in those days the number of smokers was very, very high amongst the Members and everybody else around here. He was constantly brushing dandruff off of the shoulders of Members, and he had a particularly annoying habit of kissing every woman that he encountered. Usually, I think, it was on the left cheek.

JOHNSON: Did that include Members?

ANDERSON: Oh, sure. Anybody. Nuns in their habit. And he would cite a citation of Scripture—I think it was Second Corinthians: “Greet ye one another with the kiss of charity”—to kind of mask what was really aggressive behavior, which now in many cases would be viewed almost as simple assault. And it would surprise some, delight others, horrify many who weren't used to being kissed by strange men.

I remember my late grandmother came here in June of 1960 with my grandfather to attend my graduation from the Page School, and I introduced her to my boss, “Fishbait” Miller, and he planted a kiss on her cheek, and she, I could see, was absolutely thunderstruck. I should have prepared her for that, I guess I neglected to. And she kind of pushed him away and said, “Sir, that is a liberty that I reserve for my husband and other near relatives.”

And, of course, you couldn't insult him or embarrass him. He was just not the kind of person who could ever be embarrassed. He was absolutely impervious to that. But he was kind of a clownish, almost boorish, individual. He went from being sort of cute and eccentric to being bizarre,

which eventually led to his defeat in 1974, when he lost his office to Jim Molloy. But he was an interesting person to work for. If he liked you, he was your best friend and would do anything he could for you. However, if you rose to a certain point where he viewed you as a possible threat, if you were getting to be too visible or developing a constituency amongst the Members of your own then he could turn on you like a stray dog, and be very cruel and very mean and try to suppress the fact that someone around him was becoming a threat in terms of their own achievement or developing bona fides amongst the Members. For many years I was most devoted to him, and he was very good to me, and then I reached a certain point after many years in the cloakroom where I think he viewed me as something of a threat because I was developing a constituency and a credibility among the Members. And the relationship suddenly cooled, to almost iciness. And we were not on particularly good terms when he left the service of the House.

JOHNSON: Did you have the opportunity to get to know the other [House] Officers at the time?

ANDERSON: At the time not very well. Well, as years passed, yes.

JOHNSON: But while you were a Page?

ANDERSON: No, the Officers of the House were remote figures of some reverence and awe. It was a place where the hierarchies were much better observed in those days than they are today. It would be unthinkable in most cases for people on staff to call a Member by his or her first name. It just wasn't done. If you developed a friendship and developed that kind of intimacy where first names would be used, you never did it in front of other people; it was reserved for

private occasions. But there was always the very respectful interval, which was rather typical of society generally in those days, where the honorifics of “Mr.” and “Miss” and “Mrs.” were much more widely used than they are today, where they have fallen into almost total disuse, much to my regret.

Officers of the House did whatever they did from their rather grand offices in the precincts of the Capitol. We didn't see much of them. Mr. Roberts, who was the Clerk of the House at the time—Ralph R. Roberts from Indiana—had been the Clerk for a very long time and would be for a few more years afterwards. Very imposing man—tall, trim, black hair, always was partial to inky-blue suits and very dark subdued neckties and white shirts. Of course, that was pretty much the uniform that most men wore in those days—very conservative business attire. Very dour, kind of pokerfaced, hardly ever cracked even a trace of a smile. And, of course, I learned early on that next to the Speaker, amongst the officers of the House, the Clerk was the most prestigious of the Officers. And as a result, he had a wonderful office, now the Congressional Women's Sitting Room, just off Statuary Hall—which had been the Clerk's Office for 105 years—would be for 105 years—before it was moved to the suite in the East Front extension that I later occupied.

And one day I was sent to carry something to Mr. Roberts personally and went to his office. And, of course, there were only a couple of people in the reception room; staffs were very tiny in those days. And they said, “Oh yes, he's expecting that, go right on in.” And, of course, it was this wonderful vaulted-ceiling room with antique furniture, including the couch on which President John Quincy Adams died in that very room in 1848. And Mr. Roberts was sitting arrow-straight behind his desk, which was a large partners desk. I used it myself later on. And I almost bowed as I handed him the

envelope. And I started to withdraw, and he very kindly asked me what my name was, and I told him. And he said, “And where are you from?” And I said, “Sacramento, California.” And he said, “And you’re enjoying your Page service?” “Oh, very much so, Mr. Roberts.” “Well, sit down and tell me about it.” And he motioned me to sit on the Adams couch. And I knew about the couch, was the first time I’d ever seen it. And I certainly didn’t expect to be invited to sit on it. And with barely the trace of a smile throughout the conversation, which lasted perhaps five or 10 minutes, he asked me about how I was enjoying my experience as a Page. And I asked if he would mind telling me about what he did as the Clerk of the House. And he was forthcoming about that. And I sort of made up my mind then and there being Clerk of the House has to be the best job in the world, and my fantasy as a 17-year-old high school senior was to be the Clerk of the House—little knowing that 27 years later I actually would become the Clerk of the House.

JOHNSON: That dreams can come true in this case.

ANDERSON: Yes, yes, and that fantasies can become reality. Best part of it was the reality was even better than the fantasy. But in any case, that was my, as a Page, probably my only real encounter with an officer of the House, including the one that employed me, the Doorkeeper “Fishbait” Miller. But it was one of those life-altering experiences where as it turned out, when I did decide to stay on and continue my education in Washington later and then at a certain point decided on pursuing service of the House as a career path, that I would eventually become the Clerk of the House. And that kind of remained my fantasy, and it actually came to fruition. Is this a great country or what?

JOHNSON: Certainly is. I'm just going to switch CDs.

ANDERSON: Go ahead.

END OF PART ONE ~ BEGINNING OF PART TWO

JOHNSON: We ended talking about the House Officers, and while the microphones were off, the tape was off, you started talking a bit about the culture of the institution. If you could just elaborate on that point.

ANDERSON: Sure. In the House of Representatives, as in other areas of American society, distinctions were more carefully and clearly drawn than they are today. When I came here, I was brought up in a culture of officers and enlisted men, the enlisted men being the people who were the servants of the House who served the Members and the Members being the officers, with a little "o," and that distinction was very clearly and carefully observed. Only the most senior employees ever called a Member of Congress by his first name, and then not very often; it just wasn't done. We were always very meticulous about "Mr." and "Mrs." and "Mr. Chairman" and "Mr. Leader" and "Mr. Speaker," whatever the appropriate appellation happened to be.

And as society changed, of course, the House—which was always a reflection of American society—started changing with it; informality became more commonplace. Members, far from preferring to keep the distinction, started encouraging the staff to call them by their first names, which I always abhorred. I think when lines of responsibility are blurred, it makes people on both sides . . . makes it more difficult for them to carry out their duties. I

always felt that I could do my job better if I could keep an interval of separation. There comes a time when Members of Congress, just like anyone who occupies a superior position, has to come down on a subordinate. And if you've engaged in debauch or have a very personal, familiar relationship, it's awfully hard then suddenly to become hard-nosed and demand the kind of respect and service and immediate obedience which must exist when people's responsibilities are clearly distinct.

I have always been rather uncomfortable about calling Members of Congress by their first names. As I got older and they got younger, and I stayed here longer and they came more frequently, it became kind of awkward not to, particularly if they insisted. And so with some reluctance, I started calling Members by their first names. And even with some of them I never could bring myself to do it; the respect that I had was just so much that I couldn't possibly use a first name. You know, some of the Speakers I have served, if not directly, have certainly given me clear hints that it would be acceptable if I chose to do so, to use their first names. I think they sensed the fact that if they asked me to, it would put me in an uncomfortable position because I'm reluctant to do it. So that option is kind of there by implication—that it'd be okay with them if I decided I wanted to pick up that option. I never have. For instance, in the case of the current occupant of the chair, Speaker [John Dennis] Hastert, I knew him for years as "Denny," from the day he took his seat in the House. But once he became the Speaker, I've never called him Denny again. I've always called him "Mr. Speaker." It's a singular position, and I think that must be recognized. And the Speaker and I are no less friends because I have made that distinction, any more than with the two Speakers I served as their Clerk, Speakers [James Claude] Wright, [Jr.], and [Thomas Stephen] Foley who clearly would not have been the least bit

offended by my calling them by their first names and even kind of gave me the option of doing it. I never did. And so we maintained that respect and that, I think, healthy interval and at the same time enjoyed a closeness and a confidence and a mutual respect.

JOHNSON: Reverting back to your time as a Page, did you have any particular role models that may have influenced your philosophy that you're speaking of now, and also influenced your long and very successful career on the Hill?

ANDERSON: Well, there were a lot of role models. I've always been a good listener, and I like to think that I've been a good observer. That was the way my mother trained me, to watch people and listen. I think, quoting Benjamin Franklin, that "It is better to remain silent and be thought a fool than to speak and dispel all doubt." And Mother always said, "Watch out for the quiet fellow, because he's listening, he's paying attention." And as the time went by and I was exposed to the movers and shakers of the nation, I started making critical judgments as to why some rose above the others in terms of leadership and the respect and the influence that they could wield within their peer group and why that occurred. And to those that seemed to be kind of always in the pack or even those who were from time to time conspicuous failures that just couldn't seem to handle the responsibility of high elected office. And so I was influenced both by positive and negative examples, because a negative can be a reinforcer, too, in terms of a lesson learned as to why something should be avoided.

In terms of my role models, I suppose it was those who could simultaneously enjoy the friendship and warmth of their colleagues while at the same time being able to exert a strong and compelling influence on them, because

sometimes the two are mutually exclusive—where you either lead and sort of insulate yourself so that you aren't influenced by personal relationships or exert influence because you have developed strong personal relationships where people just automatically will agree to do what you'd like them to do because of the warm feeling and relations that exist between you. I suppose one of the examples that I like to cite is Speaker [Thomas Philip (Tip)] O'Neill, [Jr.], who was my friend and mentor, who was a very warm, outgoing, friendly person, very accessible, very approachable. He enjoyed a tremendous well of friendship and respect among his peers and yet could bring great force to bear when he needed to achieve a legislative objective. And he did that very successfully. And it was, I think, kind of a fine balance about maintaining the power and authority that must repose in someone in high office, and yet at the same time the bonding of personal relationships built by carefully developed friendships and associations. He was a master at it and a very sincere person. I never found any guile in him. That you kind of felt that you always knew what was on his mind and that when he said something, that was what he was truly thinking. That there wasn't an ulterior motive or a hidden agenda.

And I always tried in my own dealings—as I grew in stature within the structure of the institution—to be approachable but at the same time try to ensure that when I had to act sometimes negatively, that I could do so effectively. I liked to be known to my employees so that they felt comfortable around me. Clerks had a tendency to be rather remote people. Clerks just weren't seen very much, even by their own employees. And I remember when I became the nominee of the Democratic Caucus in 1986 in December of that year, and one of my soon-to-be department heads invited me to his departmental Christmas party, which was in one of the committee rooms in

the Rayburn Building, and said, "Come on over, we'd love to see you." And I hadn't taken office yet, but I would the following month, and so I came in, and people in the room kind of looked because they knew that in a few weeks I would be their employer, and the place almost fell quiet. And I said to the department head, I said, "Well, why don't you take me around and introduce me to these good people, some of whom I already know and others that I don't; [it would] be a nice occasion to establish a rapport in a purely social setting." And I remember being introduced to one fellow who was in his late middle age, I would judge, at that point, and he said, "Hey, you're the new Clerk, you're the man." And I said, "Well, yes. I will be next month." And he said, "I've never met a Clerk before. In fact, I don't think I've ever even seen one." And I said, "Really? And how long have you been a member of the Clerk's organization?" "Twenty-four years." That gave me a message right there: I will give myself much better exposure. There's no excuse for anyone not to know who their employer is or having never met their employer or a series of them.

So I tried to walk that fine line between being warm and approachable and at the same time keeping a certain separation so that when I had to be tough and demand immediate response, I could do it without people not taking me seriously.

JOHNSON: So this began while you were a Page observing different Members?

ANDERSON: Sure. Making constant judgments as to why some clearly succeeded far more than others. What was it? And there were some who, at least for the short term, were successful because they were bullies. They were really nasty SOBs, they were scary people. And you can intimidate for a while. Fear can be a

motivator, and sometimes it's not a bad motivator at least to have a little bit of fear in the equation. When it takes over, though, it lasts only for so long, and you develop such hostility, that people will seize on it to be your undoing as soon as they possibly can. There needs to be a certain dread of the boss, but it shouldn't be an unwholesome fear or something that is intimidating. But to know that the boss, you know, has the right and will assert that right, you know, to be in charge when it's necessary to do so. You know, you have to leave a workforce with that understanding that no matter how nice a guy or person you are, that you can assert authority effectively when you need to. And they need to understand when that moment has arrived that the other cordial relationships are set aside for the time being while something has to be done or achieved.

But I just watched that process for a long period of time. As I say, the journey took me 27 years before I was elected Clerk, so I had a lot of time to study and observe. I never wrote anything down, but I made a lot of mental notes about the people that I liked and why I liked them and why some were clearly more successful than others—why some people enjoyed a respect and a trust and a fondness and others didn't . . . where there was no fondness or trust or real respect. And I hoped that I would adopt those good points and avoid the bad points.

JOHNSON: And this journey all began with you starting off as a Page.

ANDERSON: Yes.

JOHNSON: I don't want to neglect to ask you to look over your page from the senior yearbook in 1960.

ANDERSON: Oh, must I?

JOHNSON: If you don't mind. Your memories and reflections from years ago.

ANDERSON: “Fashionable young political aspirant who recently made his political debut on Capitol Hill.” Well, perhaps I made my debut—it didn't seem to make the papers at the time. But who would have known at that time—of course, to me to have been a Page was the be all [and] end all; if my career had started and ended there, to this day I would have reflected on it no matter what I achieved later in life as one of the most extraordinary things that a young person could have done. As I say, it led me all the way to the top of the tree. As the time passed, I ran out of rungs in my ladder since the Clerkship is the highest office within the gift of the House to one of its servants. And even though I had a certain hope, it wasn't until the three or four years immediately before the event that I thought it was actually within the realm of possibility that this might happen. And I still to this day have not quite gotten over the fact that it did happen. People occasionally will say, you know, “Aren't you disappointed that you're not the Clerk of the House anymore?” No, not at all. I would have been disappointed if I had never become the Clerk of the House. But so far, only 33 Americans have ever been the Clerk of the House, and I'm one of 33 who could comfortably fit in this room right now, all together. Not bad company, I think.

JOHNSON: Not at all.

ANDERSON: So I have no regrets at all. I miss it, but not a lot. I kind of like my life as it is now—sort of free from stress and aggravation—and I can focus on other things. But really, very little was left undone. Let's see, well, I did leave

behind my 1959 Chevy Impala, which was not quite a fate worse than death. And I did find indeed that living in Washington has its compensations.

JOHNSON: One thing that I wanted to ask you, it's just a simple point, but I thought something that was important nonetheless. You were coming from such a long distance and hadn't lived away from home. Were you homesick at all?

ANDERSON: Not particularly. Of course, I was so psyched with the great adventure of crossing the United States and coming to the city of Washington. And that was the excitement about kind of having an idea what was ahead of me—but not in precise terms—and everything always turned out to be better than I thought it was going to be, which is kind of nice when that happens. Sometimes things can be disappointing or a bit of a letdown. In my case, everything always seemed to be better than in my expectations.

When I saw my mother off at Union Station on the train platform when she began her journey back to California, and she decided to turn it into a vacation on the way home for her; she went to New York first and spent a few days there and then continued by train leisurely back to California. But I was doing just fine until I saw her onto the train. And then I almost came apart because here I am standing on the train platform at Union Station in Washington, D.C., almost 3,000 miles from home, absolutely on my own and having to sink or swim on my own. Fortunately, she prepared me well for what was to follow. I think I learned my lessons at my mother's knee very well. She gave me a sound and solid upbringing so that I was prepared to handle myself well in most of the situations that presented themselves. But I was really distraught for a while when the train pulled out and here I am all by myself, not really knowing anybody in this city—I mean, I didn't even

know the Congressman who appointed me. I didn't meet him until I got here. Because the appointment was made entirely on the strength of the letter that I wrote him.

But quickly I started making friends with my peer group, and they were very open and welcoming. Some had been here for quite a while. Others were new, like myself. And one thing about bonding in Washington is, to this day most of us are out-of-towners. We come from other places, and so we have that much in common, which is very little. And so people have a tendency to bond very quickly. So I adapted, and, of course, I was only going to be here for seven or eight months. I knew I was going back to California. It wasn't like I was going away for years and to be separated. Now granted, in those days, people didn't fly back and forth like they do now; it was a very expensive proposition. They didn't have bargain fares. And even long distance was a very expensive proposition. You just didn't pick up the phone and call from Washington, D.C., to California just because you wanted to hear someone's voice, it was expensive.

JOHNSON: You were responsible for paying for your transportation to D.C.

ANDERSON: Yes. Yes, the only thing that we got was our education, which we still provide free, but out of my paycheck, which after deductions was \$218 and change each month, I had to pay for room, food, clothing, entertainment—anything else that came up. Granted, though, everything was kind of cheap in those days. And there wasn't a whole lot to spend money on. And I have often pointed out that on my modest salary as a Page, I probably had more disposable income than at any other point in my life until I was elected Clerk of the House, when my salary spiked. You know, nowadays there's so much

that somehow while we don't seem to need it, we can't live without it. Where you can spend every penny and much more on all this consumer stuff that is constantly being produced to tantalize and tempt us. But in those days, there really wasn't much to buy unless you were a clotheshorse. There wasn't much to spend money on. Food was cheap. Entertainment was cheap, which took the form mainly of going to the movies, which hardly cost anything. Or you could go to the ballgame for 75¢ or a dollar at the old Griffiths Field [Stadium], where the Washington Senators used to play. That's where I saw my first Major League Baseball game. So we weren't spending tons of money. There just wasn't much to spend it on. You'd have to work at extravagance in order to eat up your paycheck.

That gold ring I just showed you—my Page ring—when I bought that ring, this was the top-of-the-line-ring. I could not have spent more on my Page ring from Jostens if I had wanted to. It cost \$35. It's a 14-karat ring. But just to put it in perspective, my rent was \$30. So it was more than a month's rent. You know, all of that seems laughable today, but you know, I kind of thought about it before I paid \$35 for that ring, did I want to spend that much money. And, you know, now we'll go out to dinner and spend \$35 and think nothing of it. But there were good times. We always had plenty of money. I managed to put some aside. I didn't need to spend everything that I made.

JOHNSON: Before we move on to other topics and wrap up your time as a Page, I wanted to ask you about the lunch counters in the cloakroom. So Helen Sewell and her father were on the Republican side.

ANDERSON: Yes.

JOHNSON: But who was on the Democratic side?

ANDERSON: When I came, Virginia and Clinton Gibson ran the Democratic snack bar— husband and wife. They had been running it for quite a long time. They were in late middle age when I became a Page. They took it over from old Mr. King, who was a blind black gentleman who had run the snack bar for quite a long time. I don't know whether that law still exists, but there used to be a law that gave preference for concession stands in public buildings like post offices and courthouses to blind people. And when I was a kid many snack bars and concession stands in public spaces were run by the blind because they had that special privilege of doing that.

So Clint and Virginia Gibson took over from Mr. King; I think he decided to retire. I think he was quite old, and he left, I believe, in the '40s. There were a lot of Members that still remembered and spoke fondly of Mr. King. And they were there five days a week, whether the House was in session or not, and very rarely were in session on Friday, but they were open, and there would be a few Members who would come over in midday and have a sandwich.

Once in a while the Speaker would come in and have a cup of coffee, which of course would always create utter silence because we were afraid to open our mouths when he was in there, and sometimes he would just be in there by himself having a cup of coffee at the snack bar. But they had good, freshly prepared food, very reasonable. They made real milk shakes with real ice cream. In fact, I have the old milk-shake mixer that came from the Democratic snack bar when it was replaced with a much newer, sleeker machine. They were going to trash the old one, which was perfectly

serviceable. So I asked if I could take it home. Someone said, "Sure, we're just going to throw it out." And I'm very proud of that old milk shake machine.

Then when Clint and Ginny started getting on in years and decided they wanted to retire, Virginia's youngest brother, Raymond Roebuck, took over the snack bar. These were kind of family sinecures, and Raymond ran it for another 20-some years before his health began to decline, and then he retired. It did not pass on to a relative, but he had the inside track on who would replace him. It was all kind of an incestuous operation.

But they were fascinating, and they still are places where, they're very small and compact, and the Members would kind of stand there shoulder to shoulder and talk about things that were very important, cut their deals, and make their agreements and discuss things rather candidly. Because the cloakrooms are really their private space, and, you know, if you were the soul of discretion, you could kind of stand nearby and pick up on a lot of things and, you know, as long as you didn't run your mouth about what you heard, you were kind of taken for granted.

I remember when Mr. O'Neill was the Speaker, I used to see him often come in by himself when there wasn't anybody at the snack bar and get a cup of coffee or something, and then lean way over the counter, and it looked like he and Raymond, who ran the snack bar, were whispering in each other's ears, and I often thought what are Raymond and the Speaker talking about. It's so mouth-to-ear, so clandestine-looking. And I finally couldn't stand it anymore. And I one day said, "Ray, what do you and the Speaker talk about so confidentially? Not that it's any of my business, and I'm sure you'll tell me if it's not, but I see you kind of 'shushing' together all the time." He says,

“Are you kidding?” And I said, “Well, no, I’m kind of curious.” And he said, “We’re talking about sports.” He said, “We’re both big fans, you know; he follows the same teams and games that I do. And so that’s what we’re talking about. Occasionally it might involve a little wager.” “Oh, okay.” I thought, isn’t this great. The Speaker, always looking to Ray as his source of turf information as to what’s going on in the world of sports, because Ray really knew his teams and the various competitions and rankings. And the Speaker loved that. He was an avid sports fan.

JOHNSON: So that was indicative of the sort of laid-back atmosphere that you’ve been describing in the cloakroom.

ANDERSON: Yes, yes. And I used to tell new Members that, you know, take some . . . and I participated in new Members’ orientation . . . that, you know, you’re overwhelmed when you start here, with all the things you’ve got to learn, and got to do, and get your committee assignments and choose your staff. And learn, you know, how the House functions. But take some time and make sure you just force yourself to set it aside to stay in the cloakroom or sit on the House Floor. It’s a very informal place. If a seat is not taken, it’s yours. Sit down and you might find yourself sitting next to a senior committee chairman or your party leader or the Whip or even the Speaker. And it’s a good way to break the ice and start cementing relations with your colleagues. And rather than taking your lunch at your desk or going to the restaurant, come over and stand at the snack bar. You might be having a sandwich with the Speaker, and it’s a good way for him to get to know you, and you can know him and get a head start in cementing your relationships. Very casual. You know, if there’s a spot open, it’s yours; it’s not reserved for anybody. And a lot of Members told me they followed that advice and started coming

to the cloakroom, even if it was only for 30 minutes. The chance to get to know people informally, without an agenda. You know, I'm not sitting down because I have something I have to talk to you about; I'm just sitting down because you're here and I'm here. You know, where are you from, what about your family, the kind of thing that people have in common. Did you move the wife and kids here? Or leave them at home? Or, whatever. It's a good way to start developing friendship.

JOHNSON: One final point I wanted to ask you about your time as a Page.

ANDERSON: Sure.

JOHNSON: In your graduating class, there was you who went on to become Clerk and there also was [James Thomas] Jim Kolbe.

ANDERSON: Jim Kolbe, who was a Senate Page. He was Barry [Morris] Goldwater, Sr.'s Page in the Senate for four years, I might add. He was the one person in our class who would have utterly amazed me if he had not become a Member of Congress someday. I told him that just recently, in fact, at his Christmas party last month at his house, which is just a block up the street from where I live. I told him, "You know, Jim, I would have been most surprised if you had not become a Member of Congress." And, of course, he's announced his intention not to seek re-election after 22 years. Ron Lasch was also our classmate. Republican. Stayed on for a total of 40 years. He just retired five years ago. Ran the cloakroom for the Republicans, parallel to the time I ran the cloakroom for the Democrats and then became a minority officer, not that those titles had any real bearing to those offices. And they used to use them, but they don't anymore. And he just retired five years ago. So at one

point, there were three members of our class still in the service of the House, one as a Member, one as an officer, and the other as a minority officer. So out of the small senior class not bad, I think.

Most of us, like most of the Pages generally, don't pursue careers in politics. Many of the Pages leave here saying, as I'm sure most of us did, "We'll be back someday with an MC [Member of Congress] behind our name." But, in point of fact, you know, you quickly discover as you move on—the next step being college and the diversity of options that that brings, and new horizons, new perspectives—that there are a lot of wonderful things going on in this great big country other than politics. And I tell the kids, with whom I still have close contact—I just chaperoned their winter formal this past Saturday night—that, "Fine, if you want to pursue a career in Congress or elective office, go for it, but before you make a commitment, you know, look around and see what else is going on. There are other worthwhile things to do with a lifetime. And as far as Congress is concerned, we've been doing business at the same address since 1800; we're not going anywhere. We'll be here if you decide you want to come back, but don't lock yourself into a commitment too early on."

And politics is a fickle business: For some of us it works out just fine, for others it's a life of disappointment and frustration. In my case, everything went swimmingly well. As they say, I've lived a charmed life. Others don't find that kind of progression involved. So many of them go on to other things. What we're trying to do with the Page program—and I think then, as now—is not run a school for candidates, but run a school for good citizens. To sensitize young boys and girls from our society as to what representative government is all about, what it means to be a committed, involved,

enlightened citizen of the republic. And how to participate more actively and more ably in the body politic. And if that takes the form of holding an office someday, that's fine. But that's not the only way, you know, to practice citizenship, and there are all sorts of avenues for those who feel a commitment to do something for the public good. The private sector is full of those options, just as the public sector is.

JOHNSON: Was there anything else you'd like to add about your time as a Page that we haven't covered today?

ANDERSON: I'm sure the moment I get up from this table, I'll think of 100 things that I would like to add. To me, being a Page was one of the two most formative experiences that I had, and the other came not too many years later: being a Page and serving in the military. Finding worlds and horizons beyond my own limited view of things, meeting people that I otherwise never would have had any exposure to . . . While society is much more mobile now, in those days you had a tendency to stay pretty close to where you grew up and kind of do something nearby. People didn't move around that much, and the diversity of the world was more of an abstraction than it was a reality which you understood from experience. So, serving here as a Page, seeing the United States literally come together in that one room, and then later serving in the United States Army and being thrust into a bunkroom with people I otherwise never would have met and probably wouldn't want to have met, but then becoming associated with the brotherhood that comes from doing something that requires teamwork and a lot of commonality, I think were two of the most wonderfully formative experiences that I could possibly have had. And while I would gladly be a Page again, I'd sooner open my veins than go back on active duty, which probably would kill me anyhow. A lot of

time has transpired since then. But I wouldn't take back a minute of either of those experiences.

JOHNSON: Thank you very much for everything today.

ANDERSON: Well, you're very welcome. It's been my happiness. To be continued.

JOHNSON: And I'm looking forward to it. Exactly, thank you.

— DONNALD K. ANDERSON —

INTERVIEW TWO

JOHNSON: This is Kathleen Johnson interviewing Donald Anderson, former Clerk of the U.S. House of Representatives. The date is February 23, 2006, and the interview is taking place in the Legislative Resource Center, Cannon House Office Building. This is the second interview with Mr. Anderson.

In the previous interview, you discussed your time as a House Page. Today, I was hoping that you could talk about your time as a House employee before you were Clerk. I read that you were an elevator operator, and I was curious about the time period.

ANDERSON: I was an elevator operator from the fall of 1961 until late 1963. Virtually all of the elevators on the Hill were manual elevators, and they were killer jobs for students. Kids would literally die to get an elevator job. The average shift was about five hours. The place wasn't nearly as busy in those days as it is now, and if you had a quiet corner, you could literally get paid for studying five hours a day. Keep a book in your hand—hopefully the superintendent wouldn't catch you—but the superintendent didn't make his rounds very often, so the chances of being caught studying—which was forbidden, but nonetheless common practice—was not much interfered with.

At that time, I was an undergraduate at GW [George Washington]. I originally was under the elevator patronage of the late George [Herman] Mahon of Texas, who became chairman of the House Appropriations Committee and also was for a number of years “Dean of the House.”¹ The elevator was, I thought, a delightful job. A lot of people have been inclined to

dismiss it, but if you're a social person, you get a chance to chat with people all day long, and in those days, this was literally the little village on the Hill. It was a very small place compared to what it is now. You really got a chance to know the people who worked in the congressional offices by name. Most of my passengers got on, I didn't even have to ask them their floor. I knew exactly where they were going. They knew me. It was a very friendly, almost like a neighborhood, environment. I enjoyed those years on the elevator very much. I later was on the elevator patronage of James H. [Hobson] Morrison of Louisiana, better known as Jimmy Morrison, who just died about three years ago. He was almost 100 years old when he finally passed away.

In those days, the deal was if you were a patronage employee, it was also expected that you put in at least a little bit of time in the sponsoring Member's office. So occasionally I would help out in Congressman Mahon's office. In those days, of course, there were no computers—in fact, not everybody had an electric typewriter. For mass mailings, they would use robotypers, which were rather interesting machines that used a perforated paper roll, very much like a player piano, to reproduce again and again a standard letter, which had a personalized heading and salutation. If the letter was fairly long, one person could actually operate three or four robotypers at the same time. While the letter was typing on the other machines, you'd add the name and the address of the individual and the salutation, start the machine, and then move on to the next. The racket was not to be described. They were extremely noisy machines. So from time to time, when Mr. Mahon's office was doing what in those days was considered a large mailing, which probably was not more than a few hundred letters, I'd go over and help run their robotypers. I got a chance to get a sense of what went on in

Members' offices, since other than that, I'd never really worked in a Member's offices. But I enjoyed those years on the elevator very much.

The downside was that you worked six days a week and every other Sunday. Because they didn't have automatic elevators, and people did come in weekends, you had to have at least one or two manned elevators in each building for the benefit of the weekend workers. And there were surprisingly quite a few of those, including Members who came in on the weekends. In those days, Members didn't get a very generous travel allowance, so they had a tendency to spend many weekends in the city. Unless they had families with them or other activities, they would just as well come to their offices and work when it was quiet, when the phones weren't ringing and people weren't stopping by. So there was always a level of activity in the buildings on Saturdays, and even on Sundays.

JOHNSON: Very different from now.

ANDERSON: Absolutely.

JOHNSON: When did you become an assistant enrolling clerk?

ANDERSON: I was appointed assistant enrolling clerk in late 1963, probably November or December of that year. I was appointed to that position by Congressman Morrison. Keep in mind that this was a patronage culture in those days. It would be easy to say that 99 percent of all of the jobs on Capitol Hill were appointed by somebody. There really weren't any career protections. There was a vacancy, and Mr. Morrison was senior enough to get the job, and thought I would probably like to move from the elevator to something that

was a bit more career-building. It was interesting work. I was very excited about it. It was the first time that I had a desk and chair of my own. The enrolling clerk's office, which was room H-157 in the Capitol, which is now a Member's hideaway, was a very ornate, high-ceilinged room with a large window looking straight down the Federal Mall. It was a magnificent space with a frescoed ceiling and a carved white marble mantelpiece. It would be unimaginable to find staff spaces like that today.

JOHNSON: Definitely.

ANDERSON: As the years went by, all of those little staff treasures gradually became Members' offices. In fact, one of my co-workers, Louis Breskin, who was a fairly elderly, smallish man from Chicago, who had been an enrolling clerk for many years, always hated it when any of us brought Members into the office because of course we all had friends that were Members. He used to admonish us, "Don't do that because some Member will grab this." And sure enough, as it turned out, many years after he had retired, the irony was his own Member, Dan [Daniel David] Rostenkowski, when he became chairman of the Ways and Means Committee, obtained that room as his own Capitol hideaway. So we were very, very protective of that space.

It also gave me my first real insight into the legislative processes of the House in a hands-on way. The enrolling clerks are responsible for actually engrossing and enrolling the bills in their various stages of consideration. Engrossing simply means to make larger, which is the process of changing the bill to its new form, after it has been considered in the house of origin or has been amended by the other chamber. Enrolling is actually the final process in preparing the bill in its ultimate form for signature, once it has cleared all

steps in the process, has been agreed to in identical form by both the House and Senate. It is enrolled on what is still referred to as parchment, but is actually a heavy archival paper, parchment having not been used for enrolling bills in perhaps 150 years now.

It's done very precisely. The whole process of engrossing and enrolling has to be absolutely letter-perfect, to every period and comma, the correct spelling of everything, because once a bill is signed, even if it's incorrect, it's the law of the land. And the only way it can be changed is by the enactment of a new law to correct errors in the one that has been signed. So we, in proofreading, were very, very fastidious to make sure that it was the true and accurate reflection of the actions taken by the two chambers. If there were errors in it, they couldn't be ours. And occasionally, errors would slip in other ways, but on the flip side of that, if there were errors in the official papers, the enrolling clerk could not change those errors, even if it was clear that something had been misspelled, or punctuation had been omitted or misplaced, or perhaps used incorrectly. We had to print exactly what was in the true copy—the official papers—that accompany that bill as it goes through the process. We might be able to call attention to those things in a timely way to others so that a correction could be made before it was ultimately sent to the President, but of our own initiative, we could not change anything, no matter how obvious the error might be. What was there had to be printed. It was almost like Pharaoh saying, "What I have written, I have written."

JOHNSON: At this time, as enrolling clerk, you were under the Clerk's Office.

ANDERSON: That's right. At the time I started, Ralph R. Roberts was the Clerk of the House. He had been the Clerk for a great many years, and would be for a few

more, and then continuing under the next clerk, [William] W. Pat Jennings, who was a former Member of the House who became Clerk in 1967.

JOHNSON: You spoke briefly about Mr. Roberts in the last interview. What do you remember about Mr. Jennings as a Clerk?

ANDERSON: Mr. Jennings was probably the first modern Clerk of the House, at least I'd like to think of his 20th-century methods and technologies. Mr. Jennings had been a Member of the House from southwestern Virginia, and he was defeated for re-election in 1966 and needed a job with prestige and a good salary in a hurry. There had been disaffection, among mainly the more liberal Democratic Members of the House, with Mr. Roberts, who had become rather remote and aloof as the years had passed and had done little, if anything, to advance the use of modern technologies and business methods in the Clerk's Office. I think, like so many people, as years passed, he became rather isolated and had a false sense of security in the office that he held and felt that it would be his for as long as he wanted it. He refused to recognize the challenge that Mr. Jennings had started with mainly the members of what was called the Democratic Study Group, which was a fairly large group of liberal Democrats in the House. Some of the leaders of that group were the late Phillip Burton of California and Frank Thompson, [Jr.], of New Jersey. They decided that they wanted a Clerk that was more progressive and more in touch with the Members, and so they mounted the challenge. That was when officerships were still competitive, when you could actually run for one. It has been decades now since there has been a real race for one of the House offices. That was perhaps the next-to-the-last time that there was a real competitive race for a House Office.

Mr. Roberts had gone off to Florida during the long interval between sessions, as was his custom to do when the Congress adjourned *sine die*.² In the meantime, Mr. Jennings and the members of the Democratic Study Group were organizing their forces for a challenge, which they brought off very successfully when the Democrats met to organize in December of 1966, preceding the commencement of the new Congress. Mr. Roberts was really taken quite by surprise. He did not see it coming. He did not expect it. Mr. Jennings, who had been a very successful automobile dealer . . . Mr. Jennings, I think it's important to note, grew up in dirt-poor poverty, and he actually knew what it meant to be hungry. A very smart man, and a very able businessman. He, by his own acumen, made a sizeable fortune as a businessman, mainly in the automobile business in Marion, Virginia. He owned the Jennings-Warren Motor Company, which was one of the largest dealerships in that region of the state. He got into local politics, had been the county sheriff in Smyth County, or perhaps it's pronounced Smyth County by the way it's spelled in Virginia. And then stood for the House of Representatives, and I think served 10 or 12 years in the House and was also a member of the Ways and Means Committee, which was rather a testament to the way he was regarded. He tended to be—I wouldn't say particularly liberal, but rather liberal for his region of the country in that time frame. I think he was rewarded for his party loyalty by being given a particularly prestigious seat on the Committee on Ways and Means.

At the time, I remember it was widely remarked, "Isn't that interesting, choosing a former Member to be the Clerk of the House?" People were not familiar with the fact that there was a precedent that was very old and well established. Later, when I became Clerk, I did a little research and found that of the—at the time, 30 clerks of the House—I was number 30—that 12 of

my predecessors had been Members of Congress. One of whom was even a United States Senator, Richard [Montgomery] Young of Illinois, who became Clerk of the House. Most of them were in the 19th century, though there were a couple of former Members who served as Clerk of the House in the 20th century. So the fact that Pat Jennings, a former Member, became Clerk was not without substantial precedent.

He immediately went to work restructuring the Clerk's organization, introducing new technology and new methods. He was willing to take on the very real fact that there was a lot of dead wood in the organization, a lot of people who had been serving in the organization for many years and frankly weren't doing much or had much in the way of ability. And not without a great controversy discharged quite a few people, which flew in the face of the deeply entrenched patronage system. It was really groundbreaking at the time because nobody was even thinking about tampering with the patronage system. But he did, and dismissed or reassigned several dozen members of his workforce, to promote efficiency. He introduced automation to the Clerk's Office for the first time.

I was working in the House Finance Office some years later, in 1968, when the finance office became partially computerized. For the first time, the House payroll was produced with a computer. By today's standards, it would be considered a real antique, but it was quite revolutionary at the time since the paychecks used to be all produced manually in giant American Totalizator accounting machines, which were desk-size pieces of equipment. There were about seven or eight of them in one room of the finance office, where in the week preceding payday, members of the finance office would sit and literally, by hand, on these giant accounting machines, produce the several thousand

paychecks for the employees of the House. He [Pat Jennings] installed a computer that was over in the Rayburn Building, and the computations would be done on sheets that had a magnetic strip on them. When complete, on them. When complete, those sheets would then be carried over to the Rayburn Building and fed into the computer that would then produce the paychecks. He did something that was quite daring. The first month that the House paid using computers, produced the pay vouchers, he junked the accounting machines. There was no redundancy, no fallback. In case the computer had hiccoughs and wouldn't work, there was no way to produce the paychecks except by inserting them one by one into a typewriter.

JOHNSON: That was very daring of him.

ANDERSON: But he had made this no-turning-back commitment. Because there were a lot of people that doubted computers in those days, that this was the way of the future, and that it was a step that having been taken, there would be no retreat. At the time, I questioned his sanity, but looking back, I think he did quite the right thing.

Mr. Jennings, for his good instincts as far as business and management, was shall we say . . . personal relationships were not his strong suit. He was very much disliked by his employees. He made no effort to establish any sort of personal rapport. He did quickly run afoul of the Members of the House because he still viewed himself as a member of the club. Around here, you're either a Member, or you're not a Member. There is no middle ground. Granted, the Officers of the House are sort of a hybrid. The five of them are neither fish nor fowl. They're not Members, but they're not really employees either, since they are elected by the House under a provision of the

Constitution. But nonetheless, they are the servants of the House, and Mr. Jennings pretty much viewed himself as a member of the club, rather than as the servant of the House, and found that he could not act with the insularity that he did when he had been a Member, that he was responsible to the Members of the House, and that his actions were subject to their oversight, either approval or disapproval, that he couldn't operate the Clerk's Office as he would his automobile dealership. So within a few years, there was a feeling amongst the Members, particularly the Democratic Members, that this was a mistake that perhaps ought not to be repeated. In the future, we ought not to have a former colleague serving as an Officer of the House. I personally doubt that that will ever happen again, even though there was abundant historic precedent for former Members, from time to time, serving as Officers. I cannot imagine that in the future, that would happen again, for that very reason. It's very difficult to make the change. It's much easier to move up and adapt to a new status than it is to move down and give up the prerogatives that are uniquely and exclusively those of Members of the House.

JOHNSON: For 18 years, you worked in the Democratic Cloakroom.

ANDERSON: Right.

JOHNSON: Would you be able to trace your years there by describing some of your responsibilities?

ANDERSON: Sure. For one year, 1968, I worked in the House Finance Office. Mr. Jennings had restructured the legislative operations area of the House. In the process of so doing, my particular position in the enrolling clerk's office was eliminated. So I was transferred to the finance office. Not a matter of

undiluted joy to me at the time because I enjoyed being part of the legislative machinery of the House, and the finance office did things which would be found in any organization that meets a payroll and pays its lawful obligations. It was a payroll and dispersing operation not unlike anything that would be found anywhere else in government—or in the private sector, for that matter. I really longed to get back into something that was legislative in character.

The Democratic Cloakroom, which I worked for my year as a Page, did—and still does—have three managers, a manager and two assistants, plus the six Pages that are assigned to work for them in the cloakroom. For the period of the probably 1940s, '50s, and '60s, there had been no movement at all in the three managers. They were there forever and ever, amen. And then finally, at the end of 1968, Colonel [Roy] Emerson, who wasn't really a colonel but he was a Kentucky Colonel, but always enjoyed being called colonel and everybody indulged him in that. Colonel Emerson had been the manager of the cloakroom since the 1930s. He finally retired and went off to Florida to live out the happy remainder of his life, which caused the first upward mobility that anyone could recall. It created a vacancy in the second assistant position in the cloakroom.

Fortunately, my Member, who at the time was the late Hale Boggs of Louisiana, who was the Majority Whip; Mr. Morrison also having been defeated in 1966. I was picked up by his fellow Louisianan, Hale Boggs. So when the vacancy occurred in the cloakroom, Mr. Boggs went to Speaker McCormack. The three manager jobs in the cloakroom belonged to the Speaker. They were the Speaker's personal appointments. Interestingly, many jobs around the House belonged to state delegations, or even to cities within states, if they were big cities. And for some reason, one of the three manager

jobs in the Democratic Cloakroom had been for quite a long time a California job. And it just happened that I was from California, so that knit rather nicely. Mr. Boggs, the Majority Whip, of course, had the stature to suggest my appointment to the Speaker, and I just happened to fit the mold because I was a Californian by birth and by identity. So Speaker McCormack appointed me the assistant manager of the cloakroom.

The new manager, Art Cameron, who continues to be a very successful lawyer in private practice here in the city of Washington, like myself had been a Page, though some years earlier, and had worked his way up the ladder within the structure of the House and worked in the cloakroom for quite a long time. And had very much longed to be manager, but had to wait years and years and years before he had that opportunity. He became manager in January of 1969, but by then he was also admitted to practice in the law. In the spring of 1969, Congressman Claude [Denson] Pepper of Florida was successful in establishing the short-lived Select Committee on Crime and asked Art if he would help him establish the new select committee. It had been so long since the House had created a permanent select committee—the last one being the Permanent Select Committee on Small Business—that very few people remembered how it was done. Art happened to have been here when that happened, and he was intimately familiar with the creation of a select committee and what the functions of a select committee were. Mr. Pepper asked him if he would come aboard as chief counsel, and of course he was anxious to do something that was lawyer-related. So after having waited years to become manager, he held the job only for six months, and then in June of 1969, he left the cloakroom to help Mr. Pepper with the Select Committee on Crime. Which meant that having been there only six months, I moved up a notch to first assistant, and Bob Rota, who had been an

assistant manager of the cloakroom for many years, became manager. Then three years later, when H. H. Morris, known as Hap Morris, the longtime Postmaster of the House, decided to retire, the Members of the House, the Democratic Members, decided that Bob ought to become Postmaster of the House. So within three and a half years, I went from brand-new second assistant to the manager of the cloakroom. A rather meteoric rise, considering how slow things had evolved in the cloakroom prior to that.

JOHNSON: So after years of no mobility, there was a rapid move.

ANDERSON: Right. However, then I stayed in that job for the next 15 years until I was elected Clerk.

But let me describe the cloakroom historically and in terms of its evolving function. The cloakrooms are two L-shaped rooms at the rear of the House Chamber that were created in 1857, when the new chamber—well, at least new in 1857—was built, and provide lounge areas and places where the Members could store their belongings, since they didn't have offices. Members weren't accommodated with private offices until 1908, when this building [Cannon House Office Building] was opened. Until then, just a handful of Members in the leadership had office space provided by the House. The others used the House Floor as their offices. They sat at their individual desks on the House Floor all day long, if the House was in session or not, and conducted their meager business in longhand without the support of staff. Just like some of us from my generation can remember in our schoolhouses, in the back of each classroom was a cloakroom, where we would leave our umbrellas and raincoats and lunch buckets. Well, the Members of the House had the very same arrangement. The Democrats and

the Republicans each had their L-shaped rooms at the rear of their chamber, where they would leave their briefcases, books, papers in numbered cubicles and their cloaks and hats, umbrellas, or canes, whatever they carried with them, on numbered hooks, each one having a numbered hook to hang their coat on. Thus the origin of the rather quaint term “cloakroom” because it was really exactly that.

As time passed, and as we moved into the 20th century, the House and Senate provided its Members for the first time with office space. So the cloakrooms were no longer needed for their historic purpose, and they became rather cozy sitting and reading areas—very private, Members-only spaces, not very big. Certainly couldn’t accommodate but a fraction of the membership of the House. For many years, we had nine large, comfortable club chairs and eight long couches in the Democratic Cloakroom, where Members could sit and read, have a sandwich, take a nap, or just visit with each other in a very, very private space. As telecommunications advanced, telephones were added to the cloakrooms. In the early 20th century, probably no more than two or three of them, I suspect. Some of the people who were there when I came recalled that before the phone booths were put in, there were a couple of mantelpieces that had one or two phones sitting on them, and Members sort of used them on a help-yourself basis. The phone booths, which are still there, were built in 1947, and by then, telephones had become of course an essential part of congressional communications, just as they had become an essential part of American life wherever it was to be found. The cloakroom staff had evolved from being sort of a custodial staff that kept the place tidy and presumably emptied the ashtrays or hung up the Members’ cloaks, evolved into an information and floor support activity for the two parties.

We were at an exciting new point in the advancement of telecommunications and information technology when I joined that staff. And, I've often said that being manager of the cloakroom, as far as I was concerned, was the best job there was, at least for me, except being Clerk of the House. When, after a total of 18 years in the cloakroom, I left to become the Clerk of the House, which was the fulfillment of my dreams and my fantasies, I never stopped missing the intimacy and the excitement of working in the cloakroom. It was like being at Mecca. It was the focal point of everything that went on on the House Floor. You knew absolutely everything that was happening.

In any case, my duties, and that of my assistants, were to constantly monitor activities on the House Floor—the parliamentary situation, the progress of the legislative schedule, the changes. Even though the cloakrooms fell under the Doorkeeper of the House, they were really always a leadership function, since we were mainly administratively tied to the Doorkeeper, but in a practical, functional way, worked for the Democratic leadership organization, providing the Members with current, up-to-date, highly detailed information as to the legislative schedule, the party position on the things that were scheduled. One of the things that I thought was a great deal of fun, and for which I developed quite a good reputation, was being able to forecast or predict the activities and schedule of the House. It's like anything else that, no matter how complicated it might be, if you've done it for a long time and developed a keen sense of what it is that you're doing, you can actually become very good at being able to forecast or predict how the schedule will fall into place, the elements that will be involved, time frames.

One of the things that I did, and if I may indulge in a little self-flattery, did very well, was to be able to help the Members put their own schedules

together by giving them a pretty sound guess as to when votes might occur, when the last vote might occur—always something very important so that they could plan their evenings, or in many cases, as the week drew to a close, decide which flight they would be on to get back home for the weekend.

JOHNSON: Was this something that you took upon yourself, or do you think this was something that happened with previous managers in the cloakroom as well?

ANDERSON: Oh, no, no, no, no. Everybody did that. That was part of the job. It was the expectation of the job since the cloakroom staffs had a unique vantage point being always there on the House Floor. The Members came and went all day long. Other people came and went all day long, including the Members of the leadership. But we were always there, always watching, always listening, gathering information from a wide variety of sources—the counsels to the committees that had legislation before the House, the Members that were involved in the management of the legislation.

After a long period of study and observation, you came to know intuitively which committees were able to do their business more expeditiously than others. There were some committees that always seemed to be embroiled in great controversy and difficulty when they brought legislation to the House Floor because of the personalities involved. Some committee chairmen were much more adept in management on the House Floor than others, who managed to work things out in advance of a measure coming to the floor, where others kind of wrote legislation on the House Floor, which always meant it was kind of open-ended and freewheeling, difficult, contentious. You just got to know, through the personalities involved, the nature of the issues involved, what the elements were going to be and could make a pretty

good prediction as to how long a measure might take, what the real elements of difficulty would be. It's one thing to start off knowing that there are going to be 30 amendments to a bill. Members have announced that they have 30 different amendments that they intend to offer. Everybody might know that in advance. Well, that might give the impression that it'll take hours or days to dispose of all those amendments. When in fact, a little bit of spadework will turn up that perhaps 20 of the 30 amendments are considered non-controversial, technical in nature, or agreements have already been made by the two sides as to how to deal with those amendments. Of the remaining 10, perhaps only three or four have extraordinary controversy attached to them. The others will have a certain amount of perfunctory debate and then will be disposed of.

So things aren't always what they seem to be. It takes a long time to develop that kind of sense—certainly not unique to the House Chamber. There are many aspects of business and work life where people become good at what they do because they have a sense of how things will either fall together or fall apart. It's kind of the workplace sense that people pick up once they've done something for a long time. The fun and the challenge is the multiple personalities that are involved and getting a sense of who the players are. Also, a lot of it is listening to the conversations that go on, often invariably, so you get a sense of what the deals are that have been made or that haven't been made. And then you can develop a pretty good sense of how something is going to proceed once it comes to the House Floor.

I had a huge reputation for being able to forecast the business of the House, and long after I left the floor, when I became Clerk, I had Members who had been my regular clients or customers calling me in the Clerk's Office to find

out about how the business of the day was going to go, or what plane they could catch, and I had a very hard time convincing many of them that I didn't do that anymore. And that to make judgments about chamber activity, unless you're there and follow it constantly and diligently, it is folly. You just can't do it. You haven't the resources; you haven't the understanding to make those critical judgments. I have gone on to other responsibilities, and I don't do those things anymore and that it would be irresponsible of me, now as Clerk of the House, to try to dabble in those things because I couldn't do them well anymore.

Things often change so quickly on the House Floor that if you take a short break just to go to the restroom, by the time you come back, things may have changed profoundly in terms of new agenda items or something being eliminated from the program or compromises having been agreed to, which is why I never left the floor. I would try to wait for a long, slow period of debate before I went to the restroom. I never left the floor to have lunch. I always had a sandwich at the cloakroom snack bar. The reason I got to be good at what I did was I did it unceasingly. I was always there. So I became a reliable source of information, being able to make forecasts about the program.

In terms of many of the services that we provided for the Members, in addition to giving them a rundown of the day's agenda and what elements were involved, we also handled the bulk of their *Congressional Record* material for speeches not actually delivered in the course of debate. Statements to be included under general leave to print. Members of the House have a freedom of speech which is unique to Members of Congress. The speech and debate clause of the Constitution protects them in what they say, that ordinary citizens don't have. They can say things within the confines of the chamber

walls that you or I would be sued for if we recklessly said those things elsewhere. And they can be sued if they say them elsewhere, too. But for material that goes into the *Congressional Record*, whether uttered or not, that is protected by the speech and debate clause of the Constitution.

The general leave to print gives Members an unlimited ability to express their thoughts on anything and everything touching the business of the House, or even well beyond the business of the House, by being able to include material that the constraints of time would not permit in debate. People often look at the daily *Record* and say, well, it's half an inch thick! They couldn't possibly say that much in 24 hours, and of course, they didn't. All Members, under ordinary circumstances—because it can include without limit relevant statements to everything that is considered in the course of the day, and they do that rather lavishly, so that all of the Members who perhaps because of the limitations of time can't speak or perhaps don't even want to speak, but nonetheless wish to reflect their thoughts for the permanent record, include printed statements that are part of that debate. In more modern times, they have been distinguished by typeface so that readers of the *Record* can tell what actually was uttered and what was added in a submitted form, rather than part of the continuity of debate.

This huge amount of material mostly came to the two cloakrooms. Members' offices would prepare their statements, have them signed, and send them over to the cloakroom. We would note the fact that we received them. It was very important to keep track of what came in, so that in case something didn't appear in the *Record*, we were able to protect ourselves by saying, "Yes, we received it, and we did send it on to the reporters of debates, wherever it had to go." So we knew that it got at least to us. If we didn't keep track of what

came in, it could be he said, she said forever about whether something was submitted or not. What I and my assistant would do would at least give a cursory look at all the material that came in—and huge volumes all day long from Members' offices—to see that it was clearly identified as to what it was, [to] which bill or debate it was relevant. That it was signed because submissions had to be signed by the submitting Member. It's certainly not our responsibility to authenticate the signature, but to see that there was a signature affixed. And then to the extent that our time permitted, sometimes just go over it to make sure that it was properly prepared. Members, of course, can't possibly prepare all the statements that they submit for the *Record*, and they'll tell the various people on their staffs, prepare a statement for me on something-or-other and make sure it gets in. Many staff people just aren't expert into how things for the *Record* should be prepared. So we always try to provide that little extra buffer of protection by looking things over to make sure that they were quite right before they went in or were clearly marked as to what issue they related to.

Members also can, without limitation, extend their remarks in the Extension of Remarks section of the *Record*, which is clearly speeches that have not necessarily any relevance to what the House did—or the Senate, with regard to that body—in a particular day. There are, however, limitations on extraneous material, which is material other than a Member's own original thought. For instance, the inclusion of articles, tabular material, that sort of thing, which of course runs up the cost of the production of the *Record*. To make sure that Members aren't irresponsible as to what they include as extraneous material, there is a limitation as to how much they can include, unless they in advance get a cost estimate for the production of that material

and then ask separate permission that, notwithstanding the extra cost, they be permitted to print it. So we would try to watch those things, too.

We would also make, at the end of the day, what were known informally as the shotgun requests, which were leaves to print, where we would request, on behalf of the Members, permission to print an extension of remarks or, if there was an over-cost involved, get some Member to make that request on behalf of a colleague. What we would do each day at the conclusion of legislative business, each side would get a Member, usually a more junior member, to read the shotgun requests, which were the long lists of Members who wished leave to print extensions of remarks or perhaps to reserve special orders, which was kind of a subterfuge. They usually would get a speech into the body of the *Record*, as opposed to the Extension of Remarks section, because you didn't actually have to take your time in order to include a statement. You could reserve the time and then submit the statement in writing. But it was kind of a clever way of looking like you actually spoke when you really didn't. However, as time passed, those speeches were also printed in italics to differentiate them from the speeches that were actually delivered. We handled those requests at the end of the day, and occasionally we would be called by committees to get permission for their committees to sit while the House was engaged in general debate or operating under the five-minute rule, which is the amendment stage of consideration, because the rules of the House prohibit committees from sitting while the House is in session, unless they have leave to sit. Certain exclusive committees can sit at any time they want without permission—the Rules Committee, the Appropriations Committee, House Administration; I think there are a couple of others. But the other committees of the House, in order to sit legally, have to have leave to sit while the House is in session. So we would run the traps

on those requests, get the information, and then usually I or one of my assistants would go over to the Republican side and check with the Members who were likely to raise objection, explaining why we were doing this, what the issue was that was being discussed in a particular committee, and that it had been cleared with the ranking Republican Member on that committee, so that this wasn't any kind of end-run, that everything had been done quite correctly. We did that all the time. It gives you an idea of the services that we handled in the cloakroom—*Record* material, committee requests.

About the time I joined the cloakroom staff, we had just started something which was considered quite wonderful. A telephone taped message explaining what the House was actually doing. It was like calling the weather. That had just been installed in 1968. Each cloakroom got one. Ours [phone number] was 225-7400. We had about two and a half minutes to encapsulate what the House was doing, what it had done, and what it had yet to do. But what it meant was that people who couldn't get through to the limited cloakroom lines to talk to a real person could call a recording and find out exactly what the House was engaged in and what it had done—at least the highlights of what it had done—and what it had yet to do. And then at the end of the day, after the House adjourned, the taped message would highlight the activities of the House on that tape—the results of votes, the time the House convened and adjourned, and the time it would convene on the next legislative day, and what the major elements of the program for the next day would be. It was available 24 hours a day. There was always someplace somebody could call, including Members themselves. It was considered quite an extraordinary thing.

As the years passed, when I became manager, I found that that one recording just wasn't adequate to handle all the information that people wanted. A lot of people were quite content to call the recording. They didn't need to talk to a real person. So I asked the House Administration Committee if they would authorize a second dial-in number so that we could split the information from current floor activity to program information, so that if all you wanted to know was what the House is doing right now, and you didn't care about what it had done or what it had yet to do, there was a number to call. But if you wanted the rest of the information—highlights of previous actions, plus what the House had yet to do in the course of the day or the week—there would be a second number. I got approval from the House Administration Committee to get the extra equipment because it's not cheap. Of course, everything is done on strict parity, so the Republican Cloakroom also got a second recorded message system.

JOHNSON: This didn't replace your function of communicating with Members if they wanted to speak to someone personally?

