— TINA TATE INTERVIEW ONE —

JOHNSON: This is Kathleen Johnson interviewing Tina Tate, the former director of the House Radio-Television Gallery. The date is June 28, 2007, and the interview is taking place in the Legislative Resource Center, Cannon House Office Building. Today, I would like to start off with some biographical information. When and where were you born?

TATE: I was born September 5, 1944, in Atlanta, Georgia.

JOHNSON: What were the names and occupations of your parents?

TATE: My mother was Mary Elizabeth Barnes, and she was a homemaker. She worked one small part of her life, but not very long, where my grandmother worked all of her life. My father was Clifford Holmes McGaughey, Sr., and he had a sporting goods store that was, at that time, the premier independent sporting goods store in the South.

JOHNSON: What schools did you attend?

TATE: I went to Stephens College in Columbia, Missouri, and got an A.A. It is now a four-year school, but at that time it was only a two-year school. Then, I went to Emory College and got a B.A. History was my major.

JOHNSON: Before working for the House of Representatives, what were some of your jobs?

TATE: Actually, I only worked for two places, well, three, before I worked for the House. One, when my husband was in law school, I worked at the University of Georgia libraries, and two, I worked for Merrill Lynch, both in Atlanta and then transferred up here when we came to Washington. I worked for Merrill Lynch

here and then I went to work for Cox Broadcasting. That was one of the first independent television bureaus to open in Washington. Many have opened since; many have closed since. Cox is one of the only ones that opened and stayed opened the entire time, and this was in 1970, and I went to work as their office person, receptionist, office manager. I was the only one that wasn't a journalist, and it was a very small bureau, and that's how I got to know what the Hill did because the camera crews and correspondents would work on the Hill, and they would work with the gallery, so that's how I became familiar with the galleries.

JOHNSON: You mentioned you were married. What's the name of your husband, and when did you get married?

TATE: My husband's real name is Danny Clyde Tate. It's not Daniel, it's Danny. It's very Southern. We were married in Atlanta in 1966.

JOHNSON: Your husband worked for Senator [Herman] Talmadge?

TATE: He did. That's how we got to Washington. He graduated law school and was waiting to pass the bar and wanted to do something, and a friend of his, a gentleman, who later became a Member of Congress, [George] Buddy Darden, suggested to him that he apply to Senator Talmadge because Senator Talmadge was the junior Senator from Georgia at that time, and he would hire young law graduates to work for a couple of years in Washington and then they would go back and practice law in Georgia. So, that was the original plan.

We came up in September of 1969, with the idea of working for a couple of years. During that time, the senior Senator retired, Senator Richard Russell of Georgia, and there is a statue of Russell in the Russell Building. He retired, making Talmadge the senior Senator, so there were more opportunities on staff, and Dan stayed longer. And he was getting ready to leave, and [Jimmy] Carter won the

White House and the transition office worked out of Talmadge's office, and that's how he got with the Carter Administration. So, by this time it was the '70s, now, all of our working career; I was already on the Hill. All of our working careers
[4:00] were geared toward Washington. I did have one job that was prior to this that was a part-time job. I was a guide at the capitol in Georgia. So, almost all of my life, I worked in capitols, one place or another.

JOHNSON: What do you recall about your first day on the job in the radio-TV gallery?

TATE: I started in July and one of the things . . . we had a wonderful gentleman who was the—then they called them superintendents, so the name changed later on—but the head of the gallery at that time was Bob Menaugh, and he was such a gracious gentleman.[1] He was just a lovely, lovely man, and he had guaranteed me that when they hired me, that even though I was not going to get paid right away, that I would be paid because the payroll for that month was held up due to a Member of Congress, Wayne Hays, who was chairman of House Administration, held up the payrolls for all the new hires because he was having a fight with another Congressman from, I believe, Minneapolis; I think it was—his name starts with F.—I'm blanking out, but he was on the International Relations Committee and was challenging Hays in some way on the International Relations Committee so he held up the whole payroll, everybody that was being assigned, because it affected some of this Member's hires.[2] So, it was six weeks before we got our first paycheck, and he kept saying, "It's going to be fine, you will get paid. We guarantee it will be all right because it has nothing to do with you, and it didn't."

JOHNSON: Were you the first woman to work in the gallery?

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[1] Bob Menaugh served as the superintendent of the House Radio Gallery (later House Radio-TV Gallery) from 1939 to 1974. For more information, see "Robert Menaugh, Headed House Radio-TV Gallery," 4 August 1978, *Washington Post*: B6; "The Opening of the House Radio Gallery," Weekly Historical Highlights, Office of History and Preservation, Office of the Clerk, http://clerk.house.gov/art_history/highlights.html?action=view&intID=288.
[2] Donald Fraser of Minnesota served on the Foreign Affairs Committee (later named International Relations) from the 88th through the 95th Congress (1963–1979).

TATE: I was the first woman to work in the House Radio-TV Gallery or the print gallery. There was a woman in the periodical gallery.[3] There was a woman who was actually the superintendent there. Shortly after that, she got to be superintendent, I believe, but she wasn't superintendent for very long.

JOHNSON: Were you aware at the time that you were making history?

TATE: I was aware, at the time, that they never had a woman on staff and that they were actually actively looking for someone on staff. There is a gentleman who still works with me who works now for ABC News who was there at the time, Dean Norland. He was on the board because the journalists hire, they actually designate, by the rules of the House, the employees of the galleries, and they were actively looking for a woman. Up until that time, they had believed that a woman couldn't do the job, and at this time, for whatever reason, they decided it would be a good idea to see if that was not incorrect. They actually gave some credence to having a woman. It was a plus, for once, where when I worked at Cox Broadcasting, my boss at the time, the bureau chief there, said there would never be a woman anchor because nobody would ever believe her, and that was the atmosphere. In the '70s, there were many journalism professional associations that did not allow women even to be members. There were several groups that were (more print than radio and television) established because in order to have a journalism group of women, they had to be all women. Now, most of those are integrated.

JOHNSON: Since there are so few women working on the Hill—were so few women working on the Hill at the time—do you remember having any role models, other women employees or perhaps women Members?

[3] According to the *Congressional Directory*, Jeanne Hundley (later Jeanne Ordway) served as the superintendent of the House Periodical Gallery during the 93rd Congress (1973–1975).

TATE: [8:00] Cokie Roberts.[4] Cokie Roberts. She's not more than a year older than I am, but she was already working on the Hill and was working for NPR [National Public Radio]. She was not yet working for ABC, and, of course, with her family being so established, she was very comfortable around everybody in the House, and she certainly made my life easier up here.

There were other women of stature in broadcasting fairly early. One was Carol Simpson, who went on to be a weekend anchor for ABC, so we did have some prominent women that were already in the business.

JOHNSON: Was there any kind of support network provided for women employees of the House?

TATE: No, and there was no place to go if you—the sexual harassment and all of that it was a totally different time; it was a totally different atmosphere. The House was a different place; the Senate was a different place; the way Members conducted themselves, the way they were treated—all of that was so very different at the time. No. There was no way—you took whatever treatment you got or you left. Fortunately for me, I had a boss [Bob Menaugh] that was both a gentleman and a mentor and wanted to be. He was only here for a year; he retired due to health issues, but in that year, you saw the pattern for how he expected his employees to work and how he expected people to be treated, and that was a model of decorum that I wanted to practice.

I was treated very well by the second superintendent [Mike Michaelson].[5] He didn't stay very long; he was only there for a few years. I had worked with him on the staff, and I had worked with the other people on the staff and was not treated

[4] The daughter of two former Representatives, Hale Boggs and Lindy Boggs, both of Louisiana, Cokie Roberts also worked as a congressional correspondent. The Office of History and Preservation conducted three oral history interviews with Cokie Roberts, dated August 28, 2007, July 11, 2008, and June 23, 2009.
[5] Mike Michaelson served as the superintendent of the House Radio-TV Gallery from the 94th Congress (1975–1977) until his retirement on October 1, 1981.

poorly by the staff members at all, and not by any of the correspondents. There were a few lechers, but you could avoid them. I had one person tell me if I was nice to him, he could certainly make my life easier, but I knew he couldn't, and I certainly wasn't going to be any nicer to him. I knew he would also say that to anybody in a skirt. There was a Member of Congress who tried very hard to get me to go out to dinner with him even though he knew I was married, and that was not unusual. He also tried that with every woman he met. There was nothing special about me. And once you realized that if somebody was really that aggressive, they probably were that aggressive universally. I never had anybody make it a point to harass me, individually, without it being something they did for everybody walking, so you sort of don't take it personally when you do that. And being Southern, you have a great deal more patience with that sort of thing.

The atmosphere of the galleries and the professional atmosphere of an office has changed radically. At that time, there was a wonderful gentleman that I worked with in the office of the Architect [of the Capitol]. He was an old Southern gentleman, and he used the term "honey" when he would talk to you, and that was perfectly normal for me. He would give you a hug and that was perfectly normal. It was not offensive—it was not meant to be; it was just standard operating procedure. We had a young woman come in who was in very serious feminist mode, and she was very offended by it, and she wouldn't deal with him. I explained to her that if she didn't want to deal with him, then she wouldn't get her job done. She had to do some technical work, and his people and he had to facilitate that, and if she didn't have enough sense to understand that this man was not coming on to her in any way, shape, or form, she should get her head
[12:00] straight. It was not him, it was her. He was 30 years older than she was. He was from an era when that was perfectly acceptable and normal. You have to take that into consideration—you did then—because that was a big transition stage.