ANDERSON: Oh, absolutely not. It's like in every other aspect of American life, and we see this nowadays more than at any time in history: the need for information . . . you know, we call it the Information Age. We are just drowning in information. Either information that we seek or information that is dumped on us whether we want it or not. There's this insatiable appetite for information. Decades ago, when I began here, people weren't all that interested in having a lot of information. It was just what they simply needed from time to time to do whatever it was they had to do. Dr. Billington, the Librarian of Congress, some years ago, when the Jefferson Building was celebrating its centennial [1997], made the rather sage observation that he

agreed this was indeed the Information Age, but he also added, “Alas, how much better might we be if this could be truly described as the Knowledge Age, or best yet, the Wisdom Age.” But it’s the Information Age so I decided that since there was the demand for the information, and we just didn’t have the means to get it out, we could use another telephone dial-in number. That worked wonders. It, again, satisfied, at least for the time being, the need that people had for more information.

Then we expanded the telephonic Whip call. When I started as a Page, if the leadership wanted to put out a Whip call to Members, which they did very rarely in those days, to say that a certain vote was anticipated, it was leadership-critical, Democratic Members—or in the case of the other side, Republican Members—were expected to vote in a particular way when that vote occurred. We would drop everything in the cloakroom and each one of the five or six cloakroom Pages would get into a phone booth, we would get a Capitol operator. Remember, I said that those were all manual telephones in those days, where you actually got an operator when you picked up a phone, not a dial tone. And we would say, “We need to put out a Whip call.” That operator would stick with us. Each of us had a segment of the Democratic membership in front of us—the alphabetical list—we broke it up into five or six different parts. We’d start off with, “I need to be connected with Congressman Joseph [Patrick] Addabbo’s office.” And she would manually place that call. And then we would read from our little script that, “At 3:00 or thereabouts, a vote will occur on the Jones Amendment to H.R. 1234. It is a leadership ‘aye.’ The leadership is expecting the Congressman to vote ‘yes’ when that occurs. And be sure that he gets that information.” Then click the receiver, and the operator would come back, and we’d go to the next name on the list. That’s how we put out a Whip call.

Then about the same time the first recordings were put in the cloakroom, we'd had an automatic Whip call system. Instead of a recording that you called, it was a recording that called you. But because of the cost of the equipment, each cloakroom didn't get one. There was one system with two sets of automatic-dial numbers. Whichever party got to the chief operator—the only neutral ground where we could find to put that wonderful new equipment was the chief operator's office—whoever got there first got the use of the equipment, excluding the other side until we were done with it. Say Mr. Boggs as the Majority Whip came in and said, "Donn, put out a Whip call that at 3:00 we're going to have a vote on the Jones Amendment to H.R. 1234, and Democratic Members are expected to vote 'aye.'" I would then call the chief operator, who was located over in the Dirksen Senate [Office] Building, and dictate the message to her. She would then record the message and send it to the Democratic group. If the Republicans decided they wanted to do the same thing at the same time, they had to wait until our message had run, which was about five or six minutes plus the time it took to dictate and the Capitol operator to record it and send it. So they might have to wait 15 or 20 minutes before they could access the equipment.

And of course once we had the equipment, obviously there was a desire to use it more and more. It's like anything else. When you've got it, you enjoy using it. You get a new car, you drive it more than your old car, simply because it's got a lot of new things that you like to play with. So it was getting to a point where either we had to wait while the Republicans used it, or they had to wait while we used it. I proposed that—notwithstanding the rather substantial additional cost, it was something that clearly was in the interest of both parties—why don't we just buy a second system? And instead of locating it in the chief operator's office, who frankly wanted no part of it because it was a

partisan operation; she was always afraid that in recording it, either by misspeaking or perhaps in inflection giving the impression that she was taking a side. The operators wanted no part of it, but they were saddled with it. I said, "Let's get two independent systems and put one in each cloakroom so that we can operate them directly from the House Floor. No waiting—you don't have to wait until—it's not first come, first serve. Both parties can send out Whip calls at exactly the same time. And the Committee of House Administration bought off on the idea. So we got two separate systems.

After that, we were using it a lot. Not just for the previous traditional function of announcing that a particular vote would come at a certain time and the leadership position was whatever, but to give information to the Members about things or events that the leadership thought Members ought to know about. Or announcing the day's program in the morning so that they had fresh information as to the program and any revisions, so that they could take note of the changes. It was a wonderful way of being proactive in communicating on each side of the aisle with the Members of the party caucus. So that happened during the period that I ran the cloakroom.

Then beepers were becoming somewhat commonplace. It wasn't the omnipresent little gadget that people carry around with them all the time now, like the BlackBerries. But some people, particularly in the professions like medicine, were carrying beepers. People that had to be on call, that had to have an umbilical to wherever it was that they worked. I thought it might be something that the House at least prospectively ought to look into as a way of communicating with our Members to give them a range beyond telephones. Because very often, they were caught in transit between, say, executive departments in their office, or out to lunch or whatever, and then

they needed to be reached and they couldn't be. Of course, we didn't have cell phones in those days. You couldn't just dial a number and get him or her, wherever he or she happened to be. So Motorola had just come out with a voice pager, which at the time seemed small enough. It was perhaps the size of a large cigar. A little on the heavy side. Today, we would consider it offensive to carry around because it was so big. But by the standards of the time, it was rather compact.

JOHNSON: What time period was this?

ANDERSON: This would have been probably the mid '70s. I suggested to Congressman Charlie [Charles Grandison] Rose, [III], who later became chairman of the House Administration Committee. We always kind of called him the "Bionic Congressman" because he loved the technology. Really, he was as responsible as anybody for bringing a lot of high-tech to the House, sometimes kicking and screaming. But after it happened, they were happy enough to get it. But he was always on the cusp of what was going on with new technology and had the foresight to see how it could be applied to the House. So if I had an idea that related to technology, I always had a receptive audience in Congressman Rose. So I said, "Could we get a pilot program where we get Motorola"—who was at the time the only one who was really manufacturing those things—"to give us a demo system and maybe get a dozen, two dozen units that we could let Members try out?" Hopefully those that would not be opposed to carrying around a beeper. Because there were a lot of Members who really wanted no part of it. This is one of those things when people see somebody else that has something they don't, they get kind of interested in it. It's sort of envy, which is not unknown with a lot of things in our society. So he said that would be a great idea, let me call some people at Motorola

and see if they can set up a demo system. So they put a temporary antenna up on the roof of the Cannon Building and put in a transmitter and put in the base station in the cloakroom, which was a fairly large box. Nothing was compact in those days. I got some of our Members, and Charlie Rose talked to some of his colleagues, to try out these beepers so we could give them a live voice message from the House Floor, wherever they happened to be. They didn't have to leave a, "I-can-be-reached-at number." Of course, sometimes you want to be reached, but you don't want people to know exactly where you are. So they kind of liked it. And then other Members saw the Members who were part of the test using these things, and they got interested. Before long, we had a groundswell where the Members, for the most part, wanted these beepers.

JOHNSON: Was this a test for Democratic Members and Republicans?

ANDERSON: Yeah. Oh, yeah. We had to do it that way. Of course, since there was only one base station in sending out the messages, I had to be extremely bland and neutral in what I sent out. It could not have a shade of partisan inflection to it. It had to be very straightforward, objective information. I've always been able to do that when I need to. So that is the way that happened. They also could be reached individually by a telephone dial connection so that their staffs could reach them individually and give them a live message over the phone that would reach them by radio, wherever they happened to be. So we eventually ended up with two mini-radio stations, with these two big whip antennas on top of the Cannon Building. Of course, our little base stations got much smaller, and we could use them for partisan information because each party had their own system on a different frequency.

Now, there were Members that unsurprisingly were concerned that they would be bothered constantly by everybody on their staff calling them to get their input on everything that was going on in the office. I had Members complaining to me, “Oh, I don’t want to be bothered all the time.” I said, “The solution to that, Congressman, is very simple. You have to have an access code. Assign one person in your office, and that person alone can be the person to decide when to call you. That way everyone on your staff shouldn’t have the ability to pick up the phone and call you about every darn thing that comes up.” “Well, that’s a good idea.” So that worked, and before long, everybody had them. There were only a few holdouts who just were determined, “I’m not going to be on a tether; I don’t want to feel like I’m on call all the time, you know, Congressman ‘So-and-so,’ you’re needed in surgery. I’m just not going to do that.” And that’s fine. Nobody was making you wear one. Now, they of course couldn’t imagine life without them. They’ve gone well beyond the little voice pagers, with the BlackBerries that have text messages and all sorts of features that never could have been envisioned 30 years ago.

JOHNSON: I’m going to take this opportunity to stop and switch CDs.

ANDERSON: Sure.

END OF PART ONE - BEGINNING OF PART TWO

JOHNSON: We just ended the last CD with you talking about the technological changes in the cloakroom, and I was hoping you could continue with that area.

ANDERSON: Refresh my memory. What point were we when we broke?

JOHNSON: You were mentioning that there was the system of beepers that was being used by both the Democrats and the Republicans, and that it was a big success.

ANDERSON: Ah, yes. There were some interesting sides to that. Because the range of the beepers was thoroughly long—virtually the transmitters would cover everything within the Beltway, and in some cases if the terrain wasn't too steep, considerably beyond the Beltway—we would have Members who would be arriving on flights that would get a message saying a vote had begun, and as soon as they could reach a phone, call in and say, "I just arrived at Dulles [Airport]. Hold the vote; I'm on my way." And of course it was impossible to do that. We could hold votes for Members who were within a minute or two of arrival, or perhaps even five minutes, but waiting for them to get in from Dulles was rather asking the chair to do a great deal. Or Members leaving their beepers in various places— restaurants, hotel room, whatever—and having people call in saying, "I've got this beeper that keeps telling me I ought to come and vote. I don't know where it came from, but it sounds like it might be one of yours!" Of course, they all had serial numbers on them so we could always match it with its owner once it showed up. We did have some stories about . . . as a matter of fact, both Congressman Steny [Hamilton] Hoyer and Congressman Dale [Edward] Kildee told me that their wives were both terrified, separately, when they went off to work and forgot their beepers, leaving them in the suit coat that they had worn the previous day, hanging in the closet. Of course, the wife is home alone and hears a man's voice coming out of her closet {laughter} and is absolutely terrified. That was one of the lighter sides of the beepers.

Like anything, there's an upside and a downside with Members—having such a long umbilical, now being able to move about freely, confident that they will receive timely notification of votes and leadership information—had a tendency to try to stretch just how far afield they could go in hopes that they could get back in time. Of course, they would often call in and try to have votes held, which would be unfair to the House if Members extended votes more than a few minutes beyond the ordinary time frame. It's very difficult to tell a Member it can't be held. Of course, we always had the fallback position of we asked them, and the Speaker said no. {laughter} We did our best. But it did give the Members a flexibility that they had never enjoyed before.

When I came, 46 years ago, the only notification system they had were the bells that rang in the hallways. They still have them. It was the most generic information there was. Two bells, a vote has begun. What is it on? No idea. Just, a vote has begun. Three bells, a quorum call. That was clear enough. Quorum calls are about quorum, period. And then it was another decade before there was anything to explain what that two-bell signal meant, unless you could get to a phone and call and find out what the vote was on. So this opened tremendous new horizons for the Members in being acute constantly to what was happening.

Of course, with television in the House, which began internally in 1978 and then publicly in 1979, Members could keep their television sets in their offices tuned to Channel 3 and have the benefit of the continuity of debate, knowing exactly what had been transpiring up to the point that the two bells rang, having heard the arguments, knowing what the leadership's position was. Television as an internal tool was a great advance in Members being kept

up-to-date and being familiar with what was happening in the chamber other than by sitting there all day long.

JOHNSON: Since you brought up television, and we're talking about technology, two of the major technological advances in the 1970s were the implementation of electronic voting in 1973, and then the first live televised proceedings of the House in 1979. Can you just take a moment to talk about how these two changes affected your job, and then also how they affected the House in general?

ANDERSON: Sure. Let's start with electronic voting. As a matter of immemorial observance, the House had recorded its votes by the call of the roll—going back to the very first House of Representatives in 1789. The idea of recording votes mechanically or electronically was by no means new. By the time the House began doing it, most state legislatures had some means of recording the members' votes electronically or mechanically for decades. However, the state legislatures tend to be much, much smaller bodies than the United States House of Representatives. I know of no state legislature that has a membership even half the size of the 435 Members of the House (except New Hampshire). Added to which, the House, since 1913, has not had assigned seats, so it's not a simple matter of installing a switch or a key on each individual Representative's desk. They haven't had them now for nearly a century. The idea of voting electronically in the House, therefore, even by the last quarter of the 20th century, was considered somewhat revolutionary: the idea of going from the roll call. There was a certain high theater that went with roll call. To me, I always think of the House hearing the reading clerk intoning the Members' names, and they [the Members] shouting, "yes" or "no"—this high theater of the moment of decision, when the American

people come together to decide through the 435 Representatives how they will deal with their national agenda, establish their priorities, deal with their hopes and aspirations and their fears and anxieties. To me, electronic voting has always seemed to be terribly bland. It lacks the theater of roll call. But it was something that had to happen.

The most precious commodity of the House has always been its time. If you look at the evolution of the rules of the House, in many cases, some of the most ferocious debates that we have had over changing our procedures have dealt with the economy of time. How to deal with the ever-increasing pressure of a nation that has become larger and larger and more complex and diverse and contentious and squeeze all of those needs and all of those issues, all of those ideas, into a 24-hour day. When we began in 1789 there were 24 hours in the day. In 1789, there were but 13 states and 4 million citizens, most of them living in rural America. Their cities, such as they were, were very small.

The issues facing the 65 Representatives in the first House were terribly important—dealing with the new Republic and the wilderness of North America, but they were fairly straightforward and unadorned: raising revenue to pay for a revolution; to supply the needs of the new government under our Constitution. Not a lot of issues, but they were very important. But the Members had a leisure of time. When they came here, they stayed. They didn't have to rush off to all sorts of places. But very quickly, almost overnight, our nation began to grow very quickly from 13 states along the eastern seaboard of the United States, with inevitable westward expansion. New states, new territories; the inevitable move towards the western ocean.

Immediately, the first great waves of primarily Western European immigration began, with many tens, hundreds of thousands of people fleeing the old regimes of Europe to engage with us in our new and extraordinary experiment in personal liberty, freedom of thought and action—things that were unheard of, even in the enlightened democracies of old Europe. And of course, it was the dawn of the age of industrialization, the technological age. Things were changing very rapidly. So the nation grew almost geometrically in geography and population, and the complexity of the issues dealing with a very diverse and rapidly expanding society, and nonetheless, we only had 24 hours in a day, as when we began in 1789.

To try to make all of those things, all of the needs of this extraordinary, vast, and complex nation and society fit into 24 hours which Congress could not add to. Congress can do all sorts of amazing things, but it has never been able to add hours to the day. So we have to make everything fit into those 24 finite and precious hours. Voting had become a very big time-consumer. On average, with a roll call vote, we spent 25 to 35 minutes on a single vote. If you had half a dozen of those in a day, that was several hours consumed in the purely mechanical process of voting, not in the exchange of ideas and information and question and answers and dealing with the momentous issues of the day, but in the mechanical process of deciding. It was very clear that something had to be done. As attached as we all were to the old way of voting, it was clear that we needed to force upon ourselves a method of voting that would economize on our precious time. Electronic voting was the solution to that. It turned out to be, at least in its early years, kind of a false economy. But with the advent of electronic voting, we were able to reduce voting to a minimum of 15 minutes, which was at least half of what we used to spend on a single vote. “Aha!” We have cut our voting time in half. But it

became so easy and so convenient to vote electronically that we had many more votes than we used to. We went from perhaps having a couple of hundred votes in an annual session of the House, to—I think at the high watermark, we got up to 700 or 800 votes and quorum calls in the space of a single year. So we were burning up much more time in the process of voting and obtaining quorums than we ever did before because it was so easy.

JOHNSON: So this is one of the unintended consequences of technology?

ANDERSON: Yes. So then the rules had to be further refined to make it rather more difficult to demand and to get a vote, such as raising the number necessary to stand for a vote in the Committee of the Whole from one-fifth of a quorum, which was 20, which had been the immemorial observance. We raised it to 25, and then I think to 30, in the effort to suppress the number of votes in the Committee of the Whole. We also gave the Speaker the authority to postpone and cluster votes so that they couldn't interrupt constantly the business of the day. So that if votes were demanded and ordered, the Speaker had the prerogative of postponing them and holding them together in a cluster at a particular point in the day's proceedings, so that Members weren't constantly jumping up from whatever they were doing in committee or in their offices and running over to vote, and maybe getting another 15 or 20 minutes at their desk and then coming back to vote again. It was terribly disruptive. So it was kind of cause and effect. When the effect wasn't what it was hoped to be, we had to fine-tune and tweak the rules further to get things under control.

There was even some talk about the Speaker using his authority—which he has always had, but has been historically loath to use—of refusing to

recognize demands for votes on the grounds that in his view, they were dilatory, purely obstructionist in nature. The Speaker has always had that extraordinary power to refuse to recognize for something that may be entirely parliamentary on its face, but clearly meant to obstruct or to delay. The Speaker has been very loath, historically, to use that awesome power—all Speakers. It has very, very seldom been used by the chair, but there was talk that perhaps the Speaker would have to do that in order to get some control on this very easy and convenient and time-consuming new practice of electronic voting.

JOHNSON: And this would have been Speaker Carl Albert at the time?

ANDERSON: Yes. It became operational with Speaker Albert, who was one of the prime movers behind it. Electronic voting was mandated by the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1970, which was the first major reorganization of congressional operations since the similar act of 1946, though the Act of 1970 primarily was a House measure. There were only a few parts of it that dealt with joint items in operations between the House and Senate, but it was 90 percent dealing with the methodology of the House of Representatives. It mandated that the House must, in an expeditious way, impose on itself some scheme for recording the Members' votes electronically. The challenges were how do you do it without vandalizing the historic and ornamental chamber, since high-tech and architecture don't necessarily blend very compatibly, particularly with a large historical element. It was done so cleverly that it virtually disappears when it's not in use. The only things that are always visible are the very discreet, small voting stations attached to the Members' seatbacks at various locations on the House Floor, which most people would be inclined to miss because they are small and unobtrusive. The main

displays, which disappear into the wall when they're not in use, and the summary displays as well. Then how to make it convenient where there are no assigned seats? How do Members who have no place assigned to them on the House Floor vote? Of course, the voting ID cards, which are compatible with every voting station, solved that problem. Where Members vote is simply a matter of convenience, at any of the 50 voting stations on the House Floor. They simply insert their card into the nearest one to cast their votes. Very simple indeed.

Then there was the concern about voting fraud: Would Members be passing their voting cards? Or, if Members lost them or forgot them, could someone else pick it up and use it? What would stop that practice? A very, very serious concern since voting in the House has always been considered something that cannot be transferred to anybody else. There never was any doubt that, occasionally, Members with a hand over their face would answer, "here" for someone on a quorum call who wasn't . . . simply as a kindness to a Member who was too lazy to come over and answer the quorum. We all knew that that went on. Padding a quorum call was not a really serious offense. Casting a vote is another matter entirely. The House has always held that the vote may not be given away, that if a Member is elected from a particular constituency, he or she exercises solely the franchise of that constituency and has no authority, implicit or otherwise, to give that franchise to anybody else. It is not inconceivable that Members may have answered for others on roll call, but I never believed that that practice was widespread, but only occasional, and know of no particular circumstance personally where it ever happened, though I never doubted that it occasionally did.

The voting cards are something else. They all kind of look alike, unless you get close enough to read one. Who's to say that a Member can't walk up to a voting station and insert his or her voting card and then in another pocket pull out another voting card and insert another one and vote another time? Or go to a different station if they don't wish to be so obvious. That did become an issue fairly early on, where it was clear that some Members were being recorded who simply weren't there and had in all likelihood given their voting cards to colleagues who would be there to cover their behinds while they were absent.

Finally, after an Ethics Committee investigation, where a Member was 1,000 miles away on a particular day and had perfect attendance—who happened to be a member of the Ethics Committee, by the way—and was recorded on 11 or 12 roll calls or quorum calls, Speaker Albert initiated a change in the rules that specifically required Members to be present and to vote on their own behalf and to prohibit card-passing under such grave penalties as the House might see fit to impose. So that it no longer was implied that it was wrong, but explicit that it was wrong to pass voting cards. I even had Members, early on, who were afraid of forgetting their voting cards, which was not a problem because they could fill out a paper ballot at the front desk of the House and hand it to the clerk and be manually put into the system. They were never deprived of their vote, even if they forgot their card or lost it.

JOHNSON: And if they decided to change their vote, they could also do that?

ANDERSON: Could also change their vote. But I had Members early on saying, "Can I leave my voting card with you in the cloakroom so that I'll be sure that it'll always be here when I am?" I saw nothing but mischief in that, and real peril

for myself, and I said, “Congressman, I can’t do it. I cannot be the custodian of your voting card. What if someone else comes in and demands it, and says it’s on your authority? It puts me in the terrible position of having to say no to a Member who perhaps you’ve authorized. And the offense is yours, not mine, but I am drawn into the situation.” I had to be very hard-nosed and absolutely refuse. I did refuse. When Mr. [Tip] O’Neill was the Majority Leader, and of course he had a seat behind the leader’s table on the House Floor with a locked drawer in the table, and he left his voting card in his wallet—his voting card wallet—in the drawer, locked in the leader’s table. But I had a key to the drawer, which he wanted me to have in case he forgot his key, which he never carried. So about five or 10 minutes before the House met each day, I’d walk down and unlock his drawer so that he could have access to his voting card. I only did it because, number one, the card wasn’t in my personal custody, it was in the leader’s drawer in the leader’s table. I simply unlocked the drawer so that he had access to his card. I never touched the card. One day, I had forgotten to unlock the drawer. We started with an early vote on the *Journal*. Mr. O’Neill couldn’t get his voting card out to vote, and “Fishbait” Miller, the none-too-discreet Doorkeeper of the House, came running across the House Floor into the cloakroom, yelling my name and shouting, “Mr. O’Neill wants his voting card.” Then a dozen or more Members turned around and said, “Oh, can I leave my voting card with you too?” Then I had to explain that I don’t have his voting card. It’s in his drawer, which is locked in his table. I gave “Fishbait” what for. “What are you doing? You’re killing me announcing that I have Mr. O’Neill’s voting card,” which I didn’t, number one. He could never do anything discreetly. In any case, the voting cards became a real problem in that respect. It was easy to forget them, mislay them, pass them. We had to depend on the Members’

own sense of duty and responsibility and honor and integrity that voting cards would not be passed.

I remember one day, I had a group of members of the British Parliament that I was hosting on the House Floor when they weren't in session, explaining how we did our people's business. One of the MPs said to me, "What's to prevent the Members from passing their voting cards amongst each other?" I said, "Their sense of honor." "Oh, indeed." We really had to rely on that. Occasionally, we would find them on the House Floor. A Member would leave his card on the seat or think he was putting it in his pocket, and it dropped on the floor. Whenever that happened, when the Pages or whoever would retrieve Members' lost or forgotten voting cards, I would log in the fact that a voting card was turned in. I would put it in a sealed envelope and put it in my little safe in the cloakroom. I would call the Member and say, "I have your voting card, and next time you come over this way, you'll have to sign for it." Because I wanted a paper trail to protect myself. "Oh, come on, just send it over to my office." "No, I can't do that. You'll have to pick it up yourself." They're just too sensitive to be passed around by Page. It puts a burden on the employees of the House which they can't bear. They appreciated that after a while.

JOHNSON: So these are some of the behind-the-scenes changes that most people wouldn't be aware that took place?

ANDERSON: No. Like I said earlier in this discussion, for every advance, there are certain new questions, challenges. Nothing is everything it seems to be. You have to deal with the new challenges that changes . . . well, there's nothing that's insuperable. Of course, in the decades now since we have voted electronically,

everybody has become quite comfortable with it. We have adjusted the rules to deal with some of the things that were not anticipated when it was first installed. The Members are keenly aware of the fact that they cannot pass their cards. They must be physically present to vote on their own behalf. The penalties would be very grave indeed. I don't think card-passing goes on. I think the Members firmly understand that it is a very, very high obligation and a responsibility invested in them by their constituents, which they cannot gratuitously pass on to anybody else. They take the franchise with the great seriousness that it deserves.

JOHNSON: Before we talk about TV, since that's such a big topic, I wanted to step back for a bit. The *Congressional Directory* listed several different job titles for you throughout your 18 years [in the Democratic Cloakroom]. For example, Majority Manager of Telephones, Majority Chief of Floor Telephones, and Majority Manager of the Floor Information Service. Was this an indication of added responsibilities that you had or of a changing role of your office?

ANDERSON: The answer is yes, it reflected all of those things. The evolution of the services and the duties of the cloakroom, my individual responsibilities. Manager of Telephones . . . when I first started, when it was a telephone-answering operation, it was strictly that, was a proper reflection, I think, of what the job entailed. But we became more and more a leadership information arm. In fact, for a long time, the principal way the leadership diffused information amongst our membership . . . information services or floor services was a much more accurate description of what we did in the cloakroom because in addition to leadership, program, parliamentary information, we also provided the wide range of personal services for Members. Handling their *Congressional Record* material; receiving their bills for introduction; the filing

of reports; committee requests, permission to sit and that sort of thing; permission to print in the *Congressional Record*; leaves of absences for Members that had to be away; taking pair requests, which is another subject entirely.³ The House no longer has pairing, but it used to use it very widely. A rather arcane custom. So as these things evolved—and of course with the new technology, with the recorded information messages, the Whip calls, the radio paging system—it ratcheted up the description of the multiplicity of functions and responsibilities that were vested in the cloakroom. So we occasionally tweaked and tuned our titles to reflect our changing roles.

JOHNSON: Earlier you mentioned that technically you fell under the Doorkeeper's Office, but in reality you really were under the leadership.

ANDERSON: For payroll and administrative purposes, we were under the Doorkeeper of the House. The Doorkeeper of the House provided many of the support services for the institution. Of course, when the cloakroom was exactly that, a checkroom for the Members' belongings, a place where they could grab a sandwich or just kind of lay back and relax, it was strictly a service operation, in a rather custodial sort of way. But as I mentioned earlier in this interview, with the introduction and evolution of telecommunications, and then all the new technologies that came on in the latter part of the 20th century, it became quite clearly a leadership function. So in terms of payroll and administration, we were tied to the Doorkeeper, but we took our daily direction from primarily the Majority Leader and the Majority Whip, for all practical purposes.

JOHNSON: This was the same for the Republican Cloakroom?

ANDERSON: Yes, exactly. In fact, a few years ago, the change was finally made which was clearly obvious long ago, and the cloakrooms were moved from the Clerk of the House, which inherited them from the former Doorkeeper, since that office was abolished, and transferred, in the case of the majority, to the Speaker, and in the case of the minority, to the Minority Leader's office. So they are actually employees of the Speaker or the Minority Leader, which makes a great deal more sense. They are no longer part of the Clerk's organization.

JOHNSON: Did you interact often or collaborate with the employees of the Republican Cloakroom?

ANDERSON: Constantly. Unceasingly. I learned early on that it worked to everybody's advantage to have a constant, close working relationship with the minority. Each party has its function. The majority obviously has the function of governing, to proceed with the agenda of the majority, which is where they're elected in the superior numbers. The minority, on the other hand, has a clear and historic role to question the program of the majority, the right to at least try to make change to perfect the program and legislative agenda of the majority. They have certain rights which historically have been protected by the House: the right to be heard, the right to offer amendments.

The House is operated by majoritarian rule. Clearly, if you have the votes, you can always do what you want to do. You can always roll over the minority. I always found that it makes much better sense and life considerably more delightful if you can have the minority pleasantly cooperative with what you're trying to achieve. I learned early on that it not

only made sense, but it was frankly imperative to cross the center aisle and to establish and build bridges with the minority.

So when I ran the cloakroom, when time permitted, I would cross the aisle and perhaps have a cup of coffee at the Republican snack bar, visit with my colleagues and the Members over there. When we had leadership requests from my side, since I knew the Republican Members who were the key players on the House Floor and they knew me, I could sit down not as a stranger or as the emissary from the enemy, and explain why we wanted to make a particular request and also give them my personal assurance that it had been properly vetted by the minority. I would never mislead because you only have to do that once and you'll never be trusted again, and that relationship is ruined once and forever. So when I went over to talk to the Minority Leader or the Minority Whip or the various Republican Members who were sort of the floor watchdogs and explain that this is what we want to do, and these are the people that it has been cleared with, and indeed it has been cleared, they could take it to the bank.

I developed a feeling of trust on the Republican side that was terribly important. They'd share information with me as to what it was—unless it was really proprietary—what it was they planned to do. Or occasionally, this is what we're going to do, but you can't tell anybody, but so that you're prepared to explain it when it happens. But if you tell anybody, we'll never share it with you again, so that I wouldn't be blindsided. But when some peculiar parliamentary maneuver would occur, I knew that it was going to happen, and I had the means already at hand to explain that to the Members of my party instantly, without standing there scratching my head, going, "What?" I could immediately say, "Well, this is what they're trying to do."

But I couldn't break confidence and tell anybody in advance that this is going to happen. But it was on the sole basis of personal trust and responsibilities that I could get this information. And I would do the same thing with them. "Look, we're going to do this. You can't tell anybody." But then, this was strictly at the staff level between the cloakroom staffs, so that you can explain it when it happens.

JOHNSON: So it was a professional courtesy.

ANDERSON: Exactly. It always worked well. It never failed. After I was elected Clerk, I carried that bipartisan spirit to the Clerk's Office, ensuring that my office was absolutely nonpartisan, that we treated all Members with the same courtesy, the same expediency, the same confidentiality, so that Members of the minority, if they had problems with the Clerk, dealt with things that had great sensitivity, that they could unburden themselves with me, even though I was a Democrat, knowing that I would never break their confidence. It had virtually the seal of a confessional.

JOHNSON: This was something that was encouraged by the leadership on both sides?

ANDERSON: No. It's just something I did. It was obvious, it was practical, and it worked. My leadership certainly approved of it because it made life easier for everybody. They didn't have to put out any brush fires. We didn't start them, and we didn't have to extinguish them. It made things run more smoothly. I don't believe that things that aren't partisan need to be made partisan. As Speaker O'Neill, my friend and mentor of many years, used to say, "We can disagree without being disagreeable." He held the age-old view of the House that—in fact, it's Jeffersonian in its origins—that we should dispute with

each other at the level of the issues and never turn it into personalities. That nobody should be faulted because he or she is of a different mind. That nobody holds a monopoly on truth or virtue. That we disagree for honest and respectable reasons, and that we should accept that. But to say that somebody is flawed, or somehow not to be trusted, or to be suspect simply because they hold a contrary view, makes no sense at all to me. But it was always based on trust and respect, and if that was ever violated, then of course those things went out the window. Those are things that have to be maintained unfailingly because the first time you violate trust and confidence, you'll never have an opportunity to do it again, because you'll never be brought into a situation of trust or confidence.

JOHNSON: Earlier, you mentioned briefly the Pages that were employed in the Democratic Cloakroom. Could you describe in a little more detail what their responsibilities were?

ANDERSON: Oh, with great joy. My first job, of course, was as a Democratic Cloakroom—or as was said in those days—telephone Page. It always made me very proud of the fact that the six kids that worked in the cloakroom were teenagers—16, 17 years old—because the training we gave them, and the insistence on excellence. Young people's minds are like sponges; they can absorb a lot—probably more receptive to new challenges than older people. I was always very proud of the fact that our hundreds, if not thousands, of daily callers, most of whom did not realize they were talking to teenagers holding their first real job, thought that they were talking to experienced adults because of the quality and reliability of the information that they were given by the kids. I would take a certain measure of pride in the training that we insisted on giving them, but also on their diligence and initiative in being

open to that training, and learning their jobs and being able to pick up almost a foreign language. We use terms and words—we call it “Parliamentese.” It’s a language that’s not spoken elsewhere. It’s unique to our institution. And also have to deal with a very high-pressure environment and a very small space, surrounded by very important people doing very important things, and nonetheless keeping their focus on their own jobs, which is to serve those people. Not to simply stand there in wide-eyed awe of these people, but to deal with them and deal with them reliably. And then to give information to Members, their staffs, general public, that is good, solid information about unique situations. I think it says a great deal about the intelligence of the young people that are sent to us. We don’t choose them. They are chosen elsewhere, and we have to do what we can to fit them into the needs of the House. The kids nowadays are much smarter than we were when we came. They know more. They deal with a world that is more challenging in many ways, and in many ways more perilous, than we ever had to deal with.

I also think that it’s very, very important, in a world of very important adults carrying around a lot of parliamentary freight, that to have young people in our midst to remind us of our own mortality and the fact that we don’t always have all the answers we think we do. Young people will, from time to time, ask important “why” questions. “Why do we do that? Why is something done in a particular way? Why don’t we do this, and why do we still do that?” There are legitimate answers for those questions, and it is insufficient to say because it has always been that way. That’s a brush-off. But there is a rationale for everything. And if there isn’t a rationale, then perhaps that question has real salience. “Why do we do it? Why don’t we stop doing it right now?” I mean, it has no meaning anymore. But we don’t often think of

those things. But a fresh view, particularly with the innocence of youth, often creates a situation where we start looking at things in a different way. I know that over the years, kids have asked me “why” questions, and I got to thinking about it. You know, they’ve got a point there. Maybe this is something that ought to change. Or maybe we ought to do something that we’re not doing. This fresh view is important. Of course, sometimes they simply don’t understand, and it would seem to them to be questionable, when in fact there’s a firm rationale for being it. When you explain it to them—“Oh yeah, sure, I understand it, yeah. I see what you mean.” But it causes us to examine things. But I think it’s just wonderful to have the kids in our midst. There’s a certain freshness and vitality and spontaneity that young people have, that older adults don’t. You get locked into a pattern, or you become sort of a set piece on stage. You feel that you must be a certain way. The young people don’t have that burden to carry. They’re spontaneous. They react to their surroundings without ulterior motives. It’s like when we’re very young, we play for the sheer joy of playing. There’s no agenda. As we get older, play is joined with an agenda. We play to achieve certain social goals or certain economic goals. But it’s not playing simply for the joy of the game.

JOHNSON: You were in the cloakroom for almost two decades, and you witnessed a lot of changes. What were some of the major changes for the Page program during that period?

ANDERSON: Well, number one, the integration of the Page program. Until the mid ’60s, it was all white boys. Then in 1966, we integrated by race. Of course, for a while, there was a rush to make up for the inequities of the past, and we had a lot of minority Pages being appointed, where Members wanted to show that their heart was in the right place. Then that settled down, with nobody

trying to achieve any particular racial goal or quota. Then in 1972, we—for the first time—permitted girls to become Pages. Can you imagine, that late in the 20th century? Every time you contemplate a profound change, the contemplation is really much more difficult than the change itself. When it becomes a *fait accompli*, you accept and you move on. But to get up to that awful moment of making the change, when something has been locked in stone for so long, that can be a matter of great concern. We were very concerned that girls wouldn't be able to carry the burden physically because the work of Pages is physically very demanding. Could they carry big bundles of *Congressional Records* around, and the stacks of American flags, and the boxes that have to be delivered every day? As a practical matter, we found out, and we often used to say, as Page supervisors, the girls do twice the work with half the supervision that the boys do. If anything, it measurably improved the effectiveness and the efficiency of the Page program, to have the young ladies. Of course, once Speaker Albert himself broke the ice and appointed the first girl.

JOHNSON: That was Felda Looper.

ANDERSON: Felda Looper from Oklahoma—his home state. Then everybody rushed to appoint girl Pages, where boys became almost an endangered species. It was like three-quarters or more girls. Then that settled down. But it's interesting to note that since girls became a part of the Page program, with rare exception, every year we've had slightly more girls than boys making up the Page program. The explanation, I think, can be found in a variety of ways. Girls, intellectually, clearly mature at an earlier point than boys do, where they can focus on things like politics, issues, the kind of things that are cerebral, involved with American government. They also aren't so tied down

to the concept of team sports because we don't have any athletic program at all in connection with the Page program. A lot of guys are reluctant to give up the team to come to Washington to be a Page. So there are a couple of reasons that we have usually more girls than boys. Sometimes considerably more girls than boys—where housing can be an issue because of course we do segregate them by gender in the dormitory. We do not have an open dorm. But it works. And it works out very well. So those were the two big changes that occurred: gender and racial integration.

The next big step, which was a profoundly important one, and one that was long overdue, was the provision of supervised housing for the Pages. When I served as a Page, virtually all of us lived in so-called approved rooming houses on Capitol Hill, where we were actually well supervised. Little old ladies with whom we lived wouldn't put up with any nonsense, and they were pretty strict about what we did and how we lived our lives. But one by one, the little old ladies either died or moved to Leisure World [in Silver Spring, Maryland], and the approved rooming houses were gone. Then the kids started renting and sharing apartments around Capitol Hill, and as Jim Oliver observed, during the day they were always responsible to somebody, but at night, they were not responsible to anybody, or sometimes irresponsible to somebody. Society had changed.

When I was a teenager, drugs were not part of the scene. It was not a question of deciding whether to use drugs or not. They weren't there. Nobody used them. Alcohol—it was the thrill of the chase, to get away with having a drink. But nobody did it with the—at least not in my crowd—with the purpose of getting drunk. It was just to get away with it. Now of course we have the problem of binge drinking. As far as intimate behavior was concerned, it

wasn't a double standard that it was disgraceful for girls, but for the boys who were predators, it was all right. It was unseemly and unacceptable, at least in my crowd, for either boys or girls to behave in intimate ways. We were prudes! We were old Puritans. That was the way we were raised, and there was still a concept of shame in society. That of course has changed, for a lot of reasons. A revolution in thinking in the '60s, the Pill . . . a lot of things that used to be chiseled in stone are now gone. Of course, nowadays we have sexually transmitted diseases that aren't just annoying, they're lethal—with AIDS. We didn't have to worry about those things. First of all, we didn't engage in those activities, where kids nowadays do. It all blew up in our face in 1982.

Jim Molloy, the Doorkeeper of the House, had for years been pleading with the House to provide some supervised housing for the kids. He knew that eventually we would have a serious problem. And he was right. He was prophetic. In 1982, it happened.

[A 40-second segment of this interview has been redacted.]

Of course, the FBI got into it, the Capitol Police, the Ethics Committee. The Speaker insisted on appointing a special counsel to investigate, who was Joe Califano, the former Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare in the Carter administration. We spent \$2 million funding that special investigation.

[A 1-minute, 25-second segment of this interview was redacted.]

In any case, two Members of Congress were censured at the bar of the House. One was defeated. One employee went to prison—and that was the one involved with drugs—and the other employee lost his job. Everybody seemed to be satisfied. There was something to offend everybody. Well, we almost lost the program. Speaker O’Neill appointed the Alexander Commission, which was a committee headed by Congressman [William Vollie] Bill Alexander, [Jr.], of Arkansas, who was the Chief Deputy Majority Whip, to study the Page program that we needed. “Why do we have it? Is it justified in continuance? Should it be replaced or supplanted by something else?” We came within a hair’s breadth of losing the program. I know Jim Oliver and I expended a lot of personal capital because we believed so strongly in the importance of the program.

JOHNSON: Did Speaker O’Neill come and ask you your opinion on the program?

ANDERSON: Oh, yeah. But Mr. O’Neill viewed . . . He was not hostile as such, but he had great reservations about the irrelevancy of it. He viewed it as an anachronism, that in the latter 20th century, did we still need to be employing teenagers here? Isn’t that something that went back to the 18th and 19th century? Why do we still have kids here? Couldn’t we have some less troublesome group that doesn’t require supervision or have an implied *in loco parentis* responsibility? Of course, he said if it ever happens again, they’re gone. He wasn’t going to do it again.

So the happy result was we got our dormitory, and we got a new school, vastly superior to the old. Our kids have been getting smarter, expecting more, demanding more, and we hadn’t been providing it to them in terms of formal education. So we got back into the education business that we got out

of in 1946 with the Legislative Reorganization Act of that year and hired a faculty, got accredited, set up a curriculum. We are now providing a challenge to our young people that they expect and deserve. It's a very high-quality education. We have a dormitory where they live under very strict rules. They have to read and sign a code of conduct before they commence service, and their parents also have to read it and subscribe to it. The penalties are unfailing. If there is an infraction, they get sent home. And they know it.

They are a privileged group. There are a maximum of 78 of them, out of probably thousands of young people who would like to be Pages. If it's illegal anyplace else, it's illegal here. So we lean on them very hard about . . . if you have to have a cigarette, no matter what it's made of, or a refreshing cocktail, or engage in some kind of intimate behavior, or immoral or unethical activity, you're out of here. First offense. No second chance; no second bite of the apple. If we ever did that, we'd have anarchy because we'd have to have a second bite of the apple times 78. Can't do it. It's tough to toss the kids out, but we do it. We are very happy right now. During the previous academic year, nobody got sent home. It hadn't happened in a number of years. We just completed the first semester of the current academic year, and nobody has been sent home. We've got our fingers crossed that we can make it two years in a row. The infractions, such as . . .

JOHNSON: Going back to some of the changes that resulted from what happened in 1982 and 1983, there was also an age requirement at this time, where it changed to juniors in high school?

ANDERSON: Well, we had gradually raised the floor. Of course, when I came, and forever, we had Pages from all four years of high school. We had very few freshmen

and sophomores, but we did have them. What we did in the Legislative Reorganization Act of '70 is we changed it to juniors and seniors. It meant we still had some 15-year-olds from time to time because not an insignificant number of juniors can be 15 years old. Then after 1982, we changed it to juniors only, for a lot of reasons. We brought in three professional educators—each one of them had an educational, professional, national association—to advise us in creating our school, which we had decided that we wanted to do. We knew that we wanted to change it to a one-year program. The debate was over should it be junior or senior year. The consensus was that it should be your junior year, for a variety of reasons.

Then, just a few years ago, we changed it to juniors who are 16 at the time they commence service. Why? Because if you are under 16, you fall under the provisions of the Fair Labor Practices Act—it's exploitative child labor—where 16 is the demarcation where you can put in a full workday. But under 16, you're limited to something like two or three hours of work a day on a school day. So we said fine, you can be appointed at 15, but the day you commence service and you begin on the payroll, you've got to be 16. The Oppressive Child Labor Provisions—that's what it's known as—of the Fair Labor Standards Act. So all of our students are juniors who are 16 or older. We've got some 17-year-old juniors too, of course.

JOHNSON:

I also read that some of the assignments changed, that before 1983, you would be assigned to a specific area. You could be a *Journal* Page or assigned to the cloakroom. Was that true? So now they would have assignments that would be varied?

ANDERSON: Well, we decided to get into a rotation of the assignments. The duties of the Pages hasn't changed. One thing that we don't do, though, is we do not permit them to work in their sponsoring Members' offices. I mean, they're not paid by their Members. They're paid by the Clerk of the House. Their duties are spelled out very specifically in their job descriptions as classified House employees, so they can't work outside of the duties that are spelled out officially. But when we used to make job assignments among the Pages, whether it was running Pages, overseers, documentarians, the Speaker's Page, cloakrooms . . . once you got that assignment, that was it. Of course the kids that were runners—that was all they did—was run the errands through the hallways. That was considered to be not entirely fair and not really in the interest of a broad familiarity with various aspects of House operations. So one of the things we mandated was an aggressive program of rotation. Not every kid can obviously do every job, but what we try to do is create an equal amount of time spent doing something that is floor-related or running the errands through the hallways.

JOHNSON: So they get a more balanced experience.

ANDERSON: Exactly. Something that—before 1982—we used to have a pay differential for the overseers, the documentarians, and the Speaker's Page, and the cloakroom Pages. So they got slightly more money than the other Pages, which also wasn't fair, because what we did was create the rather sorry situation of having first-class Pages, second-class Pages, no-class Pages, when they were all basically peers doing pretty much the same thing. So we eliminated all pay differentials. They all get the same amount of money which makes a lot better sense and is much more equitable.

JOHNSON: We're nearing the end of our time today. Is there anything else that you wanted to add?

ANDERSON: Oh, I'm sure I could go on forever. These are subjects that are a very rich deposit that could be mined much more deeply. Perhaps next time we meet, perhaps some things that I've said this morning will provoke further questions on these subjects or related subjects, and we can continue from there.

JOHNSON: Great.

ANDERSON: And I'm sure, like I said last time, as soon as I leave the room, I'll think of things that I should have said, wished I had said.

JOHNSON: Okay, so we'll leave it until next time.

ANDERSON: Since we're not operating under any restraints or limitations, to be continued.

JOHNSON: All right. That's a great way to end.

— DONNARD K. ANDERSON —

INTERVIEW THREE

JOHNSON: This is Kathleen Johnson interviewing Donnard Anderson, former Clerk of the U.S. House of Representatives. The interview is taking place in the Legislative Resource Center, Cannon House Office Building. This is the third interview with Mr. Anderson, and the date is April 12th, 2006.

In an earlier interview, you mentioned that while you worked in the cloakroom, you participated in a new Member orientation program. I was hoping that you could provide some more detail on that specific project and other similar projects.

ANDERSON: Certainly. Freshman orientation was a late-developing idea. It was always surprising to me, particularly since we often had large freshman classes, that there was no particular effort made to impart useful information that new Members need to know right up front about how they fit into the institution, the fundamentals of parliamentary procedure, structures of a congressional office, where they were often kind of left to fend for themselves. Many of us with long institutional experience would kind of seek out the Members and tell them what our particular areas of expertise were and make ourselves available if they wished to call on us to provide them with that kind of information.

But it was not until fairly well into the 1970s when the Democratic Study Group, which was an organization of mainly liberal Democrats in the House, started putting together a Member orientation program. And at first, of course, as anything that's new, it was kind of a scattered effort. Not

particularly well put together at first, but at least it was something, and something is better than nothing. And as time passed, it evolved into a very formal and comprehensive orientation program. Then, as now, time is always the enemy. There's never enough of it. The freshman Members have only been coming for early organization since the '70s, when in the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1970, we provided for early organization of the House where the two parties would meet in December, prior to the sitting of the new House, to choose their leadership and adopt proposals for changes in the House Rules, and hopefully take care of committee assignments and that matter of organizational business. And, of course, the political side of the institution always takes precedence over the mechanics of it. The Members, obviously, are anxious to secure the choice committee assignments, the things that are very important for their own success in representing their districts, and trying to cement liaisons with their more senior colleagues. And very often, the niceties of parliamentary procedure, and just trying to learn how they fit into the cosmic continuum of the House, gets a rather cursory look as they defer to the more important immediate political needs.

Eventually, the role of the Democratic Study Group and the House Republican Conference kind of yielded to a bipartisan orientation program that was crafted by the Committee on House Administration. And in conjunction with organization week, the committee put on a series of symposia from early morning until into the evening on the nuts-and-bolts side of being a United States Representative—dealing with the emoluments of office, clerk hire, the official expense allowance to help Members avoid the snares of getting into things that really aren't official or questionable, what you can use it for, creating a budget for your office. Because running a

congressional office is basically like simple household budgeting and finance. You have so much money, and you have to figure out what your needs and expenses are going to be and then make that money stretch for the course of the year because there's no way to get more of it if you run out. How to get equipment, how to recruit staff, pay levels, job titles, the structure of the congressional office. Which is no easy matter because, as I'm sure you know by now, the House of Representatives is not a corporate entity so much as it is a group of 435 small businesses kind of gathered under the heading "U.S. House of Representatives." They're all kind of like franchise operations under a parent company. Witness the fact that the House has no central employment office. It has a payroll office, but it doesn't have an employment office. Each Member, each committee chair, ranking Member, or whatever, is his or her own recruiting and appointing authority, and they all have a different view of how that is to be handled. But there are some things that are constant throughout congressional offices.

So there was a concerted effort to inform the new Members of what was necessary to hit the ground running, to set up your office properly to begin with, to learn how to arrange budgets and finance, to use the official emoluments of office effectively and also within the ethical limits established, and the legal limits, as well. Things like not mixing personal and political funds with public funds, which, of course, is forbidden. What is considered political and what is not, since political things, as strange as it may seem, may not be done at public expense. Those are often very fine distinctions, but they nonetheless must be carefully drawn. And we in the cloakrooms, because we had always kind of done our own thing voluntarily, spontaneously, were drawn into the orientation to talk about how the House Floor works, the Members' floor services.

One of the things that I always felt particularly competent in was the use of the *Congressional Record*. For something that is so widely promulgated and so public, the niceties of the *Congressional Record* remain kind of a mystery. What is it, after all? What are its elements? How do Members effectively use their unlimited freedom of speech to reflect their views in the *Congressional Record*? What may be printed and what may not? How to use the *Congressional Record* as an information resource.

To this day, as far as I know, nobody has done so much as a simple pamphlet to explain how the *Congressional Record* is structured and how to put information into it and to glean information from it. It's one of the things that I always intended to do, but I was always a little concerned that if I did it without authorization, somebody would object to it. "Why is he doing that? Do we really need to have something like that floating around?" Clearly, to me, it was in the interest of the institution and the public interest as well, but nonetheless the time never seemed right to do it. The niceties of how to gain recognition in debate and, once recognized, how to proceed. What are the limitations imposed both by the black-letter rules of the House and by custom and usage, which is every bit as strong in governing one's conduct on the House Floor as the black-letter rules themselves? How to make yourself the focus of favorable attention when you speak? First of all, don't do it too often. If you speak too often, people don't pay attention. When you rise have something worth the hearing of your colleagues to say, otherwise be content just to reflect your views in print elsewhere in the *Congressional Record*. Those are the things that I got interested in.

And then later, when I became Clerk of the House, the Clerk's Office was by then a very formalized Member orientation program put on by House

Administration. Various elements of my staff would hold symposia to explain budget and finance to the Members, since we supported the Members by dispersing their funds, paying their expenses, compensating their staffs. We provided the equipment that was used in their offices, the House Recording Studio, which was a way for them to communicate officially with their citizens at home, as long as it wasn't of a political nature. Again, a very fine distinction: what the studio can and cannot do for you.

JOHNSON: Were the Members fairly receptive to this orientation?

ANDERSON: Oh, absolutely. Absolutely. Everybody who comes here, like any new Member of any organization, has visions of themselves in the future, and they conscientiously wished to be effective, to be active participants. In public life, people have a sense of mission; otherwise they wouldn't stand for public office. Clearly, those who do have a sense of themselves as being able to contribute something unique and worthwhile to the public will, so they're anxious to learn and to hone those skills. The House of Representatives is a difficult place in which to attain visibility. It's a very large body. It doesn't have the clubbishness of the Senate. Most of the Members of the Senate have some level of national identity. Very few Members of the House of Representatives do, unless they're Members of the leadership or happen to chair one of the major committees of the House. It tends to be that kind of sea of people. It's difficult in the House to attain a stature of identity, often, within the institution itself.

JOHNSON: At this point, I wanted to switch focus and concentrate on the 1970s—some of the important events of the 1970s.

ANDERSON: Extraordinary era.

JOHNSON: First off, what kind of impact did Watergate and the Nixon House Judiciary Impeachment Hearings of 1974 have on the House—both short-term and long-range consequences.

ANDERSON: All right. Let's just step back a little bit to kind of frame the times. America, until the 1960s, had really been marked by constant growth, constant achievement. We always came out of everything that we got into winners. We won two world wars. We managed to deal with the Great Depression of 1929 and the decade of difficulty that followed it. But we emerged from it bigger and better than ever. In the late 1950s and into the '60s, we started questioning ourselves. New things were happening in the land: the emergence of the civil rights movement. Most Americans were, frankly, unaware and insensitive to the fact that many millions of our citizens were deprived of their rights, that were suppressed, that did not enjoy the fruits of the society that the majority did, simply because of what they looked like, who they were. So the emergence of the civil rights movement was a new challenge to the American experience.

And then we had Vietnam. It was a war that we were clearly not winning. Very costly, very controversial, very divisive. For those of us in my generation who grew up in the relative serenity of the '40s and '50s when life was good—we had just beaten the Nazi tyranny—it was a period of great prosperity, great material advancement in American life. Now we found ourselves in a dilemma where we were in a very large, costly war that we were clearly not winning, the objectives of which were never particularly clear to everybody. And then with Watergate, for the first time we found ourselves

confronted with a government, particularly a President, who was lying to us. We always had great trust and confidence in the national government. There was a tendency throughout the land to say, “Well, they know better than we do. Let Washington take care of it. They’ve always done a good job.” We’ve won two major wars. We have emerged from the Great Depression, which was a great challenge to the American persona. And everyone was quite content to let the government take care of their affairs. There was a great confidence that Washington knew best, that it would always deal well and effectively with the problems.

So having found ourselves in a situation where we were in a costly war that we weren’t winning for questionable objectives, and then when the President of the United States himself clearly was involved in illegal activities (contravention of the rule of law) and then resigned in disgrace having lied to and deceived the American people and committed unlawful acts for which, save for the pardon he received from his successor, would have probably resulted in his prosecution and likely imprisonment—certain impeachment if he had not resigned—the American people were very confused. “Can we trust our government anymore? Has it gotten too big? Do we really know who the people are in the government?” Because with Watergate, all of these shadowy figures suddenly emerged. We always kind of thought of the federal workforce as good, loyal public servants who did whatever they did in the public interest and were not pursuing secret or hidden agendas, personal agendas. And clearly, we found out that that just wasn’t the case—that there was a good reason to be doubtful, if not just plainly mistrustful, of the government. It was a great shock to the national confidence. And there was an anxiety about getting back some control over the national government.

And as a result, in the wake of Watergate, we had a huge new freshman class, mostly Democrats. The Democratic majority soared to almost 300; it was a high watermark since the FDR [Franklin D. Roosevelt] landslide of 1933. And the Republicans, at least briefly, almost ceased to be a viable political force in the House of Representatives. As it happened, within two or three elections following 1974, many of the so-called “Watergate Babies”—the Democratic freshmen who came in as a reaction to the abuses of the then Republican administration—were swept out of office. And the balance of control, though remaining securely Democratic, did resume a more normal balance since there had been an overreaction to Watergate.

But it fractured a lot of the traditional ideas of the operation of the institution. For instance, the seniority system which we discussed at least briefly in an earlier interview, which—while by the latter part of the 20th century was viewed as being something that was flawed and perhaps wrong—when it evolved in the early 20th century after the so-called Revolution of 1910 when the abuses of Speaker [Joseph Gurney] Cannon were redressed in a bipartisan attempt that was very successful by Members of both parties to take control away from the Speaker and return it to the floor of the House, to make the House a more democratic—with a small “d”—institution. Seniority had, in the decades that followed, assumed a perception of being a rigid, inflexible, ineffective way of dividing power internally in the House. That better people were prevented simply because they didn’t have the survivability as some others from assuming the gavels within the substructure of the House.

And so the Democratic Caucus that was controlled by this new class of Watergate Babies, as they were called, decided that they would abolish the

seniority system, or at least make severe changes in it, and started interviewing the senior Members, who either were sitting chairmen or aspired to be, to see whether or not the caucus would endorse their chairmanships. And, of course, four senior committee chairmen were removed. One eventually got his chair back—Wayne [Lever] Hays of Ohio—but that was kind of a fluky thing. But [John William] Wright Patman, Bob [William Robert] Poage, F. [Felix] Edward Hébert, three very senior, very powerful Members of the House lost their committee chairs. It was unheard of. Granted, some of the older chairmen had become rather arrogant and insular and were not responsive to the views and the changing feelings of their younger colleagues. But it really upset the leadership applectart. And it was a while before we kind of returned to a modified seniority system. It made things rather uncertain for a while. It also turned the selection of the second tier of leadership in the House into a conflict of personalities, and also something of a popularity contest, which was quite at variance from what had happened in the past.

In a large and very diverse body such as the House of Representatives, control is very important. The House, throughout its history, has wrestled with the issue of how much control should the Members have, and how much should they vest in their leader. The message that always emerges, throughout more than 200 years of congressional history, is—particularly in the House—that because of its size, because of the fact that it basically is a very provincial organization, as Mr. [Tip] O’Neill used to say “all politics is local.” And nothing could better bespeak that than the House of Representatives: 435 little pieces of America coming together. And the men and women who are chosen to represent those pieces, first of all, have the interests of those little parts before them, and then after they have taken care of the folks in the

district then they can worry about broader national issues and international issues. But they're really concerned about what affects the people at home. The House is much more reactionary and provincial than the Senate, which, historically, could almost be described as a diplomatic corps from the states, with each state having two ambassadors to the national government. But, not so, the House of Representatives. It's a very healthy thing, I think, to have that constant clash of viewpoints in the ebbs and flows of changing perception and political thought. But the local interest always being pushed to the front in the first House of the national legislature. Perhaps I've rambled on a bit, if you'd like to refocus me . . .

JOHNSON: No, that's fine, and there are a lot of things I want to ask about what you just mentioned. Specifically, as manager of the Democratic Cloakroom, you were privy to a lot of behind-the-scenes things that the average American wouldn't know about. So, what I was wondering is, was there a sense of panic or resentment among some of the longtime Members about the Watergate Babies, and about the challenge to seniority that had been established in the House for so many years?

ANDERSON: Oh, sure, there were a lot of panic attacks among the senior Members. When you have a built-in, highly secure power structure that had enjoyed insularity for years and years and years and suddenly to have a viable challenge, it created resentment. Older people have a tendency to like to think they have an accumulated wisdom of years that young people dare not challenge with their inexperience. And we had a lot of young Members of Congress, many of whom had never held any elected office at all. It was an interesting group just because of the different walks of life that these people

came from. Not, necessarily, from city councils or state legislatures, or having held some statewide office as had been the custom.

Also, for the first time, most of the new Members were non-lawyers. The legal profession used to be the largest single block in terms of professional or vocational experience in the House of Representatives, but not so with that new class. They were school teachers, they were business people, they were farmers, a fishing tackle manufacturer, all sorts of people with backgrounds that were non-traditional in terms of how they got to Congress. Of course, in their attitudes and their actions, that diversity of background was affected. Some of the older guys really needed to be challenged. Where they had presumed or assumed through themselves very arbitrary, capricious control over their committees and, frankly, were rudely condescending to the young Members.