Now, it's very difficult even to feel comfortable doing any more than shaking someone's hand. I mean, giving somebody a hug is something you don't do. Then, that was just common operating procedure, and everybody was much more flirty, much more casual because there weren't many women, period. You were treated like a woman, and you were treated, not sexually, necessarily, but you were treated differently. And it wasn't necessarily a negative; it wasn't necessarily a positive. You just had to understand what the boundaries were. I did have one Senator chase me around a desk—that made me uncomfortable. Had it been a different time, I would have reported it because it was an inappropriate event, but that did not happen regularly with me. I am not really sure why. I think maybe the fact that we were in the press gallery, the radio-TV gallery, you are more visible and they don't particularly want to call attention.

JOHNSON: Did you form any strong bonds with other women because there were so few of you and you had a chance to, at least informally, talk to them about some of the things that were happening?

TATE: Yes. Tina Gulland, who is now with *Washington Post* Radio, is still a friend. We were puppies when we were first here. We were both in our 20s, and we were both named Tina, and we were both blond. She is still a friend. I just did a shower for her daughter, and her daughter's wedding is in October. We are still close friends and have kept in touch, even though she has been off the Hill for years now. Cokie, I continue to—I don't see her often; she is much more famous and has gone on to do other things—but I feel very comfortable calling her on any sort of event if I need anything.

JOHNSON: Some women staffers that we've talked to, that we interviewed, have referenced the inadequate accommodations for women during the period, such as having to walk a very long way to access a bathroom.

TATE: Well, that's true, and in the Capitol, that was especially true. In fact, we renovated the gallery in 1988, and that's the first time—we did have a men's and women's bathroom—but that was the first time we had a women's bathroom that accommodated more than one person. We have a very small office, a very physically small office, but in the renovation, I made sure that we accommodated more women. It's interesting that, now, you probably have more women working out of there than men.

JOHNSON: Did you find that you faced obstacles in your job? You said you had a supportive superintendent, but because of your gender, did you feel that there were certain things that you weren't assigned, certain tasks, for example?

TATE: No. Our office was too small. You really couldn't not get assigned to things. The other thing we were doing—and this was not in the '70s but in the '80s—I began working the conventions . . . I did start working the conventions in '76, but we also credentialed all of the independent broadcasters for the conventions, and there are about 5,000 people, and we handle all of their logistics arrangements and all that. You would go into meetings and you would be the only—there would be me and Jane Maxwell, [who was] with CNN, and 50 white guys. That was
[16:00] normal. The technical meetings were very normal, to be mostly male. You would probably have maybe five percent women. But because I got a position fairly early, in Washington, people do pay attention to your job as much as they do your gender. So, once I got to be the director, and even the deputy director, that gave me a weight and a presence that was somewhat of a protection. I think most of the people that have a harder time are the younger women with less authority. People don't tend to give you a problem if you have a position. They have got something they need from you. You have to deliver something professionally, and if you are in that position, you're not as likely to have a problem. I never had a problem working with the people in the conventions, Democrats or Republicans. They

always treated me as an equal. I guess because they did, I presumed myself to be, and if you present yourself that way, most of the time, you are perceived that way.

There was a director on the Senate side who had worked ahead of me on the House staff, and he actually did try to sabotage me. That would be an occasion when I did learn, and part of it was because I was a woman. Part of it was because he had been on staff 20 years before he got promoted, and I had been on staff six years before I got moved to deputy. And only a few years longer than that and I got to be director, and when I got to be director, at that time I was the only woman director. I went to him because we were going into an event I knew that I was not quite ready, professionally, to take on the job, but I also knew that I couldn't turn it down because it wouldn't be offered again. If they brought in somebody over me, there would not be an opportunity in the future, so I had to go ahead and step up. And I wasn't prepared. I had not done enough on my own to feel comfortable that I knew what I was doing. So, I went to him and explained that I would need all of his help. I was very excited about this job and wanted to do my best, and I would appreciate any assistance he could give me, and I was willing to learn anything that he wanted to teach me. There was a lying in state of the Unknown Soldier, and we were going into a meeting with the Military District of Washington people, and I asked him if he had any folders or any files or anything that could help me with this—we had one lying-in-state in '72, but I didn't remember much about it, and we didn't have very good files on it.[6] He said, "Oh no," he just wasn't very aware of anything; he didn't know anything about the meeting. When we went into the meeting, I discovered that he knew the gentleman who was in charge. He knew the operations. He knew the expectations. He knew the agenda. And none of that had he bothered to tell me. So, it was a lesson learned, but you only have to learn it once. Once you understand that you can't expect someone else to help you or you know where

[6] For a complete list of those who have lain in state, see "Those Who Have Lain in State or in Honor in the Capitol Rotunda," Architect of the Capitol, http://www.aoc.gov/cc/capitol/lain_in_state.cfm.

you can't expect to get help, then you have to be more prepared than anybody else in a meeting, and you learn it, and you go on. That was probably the most brutal lesson I learned, but I learned it early, and it served me well.

A lot of times, what you do professionally, you learn what not to do from seeing an example of what doesn't work. I think I was a good supervisor because I observed
[20:00] supervisors I thought that did not get the best out of their staff. When you would see that, it's easier to say, "Okay, that's not the way I want my office to run." And you can learn from people doing a bad example as much as you can learn from people doing a good example.

JOHNSON: The *Congressional Directory* listed two other women who also were working in the gallery during the 1970s. What were their positions?

TATE: What were their names? Remind me.

JOHNSON: Eloise Poretz and Helen Starr.[7]

TATE: Both of them were on our staff, and both of them were hired by, I believe, Mike Michaelson.

JOHNSON: Was that unusual to have so many women working on a staff that was so small?

TATE: No. Mike was very open to having women. That was not a problem with him, as it wasn't with Mr. Menaugh. Helen wasn't there very long. Eloise was there a good while. In fact, I just talked to her. So, she left for her own reasons, as did

[7] Eliose Poretz worked in the House Radio-TV Gallery from the 94th through the 98th Congress (1975–1985), and Helen Starr worked in the House Radio-TV Gallery during the 95th Congress (1977–1979).

Helen. Helen left to go to law school. So, neither one left because of any uncomfortable working situation, and both are still in the area.

JOHNSON: I would like to back up a little bit to discuss some of the day-to-day procedures in the gallery. Can you describe the radio-TV gallery during your first few years—the staff, the physical space allotted, and some of your responsibilities?

TATE: Well, the physical space hasn't changed very much. It's still a very small suite of offices on the third floor of the Capitol. We renovated in 1988, and the mezzanine area accommodates a different arrangement, but it's always been kind of on top of each other. When we were first there in the '70s, before we renovated, there wasn't even an individual desk for each person. There were only four people on the staff at the time and there was a space for—and I have a picture of this, but I didn't bring it; I can do that if you'd like a picture of the original gallery. In fact, I've got two, both of them with me looking really young. The only unique space was the director's—superintendent space at that time—and that had a small area, closed off with glass. Then there were desks, but it was musical desks. If anybody left, you got up; there were three desks and four people, so you would just have to find a place to sit. {laughter} We didn't really have the kind of file-keeping or record-keeping that we do now. Now, you document everything, but you didn't then, and I don't know why we never thought there would be any long-term to this because Congress was still going on.

Everything was done in longhand. This was all pre-computer. So anything you did, you did on paper. We didn't start using computers, really, until the '90s, and that changed things a great deal. I guess it was the '80s because it was during the conventions. But during the '70s, everything was handwritten, even the notes we did in the chamber. It sounds like it's worse than it was. One of our duties was to keep a running log of the chamber, when the House is in session, and as long as the House was in session, you had someone sitting in the chamber the whole time

writing notes. You still do, but now we do it on a computer, which they don't allow in the Senate side. They still have to do theirs handwritten. So most of the day, you wouldn't have everybody in the room at the same time. The other thing we would do would be—we would staff committee hearings, so a lot of the day,

[24:00] you'd be out staffing a committee hearing. It wasn't too often that everybody was physically in the space at the same time.

JOHNSON: You mentioned the daily log and the notes that you took. What was the purpose, and who used these notes?

TATE: The broadcasters used them, and they still do. Now, they are much more sophisticated than they were then. We would time-code them and put the Members of Congress that did meet—which did mean that you really had to recognize every Member of Congress, every time he spoke—and you would do whatever procedure took place, whatever vote took place, and voting was different then. You had tally votes, and you had different methods of voting—teller votes, not tally votes—teller votes and you would have to indicate what the vote was.[8] You would do some debate, but you didn't try to do verbatim. You tried to listen for things that would be—now, we listen for sound bites; then, you didn't have sound recorded so we weren't listening for sound bites—you were listening for substance. Now, you are actually listening for sound—somebody saying that one little thing that's going to make air. We didn't publish the notes then, and we don't publish them now, but they are internal for broadcasters to use, both to get people who have spoken on an issue to find out the exact vote, to find out what procedure was done, to find out where they are in debate; and now, since 1979, when we got the audio and video in the chamber, to actually get quotes and to get video because they all record it from the House broadcast system now.

[8] Commonly used before the implementation of electronic voting in 1973, teller votes enabled Representatives to cast "aye" or "no" ballots without being recorded by name.

JOHNSON: What are a few other examples of the daily activities that you would do in the gallery?

TATE: We handled press conferences. We handled committee hearings. That's a big part of our job, is the committee hearings we would staff. What we would do is work with the committee people to set aside enough room for the press. There is always a section for the press, and what we've done over the years—and it started really in the early '80s—was to put in a fiberoptic system throughout the chamber, and the House put in the cameras for broadcast for the House Floor in '79.[9] But, we had prewired the chamber for Joint Meetings and Joint Sessions for the networks, even before that.[10] We were doing broadcasting, I think—I have got pictures on our walls of what dates the first broadcasts were, but we actually wired the chamber in the '80s, and we began working with a technical group of journalists—it was called the Technical Advisory Subcommittee of the Executive Committee—to wire all of the committee rooms so that they could be carried live. That has taken—we just finished Ways and Means. We are working on Ag [Agriculture] and Homeland Security, and then we'll have almost all major committees hearing rooms wired so that they can go in and cover them live anytime. This is all the first-floor Rayburn rooms, all the major committees in Longworth, along with the major committees in Cannon. That's taken 20 years to do, 25.