I recall Speaker [Thomas] Foley—who became chairman of the House Agriculture Committee as a result of that overthrow of his predecessor in 1974, Bob Poage, who had been chairman of the Agriculture Committee—and Speaker Foley years later talking about how he became chairman of the Agriculture Committee mentioned that when he came to the House in the '60s, the Agriculture Committee was chaired by Harold [Dunbar] Cooley of North Carolina, whom I remember very well, who was a real titan in the House and exercised a very tight rein over his committee. Mr. Foley observed that when he attended the first organizational meeting of the Agriculture Committee, Chairman Cooley was explaining, mainly for the benefit of the new Members of his committee, how things worked. And he said that “when we have witnesses before the committee, I will call upon the Members in the order of their seniority to ask questions of the witnesses and

if there is time left, which there is not likely to be, the new Members perhaps might be able to ask a question, but the chances of that are pretty slim.” And he [Foley] said, then years later, “When I found myself on the cusp of becoming chairman of the same committee, freshman Members were interrogating me as the contender for the chair as to what my views and attitudes and opinions were that would qualify me to receive their favorable judgment.” How things had taken a 180 in the 20-some years that had intervened, how different it was.

JOHNSON: You mentioned that some of these were the immediate consequences of some of the longtime chairs being deposed. What do you think were the more lasting effects of Watergate and this class of 75 new freshmen that came in?

ANDERSON: Well, I think that in the long run it restored the perception that strong leadership was necessary to run the House as a practical matter. Ideally direct democracy is very nice, where everybody comes to the table with an equal voice and an equal vote, and that majoritarian rule will prevail. But, as I pointed out, because of the provincial nature of the institution and the wide disparity of viewpoints, and the fact that it tends to be a very tumultuous, passionate body, that the Members eventually must admit that they need someone to force them into a pattern of procedure and behavior so that they can do the people’s business, as a practical necessity to getting anything accomplished.

At that same period of time, Carl Albert was the Speaker of the House. In terms of his education and innate intelligence, one of the better educated Speakers we’ve had: a Rhodes Scholar, a great debater, highly educated man, but he had a tendency to be non-controlling. He was sort of a transitional

figure between the last hurrah and the new politic. And his Speakership will be remembered as a period of weak leadership where it was often said, and I think quite accurately, and I hate to speak unkindly or uncharitably of Speaker Albert, who was very good to me—one of my great friends and benefactors—he appointed me manager of the cloakroom, after all—that the last person who spoke to Speaker Albert was the one whose plea was acted upon. You could never tell where he was going to be because people were always grabbing him and bending his arm and his ear, and he had a tendency to try to be everything to everybody. As a result he received a lot of criticism which he probably deserved because he did not exert a strong, controlling hand.

But, then again, he was faced with that situation of the new freshman class. It would have been hard for anybody during that period to exercise the same kind of control that his immediate predecessors, Sam Rayburn and John W. McCormack, had exercised. That era was done with, at least temporarily, by the time Mr. Albert was succeeded by Mr. O'Neill, who had been in the House since 1953, actually was one of the few remaining Democrats who had actually served in the minority before the Democrats became a long-term majority, recognized that strong control was needed. And he exercised it. And the party, surprisingly, gave him a lot of control that had been taken away from Speakers historically. He was the strongest Speaker since Uncle Joe Cannon. He appointed the members of the Rules Committee; they were no longer chosen by the Committee on Committees. That was the Speaker's Committee, and he could install or remove Democrats depending on whether he felt they were properly following the leadership agenda. And, as a result, we went into a decade of strong control from the chair. And things worked better.

Speaker O'Neill believed strongly in the seniority system, for a variety of reasons. But one of those reasons was that it was impartial and color-blind. As I mentioned earlier on, when I first started, in the 86th Congress [1959–1961], we did have several black committee chairmen. But, given the attitude of the times, if it hadn't been for seniority, they would never have had a prayer of being elected by secret ballot to chair those committees because of the bias and bigotry that existed in the institution. So it did ensure that the talents of Bill Dawson, Adam Powell, and Bob Nix were made available to the benefit of the public because of seniority. They never would have been chosen otherwise. And he believed in that. He believed very strongly in the seniority system. And he tried, whenever it seemed to be under attack, to use the personal respect, of which he had a great deal amongst the membership, to avoid Members losing their chairs.

I remember he fought very vigorously to keep [Charles Melvin] Mel Price from losing his chairmanship. Mr. Price had just plainly stayed too long. His health was in serious decline. There was question as to whether he was in possession of all of his faculties because of advanced old age and failing health. Lovely man, never a tyrant. Everybody was very fond of him, but as chairman of the Armed Services Committee, he had lost his effectiveness. And he eventually lost his committee chairmanship even though Mr. O'Neill and others tried valiantly to keep the caucus from removing him, trying to create a device where he could remain a figurehead chairman and let the next ranking Member actually run the show. But the caucus was not content to do that.

JOHNSON: Since we've jumped ahead a little bit, which is fine, to Speaker O'Neill, I wanted to ask you about the 1976 race which involved Jim Wright, [Phil] Burton, and [Richard Walker] Bolling the majority leadership race which—

ANDERSON: There was a fourth candidate you know? John—

JOHNSON: And [John Joseph] McFall, right.

ANDERSON: I was discussing that with my next-door neighbor just yesterday.

JOHNSON: Congressman Wright definitely surprised a lot of the experts.

ANDERSON: He was a big surprise.

JOHNSON: So I was wondering what you recall about the election specifically and then, also, was there any indication that this kind of upset would take place?

ANDERSON: Well, I was kind of surprised that Jim Wright got into the race, number one, because he was not a member of the leadership. In fact, he was not even a committee chairman; he was the second ranking member of the Public Works Committee, but not even chair of the committee on which he'd sat very effectively for many years. I knew Mr. Wright, but not particularly well. While a warm and friendly person, he was not known to be a socializer. He went home to his wife at night; he was not on the dinner circuit like a lot of the other Members. He was always known to be a "nose to the grindstone" type of guy, very conscientious in his approach to the business of his office. But I viewed him as something of a sleeper. He was certainly very effective when dealing with matters from the Committee on Public Works but had, at

least in my perception, kind of a narrow focus in terms of how he fit into the structure of the House. Very good in the public works area but didn't seem to be a generalist dealing with other areas of concern that came before the House.

Phil Burton, of California, was, of course, a study in himself. One of the most extraordinary people I have ever met in public life. Absolutely consumed by politics. I don't think, as well as I knew Phil Burton, which was very, very well, that I ever heard him talk about anything other than politics. He had no interests, no hobbies, nothing outside of his zeal for politics. He, of course, was a very, very liberal Member. Physically, very large—he was a very intimidating man. We sometimes used to say, with his eyes, which were very scary and kind of bulging, that the only person that could have given Phil Burton an eye transplant was Rasputin. He was known for being a very threatening individual, which had to do a lot with just the fact that he never forgot an offense, either real or imagined. He was known to carry grudges and liked to get even—and often did. His language was beyond coarse. He had the most amazing vocabulary of obscenities that I think I've ever heard in or out of the United States Army. {laughter}

I was always delighted that he took a liking to me, and I became a friend of his even though—and I often socialized with him—I was always kind of scared of him because you just never were quite sure what could set him off. So, particularly in his company, I had a tendency to sort of keep my opinions to myself for fear that I would say something that would tick him off. John McFall, who just died within the last few months, was one of the nicest, sweetest guys who'd ever served. A longtime Member from my area of California: hard working, low profile, smart, a thoroughly decent man. One

of those people that sometimes you would say “he’s too nice to be in politics—how could he ever get into this business because he’s such a decent, sweet guy?” He would’ve been a more viable candidate for leader if he hadn’t been tainted with the Tongsun Park scandal, the Korean businessman who was involved with attempts to influence a variety of Members of Congress through bribes and other means. I can’t recall specifically what the allegations were against Mr. McFall, except that he was severely damaged by them even though I think it was demonstrated that he really had no real culpability in that connection. But as I’ve said before Washington is a city where perception is reality. And that, unfortunately, became a severely limiting factor in his own ambitions for higher leadership office.

Dick Bolling of Missouri was probably the most learned person in modern times in the roles of history and procedure in the House. We often said, in jest, that he probably slept with a copy of *Cannon’s Precedents* under his pillow.⁴ Whenever he and his wife, Jim [Grant]—yes, that was her name—went off to their island retreat in the Caribbean, they would take suitcases full of House Rules and precedents and all sorts of historical things to study as their leisure reading under the palm trees.

I once said to Mr. Bolling, and I was quite sincere in complimenting him on his knowledge of the institution, that he has a truly encyclopedic knowledge of the House. And, in one of his rare moments of self-effacement, he said, “Well, Donn, that’s not actually true. I’m often given credit for that but actually I learned early on that if you memorize the table of contents, the rest is easy as long as you can find the information that you want very quickly.” Dick Bolling, for his genius—and he certainly was—and his learning—I don’t think anyone in the House at the time knew more about the institution

in terms of its mechanics and history than Dick Bolling—was aloof. He didn't mix readily with his colleagues. He was not a socializer. He had a reputation for condescending to his colleagues that he tended to speak to them like a schoolteacher—rather than as a friend, a peer, a colleague—and they were turned off by it. He was a great political tactician. He was chairman of the Rules Committee and created a lot of the innovations which are still so important to this very day, like modified rules.

When I came we had either open rules or closed rules. The matter, when it came to the floor, was either totally open to germane amendments or it was totally closed to any amendments. We had, by far, more open rules than closed rules. He came up with these rather creative ideas for—and I guess you could say it's kind of “Is the glass half-full or half-empty?”—a modified open or a modified closed rule, which restricted the offering of amendments either to specific parts of the bill or specified the amendments that could be offered and who could offer them. And often establishing the timeframes for debate on those amendments as opposed to the traditional practice of letting debate freewheel under the five-minute rule until either there's no more requests for time or a time limit of some sort is entered into by the Committee of the Whole. It was amazingly offensive to the Republicans; of course these creative rules were used to their great disadvantage and pretty much changed the relationship with the minority, which was the right to offer amendments, though not necessarily the right to have them adopted, to participate freely in the perfecting process for legislation. And it was one of those things where I always viewed it with anxiety because, unlike many of my fellow Democrats, I never had the notion that we would be in the majority forever and that someday as the minority we would have to live with the excesses that we had imposed on our minority. And like the sayings in

politics—“paybacks are hell,” “what goes around comes around,” “if you fool with the bull, you get the horn”—now that wasn’t exactly the way I heard that.

I always tried to caution our Members when they were running off and we had very large majorities, particularly through the ’70s and into the ’80s, to oppress the minority, that someday, inevitably, we would have to live with these things and could we live with it. I didn’t think so, and that they might wish to be a little more moderate. When you have the majority, you can always do what you want to do because the House is based on majoritarian rule. So you can always roll the minority, but do you really want to crush and destroy and utterly gag the minority? I don’t think so.

And, as something of a scholar of the institution, to me anything that suppresses the free exchange of ideas and information is contrary to what representative government is all about. I do believe in majoritarian rule—that is why it’s important to have a majority—to have the Speaker, the committee chairmen, to construct the rules of the body and to have enough votes to proceed with your agenda. But it shouldn’t wantonly deprive the minority of a right to express an opposing viewpoint or occasionally to perfect imperfect legislation through the process of orderly amendment. Sometimes my rather scholarly traditional views weren’t particularly appreciated in the drive to do whatever needs to be done by whatever means available, but that was the way I always viewed it. And, of course, when we became the minority, we had to live with a lot of those things, and still do, and we don’t like it very much. But we’re kind of paying the price for our own excesses.

Anyhow, getting back to that four-way race—going into it, everybody kind of thought that Phil would win by a small majority; I certainly did. Speaker O’Neill and others hated the idea—of course, he hadn’t become Speaker yet—this was at the time of the transition when Speaker Albert was retiring and everybody was moving up. And, of course, Hale Boggs was gone, having been lost in Alaska in 1972.⁵ He would have been the next Speaker, and Mr. O’Neill probably would have retired within a few years and, except locally, would have been quickly forgotten rather than becoming the looming and lasting presence that he has been in American public life, even a dozen years after his death.

JOHNSON: A House icon, in many ways.

ANDERSON: To be sure, absolutely. Because while everyone was sure John McFall wouldn’t make much of a showing—and he didn’t—and that Dick Bolling, because the way he was resented by his colleagues—admired for his genius and for his scholarship, but nonetheless resented because he tended to have a kind of condescending attitude towards his colleagues—they resented that; they didn’t consider him a pal. And Jim Wright was kind of a sleeper. Everybody liked Jim Wright and respected him, and I don’t recall that he had any enemies, either individuals or groups of people that didn’t like him or felt some imperative to oppose him, but they just didn’t know a whole lot about him even though he had been in the House since, I think, 1955.

Interesting story, and it’s reported accurately in both the Phil Burton biographies that came out some years ago. In fact, what started this discussion last night with my neighbor is he was reading the book called *A Rage for Justice*, which is an excellent biography of Phillip Burton, and I’ve

forgotten the name of the author, but he sought me out as someone who had spent a lot of time around Phil Burton, to get some input.⁶ And I was happy enough to share my reflections, particularly since Phil was dead! {laughter}

JOHNSON: Made it easier that way. {laughter}

ANDERSON: {laughter} Yes, I didn't have to worry so much about awful retribution. In any case, I used to go to The Monocle a lot when I ran the cloakroom, the restaurant over on the Senate side. I am a bachelor and I ran the cloakroom and sometimes when special orders would go on until seven or eight o'clock [p.m.] I didn't feel like going home and trying to cook something so I, and usually the guys from the Republican Cloakroom, also bachelors, would go over to The Monocle and have a quick dinner before we went home. And it was a nice time to loosen up and have a cocktail and a nice dinner. We never lingered, but it was Phil Burton's hangout; he lived on the Hill, not very far from The Monocle, and so he was a regular there and very often he would join us. We'd come in, and he wouldn't ask if he could join us but would just say "I'm joining you guys." Which was fine, and it was always a fascinating evening, granted he did most of the talking, but you always learned a lot because the man was absolutely brilliant. He was one of the giants of American public life. And you never failed but to gain an insight that you otherwise wouldn't have had from listening to him if you could manage to enjoy your meal with the language that was being used.

In any case, just before the leadership election, which was in December of 1975—no, December of 1976—I was having dinner at The Monocle by myself. It was either a Friday or Saturday night with a magazine for company. I happened to notice Phil and his wife, Sala [Galante Burton],

arrive and join another couple on the other side of the dining room and, other than to notice their arrival, paid no further attention. And I was sitting there enjoying my dinner and reading my magazine and I looked up to see Phil's looming presence sitting in the previously vacant chair on the other side of my table. He kind of scared me because I really wasn't aware when he sat down, which is amazing for a guy that was 6'3" and 250 pounds; you don't miss someone like that. He leaned across the small table and said, "All right, what's going to happen on Monday?" which was when the leadership race was to take place in the Democratic Caucus. And I said to him, "Phil, I'm not a head-counter." And he smiled and laughed and said, "Aw, come on. Which of us is?" as if he didn't count every head in the place. He pulled out a little spiral notebook which he always carried in his pocket, found an empty page and wrote "Donn" at the top of it, and said, "All right, give me the numbers. What's going to happen on Monday?" And I was really reluctant to do it. And it was pure pulling numbers out of the air because I wasn't involved in those things, mainly because that wasn't what I did best. I always considered myself something of a technocrat in the House, but not necessarily a political operative.

JOHNSON: Did he assume that you heard talk in the cloakroom?

ANDERSON: Yes, he knew that I was in a position where I heard. And I did. I was convinced that he was going to win by a narrow margin. That was sort of the consensus, and I kind of agreed with that; I had no reason to doubt it. Anyhow I said, "All right, but don't hold me to it." He said, "Of course not." I said, "Well, John McFall goes on the first ballot with maybe 20, as many as two dozen votes, not very many though." He says, "Well, all right, we all know that. Now what happens?" I said, "Dick Bolling probably gets

60 or 70 votes and drops out on the second ballot.” And he says, “Why? Dick’s a smart guy.” I said, “Yeah, but he’s not popular. People don’t like him very much; he’s not a mixer.” And he said, “Well, a lot of people don’t like me either.” I said, “Well, we’ll get to that.” {laughter}

He said, “All right, now it’s Jim and I. What happens?” And I said, “Well, Phil, I see you winning by two or three, maybe four, votes.” And he looked wounded, just very crestfallen, and he said, “Why so few?” And I said, “Phil, because you’re f-ing scary.” That’s not a word I use very often. And he said, “Me? I’m a pussycat.” And I said, “No, you’re a scary guy. You scare the shit out of me, and I’m one of your best friends and admirers, by the way.” He said, “Okay.” And he wrote all of that down.

All right, it’s the next weekend—The Monocle again. Jack Curran, the longtime lobbyist for the Laborer’s International Union was married on Sunday afternoon. Had the wedding upstairs, reception downstairs. Jack and Betty were old friends of mine; I was invited to the wedding. Mostly Democrats, a lot of labor types, and Phil and Sala—a very big labor guy and a longtime friend of Jack Curran’s. And after the wedding I was downstairs having a cocktail and previewing the buffet and deciding which way I would go and watched Phil, who was with his wife, and he was busy working the room. He never stood still in a room full of people. All of a sudden he saw me across the room. He immediately broke off from the group that he was with, came dashing across the room, walks up to me, pulls out the little spiral notebook, flips to the page marked “Donn,” looked at the numbers on it, looked at me, and said, “Not bad.” And to me, that was one of the highest compliments that I have ever been paid. That someone of his political skill and savvy would look at my guesswork and say “not bad.” It was praise from

Caesar. And I felt very comfortable with that. And of course, he had only lost by one vote.

JOHNSON: It certainly seems very insightful on your part because most of the experts were completely surprised.

ANDERSON: Oh yes, I think everyone was willing to concede the fact that he would narrowly win and were scared to death of what would happen. Mr. O'Neill, who was about to begin his Speakership, was particularly unnerved by it—to have to work with someone whose style that he profoundly disapproved of. Mr. O'Neill was as tough as he needed to be, but he was not a bully. And the thing that he really resented about Phil Burton was Phil was a bully—may he rest in peace. I loved him, and he was good to me, but he was a bully. He could be very mean and vindictive. Mr. O'Neill was not that type of person. He could break your arm, but then he'd pay for your medical bill and send you flowers because he'd really be sorry that he did it. There was a big difference in style between the two. Phil Burton held grudges; Mr. O'Neill never did. In fact, if Mr. O'Neill had a weakness, it was the fact that everybody knew that while he could get very angry and be very scary when he was very angry, he couldn't stay angry. And, if you could duck him for a few days if he was mad at you, he'd get over it.

JOHNSON: Of course, the leadership race was done by a secret ballot.

ANDERSON: Yes.

JOHNSON: But one of the things I found interesting going through newspaper articles was it mentioned that it took place in the House Chamber and it was open, that people were in the gallery watching the proceedings.

ANDERSON: When Phil became chairman of the Democratic Caucus—and that was in the age of King Caucus—earlier Speakers did not like caucus rule. During the Rayburn and McCormack years, we generally had maybe one caucus meeting every two years, which was to organize the House, and that was it. The Speaker and his lieutenants would then kind of come up with the party agenda and how they would achieve that agenda but they didn't like the idea of everybody getting together and thrashing out their views and giving instructions to the leadership. It was kind of a top-down leadership situation. And that changed with Carl Albert.

And it was during that same period that Phil Burton became chairman of the Democratic Caucus, King Caucus, as it was known for years. And he decided that we'd open caucus meetings to the public, and we had the galleries open. And, as a result, debate was rather inhibited when you had the press and the public sitting there listening because caucus meetings could be rather colorful with language on the House Floor that you would never hear because it was impermissible in the course of debate. Some pretty warm words could pass, and Members also were much more candid in a closed environment. Not that anything that was said in the caucus was secret very long—too many people involved. And the Members talked worst of anybody. It wasn't the staff that was going out betraying what was going on in the caucus. It was the Members themselves. And so Phil liked the idea of the open caucus. And it gave him a chance to present himself as a party leader, too, where he would have less of an opportunity in the ordinary

course of debate because the caucus chairman doesn't have a formal role in the structure of the House; it's a creature of the party, not of the House. So, he liked the idea of sitting in the Speaker's chair and presiding over the Democratic Caucus and showing how he ran things as the caucus chairman.

But, yes, I had forgotten that. The election was held in the presence of the press and public. The counting took place in the Speaker's Lobby, as it always does. With four tables, the alphabet is broken up into blocks, and Members are checked off as they approach the ballot boxes and drop in their secret ballots so that nobody can vote more than once. Then the votes are tabulated in the Lobby. You know which of the four boxes any Member voted in, but as to trying to figure out which his or her vote was, you can't really do it.

But it was interesting—when Phil lost by one vote even though some of his partisans were urging him to have a recount he said, “No, that's the end of it.” He was amazingly gracious in defeat considering he was defeated by one vote. But he absolutely disdained having a recount.

JOHNSON: In your opinion, just from what you're saying, it seems that it was an anti-Burton vote rather than pro-Wright, is that a fair assumption?

ANDERSON: Absolutely. Jim Wright was not a scary person. He was something of a question mark, but he was not a scary person. I mean, his dealings with his colleagues were always pleasant. He was liked, but not well known. Phil Burton, on the other hand, was too well known. And secret ballots are funny things. People can pledge their support and then do something else with impunity. They only have their own conscience to guide them. I don't

think Phil's figures, for his own head counting, were far off. I think he probably thought he would win by more than I thought he would. Maybe eight or 10 votes, I don't believe he thought it was going to be a real squeaker. Not comfortable, but not a real squeaker. But then to lose by one vote, and there, of course, has been ever since speculation as to whose vote it was. I was told by people close to him that he thought it was Glenn [Malcolm] Anderson of California, who represented Long Beach, who did not like Phil, and Phil apparently thought it was Glenn Anderson that had voted against him. Some people thought it was Norman [Yoshio] Mineta, now Secretary of Transportation. It's like anything else; everybody has their list of suspects, and who knows? Unless some of the people who switched who are still living actually come forward and say so, we will never know.

JOHNSON: Which is very doubtful.

ANDERSON: I think it's much more fun not to know. It's kind of like Deep Throat was more fun before we knew who Deep Throat was.

JOHNSON: This is a good stopping point for us.

END OF PART ONE ~ BEGINNING OF PART TWO

JOHNSON: A few minutes ago we were talking about the 1970s, a very important decade. One of the topics I was hoping you could discuss was the 1974 election for Doorkeeper between the longtime House Officer [William] "Fishbait" Miller and Jim Molloy.

ANDERSON:

And there were also other candidates in that, too. That was a four-way race. John Monahan, who had been a principal assistant to Speaker John W. McCormack, was in the race. And Frank [Monroe] Clark, who had just been defeated for re-election to the House of Representatives, a Representative from western Pennsylvania, also got into the race. So it was a four-way race. It, in reality, was a two-way race between “Fishbait” and Jim Molloy. John Monahan and Frank Clark were sort of latecomers, and by then, the two principals had their partisans pretty well locked in. Neither John nor Frank made much of a showing, each getting 10 or 15 votes. And so the third and deciding ballot was the deciding ballot.

But just for background, there probably never has been an Officer of the House, or ever will be, more famous or notorious than William M. “Fishbait” Miller, who came from Pascagoula, Mississippi, under the aegis of the late Bill Colmer, who represented the Gulf Shore area of Mississippi for decades, and for a long time in his late career was chairman of the House Rules Committee—a very conservative Dixiecrat Member of the House. In fact, he was succeeded by his own AA [administrative assistant]—[Chester] Trent Lott, who ran for the seat as a Republican. Mr. Colmer, for all intents and purposes, probably voted more Republican than Democratic, but those guys didn’t change their parties. They just voted the way they wanted to.

In any case, “Fishbait” had what most intelligent people would have viewed then and now as something kind of deadly for a servant of the House: a high visibility. I always practiced an astute anonymity, which I viewed as my great shield. The creature can never be equal to or greater than the creator, you know. And here we are. They’re Members of Congress; we’re servants of the House. I know of no middle category. “Fishbait,” on the other hand,

reveled in the fact that he was a nationally known figure. And his behavior was viewed as kind of eccentric, or cute, or novel, for a very long time. And then, as the later years passed, his eccentricities became sort of bizarre and offensive. People's attitudes were changing. And one of the things that he did to every woman he ever met was kiss them. And he would cite a passage, I think, from *Second Corinthians*, "Greet ye one another with the kiss of charity." And I don't know that in the letter to the Corinthians it was actually meant that everyone was to go around putting smoochies on each other, but he did. And a lot of women found it very offensive. I mean, it's aggressive. In some cases it could be viewed as simple assault.

I remember when my grandmother of happy memory met him, and I guess I neglected to warn her about this personality quirk. He planted a big wet one on her, a kiss, and she abruptly pushed him away and remonstrated with him that that was a liberty that she reserved for her husband, her relatives, and a few close friends. But he was a person who could not be offended. You could never embarrass or shame him. That was just not part of his reaction. "Fishbait" created, for many years, a perception that he was invulnerable, invincible. That everybody that counted was behind him, when, in fact, nobody that counted, at that point, liked him. We would have all been glad to have been done with him. But he created this perception that he was locked into that job for the rest of his life. And it was only after the Members kind of started comparing notes, one with each other, that they found that everybody views him with disdain, verging on contempt, that his odd eccentricities had now become a public embarrassment to the institution.

What finally created the full court press to get rid of him was, after Gerald [Rudolph] Ford, [Jr.], became President by default, and a few weeks after

assuming the presidency, and except for a brief stop as Vice President he basically went directly from the House of Representatives to the presidency, having been in the House for 20-some years. He came up for an informal visit, on the House Floor. We recessed the House. The arrival of the President was announced. He stood in the well of the House, and a receiving line formed, so that he could greet his former colleagues. And it was a very, very lovely return to the House. And it hadn't been, I don't think, since William McKinley, [Jr.], became President that a [sitting] Member of the House had become President.

“Fishbait,” who had to be in the center of everything, positioned himself next to President Ford in the well of the House, and then proceeded to obsequiously introduce all of his recently former colleagues to him, as though he never met them before. And all the while referring to the President as “Jerry.” And, of course, there is a protocol, that at least to date has remained unshaken. And that is that the President is always “Mr. President.” Even to his friends who may have been lifelong and intimate, at least in a public setting, the only acceptable appellation is “Mr. President.” And to have the Doorkeeper standing there, calling him “Jerry,” particularly when he arrived and he shouted “Jerry” as he expressed his own welcome, I mean, the Members were absolutely appalled, and then outraged, that this man could not make the very obvious distinction. And at that point, they started putting it together. This guy has simply got to go. He's an embarrassment to the institution. The Southern Members, in particular, were mortified by his behavior because he became, to them, a symbol of what they feared Northerners thought they were all like: rednecks, yahoos, buffoons, unsophisticated, rude, boorish people. And, curiously, it was the Southern Members, for the most part, who created Jim Molloy, who was from Buffalo,

New York. [Marvin] Dawson Mathis of Georgia, Mendel [Jackson] Davis from South Carolina, Joe [Joseph David] Waggoner, Jr., from Louisiana, and the list goes on, and on, and on of Southern Members that became Jim Molloy's partisans to succeed "Fishbait."

I remember Jim [James Johnston] Blanchard of Michigan, who later became governor of his state, who came in the Watergate class. And, of course, "Fishbait" controlled the gallery tickets for special events—State of the Union, Opening Day, swearing-in of Members—and was at a reception given for freshmen at the Democratic Club, by the Democratic Study Group. And I ran into Member-elect Jim Blanchard, and we were visiting. And he was talking about his supporting Jim Molloy for Doorkeeper—just spontaneously brought it up. Since I worked for the Doorkeeper at the time, I was, you know, keeping my mouth shut and staying away from it. Even though I had my own view of the situation—loyalty to my employer strongly suggested that I remain at least visibly impartial on that subject. And Jim Blanchard was seething. He said that this—and I won't use the colorful terms—"Fishbait" came up to him, and introduced himself, and said, "I'm your Doorkeeper, and I'm running for re-election, and if you don't pledge to vote for me, your wife won't get a gallery ticket to see you take your oath of office on Opening Day." And his response to "Fishbait" was, "If my wife never saw me take my oath of office, I would never vote for you." And then, he [Blanchard] said, "I set out to find out who was running against him, if anybody." And he said, "If Jim Molloy hadn't existed, we would have created him, but this guy had to go. The very idea that he would try to extort my support in the Democratic Caucus."

“Fishbait” just made so many missteps and had so many misreadings of the situation. And I think that he really believed that he could not be defeated. Even Speaker Albert told him that he was in real jeopardy and it would be in his best way to announce his retirement, have a party, and have some tributes on the House Floor and leave as gracefully as he could. And Albert refused to get into it.

Now, the Speaker has everything to say about who becomes an Officer of the House, but in those days, it was still kind of competitive, but the Speaker’s voice tended to seal the deal. And Carl Albert urged him not to seek re-election, that he was in real jeopardy, and that he would not support him—he wouldn’t get into it. But he [“Fishbait”] certainly could not count on his support or even say that he had the support of the leadership. And so he lost, about two to one. He was swept out of office. There were some Members who, for their own reasons, were particularly loyal to the end to “Fishbait” and tried very hard to save his job, in spite of himself, admitting that he was a very flawed personality.

I remember Sonny [Gillespie V.] Montgomery of Mississippi—who’s still living—who was very loyal to “Fishbait” during the balloting on the Doorkeeper was in the well of the House, urging his colleagues to support “Fishbait.” And they were virtually laughing in his face, saying “I wouldn’t vote for that blankety-blank’s no good, lousy, rotten, whatever, under any circumstances, and can’t imagine that you would be pressing his cause.” And then “Fishbait” wrote that deplorable book, after he retired. Made a lot of money. Have you seen the book?

JOHNSON: Yes.

ANDERSON: Rather immodestly entitled, *Fishbait: The Memoirs of the Congressional Doorkeeper*.⁷

JOHNSON: It's difficult to miss.

ANDERSON: Yes. And he had a lot of terrible things to say about a lot of people, including those who had been his friends and remained loyal to him, including Sonny Montgomery, who happened to be a bachelor who liked to date attractive women. It wasn't that he was stepping out on his wife. I mean, he didn't have one—never had a wife. But he loved dating attractive women. And, you know, I don't think he ever did anything impure or ever thought anything impure. Nobody ever imputed that to him. But "Fishbait" had horrible things to say about him in his book. And, you know, I have always felt that, particularly in public life, the worst and most unforgivable sin is the sin of ingratitude. And here was a man who worked very hard to try to save his job. And he turns around by saying really nasty things about him in his book, which were quite untrue and certainly undeserved.

JOHNSON: At this time, you were working in the Democratic Cloakroom.

ANDERSON: Yes.

JOHNSON: How would you compare the leadership style of Mr. Molloy and Mr. Miller?

ANDERSON: Well, it's the difference between leadership and no leadership. "Fishbait" was busy being "Fishbait." "Fishbait" never had a new idea about management in the whole time I was there. Nor did he ever try to improve any of the

departments or processes under his control. I mean, just for those of us that were part of his organization, getting supplies to run our operations was always a battle. He would hand out pencils one-by-one. I found myself, for years, until Jim Molloy became Doorkeeper, begging supplies from leadership offices so that I would have pens and pencils for the Members to use in the Democratic Cloakroom or buying supplies out of my own pocket, simply so that I would have the things that I needed because “Fishbait” wouldn’t get us the fundamental things that we needed.

When Molloy became Doorkeeper, and I mentioned to him that supplies had always been a sore point, and we never could get what we needed, he said, “Well, make out a requisition of what you need, and when you need it, and send it down. And we’ll just stamp it and send it on through. You know, there’s no reason you have to go begging and borrowing and buying things yourself.” And it was from famine to feast after that. I never was excessive about ordering things from the stationery store. But we always had what we legitimately needed to run the operation. Of course, we went through a lot of pencils. Members use pencils. They don’t necessarily put them back down again. It’s not that they’re grabbing pencils. But, you know, you pick it up, and you walk with it. A 10¢ pencil is hardly grand theft. But you have to have a lot of pencils.

Anyhow, Molloy knew that he had a mandate to change from something that wasn’t working at all to a real Members’ service organization. And he not only appreciated input from those who worked for him, but demanded it. Through a lot of trial and error he got it right. He was very responsive to the needs of the Members and to the needs of his own employees. We had very good esprit in the Doorkeeper’s Office. He developed a strong personal

loyalty among his employees because we knew that he was a strong advocate for us and wanted to help us do our jobs well, which, as a result, made him look good. And that's what it's all about, after all. You don't mind the boss looking good, as long as you can take a certain measure of satisfaction in the process and feel professional about what you were doing. And because he came in cold—he had been the chief of the Finance Office, and a very successful one for a number of years before becoming Doorkeeper—I mean, he made his share of mistakes, nothing serious, but it was a trial and error.

But what I admire, in particular, as the new guy on the block, was that Jim was determined to make his own mistakes, but not to repeat the mistakes that had been made by his predecessor. He often said that when “Fishbait” left, he didn't even leave his fingerprints in the office. I mean, “Fishbait” didn't leave him a scrap of paper that would have been any use to him, as to know how things were done. Like how gallery seating was handled for State of the Union or other Joint Meetings of the House. Ceremonial occasions. He had to start at step one, and build that, using his own intuition and the input of a handful of other people who had some idea of how it was done. Because “Fishbait” never shared information with anybody, as far as ticketing and seating, was something that he did out of his own vest pocket. Nobody knew how he did it. So, the first couple of times around, Jim Molloy had some grouching from Members, whose wives didn't have the seats that they used to have in the gallery and had gotten comfortable in. But Jim had no way of knowing who sat where, because there was nothing left for him to use.

JOHNSON: There was no record.

ANDERSON: And within a year or so, he got it all right. And the Members, who were grouching a little bit, appreciated the fact that, “Hey, we’re a whole lot better off than we used to be. And this guy is trying very hard to do it right. We need to be patient and kind of help him with it. And not make life difficult for him.” And Jim did get it right. When he didn’t, you know, he had no pride of authorship. He was perfectly willing to receive input and guidance from others and do what was necessary to deal with things correctly. And he did come up with a formal SOP [standard operating procedure] for how things were done, so that if he were to drop dead, the next person would know how to pick it up. And that’s the way it ought to be. As public people, we have a responsibility not to keep things in our own minds but to ensure that continuity can happen if we’re not there. These are not private businesses.

JOHNSON: Earlier, you mentioned the practice of competitive races for House Officers. When and why did this practice die out?

ANDERSON: Well, it died out for a lot of reasons. The Speaker, until we had the problem with “Fishbait,” was kind of content with the way things happened. First of all, the Officers of the House didn’t change very often. Once you were elected, you normally—unless you did something seriously wrong—got to stay until you dropped dead in office or decided to retire on your own. “Fishbait” became an embarrassment to, actually, several Speakers. John W. McCormack didn’t like him very much. Carl Albert had real problems with him. And yet there was no real way to get rid of the guy. After the bank and post office episodes in 1991, the rule regarding Officers of the House was changed so that the Speaker could remove Officers. But until then, the only way an Officer could be removed was by the same manner in which the

Officer was chosen, by resolution. The Officers were chosen by resolution, and, therefore, the only way, historically, that they could be removed was by the House adopting a resolution vacating the office. So that returned total control to the Speaker.

The Speakers, until Mr. O'Neill, didn't have a particular interest in the subpolitical management of the House. As long as it went well and there weren't problems, they were content to kind of leave it be. Mr. O'Neill was not into the nitty-gritty of how things worked at the subpolitical level, but he was interested in who was doing the work. Mr. O'Neill came from a major northeastern city with a strong patronage system. Jobs were the coin of the realm. Strong believer in patronage. In Democratic-machine cities like New York, Philadelphia, Boston, Chicago, jobs are part of what winning is all about because you have the way to reward your supporters with public employment. Mr. O'Neill believed very strongly in that. So he was kind of interested in having something to say about who filled these jobs. Mr. O'Neill also wanted people in House Offices who he could depend on for their personal loyalty for him. And he was quite correct in doing that. The Constitution, of course, puts all of them in the same sentence. Article One, Section Two, Paragraph Three, I believe: "The House of Representatives shall chuse their Speaker and other Officers." Oddly, that sentence concludes with "and shall have the sole power of Impeachment." But the Speaker is the chief and principal Officer who is actually named in the Constitution, though only once. And the Constitution does not speak to how many or what other Officers the House or the Senate shall have, leaving that entirely to their province to decide what Officers, how many, what their duties would be. And Mr. O'Neill felt that the subordinate Officers really

needed to be people that he could depend upon to be responsive, without equivocation, to him.

Jim Molloy was the last real race for a House office that unseated an Officer. Prior to that, in 1966, Ralph Roberts—the longtime Clerk of the House—was defeated by W. Pat Jennings, who had just been defeated for re-election to the House. We discussed that in an earlier interview. That got Members thinking about maybe having former Members as Officers is not a great idea because they can't stop thinking of themselves as a member of the club. And Pat Jennings, for all his management skills, still viewed himself as an equal with his former colleagues. And he simply wasn't, as Clerk of the House. He was the servant of the House, not a Member of the House. And that created real tension with a lot of Members, including Phil Burton, who was one of the people who created Pat Jennings as Clerk of the House.

So, that kind of disposed, once and forever, I think, of the practice of occasionally electing a former Member to be a House Officer. A dozen of my predecessors were former Members of Congress, including a former United States Senator. I don't think we'll see that happen again, ever. And then, with "Fishbait," it became a contentious and divisive race. The succeeding Speakers kind of decided, "I'm going to control the nominating process." And so, the procedure in the Democratic Caucus was changed to give the Speaker virtually absolute control over how future Officers would be chosen. It was still possible, though with the most extreme difficulty, for someone to run. But what it meant was the Speaker would nominate his slate of candidates in the Steering and Policy Committee. The Speaker chairs the Steering and Policy Committee. It is not likely that a member of the Steering and Policy Committee would present another candidate in the

Steering and Policy Committee. So then, they present the nominations to the Democratic Caucus, that perfunctorily ratifies the slate of nominees presented by the Steering and Policy Committee, parentheses, the Speaker, to the caucus. And then they are perfunctorily chosen by House Resolution One [H. Res. 1], on Opening Day, as the House organizes itself. It would be possible for someone to offer an amendment, in the caucus, to the slate of candidates. But that would mean opposing the Speaker.

JOHNSON: Which could also mean political suicide.

ANDERSON: Not exactly career-building for someone who has visions of becoming a committee chairman or something else. And it would also presume that that errant Member could carry a majority of the caucus to roll the Speaker—not likely to happen. So, as I say, it is possible. Is it likely? Probably zero percent. And that made the Officers non-competitive in the future. And I agree with that. I happen to think that that's the way it ought to be. I knew Jim Wright for many years. As I say, he was not a socializer, and he didn't have a lot of intimate friends. I was not his pal. I did not have dinner with him on a regular basis or anything. We had a cordial, warm relationship. But I certainly was not intimate. Members suggested to him that when my predecessor, Mr. [Benjamin J.] Guthrie, was retiring that—with Mr. O'Neill well, actually, he didn't want to retire. That was another issue. I'll get into it if you like. Because he's living, I'm sensitive about it.

JOHNSON: Right. Maybe another interview, we can talk about that.

ANDERSON: Yes. I think it's important as a historical statement. But I like my predecessor, and there's no way I can talk about the transition without saying

things that he would find hurtful. And it's certainly not my intention to hurt him or anybody else.

In any case, the idea of my candidacy was pressed by other Members. Jim Wright did not particularly have anyone in mind. And he knew me, and he liked me, and he had shared the confidence that other Members shared in my ability to rise to the Clerkship and do it successfully. And so, once he said, "Yeah, I think that's a good idea. I will support Donn for Clerk," that was it. It was done. And there were some other people who were Clerk-wannabes and who did kind of make some moves. But there was no way for them to press forward because of the change in the nominating procedure, so that the Speaker absolutely controlled the process. And that's the way it happened with me. No matter how popular a person might be, if all of the Members of the caucus say, you know, "Donn is my guy," but the Speaker has another person in mind, it makes no difference. The Speaker's person is going to be the one because the likelihood of rolling the Speaker just isn't going to happen. It just cannot happen. It would be an amazing vote of no confidence in the Speaker. It just will not happen.

JOHNSON: In keeping with the theme of House Officers, you had the opportunity to work with two future House Officers when you were in the Democratic Cloakroom—Mr. Rota and Mr. Russ. Can you describe your relationship with them while you were working in the cloakroom together?

ANDERSON: Very, very close. We were and remain the dearest and most affectionate of friends. I met Bob Rota, who was already working for the House when I started as a Page. He was the chief doorman on the House Floor. And his wife—and they had only recently married—Shelva Jean Rota, who had, until

just before that been Shelva Jean Ricci—R-I-C-C-I—was “Fishbait” Miller’s secretary. And that was when he only had one person in his office (a secretary) plus a janitor/messenger. Things were very small in those days. And Shelva Rota was “Fishbait’s” secretary. She left because she became pregnant a couple of years later with their first child, and she did not return to work once they began their family. Shelva Rota actually put me on the payroll as a Page because she did my paperwork when I started as a Pageboy in the House. So that’s how far back I go with the Rotas. I mean, like, to day one. And I talk to them every couple of weeks or so. I don’t see them very often. They live out in Clifton, Virginia, and I don’t get out that way very often. Just a matter of laziness. I don’t like to go that far. {laughter} And our careers kind of paralleled.

Jack Russ started several years later, as a doorman in the House. He was appointed also by Bill Colmer of Mississippi and also worked for “Fishbait” Miller. Jack is from Picayune, Mississippi, I think, which is in that Gulf Coast district. Jack and I took an immediate liking to each other. He was a young guy, recently married, beginning his family. He used to work two or three jobs as a lot of people did because one salary just wasn’t enough. Very ambitious. A real go-getter. And a funny guy. Tremendous sense of humor. I always thought that Jack could have made millions as a stand-up comic, that he missed his natural calling. One of the quickest minds I’ve ever known. He would just keep you in stitches all day long. He was extremely fast on his feet. And we were just the very closest of friends. I have—when it comes to Bob and Jack—I have few friends whom I love as much, and none better. That’s how I would describe the relationship.

JOHNSON: How do you think their work in the cloakroom, and yours as well, prepared you for your future positions as House Officers?

ANDERSON: Well, because of the absolute one-on-one contact with all of the Members of the Democratic Caucus. Jack never worked in the cloakroom. Jack, after working on the door, became the Democratic chief Page. When Turner Robertson retired in 1971, Speaker McCormack appointed Jack to be chief Page. Mr. Colmer, who was chairman of the Rules Committee, pressed Speaker McCormack, and that was the Speaker's gift to bestow. And Speaker McCormack appointed Jack chief Page. So we worked within six feet of each other, but that was a separate operation, though we worked very closely together. We were interrelated because we also had Pages working in the cloakroom, which was a very, very small area. So you could almost say he was part of the cloakroom, where he was a department head in his own right.

But we're all kind of outgoing people, interested in the people we work with, for, and around. With that kind of exposure to the Members—they all know who you are—you have an opportunity to gain an identity for your talents, your knowledge, your judgment, which is all-important. Very few employees have the opportunity, on that broad basis, to become identified with the entire party membership in the House. These are unique positions. And certainly in the cloakroom, where all we did was provide Members personal floor services: *The Congressional Record*, communications, scheduling information. The things that are terribly important to Members. And you develop a credibility and an intimacy with the Members, where they call you all day long. And your advice is something that they depend on—in developing their schedules and conserving their time. It makes you—I mean,

nobody is indispensable, but it makes you as close to it as anyone is going to get. We all had good talents for providing these services.

Keeping in mind that, when you have jobs like that, you know, you hear what's going on. You learn a lot of things which the people in the press gallery would love to know about. You have to be the soul of discretion. You just can't discuss what you hear. We might discuss it with each other. But it certainly can't go beyond that because the Members, perhaps without thinking about it all that hard, expect, when they're being candid around people in the cloakrooms, that they're going to keep their confidences, even though they didn't directly impart the information, you're still a party to it because the place is very small. It's more intimate than this room, by far. You've been there. You've seen what it's all about. It's not very big. So, that's how we prepared ourselves.

I was the last one of the three to become an Officer of the House. Bob [Rota] became Postmaster in 1972, when H. H. Morris retired as Postmaster. And, there again, it was Members saying "Bob's our boy. You know, he has worked hard. He has always been there when we needed him. He stayed late, done this and that. He needs to be rewarded." And so, let's see, in 1972, who was Speaker? It was still Carl Albert. And Mr. Albert said, "Fine. You know, I like Bob, and he's done a lot of personal kindnesses for me, and has proven his reliability and discretion." And so there was really no question about it. And Bob became Postmaster of the House. And then with Jack, he didn't become Sergeant at Arms until Mr. O'Neill was Speaker. And that gets into some real sticky wickets. There were some real personal personality clashes there. Again, because he is a friend, and he's living, I mean, I don't mind discussing it, if it can be embargoed. I'm always happy to be candid, as

long as I know that some of the things that I say will not become generally known until everybody involved is either dead or 20 years has passed, or whatever.

JOHNSON: That definitely can happen.

ANDERSON: Okay. With that understanding, I don't mind sharing these things. There aren't a lot of people around who are familiar with the circumstances. But I don't know that it's my job to be making a public record about things which other people may be sensitive about.

JOHNSON: I wanted to backtrack for a minute. You said, in the case with Bob Rota, that Members thought that he had done a good job and that he should be promoted to an Officer. Was there ever a practice of staff letting it be known that this is something that they were interested in?

ANDERSON: Sure. Of course.

JOHNSON: Okay. So it worked both ways, then.

ANDERSON: Yes. You can't assume that people are going to read your mind and know that you want something. You have to let it be known. And then strike a delicate balance about letting your ambitions be known without appearing to be overly ambitious. You can't be aggressive about it. You know, you can use, "Geez, you know, my fantasy is to be Clerk of the House some day," but you can't go hard charging after the job because it doesn't work that way. It's not like you read a job announcement in the newspaper and then go competing with the other people who would like to have that job, to press

your case better than the next guy. It's something the Members put together, and they feel very proprietary about it. And it is the Speaker's ultimate decision. And Speakers don't like to feel like they've been muscled. It has to be something that they decide spontaneously is their idea. I mean, the seed may have been planted by others. But nonetheless, they have to feel comfortable that it's something they want to do, as opposed to having it imposed upon them. So, I never disguised the fact that I would love to be an Officer of the House someday. I would particularly love to be Clerk of the House someday. But I kind of left it there.

JOHNSON: So, you certainly wouldn't actively campaign.

ANDERSON: No. And I tried to gain—and I did it successfully, of course—credibility for that major advancement, by doing the job that I had well and being single-minded about doing that job. One of the things that I had going for me is that I knew more about all of these things than anybody else. My view of climbing the ladder—which is the way I was taught at home—is that you gain enough skills to convince somebody that you should be given a job with minimal responsibility—the opportunity to join the organization at the lowest rung on the ladder. And then, having done that, do your diligence to do those things well, in the meantime, gaining more knowledge and more skills, so that you are equipped to advance to a higher level of responsibility and hope that somebody notices and gives you that next opportunity. And then, just keep building on that the same way, discharging your current responsibilities well and faithfully, at the same time developing additional skills that will enable you to move to a higher level of responsibility. And that's the way I did it for 27 years.

Of course, I was patient. It was almost three decades from the time I started to the time I arrived at the top. Not exactly a meteoric rise. It was the old-fashioned way, which I happen to believe in. And I believe by the time that I finally arrived at that great level of responsibility, I was equipped to do it because I understood what I was getting into. I had such a broad understanding of the institution and the complexities of it, and of the personality of the Members and the collective personality of the institution, that I could deal effectively with these things. I didn't constantly try to reinvent the wheel. I didn't step on anybody's back on the way up. I have the wonderful peace of mind of knowing that I didn't do anyone any injury in the process of getting there.

JOHNSON: On a similar topic, and one that a lot of people outside of the institution are unaware of, would be the minority officers. Can you explain their role?

ANDERSON: Yes. They were known as the "shadow cabinet." And until into the '70s, they actually used titles like Minority Clerk, Minority Doorkeeper, Minority Sergeant at Arms, even though they had no relationship, however remote, no responsibility or input into those offices. The minority officers, basically, was a way whereby the minority leadership could get five or six, have five or six high-paying jobs that could be bestowed by the Republican Leader, at his discretion—kind of give them a little parity with the majority, of which they didn't have a lot.

By the mid 1970s, they had really stopped using those titles because it was kind of silly. They had no relationship to those offices. And they restyled themselves as Assistants to the Minority, which made a whole lot more sense, because they did whatever the Minority Leader assigned them to do. Their

portfolios were created on an individual basis, with duties that the Minority Leader thought would be in the interest of the Republican Conference. When House Resolution One is offered on Opening Day—which is immediately after the oath of office to the Speaker and the swearing of the Members, and it’s all done by unanimous consent—the minority will offer an amendment to substitute to House Resolution One, which substitutes their candidates for Officers of the House. That is always negatively disposed of by a voice vote. Then the basic resolution is agreed to by voice vote. The Officers are sworn in; the House is deemed organized. The minority slate then become the minority officers, or, in modern parlance, the Assistants to the Minority. Like Billy Pitts used to describe himself—and I’ve never had a dearer friend as my opponent for Clerk of the House because, if he had chosen to, he could have used the title Minority Clerk, which he did not. But he was the Republican substitute for me when the resolution was presented on the House Floor. And, of course, there weren’t two people that ever sought the same office who loved each other more dearly.

As a matter of fact, in that particular case, I wouldn’t have minded losing to him because of the measure of affection and respect that I have always had for him. But that’s basically what it became—a way of providing the minority with top-tier, five or six top-tier, jobs that could be used at the discretion of the Republican Leader. And, of course, now it’s at the discretion of the Democratic Leader. These are all people that are designated by Leader [Nancy] Pelosi.

JOHNSON: So, even though they were listed, as you said, Minority Clerk, Minority Sergeant at Arms, during the 1960s and ’70s, they really didn’t parallel what the House Officers were doing.

ANDERSON: Not a shred. The last person to use the title (and he clung to it until the day of his death) was Walter Kennedy, who was the Minority Sergeant at Arms. And, of course, he retired before the Republicans became the majority. But to his last breath, he was the Minority Sergeant at Arms, and he liked that title. And it was interesting when his write-up appeared in the *Washington Post* several years ago—and I’m not sure how the error occurred, whether it was deliberate or someone at the *Post*—but it was a large write-up with a picture, and it said, “Former House Sergeant at Arms Walter P. Kennedy.”⁸ Of course, Walter was never Sergeant at Arms of the House. He was, for many years, the Minority Sergeant at Arms, but he never was the Sergeant at Arms. And I rode out to his funeral with Bill Livingood, who was and remains the Sergeant at Arms of the House. And he said, “I didn’t know Walter was actually Sergeant.” He said, “That must have been a long time ago.” Because they hadn’t had one since the early ’50s. And I said, “No, Bill. He never was.” I don’t know whether someone at the *Post* made the error in editing or whether someone in his family who wrote that lovely piece just decided . . . let it be. And I said, “I certainly have no quarrel with it.” I said, “I doubt that you do, either.” He said, “Of course not.” And I’m sure that Walter is resting more peacefully, knowing that he got that nice write-up in the paper, giving him credit for an office that he never held.

JOHNSON: Up until 1993, the *Congressional Directory* contained a listing for a Majority and a Minority room. What was the function of these offices?

ANDERSON: Majority and Minority room.

JOHNSON: I was hoping you could shed some light on that because I hadn't noticed that listing before.

ANDERSON: Until ninety . . . ?

JOHNSON: Nineteen ninety-three.

ANDERSON: Nineteen ninety-three. All I can think of is it might refer to the Majority and Minority Printers. But it seemed to me that they were always referred to as the Majority and Minority Printers. Did it give a phone number or a room number?

JOHNSON: I'll make a photocopy before the next interview.

ANDERSON: That could be helpful. I think I could probably put a focus on it, if I had that little bit of information.

JOHNSON: Going back to events of the 1970s, one of the major events, and you alluded to it briefly, was the disappearance of Majority Leader Hale Boggs and Nick [Nicholas Joseph] Begich, and this was in 1972.

ANDERSON: October.

JOHNSON: How did this tragedy affect the House? And then, also, how did it affect you, personally?

ANDERSON: Well, it affected me, personally, because I was under Mr. Boggs' patronage at the time. I had, in the early '60s, been under the patronage of Jimmy

[James] Morrison, who was from Hammond, Louisiana. He was defeated in 1966. And Mr. Boggs very kindly picked me up. Patronage was becoming a little more vague in those days, but it was still handy to have a sponsor, particularly when the sponsor was the Majority Whip. And I had become, by that time, very close to his family. His wife, Lindy [Corinne Claiborne Boggs], who succeeded him, later became my own godmother. And his son and two daughters, one of whom, of course, is deceased: Barbara. I felt like a member of the family. And I was deeply distressed and grieved by his loss in Alaska. And, of course, there was no doubt in anybody's mind that he would have become Speaker, had he lived, that he would have succeeded Carl Albert. And that Mr. O'Neill probably would have served as Whip, or perhaps Majority Leader, and just retired eventually. Because I don't think he had any grand design on spending the 34 years that he eventually did in the House of Representatives.

Mr. O'Neill had never really made any money in his life. And I think he had the notion, since he had a large family and a growing number of grandkids, of getting into the private sector somewhere and making some money. Because he always wanted to leave something nice, as that generation would say, for their descendants. And he didn't really have anything nice to leave because he had always been living on a public salary. Amazing, when he left office, he had as little as he did because he never manipulated his office for personal gain. He made a couple of nice investments in real estate, but that grew over a long period of time. It wasn't a windfall. And that was all he had.

Hale Boggs was much admired. And his loss was a real problem. Particularly since it was not a tidy loss. I mean, everyone assumed that he was dead, after a period of days in the wilds of Alaska, in October, the chance of survival is not very big. But he vanished without a trace. There never was a clue. So it wasn't a tidy end. Added to which, the state of Louisiana had no provision to recognize the vacancy. And in November, he was re-elected, overwhelmingly, to the House, even though he hadn't been seen in a month. It came to the House to finally tell the governor of the state that he's not here, because the governor had no way of declaring the seat vacant. And so the House adopted a resolution, pretty much saying that "Inasmuch as the Honorable T. Hale Boggs, Representative-elect from whatever district of Louisiana, has not appeared to subscribe to the oath of office, the House deems the seat vacant and directs the Clerk to inform the governor accordingly." And so, we informed the governor by resolution, and then the governor was able to proceed to issue a writ of election and have the election to fill the seat, which, of course, went to his widow, who did not really jump at the opportunity to run. She was urged to do it. She had a reluctance, even though Hale and Lindy always had a partnership about what he did. There was no question that she was very much involved in the district.

It moved Mr. O'Neill to a much higher level of visibility as the Majority Leader, and an office for which he was uniquely qualified. He had developed the Whip's office somewhat, to a higher level of involvement than his predecessors had. And Mr. O'Neill was a very good coalition builder. You know, he was a socializer, a very warm, ebullient, friendly guy. He spent most of his day on the House Floor. Very accessible. Accessibility was always the key to his success. He was very approachable.

Speaker Albert spent very little time on the House Floor when he wasn't actually in the chair. Members who wanted to see him had to go make an appointment, or to go and sit on the mourners' bench in the hallway, and hope they could get in. Where Mr. O'Neill hung out, in the cloakroom, he would have his lunch at the snack bar. He would sit in the armchairs, and he would schmooze with his colleagues. And new Members were able to come up to him informally. And so he had a tremendous rapport. He also had very good feelings with the Republican Members. He felt very strongly about politics not getting in the way of personal relationships. He said, as you know, so often, "We can disagree without being disagreeable." And he meant that. And he practiced it in his own affairs. To wit, two of his best buddies were Gerald R. Ford and Bob [Robert Henry] Michel, and John [Jacob] Rhodes of Arizona, three Republican leaders of the House. There was a tremendous bond of affection amongst them and their wives, as well. They were real friends, in every sense of the word and they got on very well.

There were a lot of Republican Members who had strong personal relationships with Mr. O'Neill because just to the way he operated. He was as partisan as he needed to be, but never more than he needed to be. And he was always available to cut deals with the Republicans, so that they got a little chunk of the pie and could go away saying, "Well, we accomplished something, anyhow. We didn't get, maybe, even half a loaf. We got a quarter of a loaf. And that's okay because we're outnumbered." It wasn't nearly as contentious as it has become. But he was just a natural for the job. And he had this broad constituency.

Even though he was a Northern, New Deal liberal, the Southern Members liked him because they could trust him. If he gave his word, they could take

it to the bank. And so they were inclined, often, to sometimes vote with the leadership when it would be a little uncomfortable for them at home. Because he would give them something in return, that they could go back with, so that having taken a bold position in support of the liberal leadership would be mitigated.

JOHNSON: In her autobiography, Lindy Boggs mentions that Tip O'Neill called her and, basically, asked permission, or was letting her know that he was thinking about running for the Majority Leadership position. And Congresswoman—well, not at the time—but future Congresswoman Boggs said how much she respected that he thought enough to call her and to talk about that.

ANDERSON: Well, that's the way he would operate. And, of course, Mr. O'Neill was a very strong family man. And his bond with his own wife was so strong. He was very big on family. And I'm sure he was thinking about if things were otherwise, and it were Millie that was the widow, rather than Lindy, and how appropriate and how good it would be for someone to call her and at least, with the courtesy of saying I would like to do this—I hope it's acceptable.

JOHNSON: Exactly.

ANDERSON: Because in, in public marriages, the officeholder is the one who usually receives the accolades. And if there's a death, the widow gets very quickly pushed aside and forgotten. Or the widower, as the case might be. And it's a validating thing; I was aware that he did it at the time. Because she told me, even within the contemporary time frame, about it. And, of course, he wanted Gary Hymel's help in cementing the support of Hale's supporters and with the Southern Members because there's a big distance between New

Orleans and Boston.⁹ Granted, Hale Boggs was a progressive. And it almost cost him his seat a couple of times because of his support of things like civil rights, which, in the South, in those days, wasn't—even in a big city like New Orleans—wasn't necessarily all that popular. But he felt it was the right thing to do, and he was committed to it.

JOHNSON: What do you recall of Lindy Boggs's first few days after she was elected to the House?

ANDERSON: Well, actually, not so much about her first few days in the House. I recall a great deal about—I mean, she settled very comfortably and quickly into the House. And, of course, it was by no means a strange place for her. She had been there, since 1941. This is now 1973 when she took her own seat in the House. But she and Hale arrived in 1941, before the outbreak of World War II. And it was a partnership between the two of them. In fact, it was often said that New Orleans had two Representatives—Hale and Lindy—because they shared so consistently the duties of his office. And she was very much involved. I think she was on the payroll for quite a few years, when that sort of thing was acceptable. In fact, she might have been at the time of his death. In any case, so she settled in very comfortably. And, of course, she was known, broadly, by the Members. She was so much a part of his public persona that she wasn't getting acquainted with her colleagues. She already knew them. It was just a more formalized form of the old relationship. And she went, I think, immediately onto the Appropriations Committee. If not immediately, very quickly, which was a wonderfully validating thing for her because Appropriations was a tough nut to crack, in those days. Freshman Members didn't go right on to Appropriations except in the most unusual circumstances. So, it was very, very validating for her.

Where she really showed her stuff, though, was in the days and weeks after his disappearance. And, of course, she never had—and I hate to use the word because I don't like—closure, that people do, ordinarily, when somebody dies. You have a wake. You have a funeral. You have a burial. You go through the ritual of separation. When someone simply disappears, you don't have those formalities. You don't have the ritual of closure. And even to the point where Congress had to declare her husband dead because the state of Louisiana couldn't even do it, it was a very unnatural situation. And, of course, her house where Cokie and Steve [Roberts] now live was just inundated with well-wishers and people wanting to be helpful, which probably added to the burden rather than were a real balm. I went out there a couple of times, and I felt that, probably, I'd be doing better service by not getting in the way. And there were some people who just went out there and parked. And you wondered what they were doing, other than keeping the furniture from flying up to the ceiling. And she ended up, as she was so wont to do, comforting the people who ostensibly came to comfort her. Other people were crying and carrying on, and she was the rock of stability, and offering solace to people that were less able to deal with the tragedy than she was. It was the same when her daughter Barbara died in 1990.

JOHNSON: I think it was 1990.

ANDERSON: Yes. I went to the funeral in Princeton [New Jersey]. And, everybody there was a mess because Barbara was dearly beloved. You talk about a family of high achievers. And I was a mess, too, because we kind of grew up together. I had known Barbara Boggs Sigmund since she was a teenager. We were about the same age. She [Lindy] was solid as a rock, consoling everybody else who was grief stricken at this death of a marvelously talented, remarkable

woman, so hopelessly out of season. And then, Lindy finally said that she would have a memorial Mass said [for Hale] at St. Louis Cathedral in New Orleans—the first time I ever went there. Flew down with the delegation to attend the memorial at St. Louis, and it was done like a funeral. The only difference was there wasn't a casket. But she had the catafalque in front of the altar, with the candles and the American flag, but no casket. And Father Robert Boggs, S.J., his brother, celebrated the Mass at the Cathedral. Lyndon [Baines] Johnson and Lady Bird came. It was his last public appearance before he died, less than two weeks later. And he looked like a man who wasn't going to be around much longer.

JOHNSON: She mentioned that in her autobiography.¹⁰

ANDERSON: And his hair had grown long, over his collar. And she bore up very, very well. But that was her act of closure and separation. There had to be a public ceremony, even though there was no casket, no body to bury. And they named a lot of things after him, Mount Boggs and Mount Begich in Alaska. Bridges, high schools, highways. But she had no place like you and I would go to focus our reflection. You go to the cemetery, or the mausoleum, and you sit there and reflect. But she didn't have a place. You don't go sit next to the high school or the highway and focus your reflections of your husband and your children's father. And so, she erected the cenotaph in Congressional Cemetery, which is also the first time I was ever in Congressional Cemetery, when she erected the memorial stone to her husband. And, as a matter of fact, I bought the lot next to it for myself.

JOHNSON: We are just about out of time, and certainly covered a wide range of topics today.

ANDERSON: Didn't we, though.

JOHNSON: Was there anything else that you wanted to add before next time?

ANDERSON: Oh, I'm sure ever so much. But it will wait.

JOHNSON: Okay, great. Thank you.

— DONNARD K. ANDERSON —

INTERVIEW FOUR

JOHNSON: This is Kathleen Johnson interviewing Donnalld Anderson, former Clerk of the U.S. House of Representatives. The interview is taking place in the Legislative Resource Center, Cannon House Office Building. This is the fourth interview with Mr. Anderson, and the date is May 31, 2006.

In your last interview, you spoke about the impact of the Watergate scandal on the House. Could you take a moment this morning to describe your recollections of the impeachment hearings of 1974 led by Judiciary Committee Chairman Peter [Wallace] Rodino, [Jr.]?

ANDERSON: Interestingly, during that period when the nation, and indeed the world, seemed to be focused on President [Richard Milhous] Nixon and what was becoming clearer each day—his eventual departure from office—the work of the House didn't miss a beat. Other than picking up the newspaper or watching television, over on the House Floor you would never guess that there was a process underway to remove the President of the United States. The work of the nation went on—the tourists were touring, the birds were in the trees—any visitor to Washington who didn't follow the news would have been unaware that it was a great moment in American history.

Obviously, there was a great deal of cloakroom conversation about it, particularly on the Democratic side, to which I was privy. Initially, I think the Members didn't feel that it would lead up to the removal of the President until the so-called “smoking gun” appeared. After that, it seemed inevitable.

What impressed me was that the Members that were involved directly as Members of the Judiciary Committee took their role with the *gravitas* that it deserved—the idea of removing the President of the United States—that it clearly had to be on the most sound constitutional and historical footing, that it couldn't give the appearance of being politically motivated or any kind of an expedient. That's what impressed me most about the debates that I followed when I had time in the Judiciary Committee and also about the discussions that I heard on the floor and in the cloakroom from the Members of the Judiciary Committee about their role to make sure that it was well done. They were concerned about their own place in history. After all, there hadn't been a serious attempt to impeach the President of the United States since Andrew Johnson. And they knew that this, if nothing else in their careers, would make them immortal, and it was important to be remembered for having done it with a great deal of thoughtfulness and introspection and adherence to constitutional precedent.

JOHNSON: What do you remember specifically about Chairman Peter Rodino? He tried to play down the fact that he had been a longtime Member and had served on the committee for many years and tried to play down his experience as if he were a novice. Do you remember anything about that?

ANDERSON: Absolutely. Chairman Rodino and I were actually very good friends. In fact, I have a complete set of the hearings on the impeachment—hardbound—which he gave me and signed every single volume, as a measure of our friendship. I've got them in storage along with thousands of other books, which someday I will probably give to the House History Office.

And Mr. Rodino was one of the most conscientious Members of the House that I have ever known. He came from an immigrant family. He was acutely aware of the dimension of his role as a Member of Congress and later as the chairman of a major committee of the House. Everything that he did was done with a keen sense of duty and responsibility. He was not one for posturing or for grabbing publicity. He took his role as United States Representative with tremendous seriousness and a sense of responsibility to his people and to his nation. I'm sure that no one who sat on that committee welcomed less than he did the focus that he received as the chairman of the committee. As the historical record clearly reveals, he conducted the business of the committee with every effort to ensure fairness and respect to the President of the United States while at the same time pursuing a grave responsibility to see that justice was done in the spirit of the law and the goals of the Constitution were carried out.

Mr. Rodino, physically, was a very small man, very tidy. His care of his personal appearance and grooming, which was always very conservative—dark suits, dark ties, white shirts—gave evidence of the good order of his mind and his life in general. He was fun to be around; he was always warm and upbeat. He was very proud of his Italian heritage and liked to say that the Italian people had a love of life and had a stewardship of things that were beautiful and worthwhile. He certainly personified that ethic in his own life. Very hard-working man, had a nice family.

His first wife, Marianna, had a long and painful illness. When she died, during the [Ronald] Reagan administration, the House actually sent a delegation to attend the funeral in Newark. It was only the second time that I recall that the House had sent a delegation to attend the funeral for the

spouse of a Member—the first one being the wife of Speaker John W. McCormack, Harriet McCormack, who actually died after the Speaker had retired from the House. On that occasion, President Nixon ordered a plane to carry Members to Boston to attend Harriet McCormack’s funeral and sent Mrs. Nixon as his personal representative as a mark of his respect for former Speaker McCormack. That was the first time I ever attended a congressional funeral. I went as well to Marianna Rodino’s funeral in Newark, and Vice President George H. W. [Herbert Walker] Bush went on the flight representing President Reagan. When [Peter Rodino] wasn’t tending to his duties, he was at his wife’s side. He was very, very attentive to Mrs. Rodino and tried to do a very fine balancing act of devoting to her the time and attention that she required and, at the same time, not stinting on his congressional responsibilities.

JOHNSON: You mentioned a moment ago that the members of the Judiciary Committee appreciated the historic importance of the hearings, and they were conscious not to make it a partisan affair. Years later, did Members overall have the impression that they had succeeded in this goal?

ANDERSON: I absolutely believe that, and I think the historical record demonstrates that they succeeded in their goal of being exceptionally fair and methodical and thoughtful in the way they approached the weighty task of impeaching a President of the United States. Just listening to the members of the Judiciary [Committee]—that is, the Democratic Members—talk in the cloakroom, there wasn’t loose talk, discussions out of school. I never heard any jokes or lighthearted conversation about what they were doing. When it was discussed amongst their colleagues who did not sit on the committee, it was again with great *gravitas* and concern that it be well done of them.

JOHNSON: Barbara [Charline] Jordan was another person that became quite famous because of the hearings.

ANDERSON: A giant!

JOHNSON: In particular, she gave a speech describing her faith in the Constitution that really grabbed the attention of the American public. What are your recollections of her during this period?

ANDERSON: Well, my recollections of Ms. Jordan are bigger than life, and she's one of the people that I have always been most proud that I could call a friend. I always thought the House of Representatives was too small for her. Her towering intellect, her mind required somehow a larger forum, not that there was one to be had. She was much younger than she appeared to be. She had severe arthritis and walked with some difficulty. In fact, I had handrails installed at the backdoor of the cloakroom that had three steps because she had such a difficult time safely getting in and out that I asked the architect who installed brass railings if she'd have something to hold on to. They're still there.

I always enjoyed talking to her; I never failed to learn something. And at the same time, she was an enjoyable person to be with. She always seemed, during that particular period—of course, she didn't serve in the House all that long—to be rather weighted down by the whole thing, to be severely burdened. But of all the members of the Judiciary Committee, she and the chairman [Rodino] were probably two of the best equipped by education, by disposition, by background to deal with it and understood the measure of their responsibility.

JOHNSON: One of our oral history interviewees, Benjamin West, the former House Press Gallery Superintendent, recalled that he advised Chairman Rodino to use the Cannon Caucus Room for the hearings. Ultimately, Rodino chose to use the Judiciary Committee room. Did you witness or hear any debate between Members about which room should be used?

ANDERSON: Oh yeah, Benny. No, I knew that idea had been floated about; I didn't know by whom, nor was I aware how extensive discussion might have been. My sense of it would be that Chairman Rodino would have probably avoided the caucus room simply because of the spectacular venue that it is. It would have added a dimension that he would not have approved of, that his committee room, which was one of the larger committee rooms, would have to make do and was an appropriate venue, since it was the responsibility of the Judiciary Committee that they sit in their own chambers to conduct the hearings. Just knowing Chairman Rodino as I did, my guess is that he would have recoiled at the very idea of using a room that had been associated with the rather theatrical hearings of the House Un-American Activities Committee [HUAC], that he had no intention of turning it into that kind of a media circus.

There's a certain drama to having a smaller space for something that is of high theater by its very nature. I think perhaps there was a greater drama to see the Members along the smaller rostrum of the Judiciary Committee than perched much higher like Old Testament judges in the Cannon Caucus Room. That would be my feeling on the subject, and I think I'm probably close to the mark.

JOHNSON: During your 35 years on the Hill, the Democrats retained control of the House. How do you think the majority-run system employed by the House shaped your career and the career of other House employees?

ANDERSON: Well, I grew up, at least in probably the first 20 or so years of my service on the Hill, in a patronage culture that had changed very little from the rise of party government in the Congress. The fact that my party was in the majority, of course, made my career path rather more predictable, at least in having imagined myself being an Officer of the House someday, which, of course, clearly is within the province of the majority party. At the same time, patronage depended on the goodwill of those whose gift it was. There were no guarantees—frankly there still aren't. All of the employees of the House basically are at-will employees enjoying no rights or guarantees afforded to those who are part of the classified civil service and have protections of law. More than just pleasing those whose job was their gift to bestow, there was also the unpredictability of if that person decides to retire or seek another office, or does the unthinkable and dies, you can be left within a vacuum after the support of a sponsor.

That happened to me a couple of times when one of my early sponsors, Jimmy Morrison, from Hammond, Louisiana, who I served both as an elevator operator and as a young employee of the Clerk's organization, got defeated in 1966. That left my career, at least for the moment, rather uncertain. Fortunately, Hale Boggs—his fellow Louisianian with whom I had some acquaintance—agreed to pick up that spot. And so I passed that difficulty easily enough. Then, of course, later in 1972, Hale disappeared in Alaska in the plane crash. By then I was well established within the structure of the House; I had an identity, and a reputation, and a broad constituency

amongst the Members. The office that I held as manager of the [Democratic] Cloakroom, while I was recommended by Mr. Boggs, was at the same time a Speaker's appointment. The Speaker appointed the three managers of the Democratic Cloakroom. There certainly was no difficulty with Speaker Albert, who would not have thought for a moment of putting in someone else; he seemed to be quite content with the job I was doing. Being in the majority certainly was very helpful up to the point of realizing my ultimate goal, which was to be elected Clerk of the House. If our party had been in the minority, that would have been an even greater fantasy than it was for most of the 27 years that I entertained it before it actually happened—barring a reversal of fortunes in my party, assuming that I was in the minority and suddenly became the majority, which, of course, was the ultimate cause for my retirement after the election of 1994. I don't know what else I could add on that point, unless you have some more specific questions.

JOHNSON: Were the Members of the minority party—the employees of the minority party—frustrated with their lack of ability to attain higher positions? And one of the things that I wanted to ask was, was the turnover higher on their side because of this circumstance?

ANDERSON: No, not really. If anything, the turnover was probably higher on the Democratic side than it was on the Republican side. The Republican staff—at least the leadership and floor staff—had a constancy and a longevity that was actually rather amazing. My counterparts on the Republican side seemed to be pleased well enough to do what they did.

There is a certain delight in being able to be the devil's advocate all the time. The minority has the historic role of attacking the majority, or at least trying

to keep them honest and making them justify what they're doing, without the responsibility of governing. So there is a certain comfort in that, where you can criticize to your heart's content, but you don't have to bear the burden of really making it work. Where if you're in the majority, you have to make it work; the responsibility is all yours. It's difficult—at least for any prolonged length of time—to blame the minority for your failings when, presumably, you have the votes to effect whatever it is that you want to do, since it is an institution premised on majoritarian rule.

The only thing about the Democratic majority historically, at least for much of the time that I was part of it, was it was not necessarily a doctrinaire majority because the party was divided amongst liberals and conservatives. Where, ideologically, the Republicans have always been much more cohesive and like-minded, with some exceptions, but not many than the Democrats, whose spectrum of thought ranged from the far left to the far right and every gradation of difference in between—which was a challenge for those of us in the information business on the House Floor on the Democratic side when trying to describe what was taking place on the floor in a language that would clearly explain the purpose of the events—but at the same time not give too much of a slant to one position because conservatives were shopping for this information as well as liberals. That was always the burden of the Democratic leadership in the House, was to how to keep a rather diverse party ideologically together. Of course, we saw over the years the gradual erosion of our once very large majorities as more and more seats—particularly in the South, and in some cases rural America—went Republican because the party nationally kept veering to the left, and many of the Members of the party, particularly from the South, did not share that liberal bent.

I always watched with keen interest as the various party leaders, over the years that I served, tried to walk that fine balance—some better than others—in appeasing all aspects of the party and, at the same time, trying to keep a majority together and make it a functioning majority. I suppose one could say that having the majority, even though it's fragmented, is better than being in the minority because when you're in the majority, of course, you get to elect the Speaker, and you have the committee chairmen, you have the ruling structure of the House. Which is why, in many cases, the party leaders were willing enough to make concessions to the conservatives even though they weren't part of the mainstream of Democratic thought, in order to keep a working majority, much to the unhappiness, of course, of the doctrinaire liberals who felt that the Democratic Party stood for liberal values as opposed to conservative values. And eventually that fragmentation and erosion caused the loss of the majority. It was inevitable.

JOHNSON: Another follow-up question I had from an earlier interview was about a listing in the *Congressional Directory* for a Majority and a Minority room.

ANDERSON: The Majority and Minority rooms were the printing offices. They were private printing operations that occupied public space. They mainly printed the Members' newsletters and other things for their mass mailings. Just how and when they got started, I would be at a loss to tell you, but I know that they were of ancient existence by the time I arrived.

They were considered a very important sinecure. The individuals who received the contracts from the two parties to provide printing services for the parties turned a rather handsome profit over the years. And, of course, occupying rent-free space in a government building certainly didn't hurt the

profit margin, not to mention no utilities to pay: water, electricity, air conditioning, all of those things being nicely furnished by the U.S. House of Representatives. Interestingly, even though they were minority and majority, or Republican and Democrat, some Members of each party for whatever reasons preferred the services of the other party's printing operation. So, you would see the Democratic printer producing some Republican newsletters, and the Republican printer printing some Democratic newsletters. Having the facilities onsite made it very convenient to move the printed material to the folding room, which was the mass mailing operation for the House of Representatives. This was also abandoned with the change in 1995, when printing and mailing was made entirely private, and Members had to find their own printers and mailing services and pay for it out of their official allowances, which, of course, is how they reimbursed the onsite printers that would send them bills for their newsletters and other things. And [the Members], in turn, would pay them by voucher against their official expense allowances.

JOHNSON: Another one of the earlier topics I wanted to ask you to elaborate on was when you described how Members often spent large blocks of time in the cloakroom and on the floor when you first started out as an employee in the House. What factors do you think contributed to the dwindling presence of Members in both of these places?

ANDERSON: Well, number one, the increased volume of business that each of them had to deal with; they simply lacked the luxury of time. Also, Members didn't travel nearly as frequently as they do now. It's safe to say that virtually all of the Members of the House go home almost every weekend. When I first came, Members did not receive much of a travel allowance. Basically they were

permitted two free round-trips a year, and unless they had their own resources to pay for additional trips, had a tendency to stay pretty close to Washington. They would usually travel only during recess periods when they could get a long block of time at home rather than going home for weekends. For the most part, committees didn't sit in the afternoon when the House was in session, so unless they were scheduling appointments in their offices, they didn't have to go to their committees, which generally met only in the mornings. The House seldom met before noon in the early years that I was here; the mornings being exclusively reserved for the committees.

People didn't come to Washington in the numbers that they do now. Members' appointment schedules are horrendous, meeting people all day long, whether it's constituents, or lobbyists, or representatives of the executive branch, or officials from back home. I frankly don't know how they deal with it. And, of course, Washington has become very accessible. It's not an expensive trip for most people to get here anymore. Even long distance is cheap enough where people of ordinary means wouldn't hesitate to pick up the phone and call a Member's office. Probably not likely to get through to the Member, but at the same time it's a greater volume of business.

But they had more time on their hands to spend on the House Floor. The daily sessions of the House didn't last as long as they do now. The House had a tendency to do its business with greater dispatch than it does now. Debates didn't go on for hours or days, even though most of the rules providing for consideration of public legislation came to the floor with open rules, and so amendments could be freely offered. But Members had a tendency not to try to rewrite legislation on the House Floor through the amendment process.

We didn't have the volume of amendments that steadily increased as we got into the '80s and '90s, which, of course, resulted in the development of creative rules which were "modified open" or "modified closed." The late Richard Bolling of Missouri, as chairman of the Rules Committee, was the artisan who crafted that concept of modified rules. For many years, we had either completely open or completely closed rules. Dependably one or the other, very few closed, mainly open, where any germane amendment can be offered. Tax legislation had a tendency to come to the House Floor with closed rules; the Ways and Means Committee always thought it was the essence of folly to remit the entire House to try to write tax law on the House Floor. For the most part, the Members were acquiescent in that. If they wanted something put into a tax bill, they lobbied the members of the Ways and Means Committee—long considered the premiere committee of the House—to get their own personal interests taken care of.

The floor and the cloakroom were a much more social place. Plus, they didn't have the umbilical of beepers and other things that allowed them to go further afield from the Hill and still make it back in time for votes. Members have always been very conscientious about their attendance in the House. Long before electronic voting Members did their diligence to keep their attendance in the 90 percentiles, if not indeed the high 90 percentiles, and, of course, there were always a few Members who, for longer or shorter periods of time, had flawless attendance records. But voting had always been something that was terribly important. Even though many of the votes might be considered throwaway votes they, nonetheless, preferred not to throw them away if they possibly could avoid doing it.

As a result of the time spent together on the House Floor, it was a much more collegial place. They knew each other. The vast majority of them had more than a passing acquaintance one with another; they knew each other rather well. The acquaintance certainly crossed the center aisle. It wasn't a place of raging ideologues as it has more recently become. Members maintained their point of view without finding any flaw in those that didn't share it other than in the course of a public debate.

I missed, as time went by, the storytellers in the cloakroom, and we had a bunch of really wonderful storytellers, and the Members would sit back there by the hour telling stories and laughing loudly. Interestingly, reflecting on the times as I might have mentioned before, they weren't necessarily lurid or off-color stories, just funny things that they had been involved in. Even though the cloakroom, to some, had the aspect of a men's locker room, the fact that the few lady Members of the House didn't spend much time in it didn't mean that the male Members felt at liberty to use coarse language or unseemly references in their conversation.

JOHNSON: Who were some of the notorious storytellers?

ANDERSON: Well, the late George—of course, to say “the late” would be redundant; they're all dead now—but George Andrews of Alabama, “Tic” Forrester—E. L. Forrester—from Georgia, Mendel Rivers from South Carolina, John [James] Rooney of New York, Jimmy [James Anthony] Burke of Massachusetts. Hale Boggs was a very fine storyteller. E. C. [Ezekiel Candler] Gathings from Arkansas, Billy Matthews from Florida, the list would really go on for quite a long time. It was kind of a round robin—they'd sit back

there and each in turn would tell a story to the delight of his colleagues, and you could hear the whoops of laughter from around the corner.

It was often tempting to kind of stop and listen. Of course, when I did I tried to appear to be doing something else while savoring the discussions.

Cloakrooms were very private. The Members did not like having staff hang around the cloakrooms, and during my period as manager, one of the things that I was vigilant about was warding off staff intrusions. Because as time went by and legislation got more complicated, committees got larger, and, particularly when we had sequential reference of bills that grew quite rapidly where several committees had jurisdiction over various portions of the same bill, there was a multiplication of staff from committees on the House Floor. And they all felt the need to use the phone or have a bite at the snack bar, and I was constantly keeping one eye on the back part of the cloakroom to make sure that they weren't intruding on the Members who would be more inclined to tell me about it than they would the offender. Then I'd have to go ferret them out, saying, "Can't sit back there; that's for Members only." And every once in a while you'd find somebody who would get a little huffy about it, and I'd say, "Well, if I can't convince you, I'm sure your chairman can, but perhaps we don't need to go there." That usually would be persuasive enough. Fascinating place.

JOHNSON: Just one question about the art of storytelling. Do you think that this was an unofficial political skill that these Members used to build alliances, something that Members don't really have the opportunity to do now?

ANDERSON: Oh, absolutely. I think it was reflective of their habits on the stump when they were out campaigning, making the rounds of their congressional

districts, that they engaged their constituents by adding stories and humor to drive home the points that they were trying to make politically. Everybody enjoys an appealing presentation. How boring it can be just to listen to facts and figures or to be forced to look at charts. But, if you can put something in context that everyday people can understand in terms of their own lives, it strikes home more readily, has more personal meaning.

We probably, in modern times, have seen many articles about the lost art of conversation—that people really don't sit down and visit with each other anymore. We've lost it at the dinner table since families don't gather to eat meals together like they once did. There are a lot of communal activities which were based on communication: People verbalizing their thoughts and feelings one to another in a direct, personal way, which has been lost because of the distractions of society. Political campaigning, I think, used to be a much more spontaneous thing than it is now.

When I first came, Members really didn't have agents to package them, to dissect every aspect of their constituencies, and try to remake them in a form that would be marketable to their constituents. They did that on their own by knowing their districts, and they spent more time in them. Of course, Congress wasn't a year-round operation. By mid or late summer, Congress would adjourn for the year, and the Capitol would be virtually boarded and shuttered. Everybody would check out, the Members would go home and stay there for weeks or months on end, in many cases even going back to the occupations that they pursued before they were elected to office since there was no restriction on outside earned income. If they had a law practice, or were a country doctor, or had a business of some kind, they spent at least part of their time doing that. Of course, that was back in the days before Member

salaries really took a bump when people started thinking they ought to get a full-time salary for a full-time job and leave other things alone. But Members didn't make very much money when I first came here; I think they had just gotten raised from \$18,000 to \$22,500 in the 86th Congress [1959–1961], which, to me, seemed like a ton of money at the time. But they really hadn't been paid a great deal.

JOHNSON: You spoke of many possible contributing factors to the dwindling presence, as you discussed, of the Members in the cloakroom and on the floor. One thing you didn't mention was changes in campaign finance laws. Do you think this had anything to do with the change in the atmosphere—that there was more pressure on Members to raise money and to have more fundraisers for their re-election campaigns?

ANDERSON: Oh, absolutely. When I first came, there weren't a lot of Washington fundraisers. Most fundraising was done at home. Lobbying groups and lobbyists as individuals did contribute, of course, to Member's campaigns. But I certainly don't recall the rubber-chicken circuit being anything like it is today, where there were multiple events every night, raising money for many different Members. Also, there was less tidiness about the whole process of money. It was a cash economy. Members always seemed to have a lot of cash on them because there were a lot of campaign contributions that were given in cash—not checks, not whatever—but envelopes full of cash. And I'm not sure that there was a careful accounting of it. Certainly the reporting of its expenditure wasn't as today.

Members used to carry what they called “walking around money.” Some of them carried thousands of dollars on them—sums which were astounding

then, which would still be rather impressive by today's standards. Nobody used credit cards to pay for things. They either wrote checks or counted out greenbacks to pay for things. I guess other than being surprised at the amounts. . . . Of course, when I was young credit cards really weren't around. People tended to pay cash for things. People carried money in their wallets, as opposed to credit cards. When you went to the store, you paid the cashier in cash. You didn't hand a credit card. Congress seemed to be no different except in the amount of money that seemed to be floating around. Certainly, for a young person whose salary was rather small, to see people carrying thousands of dollars on them when you could buy a rather fine car for \$2[000] or \$3,000 . . . {laughter} And people regularly carried that much money. It would be equivalent to carrying \$50[000] or \$60,000 today.

JOHNSON: That would be impressive. After many years of debate, the House proceedings began being televised live in 1979. Earlier I had asked you about some technological changes, specifically about electronic voting. With regards to TV, how do you think this changed the proceedings on the floor? And also, how do you think it changed the operations in the cloakroom?

ANDERSON: Sure. It was not uniformly popular. The younger, more liberal Members were very keen on the idea of television in the House. They had grown up with it; the older Members had not. They were, I think, more aware of the potential for getting messages out if the chamber were televised. The older Members had a real skepticism verging on, perhaps, a horror of the House being televised. I think some of it probably had to do with, see, "the emperor has no clothes," or having the mystique of government suddenly demystified. These were all anxieties—some of them legitimate, some of them not. But the point of getting the television in the House was no easy matter.

Speaker O’Neill, who, of course, eventually took credit for having televised the House, was by no means keen on the idea and resisted it for quite a long time. Mr. O’Neill, of course, was a progressive Member and did realize that change is inevitable. And if it is inevitable, it’s best to be part of the change even though it may not be something that appeals to you because then you can control the circumstances of that change. If you absolutely oppose and don’t offer an alternative, then the change comes, it passes you by, and you haven’t been part of the process.

His anxiety was that the commercial broadcast networks would eventually get control of televising the House—both producing it and covering it with their equipment and with their employees. There certainly was a segment of the House that was quite content to see that happen. To him, nothing could have been more troublesome than the thought of a commercial network covering the House of Representatives. When he saw that it was inevitable, then he changed and got on the bandwagon with the determination that when it happened, he would control it, very prudently. He insisted that when he finally said that “yes, we will do this,” that the cameras be owned and operated by the House of Representatives—House equipment operated by House employees, under rules that would be determined solely by the Speaker.

When we started televising—first in 1978 in-house and then in 1979 when our signal went public—the Speaker’s Rule One responsibility gave him control of the means of covering the house. Nobody else had anything to say about it, not the Committee on House Administration, nobody. How the House was to be covered was solely within the Speaker’s province, and he decided that the coverage of the House would follow the *Congressional Record*

format, where the cameras would focus only on the Members who had been recognized or to whom the floor had been yielded by others. But they would not have reaction shots of other Members. There would be no broad shots of the chamber to avoid embarrassing situations—such as, the chance shot of someone dozing off on the House Floor or perhaps making adjustments in articles of clothing not ordinarily seen, that sort of thing, which I thought was a pretty good way of handling it. He never liked television in the House, but he made it work to his advantage. And he also did it the way he thought it ought to be done, if it had to be done at all.

I recall in 1981 when I went to Australia and New Zealand with Speaker O'Neill on his official trip that year. While we were in Canberra, we visited the then Prime Minister of Australia [Malcolm] Fraser at Parliament House. We were all seated around the vast, highly polished mahogany cabinet table in the cabinet room. The Prime Minister seated at one end of the table, and on his right was Speaker O'Neill, and on his left was Chairman Daniel Rostenkowski, new chairman of the Ways and Means Committee. Chairman Rostenkowski did not like television in the House either. He was one of the older Members who thought it was a very bad idea, if not perhaps the worst idea that anyone ever had.

In the course of the discussion after the initial purpose of the meeting was dispensed with, which was the ANZUS Treaty, Prime Minister Fraser turned to Speaker O'Neill and said, "Mr. Speaker, as you may know, the Australian House of Representatives has been broadcast on the radio for quite a few years and has been quite popular with the Australian people. We are now exploring the idea of following your example and televising our House. I should certainly like to learn from you, having had three or four years

experience with television in your chamber, what you think of it.” The Speaker got beet red—very angry looking—pounded his fist on the cabinet table with a report like a gunshot, and stuck his finger right in the Prime Minister’s face and rather angrily admonished, “Mr. Prime Minister, take my good advice. Don’t do it. It will be the biggest goddamned mistake you’ll ever make.”

The Prime Minister, of course, was rather taken aback at the candor of the response. Chairman Rostenkowski was sitting on the other side of the Prime Minister—was sitting there with a kind of smirk on his face—and said rather blandly to the Speaker, “Well, Mr. Speaker, if it’s such a bad idea, why don’t we get rid of it?” And the Speaker suddenly changed his tone entirely and said, “Jesus, Danny, you know we can’t do that.” {laughter} It is one of those steps that having been taken there is no retreat. But the Speaker made it very clear that he still didn’t like it.

JOHNSON: Do you have any insight as to what he particularly didn’t like? Were there examples, or something that happened that disappointed him about the televised proceedings?

ANDERSON: Well, I think he feared that which was easily predictable: That it would create posturing for the cameras, that it would turn the House of Representatives immediately into 435 stars of daytime television. And that did have that predictable effect on many of the Members of the House who were clearly posturing for the cameras, even though there was no red light on any of the six cameras to tell you which one was then on. Nonetheless, you knew that you were being covered and that very quickly the broadcast news organizations would be taking sound bites and snippets out of the

proceedings of the House—which, of course, is entirely appropriate as long as it's used for bona fide news or information, and not for political purposes. You could tell, actually, by the clock when some Members would speak because C-SPAN wasn't carried by cable in everyone's district all the time. We used to joke that Jack [French] Kemp never appeared on the House Floor before three o'clock, which was when cable in Buffalo started carrying C-SPAN. After three o'clock, you couldn't keep him off the floor, but before then, he seldom spoke.

The Speaker was concerned that it would diminish the spontaneity of debate and create a more bitter, partisan, and divisive tone—not that the House has ever been free from those things. And it certainly did. It created a much more divided and partisan atmosphere in the House. Members, as time passed, became more and more clever about crafting their remarks for sound bites which they hoped would be picked up by the broadcast networks—and they were. Sometimes they got there by being perfectly outrageous or by saying things that were rather bombastic with the hopes that they would be picked up.

Something else that the Speaker was fearful of is that debate on the House Floor without interpretation is basically raw information. I mean, we can sit anywhere and watch something and come to our own conclusions as to the meaning of that event or chain of events. The same statement can be made of the House of Representatives. Yes, they are debating a bill which will lead eventually to a conclusion by its passage or its defeat. But what the viewer of the House of Representatives does not see are the dynamics that lead up to the point when a bill is presented in camera for debate: the elements in crafting that bill; the forces that brought it to be; why a particular bill reached

the House Floor when the vast majority of those that are introduced never do; the building of coalitions; the crafting of agreements behind the scenes that may make something which seems hopelessly complicated and controversial rather simple once it gets to the House Floor. Because it seems to lack those elements superficially doesn't mean that they aren't there, but they had been handled elsewhere at a private level.

And there was a concern about things being misinterpreted as to the meanings of the House proceedings, and there certainly is an element of that. Anytime someone comments, they are going to add their own inflection, and I'm not sure that anyone can do a perfectly impartial job. C-SPAN has stayed mainly out of the commentary business. They will try to, as objectively as possible, explain what is happening but not try to give a slant to it. I think they have received nothing but praise for having done that. You know, "Here it is." Mechanically, this is what is being done, and they leave it there without trying to explain what the partisan issues might be.

We kept the *Congressional Record* format even after Mr. O'Neill retired, until 1995 when Speaker [Newton Leroy] Gingrich said, "Let's cover everything," and gave our TV people—of course, the House still produces the signal—the authority to pan the chamber, to focus in on other Members for reactions, which means that anybody who is on the House Floor potentially is on live camera at any time, no matter where they are sitting, where it used to be, you had to be careful around the tables or in the front row about being on television. But now, no matter where you are, you could very well be on television and in a rather tight shot for that matter. So, clearly, if you watch, you can see that some Members have forgotten that when they are doing

things, or not doing things, and clearly they would prefer to be otherwise engaged when caught on camera.

I used to keep an eye on my TV set on my desk in the cloakroom. If I saw someone sitting in the vicinity of the tables who had perhaps dozed off, I would send a Page down with a message (which was a blank sheet of paper) so that it would appear on camera as though that Member was being handed a message. And the message from the Page was “Mr. Anderson thinks you may want to open your eyes. You’re on camera.” “Oh, Jesus!” {laughter}

JOHNSON: You just mentioned that you had a TV in the cloakroom and that was another question that I wanted to ask. Were TVs sent to the Members offices? Were offices equipped with TVs very soon after the live proceedings started?

ANDERSON: No, and that became a discussion, whether Members ought to be allowed to purchase televisions for their offices against their equipment allowance. And that was quickly decided in the affirmative that, yes, they could. Actually, not very many Members’ offices had televisions unless they bought them themselves. They were rather much of a rarity fairly well into the ’70s. And then, of course, everybody got one because everybody wanted to be able to watch in their office so they could have the benefit of the continuity of the debate, so that when the bells rang for attendance, they weren’t coming over in an information vacuum—depending on the whip organization to tell them what was going on [when they arrived]. They would have had the benefit of watching up to the point that the vote occurred.

In fact, the first television set we had in the cloakroom, I arranged to have donated when you could still do that sort of thing. About the only time we ever had a television set in the cloakroom was for the World Series or some important sporting event when I'd bring in my little nine-inch color portable and set it up on the snack bar so that the Members could enjoy the game.

They didn't have the distraction of television. They talked to each other. Nowadays, everywhere we go there is a television set. We go to the airport, there is a television set in the lounge while you're waiting. While you're waiting for your baggage to pop up, there is a television set. You can't get away from them. And I always thought how much nicer it was when we didn't have that distraction, and we actually talked to each other. People would even be inclined to talk to strangers in the situation where you were put together for a period of time. The idea of a spontaneous conversation was not out of the question. So it was on the House Floor and in the cloakrooms. They didn't have BlackBerries. They didn't have cell phones. They didn't have television sets. And they'd talk to each other in the primary form of human interaction—conversation. It was a wonderful, delightful time.

Then we got a television set, and I eventually asked the Architect's Office to build a wall mount for it since there was no such thing as a commercially available wall mount. And then after that, things sort of went downhill. The Members would sit there glassy-eyed watching House proceedings when they were only six feet away from the real thing. I always thought, how strange, wouldn't you think they would come into the cloakroom to get away from it, rather than to sit there and have a sandwich and watch it?

Well, in any case, televisions sprouted up everywhere. I actually had the first loudspeaker for chamber audio off the House Floor. For years we would monitor the proceedings on the House Floor by one of the three managers—basically standing at the back rail or sitting in the back row—following debate so that we knew exactly what was happening. If a point of order was raised or a vote was demanded, someone knew exactly what the issue was, who then could come in, and relate it to everyone else so we could explain when the phones started ringing after the bells rang what was going on. And when the chamber audio system was upgraded, I asked Speaker Albert—it was rather bold on my part—if he would permit a speaker to be installed at my desk just off the House Floor in the Democratic Cloakroom so that I could listen to the debate while I did my other work. Because when you only have three adults dealing with 260 or 270 Members of Congress and everyone else who calls—and supervising six Pages—you get stretched kind of thin. The idea of not having one person hanging on the rail all day long and being able to do other things, to me, seemed like a prudent use of manpower. Speaker Albert agreed to it. He asked a few questions about it, and said, “Well, we should give one to the Republican Cloakroom too, if they’d like it. We should keep parity.” And I said, “Oh, of course. I’m sure they would be very pleased to have one.” So a little speaker about six inches square was put on my desk with a little volume control and an on-and-off switch. And it made life infinitely easier for me, so that I could sit at my desk and take phone calls and listen to what was going on without having to be running in and out of the door to the back rail all of the time to keep up with what was happening in the chamber—a place where things can change in a matter of seconds. You need to be on top of it.

JOHNSON: This was during the mid ’70s?

ANDERSON: Yes, it was Speaker Albert, so it was . . . He was Speaker from '71 to '77. So it was in that period; it was probably about '72 or '73 when they upgraded the sound system. When we got television, it was a natural extension of the loudspeaker that I had to get a television set—put it at my desk. So, I found a small television set and had them run a cable lead so I was able to watch and listen, which is nice because if someone got up to make a point of order to offer a motion, you could see who was doing it rather than having to figure out who the gentleman from California, or the gentlewoman from New York, was, which wasn't real helpful. You still had to know who the Member was who was involved. And those were a great enhancement to those of us in the floor information business.

JOHNSON: When you spoke about electronic voting, you provided some great detail on some of the unintended consequences of this new technology. What do you think some of the unintended consequences were of television?

ANDERSON: I don't know that they were necessarily unintended—certainly easily enough anticipated: the posturing, the more ferociously partisan atmosphere of the House, the appetite for sound bites. Clearly, the reaction from the C-SPAN junkies . . . and there are lots of people who watch the House. You wonder why. I suppose it is an alternative to the boredom of daytime television: *Dr. Phil* and *As the World Turns*. At least it's real. But it created a lot of anger amongst the people: "But there's nobody there! I counted eight Members on the House Floor. Where are the other lazy loafers?" That was a problem, where Members became defensive about why they weren't there. Having to convince [their constituents] that spending hours on the House Floor each day would, indeed, be a squandering of time—that they have many other things that command their attention. It certainly would be nice to be there,

but rather unnecessary in point of fact because they're not out of touch. If they need to be there, they will be there. If they're participating in debate, they will be there. They're always there to vote. That certainly was a consequence.

It got a lot of viewership, and we got a lot of call-ins. The Capitol operators had a surge in phone calls, which they would usually plug into the cloakrooms or someplace like the Clerk's Office if they could figure out the destination of that call. We spent a lot of time answering public calls about—"Oh, what did he just say? Why did he say that?"—the best we could, being primarily a Members' support organization. To the extent we could, we tried to deal with explaining things to the public and, of course, [this was done] seldom to their complete satisfaction. There were plenty of times where you couldn't actually say what the real intention was because there was a strategy involved, which was not for everybody to know.

But we had regular callers. In fact, many of the employees at the rostrum developed fan clubs. The people would call and try to find out names. I know as Clerk I objected to the fact that C-SPAN gave the names of the two reading clerks—and they didn't like it either—rather than just putting "reading clerk," but [instead] gave the actual identities of the reading clerks. They didn't need to have their names out there for millions of people. There is always some loony tune who could use it for some purpose that would be annoying, or threatening. In any case, I never convinced C-SPAN to not do that, and they still do.

JOHNSON: One final question about TV was something we were curious about in our office. Al [Albert Arnold] Gore, Jr., had the privilege of being the first House

Member to speak before the cameras on March 19, 1979. Do you know if this is by chance, or was he specifically selected as the first speaker?

ANDERSON: I recall that he was, but I'm not sure that I can answer that question. I've got to believe that it probably wasn't an accident of circumstance, but I really couldn't tell you. I don't know.

JOHNSON: We haven't been able to find anything, so we thought maybe you had some insight.

ANDERSON: He certainly was one of the Members that was very keen on televising the House. And, of course, he would have been 30-something in those days and would clearly have been on the technological edge, as opposed to suspicious of it as the older Members tended to be. So it wouldn't surprise me that he would have been keen. He has always had an interest in that sort of thing. It's been part of his public agenda.

JOHNSON: I am going to switch tapes at this point.

ANDERSON: All right.

END OF PART ONE ~ BEGINNING OF PART TWO

JOHNSON: In addition to paving the way for televised congressional proceedings, do you think that the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1970 had a perceivable effect on the day-to-day activities in the House?

ANDERSON:

Oh, yes. The Legislative Reorganization Act of '70, of course, was 95 percent a House reorganization. Only a very small part of it applied to joint Senate-House interactions. It focused almost exclusively on the House. It included such things as making the *Congressional Record* more cogent in terms of identifying portions which were actually delivered in the course of debate and those which were not—which I think was a very important step forward. I'm reluctant to use the term "improving" the honesty of the *Record*, but at least making it understandable in terms of what was actually said and what was included under the Members' unlimited right to speak by including printed material or unuttered speeches in the *Record*.

There were a couple of things that Bill Pitts (who at the time was the manager of the Republican Cloakroom) and I managed to get put into the bill requiring the Clerk to furnish the cloakrooms and the majority and minority tables with copies of amendments when they were offered. Those of us that were in the floor information business really needed to know what amendments said so that we could explain them to our clients who were the Members of Congress and their staffs, and the public to some extent.

And sometimes copies simply weren't available, and so we—I've forgotten who we asked to do it, but we got someone to, a Member to—add a provision requiring the clerk (reading clerk) to furnish copies of pending amendments to the majority and minority tables, as well as to the cloakrooms, which, of course, added some work for them. But it was so terribly important—seemingly unimportant in the scope of it, but to those of us that were affected, it was terribly important.

Something else that Billy [Pitts] and I did, but we had to do it with real stealth, was put in a provision requiring the publication of the modern precedents of the House. Mr. [Lewis (Lew)] Deschler, the longtime Parliamentarian, had never published the current precedents from *Cannon's Precedents* forward. *Cannon*, I think, was published in the 1920s or early '30s [1936], but none of the House precedents were available after that since Mr. Deschler did not want them out there in the public domain. He had the only complete set, which was in his personal office where Members, if they had the nerve, could come and read them under his gaze. And, of course, he would then be aware of what precedents they were consulting. It probably would have cost us our jobs if we had been found out, but I think we got the late Bill [William Albert] Steiger of Wisconsin to add an amendment requiring the—actually mandating—the Parliamentarian to publish the modern precedents of the House. Of course, Mr. Deschler was fit to be tied. And it was overwhelmingly supported by the House because the Members were under the same affliction of being handicapped by not having the modern precedents of the House readily available to them, which, of course, were the bulk of those that were most salient to the current practice of the House. But, nonetheless, the Parliamentarian didn't rush to publish them. When the *Deschler's Precedents* eventually appeared, unsurprisingly it was a posthumous edition. {laughter}

But, nonetheless, we got that on track and got the ball rolling. There were a lot of things in that that were less exciting on their face than television and electronic voting, but nonetheless had an impact on the methodology of the House which I thought was terribly important. It was one of the few times when I actually was involved to any extent in lobbying or trying to influence the shape or outcome of legislation. Of course, that was in-house. It was

something that applied to the institution, not to external matters. I have never, ever gotten into public policy, or drafting legislation, except those things that were specifically institutional in nature.

JOHNSON: So in your opinion, the Legislative Reorganization Act of '70 was more focused on institutional changes that most of the public wouldn't be aware of?

ANDERSON: Or even care about. Television they would care about, perhaps electronic voting, and perhaps not. I'm trying to think of some of the other things that we did. Well, we also required recorded votes in the Committee of the Whole, which was new and changed the numbers necessary to obtain votes.

It was the first time that the House had had a go at its procedures and structure since 1946, which was the last major institutional reorganization prior to that. And, of course, much had changed. The first half of the 20th century was still pretty much content to use 19th century methods. Technology wasn't part of 1946. It was very much a part of 1970. Technology was burgeoning.

The attitudes of Members as to their place. . . . Members expected to be actively participating immediately, as opposed to biding their time and waiting two or three terms when they garnered a little seniority before getting materially involved in things. It was a landmark piece of legislation.

Mr. O'Neill had a lot to do with it, particularly recorded votes in the Committee of the Whole. The only part of it that he didn't really like was television in the House. But as far as electronic voting, voting in Committee

of the Whole, those were all things which, as a progressive, he thought were terribly important. He was one of the prime movers. In fact, I think the mandate—the amendment—that mandated recorded votes in Committee of the Whole was the O’Neill-Gubser amendment, which was jointly sponsored by him and Charlie [Charles Samuel] Gubser, a moderate Republican Member from California. That opened up the Committee of the Whole, and of course, we eventually, as a result of that, did away with teller votes in the House.¹¹

Once electronic voting came, it was convenient to use both in Committee of the Whole and in the House, and so we stopped the marching down the aisle to be counted. You mention tellers now and nobody has any idea what you are talking about. But those memories are very real of having: first, the one aisle tellers, which was just a count; and then, as a stopgap measure between 1970 and 1974, when electronic voting became operational—or ’73 perhaps.

JOHNSON: Seventy-three.

ANDERSON: Seventy-three. I once lost a bet on an expensive dinner at The Palm [in Washington, D.C.] on that point, where I was sure it was ’74, and it was actually ’73. In any case, we did have the two aisle tellers—tellers with clerks in the Committee of the Whole—until electronic voting arrived, and that’s when we abolished teller voting entirely. It was just dropped from the rule book. It was kind of interesting to see the Members walking down the aisles and being counted. It was, for a hopeless nostalgic like myself, it was kind of a tie that bound us to another age.

JOHNSON: Switching gears now from technology to the early 1980s and the Abscam Scandal. What were your impressions of this operation, and how do you think it affected the House, both short-range and long-range consequences?

ANDERSON: Well, history has a tendency to repeat itself. If you study scandal in the House, you can see that it tends to be cyclical. We have a widespread fall from grace, followed by long period of high ethical standards—at least nobody has been caught—and then Members start getting careless again because they haven't studied the lessons of the past. The moment in which we presently find ourselves is an example of that. It's been about a decade since we've had a period of major scandal in the House. The difference with Abscam was, it was a setup where the FBI virtually created a crime which otherwise would not have existed and rather randomly picked Members to draw into the occasion of sin as it were, the temptation. I think that's something that created a widespread resentment in the House, was the entrapment. It wasn't that something was going on that the FBI was legitimately investigating, but that they created a crime and then arbitrarily decided which Members to attempt to bribe—most of whom that they attempted to bribe readily enough bought into it. It was a bipartisan sting, so to speak. I think it created a great sense of unease about how much of this will the Executive Branch do? What was the motivation behind it? Why do this? Why tempt certain Members, and how do you get on the list to be put in that position? The end result was a cautionary tale where Members clearly need to avoid even the appearance of being influenced in an unseemly way. It did have its effect for a while. It brought down a number of Members, most of whom were frankly unimportant, kind of back benchers. But it also did take one of the titans of the House, Frank Thompson of New Jersey, who was a highly respected Member.

JOHNSON: Chair of House Administration at that point. . . .

ANDERSON: Chair of House Administration, the ranking Member on [the Committee on] Education and Labor; a great progressive, and a liberal reformer. At the time, the feeling was that he was unfairly taken advantage of because he had a ferocious drinking problem. I guess one could use that as an excuse, but clearly drunk or sober, you don't accept money for influencing your office. It's just wrong. There is no satisfactory explanation. With most of the ones that were involved, I was sorry that the House was injured by it, but it didn't really bother me. But Frank Thompson was a buddy, a dear friend, someone that I respected very much who had been very supportive of our needs in the cloakroom by way of his chairmanship of House Administration, and I was devastated by the fact that he was caught up in this and ruined by it. I was also stunned that, drunk or sober, he would have done something like that. I guess that's what bothered me most of all, was that I never would have thought he would have done something like that, under any circumstances, and he did. But it did create great indignation because of the creating of a crime that didn't exist.

JOHNSON: What about the drastic step that was taken to the vote to expel Representative [Michael Joseph (Ozzie)] Myers from the House?

ANDERSON: Well, it was the first time since the Civil War that a Member had been expelled. And it was the only time that a Member had been expelled other than for treason, which was the reason for the expulsions at the time of the Civil War, where the expelled Members had sided with the secessionists. It was kind of like—oh, what's his name from Youngstown who is in prison now, Jim [James A.] Traficant, [Jr.]—who didn't handle a bad situation the

best way he could. Both of them forced the House to take an action which was inevitable, unavoidable. I couldn't understand why Ozzie [Myers] insisted on being expelled. To me, there is no vindication in that. If he thought he was demonstrating his honesty by making the House take the ultimate step which it had been loath to take historically—and at that point, for nearly two centuries—that he was somehow vindicated by it, that it demonstrated his conviction of his own innocence, I don't know what he could possibly could have been thinking. He was clearly guilty, of that there was no doubt. His expressions on the video where he said, "I have larceny in my heart," clearly showed criminal intent—not just action, but the intent to behave in a criminal way. I didn't understand that, why he forced the issue on an expulsion.

Well with Jim Traficant, I found it more explainable because he was a wack-job through the entire time he served in the House. I mean nobody could explain his bizarre behavior. That he would let himself be expelled to me was rather unsurprising. In Ozzie's case, he was no dummy, and he wasn't bizarre, and he was kind of a homespun, up-from-the-streets sort of guy. But then, many of them are. I found it more surprising in Ozzie's case than I did later in Jim Traficant's case.

JOHNSON: So, he forced the hand of the House then because some of the other Abscam Members . . .

ANDERSON: They either were defeated in primaries or resigned.

JOHNSON: Or resigned. Exactly.

ANDERSON: Or were convicted and resigned. But he was convicted and refused to resign. And it was clear that he wasn't going anywhere except prison. He was an interesting guy, but I couldn't understand why he would do that? I mean, who wants to be remembered as the one guy who got expelled for something other than treason?

JOHNSON: Another unusual circumstance that arose out of this situation was Congressman [Raymond Francis] Lederer. He was re-elected after the scandal, but House Democrats opted to remove him from the Ways and Means Committee that he sat on. Do you remember this situation at all because this was certainly a very unusual step to take?

ANDERSON: Ray Lederer, unlike Ozzie Myers, was a pretty popular guy. He was well liked amongst his colleagues. I think there was the concern of some taint if they didn't take some action to show a collective disapproval of what he had done. I think most people felt that he had been kind of suckered into it—that he was not as eager as the other participants to enrich himself, that perhaps there was some mitigation to be found—but nonetheless, the deed had been done, and I think they felt an imperative to administer an internal punishment. But I know that Members felt very badly about Ray. He was a really likable guy, and people did enjoy him, and he kind of fit in nicely. I liked him. I guess he would have been the other one other than Frank Thompson that I felt badly for.

JOHNSON: From what you're saying, the comments that you've made, it seems as if you're arguing that there was more indignation against the FBI, and the Executive Branch, than perhaps these Members that committed crimes. Is that a fair assumption?

ANDERSON: Certainly enough indignation to go around, but the idea of creating a situation to tempt Members arbitrarily was viewed as being fairly outrageous. Then, as the ancillary to that, clearly those who were willing to sell their office and their personal integrity, it was a matter of additional contempt. But it was almost separate from the original situation which was creating the artificial crime, creating a situation where none existed. I don't know that they ever demonstrated that there was a reason to choose those Members—half a dozen of them or so—as opposed to any other half dozen Members of the House to tempt. As I recall, the issue was trying to get them to introduce private bills to waive immigration quotas in order to get people in from Arab countries. Needless to say, it did not do anything special to cement Arab relations either. As one Arab ambassador remarked, “How would it have gone down if they had named the operation Jewscam?” Everyone would have been up in arms about it, but Arabscam didn't seem to offend anybody's sensitivities. Of course, nowadays I think that we're more careful about that—one would hope.

JOHNSON: Was there any sort of demand or call for congressional reform because of this scandal among Members inside the institution?

ANDERSON: Well, one thing that it did was begin the end of the Private Calendar. Members became more reluctant to introduce private legislation. When I first came, the Private Calendar was called twice a month—I think it was the first and third Mondays of the month—and we usually had quite a few bills on it. Sometimes there'd be a couple of hundred bills on the Private Calendar, most of them immigration bills waiving the quotas in order to permit people for whatever reason to enter the United States when that quota had been filled for their region of the world, or their country, whatever it was. We did that

to get people that had important technical or professional skills in, or sometimes to get children in whose parents were Americans and adopted foreign nationals who needed to have the quota waived in order to bring the child into the United States.

Other private bills were private relief bills that would compensate individuals for loss or injury that was proven to be the fault of the United States, for instance, soldiers whose household goods while being shipped to a new duty station were lost or destroyed, and they would file a claim against the government by having a Member introduce a private bill to grant compensation for the loss. Because private bills could sometimes be of questionable merit—in fact, frequently be of questionable merit—each party had three official objectors, Members that were appointed at the beginning of each Congress whose duty it was to examine the bills on the Private Calendar to make sure that they were entirely legitimate—that the amounts that were sought in settlement were not excessive, or beyond the real merit of the case, or in case of immigration bills which came out of the Judiciary Committee—always because that was where that jurisdiction lay—were legitimate, that there was some compelling reason to waive the immigration quota to grant admission to the United States.

But as time passed, the Private Calendar kept shrinking. I'm not sure whether it has been eliminated as a category of legislation or whether Members just no longer introduce private bills. There weren't a lot of Members who were frankly willing to do it.

JOHNSON: And you think this was a direct result of Abscam?

ANDERSON: Yes, because that dealt with private bills. The idea was to get Members to introduce private bills and then push them along to get people into the United States who otherwise would not be eligible or qualify. That was the purpose behind that bribery.

JOHNSON: What do you recall about the creation of the Office of the Bicentennial in 1983 and the office's specific responsibilities?

ANDERSON: You mean for the bicentennial of independence or the bicentennial of the Constitution?

JOHNSON: Of Congress, the 200th anniversary of Congress.

ANDERSON: Oh, okay.

JOHNSON: The predecessor of the Historian's Office.

ANDERSON: Yes, well, of course, that was something that Lindy Boggs was particularly firmly behind. It takes somebody of that stature to make something like that happen. Everybody can sit around and say, "Well, we're going to turn 200 soon, maybe we ought to have a cake or something." But in order to commemorate it as befits the importance of the occasion, you really have to get somebody who has the stature, and the presence, to make it something that everybody wants to do—and, of course, she did. Nobody has a greater sense or appreciation of history than Lindy.

There had been a reluctance to hire a historian. The Republicans were mainly afraid that we'd write Democratic history, as opposed to bipartisan history.

And the way we even got our first historian was with the limited scope of planning for the Bicentennial of the Constitution and of Congress, which, of course, took place within a two year span—1987 and 1989—and that the historian was kind of limited initially to events dealing with that: planning the celebrations; publications that would be appropriate to be issued relative to the 200th anniversary of the Constitution and of Congress. Everybody felt pretty comfortable that Lindy would keep it on track and not turn it into celebrating democracy with a capital “D” (as opposed to a little “d”), and she would do it in a fair and bipartisan way. There was, of course, a lot of speculation about putting a drop-dead date on the Historian’s Office so that it wouldn’t become something that assumed a life of its own.