JOHNSON: If you had to describe a typical day in the gallery, when you first started to work, how would you do that?

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[9] The House began televising live coverage of the House Floor proceedings in 1979. Both the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) and C-SPAN broadcast the proceedings. For more information, see "The Introduction of Televised House Proceedings," Weekly Historical Highlights, Office of History and Preservation, Office of the Clerk, http://clerk.house.gov/art_history/highlights.html?action=view&intID=46.

[10] For historical background and a complete list of Joint Sessions, see "Joint Meetings, Joint Sessions, and Inaugurations," Office of History and Preservation, Office of the Clerk, http://clerk.house.gov/art_history/house_history/Joint_Meetings/index.html.

TATE: Well, the pace was much slower because everything was film, and you said you were going to talk about technology later, but technology really has driven changes, both in politics and in television. If it was film, and you only had three competing networks and PBS, you only had four groups that were competing for television.

[28:00] There was a lot more radio; there were independent groups that covered from time to time. There were some foreign groups, but not many. But anything that was going to make air that night would make a specific newscast at 6:00 or 6:30 or 7:00, one of those times, so it had to be shot and sent to where it was going. If it was going to be . . . Cox Broadcasting had a station in California. For that station, any story that had to go had to be on the plane by 11 in the morning in order for it to get processed by that station that night on the West Coast, to be shown at 6:00. So, your timeframe for when something could make a story was much earlier in the day. Even for radio, it was somewhat earlier. You had fewer outlets, and none of them carried very much live. The only committee hearings that were live . . . there were some hearings in the '70s with the crime hearings over in the Cannon Caucus Room.[11] That was a big deal for them to bring in all the equipment to do wiring because that room wasn't wired.

We did the Nixon Judiciary Committee hearings, and PBS had to build what looked like a small control room outside the window in order to have that go live, with a production truck [on the street] underneath. So those were very, very elaborate hearings to do, and the only thing that was traditionally live on a regular basis were the State of the Unions, and even that was a two-day setup because of the equipment that had to come in for it and the trucks.[12] You would set aside committee seats. You would get witness lists. You would get committee testimony.

[11] Reference to a series of televised hearings during the summer of 1972 led by the House Select Committee on Crime concerning the influence of organized crime on sports. See Steve Cady, "House Racing Inquiry Seen Paving Way for Federal Control of All Sports," 28 May 1972, *New York Times*: S9.

[12] For historical background on the State of the Union address, see "State of the Union Address," Office of History and Preservation, Office of the Clerk, http://clerk.house.gov/art_history/house_history/stateunion.html.

You would stay around to be sure that if anything was shot, they got the shots they needed. We didn't have a lot of pool coverage at the time, so most of it was independent cameras coming in and setting up. Then, you'd be in the chamber during the whole time the House was in session. We stayed until special orders were over. We don't do that anymore because nobody carries that. It's a valuable part of the House, but it is not a part that television carries. That was something we would always do. So your nights could be very late because they could go late on special orders, even after legislative business was over. We worked on Saturdays; we worked a half-day on Saturdays. We would only have one person in on the day, but every Saturday, somebody was in for a half a day. So, the pacing was much slower, with a more concentrated group of people that you knew needed to get access.

What you did have then, that you have not had for a long time, now, is both a producer and a reporter from the major networks. You have a producer and a reporter on the Hill, but not in both the House and the Senate gallery. Then, you had them both in the House and Senate gallery. There was a bit of a hierarchy in terms of how a person made their career in the networks. They would start off being a House correspondent, then they would be a Senate correspondent, then they would be a White House correspondent, and if they got really lucky, they would be an anchor. So we knew a lot of the people who got to be in those positions because they had come through the House. Brit Hume had worked in the House before he worked in the Senate, before he went to Fox. Charlie Gibson, who worked in the House—he didn't work in the Senate—but he worked in the House before he went to the White House, before he went to GMA [Good
[32:00] Morning America]. Cokie Roberts worked for NPR before she worked for ABC, before she went to network. So there was the hierarchy of people that went through that we really got to know very well. That's not true so much anymore. Most of the people who work out of the House Gallery now are producers, and

they may or may not do a little air work, but they are not regular correspondents. Only CNN has a regular correspondent based on our side.

JOHNSON: So those were the typical activities. Do you remember any unusual days or unusual circumstances?

TATE: In the '70s?

JOHNSON: Or into the '80s too.

TATE: Well, there were a lot of unusual ones. I can't even remember the date of this. I think it was '91, but I'm not sure. Not skipping that far ahead . . . One of our most unusual ones was the Million Man March.[13] That was very interesting because I don't know if you know that much about the Million Man March, but when it happened, nobody knew what it was really going to be and neither the House nor Senate were taking very much credit for it and were not having a visible presence. But you had no [male] Senators who were black at the time, and you had black House Members that did not really want to be publically involved, but some of their staffs were, or out of the public, they were involved. So we knew that it was going to be covered; we knew it had the potential for either being very big and bad or very big and good, but it had the potential for being very big. There was so much interest generated by it that you knew it was going to get a lot of television coverage, and nobody would participate in any kind of meeting to find out how to set it up. Logistics is what we do, and logistics are neutral. {laughter} We don't care whether it's a good thing or bad thing, we cover it and we try to get people in place so that they can cover it. We are not responsible for the story. We went into a meeting with a group that were anti-white, anti-government, and anti-female.

[13] The Million Man March transpired on October 16, 1995. For historical background on the event, see Ronald W. Walters and Robert C. Smith, *African American Leadership* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1999): 184–191. The Million Man March was covered widely in the press. See, for example, Michael Janofsky, "Debate on March, and Farrakhan, Persists as Black Men Converge on the Capital," 16 October 1995, *New York Times*: B6.

Here I am, "Hello, I am here to help you." We had to do a lot of very careful negotiations to get coverage arrangements made with a group that was very reluctant and needed our help but did not want to accept our help. We worked with a couple of excellent House staffers who were behind the scenes making sure that we got what information we needed, and that's where we got most of it. We really were the only office that had any information at all. The guidelines that the [Louis] Farrakhan people put out were ones we had written that got the name of our office just taken off in the arrangements and put on their Web site release because somebody had to do it. You have to tell people when to show up and what credential to use and what entrance to come through. It doesn't matter whether it's going to be good or bad, and it turned out to be an amazing event with an incredible amount of participation and an incredible story. I felt very good that we had forced ourselves in on it in order to make sure that it was handled properly. I thought we did a very good job.

JOHNSON: You mentioned Bob Menaugh a few times, and you referenced Mike Michaelson, but could you talk a little bit more about their leadership and how they directed the gallery?

TATE: [36:00] Well, Mr. Menaugh had been the original superintendent. The gallery was established in 1939, and he had been the original director. There have only been, now, four.[14] I was the third. He had a wonderful relationship with Members of Congress directly, and this is another change. Directors, then, dealt directly with chairmen of committees, as well as not only the press secretaries for the committees, but the chief of staffs for the committees because it was a much smaller staff apparatus, and there was much less media coverage. Because he had that comfortable relationship with Members, which I couldn't have at that time because (1) I was female, and (2) I was in my 20s—but you had somebody who

[14] Olga Ramirez Kornacki is the fourth and current director of the House Radio-TV Gallery.

had grown up in the House and had been in the House all that time and was very comfortable working with Members, so that was just a very different era.

When Mike came in as director, he changed a lot of things, and he was much more interested in really getting a professional television approach and taught me a lot about how to think about what these people were going to want. He would take me along to meetings, he was a good mentor in that regard, to learn from him what people expected and what they wanted. I did learn a lot about what was going to be the role I would do, and then I took it from there. I think it changed after he left because it changed radically with the onset of satellite trucks, and local television covering like national television did. So you didn't just think about the national groups; you also had to think about the local groups, and you had to think about what they would do on a day-to-day basis. Both Bob Menaugh's demeanor, character, and style and Mike's true interest in the technology and the newsworthiness of things were very good examples for me and very good help to getting me to do my job.

JOHNSON: When you first started your job in the early '70s, there were less than 20 women Members. Did you feel a special connection with them because there weren't many women House employees, as well?

TATE: Yes. I didn't feel a special connection with them because they were all much older. Most of them were—I don't remember all of them, but I remember Shirley Chisholm was not a widow—but most of them were widows of Members who had served, as opposed to being elected on their own.[15] They didn't start having Members elected on their own very regularly until into the '80s and really into the '90s. So I did not know any of the female Members well. On Judiciary, what was her name?

[15] For information on Shirley Chisholm and the "widow's mandate," the term coined to explain the path to office utilized by many women between 1917 and 1976, see *Women in Congress, 1917–2006* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2006): 440–445, 5–6 and http://womenincongress.house.gov.

JOHNSON: Barbara Jordan?[16]

TATE: No. The woman from New York. She was one of the younger women. But there were a few, and of course Barbara Jordan was just astonishing.

JOHNSON: Liz Holtzman was on Judiciary.[17]

TATE: Yes, Liz Holtzman. Barbara Jordan was the role model that every human being who wants to be a Member of Congress should follow because of her dignity and how splendid her speech was and what a role model she was in that respect. So
[40:00] they were role models, but not because I knew them personally or had any direct connection with them personally.

Chairmen were much more God-like {laughter} than they are now. I can remember walking with Mike Michaelson, and he was trying to persuade Chairman Jack Brooks from Texas to do something, and the chairman was listening to him and smoking a cigar, and I had a tablet in my hand, and he didn't have a place to drop his ashes so he just flipped them on my tablet because it was the closest, most convenient place. So, it certainly gave you a position. You knew what your place was in terms of what chairmen were doing.