It eventually did. The Speaker’s Office managed to protect it, but even then, they couldn’t do the kind of historical research and publication that needed to be done. It’s only been within the last few weeks that Dr. [Robert] Remini’s excellent history has appeared. Frankly, I would have preferred to see something even bigger than that: a multi-volume, in-depth history or encyclopedia of the House of Representatives. But I think that’s probably as good as we are ever going to get, and it is a fine volume. I haven’t had a chance to really get into it, though I did appreciate his acknowledgement of my small contribution upfront, which was very thoughtful of him.

So that was really that. [Lindy Boggs] got started with the Bicentenary of Independence in 1976, and then kind of kept that ball rolling as we led up to the more significant Bicentennial of Nationhood and of the creation of our institution. She did consult a wide range of people: She worked with the late Chief Justice of the United States, Warren Burger, who was chairman of the National Commission on the Bicentennial of the United States. She was able

to get people like David McCullough and Ken Burns involved—I'm sure you've seen Ken's excellent *The Congress*, which is delightful. To me it's a little bit on the fluffy side, but it's a delightful film. It seems to me more could have, and should have, been done; I did work with him somewhat on that. But as I say, we were doing the best we could with the kind of backing that was then available.

And, of course, everybody was afraid of throwing too much money at it: Is this going to be a multi-million dollar extravaganza where we are going to be celebrating ourselves and get criticized for it? Fortunately people like Lindy were able to convince others that we only turn 200 once. This is a remarkable achievement and should not pass by without being properly noted. And, indeed, the events that attended it I think were not unduly extravagant. They were well planned, and we got a big bang for the buck. The only thing that was a little on the expensive side was hauling most of Congress to Philadelphia for the ceremonies at Independence Hall—but then the City of Philadelphia picked up some of the expenses for the extended Philadelphia weekend, which I enjoyed enormously.¹² Plus, I had the opportunity to preside in the assembly room at Independence Hall along with Joe Stewart, then Secretary of the Senate. I'm sure you've looked at the videos from that.

JOHNSON: Yes, I have. Just another question about the Historian's Office: You said that there really wasn't a desire to create a position for a historian, even though the Senate had a Historical Office since the early '70s?

ANDERSON: For quite a long time.

JOHNSON: Right.

ANDERSON: And a very serious Historical Office.

JOHNSON: And do you think Members were reticent because of the fear that this would become a partisan office?

ANDERSON: I think so. I know the Republicans were very fearful about that, and the Democrats, for the most part, didn't have the broad or deep commitment to make it happen, notwithstanding that it wasn't something that they felt like really fighting over. I think part of it has to do with the provincial nature of the House, opposed to the more broadly defined nature of the Senate. There is a certain clubbiness in the Senate—it's smaller; it's a continuous body. We [the House of Representatives] are not. Then you had folks like Robert C. [Carlyle] Byrd who loved that stuff and had the kind of muscle to make it happen. I don't know what was involved in the creation of the Senate Historical Office, but I don't think there was any real resistance to it. I think it was something that came along rather naturally and easily for the Senate.

But I thought it was appalling, verging on scandalous, that we had never taken a serious interest in chronicling our own history because I say, with no denigration meant to anybody, that the House of Representatives is clearly the world's foremost parliamentary assembly. The fact that we have been pathetic in capturing our history and presenting it and making it available to the people who would love to study it and gain from it—it is a remarkable institution—and we just have let opportunity after opportunity pass us by for doing anything of a substantial nature like the Senate has. We don't have a Robert C. Byrd who has the time to write speeches about Senate history and then have them bound in a book—there are several, actually, large books; they're quite nice.

I did what I could, but it was “everybody has other things to do.” History here is measured in the span of two years. That’s something that’s very difficult to overcome. We have no sooner created one House then everyone’s concerned about the next without any particular interest in finding out what the meaning of what has happened in previous Houses may have been.

JOHNSON: Do you know how the office ended up under the jurisdiction of the Speaker?

ANDERSON: Probably because the Clerk wasn’t interested enough to go after it, and it had to go somewhere. They wanted somebody who could supervise it, and that ended up being a staff responsibility. Really, I’m sure Jim Wright didn’t give it much care. Mr. O’Neill certainly didn’t, not that he was unconscious of history coming from Boston, but that wasn’t his shtick. In fact, he did ask me to represent him in the preliminaries when he was getting ready to leave office in the planning for the Philadelphia event in 1987, which, of course, was the year following his departure. I made several trips to Philadelphia to work on the plans for the joint ceremony. Of course, I am sure he was focused on leaving office, but he didn’t seem particularly interested in being debriefed as to what was being planned. I guess he was thinking that he would be part of history. By then, there was no reason to be involved in the making of it any longer.

JOHNSON: Safe assumption.

ANDERSON: Speaker Foley’s office was keenly interested in it. Of course, he had a nice sense of history. He had a good view of himself in the historical continuum. I particularly enjoyed Speaker Foley for that because we often talked about matters of historical importance. He was interested in the things around him.

We never got a few of the projects going that I would like to have seen started, like returning the chamber somewhat to its mid-19th century appearance—both of us were tantalized by the idea of doing a modest restoration of the original appearance of the chamber, such that could be done without tremendous amount of public expense or inconvenience to the House. There were some things we thought about putting back in, like the Rinehart clock, and getting the white marble rostrum back from the Rayburn Library, modifying it to make it suit the contemporary needs of the House. But those things never got done. Perhaps someday they will, but I'm inclined to doubt it.

JOHNSON: During the 1970s and 1980s, several new security measures were implemented in response to various acts of violence at the Capitol. In your opinion, do these measures have any tangible impact on congressional staff or Members?

ANDERSON: No, there was the predictable grumbling when they finally installed metal detectors at the doors, which didn't happen until the second bomb went off in the Capitol. We didn't even get them after the first bomb.

JOHNSON: The first being in the 1970s, and the second being in the early '80s?

ANDERSON: I think that's right. And there were a lot of older staff people and Members around who thought it was just terrible to have metal detectors and bomb-sniffing dogs, that just didn't seem to accept the fact that we were no longer insulated from that sort of thing by the security of two oceans—that terrorism had come to our shores and was here to stay. It was just going to be part of the national persona for the future.

But it was something that . . . It wasn't really radical, having metal detectors. Even the x-ray machines didn't come along for some while after that. There was no particular rush to install them. So I didn't find it particularly intrusive. It was to me a rather modest ratcheting up of security considering what we had experienced in the way of two potent bombs going off in the building, which would have been lethal to dozens, if not hundreds, if the building had been occupied at the time—small enough price to pay. But there really wasn't . . . I didn't find it particularly visible or particularly intrusive.

I always thought that we should have more. I thought some of the schemes that were involved were a little bit scatterbrained, like putting the steel plates behind the Members' chairs on the House Floor, which, if there was a potent device in the chamber, it would send those plates flying like guillotine knives. But apparently there was some difference of opinion between the Sergeant at Arms, who wanted a lightweight blast-resistant plastic, and the Architect who had to buy them, who thought that the plastic was too expensive. So he bought steel instead, which was much cheaper but weighed a great deal more. And I never could quite see what bulletproofing the backs of the chairs would do anyhow since the sight lines, depending on where you are, are right down the aisles.

JOHNSON: And that was a measure that was implemented after the 1954 shooting [in the House Chamber]?

ANDERSON: No, no, no; nothing was done after that. The steel plates . . .

JOHNSON: But because of the 1954 shooting, wasn't that the thinking behind it?

ANDERSON: Yes, looking backwards. But it's quite clear that none of the Members who were wounded in the '54 shooting would have been spared had the seats been bulletproofed, because of the angles of the shot. They were all hit from above, and the seats would have offered no protection whatsoever. And then they put in the two-and-a-half-ton steel doors in the cloakrooms, which were like bank vault doors. But the way they were mounted is they opened in, and they were held by a common household door latch. If there was a blast in the hallway, that door would have been flung wide open, grievously wounding anyone who was standing near it because it did not have a heavy-duty locking mechanism to hold it in place—and it opened in rather than out. If it opened out, the blast would have held it against the heavy-duty frame. But, of course, to open it out, then it would be opening out over three descending steps, which would be kind of inconvenient if someone came flying out while someone was coming up the steps and would have been knocked down. Trying to open a door at the top of a staircase that comes towards you is not easy. There is no easy solution, but then again, I wasn't asked. The door simply arrived one day and was installed. I had a tendency not to get into things that I didn't clearly understand, but that seemed obviously to be no real solution.

JOHNSON: Were there other minor security measures like the door that you just spoke of that you recall?

ANDERSON: Not very much. Not very much. More plainclothes officers added to the building—one or two seated in every occupied section of the House Gallery to be close to anyone that might be a potential threat. But it was—anyone

who had any smarts could figure out who the cops were in the galleries. It wasn't like they were dressed like tourists.

JOHNSON: This is a good point for us to stop, unless you had anything else you wanted to add.

ANDERSON: No, no, I'm getting a little dry. As always, very enjoyable.

JOHNSON: Great. So, until next time . . .

— DONNALD K. ANDERSON —

INTERVIEW FIVE

JOHNSON: This is Kathleen Johnson, interviewing Donald Anderson, former Clerk of the U.S. House of Representatives. The interview is taking place in the Legislative Resource Center, Cannon House Office Building. This is the fifth interview with Mr. Anderson, and the date is June 21, 2006.

Shortly after its organization, the members of the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC) boycotted President Nixon's State of the Union Address in 1971 in response to the President's refusal to meet with the new group. What are your recollections of the CBC during their early years?

ANDERSON: Like any new group, the CBC was a slow starter. They had an annual gathering, which was sort of their fundraiser for their various outreach activities, which was basically Hill-centered with a banquet in one of the larger committee rooms. And I was always very flattered, because I was always invited to their events. As a non-hyphenated white American, I have always felt kind of cheated because I have always thought ethnics have more fun than we do. I've often said I can't imagine anything more boring than a room full of non-hyphenated white people.

And so I was always very keen to participate in their events, and very flattered that they would invite me. That was a time when caucuses were starting in a lot of areas, which, amongst some of the Members, created some resentment. Where the attitude was, "We're all Americans, we're all Members of Congress. We ought not to be dividing ourselves into these subsets." At the same time, having recognized the fact that there was a legitimate need for

unity in activism amongst certain groups, particularly Americans of color, in promoting the aim of equality and fair treatment in society, and the equal distribution of the benefits of the society.

The civil rights movement had been underway for perhaps a decade and a half at that point, perhaps a bit longer. More black Members were being elected to the House of Representatives. They logically felt, through a commonality of purpose and a unity in forming a front, they could achieve more in articulating their views and in obtaining a desired outcome in the various legislative agendas that were being put forward. I didn't view it as any form of tribalism or separatism, but a legitimate manifestation of people who had long been left behind, trying to achieve legislatively, which, of course, is the most admirable of ways, the equal benefits for the group from which they emanated. It quickly evolved into a much larger force, as some of the other caucuses have either remained sort of on a flat-line, or even have waned.

The CBC has continued to grow, both in terms of the number of African Americans that have been elected to the House of Representatives as the years have passed, and, I think, the energy of the Members who have been part of the CBC. Some of the early sort of establishment black Members, who mainly came from the big city machines, where certain districts had historically been set aside where there was a black Member from Philadelphia, or a black Member from Chicago, or whatever, New York, tended to view with some disdain the emergence of the CBC. They didn't like the idea of being part of that racial identity group. They preferred to operate within the white culture of the House. They wanted to be viewed as assimilated, not different, as part of the power structure, not as any kind of

insurgency. But as those Members eventually left with the passage of the years, the attitude, I think, changed considerably.

JOHNSON: Another major caucus of the period was the Congresswoman's Caucus. Organized a few years after the CBC, this organization went through many changes with its mission and the direction.¹³ What were your impressions during its formative years, and in the late '70s, and into the 1980s?

ANDERSON: Well, there again when I started, like African-American Members, women Members were few in number. And virtually all of them, not all of them, but virtually all of them, were widows of Members who had sought election in their late husband's stead, after their deaths. My own godmother, Lindy Boggs, is one who comes to mind, even though in her case, it happened much later. When I started, easily three quarters of the perhaps 10 or 15 women in the House were widows of Members, some with long service, some who didn't serve particularly long. And every one of them was extraordinarily able and qualified for office in her own right. I never perceived anyone who was just riding on a famous dead husband's name—that they had legitimately established themselves with credibility, intellectually, and in the ability to deal with the office.

When I came, the women were rather marginalized. They were sort of treated with a kind of excessive deference by the gentlemen. Of course, that was the end of another era, and they almost viewed as sort of cute little things, "They're here; be nice to them." But they sort of operated on the margin of the internal power structure of the House. And, of course, as we moved into the late '60s and early '70s, that all changed with the rapid advance of the feminist movement, and the emergence of national women's organizations

that became very visible, and very vocal, and that had clear-cut legislative and social agendas that they were trying to establish.

There was a period when the Women's Caucus, in its early years, was sort of negatively stereotyped by some of the radical Members of the group: Bella [Savitzky] Abzug and Liz [Elizabeth] Holtzman, and some of the women who seemed to be “man-haters,” as opposed to just trying to put themselves appropriately on an equal footing with the men in American society. They created, I think, a real negative, as far as advancing the cause in the House.

There were some women like Lindy, who, while they participated actively in the Women's Congressional Caucus, at the same time preferred to keep a much lower profile and lower key, and seek their agenda more subtly with more deft bargaining and dealing with their male colleagues in a non-threatening way. I've always found that, unless you run up against an impenetrable wall, subtlety is probably a—and being non-threatening—is a better way to proceed. As my late grandmother used to say, which is certainly not a saying unique to her, “You can catch more flies with honey than with vinegar.” And certainly it was [the case] in the House. There wasn't anything that Lindy ever really wanted that she couldn't achieve, and she did it with sweetness and graciousness, and her absolutely overwhelming Southern charm. You just couldn't say no to Lindy, and yet she was never threatening.

JOHNSON:

Now, she was one of the co-founders of the Women's Caucus. Do you have any insight on her feelings of this organization, and the importance that she felt that it might have had?

ANDERSON:

Oh, yes. Even as a Southern woman, she saw the gross disparity and deficiency in the equal treatment of women in our society. At the same time, she was loath to give up her femininity. She did not want to be a man in a skirt, but maintain her feminine identity. I recall in 1976, when she was chairwoman of the Democratic National Convention that met in New York City, and I went up at her invitation to assist her in that role, and she was appalled that she was constantly being referred to as the chair of the convention. And her response, which was as testy as I've ever seen—which was not testy at all, it was with a smile, and sweet, but very much to the point: "I haven't struggled all my life for the equality of women to at this point be reduced to a piece of furniture. I am the chairwoman of the convention, if you please." And she made that point very clear that she was quite comfortable in her own skin, as a feminine woman, and did not wish to be viewed either as a sweet little thing, or a hellion. She felt that, with a modicum of decency and restraint, that women could achieve the goals they sought. But she was very, very much a part of the movement to advance the equality of women, no doubt about that. And nobody ever questioned it, but she didn't have to scream and yell or use coarse language, or get right in the faces of her male colleagues in order to achieve those ends.

JOHNSON:

You spoke a few minutes ago, when referring to the CBC about a generational difference between some of the older Members that felt more comfortable assimilating, versus the newer Members that were more assertive. And that certainly happened with the women as well. Some of the old guard women Members of the Democratic Party, like Leonor Sullivan, and Edith Green, and some of the newer Members of the era like Pat [Patricia Scott] Schroeder and Barbara Boxer. What do you think the shift in style of women, from generally not wanting to make an issue of gender, versus the

more assertive and unapologetic demand for change, how do you think that affected the House?

ANDERSON: Well, of course, Leonor Sullivan was the widow of a Member, John B. [Berchmans] Sullivan. I'm not sure how long her husband had served in the House. I don't think it was very long, but she was in the House for a very long time, and within the period of my service was one of the first women to chair a committee of the House. She was not the first woman committee chairman. I think there was Mrs. [Mary Teresa] Norton, who might have been from New Jersey, she was chairman of the House Administration Committee, I think, back in the '50s.¹⁴ But at the time of my early period in the House, Mrs. Sullivan chaired the Merchant Marine and Fisheries Committee, and was the only woman chair of a committee in that period. She was every inch the *grande dame*, perfectly charming, a woman of sophisticated mind and breeding, but she could be absolutely tough as nails. You just really wouldn't want to get into a confrontation with Mrs. Sullivan. She could give as good as she got in any situation.

The others came along quite a bit later. Pat Schroeder came to the House from Colorado, with her, I think, principally as a feminist leader. I think that was a very large part of her campaign. I've never concerned myself very much to campaigns, but I recall that she had that identity immediately on her arrival in the House.

Barbara Boxer on the other hand, had been a congressional staffer. She worked for John [Lowell] Burton, Phil Burton's brother, before he decided not to seek re-election. And she sought the seat which had Marin County and just a little tip of the city of San Francisco. It spanned the Golden Gate,

a rather peculiar district which Phil Burton had carved out uniquely for his brother, who then decided not to seek re-election. And it worked very well to Barbara's aim. Well, Barbara had a decidedly feminist agenda. I think her agenda was considerably broader than that, covering a wide range of social issues, from a liberal perspective. She didn't have the same kind of single issue identity that Pat did when she first came to the House. Barbara, like some of the women in the House, also had to deal with overcoming the "small woman's syndrome": Barbara's 4'11." And I come from a family of small women: my mother is 4'11," and I'm 6'3," and she's 4'11." My grandmother was 4'11," both of them. And there's a tendency for people not to take small women seriously, and so there is a need to be more assertive. And you can't increase your height; your high heels can only do so much to offset what nature has given you. It's not unlike the small man syndrome. Small men have a tendency to feel a certain inadequacy. I'm not sure that they are so apt to be stereotyped by people in society as caricatures unless they're abnormally small. Speaker Albert almost fell into that category at 5'4," he was quite a small man, and was painfully aware of his small stature, particularly when standing next to someone like his Whip, Hale Boggs, was over six feet tall, or Mr. O'Neill, who was over six feet tall. Actually, Mr. O'Neill was about six feet tall. The difference between the Speaker and his associates became even more glaring.

But small women have a tendency, just as a defensive measure, to be more assertive to offset the unfortunately caricature which society, particularly male society, has a tendency to place on them. And I have never been offended by that, I've always been able to understand it. It's difficult, particularly since I grew up in a family of small women. Of course, they were of a decidedly different age, where they were not, frankly, upset at being on the short end of

the deal every time benefits of society were passed out. They accepted that as their role in society.

My mother and my grandmother were almost offended by overly aggressive women. They thought it was terribly out of place: that each gender had a role that had been imprinted by custom and practice throughout history, and they were quite content with that. But, of course, they weren't in public life either. My grandmother never worked outside the house, my mother did. She's a professional woman and had a career of her own, and was always pleased that she got as far as she did in spite of the limiting factor of being a woman. It was something that I only became sensitive to and began to understand as a young adult. I did not really appreciate the limitations that my mother had to deal with, that were imposed by structures of society that were grossly unfair. And so I have always been much more acute to the—I like to think that I'm a fair person in all cases, but particularly to the fact that women have been held back unfairly for so long. In any case, did I get off on a tangent?

JOHNSON: No, that's fine.

ANDERSON: Would you like to refocus?

JOHNSON: Sure. Well, we were talking about Barbara Boxer and Pat Schroeder, and one, I've heard that these two women were involved in (and other Congresswomen as well) equal access to the House gym in 1985. And this certainly was a symbolic movement in many ways, in the fact that they were claiming equal access within the House institution itself. What do you remember about this particular movement and its influence?

ANDERSON:

Oh, that was a great *brouhaha*, though actually they weren't the first. Catherine [Dean] May, who was a Republican Congresswoman from Washington State, if my memory serves me well, tried to force the issue in 1965, right after the Rayburn Building opened, with the new, very large gymnasium in it. I'm not sure Mrs. May was all that much inclined towards the workout ethic, but she did feel there should be some accommodation for women Members, and, of course, that was the Member's club room, that was their locker room. And it had a swimming pool. The old gym didn't have a swimming pool. Of course, the Members liked to swim in there altogether. They never wore bathing suits, and, of course, having women using the facility would've meant that for propriety's sake, they would've had to wear swimsuits, which they just didn't want to do.

One day, Mrs. May just barged into the facility and went down to the lower level where the swimming pool is. That's where I keep my locker, even though I never use it. It was the only thing that I ever enjoyed over there, was the swimming pool. And apparently there were a number of her male colleagues swimming in the buff in the pool, and she stood at poolside as they clung to the side of the pool for modesty's sake, and demanded that hours be set aside for the ladies to use the gymnasium.

I don't recall at the time that any others were making a fuss about it, but she certainly was. At that point, they were willing to concede anything just to get her out of there. And so they did set aside hours which were absolutely bizarre, like in the middle of the night, when nobody would conceivably come by to use it. But she had at least made an initial point, a starting point.

Then by the time that Pat and Barbara arrived, of course, the whole health ethic and exercise were something else that were becoming commonplace in society. People were more health-conscious, exercise-conscious, trying to keep themselves in shape. And they legitimately wanted to use the gym, not only to have equal standing with the men, which, of course, was a foundational issue, but they wanted to use the facility for their own health and well-being, and they were eventually successful in having set aside the women Members' health suite, adjacent to the men's gym, and also access to the swimming pool. And at that point, signs were posted all around the swimming pool area, and in the men's locker rooms, that "Swimsuits must be worn," with "must" quoted and underlined. And even though I understand that, that was before I had gym privileges, that some of the Members obstinately refused to wear swimsuits, and said, "If Bella [Abzug] or anybody else gets off by seeing me naked, more power to them. But I'm not going to wear a swimsuit." But I was amused when I saw the signs up.

I used to go over to the gym every once in a while to seek people out that didn't want to be found. Even though I probably shouldn't have been in there, it was expected that when I ran the [Democratic] Cloakroom, I would go over once in a while to rouse somebody from one of the sleeping cubicles which everybody denied existed, but they were there. But they made their point, and the women's health facility was established, and access to the swimming pool most appropriately. But it was really based on two considerations: equality, and the need that everybody shares for good health through exercise.

JOHNSON: Staying with this topic, I had one other major time period and event to ask you about. Both of these women, and there were five others, were involved in

a memorable march to the Senate, in 1991, to attempt to delay the confirmation vote of Clarence Thomas for Supreme Court Justice. Do you remember the reaction of their Democratic colleagues to this unusual and dramatic event?

ANDERSON: I don't recall any negative reaction. I think that most of the Democrats were frankly approving of it, that shared their concern that Justice-designate Thomas had probably exhibited some behavior towards women that was ungentlemanly and unacceptable, and that while they weren't as keen on joining the protest, they certainly found legitimacy in what the women Members were trying to do, and of course, sitting Members of the House do have the privilege of the Senate Floor, just as sitting Senators have the privilege of the House Floor. So they were entirely within their rights to go over there. Whether to go over and demonstrate is another matter. Certainly demonstrating Senators on the House Floor would be unwelcome, but it's never been an issue as far as I have known. But, I recall a positive reaction, and I don't recall any criticism being leveled amongst the other Democratic Members of what they did.

Clarence Thomas' nomination was from the very beginning, highly controversial, where there was, I think, a legitimate question as to whether he was the best to-be-found successor to the extraordinary Thurgood Marshall, who he was replacing on the court, in the so-called black seat.

JOHNSON: The Anita Hill-Clarence Thomas dispute certainly, according to press accounts, heightened the tensions between the sexes in Congress. Do you think this was a fair assessment in the House? Did it really contribute to more bad feelings, bad blood between women Members and male Members?

ANDERSON:

No, and I don't recall that there ever was a bad feeling, *per se*. I mean, there was a bad feeling amongst some male Members for specific female Members, basically a more of a behavioral and in-your-face thing, as opposed to a class, as a class, of people. I don't recall any hostility to women Members in general. As I said, the few who were kind of in your face and threatening, had a tendency to have a very negative response from their male peers, but certainly no generalization could be made. I think the result of it, which probably was good in society, as well as within the institution, was that men became more thoughtful about their own expressions and mannerisms and behavior in the presence of and toward women. Realizing that what may have been acceptable in another age simply, or had been accepted—it may not have been acceptable, but it was accepted as the norm—simply wasn't able to continue with the kind of condescending remarks to women. Some of the ways that men had a tendency to address—like “darling” and “sweetie,” and that sort of thing—it just wasn't proper, it's not professional. It is diminishing if not outright degrading.

I remember in my own office, I used to cringe every time my administrative assistant, Ann Fletcher, who was an older Southern woman, referred to the women in the front office, her co-workers, as “the girls,” which was a term that would never pass my lips. I would never refer to a woman employee as a girl; perhaps a young woman, but certainly never a girl. I occasionally would say “Ann, I don't know. . . .” “Well, I'm Southern, and that's the way we talk. And I don't think that they mind.” And I'm sure they didn't. I mean, her age differential, I think, gave her the ability to do that, plus also being a woman herself. But I would never have permitted it for one second with a man in the office to refer to “the girls.” It's diminishing, it's just not proper.

But, I think the Clarence Thomas episode was healthy in that it made a lot of American men stop and think about their behavior, and that perhaps coarse talk amongst men may be just fine, but the demeanor of the conversation simply has to change when women are present. Or, expect the same thing in return, and if the shoe's on the other foot, sometimes it's not all that pleasant.

JOHNSON: Well, directly related to this period was what was dubbed “The Year of the Woman” in 1992, when 28 new women were elected to Congress. What was the reaction, because this is such a big change in the House to just this new influence of women, all at one time?

ANDERSON: I think perhaps a few of the old-timers felt a little bit threatened about it, those who grew up and were able to—grew up with, and were unable to—cast off the traditional dominant male role in the scheme of most things. But I think most people applauded it as being long overdue, and viewed it as the shape of things to come, where with each election, and with each reapportionment, we could expect more and more women to be elected. Frankly, I'm surprised that we don't have twice the number [of women Members] that we do today, simply because society is clearly ready for it. One of the problems with the dearth of women, I think, in both chambers, was the lack of women candidates. You can't get elected if you don't run. And just recalling the casual thought I gave to the matter was that there weren't a lot of women standing for Congress, which was responsible for the fact that they weren't being elected in sharply increasing numbers. Of course, nowadays, there are lots of women running for offices at every level, and getting elected.

When I came there were perhaps 10 or 12 women in the House, and just one in the Senate, Margaret Chase Smith. Now what are there, 50 or 60 women in the House, and a dozen or more—I think it's more actually—in the Senate. I have never been one of those people that has difficulty dealing with women in authority. Chauvinism has never been part of my persona: I came from a family of strong women, I was used to being around strong women, and being subordinate to women supervisors I never found threatening my male ego or persona. It was just perfectly fine with me, though I had co-workers that resented it terribly, and felt terribly threatened by it for reasons that I was never fully able to comprehend.

JOHNSON: In the previous interview, I asked you about your recollections of Congressman Phil Burton. What do you remember about his wife's tenure in the House, after she won the special election to fill her husband's seat?

ANDERSON: Phil and Sala were as different as night and day, and totally compatible. They were lovebirds deeply devoted to each other; it was a natural fit. While he was as crude and coarse and vulgar as anyone I have ever known in public life, she was totally opposite. She was every inch the *grande dame*, a very polished, sophisticated woman. She came from a very fine Polish family, very wealthy, very sophisticated, highly educated people. She was always quick to point out that her family came to America not as refugees; she was very defensive about that. She didn't want to be confused because she was Jewish—and came from a Jewish-Polish family—that they did not leave to escape the Holocaust. They came before that. And how they ever fell so deeply in love with each other, I will never know. But it was always a delight to watch them together, and how her presence changed him, because she would not permit him to use the really vile language which was his usual affair when she was

around. She would correct his speech, and he would stand reprimanded. He wouldn't use the vulgar obscenities and filthy language that he would use when she wasn't around.

She felt very uncomfortable as a widow in the House. She was of an age and a generation where she felt that a lot of things were not appropriate for a woman to do by herself, like go to social events. I live on Capitol Hill, and Sala and Phil did too, just a couple of blocks from my home. And I got to know her well through my long, close friendship with her late husband. And when she took her seat in the House after his death in 1983—she was elected later that year in a special election—very often, knowing that I was single and was her neighbor, in the evening, she would say “I'm supposed to go to this or that. Would you mind awfully going with me? I don't like to go alone, as a woman.” She was an older woman, and had been used to having a man go with her to things. And I loved her to death; she was a charming, wonderful person of keen mind, the kind of person that you hope to get to know in a lifetime. And so I was flattered that she would ask me, and I was always very pleased to go places with her, just to stand next to her while she made her rounds, and did whatever it was that being a Member of Congress entailed, and then see her home, and I always had a wonderful evening.

If Sala ever said, “Damn,” she would excuse herself. See, her speech was as pure as his was awful. And she was very effective. Not only was she smart, she was definitely his partner, when he was a Member of Congress, and she came very well equipped to the job when she succeeded Phil. Plus, she also had going for her the fact, the Burton name, which was very potent. And so she was drawn into the mainstream of the Democratic membership of the House very quickly, and very fondly. Even Members that loathed and despised her

husband, and felt very intimidated by him, were very warm and affectionate to her because she deserved it. She earned their respect. She was kind of Phil without the attitude. She had the intellectual moxie, but didn't need to be crushing the opposition all the time, or intimidating people into compliance with where she wanted to go.

In a way, she was very much like Lindy [Boggs], charming the birds out of the trees. I felt very, very sad when she went into her terminal illness. I was elected Clerk just a few days before her death in 1987. She had, even though her health was in sharp decline, had won re-election to the House, and she clearly was hardly able to function. And, of course, she had to take her oath of office, and dying in office makes a big difference for the estate, because Members' estates get a gratuity, which is a full-year's salary, tax-free. Phil and Sala had no children of their own. She had a daughter by a previous marriage. And the Burtons were financially secure. They were, I wouldn't say rich people, but they were rather well off. But she, nonetheless, wanted to be sure that her surviving daughter received the death benefit paid by the House. But she was concerned about coming to the House on Opening Day in a wheelchair because she could no longer walk. She didn't want to be wheeled into the House to take her oath of office. And she called me several times and ruminated over it, and I tried to reassure her that she would neither be the first or the last Member who needed assistance in coming to the House to be sworn in, and that her colleagues would rejoice to see her, everyone being very concerned about the state of her health. And she seemed resolved to make an appearance, and then I think that either she just totally wasn't up to it, or was reluctant to be seen as an invalid.

But in any case, as the custom when a Member cannot appear to take the oath because of incapacity, the House, by resolution, can designate another Member or a judge to go to the bedside of the ill Member to administer the oath. And as I recall, the House authorized, by resolution, the Speaker to appoint a Member to go administer the oath, and [William Donlan] Don Edwards of California, who as I recall, was the Dean of the delegation at the time (a Democrat) was designated by Speaker Wright to go to the bedside. She died in her home here on Capitol Hill, and he administered her oath. I never saw her again. We talked up to a day or two before her death, but I never saw her after late the previous year. And I was very sad by Sala's death. We had become very close friends. I enjoyed her company socially as I had her husband, but without the anxiety. Lovely, lovely lady.

JOHNSON: And Sala Burton backed now-Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi to replace her in the district.

ANDERSON: Yes. Nancy, as I recall, had been a member of her staff in the San Francisco office.¹⁵ As a matter of fact, a few weeks after Sala's death, I flew out to San Francisco to visit the vacant office in the Phil Burton Building, in San Francisco. Interesting that Kevin Shelley, the now disgraced and resigned secretary of state of California was on that staff as well—got into a world of trouble. His father had held that seat before Phil, and then left, I don't think real happily, to go back to San Francisco, to run for mayor. I think he was kind of pressed into running for mayor. The Democratic organization needed a strong candidate, and [John Francis] Jack Shelley was a very popular, longtime Member of the House, representing the City of San Francisco. Anyhow, that's a sidebar. And so I flew out to San Francisco to visit the vacant Burton office.

JOHNSON: This was one of your duties as Clerk?

ANDERSON: Yes, because under the rule [House Rules], when a seat becomes vacant due to death, resignation, or expulsion, the Clerk of the House administers the operation of the vacant office until the seat is filled. The members of the preceding Member's staff, if they wish to stay or transfer to the Clerk's payroll, operate the office only for the purpose of pursuing constituent services, casework, ongoing projects for the district. They cannot engage in any political activity except clearly at arm's length, during off-duty times: the same strictures that apply to anybody. And the Clerk is very vigilant to make sure that they don't. The phone is answered by the number of the district, say the 10th District of California, not Congressman Burton's office, because there is no Congressman Burton. He or she is dead or gone, which is a painful change for the staff. So the Clerk makes sure that services to the constituency are maintained until the seat is filled. And we always sent somebody to visit the office, to talk to the . . . Of course, here [in Washington, D.C.] you just walk across the street and visit with the staff. But with the district offices, that requires sometimes quite a bit of travel, particularly in a large district where there are several offices where somebody has to maybe go hundreds of miles to hit them all.

So I went out to San Francisco, mainly out of respect to the Burtons, but also because it's one of my favorite American cities, near which I grew up. And Nancy [Pelosi] and John Burton and I had lunch at the St. Francis Hotel. She was then the leading candidate to succeed Sala. I guess it could've been viewed as somewhat of an impropriety that I had lunch with the candidate. However, we did not discuss political matters. I had known Nancy, though not very well, through her family connection to the House, with her father

having been a Member. Though he was gone by the time I started, the late [Thomas] Tom D'Alesandro, Jr. And, of course, John was a very dear friend of mine who was still a—I think he was still a sitting Member at the time. No, no, Barbara [Boxer] was already in the House. John had left the House [at the end of the 97th Congress], but he thought it would be nice if the three of us had lunch. And so we did, we had a lovely long lunch at the English Grill in the St. Francis Hotel. And, unsurprisingly, she won the seat by a huge margin. But she was very, very close to the Burtons.

JOHNSON: As an employee of the majority throughout your career, I've asked you about Democratic Members for the most part, but I also wanted to get your opinion on some of the Minority Leaders of the era in which you served.

ANDERSON: Well, I knew a lot of Republicans very well over the years. I was always very bipartisan in my outlook. I never viewed the center aisle as a fence.

JOHNSON: Right. So, specifically: Jerry Ford, John Rhodes, and Bob Michel, what are your impressions of these three Members, and the influence that they had on the majority in the House.

ANDERSON: Knew all three of them very well, and numbered them as close, treasured friends. Former President Ford still occasionally calls me at home. And it's always a great thrill to answer the phone and hear someone say, "This is Jerry Ford." Not a whole lot of people get personal phone calls from a President, even a long retired one. And so I'm always thrilled to hear from him. I got to know the Republican leadership because very often in the nearly 20 years that I spent in the Democratic Cloakroom, I would run back and forth across the aisle to carry messages from our side to theirs, to see if, to inform them of

things that we wanted to do by unanimous consent, or perhaps bring up, or a change in the program, and to find out if there was going to be any objection, or would this be an issue and then report back to our leadership. Just so there were no surprises. Nobody likes to be surprised unless they've won the sweepstakes. But other than that, people just don't like to be surprised. And that's how I got to know the members of the Republican leadership.

I always enjoyed Mr. Ford, who, as I recall, only once came into the Democratic Cloakroom, which I found rather surprising. When I was making a few changes in the cloakroom to suit what I thought were the more modern needs of Member services, and the Architect of the Capitol decided he wanted to make some changes in the Republican Cloakroom, which did not go down well with Ron Lasch, who was then the manager, also my Page classmate of years before. But the Architect seemed determined to make some changes, and Ron had told Mr. Ford, the Minority Leader, that he did not want these changes, and the Architect seemed determined to make them. And Mr. Ford said, "Well, is there a difference between the two cloakrooms?" Apparently, he had never been in the Democratic Cloakroom. And so one afternoon, with the House in session, I was sitting at my little desk just off the floor and Ron came in with Mr. Ford in tow, who kind of hesitantly stuck his head in the door, and kind of looked around as though he were walking into no-man's land. And I said, "Mr. Leader, please come in." And he said, "Well, I've never been in here," and I was just stunned, as long as he'd been a Member in the House. And he never struck me as a blind partisan who would sooner open his veins than set foot in the Democratic Cloakroom. And so he came in and he looked around, and noticed that the arrangements of the phone booths were somewhat different, and he said,

“Well, they are different.” And Ron said, “Yes, and I’m quite comfortable with the way our arrangement is made,” because the Architect wanted to rearrange the phone booths in the Republican Cloakroom to match the arrangement that we had in the Democratic Cloakroom, which to him made better sense. Of course, it’s the people that have to use the space who should be the final judge of the arrangement, and that’s the way it remained. The change was not affected in the Republican Cloakroom.

But I always found Mr. Ford to be a perfect gentleman of a keen mind: very focused on the issues, well respected by Members on both sides, as tough as he needed to be in debate, but never abrasive, never caustic, never sarcastic. I thought he always had a firm grasp on the situation when he took the floor in defense of the Minority. The senior Members on our side were enormously fond of him, as they were of his immediate successors, John Rhodes and then Bob Michel. Probably less so [Charles Abraham] Charlie Halleck, who preceded Gerry Ford. He was the Leader when I first started in the House, though he enjoyed a fairly large modicum of respect and affection on the Democratic side. Of course, partisanship didn’t have the edginess that it does today. It really was a place where, as Mr. O’Neill loved to say, “We can disagree without being disagreeable.” And Members did not personalize their differences or disputes, which is why later, when Vice President [Spiro Theodore] Agnew resigned, and for the first time the 25th Amendment to the Constitution was invoked to replace the Vice President, and Richard Nixon was looking for something to calm troubled waters which were brewing for him as well at the time, he nominated Gerald Ford, who he knew would sail through confirmation in both Houses [in 1973].

And as I recall, there was either no opposition, or virtually none to Mr. Ford's confirmation as the first appointed Vice President of the United States. Certainly in the House of Representatives where he was viewed as one of our own, everybody knew him, had a great fondness for him, and felt that he was eminently qualified to assume the duties, particularly since there was beginning to be the kernel of thought that this man could be President. And he would be someone that would be comfortable to live with, and certainly agreeable to work with. So he went sailing through the process and took his oath on the floor of the House, in the presence of the House, when he was confirmed with President Nixon in attendance looking on, which I thought was quite a wonderful thing for him to leave the House by taking his oath as Vice President there on the rostrum.

In any case, John Rhodes succeeded him. John Rhodes was a much more sociable person, not that there was anything un-warm or unfriendly about Mr. Ford, but he was not known to be out on the dinner circuit, having dinner most nights with his colleagues. Mr. Ford went home to his wife Betty every night. He was not much seen in downtown restaurants, where John Rhodes, who enjoyed having a refreshing cocktail, did that as gladly with his Democratic colleagues as with his Republican colleagues.

He and Mr. O'Neill, who, of course, by that time was in his ascendancy, were the very closest of friends; they were golfing buddies. A lot of relationships were cemented on the golf course in those days. Both of them had a passion for the game, and their wives were also friends. John Rhodes of course, was also the Republican Leader when Mr. O'Neill assumed the chair.

I will never forget, as is the custom for the defeated candidate for Speaker who becomes the Minority Leader, of course, to make brief remarks, introducing the Speaker-elect to the House, with both of them standing in front of the chair, at the eminence of the rostrum. And, of course, Mr. O'Neill's first term in the House was as a member of the minority. The Democrats were in the minority when Mr. O'Neill was first elected to the House of Representatives, and [Joseph William] Joe Martin, [Jr.], was then the Speaker. And Mr. O'Neill said, after Mr. Rhodes' very generous introduction said, "John, I know you've had your eye on the Speaker's chair for quite a few years, and believe me, that's all you're going to get on it." {laughter} And, of course, it created a lot of laughter in the House, and nobody enjoyed the reference more than Mr. Rhodes himself. And, of course, you could see the warmth and affection that bonded the two of them, standing there together, that it was very clear that if the relationship had been different, each would have been just as glad to see the other take the chair, and would've been very comfortable with the other being the Speaker of the House, as they were with the then-arrangement.

And that friendship certainly continued to Bob Michel, who also enjoyed going out to dinner with his buds on both sides of the aisle, and also enjoyed a refreshing cocktail after work. Bob Michel had a passion for golf. He and Mr. O'Neill were both members of Burning Tree, which is a very small and elite club as you know, which is still all-male, out in Montgomery County [Maryland], just at the district line. And they were the closest of friends. And the interesting thing is, with both Mr. Rhodes and Mr. Michel, their wives were also close. Mrs. O'Neill and Mrs. Rhodes and Mrs. Michel were as close to each other as congressional spouses as their husbands were as colleagues. So it was like family friends, and they took that very seriously. And they did a

lot of things together as couples, which was very important to the working relationship that they had between them. And they were always able to work out compromises and deals, so that majoritarian rule, of course, would prevail, as it is supposed to do in the House, and yet at the same time, the Republicans would be vindicated in being able to get some of the things that were important to them. Not necessarily even half a loaf, but maybe a quarter or a third of the loaf, but never went away empty; that there was always something that could be worked out to sweeten the package, to make it palatable to the minority.

And in those wonderful years, there was this delightful feeling and bond between the leadership on both sides. Both Mr. O'Neill and his counterparts on the Republican side did take some heat from their respective caucuses, as being perceived as not as doctrinaire and inflexible as they ought to be. That Mr. O'Neill was criticized by some of the Democrats, particularly younger ones, for giving the Republicans anything at all: "Grab it all, that's why we're in the majority." Or some of the younger Republican Members feeling that John Rhodes and Bob Michel were too anxious to compromise with the Democrats, were too yielding to Mr. O'Neill, and should've been throwing darts all day long, and in your face, and very confrontational, in which case they would've gotten nothing. And that just wasn't the way they chose to operate. It was very clear, I think, to all, when the change of control came after the '94 election, even if Mr. Michel had sought re-election to the House, he would not have been Speaker, because the younger, very doctrinaire conservative Republicans felt that he had been too yielding to the Democrats, and they wanted someone who was winner-take-all. And so, it wasn't the irony of after having served in the House for some 30-some years, that as Mr. Michel leaves, his party becomes the majority, and he could've

been Speaker, something he would've liked very much to have been. But he couldn't have been Speaker, it would not have happened. It was nice to muse about those sorts of things, and he would not be the one to say so, but he would certainly concede in his own mind it wasn't to be.

JOHNSON: I know I've asked you this before in passing, but since we're on the topic, what do you think were some of the factors that led to the demise of this era of good feelings between the two parties?

ANDERSON: Any number of things. Certainly high on the list would be television in the House [which began in 1979]. They'd created this electronic forum for contentious debate and for posturing before the public. In an era of mass communication, where television had become a tremendous influence in politics—in another age, people still got a lot of their information from newspapers or from campaign ads, from time to time. Election cycles were not endless like they are today. There was a period of maybe a few months every other year when we got into an election cycle, and the rest of the time there wasn't much happening. But then it became a year-round, constant occupation of campaigning, fundraising, getting the message out. Campaign consultants really did a lot less in molding candidates in another era, and now, of course, they completely remade the people that they were selling and packaging. That did not go down well with the older crowd. In many cases, they didn't even have campaign managers. They kind of ran their own show, as they always had.

It was sort of like Mr. O'Neill, what you see is what you get. But he had been around long enough, and was prominent enough, so that he didn't really have to repackage himself, to market himself to his constituents. Everybody

grew up with him, they knew him; he was the guy next door, a household name. But other Members started going more and more to media consultants. He hated that, he just hated it. He felt it was actually verging on the dishonest to be packaged by media people, that there should be more spontaneity and candor in the campaign process.

Television certainly was very high on the list in creating the bitter, partisan divide in the House. And also, it had gotten to the point where there weren't any Republican Members who had ever been in the majority. Once, let's see, I think John Rhodes had served briefly in the majority, but once he was gone, there were only maybe a couple of other Republicans who had been around long enough to have ever felt the rush of being in the majority, and they were getting kind of tired of the perpetual minority status, and wanted to resort to drastic means of whatever nature to change that.

They were also acute to the fact, which is a reality, and people wiser than I in these matters will confirm, that the Democrats were becoming very fat and lazy and complacent in thinking that they were a permanent majority, and would be to the end of time. I never thought so. Everything changes, everything has an end. And I was very, very worried about the fact that even though with every election our majority, which was huge when I started, was becoming slimmer and slimmer, with the loss of the "solid" South. Also with the doctrinaire, ultra-liberals on our side being unwilling to work with the conservative Democrats in forming a unified front in the Democratic Caucus, and driving more and more of them to voting almost consistently with the Republicans. I mean, it worked fine, we held a mathematical majority. It wasn't always a working majority, but we held a mathematical majority, which was important enough. But sometimes we couldn't proceed

with our legislative agenda, predictably because of the Democrats who would vote with the minority. And we would lose a lot of major issues because of that.

On the other hand, when you are in the majority, you control the program. If you can't win, you just don't call something up for consideration. You don't schedule something to come up to lose; you schedule something to come up to win. That was one of the great benefits of being in the majority. But the Republicans, on the other hand, felt an urgency to have a slash-and-burn minority, and eventually take the House, and they did. I saw Mr. Gingrich from the beginning as a threat to the future of the Democratic majority because of his persistence and his perseverance, his glibness, his ability to articulate a message and his willingness to stay late at night, to use television to do it. I told many of our Members, "This fellow needs watching, and we shouldn't have the floor deserted, we should have someone over here to rebut." "Nobody pays any attention to him, he's a rabble-rouser. People like that, nobody pays any attention to." I didn't see it that way. And it was too late by the time our leadership started sending Members over at night to rebut. That train had long left the station, and if not in 1994, certainly in 1996 we would have lost the House. I was wounded by it, but it didn't come as a particular surprise to me. I just saw this happening over a period of time, and I was kind of preparing my own mind for how it would affect me personally. Did I finish with that question?

JOHNSON: Definitely, and this is a perfect pausing moment, if that's all right.

ANDERSON: All right, fine.

END OF PART ONE ~ BEGINNING OF PART TWO

JOHNSON: In an earlier interview, you briefly discussed the former Clerk of the House, Ben Guthrie. Can you set the stage for how you came to replace Mr. Guthrie as Clerk?

ANDERSON: Sure. I mentioned I think in an earlier interview that my fantasy as a 17-year-old Page boy was to be the Clerk of the House when I met old Mr. Roberts, who had held the office for many years, and would for a few more. And since my interest in the institution has been primarily focused on process and the mechanics—history—I thought the Clerkship had to be just the best job in the world for someone of my interests, and indeed it was. As the years progressed, and it became very clear that I was heading for a career in the House, to the extent that anyone who lives from one election to the next can plan a career, my fantasy just continued to grow, that I really wanted to be the Clerk of the House.

And I made no secret about that being where I'd like to land someday, and the Members knew that. But that pyramid gets awfully steep, and I never really expected it to happen. Only one person can do it at a time, and the people who did it tended to be around for a while, and I just kind of expected that I would grow old and waiting, and it probably would never happen. You don't really run for one of those offices. There was a time in a long-ago age when they were kind of competitive, but that stopped even well before I arrived. It's an anointing; the Speaker has to be on board. And, of course, in modern times, which certainly included the point at which I became Clerk of the House, while the Officers are elected in a constitutional sense, it's really an anointing, because the Speaker controls the nominating

process. And you have to be nominated by the Speaker, it's virtually impossible to roll the Speaker, and would be certainly imprudent to try, if you had any thoughts of career building in mind. It's one of those things where you'd better win if you're going to try that, otherwise you're out for sure.

Members that were close to me, kept talking, "You know, you ought to be Clerk someday. We'd love to see that happen to you." But that depends on who the occupant of the chair is, and who the occupant of the Clerkship is at the time. My view is just to keep doing what I'm doing to the best of my ability and hope that patience and diligence are rewarded eventually. But beyond that, there was really nothing I could do to further that ambition. There was just a lot of chance involved in it. And even though it could've been the near-unanimous view of all the Democratic Members that I ought to be the Clerk of the House, there's only one person's mind who counts, and that's the Speaker's. If the Speaker is of a differing viewpoint, it's simply not going to happen.

So anyhow, as time passed, we had Ralph Roberts—just to give you a thumbnail sketch of the Clerks before I came along who had been Clerk for a very long time. He'd also been Doorkeeper of the House before that. Ralph had grown old in the job, and basically never got to know the newer Members as they came to the House. His list of close friends and allies became shorter and shorter with the passing of time, as they retired or died, or got defeated, and he had lost his political base. Times were changing in the House. Pat Jennings, who was a Democratic Representative from Virginia, was defeated in 1966. Though a Southerner, he had been allied with Phil Burton and the Democratic Study Group, which was a liberal subset of

House Democrats. There was a growing feeling that Ralph Roberts had become kind of ossified in the job, was not accommodating to the needs and wishes of the newer Members, and so when Pat Jennings was defeated, he needed a job with a big salary and high profile in a hurry. And the Democratic Study Group, principally Phil Burton, Frank Thompson and those people, put together overnight a campaign to unseat Ralph Roberts, who did not see any threat. It had been a long time since a former Member had served as Clerk of the House, in point of fact. Twelve of the 33 had been former Members of Congress, Pat Jennings being the most recent. Ralph went off to his usual interim vacation in Florida, and even calls from Speaker John W. McCormack wouldn't bring him back to cover his bases because he just didn't see it as a threat. He was fairly substantially defeated in the Democratic Caucus and Pat became Clerk of the House.

Pat Jennings moved very effectively and aggressively to modernize the rather antique methods of the Clerk's Office, applying new technology—and technology was just beginning to surface in those days. Computers were being used a little bit, they weren't a big thing, but obviously this was the way of the future. Pat Jennings introduced those. He bucked the patronage system and got rid of a lot of people in his organization that were, for the most part, not doing much but drawing paychecks, and not contributing to the overall effectiveness of the organization. Created a lot of unhappiness among many senior Members whose favorites were dismissed out of hand because the patronage system was still king in those days, and he was overturning it, over the objections of his former colleagues, and it created a situation where they said, "This was a bad mistake, you can't have a former Member of the club as one of your servants" because a former Member

thinks like a Member. And they're not any more. You've got to have Officers who are the creatures of the House, not the creators.

And so, I think that probably sealed once and forever, not having former Members serve in positions like that. And when you're out, you're out. Move on and do something else, but don't hang around; he eventually left and became a lobbyist. Speaker Albert, using his authority, filled the vacancy by appointing, to the un-expired term, Edmund [Ted] L. Henshaw, Jr. Ted Henshaw, longtime party loyalist and servant, had been the director of the Democratic Steering and Policy Committee, Democratic Campaign Committee, and it was a reward for long service in support of the party in the House as an employee. Ted was very effective, very well liked, but within a couple of years, he suffered a very severe stroke that incapacitated him, and for the next roughly two years, he was seldom seen. For all intents and purposes, he was non-functional and the subordinates in his office had moved in to take over the day-to-day operations, as Ted was simply not able to deal with them. Speaker O'Neill was reluctant to do anything about it, because like everybody else, he had a great personal affection for Ted, and was loath to force him to retire, even though his health and incapacity really demanded that he resign the Clerkship. And eventually that did happen.

[A 1-minute, 19-second segment of this interview has been redacted.]

In any case, the issue finally was forced when the press started getting curious as to where is the Clerk of the House? Nobody has seen him, and the last time he was elected he was wheeled onto the House Floor, and two people got him up to his feet, one of whom held his hand up so he could take his oath, promptly sat in the wheelchair, and was wheeled off the floor not to be

seen again. Because it is such an important office, needless to say, after a while, the press was getting curious. What is going on in the Clerk's Office? He's not around, documents seemed to be signed by his subordinates, with his name by whomever, which the Clerk can do under the rule, but it's supposed to be done on the occasional, not an ongoing basis. And eventually Mr. O'Neill was forced to insist that he retire. That it was going to become an issue and an embarrassment and his affection towards Mr. Henshaw, notwithstanding, it had to happen. And so Mr. O'Neill appointed Ben Guthrie, who had been the Sergeant at Arms, to that office.

Ben, for many years, worked in the Office of the Clerk. After his service in the military during World War II, he went back to work at the Government Printing Office [GPO]. He was a printer by trade, and then was assigned to the Clerk's Office as the House printing clerk, to coordinate printing for the institution, which was handled through the Office of the Clerk: paid by GPO, but worked physically in the Clerk's Office. Mr. Roberts kind of gave him institutional responsibilities well beyond his duties for overseeing printing services to the House and he became part of the Clerk's organization, though still being paid by the Government Printing Office. Pat Jennings, when he assumed the Clerkship, appreciated Ben's remarkable talents within the Clerk's Office, but said basically, "If you're going to stay in the Clerk's Office, get off the GPO payroll and become part of the Clerk's payroll. You're not going to have the hybrid situation." So Ben transferred and became an assistant to the Clerk. Basically, he was in charge of the legislative group of services. And then became Sergeant at Arms when Ken Harding retired. And then was brought back several years later to be Clerk by Mr. O'Neill, and Jack Russ became the Sergeant at Arms of the House.

Ben, as I understood the situation, and just knowing Ben personally as I have for so long, was a master mechanic. He had tremendous follow-through, could do anything that you set him to do. A conceptualizer, he was not. Also, his co-workers in the Clerk's Office, when he was an employee, had a bunch of agendas that they pursued separately while the Clerk was incapacitated. There was nobody to take the helm, and so everybody ran in different directions, doing what they wanted to do, often not in the interests of the institution, but in pursuing whatever it was that they were interested in. It was beneficial to them. And Ben was always sort of out of that cabal and was not much appreciated by his co-workers in joining in the despoliation of the Clerk's Office. So when he came back as Clerk, it was not a welcome thing for the people who had once been equals and now were his subordinates. And instead of firmly taking control and saying, "What has been has been. I am now the Clerk of the House, I will make the decisions, and if there is anybody here who cannot accommodate themselves to directions which I give, there's the door, go now." He did not provide a strong direction with the Clerk's Office, which was, at least in those days, through my Clerkship—a huge organization, with more than 600 employees, 24 divisions, in 11 different buildings.

It even got bigger once I became Clerk. We kept accumulating new responsibilities: things like the child care center. When they couldn't figure out what to do with them, they just automatically gave them to the Clerk, even though there was no natural relationship to our organization. And because things hadn't changed, a lot of people, particularly in the workforce, were not being treated fairly. Favorites were being advanced unfairly over others who had merited promotion. Raises were not being handed out on an

equitable basis. It was not a meritocracy. Members were not being well served.

The thing that kind of was the straw that broke the camel's back, was the Gramm-Rudman Deficit Reduction Act [also known as the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act], to trim the federal budget and bring it into balance. And that happened in, I think 1985. And every operating, every appointing authority was obliged to make a certain reduction in payroll and expenditures. It was an across-the-board thing. They had to exempt the House Chaplain, because the only item in the Chaplain's line item in the budget was his salary, since the Chaplain has no staff, never did. And so they exempted Dr. [James D.] Ford, so his salary wouldn't be reduced. And other than that, the other Officers had to make certain cuts. Jim Molloy, the Doorkeeper of the House refused to. He said, "I can't, everyone I have is vital to the organization," basically dumped it back on the Members. "If you think my staff needs to be cut, you cut it. You want to reduce the folding room, where your mass mailings are distributed, and maybe your newsletters won't get out on time, if at all," and of course, he got away with it because he stonewalled.

The Clerk's Office, on the other hand, decided this is a good time to purge the enemy's list, people we don't like in the organization. And so very selectively, and very transparently, the people in the [Clerk's] front office came up with a list of people they didn't like, and reduced their payroll accordingly. It was very transparent, and it also was not done very cleverly, because some of the big movers and shakers in the House had some of their people terminated. That caused them grievous offense and great personal injury, and so they decided there had to be a change and that's when my

candidacy gained currency. There was a real hostility to the incumbent. Not because he was an unpleasant man, everyone agreed that he was a decent, pleasant fellow, but he was not assertive and was not in control. And like the sign on President [Harry S.] Truman's desk, "The Buck Stops Here." When your name's on the top of the letterhead, that's where people go to complain and find fault. They don't go looking down the food chain, they go to the person at the top. So Ben, unfortunately, was victimized by forces within his office that he refused to control, or was unable to control, one way or the other. The hit list, the enemy's list of the two dozen or so people that were fired, was the last straw.

The Members started talking amongst themselves, and said, "We need a new Clerk, this guy is not working for our interests, we don't even know who he is. We didn't elect him, Tip [O'Neill] appointed him." He was not a socializer, they didn't know him socially, and very few people knew him period. He was not a guy to sit on the House Floor and visit and make the rounds so that everyone was comfortable and knew who the Clerk was. And so they started pushing my candidacy, and a dozen or so of the movers and shakers went to Jim Wright, who was then the Majority Leader, and the clear heir apparent to the Speakership, Mr. O'Neill having announced his retirement. And there was no obstacle to Mr. Wright assuming the Speakership, which he did predictably without a challenge. Of course, it was Mr. Wright's call, and they said, "Jim, Ben's got to go, or whoever is the Clerk." Some of them couldn't even come up with his name. "He's got to go, we need a new Clerk, and we've got the guy, Donn Anderson, who runs our cloakroom. He's been here for a long time, he's been faithful and discrete and dependable, and we want him."