You asked me about really unusual things that happened in the '70s. One of the things was with Chairman Hays, who had gotten into trouble because of a woman named Elizabeth Ray whom he was paying not for her secretarial services but for her other services.[18] He was being hounded by the press and eventually did leave Congress. There was a press conference arranged that he came into—I was working it—and he was brought in from the back, came to the podium, made his

[16] Office of History and Preservation, *Women in Congress*: 488–493 and http://womenincongress.house.gov.
[17] Ibid., 482–487 and http://womenincongress.house.gov.
[18] For more information, see Julian Zelizer, *On Capitol Hill: The Struggle to Reform Congress and Its Consequences, 1948–2000* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004): 181–184.

statement, and left. The press all wanted to ask questions, and he wouldn't take questions. We would not do a press conference like that now. One, a Member wouldn't expect it; but two, it wouldn't be granted. The press wouldn't allow it. At that point, the press was much more controlled, even though they were very upset with the way it was run. It was something we did, based on what the Member wanted. Now, you wouldn't do that. Your role is much more to take care of what the press needs because your perception of what you are supposed to be doing is if the press gets the story right, and you've helped them do that, then you've helped the American people understand their government. So to stand up to a Member of Congress because they are making a judgment that is not transparent for information purposes, it's something you have to do now. There is too much media to be able to contain something, like you could contain it then, like a Member could control it then.

JOHNSON: That made me think of an earlier interview with Ben West, the former superintendent of the House Press Gallery.[19] He commented that he often felt like he was in the position of serving two masters. Is that something that you felt, too?

TATE: Yes. It's essential to have both the trust and the assistance of not only the Member, but the chief of staff and whoever is handling the press because you can't operate in somebody's room or in somebody's space without having that kind of trust, and you need the trust of the leadership of the House because there are things you need to do at a leadership level. It's a mutual trust, and it's a mutual goal. There are times when Congressmen get themselves in trouble, and it's not the role of the press, and it's certainly not the role of the galleries to keep them out of trouble. If they land in trouble, it's up to you to try to assist them in the

[19] For a brief synopsis of the career of Benjamin C. West, superintendent of the House Press Gallery from 1969 to 1986, see "Longtime House Press Gallery Employee Benjamin C. West," Weekly Historical Highlights, Office of History and Preservation, Office of the Clerk, http://clerk.house.gov/art_history/highlights.html?action=view&intID=355. The Office of History and Preservation conducted five oral history interviews with Benjamin C. West, dated August 24, 2005, August 31, 2005, September 7, 2005, January 19, 2006, and May 23, 2007.

coverage that's going to happen. You are not trying to make the coverage happen; you are just trying to be sure that it happens in as dignified a way as you can get it to happen.

Even though this is jumping forward, [Gary] Condit was probably one of the bigger examples of how a Member of Congress became a focal point that he did
[44:00] not want—there were lots of others, certainly Hays, but this is the difference. This is a good difference between what happened with Hays in the '70s and with Condit in 2001. The difference there was so incredibly visible because by that time, you had all three cable networks going gavel to gavel with any kind of story, and this story had sex, and it had money, and it had a Member, and it had a young girl; I mean, every part of it was titillating. So it was not what you would do to maybe better the country, but it was going to get a lot of coverage. We sat down with Condit's office; we sat down with the Sergeant at Arms office and discussed ground rules for how we could do this because it was going to happen. It could be messy and unpleasant and lots of angry phone calls back and forth, or we could set some parameters and be sure that the pictures people were going to need were going to happen. That's what we ended up doing. That story went on until September 11 [2001]. That was the story of that summer; the story that entire summer was nothing but Condit.

There have been other scandal stories that were much more controlled when television wasn't as obvious. Under Speaker [Thomas] Foley, you had the bank scandal.[20] One of the things that we couldn't photograph was the bank—that was one of the areas that you were not allowed to take pictures of, and I persuaded them to let us take a picture, not inside the bank, not with the employees, but just of the bank door. Even that they regretted because they said you wouldn't have told the story without the picture. Well, yeah, they would have. It was one of

[20] Reference to the General Accounting Office (name changed to General Accountability Office in 2004) and House internal investigations that revealed in 1992 that dozens of lawmakers had overdrawn their accounts at the informal House "Bank" run by the House Sergeant at Arms.

those things where the story was spun, and it was being fed and it wasn't being fed by House Gallery employees—it was being fed by Republicans who wanted to get that story out, and they weren't going to give up on getting that story. So you are going to get the story, and if it's a Page scandal—and we've had several of those since I've been here. The reason the kids wear the little outfits they wear, the reason they are the age they are because of previous page scandals, some with girls, some with boys, so there is not really much new—it's just different ways of looking at it and different responses to it. People do respond differently, now, to things because there is so much more instant response. It was how long the [House] bank scandal went on because Members didn't get it, how important that was to the trust of the American people, and it eventually caused . . . and it was an element in the political change of Congress, not the only thing, but an element in it.

JOHNSON: When a scandal like the House Bank or some of the others that you mentioned occurred, did you feel any pressure in the gallery from the leadership to act a certain way?

TATE: Sure. We hear about it about as soon as it happens. One thing lovely about journalists is that they do talk, and if they know something's coming, and they know they are going to have it, unless it's their exclusive, once it gets past being the first time you hear it, you know where it's going, and you know that this is going to be a big deal. Our reporters would let us know this is huge; this is something we are going to get a lot of pressure doing. You go to the leadership,

[48:00] and you go to the authorities, and, in this case, it's usually the Sergeant at Arms is the other office we have to work with; we've always had very, very good relations on our side, which has not happened on the Senate side. We have had very close relations with all of the Sergeants at Arms that I ever worked with. If they couldn't do what I wanted them to do, they always understood what we were asking for and that it was a legitimate request, whether we got it or not. That was

something really that's been a valuable connecting link, is how well we worked with the House Sergeant at Arms, throughout the years. We made sure that we kept that kind of personal contact and trust because the police are not there to keep the press from the Members. They don't think it's their role, I don't think it's their role, and if you allow them to think it's their role, you're not serving the American people. So you have to keep reminding them, that's not what you are here for. The press is not going to hurt these people. They may hurt them politically, but they are not going to hurt them physically. As long as they are not going to hurt them physically, you don't need to keep them away from us. So we need to work out specific arrangements that make this work. There are a lot of rules that various Sergeants at Arms would let us bend one way or another to make it easier to cover because they didn't want the police involved in the coverage of the story. They didn't want to be accused of covering up anything, and they were willing to work with us, not to expose a Member, but to be sure that the Member was treated fairly and that coverage was allowed.

JOHNSON: Did you have instances where the Speaker would call you in directly and ask you to phrase things a certain way?

TATE: No. I have had Speakers' staff do that, but I have not had Speakers do that.

JOHNSON: Did you find that you could work independently, then, for the most part, that you could listen to the opinions of the leadership but then decide if you think this is the best way to pursue a story, then this is what you would do?

TATE: Well, I didn't pursue the stories. It was a matter of trying to—as working for two masters—we also were the buffer. There were times when you could not get what the press wanted, and in that case, you were the person they could yell at from both directions. You were the person who could go in and do the conversations so that it kept leadership and/or Sergeant at Arms folks from having to talk directly

to the press and the press having to talk directly to them. When people have to be confrontational because they have to do their position, you get hostility that can be long-lasting. If you've got somebody who can be the go-between, you can keep it softer. That's another thing about being a woman that has actually served me well. You can be a bit softer. You can be perceived as less threatening, and you can be every bit as firm, every bit as dogmatic or insistent, but you can do it in a way that is not as threatening as sometimes a male tends to have to do the testosterone thing. You can just feel it in the room when you have got one guy who thinks that he has to prove his point, just his point, not get the result, but his point. We always go into these negotiations with this is where we need to get and we'll get there any way we can, but it isn't whether it's my point or your point.

[52:00] You want to educate everybody into coming to your side, and if you can't, then you need to change your side to get there. You need to get the result, and the result is what is more important than whether it's your point or his point. Women tend to be a little better at that.

JOHNSON: So, in addition to being a buffer, in some cases, you are a facilitator.

TATE: Entirely, totally. We had one staffer who used to say, "We don't do anything, we facilitate everything." That's really what we do, is make it easier for people.

JOHNSON: You mentioned the Sergeant at Arms, and when I was looking through some old editions of the *Congressional Directories*, it listed your office and the other House press galleries under the Office of the Doorkeeper.

TATE: Yes.

JOHNSON: Did your office fall under their jurisdiction?

TATE: In fact, the Doorkeeper is, of course, now the CAO, for our purposes, but the Doorkeeper's Office was a much different office than the CAO's office is.[21] The Doorkeeper was in charge of everything that went around the chamber, everything connected to the chamber, and anything connected with Members. So things like Joint Meetings, Joint Sessions—and then they had a lot of ceremonial sessions—anything in the Rotunda or Statuary Hall would have some component of Doorkeeper involvement, and some of the Clerk as well, but more the Doorkeeper than anything else.[22] When the Republicans took over, they were trying to decide where to put us, whether to put us under the Clerk because we have a legislative function, or under the Sergeant at Arms, because we work with them so directly with logistics, or under the new CAO. I think when they decided to put the recording studio with the broadcast under the CAO, then they decided to put the press galleries under the CAO, and I believe that to be how it happened. I don't know that for a fact because I wasn't in on any of the meetings. But the Doorkeeper—before that was a patronage job and a patronage position, and most of the doormen were patronage. We were the only office that was not, so there would be pressure from them to either appoint or not appoint or have interns or whatever. We would get pressure from them.

That was one of the reasons that Cokie Roberts was such an advantage to us because she knew everybody, and she was on my board several times and was on my board when I was elected. There were two occasions where we had run-ins about hiring, where the Speaker's Office withheld the hire that we wanted for various reasons, one under a Republican Speaker and one under a Democratic Speaker. In both cases, we ran interference, with our executive committee going directly to the Speaker's staff, and in both cases, the event was reversed. So, we were able to continue hiring as we have hired in the past. That is not true on the

[21] In accordance with H. Res. 6 of the 104th Congress (1995–1997), the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) is elected at the start of each Congress and oversees the financial and administrative functions of the House that were previously the responsibility of the Postmaster and the Doorkeeper.
[22] For more on the history of Statuary Hall, see "National Statuary Hall," Office of History and Preservation, Office of the Clerk, http://clerk.house.gov/art_history/art_artifacts/virtual_tours/statuary_hall/index.html.

Senate side. The Senate side, they have always been under the Sergeant at Arms, and they do not have the rules that we do that sets the gallery under the Speaker for authority and CAO, but then the Doorkeeper for payroll purposes. So they didn't have that division, and they didn't have that kind of blessing that the House has always given the galleries. It's a very important part of our history and our operation. It gives us much more independence, and since nobody's directly responsible for us, as long as we don't embarrass them, it's pretty much okay with us.

JOHNSON: [56:00] So even though you were under their jurisdiction technically, the Doorkeeper's Office, there wasn't a lot of interaction that you had.

TATE: There was a lot of interaction because they were our payroll masters. Any kind of raises—when at one point, I wanted to restructure our office, and our Doorkeeper then was Jim Molloy, he said he would not go in for raises for our office, but he wouldn't object if I did.[23] He would let me make the presentation, and if I did the paperwork—I can't actually remember if I made the presentation or not; I know I went to the meeting. I think he actually put it out, but if I worked it, he wouldn't oppose it, but he wouldn't put it up. [Leon] Panetta, I think, was on the Legislative Approps at the time, and that's where you had to take it.[24] We took what we wanted to the Legislative Approps staff and discussed how we wanted it to work, and they voted on it to change our structure, and he didn't oppose it. Raises were things that he had to control. Access to the floor for Joint Meetings and Joint Sessions, he had to control. So, there was a lot of interaction, and we didn't always agree, but we were not ever unpleasant. "Fishbait" Miller was the Doorkeeper when I first came, and I had less to do with him and more to do with

[23] Doorkeeper of the House from the 93rd Congress (1973–1975) through the 103rd Congress (1993–1995, the last Congress in which the position existed). For more information on James T. Molloy, see Martin Tolchin, "The Keeper of the Door and Other House Parts," 5 June 1985, *New York Times*: A18.
[24] "Legislative Approps" refers to the House Committee on Appropriations' subcommittee that oversees expenditures for the legislative branch. Congressman Leon Panetta of California served on three standing committees during his House tenure (1977–1993): Agriculture, House Administration, and Budget.

the Speaker's staff at that point because the Speaker's staff was so small and so directly in charge of everything.[25] You went to one person, and he took care of it.

The way we got the renovation in 1988—I went to John Mack, who was Speaker [James] Wright's chief of staff, and said—I took him over to see the Senate Gallery, which had just been renovated, and it's so beautiful and so grand and took him back to see our office, and I said, "This is not what we need, we need something else." He said, "Okay," and he told Appropriations to do it. That was how it happened. That was the way things happened then. If the right people said the right thing, and that was another case of Wright—the approval came with John Mack carrying the water for it, and it was like a half million dollars for the renovations at that time. By the time the gallery was opened and the renovation was completed, Wright had gotten into so much trouble that he was no longer Speaker. Wright had written a handwritten note that said, "I hope you invite me to your new gallery," and he never came because by the time it was opened, he was so radioactive, it was too small to have a press conference with him up there. But, that happens. Keeping very close, direct channels to the Speaker's Office has always been incredibly important for our staff, and we've always done that. The cooperation has been constant, if not complete. There were times when there were things that we would have objections to, but I have never had a Speaker's chief of staff that would not work with us, and that we've been blessed with. There's been a lot more difficulty, I think, on the Senate side with that kind of "Oh, you're not important to us."

[25] William "Fishbait" Miller was Doorkeeper of the House during the 81st and 82nd Congresses (1949–1953) and from the 84th Congress (1955–1957) until he retired on December 31, 1974. For information on the career of "Fishbait" Miller, see William "Fishbait" Miller, *Fishbait: The Memoirs of the Congressional Doorkeeper* (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1977); William Gildea, "Fish Bait at the Door: The Power of the Odd Job," 17 February 1974, *Washington Post*: M1.

JOHNSON: Was your office affected with the change over from the Doorkeeper's Office to the . . .

TATE: Absolutely, completely. All of the House offices that were not Members' offices, of course, all of the committee staffs, the ratios changed, so the ratio for staffing changed. All the Members' offices were in play in terms of how many people they

[60:00] could have, but all of the offices that were support staff were asked to turn in resignations. And our galleries, and I think—I don't know if Ben West mentioned this or not—but I think all the press galleries did it, but I know our office did not. Bill Headline was the bureau chief of CNN at the time, and he was my chairman for the Executive Committee of Correspondents.[26] I told him what was going on and said this would be a precedent, and he said, "Well, we don't want you all to turn in your resignation," and I said, "We don't want to turn in our resignations." He said, "We want the people we got. We hired them and we want them, and that's in the rules of the House." Now, they can change the rules of the House, but they haven't. So I said, "Okay, let's go see Tony Blankley," and we did. Tony Blankley, at that time, was the press secretary to [Newt] Gingrich. We went in and made the case and he said, "Okay." They didn't want to pick a fight with the press, that was not necessary. Tony has been up to our office a thousand times, and he knew what we did, although he never considered us nonpartisan. He always considered us bipartisan. He didn't see us as Democratic appointees because we were not. We were not hired by the Doorkeeper, and if they insisted, there would have been a fight, and they were turning the place upside down. So this was a fight they didn't need and certainly one they just didn't want.

When [Nancy] Pelosi's office took over, I continued to work with the Pelosi staff as well as [J. Dennis] Hastert's staff on issues. Even before the election, I had informal conversations with the Pelosi staff just in case it happened. There would

[26] For information on Bill Headline, see Lauren Wiseman, "William W. Headline; Led CNN's Washington Bureau," 23 October 2008, *Washington Post*: B06.

be things we'd need to talk about, as we had done with the Republicans, things that needed to be done, and I had worked with Tony on a lot of issues for opening day, what kind of coverage he wanted, what type of coverage had been allowed before. Our role there in some sort of major change like that is not to say what is going to happen and what isn't going to happen, but to explain to a new office coming in what the precedents were, what areas had been used and why, and what areas hadn't been used and why, and what areas were easy for coverage and what areas were not, and then let them make a decision. I don't make any of the decisions, but you are sort of the background person, and there isn't really another office that does that. Even when Hastert took over, that was fairly sudden, and we went in and talked to Hastert's staff immediately and said, "This is what happens and this is how we do it, and if you want to do it differently, you can do it differently, but things like State of the Union, how that sets up and who comes for what meetings and who's in charge of making what decisions, we'll walk you through what the precedent has been, and if you want to change it, you can change it, but this is what has been the pattern." We did that with any Speaker that came in, to make sure that they knew—most Speakers don't want radical change that they don't create. So they want to stay within precedent until they are ready to change the precedent. So that's what we do is try to say this is what happened before.

I recall one other—you were talking about other people, people who gave you a lot of grief, men who made your life unpleasant. Many years ago, there was a director of the recording studio—which we have to work with on a very direct basis because we get their floor feed, and they do a lot of work that interconnects
[64:00] with us—this was many, many years ago. This gentleman did not like television, and we have had other officers of the House that did not like television, and they would be more difficult, but in most cases, they were not duplicitous; he was duplicitous. He would say one thing to me and another thing to the leadership,

and you would go into a meeting where you'd already had a conversation, you had already given him a heads-up, and then he would do a back fill and try to make a point without giving you any kind of up-front. Another lesson to learn. You can deal with people who are not duplicitous, but if they are, then you have to work around them, and he happened to be a man. I think part of it was a male-female thing, but it was probably more that he hated television, outside of his own television realm. He wanted to keep control of anything that was television. He didn't want the networks to come in for the State of the Union. Well, that wasn't going to happen. That was not really a fight I needed to worry about because no Speaker is going to challenge the networks on coverage of the State of the Union unless there is some incredible reason to do it. Nobody is going to do that just because a staffer is annoyed that somebody is putting cameras in the room. That is another example that was as much professional as personal animosity that was a difficult person to work for. Most of the people I've worked with, I have been very fortunate. I have had genuinely cooperative experiences with almost all the officers of the House. He was not an officer of the House, but that was the one exception of somebody who could make my life difficult, and did, and did it on purpose.

JOHNSON: We're going to pause for a moment, if that is all right with you.

End of Part One – Beginning of Part Two

JOHNSON: During the first part of your interview, you mentioned several times the renovation that took place in the gallery. Could you describe that in more detail?

TATE: Well, we had space that was inadequate; the space we have now is still inadequate. We went to all the networks and said—once we had gotten

permission to do the renovation, which, as I told you, we got from John Mack and Wright's office. We really needed to come up with a plan that everybody could agree on because you got so many competing interests, so we got all the networks together and came up with a design that we thought would work with the Architect's [of the Capitol] people and showed them what we were doing, and then, we did a survey—and there's a folder, actually, on the renovation if I can find it in my files. This was pre-computer files. We had every organization apply for what type of space they wanted, whether it was a one-person booth, a two-person booth, or a three-person booth; and we came up with a list of criteria for what you would have to do to have a booth. To guarantee that you'd get a booth, you had to have a presence every day in the gallery when the House was in session. To have consideration for a two-person booth, you had to have two people there on a regular basis; for a three-person booth, the same thing. So, the criteria was set. Everybody had to be in on the agreement for the criteria, and then the booths were designed based on who put in for what and how many we could fit. Then, they were assigned on a lottery. So, it was all very collegial.