Mr. Wright, whose decision it was, signed on without the least hesitation, and so at that point, it was done. Then the problem was for Mr. Wright to explain to Ben that it was time for him to retire. Of course, he did have 45 years of federal service and did have sufficient age. He had absolutely maxed out on his benefit, it was not an injury to him, but he did not want to go and he was resistant. Speaker Wright, for his even—in spite of his reputation for being edgy and mercurial, at the same time hated to fire people, he just couldn't do it. He couldn't figure out a gentle way to persuade Ben to do the right thing and announce his retirement. And he came up with all sorts of scenarios to try to make his decision attractive and palatable, but he finally had to take the bull by the horns and say, "Look, you're not going to be nominated. Announce your retirement, have a party, get speeches made on the House Floor, but you got to go." Finally that's how it happened. And so Mr. Wright agreed with the Members that I should be the next Clerk of the House, and I had no opposition. It was as smooth as it could possibly be, but Mr. Wright was the key to it.

Now, I knew Mr. Wright rather well over the years. But then again, Mr. Wright was not a socializer, he went home at night. He was not out to dinner with the guys; he and Betty had dinner together almost every night at home. He's a homebody. He was a hard guy to get close to. He didn't have a lot of intimate friends, and while I certainly felt a high comfort level and a cordiality, I couldn't say that I was one of his buds. But he was content to rely on the Members who came to him in sufficient numbers, and particularly representing the various parts of the caucus that they did, that I would be a good candidate to be Clerk of that House, and that he could be comfortable, that I would be a good steward of the office during his Speakership, and I'd like to think that I was. And that's how it came to be.

But it was a case in point of someone who was a good, competent public servant, a decent human being, but kind of was promoted out of his depth. There are some people who are wonderful at follow through, they're great mechanics, but are not decision makers—cannot control circumstances, they're just not assertive. The history texts are full of examples of those who lead and those who don't. There are many people who are to be applauded for being effective followers, and others because they're effective leaders.

And Mr. Wright's admonishment to me, when he called me to his office a couple months before the end of the old House, to tell me that it was his decision that I would be Clerk of the House, when he assumed the chair the following year, and we discussed the future. In very private and warm terms, and I asked him if he had specific instructions for what he wanted me to do as the next Clerk of the House, and he smiled a wry smile, and said, "Donn, I expect you to clean that place up." That was all he told me. That was all I needed to hear because I knew that I had his support to do what was necessary to reshape the office into a cohesive organization, to return fair play to the workplace, and to take whatever remedial steps I saw as appropriate to restore confidence and morale in the organization. That was my main and my first objective, and basically continued through the eight years that I held the office, was to try to instill a high morale, and a sense of fair play in the organization.

If you have a happy, well-motivated workforce, everything else falls into place. If everyone's happy in their task, glad to come to the workplace, where it's a place where they know that they will be validated for their humanity, and for their achievements, reproved if they deserve it, but not unnecessarily. That the people in the front office are mindful of their interests, and think of

them as individual human beings, worthy of respect and you don't have to worry about it. I've never taken a course in personnel management, but I don't think—I've never read a pamphlet on the subject, but just using common sense, having worked my way up for many years, and seeing examples of both good and bad bosses, I think I knew what I wanted to do very clearly when I assumed the office.

The question that was often asked me, what is the most difficult or challenging thing about being Clerk of the House? And the answer that people would expect most readily is managing a billion dollar institutional budget for the House of Representatives, big capital programs, dealing with 435 Members of Congress who at least stereotypically, though not truly, are viewed outside the institution as being a raging egos out of control, you know, how could you possibly manage? Well, actually the Members of Congress are a rather simple part of the equation, contrary to their personification or vilification in public, most of them are very intelligent, thoughtful men and women who understand something, like everybody else, if patiently and thoughtfully explained. They're not unreasonable. I could number on the fingers of probably less than both my hands the times that I have found Members of Congress to be totally outrageous and unreasonable. They're actually rather predictable.

But I've always considered the biggest challenge is motivating the workforce, making sure that you have people that are happy, that have confidence in you and in each other. That enjoy serenity and validation in the workplace, that are glad each day to come to their task, that feel that the boss is on their side, that understands what it's like to be on the other side of the big desk, and of course, I was on the other side of the big desk for many years before my

position changed. And I think that uniquely equipped me for the job that I did. But that's basically how I became Clerk. I was well positioned, as manager of the cloakroom, I developed a one-on-one constituency with the Members of the Democratic Caucus; I knew each one of them personally and well. They had a chance to observe me in action every day, just as I observed them, and when the time came for a change, fortunately while I had never been aggressive about wanting to be Clerk, I made no secret about the fact that it would certainly be a glad way to conclude however long my career might be. Those offices were the ultimate rewards for people who had been loyal and faithful and discrete for many years that had earned that kind of recognition. Of course, there aren't very many of them, they can't go to many people. And the change doesn't happen that often, I was just lucky that the timing worked out well for me.

JOHNSON: Backtracking to your first day upon your election, as you like to say, once you were "anointed" Clerk of the House, what were your immediate responsibilities?

ANDERSON: Well, there's a big difference between contemplating something, and then being visited with the reality of it. Of course, my goal for 27 years was to be the Clerk of the House, and I thought in anticipation of that. I knew a great deal about it, I had certainly studied the office, and observed it as best I could. I worked for the Clerk for a number of years, and thought that I had a pretty comprehensive understanding of it. Now, I had supervised staff of maybe a dozen when I worked in the cloakroom, six Pages, two assistant managers, couple of snack bar attendants, and the Member's restroom attendant, hardly a huge staff, and certainly not very complex in terms of

mission. And I had been someone else's subordinate; I had worked for an Officer of the House, with the Doorkeeper.

Then on that first day after standing in the well of the House, about two o'clock in the afternoon, on Opening Day and taking my oath with my now-brother Officers, from Speaker Wright, with knees that were turning to rubber, and the oath seemed like it took a half an hour, when it probably isn't more than 15 or 20 seconds. In fact, my hand was shaking so much that my mother sitting up in the gallery could see my hand shaking. And so after that, and receiving the congratulations of my brother Officers, and other who came up to me on the House Floor for an embrace and a handshake and a backslap, and shared that extraordinary moment, I went up to the gallery to fetch my mother and my cousin who had come with her from California, and I took them down to my new office, a magnificent room. There was nothing personal in it, except my boxes had been delivered, and were kind of standing there in the middle of the room, but no personal keepsakes or anything anywhere, just the beautiful room and the rather nice, antique furniture. I had lunch sent in from the restaurant because I kind of figured I ought to be there during my first hours on the job, and so my cousin and my mother and I sat around the big, mahogany conference table, and I had a bite to eat, and people kept coming in to have me sign things, and work had begun at once.

One of the first things I had to sign was the House Resolution One, basically certifying my own election. And in preparation for assuming office, I had already sent signature specimens to the treasury, since I was the dispensing officer of the House, I had to sign my name on a sheet of paper about three dozen times so that they would have original specimens of my signatures, in case anybody tried to forge it. They figured, I think, if you sign three dozen

times, there will be enough variations to the way you sign that they'll have them all.

It was all very exciting, and of course my new envelopes had already been pre-printed with my frank on them, my own signature. My secretary and my deputy kept bringing in stacks and stacks of all sorts of things for me to sign that were necessary to start a new House. And so while visiting with my family, and signing, and thinking when will I ever learn the job, if all I have to do is sign my name? But I got to thinking though, even though I had a plan, and in anticipation, had invited to join my staff the key people that I felt I would be most comfortable with, there is still that reality of walking in and saying, this is no longer contemplated, this is real. "What do I do now? Where do I go, what do I do next?"

Fortunately, I had plenty of people around me. Many of the people in the immediate office were holdovers. I let some go, but it was done very surgically. I don't like firing people either, and there were some that simply had to because I could never have trusted their loyalty, that had expressed themselves in such a way that they had compromised once and forever any relationship with me. It was kind of unamendable, and I had replaced them with people whose background and disposition and loyalty I trusted, and everybody hit the ground running. We did have a plan, and we knew what we needed to do right away, and we had our longer objectives. Basically, it was trying to bring justice back into the personnel structure of the office and it took several years to finally get that addressed. You can't just do it overnight. When there had been a lot of neglect, and of course, some of the people who had been promoted unfairly over others that should've been promoted, they're doing a fine job, you can't just fire them and move other

people up. That would be unjust in itself. You have to find a way to work those things out. Fortunately, the Clerk's organization in those days was so big, there was plenty of room within the organization to maneuver people to amend past wrongs and injustices. And in cases where someone in a particular operating unit had no hope for immediate promotion, you could move them to another operating unit and get them back on the promotion path, as long as they didn't have any tremendous objection to moving to a different unit, say Legislative Resource Center to the Finance Office, or from the Finance Office to Records and Registration, whatever.

And most people are interested in moving on with their lives, making a little more money, and being in a position where they can see advancement as a reward for good service. We're willing to accept some lateral movement in order to get that happening again. And Bill Long, with whom I'm having dinner tomorrow night, I brought in from the Finance Office, I had known him for years, but not very well, but he had a reputation for having tremendous insight into these things, a genius for people. And we needed that, so I brought him over from the Finance Office to be my personnel guy. And he had a clarity that was unbelievable, and somehow, even though he had worked in the Finance Office, knew where all the skeletons were everywhere else in the organization. We were able to do a lot of good in a hurry, and then as time passed, do the rest of it and everybody knew that it was coming.

So those that were unhappy and had been unhappy, that didn't get taken care of in the first cut, they knew that eventually it was going to happen. As opportunity presented itself, I would make those changes. And that was the joy of it, there's a certain rush that goes with having power and recognition,

the trappings were extraordinary, the salary was pretty good, having a car and driver and all those things is quite wonderful, but being able to do something worthwhile, to do good when you have the opportunity, to leave things better than you found them, that's what I really liked. And while the trappings and the prestige and the power were fine, I always reminded myself daily that public office is exactly that, it's transitory. It doesn't belong to you. You get it as a stewardship, in trust for a period, and then somebody else after you. And so I always reminded myself while the trappings were wonderful, someday I would have to know who I was without the trappings.

JOHNSON: You recalled a few moments ago that Speaker Wright's directive was to "clean house." But besides that, upon becoming Clerk, did you have any sort of roadmap, so to speak, from former Clerks on how to run the office, or advice that they might have passed on?

ANDERSON: No, actually very little of it was written down in any kind of SOP [standard operating procedure]. One of the things that I insisted on beginning was that every operating unit develop a formal SOP, detailing every aspect of their operations, whatever they were. No more of this, the person in charge keeping it in his or her head, so if that person drops dead, nobody knows what to do. I insisted on developing a detailed SOP. What is the mission, what are the various facets of that mission? With whom do you interact, how do you accomplish your various purposes, what are the rules and statutes that govern because it's an office that has a huge fiduciary responsibility.

I think we did a search on the computer of the U.S. Code to find the references to the Clerk of the House, and came up with over 1,000 references to the Clerk of the House in the United States Code, the *Statutes at Large* of

the United States.¹⁶ I mean, that's a lot of references to the Clerk. Many of them were of no particular consequence, but many others were terribly important. But I wanted to know about all those things. I mean, my learning curve was a very, very long one. And after eight years, I was still learning.

And of course, many of the things that the Clerk does are cyclical. They happen once every year, which would be budget, or once a month, which is disbursing, treasury reports, the issuing of paychecks, the reimbursing of Members' official expenses—that was, of course, when the Clerk still was the Finance Officer, which of course she's not now. Annual, of course, that would be budget. Every two years, the making up of the roll of the new House from the certificates from the secretaries of the various states that the Members elect, the calling to order, and organizing of the new House, office moves, closing Members' accounts who are leaving, setting up new accounts for those that are incoming, the orientation which had taken on a very large dimension as the years went by. So there was a major week of formal orientation in which the Clerk obviously had a very large role.

The presidential election, of course, didn't have much impact on us, other than to have a Joint Session of Congress to count the electoral vote, but that was a mere formality imposed by the Constitution, about as interesting as watching paint dry. And then, of course, once every 10 years, and it happened once during my eight years, the decennial census and reapportionment of the institution, where it becomes the duty of the Clerk, having received from the President, who has received from the Secretary of Commerce the census figures, to inform the governors of the states as to how many seats their states are entitled to in the reapportioned House. And then to be immediately sued by seven or eight governors whose states have lost

representation in the reapportionment, in the spirit of sue the messenger, or kill the messenger, because the Clerk has a purely ministerial function to inform the governors, which is done on very handsome certificates with the gold seal and the ribbon and the Clerk's signature. I immediately got sued when I sent those certificates. I think six governors sued me for having taken Representatives away from them, as if I had anything to say in the matter. My counsel said, "Don't worry, you don't need to pack your bag, you're not going away."

JOHNSON: You weren't the first Clerk that this happened to, of course.

ANDERSON: No, no. I was constantly being sued by lots of people. As the signatory certifying and fiduciary officer of the House, people were always suing me. I think my cousin Googled me once, and said, "Do you have any idea how many people are suing you?" I said, "No, do you?" "I think I counted over 100." I said, "Really, that's impressive." And of course, a lot of them are nuisance suits, or Freedom of Information Act suits, things like that. It just goes with the territory. A lot of that I'm sure has now moved to the CAO [Chief Administration Officer], where the financial records now repose. But in terms of access to the archives of the House, the Clerk, of course, is still responsible for that, so people that aren't willing to wait 20 years for certain records that have not been opened—it was 50 years by the way, when I started. I agreed with the historical community that that was excessive, that we ought to shorten the waiting periods for opening many of the records that are non-sensitive. Certainly things that contain classified information like Armed Services, that sort of thing, probably ought never to be revealed, but other things, they just had an arbitrary seal on them, should be opened.

JOHNSON: You spoke of some of your duties throughout the year. Now, for people that are going to be listening to this, or reading the transcript and don't know much about what the Clerk does, can you describe some of your day-to-day activities?

ANDERSON: I've often had a hard time answering the question, "What is an ordinary day in the Clerk of the House like?" because there really wasn't. There were certain predictable elements. Part of it depended on whether or not the House was in session. I always had, usually toward the end of the day, a big stack of things to sign. Of just about every nature you can imagine—documents, vouchers, bills, the bills normally came to me in the morning, or from the House Floor, and of course in the afternoon as they cleared the chamber. I also preferred to sign routine correspondence myself, not that it necessarily required me to read it, but it gave me a sense of what was happening throughout the organization. For instance, acknowledging Members' request for say, property in their offices, to have a chair recovered, or new carpeting, or "Can I get four additional armless chairs?" Because we did the furnishings, carpets, Venetian blinds, all those things. It gave me an idea of what Members wanted, what they were using, the volume of things that were going through our shops for repair, refinishing, renovation, things that we were buying new. The types of things Members wanted because needs change. An item that could've been a hot ticket a few years ago, maybe nobody wants any more. They want something new, like a typewriter desk with a well, we used to have thousands of them because everybody had typewriters, well, they're not necessarily good for computers. So no one wants them, let GSA [General Services Administration] get rid of them, they're taking up space and require desks that people who use computers would find more useful.

So I like to sign those things myself, it gave me a way to keep my finger on the pulse in a lot of areas, even though it was considered routine, because my Deputy [Clerk], Ray [Colley], who'd been deputy for a very long time, for several Clerks, kept saying, "I can sign some of this," or "We do have an autopen stored somewhere." Of course, it didn't have a template for my signature on it. At first I was inclined in that direction because I thought I would be just overwhelmed with signing. And then I decided the signature machine was not a good way to go because the initial signing would subside somewhat once the new Congress got going, and a signature machine required someone to operate it, which means you tie somebody up sitting there. And each sheet has to be perfectly placed under the pen, so that it can be signed properly, and then you have the security of having a machine that makes a flawless copy of your own signature. You don't want people having access to that machine, and it's a big machine, where do you put it, who has the key to it? I decided no, let it stay in storage. Whatever I have to sign, I can sign. Plus, I had the authority under the Rules of the House to designate other members of my staff to make my signature, in the event that I was out of pocket, if something needed to be signed, they could sign my name and put their own name under it, so that someone would always be available to do that.

If a bill had to be rushed somewhere, say it had just cleared the House and the Senate was waiting for it, and I was out of pocket, they always had my authority to sign and move it along rather than stand on formality and hunt for me, or wait for me to come back because that would get in the way of the process. But I was always kind of sticky about that, if I was around, I should do the signing, and not get lazy and start farming it out to everybody else. I had appointments all day long. I saw a lot of vendors, people who did

business with the House that sold us products and materials of all types and descriptions, whether it be equipment supplies, services, we had various things that we bid out. Contract services which had to be done under the federal bid guidelines, where we had to advertise in various organs for people who provide these services would be able to see them and then submit their proposals, and then at a certain hour, unseal the bids publicly, and read them, and award the bids to the lowest capable bidder. So things like that would pop up.

We always had people that wanted to sell us things. I mean, granted, we weren't the biggest customer in the world, but we did buy a lot of stuff. And people in the stationery business or whatever were very anxious to have our custom. So usually I would have those things pre-screened, by say the manager of the office supply service, to see if these were things that we would actually be interested in, or is it a viable alternative to a product line that we're already carrying, that maybe somebody else has a better product or something that we ought to have in addition to something we have so that I wouldn't have to bother myself with that. Recognizing that I wasn't necessarily the most qualified person to make those critical decisions, I had to depend on the recommendation of others.

I was always very trusting, to the extent that, you know, as long as you're square with me, and give me sound advice, and there's no hidden motive behind it, things are just fine. But if I ever find out that you're pursuing some separate agenda, that is not in my interest as the person who is ultimately responsible, or in the interest of the institution, then we have big trouble. So don't violate my trust. I was smart enough to know that many of the people who worked for me knew more about what they did than I ever

possibly could. And there were a lot of things that they did that I could never possible do myself. So there had to be a situation of trust. And also you know, I'm not going to micromanage or look over your shoulder, but keep me informed, if anything is happening that I might be questioned about by a Member of Congress, I need to know that so that I don't look like I'm ignorant as to what's going on in my organization. You know, if you want to do something and make a change, no matter how good it is, the chances are I'll say fine, make the change, but if a Member stops me in the hall and says, "You know that change Kathleen made, I think it's just great." Where I'm standing there thinking what change did she make, and having to say, "Well I do too," until I can find out what she did. So, I just need to know, "Don't surprise me. Chances are I will go along with it if you've got a good suggestion, if you want to change things as long as I understand what's happening, you just can't do it without letting me know what's going on."

The same thing with my relationship to my oversight committees, House Administration, and Legislative Branch Appropriations, and the Speaker. I kept them informed as to what I was up to, not that they necessarily wanted to look over my shoulder, but so they weren't blindsided by something, no matter how good it might be. And if it was really good, I preferred the Speaker take credit for it. He's the guy who's ultimately responsible for the image of the institution. I don't need the public validation, but it's very nice if the Speaker can get it, and so I often you know, told my Speakers, "This is what I'd like to do, and this is a good thing, and I think you ought to get credit for it." "Oh no, you did it, you ought to take the credit." "All right, as long as I have your confidence, that's all the validation I need. I can live without it, so you go ahead and take the credit, and as long as you approve,

that's fine." If you don't have pride of authorship around here, you can do just fine.

JOHNSON: It's a good lesson to be learned. We are just about out of time, and we just scratched the surface of your time as Clerk.

ANDERSON: Yes, I was thinking of all kinds of places. I was sort of going on with a stream of consciousness narrative, and I'm not sure that's a good thing in the world of oral history because oral history is not really a stream of consciousness narrative.

JOHNSON: Well, it's a fine beginning, and we'll follow up with some more specific questions in our next meeting.

ANDERSON: I want you to know that I have a very high comfort level with you, and I feel quite good about sharing things, which frankly, some of this I haven't shared with anybody, or other than a few intimates who are privy to it. Such as Bill [Long], with whom I will be having dinner tomorrow night, who was part of it from the very beginning. He was always after me to be much tougher than I was.

JOHNSON: Well, that's great to hear. Thank you.

— DONNARD K. ANDERSON —

INTERVIEW SIX

JOHNSON: This is Kathleen Johnson interviewing Donnard Anderson, former Clerk of the U.S. House of Representatives. The interview is taking place in the Legislative Resource Center, Cannon House Office Building. This is the sixth interview with Mr. Anderson, and the date is July 10th 2006.

As Clerk of the House, you supervised hundreds of employees, you were responsible for a departmental budget of more than \$25 million. Can you describe some of the offices that were under your very large jurisdiction?

ANDERSON: Well, the place where we're sitting was part of my responsibility. Then it was several small departments, which have been since consolidated into this one larger department, which was always my objective. It was one of those things that the time never seemed right to do, so I never proceeded with it. But the House Library, the Office of Records and Registration, the Placement Office, and the Legis Office [Legislative Operations], the sort of bill status, legislative information organization.

My duties were divided into three major groups: legislative, financial, and general administration. My legislative group of offices included those things which people most readily associate with a legislative body, the core processes by which the House produces its only product, which is a body of public policy and law for the governance of the nation. The processing of the bills and resolutions, the tallying of the Members' votes, the keeping of the [House] *Journal*, the reading aloud of business to the House, the compilation of the daily record—our legislative operations organization. I always

considered those the highest priority because of the constitutional importance of those things. The documents of the House, its legislative products always had to be letter perfect, there never could be the slightest error, lest there be doubt as to what the House actually produced. Likewise, the tallying of the Members' votes also immediately rose to a constitutional level. There could never be any question about the accuracy of the voting process, lest there be doubt as to what the House determined, and how it made that determination. So I put a great emphasis in the people of those organizations were aware of how keenly I felt the importance of zero defects, and I always encouraged them, if they had any reservations or doubts whatsoever about the things that they did, to bring those to my attention, so that they could promptly be addressed and corrected. Fortunately, we never had any difficulty.

For instance, with the electronic voting system [first used in 1973], which is the process by which the American people collectively reach their decisions through their 435 Representatives; if a machine had hiccups, however slight, we just didn't use it until we were confident of its integrity, and went to the standby voting process, which was the old call of the roll, which had been in use from time immemorial. That happened, but rarely. The machine received such care and constant checking and safeguarding done on a daily basis, down to the last LED that we never had any real concerns about it. But if there was a problem, even if it was only a display panel not coming up, or the collecting of the votes was not in doubt, we didn't use it. There could never be any issue raised about that process.

My second large area of responsibility was financial, which was the Finance Office operation. The budget and disbursing processes. Each year, late in the

fall, I would sit down with my budget group, and begin working on the budget projections for the new fiscal year—what was necessary to fund the operations of the House in every particular: salaries; capital programs; services; materials, whatever. And then early in January, I would be called to appear in several days of open hearings before the Legislative Branch Subcommittee of the House Appropriations Committee, to present the budget to defend the figures that we had projected for the needs of the House. To call to the table the other Officers and Officials to defend and explain their portions of the budget, to respond to questions from the Members of the subcommittee, and to receive their guidance as to the fiscal projections for the House.

Once the Legislative Branch Appropriation Bill was enacted, signed into law by the President, then it became my responsibility as the disbursing officer, since not a cent was dispersed except over my signature, of the roughly \$1 billion for House operations each year, which by the way, has remained fairly constant. To see that those expenditures were made strictly according to rule of law and the direction given to me in the rather thick report, issued by the Appropriations Committee to accompany that bill, giving me very precise guidance as to the Capitol projects that I could pursue or was directed to pursue. To build in planned cost-of-living adjustments for federal employees, things of that nature. And then, of course, year round to issue the disbursements to pay the salaries of the 12,000 plus House employees here and throughout the nation. As well as to reimburse the Members for the official expenses of their office, and to pay contractors and vendors for things and services provided to the House of Representatives.

Also, to enter into contracts on the part of the House, since the Clerk was the

contracting officer for such things as reporting services, since we augmented our committee reporting staff by hiring outside reporting firms to do the hearings of committees that were not classified, since all of our committee reporters had the highest possible security clearances. We used them for things like the Armed Services Committee, the committee on Standards of Official Conduct, Foreign Affairs, those hearings that touched on issues of great confidentiality or national security. Since our reporters were code word or Q-cleared [security cleared] to be privy to those things.

So, disposal of waste paper, all sorts of things that the House contracted with outside firms to do on our behalf, following the federal rules forbidding and the awarding of contracts with advertisements being published in the appropriate organs to make people who provided those services aware of the fact that we were looking for people to provide them, and then in my office from time to time, we would have the sealed bid openings in the presence of representatives of those firms.

Then I would award the contracts based on the lowest responsible bidder. Sometimes people would come in low, but it was clear that they deliberately low-balled, and probably were not capable of providing the services, at least at the level that we required them. And those judgments had to be made, and of course the law permits a certain discretion on federal contracting officers' parts.

One of the delightful parts of being the disbursing officer was that my little signature appeared printed on each paycheck issued by the House of Representatives. While most employees, including myself, had their pay directly sent to their banks, or other financial institutions, there were still a

significant number who liked to receive their yellow paycheck with my signature printed on it in hand, and then do whatever they did with it. Almost invariably on payday, some kind soul would walk up to me in the hall, hold up his or her yellow House pay warrant with my signature on it, and say, "I want to thank you personally for this," as if I had stayed up the night before signing more than 12,000 paychecks, which I would've had to do had the machine broken down. Since they would've had to have been signed by hand. Fortunately, the machine proved to be very reliable throughout my eight years as the disbursing officer.

The general administrative segment of my responsibilities, now of course rest primarily with the Chief Administrative Officer, a recently created Office of the House, which did not exist in my time. The Clerk was, in point of fact, the chief administrative officer. That included a wide range of things amongst which were the production of televised House proceedings through the television control facility, which was an offshoot of the House Recording Studio. The people in television control operated the cameras and produced the signal, which was then made available at the head end, in the press gallery, to any *bona fide* news organization that was accredited to that gallery, as long as the signal was not used for any commercial or political purpose. It was an open domain entirely. C-SPAN, of course, is normally credited by most Americans, thinking that they produce the proceedings of the House, when indeed they don't and never have. However, from the very beginning of television in the House [in 1979], they have carried the proceedings. For the first several years of their existence, we were all the programming they had. Now of course they have a wide and very wonderful array of public interest programming to fill their air time when the House or Senate is not in session. The [House] Recording Studio provided a facility where Members

could tape either audio or videotapes, for use at home, of a non-political, informational nature, reimbursing the studio for the cost of production out of their official allowances.

Our office of property supply kept the inventory of all the furnishings of the House of Representatives for our various office buildings, including actual furniture, lamps, carpets, Venetian blinds. The rule of thumb, as to responsibility for the hotel side of the House of Representatives was if it moves, it belongs to the Clerk, and if it's fastened down, it belongs to the Architect of the Capitol. For instance, we framed pictures for Members' offices, but we couldn't hang them. The Architect's people had to hang them because they had to know where to drive the nails in the wall so as not to hit an electrical conduit or a pipe or something, which made a great deal of sense. We have shops that build and maintain all of the furnishings of the House, a carpet shop, an upholstery shop, a finishing shop, a cabinet shop. We have a wash rack for Venetian blinds. There are thousands of windows in our buildings, and the Venetian blinds are by no means standard, though we have many windows that are the same, and people wanted their blinds washed rather than take them out, wash them and bring them back, we knew what size the window was, and we'd bring a clean set to install and take the dirty set away, wash it, put it in inventory until the next person wanted blinds of that particular size.

We provided all of the equipment for the House—computers, typewriters, which of course were on their way out by the time I became Clerk. Copying machines, faxes, anything that Members used in their offices, the Committee on House Administration provided an approved list of equipment and vendors from which Members could choose. Members had, and still have a

wide variety of choices for the equipment that they can acquire for their offices. They would let us know, we would order and install the equipment for them and debit their accounts accordingly. There were guidelines as to the depreciation of furniture and equipment, we also of course paid for and kept inventory of the furnishings used in the more than 1,100 congressional district offices throughout the United States. Members were free to buy their furniture and equipment locally from people in their home areas. But again, it had to be from a rather lengthy list of approved items that they could use. Something that few people realize is that the inventory of furnishings and equipment is passed on from one Member to the next. If the Member leaves, his or her successor inherits the inventory of his or her predecessor, then as their basic allotment, and then as time passes, they can augment or replace. So keeping the inventory of the House was a prodigious task. When I became Clerk, we were beginning with the bar coding of those things, which was completed during my tenure, so we had a bar coded inventory, it was very easy to keep track of what Members had.

I jointly operated the Capitol telephone exchange with the Senate Sergeant at Arms. Half of the operators were on the House payroll, and the other half were on the Senate payroll. And together, the Senate Sergeant at Arms and I administered the operations of the telephone exchange. I also was responsible for the House telecommunications system. There was a House Office of Telecommunications. At the time I became Clerk, the House was under contract to AT&T for the installation of a new System 85 to replace the very old Centrex system that the House had used for 20-some years before, basically going from mechanical telephones to completely automated telephones. I must tell you that the change from mechanical phones to automated phones was not an easy one. The staff took time for the most part

to learn how to use the new phones, which were rich with features, but lacked the familiar mechanical buttons that we had had before. Some of the Members refused to take time, and so were at war with their new phones when they arrived on their desks.

We did have some technical problems due to faulty engineering projections on the part of AT&T, which was the problem of the vendor and not of the House of Representatives. Where they had mistakenly estimated the average time for a telephone call within the House of Representatives. The work at the switch, which is the bank of computers that runs the phone system, is primarily engaged in setting up and taking down phone calls. Once a call has been set up, the switch really does nothing to maintain that connection. But every time a person picks up or hangs up, the switch is busy setting up the call and taking it down. AT&T projected less activity in that way than it turned out we actually had. That we were much busier, our phone calls were much shorter on average than they had projected, which brought out a design flaw which was throughout all System 85 switches, [for AT&T] of which there were several hundred in the United States, mainly in fairly large institutions, which caused the switch to overload and then shut down. And in the early months of our new System 85 we were constantly dropping the load on our switch, which meant the House had no telecommunications. My problem as the administrator wasn't during the outage. It was when the phones came back on, when the angry Members started calling to find out what the hey is going on.

JOHNSON: What time period was this?

ANDERSON: It was during the summer of 1987 and into the fall. The flaw in the switch

which was endemic in System 85 was discovered here because of the miscalculation of our telephone load, and AT&T was able to correct it as a result throughout all the other systems that they had installed around the nation. Because we did not have the capacity that we had paid for, AT&T needless to say was very anxious to please and make amends to their highest profile customer, the United States House of Representatives, particularly. At the time, they had a nationwide campaign of advertising. You may recall the “Reach out and touch someone” [AT&T’s advertising campaign].

JOHNSON: Yes.

ANDERSON: And the late Mo [Morris King] Udall of Arizona, who was having the same problems everyone else was with his telephone, came to the House Floor one day, as many Members did, to gripe about the new phone system. AT&T certainly did not need the bad publicity, and he said quoth, “Our new telephone system from AT&T makes me want to reach out and punch someone.” We had a meeting with the top execs from AT&T up in House Administration. And I came in with my [deputy] general counsel who had helped write the contract for the phone system. When we arrived, the AT&T folks were already around the large committee table. Mike [Murray] said to me, “Donn, they’re willing to do anything. They didn’t bring their attorneys with them.” They ended up resolving the problem by sending us an additional switch, which was about \$3 million worth of equipment, which they sent out in a chartered wide-body from Denver, where their headquarters is. They’re not off-the-shelf items. They build them as customers order them, so it was diverted from someone else who had ordered one and installed over the weekend. Fortunately, we had room in our switch room for it, and that took care of our problem quite nicely, and of course at

no cost to the House of Representatives, since it was AT&T's fault.

But there's probably nothing more challenging than changing a telephone system. We all get comfortable with the instrument and the features that we have before us, and when something new comes along, it requires a new learning curve. And like anything in the world of technology, the older you are, the less amenable you are to change. You get comfortable with doing things in a particular way and having to relearn, in some cases completely, the process of making a phone call can be very difficult.

Let me think of some of the other things that we did, and I often go through it building by building. The child care center was one of the operations we ran. I'm not quite sure why we did, since the child care center was relative to nothing else that we did, but then again, it was relative to nothing else that anybody else did. It could just as easily have gone to the Sergeant at Arms or the Doorkeeper or the Chaplain.

JOHNSON: I wanted to ask you something, since you brought up the child care center. You mentioned in the last interview that your office had grown by leaps and bounds. And just from what you're describing now, you had such a diverse range of responsibilities. Did you find it increasingly challenging to manage such a huge operation?

ANDERSON: Not at all. One would think so, and in the beginning when I saw that trend developing, it was a time when a variety of new services were being created, which seemed to find their repose in the Office of the Clerk. I thought we may reach a point of diminishing returns, where we can't successfully administer everything. But as I said in one of my early interviews, I inherited

an organization that was very intelligently structured. I'm not sure that I had that confidence when I became Clerk, but I quickly realized that the organization that I inherited was indeed intelligently structured. By and large, it was well staffed, with very capable and enthusiastic managers. Speaker Wright gave me unlimited leeway to structure my organization and run it as I felt most appropriate and most comfortable.

I had a deputy and three principal assistants, each one of whom had a group of departments, which we tried to create where there was some relationship. Obviously we have some hybrids that have no relationship to anything else, like the child care center. So our chain of command was the individual department heads. And we had about two dozen departments, each reporting to either the Deputy Clerk or one of the three assistants to the Clerk, depending on where their department landed in someone's portfolio, so that I didn't have to deal constantly with department heads. Obviously, I was certainly willing to, and told the department heads they had the right to my attention any time they felt they needed it. I did not wish to isolate myself or be isolated. Granted, I knew that my understanding at best of many particularly technical areas was weak, and I had to depend on those that had the technical expertise to correctly advise me as to how to proceed. But my door certainly was always open. I wanted to know what was going on. I couldn't possibly understand everything, except in the broadest terms. But no, it was challenging to an extent, but never daunting because we had such excellent department heads who had great expertise and experience in the work of their departments. I almost always had the peace of mind of knowing that things were well tended to. And because my department heads, and I'd like to think my workforce in general felt confident in the fact that I would always back them up, and was keen to have their input, that I made

no pretense to an excellence which I didn't possess, that they felt very comfortable in bringing their problems and their needs to my chain of command or to me personally.

I was always delighted at the compliments that I received on the people that worked for me, and their ability to deal with complex issues successfully, to solve problems thoughtfully. One case in point was our Office of Telecommunications, which of course is so critical to the successful operation of the House. Susan Zeleniak was our chief in that department. She came to us from AT&T with a very fine and long background in telecommunications at the industry level. In fact, because she wanted to be part of the new advances that were taking place here in the House, she left a career with the telephone company that probably would have enriched her more greatly in the short run than we could here. But she wanted to be a part of it, as did her assistant chief, Bill Kinter, who also came from the telecommunications industry. And I received constant praise and compliments about Susan and Bill for not only being fine technical people, but their ability to speak plain English and not to use the term of art that was sometimes used not to "speak telephone" to people, where they could explain in terms that non-technical people could understand how these very complicated and very useful new communications instruments worked.

The two of them, during the difficult transition of the new phone system personally went from office to office to hold the hands of Members of Congress, to help them become familiar and ultimately like their new telephones, which many of them hated at first, simply hated. It was enormously useful to me, because I was not capable of doing that with the Members. I was, in some cases, having just as much difficulty with my new

phone as they were because there was a learning curve involved. Phones were much more complicated and were more feature-rich than they had been in the past, but Susan and Bill did a wonderful job because of their industrial background, deep technical understanding, and their gift for being able to explain technical things simply and plainly to non-technical people. It got us through that very, very difficult period rather easily, and were able to work with the telephone company to provide a solution to our endemic problem with our new system, which was a design flaw that had nothing to do with us.

JOHNSON: Two of the changes that took place while you were Clerk were spearheaded by you, as far as I can tell. The Office of Employee Assistance and the Fair Employment Practices Office.

ANDERSON: Yes.

JOHNSON: Could you provide some background on those two offices?

ANDERSON: I consider particularly the Office of Employee Assistance the jewel in my crown. In fact, yesterday I went to a 50th anniversary party for Joe Quattrone, our barber [in the House] with Chaplain [Daniel] Coughlin. And we were talking about the Office of Employee Assistance, coming back from the party while driving in my car. Since as the Chaplain, he works somewhat with the people in that office, because there is a spiritual dimension to recovery.

When I became Clerk of the House, I became chief of an organization with over 600 very diverse men and women in it. It was easily predictable that

among those 600 plus men and women, there would be people that had chemical or alcohol dependencies, just like there are in any similar group to be found anywhere in society. I had to deal with those problems virtually from day one. We had alcoholic employees. We had employees that used other drugs. None of us were clinicians, counselors, psychologists. We were not equipped to deal with those issues, which are very complex and very sensitive issues. People who don't know anything about them best should leave them alone. Usually as men and women of good will, when we get involved with people that have dependencies, we make matters worse. We do the wrong thing for all the right reasons. The people who suffer from the affliction of chemical dependency almost always are very likeable. They're the kind of people that you enjoy working with. They're nice people who, for whatever reason, have gotten into the terrible trap of addiction.

Because they're likeable, the people around them tend to be enablers.

"Enabler" was a term I was unfamiliar with until I got into the issues related to chemical dependency. Because "Fred" or "Suzie" has a drinking problem, co-workers have a tendency to try to cover up or fill in. "Fred" or "Suzie" is probably having a temporary crisis, let's help them by sharing their workload until they get through it, and then they'll be back to normal. And all that does is help "Fred" or "Suzie" get further along with dependency and you become an enabler.

The law deals with chemical dependency as a disease and you cannot fire somebody for being sick, that is against the law. It's a form of impermissible discrimination. You can fire people for declining work product, or for abuse of the leave system by documenting those things. Always the end result of dependency is declining product, abuse of the leave system. So you can

resolve that problem that way. It may resolve the problem so far as the employer is concerned. It does nothing to resolve the problem so far as the chemically dependent person is concerned. The compassionate and appropriate thing seems to be to help that person back to a healthy, happy, respectable, productive life. So virtually from the beginning, my senior staff and I started talking, first informally about what can we do? Not only were these people our employees, but in many cases they were our friends, people that we knew socially as well as professionally. We didn't want to fire them, we didn't want to see them come to harm. Interestingly, in the progression of dependency, the last thing that usually goes in a chemically dependent person's life is his or her job. Often the family goes, they can't take it anymore. The house is lost. But the job, because the people around tend to lock arms and try to support the person who has the problem, tends to be the last thing to fall apart in the life structure of the person who is dependent.

So we thought employee assistant programs are widely to be found throughout the private sector. Why not in government? Why not here in the United States House of Representatives? The immediate concern that was raised was if we try to pursue this, will the leadership of a prominent, public, political institution wish to announce publicly by the formation of an employee assistance program that we have alcoholics, we have drug users, just like everybody else does everywhere else in society. And it crosses all lines. It's not a factor of race, age, religion, economic level, region of the country, neighborhood. It happens everywhere, to everybody. It is a sad product of society that dependency occurs. So we decided that we really needed to give it at least the old college try. That our conscience demanded that we try to get the leadership interested in doing this.

So, I prepared a memorandum for the bipartisan leadership, Speaker Wright, Minority Leader Michel, Majority Leader [Richard Andrew] Gephardt, the Minority Whip, Trent Lott, the Majority Whip, Tony Coelho, to say we have this problem. Whether we care to acknowledge it publicly or not, it's here. It is not just a problem with the Office of the Clerk, it's a problem that occurs in many of the congressional offices, in many of the committee offices, of the support offices, everybody's got it including Members of Congress themselves that have problems of dependency. I felt that it was advisable, and I expressed it in the strongest polite terms that I could that it was not only in the interest of the recovery of the people affected, but in the interest of the House of Representatives to present themselves as a concerned, compassionate, public employer to try to deal with these issues.

I was amazed that my proposal received enthusiastic, unanimous and spontaneous support. There wasn't the least resistance, or any caution about, we really don't want to air our dirty linen in public, quite the contrary. They agreed because I'm sure that all of them had the same experience that I had, knowing somebody or employing somebody—or having a colleague that had a problem, and not knowing how to deal with it, what to do. So, I was given the green light from the bipartisan leadership.

I went to the Committee on House Administration, with a request to fund a study by an outside organization that deals with the establishment of employee assistance programs to study the institution of the House of Representatives and to find out what our unique needs were. If we proceeded to establish such a program, what we would need in terms of personnel and resources to do it properly. What the elements were that we needed to know about, because we were all in the dark except to be familiar

with the broad concept, but not the particulars of how it was to be done. I hired a woman who was a Ph.D., who specialized in just helping mainly corporate America set up employee assistance programs. She and her organization did a lengthy study of the House of Representatives, and came to me with a proposal for what we needed. I in turn covered that to the Committee on House Administration to make a formal request to create the office, with X number of personnel, at a salary level that seemed appropriate, and request for space assignment, particularly in some remote recess of one of our buildings, where there wouldn't be a lot of passersby to see people going in and out of the unmarked door. It was kind of knock three times. They gave me the authority to create the office. The Legislative Branch Subcommittee agreed to fund the positions. I think we started out with five staff people. The Office Building Commission gave me adequate space, in the Ford Building.

Then, the objective was to properly staff it. I called in some people that were prominent nationally in the field. I wish I could recall their names because they certainly deserve credit. One of them, who has since died, was one of the early leaders in employee assistance from the National Institutes of Health. He and a couple of other people very generously lent their time to help us do this. I bought the mailing list from the Employee Assistance Professionals Association, the National Professional Group, to which virtually all providers of employee assistance belong, and sent a direct mailing to each of their members, which was perhaps 3 or 4,000 people. Plus advertising in their professional journal, the fact that the House of Representatives was establishing this office, and that we were seeking to appoint a director and this is what the director's job would be—his or her responsibilities, the level of compensation that we proposed, and generally, the objectives that we

planned for the office.

We decided from the beginning to make it a broad brush program. Not just to deal with the problems of chemical and alcohol dependency, and co-dependency, which are the people who may not drink or use, but whose lives are just as sadly affected as those who do it, because their husbands, wives, children, parents, whatever. And include things like unhappy marriages, problem children, low self-esteem, gambling, uncontrollable debt. All of these things which afflict people. Granted, our focus was on the problems of alcohol and drug abuse, but not limited by any means to those things.

We said that those who were seriously interested were welcome to come to Washington to be interviewed. We did not provide any expenses, those that were seriously interested would have to come here on their own dime, and pay their own expenses. We had about two dozen serious applicants, and we felt that that was a sufficient pool from which to choose prudently. If people were serious enough that they would spend their own money to come here to be interviewed, we felt that they had a serious interest. Because I had asked several people known nationally in the field to assist, we had someone to review CVs because I don't know how to read a CV of a professional, particularly in that area. There are things to look for that someone in that field can catch. The fact that you've had a long list of employers isn't necessarily impressive. Because you worked for 10 Fortune 500 companies, but why did you change so often, instead of staying in one place for the long haul? That could be a key to someone not necessarily fitting in properly. So, we had them come to my office. There were several of us in the room, including a couple of the experts who had volunteered to help. I never spent less than two hours, and I interviewed personally with many of the

applicants, to see if we could really get into their minds and see what they had to offer us. What they thought of us, how they thought they could help—what the unique situation of the House of Representatives was.

We eventually decided on Bern Beidel who is still the director of the Office [of Employee Assistance], to my great happiness, many years later. He came from the New Jersey state police, where he had established and run for a number of years with great success their employee assistance program. Of course he had a different dimension of drug users and alcoholics. These are cops with guns, very intimidating people. High stress, high-risk jobs, and his *bona fides* seemed to be splendid. When we settled on him, we were just hopeful that he would be willing to relocate his family here from New Jersey, to a much higher cost of living area, at a salary incentive, which while it was more than he was making, wasn't a lot more for the differential, and the cost of living here plus relocating. And to our everlasting happiness, he agreed.

That whole initial process of setting up the office took a little over a year. My feeling was that we shouldn't rush. We had never had one for over 200 years, and now that we're going to do it, we must do it right. There must be no question, from the very beginning, that it is rock solid, that it will live up to its billing and all the expectations we have. If it takes an extra couple of months to do it right, so be it. Once we engaged Bern to be our director, then I left it to him to fill the positions that he would supervise. There again, my view being hire good managers and then get out of their way and let them manage. And I had no reservations about the fact that he would hire only the people that he felt could best do the job. He gave me no doubt that he shared the sense of mission and imperative that I had about the importance of this office. It was a success from the very beginning, and

remains so now, nearly 20 years later.

JOHNSON: Did the House leadership, or other Members ask the Clerk's Office to get involved in advertising the emergence of this new program to convince employers that this is a safe place to go?

ANDERSON: Well, it's one of things you don't really want to advertise too overtly, no billboards or that sort of thing. Obviously, we did have an article in *Roll Call*. I had the help, by the way, which was very immaterial, of several Members of Congress who were recovering alcoholics and were public about that. Jim [James] Ramstad is still a Member of the House. Ben Jones of Alabama, the late Bill [Norvell William] Emerson of Missouri, whose widow now serves in the House, Jo Ann Emerson, and Rod [Rodney Dennis] Chandler of Washington. They have always been in the open about their recovery from alcoholism, and were very anxious to help and see this turn into a success. So I let them do the advertising. We asked *Roll Call* to give us some editorial support on it, and they did. They did a nice editorial piece in one of their papers, plus an article with a group picture of myself, Mary Rose [Oakar], who was a Congresswoman from Ohio. It was Subcommittee on House Administration that had oversight at the time, and the four other Members who were recovering alcoholics, who had help. There was a lengthy article in which the whole concept of EAP [Employee Assistance Program] was discussed and how we were happy to bring it to the House of Representatives so that those people who had problems had a place to go where they could receive appropriate, and most significantly, confidential, absolutely confidential assistance.

An employer cannot order an employee to seek any kind of assistance. You

can't order someone to receive medical or counseling services. That has to be something people do of their free will. An employer can say, "I see that there is a problem here, and there is a solution to this problem which I also see, and that there is this office which is available, to which you can go if you wish. What transpires there is between you and the professionals in that office. I will never be made aware of the fact that you went, number one, or what has transpired while you were going, unless you in writing give them permission to furnish me information." Now, I ran the office, but I never got into their casework, except numbers. How many people, do you have enough resources to deal with the demand for your services? When I had problems with my employees, I would say, "Look, we have a problem here. I can't order you to go, but I see disaster ahead if you don't recognize the fact that you have a problem and seek to deal with it. I can urge you to go, but I can't order you to go." And if you do, notwithstanding the fact that I operate the organization, they have no communication with me about the individual cases unless you were to give them permission in writing to communicate those things with me.

Whenever I went to that office as the officer in charge, I wouldn't just arrive, I would call first to see if the coast was clear, do you have any people in there that would not want to see me walk in the door? And so when they didn't have any clients there, then I would come over. I didn't go very often, but just to visit and see how things were going.

But I consider that the finest thing that I left my fingerprints on during the eight years that I was Clerk of the House. If I were to be remembered for one thing, I would wish the EAP to be my legacy to the House. It saves lives, it saves families, it saves futures. It gives people an opportunity to return to

self-respect and self-sufficiency, to happiness, to peace of mind. The problems of dependency and the other things that afflict people, unhappy marriages, problem children, these are all terrible afflictions that make for very unhappy lives, and can be deadly. Often health problems that result in death or suicidal tendencies, so it's something that I consider terribly important.

As far as the Office of Fair Employment Practices, I did put that together. I sometimes think I'm given more credit for that than I deserve. The move in that direction was coming. Interestingly, I think that it got its start because of the concerns that some of the women Members had felt, and correctly, about glass ceilings and other gender discrimination, that I think could be correctly observed institutionally. In a political institution, where everybody is basically an at-will employee, where you don't enjoy the rights and protections of the classified civil service, complaining about impermissible discrimination can be a dicey thing, because you can be fired out of hand. You don't have the right of appeal or protection that a classified civil servant would have. I was given the task once the resolution was agreed to by the House of establishing the process. It was something with which I heartily concurred. I like to think of myself as a just and fair-minded person, who acts not only within the letter but also the spirit of the law. This gave a process which was by no means a perfect process, but nonetheless a great advance towards providing protection for employees of the House who felt that they were victims of impermissible discrimination, at the same time protecting them from retaliation.

The resolution that created it also vested it in the Office of the Clerk of the House. That was one of those things that through our creation, kept being

added to our organization. For the most part, it was a low maintenance department, again kind of free-standing. While I supervised it, I didn't meddle in it, because of the confidentiality of what it did. I was a member of the review panel. The process that was established in the House Resolution creating the office provided that ultimately if the aggrieved party was dissatisfied with the ruling of the office, that he or she could appeal to the review panel which as I recall, consisted of three Members of Congress and three Officers of the House. It was bipartisan. Let's see, and I guess also three minority employees, or was it two Officers and two minority employees? I'd have to revisit the resolution.

In any event, I think only two or three times, and I can't quite remember in which year it was established [1988], I was called upon to sit as a member of the review panel to review an appeal. Curiously, one of the cases that went to review was against me as the respondent, where I had in one of my departments, promoted a junior man over a senior woman, simply based on a level of competency. Where the junior man was clearly far more competent than the senior woman, who in my qualified judgment could not have competently performed the duties of the position that she sought. I think she was kind of content with my judgment, though not happy with it, but understood the rationale for it until some of her female coworkers urged her to prosecute a claim, in which case I became the respondent. Well, as long as it was being reviewed by the office itself, it was no concern of me, because I wasn't involved in that stage of the process. But when they found against her, and then she again at the urging of her female coworkers, decided to take it to the ultimate step, to appeal it to the review panel, then I had to recuse myself as the respondent.

Interestingly, I guess it was two Officers of the House, and the Chaplain was excluded from serving. So of the five Officers, only four were eligible to serve. And it was the Doorkeeper, Jim Molloy, and myself who were on the review panel, but at the time the case came to review, the other two Officers, Jack Russ, the Sergeant at Arms, and Bob Rota, the Postmaster, already had sticky wickets of their own with the [House] Bank and the [House] Post Office. So the Speaker couldn't very well appoint one of them to serve in my stead. And since the resolution was rather specific that it had to be House Officers, basically we had to go to the floor with a resolution authorizing the Speaker to appoint some other majority employee to serve in place of the Clerk, who was recused for the pendency of one case, which naturally garnered some interest in the press gallery. Why would the Clerk recuse himself? And I did take the inquiries, and I said look, it's because I'm the respondent in an allegation of discrimination based on gender. Interestingly, they took it no further. There was a little squib as to the rationale for it, but they never got into the case itself. I like to think it was because I generally enjoyed the reputation for being fair on those issues that they figured that this wasn't worth pursuing.

Indeed, when the case went to review, they found in my favor, that I had been on solid ground, in acting as I did in making the promotion. But it was interesting, nonetheless. I'm glad to say that as a result, the woman who had been passed over put her nose to the wheel and got up to speed on the skills that she needed, and eventually got the job that she sought. So in the final analysis, it all turned out well.

JOHNSON: Well, you have provided some fantastic details on what you do as Clerk and the offices that were under your jurisdiction. If you had to describe the

vision or your personal mission for the Clerk's Office, how would you do that?

ANDERSON:

I would say that the mission, as I viewed it, was to anticipate and avoid problems, insofar as I could, and resolve them efficiently and effectively when they couldn't be avoided. I tried to look into the future and see what the needs of the House were as the institution continued to evolve. Also, be mindful of the kind of things that would most likely cause difficulty, so that we could prevent those things, or at least be prepared to deal with them when they occurred. I think the Employee Assistance Program and the Office of Fair Employment Practices are two excellent cases in point.

I also found that I could operate most effectively in pursuing the things that I felt important if I had no pride of authorship. I think that's usually the case, whether in the public sector or in the corporate sector, that if you want to get something done, and you're subordinate to others, if you're content to let the higher-ups take the credit for it, you can generally achieve most anything you want. If you feel the need for public validation, that can make things considerably more difficult. For instance, the Employee Assistance Program, well I am personally very proud of it, and I think I can properly take full credit for its establishment. I was quite content to let the leadership of the House on both sides take credit for the initiative in creating it. I got something I wanted that was very dear to my heart, the House of Representatives, and the leadership, starting with the Speaker, looked great for having done something really worthy. But it got done. And that was the important thing, and I didn't feel that I needed to see Donn Anderson in large letters in the paper being congratulated for having done something worthy.

It was trying to anticipate difficulties, and preventing them from becoming difficult, when possible, or having the means to deal with them effectively and quickly when they occurred. I tried not to get into a rut, thinking that everything is as good as it can get—we can rest on our laurels now and just do things the way we've always comfortably done them. Particularly as you get older, you kind of like to think that old ways are better, and sometimes they are. Many times they aren't. And when you get locked into a pattern of thinking or behavior, that's when things can start going south on you, I think, in a hurry.

So I always not only encouraged but demanded input throughout my organization from everybody, not just my senior staff or my department heads, but all of the workers as well. If they had an idea that they thought was helpful, I not only encouraged them, but demanded that they share those things with me. If they disagreed with me and the policies that I had or the things that I was doing, granted, we all like to be validated in what we do and what we think. It's nice to be of a mind that people think that you're correct and smart and inspired, but we seldom are consistently that.

Bad news often is helpful, because it enables you to correct a situation which, if unknown, cannot be corrected. My only demand was if you disagree with me, do it to my face. I don't want to hear it come back to me from the Longworth cafeteria or from the Democratic Club or wherever the people in my organization dispute my judgment or my reasoning. If you disagree with me, I may not like it, but there certainly won't be any harm to you if you deal with me forthrightly in those areas. And I like to think my workforce felt comfortable when they had a disagreement or a problem. It didn't happen a lot, but it occasionally did. I did not feel that my employers had a

right to know my mind on everything. If they felt aggrieved or somehow uncomfortable, if I could do something to set them aright, fine. I never felt under the obligation to fully explain my mind to those who sought to know it.

But perhaps when there were situations where party A thought that he or she should have been promoted instead of party B, I could perhaps offer an explanation, though I didn't necessarily feel duty-bound to do so. I could set that person's mind at ease. Usually it was a case of all other things being equal, party A might have on his or her own, sought additional training on their own initiative to better equip them for an opportunity that presented itself. And when I explained that, then party B would say, "Oh yeah, I can understand that. Yeah, well maybe I ought to do the same thing." Perhaps it would be a good idea. I couldn't help as an employer but admire people who took the initiative. If they wanted to be promoted, we had limited funds to provide training for our people. Some of them did take the initiative of maybe taking an advanced computer class at night or on a weekend, to learn more advanced skills which qualified them for an opening that presented itself. You've got to admire somebody who pays a couple of hundred dollars out of their own pocket to take a course on their own time to better qualify themselves to advance.

JOHNSON: Well, I think this is a good opportunity to take a break, and I can switch CDs.

END OF PART ONE ~ BEGINNING OF PART TWO

JOHNSON: A few minutes ago, when I asked you about your mission for the office or

your vision for the office, one of the aspects you mentioned was that you like to anticipate the future and certainly a big part of this would be technology. So what technological advancements did you take care of in your office you were responsible for?

ANDERSON: Well, we went to a PC [personal computer] network. I can't say that that was my inspiration. Frankly, it's only been in fairly recent years that I became a computer user myself. Throughout the entirety of my term as Clerk, I did not have a computer terminal at my desk. I took the view that I had over 600 people that were paid to do that sort of thing for me. There was no need for me to get into it myself. But we went from mainframe support to a PC network. That seemed to be the trend at the time. And my staff—that were very up-to-date on technology—urged me to go in that direction. So we certainly had within our organization all of the technology that we needed, and it was current.

One of the things that I did was install a FileNet system in the Finance Office, moving away from relying on paper files and an earlier, more primitive data retrieval system which was way out of date by the time I became Clerk. Bob McGuire, who was the chief in the Finance Office, said that he wanted to go to a more advanced data storage and retrieval system for the Finance Office, which was almost geometrically increasing in the volume of its operations. The size of the payroll really hadn't changed, but in terms of Members' disbursements, and disbursements for the House, generally. Moving paper was getting to be a real problem. I said, "Explore what's out there, and give me a proposal for what you think is appropriate for the Finance Office." I knew it was going to be a big ticket item, which indeed it was, where I would have to build it in to our budget estimates. It was not

something we could purchase out of extra funds that we happened to have in any of our accounts. It was just too much money involved. And I think the first FileNet system we bought was about a \$1.5 million, which was quite an investment. We did have to budget for it. But it did ease the paper chase in the Finance Office enormously, and gave them the ability to do their tasks much more quickly and more efficiently than in the past.

And then later, a few years later, we had exhausted the capacity of what I thought was a very large system, and we had to expand it yet again, which while it was expensive, was still only a fraction of the cost of the original system. We completely transferred the furniture inventory of the House to a database, so that our office and property supply could tell in a jiffy what each Member had, or at least should have in his or her office. It made accountability for the inventory of the House much better. It also made it far easier for us to manage our repair and replacement cycle of furnishings, by being able to develop trends as to the type of items that most frequently come in for repair or refinishing so that we could have new things ready to go. What we did when Members' offices say, had a broken chair of a particular description, rather than pick up the chair, fix it and return it, we would bring over a new chair or a recycled chair that had been repaired, like new, and just give them that one, and take the old one, put it back in the repair cycle, when it was repaired, then we put it in inventory, against the next need, so that people didn't have to do without while their furniture was being either repaired or reupholstered or refinished, whatever the need might be. Since most of our office building furniture is standardized, we always had things in inventory that could be sent over immediately to replace something that had broken or been damaged, whatever.

And, of course, having that on a database, we knew exactly what was in the warehouse, which warehouse, what color was it? Since we had different colors for the different buildings, we had a Cannon blue as opposed to a Longworth blue in terms of leather. For some reason the Members' furniture in Cannon was a different shade of blue than the Members' furniture in Longworth. So if they needed a three-cushion couch for the Longworth Building, we knew if we had one and where it was, and what color it was. Bring it right over and take the damaged one, and send it to the upholstery shop to be repaired, and then return to inventory. It all worked very well. There was no inconvenience. Nobody ever had to do without or wait.