One of the things that came from that is that there was a producer for NBC—and NBC at the time did not have radio, and a lot of the reason the networks had three-person booths was because they had radio. He decided that he wasn't happy with his own people, so they were in a position where everybody would agree to them having a three-person booth and he said, "Oh, we don't need it." And I said in front of everybody, "You can have one; everybody agrees that your network can have one, and you are the one that's the spokesman for your network and you are telling me. . ." and I am saying this in front of everybody, "You are telling me that you, NBC, do not want a three-person booth?" He said, "Yes." They have a two-person booth to this day because of it, and the booth is way too small, so they ended up picking up another booth they can use when they have a third person because they can't physically work out of the booth they've got.

That was a long process of getting all of the networks and all of the booth people, the occupants of the booth, and convincing people that they really couldn't meet the criteria, but doing it in a way that was obvious to their peers. If you keep the direct competitors equal in their resources and then let them knock out whether or not they can do better journalism or faster journalism or get more scoops, then everybody's happy because then they are competing professionally. You don't want to make the competition anything like whether or not they are given the same facilities. So we wanted everyone to agree on what facilities they had.

[4:00] In the same way, when we did the impeachment hearings on [President William Jefferson] Clinton, you had to get everybody to agree on how you did distribution of materials. That was when we were only able to get CD things, you couldn't just put something on the Web. We just weren't quite there. So if you were doing distribution, you had to have systems in place that everybody could agree, "Okay, that's my group of competitors. That's my information. I'm in with that group, and I can agree that I am, and therefore, I will participate and stay fair." Our goal is to be sure that everybody has the same access to both the logistics and the requests, and the space, and the facilities, and the information on an equal basis so they can go out and do their jobs.

JOHNSON: Was this renovation driven by you and your staff realizing that the space was inadequate, and also the reporters; was it a joint effort?

TATE: Yeah. Everybody knew it was inadequate. This was also driven by the fact that we needed to bring fiber into the gallery, so it was obvious that everybody needed to wire their booths, and you couldn't really do that the way it was done. This was a time to bring everything into the booths.

JOHNSON: This was still the same space that you had occupied before on the third floor, number 321?

TATE: It is 321, 322, and 322A.

JOHNSON: So you didn't acquire any new space?

TATE: Oh no, and the Senate did. The Senate got the Senate Document Room, I believe. But no, there was no more space to get. There is no space on the third floor, and it is incredibly important for the journalists to be close to the floor because they need to be close to Members.

You asked me earlier, and we can go back to the relation, but you asked me about role models. There were a couple of other women that were somewhat role models in different places. One was Lorraine [Miller] because she worked for Wright and she had been somebody of prominence and somebody you could talk to in the Speaker's Office.[27] The other was a woman named Robin Sproul, who was with ABC, who was the bureau chief for their radio and then was the acting bureau chief, and then—I don't know if she was the first woman bureau chief in Washington or not of a major network, but whether or not she was, she has been the one longest serving, and she has been a mentor and somebody I could go to on professional questions and things.

JOHNSON: You mentioned Cokie Roberts several times and it was in reference to the Committee of Radio and Television Correspondents. Can you provide more background on this organization?

TATE: Yes. The Executive Committee of Correspondents is an elected board of journalists of seven people. They are elected every December, but it's a split election, so that you have four elected one year and three elected another so that you always have a continuum. They serve for two years. The person with the most

[27] Lorraine C. Miller was elected Clerk of the House on February 15, 2007.

votes becomes the chairman, and the election is all of the accredited journalists—broadcast journalists—to the House and Senate radio and TV galleries' vote, so they could have 3,000 votes; they rarely had more than 100. That board sets policy for the galleries, and it also handles accreditation. So if someone comes to petition for membership, they have to meet the criteria. The criteria is on our Web site. Those are their two biggest issues. They also hire, and that's in the rules of the House; that's also on our Web site.[28] But the rules of the House allow the Executive Committee of Correspondents, in several areas, they are mentioned in the House Rules as an entity. Because of that, when there has

[8:00] been a court challenge, the legal counsel for the House will go with me if I get subpoenaed and I was subpoenaed at one point. They dropped the subpoena before I had to go, but legal counsel talked to me about it.

There was another case, not too long ago, when a subpoena was going to be issued and was not, but in both cases, legal counsel will support me, or the Executive Committee, because they are mentioned as an entity in the House Rules, if they are doing that function. They wouldn't do anything for NBC or a chairman who happens to be working for NBC, but they would support anything they did as the Executive Committee, in terms of credentials requests. They did that with the periodical gallery. They supported the periodical gallery when they were challenged by a group who wanted credentials and were turned down by their executive committee. So I serve that Executive Committee. It's a board that generally—Cokie Roberts happened to be the chairman the year that Mike left to go to C-SPAN. My job interview was "Do you want this job?" And I said, "Yeah." She said, "Okay," and that was my job interview 25 years ago. So she's been a longtime friend and a longtime supporter. She and Linda Wertheimer have been good friends over the years.

[28] See the House Radio-TV Gallery Web site, http://radiotv.house.gov/.

The NPR people, because they are up there all the time, have been one of the real staunch people. You have certain groups that have had a presence and that keep people there for a long, long time and those groups always try to have somebody on the board. The networks always try to run a few people and NPR always tries to have somebody on the board. It is important for us—I talk about having good relationships with the leadership, but if I'd gone to Tony Blankley and said, "I don't want to resign and take a chance on you rehiring me," he might have said, "Fine, thank you, I'll see you later." But if I had Bill Headline, who is the bureau chief of CNN sitting right beside me saying, "We don't want her to resign," that has a whole lot more clout. Those are the people we represent; those are the people we work for, and any power that we carry, it's because of the people standing behind us. We never speak for them in terms of being a spokesman for the Executive Committee; they can speak for themselves. But, in terms of addressing issues for them or access for them, or something like that, if it's not something they want to deal with directly, then it's something we need to deal with.

There was a change of House Rules that the Executive Committee felt uncomfortable testifying about because one of the rules of the galleries is that you don't petition Congress, and yet, they supported it, and they wanted it to happen. There was a rule that said that if you were subpoenaed by a committee, you could elect not to be photographed and recorded for television as a witness. That had been in the rules until the Republicans took over, was still there when the Republicans took over. The other rule that the Republicans changed without any pressure from us—that changed how we operate to some extent—is that they put in the rule that says if the committee hearing is open to the public, it is open to television coverage, and you cannot close it to television coverage. Before that, they could vote to close a committee hearing that was open to the public to television coverage. They would allow print, they would allow radio, but they wouldn't allow television. Or they could vote not to. The Republicans changed

that, with no pressure from the Executive Committee, but [Gerald] Solomon, the
[12:00] Rules Committee chairman, wanted to change that rule because he wanted somebody to testify that didn't want to testify, and he wanted it to be on television. So he brought it up in the Rules Committee. Our committee [Executive Committee] very much wanted it changed because it's a very hard rule to deal with because you don't know until that morning whether or not somebody is going to do it, so you've got it all set up and then you have to break it down, and do you break it down in time—and logistically, it's a nightmare.

So I went with Barbara Cochran, who was the chairman of the National Association of Broadcasters, and she made the pitch because she was not a working journalist at that time.[29] She was representing journalists. She had been the bureau chief at CBS. She made the presentation on behalf of the journalists so that the Executive Committee was not lobbying Congress to change a rule because that's something they are not supposed to do.

JOHNSON: Seven people sit on the board, you mentioned. Is there any kind of set ratio as far as a certain amount have to be television journalists or radio . . .

TATE: No. I don't know if we have that on our Web site or not, but you might check the Web site to see if the criteria for the rules for election are on there. If they're not, they might be on the Senate side. They just changed the rules so that they can serve two consecutive times. They put in a rule that—I can't remember if they actually did it or not—where you couldn't have two people from the same organization run, but that's never been challenged. They have had people change jobs in the broadcast industry from one company to another, so they run as individuals, they do not run as members of a group. But, if NBC is running a candidate, NBC is going to get behind the candidate, but if the candidate changes and goes over to CNN, he stays on the board or she stays on the board. So you run

[29] Barbara Cochran served as the president of the Radio-Television News Directors Association from 1997 to 2009.

with the support of your group, but you don't necessarily have to stay with that group, as long as you stay in journalism. If you go out of the field, then you no longer—if you can still be credentialed, you can stay on the board.

JOHNSON: Were there other memorable journalists that were on the committee besides Cokie Roberts?

TATE: Yes, oh, absolutely. Charlie Gibson was on the board when we hired Olga [Ramirez Kornacki], who is now the director. Joe McCaffrey was an old-time WTOP chairman. Dave McConnell has been on the board and has been chairman. He is WTOP. The list of former chairmen are on our Web site, and they are some of the most distinguished journalists. Even Eric Sevareid was a chairman; that was before me. Joe Johns. A lot of correspondents who are or have been on air. Brian Wilson has been chairman twice. Phil Jones was chairman twice. A lot of very prominent journalists have been chairman. Bill Headline, as I mentioned, CNN bureau chief—he's our only bureau chief that's ever been chairman. If you go through it, you will see. Carol Simpson was. Ann Compton was. It's been a very distinguished group.

We have only had one non-network chairman that jumps to mind. Brian [Wilson], the first time, was WTTG, but he was supported by Fox. But there was
[16:00] a woman in the '80s named Carolyn Gorman that the independents decided they wanted to support somebody, and if all the independents got behind somebody, then they can elect someone. There have been several C-SPAN chairmen. Annie Tin, Brian Lockman—there have been several of them.

JOHNSON: What privileges are associated with accreditation and the gallery cards that are given to broadcasters?

TATE: Twenty-four hour access. They have the same access to the building that staff does and more so, in some areas, because some areas they can go that staff can't go.

JOHNSON: For example? Where would that be?

TATE: Well, if there is a press setup, the staff can't go into the press setup. There are places where they have additional credentials to go that staff can't go, but primarily, it's access. The big challenge to that is it's also access to documents, but more than anything it's access to the Capitol. The Capitol is so hard to get in to, now, that if you don't have proper accreditation, you get stopped three times getting to the door. That is one of the things that is just key. Over the years, the accreditation challenges that we've gotten from Members have been, "Well, can't you take their card?" Well, no, they don't take their card. Only the Executive Committee can take their card, and the Executive Committee has never taken a card from anybody that I know of. They have suspended or they have talked to people who have used them incorrectly.

There is one occasion where a woman gave her ID to her husband, and they revoked that because she was using it fraudulently at that point. That's about the only reason they would, and so when an unflattering story or a picture somebody doesn't want comes out, we start getting the calls, "Can't you control this?" "Can't you take their card?" "No, we don't take their card." You have to do something that is illegal or fundamentally improper in the world of journalism, and exposing a Member or taking a picture that's unflattering or doing a story that they don't like or even a breach of an agreement is not something you would take someone's access to do their job.

JOHNSON: Do journalists have to reapply for accreditation . . .

TATE: Yes, every year.

JOHNSON: You talked about the Senate Radio-TV Gallery . . .

TATE: They do the accreditation. They have always handled the accreditation on one side because there is no reason for people to go to both sides, and the place you have to get your picture done is on the Senate side, so they have always been the accrediting office; in terms of the paperwork, they are the administrative office that does that. We do the conventions, we do the accreditations for the conventions; they do the accreditation for the day-to-day office.

JOHNSON: What kind of working relationship did you have with the Senate Gallery? Did you work with them closely on a daily basis?

TATE: Oh, yes. They are essentially a mirror image of us, and what we try to avoid doing is having both of us in charge of anything because that's very confusing for people, since what we do is logistics and information. You want it primarily coming out of one office. So, obviously State of the Union has to be our side because it's on our side. The inaugural is handled by Senate Rules Committee, so it's on the Senate side. More because we got interested in it and because Mike loved doing them, we did the conventions. Lying in states are the closest thing to a dual thing, and so what we've worked out with lying in states is our office handled Rosa Parks

[20:00] and the officers because, in both cases, they were driven by our Speaker.[30] The Reagan funeral and the [Gerald] Ford funeral—the Reagan funeral, it was obvious that our Speaker wanted to be more involved than we originally thought. In fact, Ted Van der Meid, with the Speaker's Office, wanted our staff involved more than we had initially were expecting to be, so a lot of the plans really had started out on the Senate. And the Senate was supposed to handle that because that was

[30] For information on the tribute to Rosa Parks, see "The Honoring of Civil Rights Icon Rosa Parks," Weekly Historical Highlights, Office of History and Preservation, Office of the Clerk, http://clerk.house.gov/art_history/highlights.html?action=view&intID=250.

a convention year, and we didn't know it was going to be a convention year, but we knew it was around that time, so we were working on conventions, and they were supposed to be doing it. But the Senate didn't give him the level of support, and it was the first one [convention] we had in such a long time that—and our leadership, if you remember, was in Europe—so by the time the leadership got back, some time had already passed, and they wanted us more involved than we were, just because they wanted to have eyes and ears who had been onsite. When the Ford planning began, we stepped forward and said with the Speaker's Office, we would like to do that. Ford was a House Member. We know, as House Members, the House would be more involved. His primary period was here, and we want to take that and be the lead office on that, and they said fine.

Now, when there are gold medal ceremonies or the Holocaust ceremony or other types of ceremonies that take place in the Rotunda, then we trade off. We generally do the Christmas tree lighting because the Speaker lights the Christmas tree. So, it's where the Speaker is more the prominent person or whether it is a Senate-driven event, there might be an obvious reason for us to take it.

When we did Federal Hall—that was one that I had to beg to be involved in because that was working, and the Speaker's Office was doing it, and leadership was working on it, and I couldn't get anybody to give me any information for us.[31] I kept saying, "You're going to want television, you're going to want television, and we do television, and if you will let us come to the meetings, we'll help." Then, they finally got us involved in the meetings. So we were the primary office for that. If you see a need, and you step forward, and you can be helpful, people will generally welcome you in to take care of things. So that's why we were more involved in that than the Senate was because we stepped forward to be involved in it.

[31] The House participated in a ceremonial Joint Session of Congress in Federal Hall in New York City. The session was held in remembrance of the victims and events of the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks. See Carl Hulse, "Congress, Back in Its First City, Honors Resilience of So Many," 7 September 2002, *New York Times*: B1.

JOHNSON: So, typically, you've had a good relationship, not a rivalry, with the Senate side.

TATE: No, it has not been a rivalry, with the exception of when I was first director and [name redacted] was director—that was not a rivalry as much as a—I got to be more prepared than anybody going into a meeting with him because I just had to be. Fortunately, he wasn't there all that long. Larry Janezich was the director for most of the time that I was the director, and he was just wonderful to work with.[32] He is very, very smart and had enough problems of his own where he wasn't a problem for me in any way, shape, or form.

The other directors of the other galleries over there, one of them—the gallery we work with most over there is the press photographer's gallery because they don't have a House Gallery—so we are very fortunate that we've had very good relations with them. The guy who is now the director on that side worked for me at one point, and he's just a terrific guy and very professional and has the same approach to things that we do. So it's, "Let's get the job done, and let's do it right, and let's work together." That's been a good relationship in most cases.

JOHNSON: [24:00] Did you work closely with the other House press galleries, the print and periodical?

TATE: I would rather talk about that when we are not being recorded.

Break in CD

End of Part Two – Beginning of Part Three

[32] Larry Janezich served as the Senate Radio-TV Gallery superintendent from the 101st through the 108th Congress (1991–2005).

JOHNSON: Okay, we're back on tape now.

TATE: Okay. David Holmes was hired the same day I was in 1972, and he too was held up in his payroll.[33] We were friends from the very beginning, and he got to be director very quickly because the woman who was the director over there left to go to Saudi Arabia with her husband, who was in the State Department.

JOHNSON: And David Holmes was in charge of the periodical reporters?

TATE: The periodical gallery, so he was a director a lot sooner than I was, and he retired about four years ago. In his hiring, he also hired a woman named Ann Jerome Cobb, who had worked with my husband in Talmadge's office. So that office has always been, for a variety of reasons, a very good office to work with. They don't compete with us very much, in very many ways. Because the periodicals don't have the same immediacy, they're frequently left out of meetings and left out of information. So we could serve them by making sure they knew when things were going on and making sure they knew when meetings were going on because we were always included in meetings. The young man who's the director now, he's somebody that David wanted me to befriend, and I did, and he's been just a real asset to work with, and I've been somewhat of a mentor to him. His name's Rob Zakowski.[34]

JOHNSON: Can you provide an example of a way that you worked together, a specific example?

TATE: Well, on almost—I can actually describe a way we worked together, that I worked with a print person, but not the director. When the officers were shot on that

[33] David Holmes served as the superintendent of the House Periodical Press Gallery from the 94th Congress through the 107th Congress (1975–2003).
[34] Rob Zakowski became superintendent of the House Periodical Gallery during the 108th Congress (2003–2005).

awful Friday in, I think it was 1997.

JOHNSON: [July] 1998.[35]

TATE: The galleries were supposed to be going on a site visit to Los Angeles. Well you know, I knew with [Tom] DeLay being involved, that this was going to be House driven, and it was clear things were happening.[36] So I was the only director that did not go to LA [Los Angeles]. The rest of them went, and I stayed here, and we were around all that weekend. The print gallery was open, and there was a guy named Chuck Fuqua who was kind of like the lowest person in the staff, but he just happened to be on staff that day. He was supposed to be there, and there was a meeting called in the police headquarters, where they going to set up the coverage on this. I knew about it because the police always call us about stuff. I called him [Fuqua], and I said, "Who's there?" and he said, "I'm it." I said, "Well you've got to come with me. Get somebody to cover your office. You've got to be represented at this." I took him with me because it was critical that we—that people know how this was going to operate, and that it was going to happen. When everybody left to go to LA, it wasn't set that there was going to be a lying in tribute, and that's the kind of thing television has to be in place for. There's just—you can't do that at the last minute. You have to bring in all the equipment ahead of time. You have to get your cameras in place. You know, the print people got back in time to actually be in place to make sure their people were escorted. Well, that's fine, but he was there with me so that he could tell his group what was going to happen and when it was going to happen, so he could do the logistics for them.

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[35] On July 24, 1998, Russell Eugene Weston, Jr., forced his way into the Capitol and shot and killed Capitol Police Officer Jacob Chestnut and Detective John Gibson, before being shot himself. For a detailed account of this tragedy, see Francis X. Clines, "Assailant and a Tourist Hurt in Shootout," 25 July 1998, *New York Times*: A1; "The 1998 Shooting of Two Capitol Police Officers," Weekly Historical Highlights, Office of History and Preservation, Office of the Clerk, http://clerk.house.gov/art_history/highlights.html?action=view&intID=270.

[36] As part of then-Majority Whip Tom DeLay's security detail, Detective Gibson lost his life protecting DeLay's staff when he and the assailant exchanged gunfire by the Majority Whip's suite of offices in the Capitol.

There had been other occasions where we were the primary people at the Federal Hall thing, and we were the primary people once again because television is so much more time sensitive. We have to know ahead of time. We have to know before it happens. We have to get everybody in place. Our planning for a
[4:00] lying-in-state . . . we're probably the first office outside the Speaker's Office who gets called about it because you have to start those trucks rolling and you have to have the plan in place. You can't just wait to give out credentials the day the body gets here. You've got to get those things done. So we've been more—the radio-television group tends to be the ones to find out first about big events that are going to be televised.