JOHNSON: The Internet was in the early stages during your years as Clerk.

ANDERSON: Very early.

JOHNSON: Did your office have access to the Internet, or did other House offices at the time that you were Clerk?

ANDERSON: I don't recall that we had it, and I don't recall that anyone had it, frankly. I think that kind of came along as a service to the House after I left. I don't even recall hearing anything about the Internet, while I was Clerk of the House, I think it was just in the years that shortly followed my term that the Internet started becoming an important resource.

JOHNSON: Switching topics away from technology, how would you describe the relationship between the Speaker and the Clerk? I'm interested both historically and in your own experience with serving under two Speakers.

ANDERSON:

Well, historically, going back to the origins of the House, the Clerkship was viewed almost as a vice presidency to the President of the United States. There was a much stronger political relationship between the Clerk and the Speaker, and of course, it wasn't until fairly recent times that the Officers of the House became absolute creatures of the Speaker. But many of the Clerks, well into the 20th century, kind of sought the office as independent agents, garnering support among the membership, rather than depending on the endorsement of the Speaker to be chosen. Because the Clerk of the House had such vast authority related to the organization of the chamber, which may not have been anticipated initially, as many things weren't in the early days of the House, selecting a Clerk became a matter of keen political interest to the Members.

As you may know from your own research into the origins of the office, the Clerk even to this day receives the certificates of election from the secretaries of state, of the several states following the general election. From those certificates, makes up the roll of the House, or the new House of Representatives. And of course the Clerk has a certain latitude, whether implied or usurped, in determining the validity of those certificates. There's not really a check upon how the Clerk decides to accept the certificates that he or she receives in the Clerk's Office. In other times that became a serious issue when more than one Clerk tried to determine the makeup of a new House by refusing to accept otherwise valid certificates from the states, thus preserving a majority which would have otherwise been lost or perhaps to create an artificial majority. Of course, in modern times, that has all changed. The Clerk, theoretically could still do that sort of thing, though it would be to his or her own destruction to try to do that. Not only would it be viewed as virtual assault upon the Constitution, and the making up of the

institution, it would be utterly scandalous and would subject the individual who attempted to do it to a national opprobrium and disgrace. Because something can be done doesn't imply that it ought to be done. The thought would never have occurred to me, as I went through the formality of receiving Members' certificates of election, to pass any judgment on them, as long as they seemed to be in regular form.

In fact if anything, we sometimes had difficulty in securing from the certifying authorities of states, the certificates so that we could complete the roll of the House in time for its organization, particularly if, as an adjunct of the congressional elections, say the secretary of state of a particular state had been defeated, and he or she had other things on his or her mind rather than certifying Members-elect of the House of Representatives, and we were left without certificates from that particular state to make up the roll, where we were trying all sorts of ways through pleadings or intimidation or coercion to find somebody who was willing to certify the election of Members of the House of Representatives. Sometimes almost up until Opening Day [of Congress], to try to complete the roll of the House, but there it was a failure at the other end, rather than a part of the institution.

I think it's fair to say that the Clerk, amongst the subordinate Officers of the House, has always had the strongest relationship with the Speaker because the Clerk does share with the Speaker a variety of executive and certifying signatory responsibilities, which does not fall upon the other Officers of the House. Now how those things have changed in the 12 years since I have left office, I would be less competent to comment upon. But as the individual who at least considers himself the last traditional Clerk of the House, before the Office was reshaped, my relationship with the Speaker had to be a very

strong and very intimate and very confidential one, because I was very often the instrument by which the Speaker's will was carried out. And of course, even in the legislative process, the custody of papers with regard to a bill, can be used in an extortionate way in the other chamber or on the President of the United States even, in affecting the work of the majority in the House. There were times, simply because a bill had passed the House, where the Speaker might have told me that I need not be in any particular hurry in processing that bill and getting it to the other chamber. Or in enrolling that bill and getting it to the President because the 10 days in which the President has to sign under the Constitution doesn't begin until the bill is actually received at the White House. It does not start at the moment the bill has been cleared by both houses. It's only when the President actually has custody of that bill. Most people don't realize that.

So the fact that an enrolled bill might be sitting in the top drawer of my desk, where we are taking great pains to examine it and make sure that it is absolutely correct before we send it on to the President. Or in the case of a House-passed bill to the Senate, or a House-passed Senate bill being returned to the Senate, it might be that the Clerk feels that a more thoughtful examination of those documents are necessary before it can be sent on, since leverage can be had when other people are anxious to have something. Or perhaps don't want to have something.

Very often we retain bills when the President was out of the country, or wanted to put off the signing to a later date for ceremonial or publicity reasons, we just wouldn't send the bill on to the White House. Where the 10 days would begin, wait until the White House gave us the signal that they wanted to receive the bill, then we'd transmit it. There's nothing that says

that those things have to be done on a particular schedule. They're entirely discretionary. It is also useful to the Speaker, at least it was during my incumbency, perhaps to take burdens upon myself which the Speaker would just as soon not shoulder, where if there was to be public scrutiny or complaint, it could be of the Clerk rather than the Speaker. Where the Clerk was merely acting to effect the wishes of the Speaker where he did not wish to be burdened by those decisions or criticized for how they were made.

JOHNSON: Can you provide an example of that?

ANDERSON: Well, I suppose I could, given some time to reflect on it. Nothing immediately comes to mind, but I'd be very happy to revisit that question. Given some time, I'm sure I could cite an example.

JOHNSON: Sure.

ANDERSON: Which is why I believe that whoever is Clerk of the House has to enjoy the complete confidence of the Speaker, to be philosophically connected to the Speaker. There was some discussion after my party lost the majority in the election of '94, some Republican Members who I'm flattered to say had personal and professional respect for me, thought that I ought to be retained by the new majority, which was very flattering, but frankly an impossible situation for many good reasons. Some of them even went so far as to ask the Speaker to be, Mr. Gingrich, to consider keeping me on as Clerk in the new Republican House. Even if that offer, as far-fetched as it might have been were made, I would have felt an imperative to refuse it. If for no other reason than to be effective as Clerk, and for that matter to be effective as Speaker, I think there has to be a kindred spirit there. As fond as I was of Mr. Gingrich,

I certainly did not share his philosophy of government or much else for that matter. My good feelings for him were purely at the personal level, not at the political or philosophical level. And in good conscience, I could not have done that. I think there has to be a very high level of trust from the Speaker to the Clerk of the House. And the confidence that the Clerk shares his vision and his goals, institutionally.

JOHNSON: Can you compare and contrast how Speakers Wright and Foley ran the House, and also their interaction with the Clerk's Office?

ANDERSON: Sure. Both Speakers Wright and Foley were interested in what I did. Interested for their own illumination, not because they had any inclination to get into the work that I did. But as a matter of proper intellectual curiosity, both of them I think having a keen view of their own place in the scheme of things, as contemporary players in American political life, but also in the historical continuum of the House. And while neither Speaker Wright nor Speaker Foley even made any effort to interfere in the mechanics of what I did, they nonetheless were interested in knowing for instance who the people were who sat around them on the rostrum, and what it was that they did.

I'm not really sure that Mr. O'Neill had any great understanding or particular interest in what those people did. He was concerned mainly that the finished product would always be correct, but not necessarily how that product came to be. I had some very lengthy and frankly in-depth conversations with both Speakers Wright and Foley, as to some of the mechanics of particularly my legislative group of offices. They were interested to know how things were done. And it was clear to me that it wasn't with any motive of getting into those processes or interfering or

changing them, but just to know for their own satisfaction how things—for which they were ultimately responsible as the chief and principal officer of the House—were accomplished. I found it very helpful to me that my Speakers had an interest and an understanding in what it was that I did, at least in broad terms, as opposed to having no particular interest. It's a fine thing to have the confidence to run your office as you see fit, but it's also nice that the person to whom you are chiefly responsible understands what you do and thus appreciates the more, the quality of the product that you produce.

Speaker Foley in particular, I think had a very keen historical view of the office that he held, and of the institution of the House of Representatives. Even so far as being a rather able scholar of our British parliamentary ancestry and patrimony, which of course is fundamental to so much of what we are institutionally and many of the processes that we have adopted for our own chamber. I share it passionately, an interest in those things, and we had some very, very delightful discussions, sharing thoughts on the history of our chamber, how it was influenced by our antecedent, the British House of Commons. And also to our antecedents in the colonial assemblies of early America, before the beginning of the federal period.

Speaker Foley in terms of history was one of the most learned men that I have known in the House. He enjoyed knowing how he fit in to the continuum, as did I. I always regretted that there wasn't more known about the occupants of my office because only a very few of them have any biographical material at all that are available that have somehow managed to elude the shadows of history. Even some of the Speakers are not well known, where there's very little biographical material to shed light on who they were or how they influenced the political history of the United States, which is

rather odd considering the potency and the visibility of the Speakership throughout American history. Certainly much more influential than the Vice Presidency.

JOHNSON: You described how they related with your office, which I did ask you to do. Could you just give an overview of their different styles with how they operated over the House in general?

ANDERSON: Sure. I just wanted to add one thing though about relationship with my office. When Speaker Wright became Speaker, of course as anyone new to his job, you know, by no means new to the House or to the leadership. After all, having been Majority Leader for 10 years before he became Speaker, he was anxious to make sure that he did everything correctly, that he understood what he was doing. And he made it clear to me through Marshall Lynam, just to help you out in anticipation, his chief of staff, that he wanted to know about personnel changes in my office. Not that he was going to attempt to fill those things himself, but wanted to be made aware. And I kind of thought to myself, I don't think he realizes how big the Clerk's organization is, and how many personnel changes there will be on average in the course of a month, most of them at a fairly low level. And I did ask if he had any interest in filling positions in the Clerk's Office. Mr. O'Neill had a great interest in jobs because he came from a Northeastern Democratic machine city where patronage was the coin of the realm. Mr. Wright, coming from Texas, did not come from one of those political structures, and frankly had no particular interest in jobs, so that wasn't part of his mix. And very quickly, Marshall became kind of overwhelmed with the constant information we were providing about people who had, say left the labor room, or one of the cabinet shops or whatever. And finally he said, "Well, if

you have people to fill those jobs, just go ahead and fill them. I don't think we need to know about that."

Mr. Wright was less collegial I think in his approach to running the House than his successor, Mr. Foley. I think Mr. Wright had a tendency to rely on his own counsel in terms of the way he moved along the party program, its legislative agenda. As I said, he didn't involve himself very much in the administrative structure of the House. He seemed quite content with the way that was being run. Interested, yes. Concerned, not particularly, because I don't think he ever felt that there was anything there that might cause him concern or embarrassment, and really the [House] Bank was an issue that developed later on, mainly because it was kind of an anachronism that might have very well have been ended years before, but like so many things, it lingered beyond its usefulness or need.

Mr. Wright was kind of a private person, with all respect he did not receive criticism very warmly. Of course, nobody likes to be criticized or have their decision-making process or thoughts contested, but it's very useful when people do that, and when you're open to it. Nobody is well served when they live in a world of "Yes, boss," "Yes, boss," as opposed to, "Boss, I don't think that's a very good idea, and this is why." When you're constantly validated, even when you're wrong, you make mistakes which could be avoided. As I said earlier in today's discussion, I didn't necessarily like hearing bad news or hearing things that disagreed with my vision of things, but in order to do my job correctly and avoid embarrassment to myself, if I was wrong, I needed to be told that. And as long as it was done in a respectful and private way, as opposed to public criticism elsewhere, or where it was brought to me personally, I could deal with it appropriately. I just didn't like being

criticized behind my back. Nobody does. Mr. Wright just didn't like being criticized or being disagreed with. It was a sort of tendency, I think, "This is what I've decided, now you folks figure out why I'm right." Not at all unheard of amongst decision makers, I think people sometimes feared disagreeing with Speaker Wright.

I know that I had a certain anxiety about it, but I found that when I came to him and spoke my mind plainly and when he agreed to support me as Clerk of the House, which of course made it happen, I told him that my first concern would be promoting the interest and the reputation of the House of Representatives number one, and of his Speakership number two. And that the only thing that I expected in return was the right to express myself plainly and candidly to him whenever I felt it was necessary, to which he agreed. There were occasions when I had to remind him that he had made that commitment to me, when it was clear that he didn't want to hear some of the things that I had to say to him when I felt he was wrong or perhaps headed in a direction that really ought to be changed. I think because I insisted on speaking plainly to him, which might have got him ruffled, but he would get over it. We became actually friends as opposed to people that didn't necessarily know each other that well, but nonetheless had mutual respect. But I think that because I did exercise a certain bravery in speaking truth to power, we actually became friends because there were some people, including some members of his own staff, who were afraid to tell him the truth because they were afraid of his rather mercurial temper. I got yelled at more than once, but he always apologized after he did it, and agreed that I had done the right thing in sharing my concerns with him, even over something that he didn't agree with. But he really needed to know about, without going into chapter and verse there.

I never had those anxieties with Speaker Foley. Speaker Foley was a very calm type-B individual. I always felt that I could speak my mind very plainly and very candidly to him. And even though he might not have liked what he was hearing, he would always receive it with the greatest politeness and courtesy, and be grateful for having heard it. I never had the least anxiety about being candid with Speaker Foley, and always felt a very high comfort level. Frankly, the times when I had to disagree with him were very few. I always thought he had a very good read on things. I thought he and I were much closer to being kindred spirits than Speaker Wright and I had been. I think if Speaker Wright had remained Speaker longer, that that relationship would have evolved. I think it was well on its way. I was anguished when it became clear that he would have to give up the chair over what I thought was a very modest offense.

But the climate was such that events were moving clearly in that direction. I have a great personal respect and fondness for Speaker Wright, and I would like to have seen the relationship develop further than it did. In two and a half years, I think we were just getting on to the right relationship, where we knew each other well enough to have free and candid exchanges, and then of course he resigned the chair and that was that.

JOHNSON: Well, you just alluded to Speaker Wright's eventual resignation on June 30, 1989. How do you think that the controversy, and specifically the very long ethical investigation that took place, how do you think this affected the Democrats and also the House of Representatives?

ANDERSON: Well, it was very difficult for the Democrats. There's a tendency to feel that—I guess there's an expression that I heard when the fish stinks, it stinks

from the head down. And of course the Speaker is the head of the House and certainly the principal leader of his party in the Congress. The travails of the Speaker can't help but impact on the members of his party because Speaker Wright was a very private person, frankly he didn't have very many close friends. He was not a socializer, didn't go out drinking with the guys. He enjoyed playing cards, but didn't do that very much. He generally was kind of a homebody. When he wasn't at the Capitol, he went home to his wife. And they spent their evenings quietly together at their home.

So when he started having problems, there really weren't a lot of people who flew to his aid, because they didn't know him very well. They felt no personal bond. Had it been Mr. O'Neill, there's no question that virtually the entire Democratic Caucus would've been there expressing the strongest public support for the Speaker. But he had very, very few intimate friends. And that was a deficiency that certainly had an impact during the long ethical investigation. There just weren't a lot of people out there defending him, or perhaps, he had people who had been put off by his rather—I don't want to say aloof, because there was nothing rude or impolite about Mr. Wright, he certainly was a very gracious man. But I just don't think that many Members felt like they really knew him. If you're close to someone, and feel you really know them intimately, you're far more likely to fly to their assistance in a time of distress, than if it's someone with whom you have only the most casual relationship, or a relationship that is purely professional. I think that was the problem there, but it did cause tremendous distress.

Of course, back in those days, we [the Democrats] still had a decent majority in the House, so I don't think people viewed it as something that was fatal as far as the future of the Democratic majority in the House. And after a

certain point I think many of the Members of the Democratic Caucus were just as anxious to have him resign and be done with it, so that we could move forward again. Since Mr. Foley, who was the clear successor, was somebody in whom the Members had a great deal of confidence. It wasn't to say that his decline was viewed as fatal to the majority, but it needed to be ended so that we could move ahead, which in fact we did when he announced his resignation in June of 1989. And Speaker Foley very quickly resumed the chair. The slate was clean and we moved ahead.

JOHNSON: Just one other question about this period. Do you think television played a role in the escalation of the pressure on Speaker Wright to resign?

ANDERSON: Absolutely. Absolutely. When you can focus something day and night—of course by then, we were certainly into the 24/7 news cycle, and keep an issue alive, it just wears you down, if nothing else. Even if the groundswell of public opinion isn't aroused all that greatly, the fact that there is commentary going on day and night, all the time, it just wears you out. You can't deal with it after a point. Or where anyone is looking for sanctuary. No question about it, television had a great deal to do with his decision ultimately to quit the chair, and shortly thereafter, the House.

JOHNSON: A few weeks before Speaker Wright stepped down in 1989, the Majority Whip, Tony Coelho also resigned. How do you think this shakeup in the House leadership changed the overall atmosphere and the direction of the House of Representatives?

ANDERSON: Well, I think Tony's [Coelho] resignation from the House was really only kind of a sidebar. It was kind of a temporary spike on the radar screen, but I

don't think it had a very big effect. He decided early on, as soon as his financial dealings, which were not corrupt, but they certainly were subject to scrutiny, and not necessarily pleasant scrutiny, came up, he decided I think for both his personal reasons and loyalty to the Democratic Party and to the House, to put a quick end to it, and not create another drawn out situation as was the case with Speaker Wright. And simply resign and be gone, end of story. Now, he could easily foresee that had he stayed, it would have become another drawn out affair. I think he did the right thing by quickly announcing his resignation, defending himself as best he could. Of course, there was no further proceeding. What he'd done with the junk bonds may have been unseemly, but it certainly didn't violate any standard which then existed. I think it was viewed with actual sense of gratitude from the Democratic Caucus, that he got out very quickly. He didn't thrash about, trying to defend himself, while other things were happening. Just escalating the disarray in the party at the time. We were able to then move on rather quickly to a new leadership. And get that behind us.

JOHNSON: So you didn't sense any sort of panic that two leaders, two major leaders in the Democratic Party resigned in such a short period of time?

ANDERSON: Well, yes, but not particularly high level, nor anything that was enduring. The Members basically wanted it over, and Speaker Wright's investigation went on for several months. Tony's did not. He left almost immediately after the matter surfaced. The Members first of all were hoping that Speaker Wright would be able to vindicate himself, but when it became clear that that was going to be difficult, then they wanted it to be done, to be over with and he certainly did that. I think that it was incredible that a Speaker would resign the chair over something as inconsequential as \$10[000] to \$12,000

worth of royalties on a paperback book. When I went to the Inter-Parliamentary Union meeting later that year in London, my fellow secretaries general, in my organization, which was the Association of Secretaries General of Parliaments were absolutely astounded that our Speaker would forsake the chair over something so trivial as a very modest amount of book royalties. That it was simply unheard of in their countries, including Great Britain, where parliamentarians can virtually do anything they want as long as it's reported. That they don't have any of the ethical strictures that our Members do, but that our Speaker could be driven from the chair over something as trivial as a few thousand dollars worth of book royalties, to them, was beyond all understanding.

JOHNSON: During the 1990s, scandals involving the House Bank and the House Post Office transpired. Can you provide details on these events and also speculate on their consequences on the institution, and the public perception of the House?

ANDERSON: I think those had a much more profound effect upon the institution of the House than the resignation of the Speaker and the Majority Whip. You might say, and I touched on this a few minutes ago, that both the bank and the post office were kind of anachronistic. They were institutions that were not much susceptible of change, within an institution that had changed profoundly. The House Bank, as a matter of background, was established in the antiquity of the House, because when Members came hundreds, if not thousands of miles to the seat of government, they needed resources while they were at the seat of government. And so a banking service was created so that they could draw against their salaries, because banking was so very local in the early decades of America, that this provided a way for Members to

have funds upon which to live in New York, or Philadelphia, or Washington, after the seat of government settled here in 1800. It was a convenience. It was never a full-service bank. It was basically a disbursing office for the Members that enabled them to have an account that was not interest bearing, where they could draw against their salaries to pay the hotel keepers where they lived, or pay a check to a local physician for medical services rendered, or to hire a horse and a buggy to get around with.

Long after banking developed to the point where checks from distances were honored everywhere, the bank continued. It neither paid interest nor charged interest. It again, was a disbursing operation, its funds being entirely the Members' salary account. It was not funded in any other way. There was no appropriation to the bank, other than for the employees that ran it. Many Members felt that it was absurd to keep anything more than a modest sum of money in an account that didn't pay any interest. Some Members never used the account. They had their checks sent directly to an institution at home, and wrote checks like anybody else against a bank elsewhere.

Like anything else, people get careless, and they found that if they wrote an overdraft, there was no particular penalty except the bank manager might walk up to the floor and say, "You need to put a few hundred dollars in your account, you're overdrawn." But there was no penalty, no charge for overdraft, which Members felt was reasonable, since they weren't making any money either by keeping their funds in that bank. When things go unchecked, then problems can develop. Some people will always take advantage of a situation, and some did, where the amounts of overdrafts were really quite prodigious. Nobody lost any money because the funds involved were strictly Members' payroll funds. They didn't come from any other

sources. No appropriated funds. But it looked bad because we did have abusers and it did have a certain fairly large dimension to it.

The [House] Post Office was a question of mismanagement, to some extent, and also the fact that it was really the last vestige of a patronage culture, where patronage had otherwise disappeared. Much of what happened in the House Post Office happens in any other post office in the United States. The House Post Office could be said to be a second class post office. Many post offices in the country are much bigger than the House Post Office. Virtually all of them have a certain amount of embezzlement, drug use, theft. How often have we heard the expression going postal? At least nobody in the House Post Office killed anybody else or exchanged gunfire.

But the post office was entirely patronage. The Postmaster had very little to say about the people that worked there. It was kind of a dumping ground for people that really had no qualifications, in many cases, mental defectives whose mental capacity wasn't very good. And here you have people that are not necessarily well educated or particularly bright, that have other problems which they bring to the workplace. Handling money and negotiable items because they tended to be less educated. There was a greater inclination for things like drug use or criminal behavior. As Mike Shinay, who was brought on after Bob Rota resigned as House Postmaster [in 1992], to administer it until such time as some better solution could be found for the collection and delivery of the mail in the House, it was a longtime post office career executive. He said that if the things that had happened in our post office happened in the city post office of Washington, D.C., if it had been a story at all, it would've been a one-day story in the Metro section. That there was theft and drug use, and sloppy handling of the records and negotiable items,

which every post office must keep or has. He said because it was the post office of the House of Representatives, it immediately leapt to a much higher level than it merited, in his experience as a senior postal official, having been in charge of major post offices, and entire postal divisions, covering major areas of the country, he said this happens everywhere. It was not unique to the House Post Office, but because it was the House Post Office, it jumped off the front page as a big story.

There probably should've been changes made in the way mail was collected and delivered. It is possible that perhaps the Postal Service should've been running the counter operations all along. That's not to say that there wouldn't be drug use or theft or embezzlement. There was the issue of stamps for cash. Well, historically, until the middle of the 20th century, Members of Congress weren't particularly well paid. In order to augment their compensation, there were certain things that were kind of built in to the emoluments of office which enabled them legitimately to offset the insufficiency of their basic compensation by being able to cash out on various allowances that were given to them. Members now have one account for representational expenses, which covers everything but payroll, which is still a separate account. But everything else, rental of office space, office equipment, transportation, telecommunications, anything that a Member can justify to operate his or her office comes out of one account now. But until rather recently Members had a variety of accounts such as stationery, postal, telephone and telegraph, and there were a couple of other—travel—there were a couple of other things beyond that. Each was a separate account. And the deal was that Members could accumulate funds in those accounts if they were thrifty and didn't spend everything that was available to them, and they could from time to time if they wanted to, cash out the excess amounts

in those accounts and keep the money, as long as they declared it as income and paid tax on it. That was the way they offset their rather insubstantial salaries.

Not only did attitudes change, but some of the legalities affecting those things changed. Most Members changed too, and they quit doing it. Other Members were not inclined to do it, they still felt that it was their right, and their privilege to do that. And thus it was that the trading of stamps for cash at the post office became an issue, and ultimately a criminal issue, where Members had bought fairly substantial amounts of stamps against their representational allowance, and then turned those stamps back into the post office, and used to be reimbursed in cash, rather than by some form of other credit. The cash which they in turn kept for their own personal use. Whether or not they paid taxes on it, I'm not sure. But in any case, that became the legal and ethical sticky wicket. We had reached a point where few if any Members would've thought about doing that, but there were some who had always done that, felt it was their entitlement. It had always been done. Without mentioning names, you'd be surprised some of the people who were engaged in stamps for cash.

JOHNSON: Well certainly, another factor that seemed to attract public scrutiny was that you had some major players in the House, some really important Members of Congress that were involved in these scandals.

ANDERSON: Oh, absolutely. Chairman of the Ways and Means Committee [Daniel Rostenkowski], notably, but believe me, the list didn't stop there. It could've gone on much further. But the chairman of the Ways and Means Committee became something of a trophy for the U.S. Attorney, and indeed

it did cost him his seat eventually in the House, and he did serve time in a federal penitentiary, for having engaged in that practice. But I'm not sure that the law clearly prohibited what was done.

And then there was also the question with the same Member, and other Members using their stationery funds to buy gifts to give to people at the stationery store. While the stationery store, in addition to carrying the staple items that one would expect to find in an office, paper, pens, paper clips, the kind of supplies that one ordinarily needs to run any kind of a business office, there was a huge variety of gift-type and luxury items, which could also be bought against Members' representational allowance. That was one of my departments as the Clerk of the House. I tried the best I could to limit the number of gift-type items, I'd thought that it had gotten frankly out of control. But there was no reason we needed to be selling bone china and crystal stemware, 12 different beer and coffee mugs, a shoeshine kit with the seal of the House of Representatives, a toenail clipper with the seal of the House of Representatives. I mean, it just got kind of nuts. And every time I tried to curtail the goofy items, or some that I thought were just plainly unjustifiable, there were always Members would say, "Well I liked that stuff." Or, "My constituents enjoy it."

I remember once I tried to get rid of the silver-plated baby cup and spoon with the seal on them thinking that if I had a baby wouldn't I rather have the baby's name on it than the seal of the House of Representatives? And I was told quite plainly by a number of Members, our constituents love that stuff. Well, what are you going to do? Anything as long as it's done with a modicum of restraint is okay. But we're getting to the point where we were selling tens of thousands of dollars worth of merchandise like that, and its

destination was often in question. Who's getting the bone china, or the crystal stemware, or the hundreds of silver-plated baby cups and spoons? What is a true representational expenditure? And as the responsible Officer of the House, I can only do so much. I can hold the line only to the extent that I am permitted to hold the line. But if I'm overruled, there's not much I can do about it. And I was always waiting for those things to become an issue, particularly since Members or staff people could bring guests or constituents in to shop in the store. Most of the time, they just wanted an ashtray or a mug or something with a seal on it for a souvenir. But occasionally, we'd have some fat cats who would come in and buy hundreds, if not thousands of dollars worth of luxury goods.

[A 3-minute, 32-second segment of this interview was redacted.]

Finally, towards the end what we did was we created a separate gift shop, so that the stationery store was exclusively stationery items. Next to it was a gift shop, where anybody could come in off the street and buy for cash.

JOHNSON: So this was done under your tenure as Clerk?

ANDERSON: At the very end, yes. And that solved a world of difficulty because then you didn't need to have Members or staff bringing people in because it was open to the public, as well as the Hill community. And if somebody wanted to come in and buy a Cross pen, or a Montblanc pen they could. But we were selling at cost, so we were undercutting everybody else in town. Say, just for example a \$100 Montblanc pen might be \$60 at wholesale, which is what we were selling it for. And you can imagine how the retailers around the city were reacting, we were killing them.

JOHNSON: Going back to the banking scandal and the post office scandal, as one of the Officers of the House, what role were you called upon to play during this very turbulent period?

ANDERSON: Well, I wasn't. Because neither one of those things had any connection to the Office of the Clerk. I found it deeply distressing because it created a tremendous and very broad scrutiny of all of the Officers by the media. I knew that the press was microscopically looking at my organization for any sign of ethical lapse. I was equally confident that they wouldn't find any because I was very cautious. In fact, several of my friends in the [House] Press Gallery said, "A lot of our folks are looking at you," and I said, "I'd be surprised if they weren't." They said, "We don't expect to find anything because you have a reputation for being squeaky clean." And I said, "That is no accident, that is by design. I would rather err on the side of caution," I said. But it's their job to look, and I have no lack of peace of mind because of the knowledge that they are looking.

But it was deeply distressing, particularly since the other Officers that were having problems were two of my most beloved and treasured friends—had been for many, many years. Both Bob [Rota] and Jack [Russ] were very dear to me. To see them in distress was personally very painful. It also created a dilemma for me because they had in some way failed to properly administer their organizations. It was creating a very embarrassing situation for the House of Representatives, and for other Officers as well, those of us that didn't share those difficulties. And I think one of the most awful things that can confront an individual is to be angry with friends. When you're really angry and resentful of people that you've known and loved very much. They've created a situation that is the cause of embarrassment and grief for

oneself, even though you weren't a party to it, or did anything to deserve you that kind of opprobrium or public concern. And it was a very great dilemma for me to be angry with two of my dearest friends and two of my peers who'd been Officers of the House long before I was. And it took me a lot of thought and a lot of introspection to work those issues through because I didn't want to be angry with my friends. I wanted to be forgiving, yet at the same time, I felt that perhaps in some way they had failed in the obligation which I always saw very clearly on my part to always promote first the interests of the institution above all else, and to see that there was nothing for which I was responsible that would bring shame or opprobrium to the institution of the House of Representatives. That I found deeply troubling. It took me weeks to work through those issues so that I could again be at peace with my friends, who by then had resigned in disgrace and ultimately would serve prison time.

JOHNSON: Both in the same month I believe, March of '92?

ANDERSON: The same week. In the same week. It was just devastating. It was for me, the worst period in the 35 years that I served the institution. I felt it very deeply and very personally. Not only were two dear friends coming to personal grief, but they had—whether deliberately or by dereliction—contributed to the diminution of the institution, for which I was so intensely loyal and protective, which suffered gravely as a result of it. And which I think led to an earlier loss of the Democratic majority than would have happened. I think the loss of the majority would have come, perhaps a term or two later than it did. I think it was inevitable that it would happen. But I think that speeded up the process by giving the Republicans the ability to say, they're [the Democrats] absolutely corrupt from top to bottom. They can't run a

bank, they can't even run a post office. The Speaker has resigned, the Whip has resigned, and what did they call it, a culture of corruption?

JOHNSON: And a loss in public confidence.

ANDERSON: Absolutely. And it's just like the Republicans are dealing with right now with Duke [Randall] Cunningham and some of the other people that have brought scandal to their side. Not that there isn't enough of it to go around. I feel that that hastened the day when the Democratic majority was lost.

JOHNSON: We have covered a lot of ground today, and are out of time.

ANDERSON: Indeed we have.

JOHNSON: Thank you, very, very much.

— DONNALD K. ANDERSON —

INTERVIEW SEVEN

JOHNSON: This is Kathleen Johnson interviewing Donald Anderson, former Clerk of the U.S. House of Representatives. The interview is taking place in the Legislative Resource Center, Cannon House Office Building. This is the seventh interview with Mr. Anderson, and the date is October 5th, 2006.

In your previous interview, one of the topics discussed was the resignation of Speaker Wright. With the election of a new Speaker, Tom Foley, in 1989, did you and the other House Officers also come up for election?

ANDERSON: No, Speaker Wright resigned, I believe it was June 1989, six months into his second term as Speaker. The other Officers of the House would not necessarily be up for review. Our terms, of course, had another year and a half to run. As a matter of course, I offered the new Speaker, Mr. Foley, my resignation if he wished to choose his own Clerk, and confident in my own mind that he would not. Indeed he said, "Absolutely not. I would be very pleased if you would continue to serve as you have my predecessor." And so, no, there was no election for the subordinate Officers. It would be just like a Member resigning in midterm. An election would be held, but there was no reason for the other Officers of the House to resign. And of course we hadn't reached the point yet of the [House] Bank or [House] Post Office matters.

JOHNSON: Since you just brought up the bank scandal, and we talked about that in the last interview, I had a couple of follow-up questions. How was the morale of the House affected with so many Members either resigning or losing their elections as a result of the scandal?

ANDERSON:

Oh, morale was very dreary. It was something that touched everybody in the House with so many Members who had problems with overdrafts. Everybody had a friend who was affected if not affected themselves. And it was a mark against the House of Representatives, all of us have a certain institutional pride. When the institution is diminished likewise we feel diminished accordingly.

It was difficult to understand frankly why so much was made of it because the [House] Bank first of all was really a payroll office. And the Members received no interest on the money that they left on deposit in the bank. Likewise when they had overdrafts they were charged no interest. My view is I wouldn't bank at a bank that wouldn't honor an overdraft and protect me. Likewise I thought it was only appropriate the House Bank do that, too. Some Members did carry it to extremes where they really took advantage of the situation with enormous overdrafts which basically were interest-free loans.

In terms of public funds, the funds that were overdrawn came out of an accumulative account of Members' salaries. It didn't come out of appropriated funds. They were basically borrowing against their own accumulated pay, out of that one big pot. So at no time was the public liable for those overdrafts. In any case, even if a Member had died with overdrafts because the House always grants one year tax-free salary to the estate of the deceased Member, the House could have recovered that way. So there was really no way that the House could lose. For some Members it was a matter of inattention where the amounts were very small. For other Members there certainly was a design to get interest-free loans by their overdrafts.

The bank was an anachronism as I said in my earlier interview. It was created in an age long ago when Members came to Washington and did not have access to their hometown banks. And so the Sergeant at Arms, who has always paid the Members until recent years, provided a banking service with checks so that Members while they were in Washington could pay the bills at their rooming houses where they lived, at the livery stable where they got their horses and carriages. It was a convenience for the Members who were a long ways from home. Of course, as time passed and banking became modern and checks from local banks were generally honored everywhere, that need had vanished. However, the bank persisted. It probably should have been closed.

There actually were quite a few Members who did not keep deposits at the House Bank because they thought, "Why should I keep thousands of dollars in a bank that doesn't pay interest? I can move it home and at least get one or two percent on the balance I have in my checking account." I would say probably a quarter of the Members had their pay immediately sent elsewhere and did not ever write checks on the House Bank. They didn't even have accounts.

JOHNSON: Was there a public backlash against the patronage system because of this scandal and because of the post office scandal?

ANDERSON: I wouldn't say there was a public backlash. A lot of things are perceived as public backlashes which are actually attention that's generated internally by the Members in their own comments before the public or by the comments generated in the national media. I was unaware of any citizens groups or even citizens that were clamoring for the end of patronage. The minority,

then the Republicans, used that as a lever to say the Democrats are so wedded to the patronage system that they don't have qualified people doing important things, when in point of fact most of the patronage employees held fairly low-level jobs that required minimal skill.

In my organization out of more than 600 employees fewer than 50 of my employees were patronage, where the Members filled those vacancies. And they were all entry-level positions where minimal job skills were required. None of those people had any supervisory responsibility or fiduciary responsibility whatsoever. Very often the [Democratic] Patronage Committee didn't even have people to fill those jobs, and I filled them myself using the screening and interview techniques that I did in filling other positions. And in the case of those who originally came to my organization by patronage who demonstrated their worthiness as employees, I very often would move them from patronage positions into full positions which were under my control and return the vacant job to the Patronage Committee to be filled yet again.

By the time I became Clerk of the House, patronage had almost disappeared, except perhaps in the House Post Office, which was overwhelmingly a patronage culture. But then again in the post office most of the jobs were low-level mail sorters, mail gatherers, delivery people, requiring minimal skills that could be quickly learned. The problem in the post office came with those employees who handled cash or cash instruments at the counters for the window service, the stamps, money orders, and that sort of thing, where there was a fiduciary responsibility. And it turned out that those things were not well done. Not that there was any widespread theft or

embezzlement, but the way stamps and cash instruments were handled was very sloppy to say the least.

As far as drug use in the House Post Office as Mike Shinay, who became [House] Postmaster, in fact was the last Postmaster of the House following Bob Rota's resignation, told me, and he was a career postal manager who came from the United States Postal Service, he said there's not a post office in the United States where somebody in the backroom isn't sniffing or smoking something. And his observation was that the House Post Office was relatively small, it was a class-B post office, and if it had even been the city post office of Washington, D.C., the failings that were found would have been a two-paragraph story in the metro section for one day, but because the post office was that of the U.S. House of Representatives it immediately rose to a higher level of attention.

JOHNSON: Related to the two scandals, especially the banking scandal, and the practice of patronage, can you provide historical background on the creation of the Director of Non-Legislative and Financial Services—the predecessor to the CAO [Chief Administrative Officer] that was established during 102nd Congress [1991–1993]?

ANDERSON: Right. The Democratic leadership was faced with a serious dilemma. The House had been badly damaged in its public image by the bank and the post office and the thundering and roaring of the Republican minority to get rid of the so-called patronage system and professionalize all aspects of the House. And to me it was a solution that was really a nonsolution in creating the Director of Non-Legislative and Financial Services. To bring someone in

who was unfamiliar with the culture of the House (which is a unique institution).

Many people think of the House of Representatives, indeed most people think of the House of Representatives, as one large corporate entity, when in fact it's a loose gathering of 435 small businesses tied together under the umbrella name of the House of Representatives. When you add the committees and the support offices, all of whom are independent employing authorities, you come up with about 475 to 500 various employing authorities. Of course everybody has a different view of management and different management style.

But the Democratic leadership was in a panic to do something, which they thought was significant to assuage the criticism of the House for being unable to run a small bank and a small post office successfully where there was criminality and fiduciary infidelity. And that's why they came up with this hastily conceived scheme to create the Director of Non-Legislative and Financial Services. And basically in giving him his duties they went down the telephone directory and arbitrarily assigned those duties to the new Director. The irony was that much of the Director's responsibility came out of the Office of the Clerk, which was absolutely without stain or blemish or even the hint of anything having been done wrong or any other failing whatsoever. The Clerk's Office, and I say with a certain conscious pride, had received praise for the excellence in which we conducted our affairs. Not just on my watch, but the Clerk's Office generally had a reputation for being intelligently structured and well managed. I like to think that that improved during the eight years that I was the Clerk of the House.

So I was rather wounded by the fact that many of my responsibilities, which I had handled faithfully and well, were transferred to the new Director, including the financial operations of the House and a variety of service support operations like furniture and furnishings, the childcare center, and things like that. I saw no rationale for it. Basically they were fixing something that wasn't broken in the first place. But it was a dramatic move, and frankly the House never got any credit for taking it, as I predicted they wouldn't. When it comes to appeasing the media, more is never enough. It was like [British Prime Minister] Neville Chamberlain going to Munich to appease Adolf Hitler [during World War II]. It can't be done. And if the Members had paraded into the well of the House, taken off their clothes and set themselves on fire, they would have been accused of an esthetic blunder as well as pollution. There is no solution for that sort of thing. And reforms that are done in haste and panic are not good reforms. They aren't carefully thought through.

The House of Representatives at that point had just celebrated its bicentennial [in 1989]—a very old institution. And I found early in my career with the House that many of the things that are done here, as odd as they may seem externally, are based in a very solid historical foundation. There is actually a rational explanation for everything that is done. The Members who were responsible, and it was mainly majority Members and the leadership, for creating that new office, really hadn't a clue as to how the subpolitical operations of the House were structured or managed. They thought they did but they really didn't, just as I thought when I was first elected Clerk of the House in 1987 that I came to that office with a very firm grip on everything that the Clerk did. Within 24 hours I found out just how little I actually did know about what the Clerk of the House did. And I was

on a learning curve for the full eight years that I had the office, always learning new things about what the Clerk of the House did.

JOHNSON: You mentioned that the Democratic leadership spearheaded this reform. Was there one person in particular that you know that was working behind the scenes?

ANDERSON: It was probably Vic [Victor Herbert] Fazio, [Jr.], as chairman of the Legislative Branch Appropriations Subcommittee. I'm trying to think of who else might have been involved. Possibly Ben [Benjamin Louis] Cardin.

JOHNSON: Charlie Rose?

ANDERSON: Charlie Rose was actually opposed to the whole idea. As chairman of the House Administration Committee he was brought into it but made no secret of the fact that he thought that the reform was unnecessary and unjustifiable. Didn't like it at all. I know reluctantly he went along with it. It wasn't done well because as we found in our research, the Clerk of the House, at least at that point, was cited in the United States Code several hundred times as to what the responsibilities and duties of the Clerk were. In fact I was impressed when I asked my lawyers to give me a compilation of the citations referencing the Clerk of the House in the statutes at large of the United States, and there were hundreds of them. By simply transferring duties to a new entity you've got to change the law in order to give that person signatory and executive authority. So I found myself in the odd situation of signing everything that somebody else was agreeing to, like payroll appointments, pay adjustments, contracts, things that had been my responsibility, and under the law still were. I must say I felt a certain unease about doing that because

these were people I didn't know. Contracts of which I had no further oversight but was expected to sign. So I definitely had a legal and fiduciary responsibility and I hated it.

JOHNSON: What was your relationship like with the new office? Did they come to you and ask for advice?

ANDERSON: Yes, General [Leonard] Wishart was hired. They hired a headhunting firm to find the Director, and he was a recently retired United States Army Lieutenant General, a three-star, kind of stereotypically what you'd expect a three-star general to be, recently retired, kind of stiff and starchy, not a martinet by any means, but was used to giving orders rather than taking them. It was very clear early on that he was uncomfortable in a political environment where he was expected to take orders from hundreds of people, basically. He did his diligence to try to structure the transfer and the change intelligently. Of course then, as always, I gave him my complete cooperation. I am after all the loyal servant of the House and as much as I despised what was done, I would not reflect that in being obstinate or non-cooperative. To me if it was that hateful, my only alternative would be to resign. Which I did not feel moved to do.

But he did his best. It was kind of fitful and full of stumbles as he groped his way through an organization that was very different from the structure of the military from which he came, where duties and responsibilities and decision-making is very clearly delineated, as opposed to a large political institution where different people have different areas of responsibility that may be very hard to determine, and that usually comes with long service to the institution, as you understand who is really responsible for what.

So I was not so concerned personally because the change had nothing to do with me. Nobody had ever imputed any incompetence or malfeasance or neglect to me personally as the Clerk of the House. I did not take it that way. What troubled me deeply was the Office of the Clerk, which is as old as the institution itself, it was established as the second formal act of the House on the first day it had a quorum, would be so dramatically restructured and in fact dissected, after more than two centuries. Some Members who really were naive on the subject talked to me about wouldn't you be happy about just having your traditional duties to do, thinking that the legislative processes were the traditional duties of the Clerk. In point of fact all of those things, the financial and general administration of the House, were the traditional duties of the Clerk as well. Nobody else had ever done those things, but the Clerk for 200 and some years at that point. And I brought them up to date on the fact that those are my traditional duties. Those aren't things that have accreted in the last few decades. They'd been there since 1789. And it is something of an irony even during the eight years that I was Clerk up to that point that every time something new was established it was given to the Clerk of the House to administer, such as the Office of Fair Employment Practices, the childcare center, the Office of Employee Assistance just for starters. Every time the House did something, created something new, it always ended up on the Clerk's desk, which was fine with me. And I found it frankly flattering that the leadership and the Members of the House had confidence enough in my organization to give me additional very important responsibilities, which suddenly had a reversal with the creation of the Office of the Director [of the Non-Legislative and Financial Services].

Having a strong sense of history, and being a student, indeed a scholar of the institution, it troubled me deeply that the Clerk's Office would be so cavalierly dealt with by people who hadn't an inkling as to what the origins and function of the Clerk's Office historically had been. Which is why I view myself historically as the last Clerk of the House, since the Clerk's function now has been reduced to legislative responsibilities. Always part of that package. To me it was reinventing the wheel, particularly since nothing was saved. A new bureaucracy was created to do something that was already intact, with another level of administration and more expense.

JOHNSON: Was that the biggest change that you've seen historically in the role of the Clerk?

ANDERSON: Oh absolutely, absolutely. The Clerk's Office grew through accretion for more than 200 years, even though the general mission of the Clerk's Office was unchanged, which was legislative, financial and administrative, but as the times changed in the nation, and as a result the institution became more complex, the Clerk's Office grew accordingly, basically expanding the three areas of responsibility that it had always had. It was a monumentally stupendous change in the Office of the Clerk.

JOHNSON: In your opinion, what are the key qualities that contribute to an effective Clerk?

ANDERSON: Many of those qualities I think are consistent with a good manager anywhere. The ability to "know that you don't know," which I think came from Socrates. I know that I don't know. When I became Clerk of the House I inherited a very large organization, was extremely diverse in responsibility.

Some of those things I was acute to and could actually do myself because I had enough understanding and knowledge. Most of the things that were done by my various departments I couldn't possibly do myself because I didn't understand them. So I had to have great confidence in my workforce and especially my managers.

My rule was I would hire good managers and then get out of the way and let them manage. The requirement being that they keep me constantly informed as to what they were doing so that I was never blindsided or in the dark. I found it best not to be looking over people's shoulders all the time. I trusted until I was given reason to do otherwise and it worked. And I encouraged my managers to come to me with their needs and with their problems and their difficulties so that I could support them in resolving those things, getting them the help that they needed, if they needed new equipment, personnel resources, whatever.

But I think primarily a good Clerk—and the Clerk still has an extraordinarily unique relationship to the institution, the Clerk is still by any measure the pre-eminent Officer of the House—has to be someone who intuitively understands the institution in a historical perspective. In the political tides that influence and govern the institution because in practice it bears little relation to how you may structure it on a flowchart or an organization chart. To that extent I consider myself extremely well qualified when I came to the job because I had a historical overview of the totality of the institution. I had worked for it for 27 years before I was chosen Clerk. I had no other agenda than to be a good servant of the House. When I became Clerk of the House I said this will be the last job I ever have, and indeed it was the last job. For the last 12 years I've not sought another job. I'm quite content to have

ended my career as the Clerk of the House with the confidence of knowing that I did it the best that I could and in fact it was a good run. I never was invalidated in what I did.

I think it is folly to bring someone in from the outside to do important things institutionally. That was discovered in my immediate successor, who came from a non-House background, and I don't want to get into criticizing her, but she was constantly reinventing the wheel and fixing things that weren't broken simply since she had no understanding, however fundamental, of what the structure and needs of the House were and how the political machinery operates, which is pretty much the same whether it's Democrats or Republicans that are running it.

My two additional successors, Jeff Trandahl and more recently Karen Haas, are institutional people. They came to that office having long previous institutional service, and so a keen understanding of the internal politics of the House, its history and the unique and sometimes difficult to explain structure of its administration. As a result, both of them were and are highly regarded as being splendidly suited for the job. They're not reinventing the wheel. They're building upon a solid foundation that is already in place. And I must say I am absolutely delighted in the case of both Jeff and Karen, who now are my second and third successors, it was a matter of great joy to me when first Jeff and then more recently Karen were named to be Clerks of the House because they follow my vision of what the Clerk ought to be in terms of preparation for that high responsibility.

JOHNSON: Going back to your time as Clerk, you had the same Deputy Clerk throughout your tenure, Ray Colley. Can you describe the relationship between the two of you?

ANDERSON: I did. Sure I'd be delighted to. Ray Colley was originally a journalist. He's a newspaperman by background. In his early years, he was an Army officer. He came from southwestern Virginia and came to Washington as administrative assistant to W. Pat Jennings, who then was a Democratic Representative from southwestern Virginia. Later on Ray left the service of the House to become Assistant Postmaster General of the United States during the [Lyndon B.] Johnson administration. And then after Johnson, when Richard Nixon became President, Ray came back to the House. By then Pat Jennings had been defeated for his House seat but had been chosen Clerk of the House in 1966. Pat asked Ray to come back and Ray in fact was the first Deputy Clerk. There never was a position of deputy. It was created for him and he continued to serve four successive Clerks of the House as deputy.

I often thought that there was no one on the House side of the Capitol who had a keener understanding of every aspect first of the Clerk's Office but just of the House of Representatives in general. The depth and breadth of his knowledge always astounded me. And yet he had very low visibility. He kept his head below the ramparts and did not seek to become a highly visible figure in his own right.

Needless to say, Ray had always aspired to be the Clerk himself. And after being passed over three times, as deputies rarely rise to become the principal in their offices, he kind of lost that aspiration. At that point, the years were

overtaking him. I recall that the day the Democratic Caucus nominated me for Clerk, which was in early December 1986, I was the manager of the Democratic Cloakroom at the time, and about 5:00 that evening the phone rang in the cloakroom and I answered it and it was Ray and he asked if he could come up and visit with me. By then everybody was gone, the other floor staff, the Pages. And I said, "Sure, Ray, by all means come up." I had an inkling of what he wanted and so he came in and very graciously congratulated me on having been nominated for Clerk, which of course was tantamount to election, which is a mere formality having been nominated by the majority. He said quite candidly, "It's difficult to always be a bridesmaid and never a bride." He said, "I make no secret of the fact that I always aspired to be Clerk of the House." I said, "Yes, I knew that. That was certainly understood and it would have been surprising if you had not." He said, "That if it is your inclination to continue me as the Deputy Clerk, which of course is your call, I would promise you my loyalty and dedication." I said, "I could ask for no more and would expect no less and frankly I was hopeful that you would want to stay because if you weren't I would have done my best to talk you out of it and convince you to stay on. I'm beginning to understand my own inadequacy and I appreciate the extraordinary resource that you've been to the Clerk's Office these many years and how dedicated and loyal you have been to the Clerk, in fact several Clerks." And so we shook hands on that.

For the next eight years it was an extremely happy marriage. We never spoke again about his disappointment at not having been Clerk. Without fail he supported me in every particular. The knowledge that he shared with me and the dedication that he gave to the Office of the Clerk to me were beyond measure and certainly beyond my ability to express appreciation. I would

have been at a tremendous deficit if I had not had the benefit of his knowledge and hands-on experience. I consider part of my success as Clerk, a measurable part, to the fact that Ray was my deputy.

JOHNSON: He must have brought a lot of institutional knowledge that helped you in your first few years.

ANDERSON: Absolutely. Not only that, Ray was a superbly acute politician. It was no secret that for many years—in fact until just two or three years ago—Ray was the vice chair of the Virginia Democratic Party. In fact when we had that conversation in the [Democratic] Cloakroom in December of 1986 Ray mentioned that and he said, “I’m sure you know I’m the vice chair of the Virginia Democratic Party. Do you have a problem with my continuing to hold that office?” And I said to him, “Has it ever been a problem? Have you ever been criticized here in the House for holding that office?” And he said, “No, I have not.” I said, “Nor am I aware that anyone has criticized you.” I said, “As far as I’m concerned, as long as you continue to do that strictly at arm’s length and you understand the law on that very well, and what you do in Virginia Democratic politics creates no embarrassment for me or for the Office of the Clerk in general, it’s fine with me if you continue to hold that office.”

He always made a very discreet separation of his public responsibility from his political responsibility and never kept anything in his office related to the Virginia Democratic Party, never used the telephone for the business of Virginia Democratic Party. His office was absolutely sterile when it came to the political office that he held across the river. And it never became an issue and it was certainly no secret. The Republican leadership certainly knew of

his position. I am unaware of any objection ever having been raised to it. Certainly not to me.

JOHNSON: What were some of the other significant positions in the Clerk's Office besides the Deputy Clerk?

ANDERSON: Well, in addition to the deputy, there were three principal assistants plus my administrative assistant, who probably could be described as an executive secretary. One of the three I retained, Dolores Snow, who had been an assistant to the Clerk for several years. She for at least 20 years was the administrative assistant in Speaker O'Neill's congressional office. She ran his congressional office. Not only beloved to him but a beloved friend of mine. I'd known Dolores for perhaps 30 years at that point. As Mr. O'Neill was beginning to think about the conclusion of his career, one by one he placed elsewhere employees that were particularly dear to him so that they could continue after he had left office. And so he placed Dolores in the Clerk's Office and to me that was a double bonus because she was so highly skilled and competent but also a cherished friend on top of that. So naturally I wanted her to stay on.

I did discharge two of the principal assistants of my predecessor. In fact one apparently reading the handwriting on the wall put in his retirement papers before I became Clerk so I didn't really terminate him myself. I did sign the takeoff. Speaker Wright gave me a mandate, quote, "Donn, I expect you to clean that place up." And that was all he told me. Based on that, I knew that I had his full backing to structure and staff the office as I felt most appropriate and suited my level of comfort and that I would have the Speaker's full support to do that.

So as my other two principal assistants, I brought from the Parliamentarian's Office, Dallas Dendy, who by the way called me this morning. He had heard that I hadn't been feeling well. He now lives in Dallas, Texas, oddly enough. And Dallas was the longtime timekeeper, worked for the Parliamentarian, always stood to the Speaker's left, in fact sat in the Clerk's chair except on formal occasions. Helping the Speaker recognize Members and keeping track of the consumption of time. Dallas had an extraordinary insight into the legislative process. That particular portfolio was our legislative group of offices, such as this would be. And so I asked Dallas if he would wish to join my staff. It was somewhat better in terms of pay than he had been getting, but it gave him a much wider range of responsibility. Bill Brown, who was then the Parliamentarian, told me, "I really hoped that you would offer that job to Dallas even though I'm just sick to death about losing him, but I think it's a good thing for both of you." And indeed it was.

Then for my third principal assistant I brought Bill Long over from the Finance Office. He had been the chief of the benefits section of the Finance Office and had a huge reputation amongst the workforce of the Hill for his excellent understanding of benefits, health benefits, retirement, life insurance, the things that are so important to the workforce. Difficult for many people to grasp, particularly retirement. And it's one of those things that if it is not done well it is a disaster for the individual because most of the decisions made by federal employees about retirement are one-time irrevocable decisions.

So you can end up at the end of your working life with much less than you had expected when it comes time to do the computation. I knew Bill socially but not all that well. I knew him best by his good reputation and the high

regard that he generally enjoyed. His portfolio included personnel for the Clerk's Office.

And frankly as I may have touched, morale in the Clerk's Office was not very good. In fact it was extremely low—great workforce, poorly motivated because of other people's agendas, people had been passed over that should have been promoted. There was a cliquishness between the front office and certain segments of the workforce. These were things that I felt were my highest priority to change when I assumed office because without a well-motivated, happy workforce, nothing else will work. You've got to start there.

So I asked Bill. I called him one day from the cloakroom after I became the nominee of the [Democratic] Caucus. And we knew each other, but not particularly well. I called him in the Finance Office right upstairs here [in the Cannon House Office Building] and said, "Can you come over and visit with me?" He said, "Sure I'll be over." When he came over we went across the hall to the Ways and Means Room in the Capitol, which is now Vice President [Richard Bruce] Cheney's office. I had a key to it, which I sometimes used when the chairman wasn't around as a place—and the chairman gave me the key—where I could enjoy some privacy, which the cloakroom never afforded. Particularly after the word got out that I was going to be Clerk, it was a parade of people all wanting jobs in the Clerk's Office. I was just beset for days after I became the nominee of the caucus.

So Bill and I went across the hall to the Ways and Means Room and I said, "Bill, I'm going to be the Clerk of the House next year for the 100th Congress [1987–1989]. And he said, "Yes, I knew that." I said, "It's a

tremendous responsibility. I'm aware of the fact that the personnel situation in the Clerk's Office is a mess, that there's disaffection, disappointment, morale is dismal." I said, "Give me your thoughts on what needs to be done to turn that around." He gave me an explanation that to me was breathtaking in its analysis and thoughtful conclusions. I said to him at that point, "How would you like to be an assistant to the Clerk of the House?" He said, "I think I'd like that a lot." I said, "Great." And I offered him my hand. I said, "You're hired." Now I've got to find someone to replace you because Bob Maguire, the chief of the Finance Office, will be very sore at me for taking one of his principal assets away. But I said, "I will talk to you about that and we'll see who your successor will be." So anyhow that's how I came to have my three principal assistants.

My administrative assistant Ann Fletcher, who was an older southern lady from southwestern Virginia, I had known for many years socially. I loved Ann for her warmth and personality and milk of human kindness personality in addition to her extraordinary office managerial skills and experience because she had worked for the House for quite a long time and prior to that had worked for the space industry in Florida. She worked for three different high-ranking Members of the House. So I knew that I would want my own administrative assistant, something that is so very personal, and I did give notice to the person who had held the job, it was not out of any antipathy towards her, but I wanted someone who understood me and would not be constantly saying, "Well Mr. Guthrie [previous Clerk] or 'Mr. Whomever' used to do it this way," which I expected had I not made the change. So I offered Ann the job and she said, "I think we'll do just fine together, honey."

Indeed it could not have been a happier relationship. She had the remarkable ability to throw oil on troubled waters. To keep a level of calm and cheerfulness in the front office. It created an atmosphere of warmth and welcome. I had more people tell me, "I don't know who Ann is but I just love her to death," because she always had time for a cheerful comment for everybody and a warm smile. And there was no guile in her. There was nothing concocted about her wonderful personality. That was the way she was, a woman of infinite patience up to the point that she would not suffer abuse or coarse language. She'd put her foot down on that and with my entire support. She had my front office and particularly my life so well structured, she made my appointments, saw that I was pointed in the right direction all day long, screened the people who came to see me.

I did keep an open door, which bothered her, because people would come flying in right past her desk. She could scarcely deny that I was in if the door was wide open and there I am. I didn't like sitting in my office with the door closed. I never liked it. I wanted to hear other voices and see the traffic in the reception room. But she also knew some people that I would be delighted to see and other people that frankly I would be appalled to see and knew how to rescue me from those people. She had her little list of people that she had to save me from. And she did very well. Always with a credible reason why I couldn't talk any longer. "Honey, you'll have to leave now because he's got to go see the Speaker," whatever the explanation was.

She was just wonderful, absolutely wonderful. It broke my heart when about a year and a half before I left she decided to retire. But she had worked for a very long time and she was anxious to get back to the hills of southwestern Virginia and enjoy sitting on her porch and looking at the mountains. So I

had to promote another person in my office. But that was the basic structure of my immediate office.

The deputy and each of the three assistants, had a portfolio of departments or other responsibilities that were associated with the front office. Dolores had things like the stationery store and office equipment. Bill, in addition to being my personnel guy also had the department of Office Furnishings. I always called it property supply [formerly the Office of Property Supply and Repair Service] and I never got used to the new name. Dallas had the legislative group, which included things like my responsibility after the Census and reapportionment of the House, my archival functions. And Ray Colley had only one department, but it was extraordinarily important. And that was the Office of Finance where he personally oversaw that office and the chief of that office answered directly to him.

JOHNSON: Do you know if this was a similar division with previous Clerks?

ANDERSON: Yes. I gave more emphasis to Bill in terms of personnel because I recognized that as either my complete success or total undoing if I didn't take remedial action in the personnel area. To provide fairness and confidence amongst the workforce that I was on their side, that I was their advocate. Clerks of the House had tended to be very remote figures. I made myself very accessible and very present. I would set aside time every week to wander about the buildings, dropping in at my various departments. So much so in fact that at first it created a stir because the employees weren't used to seeing the Clerk of the House. In fact I found that many of them never had seen a Clerk of the House. In fact having worked for the Clerk for years they'd never seen a Clerk. And I said that has to change. I wanted a comfort level.

And at first it created a furor with everybody trying to look as busy and professional as they could, and then after a while when I became a familiar figure you couldn't feel any tension or change. They went about their business as I went by to just visit and say hello. I wasn't there as an inspector or an inquisitor. I was simply there because I was interested in knowing who worked for me and hopefully learning more about what they did. It paid enormous dividends.

I declared that I had an open door policy. That anyone in the workforce that had a grievance or perhaps a suggestion for improvement was welcome to bring that directly to me. While I preferred that they use the chain of command if for some reason they weren't comfortable going through supervisory channels they could bring their complaint directly to me and I promised only that I would give them a hearing but not necessarily an adjudication. And that in the decisions that I made that employees did not have a right to know my mind except to the extent that I was willing to explain my rationale for doing as I did. But nobody had a right to understand how I came to a particular conclusion. And they seemed to be content with that.

Bill cautioned me against it. Bill thought that I'd have a line 20 or 30 deep in the hall all day long of employees coming to see me about this or that insignificant thing. I said, "I don't think so." I said, "I truly believe that if they know they can come they'll be content with that," and in point of fact relatively few came. And I was as good as my word. If they wanted to see me about something I always saw them. Very often if they had a grievance it was through a misunderstanding or a lack of understanding of something that was going on, which I was able to clarify for them and they went away happy.

Sometimes they brought suggestions that I found useful. Sometimes I found them crazy but I listened anyhow. And as one of my employees in the Finance Office who had been a longtime Clerk's employee remarked, he said we have *glasnost* in the Clerk's Office, openness. And that was the time when [Mikhail] Gorbachev was spreading *glasnost* all over the Soviet Union. I was very flattered by that though I didn't think of the previous regime as the totalitarian communist dictatorship but in any case it was refreshing.

But I had wonderful relations with my employees. I like to think that while I couldn't recall all their names because there were over 600 of them, that if I ran into one of them in the hall I would at least know by the face that that was someone who worked for me somewhere if I couldn't make a further connection. Bill Long had the remarkable ability to know every single one of our employees by name and usually a decent amount of personal information about them, which was very useful when it came time for personnel actions.

I recall in one of our very small departments, the House Placement Office, where there were six or eight employees, very small shop, the assistant chief of that department resigned to take a position elsewhere. My policy had always been to promote in line. If the next senior person, assuming that he or she was competent for the additional responsibility, my inclination was always to promote that person and move everybody up a notch. So when I was looking at the people in that office as to who I would choose to become assistant chief I naturally looked at the woman who was the next most senior person in that office and I told Bill I'm promoting "so-and-so" to be assistant chief of the Placement Office. He shook his head and said, "You can't do that." I said, "Why not? She's been here quite a long time, she's the senior person in that office, it is my feeling that she's been a competent and loyal employee. Why

shouldn't I promote her?" And he said, "You're absolutely right about all of those things. She is a fine employee. She has been with us a long time and she is the most senior person next in line in that organization." "So why can't I promote her?" "If you do she will become a supervisor and will be supervising her own sister, different name, and her live-in significant other." "Oh, really? No, we can't have that. That will never work. I didn't know that." She deserved a promotion and I was determined that she would have it. So I moved her to a different operating unit where she would have the recognition of the greater responsibility and the additional compensation but would not be supervising her sister or her live-in boyfriend.

I always tried to avoid those relationships. We had plenty of significant others and relatives in our organization but my rule was they should all work in different operating units to avoid any suspicion of favoritism. But I had plenty of relatives in the Clerk's Office, most of whom I inherited. And that worked well enough. I think in one family, the Bowles family, we had seven members of that family working in various positions for the Clerk of the House. And they were just terrific. They're wonderful employees to the last person. It was a joy to have them.

JOHNSON: That would serve as an example of the patronage era?

ANDERSON: Yes, they're probably holdovers from that, but had learned well their job skills and had moved ahead with responsibility—demonstrated ability. My concern was not with how people came but their performance once they arrived.

JOHNSON: I wanted to switch topics for a moment. You were one of several House Officers. Did your office, the Clerk's Office, work as a separate agency or did you have more of a relationship in which you worked closely with the other House Offices?

ANDERSON: For the first time that anybody could remember, the five subordinate Officers of the House worked very closely together. In the years before I became Clerk of the House, the Officers usually viewed each other with a certain suspicion and jealousy. We like to joke about the chalk lines drawn on the carpet. "This is my territory, don't step into it." The last key to that was when I became the Clerk of the House and, of course, the other Officers who had been in their jobs for quite a few years in most cases were dear friends of mine. And we agreed to work together in the spirit of friendship that had always joined us and to cooperate and to help each other out whenever we could. If I heard something negative about another one that they needed to know about so they could fix the problem I passed the word, "Congressman So-and-So' is not happy with you and this is why. You might want to tend to that situation."

I wasn't particularly territorial. There were a couple of things in my organization which I thought clearly ought not to be there that should be somewhere else. For instance why should the Clerk of the House be making ID cards for security purposes for the employees of the House? That's an internal security function that should properly be with the security officer, the Sergeant at Arms. He preferred to do it. I preferred not to do it. I considered it a terrible headache and responsibility that we were not really competent to discharge. Plus it also diverted employees of the Finance Office frequently to create those ID cards. I wanted those people to give their full

attention to the more obvious duties of the Finance Office. So I gave away that ID card responsibility to the Sergeant at Arms. My predecessor absolutely refused to do it even though he had previously been the Sergeant at Arms.

JOHNSON: This is something that you worked out with was it Jack Russ [Sergeant at Arms] at the time?

ANDERSON: Jack Russ, yes. And likewise we had two locksmith shops. One was part of property supply and one was sort of a free agent where the man who ran it created a little sinecure for himself. He was very, very competent at security, high security locks, alarms and that sort of thing. I thought to myself we don't need that. The kind of lock work that we do are file cabinets, desk drawers, we don't really do office doors. The Architect's [of the Capitol] people do that. There are some security systems which belong to us that we tend to, but we don't need someone with that kind of expertise who frankly is underutilized. Jack wanted that individual and I gladly transferred him and all his equipment to the Sergeant at Arms. It made much better sense to both of us to have it there. But I wasn't just holding onto things for the sake of holding onto things. In other words, a very, very, close personal and professional relationship amongst the Officers of the House.

JOHNSON: Can you provide an example of a joint project that you may have worked on with other House Officers?

ANDERSON: Well I suppose immediately coming to mind was the trip to Philadelphia in [July] 1987 when we celebrated the bicentennial of the Great Compromise of the Constitutional Convention where most of the House and most of the

Senate on a chartered train went to Philadelphia for a long weekend to commemorate the Great Compromise, which of course defined the nature of the legislative branch of our government (basically Article I). After that the deadlock was broken in the convention and the rest of the Constitution came along rather quickly after the issue was decided as to how the people in the states should be represented in the first branch.

We had logistics in terms of staging the Joint Ceremony in the conference room of Independence Hall in Philadelphia of moving certain artifacts of the House to Philadelphia that had to be secured and then returned, of providing televised coverage of those proceedings using our own people and facilities. But the Sergeant at Arms had the responsibility for the security of the Members of the House while traveling, while in Philadelphia, working with the local law enforcement authorities to be sure that their safety was ensured while we were in Philadelphia. And also arranging the actual logistics of the transportation, the train, the buses from the Rayburn Horseshoe [the horseshoe-shaped main entrance of the building] to get the Members and their significant others over to Union Station [in Washington, D.C.] to board the train. So that would have been an example of a close collaboration. The Doorkeeper's Office was responsible to some minor degree but it was basically a matter that was principally conducted by the Clerk and the Sergeant at Arms.

The leadership, while anxious to participate, kind of left it in our hands to arrange the scenario for the whole thing. I worked with the Historian's Office, Dr. [Raymond] Smock, in researching some of the historical aspects of what we would do once we got to Philadelphia and Independence Hall. Joe Stewart, the Secretary of the Senate, and I presided jointly, which was a

thrill I will never forget, in the assembly room in Independence Hall in calling the Joint Ceremony to order and then in conducting the roll call on the election of Lindy Boggs to be the chairwoman of the Joint Ceremony. And of course that was by previous design. It was simply a matter of calling the roll and her being chosen unanimously.

JOHNSON: Was there a similar level of cooperation with the bicentennial of the first meeting of Congress?

ANDERSON: Yes, yes. That was in 1989. By then I was very comfortably situated in my role. The only thing that got in the way of a joyous celebration of the bicentennial was the increasing difficulty that Jim Wright was having as Speaker. The end at that point was easily predictable. I'm trying to recall whether—no, I think he had left office by the time we actually celebrated the bicentennial.¹⁷ I think it was Speaker Foley who was in the chair when we had the ceremony in the House commemorating—well, actually we had several ceremonies. We had a ceremony commemorating the first quorum of the House.

JOHNSON: That would have been in April.

ANDERSON: Yes. Then we had a Joint Meeting of Congress to commemorate the bicentennial of the Congress [on March 2, 1989]. The Senate also had a separate ceremony commemorating the first quorum of the Senate. And the Joint Meeting was really quite wonderful. The principal speaker was David McCullough, the author of several extraordinary historical volumes including *Truman* and *John Adams*.¹⁸ He gave as fine a speech on any occasion as I have ever heard. It was kind of funny. When we were putting together

the—I guess actually we—Jim Wright probably still was the Speaker because we had the Joint Meeting as I recall on the meeting of Congress, which I think was March 1st.

JOHNSON: The quorum call was in April.

ANDERSON: Yes, and so we did that first as a Joint Meeting of Congress. So Jim Wright was still the Speaker. Then later, on April 1st, we had our own ceremony exclusively for the House commemorating the first quorum and I remember I was standing at the rostrum and of course the chamber was still decorated with the bunting and the potted palms and it was all quite grand and wonderful and Barney Frank walked in after the ceremony had commenced and he said to me, “Donn, what’s going on? What’s all this about?” And I said, “We’re commemorating the bicentennial of the first quorum of the House.” And he said, “Didn’t we do that a few weeks ago?” And I said, “No, that was actually the first assembly of Congress.” And he said—with his usual wry wit—“Isn’t this getting a little out of control? What’s next? The bicentennial of the first congressional junket? The bicentennial of the expulsion of the first Member?” Or indictment of the first Member I think was the word that he used. I said, “Okay, Barney, I understand where you’re coming from and if you’d like to stay it’ll be very nice. I think you’ll enjoy it.” So, no, Jim Wright was still the Speaker then. That was spring of 1989.

JOHNSON: I have a few more questions I want to ask you about this, but I need to stop so I can switch CDs.

END OF PART ONE ~ BEGINNING OF PART TWO

JOHNSON: You were just speaking about the several bicentennial celebrations and one of the questions I wanted to ask you was you had mentioned that Lindy Boggs had played a prominent role in the organization of these events. Were there other Members that also played a significant role?

ANDERSON: Not in the formative stage. Lindy pretty much carried the ball from the beginning in 1976 when we celebrated the bicentenary of independence. And that's the origin of the House History Office, how that got off the ground.¹⁹ She had long been an advocate of a history office for the House. She managed to pry that door open a little bit by putting together a very small working group to plan first the bicentennial of independence and then leading up later to the celebration of the bicentennial of nationhood and constitutional government. She did it with such a zeal and with such caring and thoughtfulness and her usual competence that I don't think too many others actually intruded on that, nor wanted to. I think it was one of those things that a lot of people thought was necessary to do, but "Geez I'm too busy to get involved in that. I've got other things to do besides plan ceremonies and do historical research and do periodical publications on these events." She had a natural zeal for it.

So the Speaker was quite happy to let her continue and, of course, she sponsored that wonderful movie that Ken Burns made, *The Congress*. In fact that's how I got to know Ken Burns, working with him as he was planning that delightful film that he made about us [the institution]. Lindy would often have luncheon meetings in the Congresswomen's Sitting Room just off Statuary Hall with the people that were involved.²⁰ She involved me long before I became Clerk of the House as we were leading up to those things. Speaker O'Neill, who was not a ceremonial person, he didn't disapprove of

them but he just wasn't a ceremonial sort of guy, designated me as sort of his point man when I was still manager of the [Democratic] Cloakroom to participate in the planning for the bicentennial. He retired the year before we started that celebration, but of course those are things that are long-term. You don't just say we're having a bicentennial next month, what are we going to do? You start several years in advance, dates, the context of the events that we will have and they were all quite wonderful.

So I was delighted when Mr. O'Neill sent me off to Philadelphia on various occasions to meet with the Park Service people in Independence Hall and the Philadelphia city people who would be supporting the celebration. It was very important of course to the city of Philadelphia, and a chance to showcase themselves, which they did magnificently, marvelous hosts. But Lindy primarily was the mover. She coordinated all the people for the events. I think Claude Pepper got into it somewhat.

Interesting, in 1989 when we celebrated the bicentennial of the Congress Mr. Pepper at that point had served in the Congress for exactly one quarter of the history of the nation between the Senate and later the House. In fact he was clearly the star of the show in Philadelphia, who gave such a marvelous address as he always did without notes. After we had our Joint Ceremony in the assembly room in Independence Hall we moved next door to Congress House. The House Members met in their old chamber on the first floor and the Senators met in their old chamber on the second floor, the actual rooms that were used during the 10 years that Congress spent in Philadelphia. And Mr. Pepper gave the principal address magnificently without any notes. Of course his eyesight wasn't good so he always tried to memorize. He had a gift

for wonderful spoken prose. And it was just as fine as I've ever heard. In fact it was spellbinding.

JOHNSON: It seems like a perfect time to ask you this question about another special event, a somber event, that took place during your tenure as Clerk, when Claude Pepper lay in state in the Capitol Rotunda, which of course is a very rare honor. How did you as Clerk oversee the ceremony?

ANDERSON: That was something that we had nothing to do with except to assist in the rather limited television coverage of it. On a personal level it was very painful to me. I may have mentioned that Mr. Pepper actually nominated me for Clerk in the Democratic Steering and Policy Committee in 1986, which was penultimate to my nomination by the Democratic Caucus. Ordinarily the Speaker nominates the officer candidates in the Steering and Policy Committee. They're ratified perfunctorily and then forwarded to the Democratic Caucus for the approval of the caucus.

When I came in for my interview it was more of a roast than an interview. They don't do that anymore but every two years they used to have the officers or those who aspired to be officers into the Steering and Policy Committee for a friendly roast and the Members enjoyed putting us on the hot seat. After I squirmed in the chair in front of the panel for a few minutes, Mr. Wright graciously ended the persecution and said, "Well, I think we can move on to Donn's nomination." At that point Mr. Pepper said in his gravelly voice, "Well, Mr. Speaker"—and Jim Wright wasn't quite Speaker yet but he would be the following month—and he said, "Well, Mr. Speaker, Donn has been a dear friend of mine and of my beloved late wife Mildred's and while it is your prerogative of course to nominate candidates

for the officerships of the House I would consider it a great consideration and privilege or kindness on your part if you would defer to me so that I could nominate Donn in the Steering and Policy Committee.” Mr. Wright said, “Well, Claude of course. I’d be very happy to do that.” So Mr. Pepper actually nominated me for Clerk and I’ve often thought how extraordinary to have been nominated to the ultimate goal of my life and career by someone who shortly afterwards, two and a half years later, would lie in state in the Great [Capitol] Rotunda, one of 40 or fewer Americans who have been accorded that honor.

The ceremony in the Rotunda I found deeply moving. First of all it was an open casket. I had only seen one other open casket lying in state in the Great Rotunda, and that was for General Douglas MacArthur back in the early to mid ’60s. But apparently it was either Mr. Pepper’s wish or his family’s that the casket be opened.

The morning that the casket was removed after the 24-hour lying in state, I went up to the Rotunda to watch the honor guard take the casket out. The room had been cleared of all but Mr. Pepper’s family and his staff, who were there to witness the casket being closed and the flag being placed back on it and the honor guard very somberly carrying the casket out the door. I was standing with Dr. [James D.] Ford, the Chaplain of the House. Next to him was a man who was nicely put together with a suit and tie who everyone thought belonged there. He looked like if he wasn’t a member of the family, he was a member of the staff, actually he was just someone who found his way in. As the body was being taken out of the Rotunda, and I always kind of choke up when I tell this story, this man who I would guess was probably in his late 30s, early 40s, said to Dr. Ford, seeing his clerical collar,

“Reverend, I know that in your career you have helped a great many people.” And then he said pointing at the casket, “But, he has helped ever so many more.” And he did. Excuse me. I must be getting old. I cry easily. In any case Dr. Ford then said, “Do you mind my asking who you are?” He said, “I’m just a guy from North Carolina who works in a program that Mr. Pepper created a number of years ago that helps people.” He didn’t even explain how. He said, “I’ve never met the man, but when I heard he had died I got in my car and came up here.” I thought how wonderful, and it gave me a further dimension of just what a kind, wonderful person Claude Pepper was.

I also went to his funeral in Miami with the delegation. He had several funerals, one in the Capitol, one in Miami, and then another one where the University of Florida is, Tallahassee. Anyhow he’s buried there. But I certainly—all the people I’ve known, I think he’s one of the people I cherish the most.

JOHNSON: You described the many responsibilities, the diverse responsibilities, of the Clerk, the Clerk’s Office. And going through some newspaper articles, one of the characterizations of the Clerk and also the other House Officers has been as “fixers” who help Congress. Do you think this is a fair or an accurate description?

ANDERSON: Yes, I’d go along with that. Probably “fixer” is not the term of art that I would use, but I certainly don’t dispute it. I always considered my duties as primarily to prevent problems when I could and to solve them when I couldn’t. Fortunately it was an abundance of the former and less of the latter. I often viewed it as my responsibility whenever I could to deflect

criticism or focus on the leadership or Members by trying to deal with things at my level so that they wouldn't have to get involved. But, no, I'd agree with that that being a fixer was definitely a part of it.

I tried to keep a very low profile and keep my head below the ramparts. In fact I often said that anonymity was my great shield. I never gave interviews. I never sought to see my picture in the paper, on television. But there were times when in order to deflect criticism perhaps from the leadership or relieve them from trying to explain something they didn't really understand where I would do that either by request or on my own initiative, having cleared it of course. And they were quite content to let me do that. Yes, that's a very good observation. We certainly were fixers. And let's face it, there are lots of things that the leadership doesn't want to get involved in. They're time-consumers. They're chores. It's housekeeping duties. You'd much rather have a housekeeper than run the vacuum cleaner yourself. And that's kind of what we were, the subpolitical managers of the House. The Members, particularly those in the leadership, had the responsibility for crafting the legislative product and a body of public policy for the nation and that's what they really wanted to do. They didn't want to be involved in Members' payrolls or fixing furniture, except when they wanted their own fixed. And that's what we did, and tried to smooth out the rough spots that occasionally come along.

JOHNSON: Can you provide an example? It could just be a minor problem that you were able to fix.

ANDERSON: Well one situation comes to mind, which was more of a counseling session with the Speaker than a real problem, since the problem hadn't developed.

But for whatever reason when Mr. Wright was Speaker his wife wanted a stretch limousine as his official car. He was already taking some hits publicly for other things. The fabric was beginning to unravel. Mr. Wright was a very otherworldly person. He could care less about showy cars or anything else, but his wife wanted a long car so their friends could travel together with them when they went places. And of course his driver was absolutely salivating at the thought of having a long luxury car to drive. The Speaker had a standard Cadillac Fleetwood sedan, no longer than any other Fleetwood. It was a factory car. And the driver kept stoking the fire with Mrs. Wright so when the Speaker got home she was beating up on him to get a long car. While he was in the car the chauffeur was beating up on him. He wanted that long car and I saw nothing but peril in it. That it would be a catastrophe if he got that car because he was already being criticized for various things. And finally I went to see him and of course the chauffeur had carried the word back to the Speaker that the Clerk of the House doesn't want you to have a long car. And it wasn't that at all. My interest was in protecting the Speaker, not in confounding his will.

So it got back to me the Speaker was really sore at me. So I made an appointment to go up. And when I walked in he was sitting low in his chair giving me the death look. He didn't motion for me to sit down. I won't describe chapter and verse but the sum was, "Are you the Clerk of the House telling me the Speaker of the House that I can't have the car that I want?" I said, "No indeed, Mr. Speaker, I am your good servant and obedient and I will order any car that you want. But you may recall when you gave me your commitment to this job that the one thing I asked of you was the right to speak candidly to you on things that you need to know about that I wish to share with you whether you necessarily like those things or not and I claim

that right on this occasion.” I said, “You’re already taking hits for various things unfairly.” I said, “If you get a car that’s even one inch longer than the one you’re driving you will never ride peacefully in it. It will be on the front page of every newspaper in America. It will be on every nightly news show. The story will be the car, not about you—except in a very derogatory way.” And I said, “So tell me what you want me to do. I’ll go downstairs right now and order a car any length that you would like.” He was still upset and he said, “I don’t care what I drive. You know what kind of car I own.” Because he had a jalopy. It was a really old beat-up car. His personal car. And he drove it himself. He said, “But, Mrs. Wright wants this car.” And I said, “With all respect and affection for Mrs. Wright she does not understand the political implications of having a longer car.” And I said, “I promise you you’ll never be happy with it. In fact it’ll make you miserable.” So after thundering and roaring for a while he calmed down and he said to me in a very soft voice, “You know, Donn, you work hard all your life to get a job like this and then when you get it people don’t want you to be happy with it.” I said, “I understand that, Mr. Speaker, and it is too bad.” I said, “What do you want me to do about the car?” He said, “Forget about it, I’ll deal with Mrs. Wright.”

JOHNSON: This is an example of your philosophy we talked about of trying to prevent problems before they start.

ANDERSON: Oh, he would have been murdered if he got that car. We even tried a way around it by getting an armored limousine that GM [General Motors] had that they were willing to give us for something like a dollar. It was left over from something. It was like new. And it was longer. It wasn’t a super stretch but it had a larger backseat. Of course it had windows that were two

or three inches thick which could not be rolled down. You'd have to run AC constantly or you'd suffocate in it. And I don't know how many tons that car weighed. It would have cost a fortune to operate it. But we could have gotten it for nothing. And when I suggested that he kind of got interested and I said but you can't roll the windows down and I know that you like fresh air. "Oh I don't want that." I said, "Well, that is a solution where you could say quite honestly that it didn't cost the taxpayers anything because GM would gladly have transferred it to us." It had been in government use anyhow. So that idea went by the board. But it did save the Speaker a world of difficulty because that car would have been a calamity.

And after that Mr. Wright and I were very close friends. We had been on cordial terms but we actually became buddies after that because his own staff had a tendency not to confront him because he did have a mercurial temper and he was one of those people whose bark is worse than the bite. Well the bark can kill you. So after that, and in the years that have followed, I call him every few months, and talk to him. Without fail every time we've either met in the years since his retirement in 1989 to the present day, he will apologize for having yelled at me over the automobile. And I keep telling him, "Mr. Speaker, I have long forgotten that, and I wish you would too. No harm done. One apology was more than sufficient." "Well I've always felt bad about that because you were just trying to do the right thing." And I said, "Well, that always was my objective. To the extent my judgment on those things was sound I'm glad it was useful to you."

JOHNSON: So far today you've touched on your relationship as Clerk with leadership, with House Officers. Another aspect of interest would be your relationship

with House committees. Specifically can you describe the relationship between the Clerk's Office and the Committee on House Administration?

ANDERSON:

The Committee on House Administration was of course a matter of almost daily contact for the Clerk of the House for a variety of reasons. The Subcommittee on Personnel and Police of course regulated the number of positions, job classifications, salary levels. For our organization that was terribly important. Whenever I needed to restructure something within my department I had to first get the authorization from the Committee on House Administration to do it and then endeavor to get the funding from the Legislative Branch Subcommittee since it was a two-part process. The Subcommittee on Procurement and Printing of House Administration, of course, governed the approved list for furnishings and equipment that we could buy for Members' use. The committee also regulated Members' allowances which we disbursed from the Finance Office. So virtually every aspect of our function had some material connection to the Committee on House Administration. If it was something as perfunctory as when an enrolled bill was ready for signature, at first having to go to House Administration to have a set of duplicate tags affixed to it, each one of which was taken off by each person who touched that bill as it went through the signing process. So House Administration was into everything.

And of course they had an oversight of television of the House. The rules were promulgated by the Speaker but Charlie Rose, who I often called the bionic Congressman because he was so interested in introducing high tech to the House and can be credited with the great advances that we made during the period that he served on that committee. He was interested in television and computers and videoconferencing and all these things that we were asked

to do. Of course, we also had to find the money to do it. Technology is not cheap. I don't think a day went by that I personally wasn't on the phone with someone in [the Committee on] House Administration or talking to the chairman himself. I would say with great delight that my relationship with the committee both when Charlie Rose was chairman and his predecessor Frank Annunzio was absolutely wonderful. I got consistent support from the committee in doing the things that I wanted to do. I wouldn't call it a free ride or a pass. I had to justify the things that I wanted, but having made a sound justification I was never denied anything that was important. Occasionally they might say for whatever reason, "No, can you hold off a few weeks on this or maybe wait until the next fiscal year?" "Sure, whatever works." I tried to do things in a way where we weren't facing brick wall deadlines so there was time to do things thoughtfully. I had very good relations with the committee. I have nothing but good to say.

Sometimes some of the staff on the committee would get a little—I guess everybody likes to have their hand in things. With constantly sending things back for more justification and more justification after I had Members' commitments that this was done, it's complete. Occasionally while I was willing to play the game to a certain point, when it became tedious, I'd simply go back to the chairman, whether Mr. Annunzio or later Mr. Rose, and say, "I'm having problems here with your staff, I thought we agreed on this." "Well, blankety-blank we did, I don't know why they're fussing. Give me that, I'll take care of it." And that was the end of it. I never liked to get Members beating up on their staff people if I could avoid it but there were times when it just simply got tedious or impossible. I had to do it.

JOHNSON: Did you work closely with any other House committees?

ANDERSON:

The Legislative Branch Appropriations Subcommittee because House Administration was my authorizing committee, and whenever they authorized something I had to go find the money to pay for it. I remember a case where I transferred a position, the security fellow I was talking about [earlier in the interview], to the Sergeant at Arms, and I neglected to contact the Legislative Branch Subcommittee. Instead I got House Administration to transfer that position from my payroll to the Sergeant at Arms' payroll. But of course you have to transfer the money to fund that position, which I neglected to do. Ed Lombard, who was for many years the chief clerk to the subcommittee—they only had a couple of people working for the subcommittee—was very distressed with me because I had not mentioned that transfer and came down to my office in a high dudgeon about you've got to transfer the money. And I said, "I'm so sorry that you're upset and you are my friend and I certainly didn't do it deliberately.

But at the time it seemed like such a completely right thing to do that I guess in my enthusiasm to see it done that I forgot. I'm sorry you're mad and I'll never do it again." "Well it's all right, but you got to be tidy about these things." I said, "Yes, I understand. I am reprov'd."

But those were my two oversight committees and I must say that it was a love trip with both of them. I never had any difficulty. Of course I'm not a person who's devious. I play all my cards on the table. If you like it fine. If you don't it's on the merit of the proposal, not because I was devious or tried to circumvent anything or anybody. And I've got to say that I never had any material difficulties. The little things were easy enough to get. With the big things often timing is what you need. Like I mentioned some months ago about this consolidated organization with legislative records being in one

place rather than several smaller departments, something that I always wanted to do, the time just never seemed right to do it. And I had other things that took priority. Having these functions handled by several small organizations, the [House] Library, Records and Registration, whatever, the job was getting done, it was functioning just fine, but it would have made more sense to consolidate those functions in one place. For various reasons I never saw it as opportune to make that proposal. It was to fall to one of my successors to do that very prudent reorganization, which I had always wanted to do.

That's another reason why it's important that someone come to one of these offices with an intuitive understanding of the temperament of the House, the temperament of the Members, how things work, and when they work best. It's one thing to be gifted with many wonderful ideas but sometimes it's hard to sell those ideas. You have to arrange your priorities, which was most important to you and which can wait for a few months or even a couple of years. And I like to think that I was good at that. I eventually got everything that I wanted but I was patient and non-confrontational. Added to which, I never was concerned about pride of authorship. If I came up with what I thought was a really grand idea, if the Members could get some mileage out of it by claiming authorship, good, go ahead. Be my guest.

When I created the Office of Employee Assistance which was the one thing of which I am most proud during the eight years I was Clerk, the jewel in my crown, I was more than happy to let Speaker Foley and Chairman Rose and various Members who had supported that goal get their pictures in *Roll Call* and be quoted widely about how wonderful this new office is. As a result they gave me some credit too but I didn't really need that reinforcement. It

was something I really wanted to do. But if they could get some mileage out of taking credit for it, good, go for it.

JOHNSON: And nearing the end of this series of very informative interviews, one aspect I was hoping that you could discuss is the transition period between the 1994 elections when the Republicans took control of the House and then with your subsequent retirement in January of 1995. What are your recollections of this time period?

ANDERSON: Well I had a certain foreboding about the election of '94. I did not think things were going well. I wasn't ready to predict the loss of the House but I did expect a considerable diminution of our majority. Election Night I went over to the Democratic Club for dinner and to watch the election results, but by early evening it was clear that we were gone as the majority. And of course the party at the Democratic Club turned into a wake and I said to the people I was with I don't really see any point in staying here. I can deal much better with bad news after a good night's sleep so I'm going to go home. I went back to my office first to collect my things and I ran into Jim Molloy, the House Doorkeeper, who said, "Where are you going?" I said, "I'm going home." "Why don't you come over to the office?" He said, "All the returns aren't in." I said, "Jim, we're out, we're gone, I don't want to sit around for the death of a thousand cuts, I'm going to go home and go to bed. I've got to deal with important matters in the morning and so do you." Because the very next day we had to start working on the transition. So I went home and went to bed and took my phone off the hook so that people wouldn't be calling me all night to commiserate.

And then the next day, bright and early, refreshed after a decent night's sleep to deal with where do we go from here, how are we going to handle this? And I had put together some thoughts. Mr. O'Neill, who died earlier that year [1994], often said that a good exit is far more important than a good entrance. People don't remember or care when you came but they never forget the circumstances when you leave. And I said I'm going to make a good exit. It will be dignified and cheerful and cooperative. I'm not going to have anyone say of me that I was chewing the grapes of wrath on the way out the door or anything less than the essence of cheerful cooperation.

And I assembled my department heads later in the day and I said, "This is what I insist happen, that all of you are to be forthcoming as we begin the process of handing over to the Republicans who have won the House. It's rightly theirs in January and if I hear of anyone who is being obstructionist or not forthcoming I'll fire you before the Republicans get a chance to. Count on it." I said, "This is going to be remembered as having been well done. We're good citizens. We're patriots. When you live by the vote you also die by the vote. And we've had a good run of 40 years." And someone said rather impertinently, "Well it's easy for you to say, you've got your age and retirement. Some of us don't." And I said, "For that I am sincerely sorry and to the extent that I can influence those things I will try to save as many of you as I possibly can but I cannot make any commitments except to put forth the effort. Those are not my decisions to make. But as to what I said about cheerful cooperation I'm as serious as a heart attack about that. And if you can't do it leave now." It was actually three or four days before we had any real contact from the Republican leadership. In fact it was kind of "Oh, what do we do now? Do we continue as we have been doing or until someone tells us to stop, or what?"

Three or four days after the election Speaker-to-be Gingrich called my office and he wanted to stop by and see me. And I thought it was rather odd that he would want to make an appointment since he and I were good friends and had a very cordial relationship. He could certainly drop in whenever he wanted. But one of my secretaries came in and said, "Mr. Gingrich himself is on the phone and wants to know if it would be convenient for you to see him about 6:00 this evening." And I said, "Well, you tell the Speaker-to-be that the Clerk of the House would find it convenient to see him any time he wants to see the Clerk of the House and I'll be very happy to go to his office." "No, he wants to come here." So I said, "Fine." So a few minutes before 6:00 I look out in my reception room and Mr. Gingrich comes in with half a dozen hangers-on following him. Instead of just walking right into my room—the door was wide open—he politely says to my receptionist, "I have an appointment with the Clerk at 6:00." And she said, "Yes, Mr. Gingrich, he's expecting you." At that point I was on my feet coming out to invite him in. And he started to come in and the half a dozen or so people in his retinue started to follow him in and he gave the back off sign with his hand, meaning this is private. He came in and shut the door and first started talking about the historic objects and the artworks that I had in my office. Of course he is a Ph.D. in history and those things are very interesting to him. Then he got into a lovely almost soliloquy about the service that I had performed to the House and the fair and equitable treatment that I had always shown the minority and that they were very grateful. Of course he was on House Administration at one point, was the Ranking Member and he was very supportive, not only of the Clerk's Office, but of me as the Clerk so I felt great warmth towards him. We talked about a lot of things, not necessarily the transition, and then off he went.

Some people said he was just checking out the real estate and I said well if that had been his goal all he needed to do was get the night engineer to unlock the door. He didn't need to make an appointment because they were unlocking doors at night and looking at the various rooms. That's what happens when elections occur. But he showed me the respect of not coming in by stealth of night to check it out but coming there while I was there. (If that was his goal.) And I don't think it was. But it gave me a very good feeling and I felt validated in my judgment of being forthcoming and cooperative. He was as the victor being very modest and gracious in his victory and I felt I could do no less in defeat.

Then a few days after that when they had put together their transition team, their office headed by Jim [James Allen] Nussle, we got our first formal contact. Of course amongst ourselves we had been talking about what are the things that we need to do when a formal transition is put into place. And of course it was after an election. We had all of the office moves to accomplish. Members' furniture and equipment, we always hired extra people in December for the office moves. So I asked Jim Nussle if he could come by and visit with me, which he did. I said, "These are the things we ordinarily do after an election. I don't want to make any commitments about hiring temporary employees or whatever without your approval. Do you have any objection?" "No, do whatever you need to do. Continue just as you would in any other situation." And thereafter if I had any questions about making a commitment which they might have to live with subsequently I called him and said I'd like to do this and this is why. "Do you have any objection?" "No. Go right ahead."

Did I tell you about our binders with the SOPs [standard operating procedures] in them when last we spoke?

JOHNSON: I don't believe so.

ANDERSON: Ginni Thomas, Justice [Clarence] Thomas' wife, worked for Dick [Richard Keith] Armey for a number of years and she was the staff coordinator for the transition office for the Republicans. Ginni called me one morning probably about a week after the election and said, "I'm coordinating the transition. Do you have anything in writing that describes what you do or how you do it?" I said, "Oh indeed we do, actually quite a bit." Because I had insisted that all my departments prepare detailed SOPs on what they did and how they did it and that people shouldn't keep that information in their heads. If they drop dead you got a problem. Some of them didn't like writing it all down because they thought it was proprietary and would weaken their hold on their jobs. I assured them that wasn't my motive, but responsible management demanded that we have things in writing to explain how things are done and what we do. And I said, "Yes, Ginni we actually have quite a bit." "Well, can I come by and pick it up maybe around 5:00?" And I said, "Yes, absolutely." I said, "But you might want to bring one or two people with you or a small hand truck." And she paused on the phone and said, "That much?" And I said, "Oh, yeah, that much; it's a big organization." And so she showed up with a man pulling a two-wheel handcart and we loaded three boxes of ring binders on it and she stared at it in amazement and said, "All of this?" And I said, "Actually that's just part of it, Ginni; that's what we could put together in a hurry. In the next few days we'll probably have twice that much more." She looked at the boxes with all the thick ring binders and thought about having twice that much more. She said, "I think

this is going to be more challenging than we anticipated.” And I said, “Lots of luck. But we will help whenever we can. Nothing will be withheld.”

From my point of view the transition went very well. It was an unhappy time. I was not in a crisis because I did have my time and my service. I could retire with a full benefit. Wasn't that I was worried about where my next meal would come from, as many people were. I was walking out the door with 80 percent of my best three, which was a good best three [reference to retirement annuity]. But there were a lot of people that weren't in that position who either didn't have enough time to vest or their salaries weren't particularly high. It was a very tough situation. My heart bled for them. To the extent that I could I tried to tell the transition people that you just can't come here and sweep everybody out. The trains still have to run. You might want to do that in time but on January 4th you've got to make this place work. And don't be too hasty about tossing your expertise out the door and they were pretty good about that.

JOHNSON: As Clerk of the House you were responsible for overseeing the organization of a new Congress. So what was this like given that your last official duty as Clerk was supervising the transition of power between parties?

ANDERSON: Interesting that you should ask that. The day following the November election in the early evening I was sitting alone in my office pensively thinking about the future, what I would do, the business immediately at hand. And I kept thinking about Mr. O'Neill's words that a good exit is more important than a good entrance. And I thought my last ministerial duty will be to preside over the organization of the 104th Congress even

though I will not serve it and I think that I would like to say a few words and express my gratitude to the House and the nation.

It also dawned on me that January 4th—I think the 3rd was Sunday. I think the 4th was a Monday.²¹ Anyhow which is why we didn't meet on the 3rd but met on the 4th. It also dawned on me that January 4th was my service anniversary, that it would be exactly 35 years to the day that I was appointed a Page. I thought the role of the Clerk on Opening Day, while heavily scripted by precedent and history, is still entirely within the province of the Clerk. The Clerk is the only one who has any standing. I'd like to say a few words. The question was where will I say those few words? I was sensitive to the fact that it was Newt's big day and that I shouldn't do anything that would detract from the focus on him. That would be poor taste. And yet I wanted to do this, and I thought where will it fit? The only place I could find in the Opening Day agenda, which is invariable from Congress to Congress, was after the announcement of the quorum of Members-elect and the announcement of the certification of the Territorial Delegates because right after that you move directly to nominations for Speaker. I thought at that point I could work in a few remarks. So I sat at my typewriter and wrote one draft of a farewell speech and I never looked at it again. I never revised it. It came out of the typewriter. It was exactly 45 seconds long. I didn't want to go overly long because it was not my place to monopolize the proceedings, but I did want to express my appreciation.

I guess the day before Opening Day I gave it [my speech] to Dallas, my assistant, and I said have someone put this on the computer and enlarge it and stick it in my Opening Day folio. I said, "I may or may not give it depending on how emotional I am." You saw that I'm easily overcome. I

may not be able to do it. But it all went very well. And so following the certification of the Delegates I asked the indulgence of the House for a moment and I gave my remarks, which produced a prolonged standing ovation for which I was quite unprepared. In fact I didn't expect any applause at all. It was just something of a cathartic for me. I don't like the word closure. I hate the word closure. I think it's overused and abused, but I did kind of want closure. And the House gave me a prolonged standing ovation that was equally from the Republicans as from the Democrats.

Then Vic Fazio sought to be recognized. And I didn't know what he wanted to do but the next person who should have been recognized would have been John [Andrew] Boehner, the chairman of the Republican Conference, to nominate Mr. Gingrich for Speaker. And then Mr. Fazio as chairman of the Democratic Caucus would be recognized to nominate Dick Gephardt for Speaker. This was sort of backwards. And so I didn't really recognize Mr. Fazio, but he thanked the Clerk for recognizing him, which I hadn't really done, and then proceeded to deliver a beautiful speech regarding the character of my times and service to the House. Obviously somebody in my office slipped him a clue that I was going to do this because he had a text in his hand. I didn't share it with anybody. There were only two people in my office who knew of my intention. One was Dallas and the other was Gerry Vans. And I saw Gerry Vans' fingerprints all over that speech that Mr. Fazio gave. It was beautiful, absolutely beautiful and clearly was written by someone who knew me even better than Vic Fazio did—as Gerry would.

Then John Boehner asked Vic Fazio, who had never really been recognized, to yield. After Vic finished then I got another long standing ovation. And then John Boehner asked Vic Fazio to yield to him and before I could do

anything to cut this off, because it was getting out of hand, I didn't want to be the star, that was Mr. Gingrich's entitlement, and I was becoming very uncomfortable because Mr. Fazio went on for three, four minutes with this beautiful speech about my service to the House. And then John Boehner asked him to yield, which Vic did, and *ex tempore* he gave a beautiful tribute on behalf of the Republicans, which he just conjured up. Dallas had gone over to tell John Boehner that I planned to give a very brief farewell speech so that he wouldn't seek for recognition immediately and give me a little space in which to do that. So anyhow after John Boehner finished I got another prolonged standing ovation from the House and I was just quite overwhelmed by the whole thing. It was not my purpose to aggrandize myself on the way out the door, but simply to share a few simple thoughts of gratitude. In any case to use that word that I dislike, if anyone ever had perfect closure I did. And I'm glad that I gave that speech. I almost didn't. I wasn't sure that I would be able to get through it without falling apart on what was arguably the most watched session of the House since we had television because we hadn't had a change in party government for 40 years.

JOHNSON: A very historic moment.

ANDERSON: Yes. And a friend of mine had it, my farewell speech along with the speeches given by John Boehner and Vic Fazio, beautifully printed up and framed for me. So I have it home. So it was good. No, I was telling a reporter from *Roll Call* a few weeks ago who called me, apparently wanting to have a standby story about the transition if there was to be another one, and I told her about that. I also told her about Mr. Gingrich's courtesy and Tom [Thomas Dale] DeLay's [Republican Whip] too because Tom was going to take my office and then eventually changed his mind and took Dave [David

Edward] Bonior's [Democratic Whip] office but moved my furniture. Everybody involved on the Republican side was so gracious about it and bent over backwards to see that I was shown every courtesy and respect and accommodation.

While other people were being pushed hastily towards the door because they were anxious to get the space, nobody even looked sideways at my office. And I told Tom DeLay, who I knew was drooling over it before he changed his mind and took another room nearby that, "Tom, I know you would love to have this office sooner rather than later. And if that's your wish I'll move to some less auspicious space and conclude my affairs there. But if it's all the same I had always imagined myself walking out that door for the last time rather than some other door." He said, "No, no, keep it as long as you want." I said, "Well, I'll be out by midmorning on Opening Day." He said, "No, keep it all day." I said, "No. Once I have organized the House it would be wrong for me to keep the office, by that time I will not be the Clerk anymore. But I'll be out by midmorning." And I appreciated that. So I left on the desk with a note for him a bottle of rather upscale champagne expressing my good wishes for his success and his new office as Majority Whip and hoped that he had the same joy in that room that I had had for eight years. So I like to think I made a good exit.

Then on Opening Day after I announced the state of the vote on the election of the Speaker and announced that Mr. Gingrich was the Speaker-elect and appointed the committee of Members-elect to escort the Speaker to the chair, and then recognized the Doorkeeper who announced the Speaker-elect, and he came up, and at that point I sat in my chair next to the Speaker for the last time for last few minutes, and Mr. Gephardt rather tersely, and, frankly I

think ungraciously, presented the Speaker-elect to the House. Usually it's done by the defeated candidate with a fairly decent speech of extolling the virtues of the new occupant of the chair. But Mr. Gephardt simply said, "I present the Speaker-elect to the House of Representatives," and then left the rostrum, which I thought well, anyhow that's my own view, but graciousness in defeat could have provoked a little more commentary, even if it was insincere. There are times when you do that for the sake of appearances, but that's another matter.

So Mr. Gingrich at that point addressed the House as the Speaker-elect does from the chair. And in his speech he specifically complimented the Officers of the House for their spirit of cooperation in behaving in every respect like good citizens and committed patriots in what was a difficult situation. If you review the tapes of Opening Day you'll hear him say that. And then he announced that he was ready to take the oath of office and called on John [David] Dingell, [Jr.], the Dean of the House, to administer the oath.

Having taken the oath of course the House rose to show its respect to the new Speaker—far more enthusiasm from the Republican side than from the Democratic, where the applause was polite and rather sparse. And if you watch the tape, I'm standing three steps below the Speaker, maybe three feet away, applauding, and he catches me out of the corner of his eye. He comes down the three steps—now this is his supreme moment, he has just taken the oath as the first Republican Speaker in 40 years, rising certainly to the highest office to which he probably aspires, notwithstanding there are rumors about his run for the Presidency in the future—but in any case he steps down the three steps, takes my hand, and says some words about we really appreciate the fairness and thoughtfulness with which you treated us when we were in

the minority, and frankly we're sorry to see you go. I thought is this terrific or what? This is his supreme moment. Anyone else would be standing there saying, "I got it, it's all mine, I really did it. I brought it off." And he's stepping down in the sight of the House to thank this guy who's about to become yesterday's newspaper. It was very nice and I'll never forget that. It was an extremely gracious thing to do. So I regret that we lost the House, but in personal terms I have no anger and no ax to grind. Quite the contrary, everybody in the new regime went so far out of their way to be kind to me, I couldn't. It would be unseemly.

JOHNSON: What is your perspective on the Clerk's Office and the House in general since your retirement of almost—or actually over a decade ago now?

ANDERSON: Well, I was very disappointed in my immediate successor. She had the opportunity to do much better than she did. She was not a House person by background. She came from the Republican National Committee and had her own perception of what the job was about. So I don't really think it was her fault. She was limited by not being a creature of the institution. I thought how wonderful, we finally have a woman as an Officer of the House, which had never happened before. I always thought the Democrats of all people missed the boat by never doing that because we were always so big on that sort of thing, on fairness, but we never put words into action. The Senate had already done it. They had a woman as Secretary of the Senate and another woman later as Sergeant at Arms of the Senate. The House had never had a woman Officer.

In any case, when I was meeting with Robin [Carle] for the transition and beyond I told her that I'm not a meddler. When I walk out the door I am

done with this. You won't hear from me unless you want to hear from me and I hope that if I can be of use that you'll give me a call if there's anything that you need to understand or know about. I will keep nothing back. She never did. And she went off on her merry way to reinvent the wheel and created a world of difficulty in the process.

Then she was followed by two Clerks who were totally institutional, strong, long background in the institution, who I think have been marvelously successful. Karen [Haas] only had the job for a year but she has made her mark, and nobody suspected that she wouldn't.²² I was just overjoyed when I heard that Mr. Hastert had designated her as he did Jeff Trandahl to succeed Robin.

I have a tendency nowadays to look at the Officers of the House as kind of high-priced employees with an honorific in front of their names—that they don't really have the freedom of action or the deference which historically had gone with those very high offices. That's why as I said earlier in this interview I tend to view myself historically as the last Clerk of the House in terms of the traditions of the institution. These were offices of reposing dignity.

After the bank and the post office—because a couple of Officers got in trouble, one through trying to be a nice guy, and the other because he had too many personal agendas—instead of curing the problem by providing more oversight or being more selective in who replaced them, they threw the baby out with the bathwater. And took a meat-ax approach to reforming the internal structure of the House. It was badly done and I think to this day reflects those things. I don't expect it to change. To me the CAO is

perfectly superfluous. The Clerk did almost all the things that the CAO does today except run the restaurants. And I would have had those too if I hadn't strenuously objected to it. They tried to give me the restaurants. And I said absolutely not unless I have absolutely free rein to run them the way I see fit. Because if I'm going to have Members calling me every time they get a cold bowl of soup or someone isn't polite who's bringing that bowl of soup, I've got to have the ability to correct that situation. And everybody who works in the House Dining Room is a sacred cow to somebody. And I either run it or I don't. So they decided not to give me the food service operations, I really didn't want.

But no, I just think the Officers of the House have been diminished. There's also in the leadership offices a lot of senior staff people who now are micromanaging the Officers of the House. It wasn't like it was with me in 1987 when Jim Wright gave—or '86 actually when Jim Wright gave me his commitment to be Clerk of the House and gave me the one simple instruction that "I expect you to clean that place up." He never added anything to that and I knew that he had sufficient trust in me to know that I would be a good steward and do the job correctly. He didn't want to micromanage the Clerk's Office. If he had wanted to be Clerk of the House he would have run for that instead of Speaker. He didn't want to be bothered with it. He wanted to be sure that he wouldn't be bothered with it, and so he gave me *carte blanche* to run it the way I saw fit. I like to think immodestly that I did it very well and his successor seemed to be equally pleased with my performance. He got caught on the horns of a dilemma though with the bank and the post office and I think it was not with any enthusiasm that he permitted to happen what did with the restructuring of the administration of the House. But he did. I've long since gotten over it.

I now look at it with a sense of nostalgia rather than with a sense of anger or irritation that this was done hastily and badly.

JOHNSON: We're almost out of time but I wanted to ask you one final question. Based on your 35 years on the Hill, what advice would you offer to a new employee or a person considering a career in the House of Representatives?

ANDERSON: Things are so different here now than when I started as a kid nearly 50 years ago where people who began service with the House tended to look at it as a career, that the House was their future. It was like people who used to go to work for a corporate entity would plan on retiring 30 or 40 years later from that same employer. And that's the way it was around here. My first decade or so on the Hill we had literally hundreds and hundreds of employees with 20, 30, or 40 more years of service that considered it a fulfillment in itself to work here. Now I think one of the congressional think tanks has come up with the rather appalling statistic that the average service amongst the 12,000 plus workforce of the House is 2.6 years. Well to me I get the chills thinking that people with the accumulated wisdom of 2.6 years are making my public policy and probably writing my laws. I liked the experience that used to be so typical of the House and dedication to it as an end in itself as opposed to just another line on a CV before moving on to something else.

The personality of the House has changed so dramatically, I'm not sure that I could fit into it comfortably anymore. There was, and I'm sure you've heard this from others, sort of a clubbiness, a kind of familial feeling that we had here for years and years, which has long since vanished. People don't know each other very well. The goal is to win at all costs. Everything seems to be philosophically driven as opposed to working together to craft good

legislation and make sound public policy. And for the people beneath the policy level to be able to be the good stewards that they would like to be. And do their jobs with support and without molestation.

My advice would be, and of course it may be hopelessly out of date, but any employer is entitled to loyalty. And it used to be that loyalty and dedication produced predictable rewards. I'm not sure that that's the case anymore. Because of the nature of the institution, I'm not sure that anyone would even want to try to stay 20 or 30 years. They'd have burnout or a premature heart attack long before that point. The pace and the pressure and the scrutiny would be enough to destroy anybody's health, at least in a Member's office. So I would like to see the House try to move back to a more career-oriented workforce because institutional memory is so terribly important. And when that's lost the fabric becomes rather frayed.

I'm flattered from time to time when people call me with institutional memory questions. Unfortunately, they're the kind of things that while they may be fun and interesting, don't necessarily go to the heart of what I thought was the glue that kept the organization together. But, nonetheless, I'm always flattered as when you forwarded the Rodino question to me. It brought back memories of a treasured friendship. But I've always felt that hard work is its own reward.

I would encourage someone starting to give their employer, whoever he or she might be, their best shot. To constantly work on self-improvement so that having been given initial responsibility you can demonstrate in short order that you are ready to assume greater responsibility. It was the way that I climbed the ladder, the old-fashioned way, one step at a time, by trying to

do whatever I did well and at the same time training myself for the next level of responsibility that I wanted to attempt. Fortunately, with only an occasional setback, it all kind of fell into place. That was leavened with a lot of patience because as I say I was here for 27 years before I got to the top of the tree. And how many people here today are going to be here for 27 years? I think I can tell you safely zero. There won't be any more people like myself with 20 or 30 or more years of service. They simply won't be here. When they get the big jobs they start thinking about being around for three or four, five years, and then out the door (if that long). Until something better comes along that's less stressful and has more permanence. I lived by the vote for 35 years, which is why when we lost the House in '94 rather than complaining I thought this is a pretty good run, 35 years without a contract and no guarantees. I can't really complain. It worked out rather well.

JOHNSON: Is there anything else you wanted to add before we finish?

ANDERSON: I can't think of anything for today. What would our next subject area be?

JOHNSON: I think we are just about finished, unless we see some big gaps when we go through the transcripts.

ANDERSON: Okay, well, depending on what develops with the Page program I might want to revisit that.

JOHNSON: Thank you very much for taking the time to speak with me.

ANDERSON: Absolutely delighted.

NOTES

¹ An unofficial title given to Representatives with the longest continuous service in the U.S. House of Representatives or from a particular state delegation.

² From the Latin meaning “without setting a day.” A *sine die* adjournment signifies that Congress has adjourned or suspended business at the end of an annual or special session.

³ A procedural practice previously allowed under House Rules, Members anticipating an absence for an upcoming floor vote could enter an informal agreement to “pair” with another Representative without an indication of how either would have voted—referred to as a “general pair.” House Rules before the 106th Congress (1999–2001) also allowed “specific” or “dead” pairs, where Members on opposite sides of an issue could record how they would have voted if they had been present in order to nullify the effect of absences on a recorded vote.

⁴ The volume is part of a compilation of parliamentary precedents of the U.S. House.

⁵ On October 16, 1972, a plane carrying Majority Leader Hale Boggs and Congressman Nick Begich disappeared during a flight from Anchorage to Juneau. The two Democrats were en route to a campaign stop for Begich’s upcoming re-election bid.

⁶ John Jacobs, *A Rage for Justice: The Passion and Politics of Phillip Burton* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1995). See also, Judith Robinson, *You’re in Your Mother’s Arms: The Life and Legacy of Congressman Phil Burton* (San Francisco, Calif.: M.J. Robinson, 1994).

⁷ William “Fishbait” Miller and Frances Spatz Leighton, *Fishbait: The Memoirs of the Congressional Doorkeeper* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1977).

⁸ “Walter P. Kennedy Dies; House Sergeant at Arms,” 26 October 1999, *Washington Post*: B6.

⁹ Gary Hymel was the administrative assistant for Hale Boggs at the time of his disappearance in 1972. Hymel went on to become the administrative assistant for Tip O’Neill.

¹⁰ Lindy Boggs with Katherine Hatch, *Washington Through a Purple Veil: Memoirs of a Southern Woman* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1994): 258-260.

¹¹ “Teller voting” refers to a now-rarely used voting method in the House whereby the Speaker appoints Members to count the ayes and noes on a given question and simply report the aggregate tally, and not each individual Member’s vote, to decide the outcome. Members would file through the center aisle and be counted by the teller on their respective side of the question. Beginning in the 92nd Congress (1971–1973), after adoption of the rules changes in the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1970, “recorded teller votes” or “teller votes by clerks” allowed recorded voting in the Committee of the Whole by voting cards and ballot boxes located in the back of the House Chamber. Member tellers, and later clerks alone, would count the ballots and report the aggregate tally immediately, and then overnight, the individual Member votes in the *Congressional Record*. “Recorded teller votes” only existed as a stop-gap measure before electronic voting was fully operational in 1973. For more on the practice, see Lewis Deschler and William Holmes Brown, *Deschler–Brown Precedents of the United States House of Representatives*, vol. 14, ch. 30, §16 (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1994): 11547–11551; Michael L. Koempel, Jacob R. Straus, and Judy Schneider, “Record Voting in the House of Representatives: Issues and Options,” 3 July 2008, Report RL34570, Congressional Research Service, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.: 30–31.

¹² The 100th Congress (1987–1989) assembled in Philadelphia to celebrate its bicentennial on July 16, 1987.

¹³ The Congresswomen’s Caucus first met in 1977, six years after the creation of the Congressional Black Caucus.

¹⁴ Mae Ella Nolan of California holds the distinction as the first woman to chair a House standing committee (Committee on Expenditures, 1923). Representative Mary Norton of New Jersey chaired four House committees.

¹⁵ Future Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi never worked for Representative Sala Burton of California when she served in the House.

¹⁶ The *Statutes at Large* is the official source for the laws and resolutions passed by Congress.

¹⁷ Speaker Wright resigned from the House of Representatives on June 30, 1989.

¹⁸ *Truman* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1992); *John Adams* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2001).

¹⁹ The Office of the Historian of the U.S. House of Representatives was created in 1983 in preparation for the House Bicentennial in 1989.

²⁰ Originally called the Congressional Ladies Retiring Room, the space off of Statuary Hall, was renamed the Lindy Claiborne Boggs Congressional Women's Reading Room in 1991.

²¹ The 104th Congress (1995–1997) opened on Wednesday, January 4, 1995.

²² Karen Haas served as Clerk of the House from November 18, 2005 to February 6, 2007. When the Republicans gained the majority after the 2010 elections, she was elected Clerk on January 5, 2011, at the opening of the 112th Congress (2011–2013).

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