Now, the print people could be the first to find out about a hearing that's coming or an informational thing because they deal very closely with Members, and Members will talk to the print people on background more than they'll talk to radio-television on background because they don't want them there yet. So sometimes we have learned a few things from them, but in most cases logistics, we'll know before they do.

JOHNSON: In cases like you mentioned—the tragedy in 1998 or very unusual circumstances—do you also find that you're getting calls from staff, asking you questions because they know that you're the source of information?

TATE: Sometimes we do. Not too much. We try to discourage that. We try to find some place for them to get answers because quite frankly, we're just a six-person staff, and in an emergency situation, you never have six people. You generally have two that are working the beginning part of something. There isn't enough time to answer everybody else's questions, so we try to be sure we have a way to put out information, to get people to the place where they need to get tickets or places where they can find out things.

JOHNSON: And the staff for your gallery, has it remained the same since you started in the 1970s?

TATE: We had four people then. We went to five people, and now we've got six, and we'll go to seven when we get the Capitol Visitor Center, or we hope we will.[37] We're approved for the seventh one if they're funded.

JOHNSON: Well, there's many, many things that I want to ask you about, but I'm going to leave that for another time.

TATE: Okay.

JOHNSON: Is there anything that you wanted to add to today's session?

TATE: You were talking about the galleries and the renovation. There was one other key part to all that. When Wright was Speaker, there was a Clerk named Ben Guthrie, who left rather suddenly, and for a short period of time, there was a room he had in the basement of the Capitol, right in the center of the building, right near where the carryout is, and there was just this vacuum for like two months, and I went down and asked for that room.[38] Nobody owned it for just that two months, and they gave it to us, and that became the beginning of the hub room, where all the infrastructure of the Capitol comes in, all this electronics comes in. So you know, sometimes it's sort of you just have to be there when there's a void. That was one of the impetuses for doing the renovation, is that now we had all this infrastructure of electronics coming in to the Capitol, and it needed an expansion. Since then we've expanded. We had to keep it in mind when we did the [Capitol] Visitor Center because you never want to have television brought offline. Nobody

[37] The Capitol Visitor Center opened on December 2, 2008. For information on the nearly 580,000-square-foot addition to the Capitol, see "Capitol Visitor Center: Project Information," Architect of the Capitol, http://www.aoc.gov/cvc/project_info/index.cfm.

[38] Benjamin Guthrie was Clerk of the House during the 98th and 99th Congresses (1983–1987).

wants to spend as long as we've been without, you know, in the construction, you had to keep that up and running. So it's been protectively built around it, but it's been a key part of just the infrastructure for the electronics that go out of here, and that was one of those things you just sort of, you watch, and then something—just all of a sudden this little moment that you go to. Like going to John Mack, there's a moment, and there was a lot more of that kind of thing, where there were personal associations that you could use. It still goes on, but [8:00] there's just so many more people involved now. And there's so much more work done that there were fewer people to make decisions, and the decisions could be made at a more direct—without all the checks and balances that you have to have now on a lot of things. That would have probably taken a year to get approved any other time.

JOHNSON: With almost everyone that we've talked to, space has always been an issue, no matter what time period.

TATE: Oh, yeah.

JOHNSON: In the 20th century or 21st century.

TATE: The building didn't get bigger.

JOHNSON: Right. Well, thank you very much for speaking with me today.

TATE: Okay.

— TINA TATE INTERVIEW TWO —

JOHNSON: This is Kathleen Johnson, interviewing Tina Tate, former director of the House Radio-Television Gallery. This is the second interview with Tina Tate. The interview is taking place in the Cannon House Office Building, and the date is July 12, 2007. I would like to begin with talking about some of the changes from the 1970s until today.

TATE: All right, these were some things that I had thought of after our first discussion that really made a big difference in how the House was covered from the '70s, '80s, and '90s. And one of those was the Speaker's press conferences. The Speaker would have a press conference 15 minutes before the House was in session, every day that the House was in session. So reporters had an opportunity to talk directly to the Speaker—ask him a question on any subject they wanted, whether it was legislation, or visitors to the Congress, or whatever he wanted to, even a political question. So that was something that was a real tool for reporters, to have that kind of access with a Speaker directly, on a face-to-face basis. As staff, we would attend and take notes on it. If a reporter missed the session, he/she could check our notes to see what questions were asked. And that went on until Speaker [Newton] Gingrich was elected. He began to do his press conferences on camera because he was a very visible figure—and a very telegenic person—and would always have something interesting to say; it would frequently make air. You would begin to get reporters asking baiting questions, in order to make air, or in order to get a point across, rather than to solicit information. They discontinued doing the Speaker's press conferences on camera, and then they discontinued doing the Speaker's press briefings altogether and began doing Majority Leader briefings, and after that Minority Leader briefings occurred as well.

The Speaker's press conferences really began as early as Carl Albert. And it may have been under [John] McCormack, I don't know. That was before I was here,

but it was one of those tools that gave the press an opportunity to face-to-face talk to the Speaker of the House anytime there was legislation. And I thought it was a very integral part of the way they covered.

The other things that were different in the '70s especially, and even in the '80s, were how much information we got from the leadership. Now, you get conference papers that come by e-mail, you get on the Web sites, you get the schedules, you get all of these talking points, all of these legislative details, you get a breakdown of the bill, you get the amendments that are going to be offered. You get those all delivered to you. And those are the kinds of things we track for reporters, but it goes to the reporters as well. You get inundated with information from all different sources, minority and majority. In the '70s and '80s, you didn't have much other information coming in, so we had a much closer relationship with the Parliamentarian's Office. We spent a good bit of time working with them, and we could always go to the floor when there was a question, a parliamentary question. We still have floor access, but we hardly need it now. Earlier we would actually have to go down to the floor and get copies of amendments that had not been printed until the time they brought them to the floor or check out what was going on with the Parliamentarian or his staff. So we had much more direct communication with the Parliamentarian's Office. We were expected to have all of the parliamentary procedures down pat. But if there was any kind of a change, or any kind of a schedule arrangement, or any surprises, we would do much more with them directly than we need to now. Now, by the beginning of the day you know if there's going to be a conflict later on, and it's all much more programmed than it was then. It was much more spontaneous, as were the speeches, much
[4:00] more spontaneous.

And one of the other committee changes was in the lighting of the committee rooms. One of the things we had to do was open the committee rooms for crew setup. We had to work up a system of opening the committee rooms two hours

ahead of the committee hearing because they had to bring the big television lights in order to do television because the equipment really required that level of lighting. And in the '80s, the committees got very tired of having to take that much time, and if you can imagine how much gear it required. This was not even for a live hearing. This was for any hearing that was going to be televised—the networks were going to televise—they would bring these great big pole lights in. The committees began to light the committee rooms themselves. They asked the networks if they wanted to light them, and they said no. They wanted to continue bringing in the lights because they had people they paid to do that anyway. They didn't want to do installations. So the committees did installations themselves. It didn't reduce the amount of time people would go in to set up. But it reduced a lot of the clutter in the committee rooms, and that was one of the things we had to deal with, was how much extraneous equipment was required, and how it would go in, and where it would go in, and whether it would fit in a committee room. That was one change from the '70s to the '80s. Now, you almost need no additional lighting. Some lighting makes it better because you don't get the raccoon eyes if you light from underneath, but you can shoot both video and still photography with the technology we've got now, just with the regular light in the room, and the augmented overhead light that the committees have put in helps, but it isn't even necessary anymore.

JOHNSON: You mentioned a close working relationship with the Parliamentarian's Office.

TATE: Yes.

JOHNSON: What are your recollections of the Parliamentarians at the time?

TATE: Well, they're just the best people in the world. Charlie Johnson is one of my oldest friends, and they are wonderful people. They're really the institutionalists of the

House.[39] Bill Brown before him; I did not know [Lewis (Lew)] Deschler very well.[40] I was there when he was here, but I didn't know him well. But Bill Brown was just an amazingly good person, and knew the House, and knew the Members, and would guide us in anything that we needed. One call from us, or one visit with us, would save them 20 calls from press people. And it wasn't that they didn't particularly want to talk to press people, it was that that was not their mission. So we tried to be the ones to go to them and get information from them. And they were always so helpful.

One of the more recent times when we were still working with them as directly as we had been in the past was when Vice President [Albert] Gore [Jr.] presided over the Electoral College when he was defeated.[41] That was going to be carried live. Now that's another time that we have cameras in the chamber. There are only three times, regularly, that we bring cameras into the chamber over and above the House Recording Studio cameras, and that is: Joint Meetings, Joint Sessions, and opening day.[42] The fourth one is the Electoral College count. That's usually procedural, and the networks may go to a minute of it or use a minute of it on the evening news, but because Gore was presiding over his own loss, and there was going to be a challenge by the Florida delegation, they were going to carry large parts of it. And of course, by this time you also had competing cable networks. So you were going to have a lot of it go to air, and we needed to have it scripted. So we really went through and walked every detail of it with the

[39] For a complete list of House Parliamentarians, see "Parliamentarians of the House," Office of History and Preservation, Office of the Clerk, http://clerk.house.gov/art_history/house_history/parliamentarians.html. Charlie Johnson served as the Parliamentarian of the House from the 104th Congress through the 108th Congress (1995–2005).
[40] William (Bill) Brown served as Parliamentarian of the House of Representatives from 1974 to 1994. For more on his career, see "William Holmes Brown; House Parliamentarian," 29 May 2001, *Washington Post*: B06; Lewis Deschler served as the House Parliamentarian from 1928 to 1974. For more information on his career, see Richard L. Lyons, "Parliamentarian Lewis Deschler Dies," 13 July 1976, *Washington Post*: C6.
[41] For historical information on the Electoral College, see "The Electoral College," Office of History and Preservation, Office of the Clerk, http://clerk.house.gov/art_history/house_history/electoral.html.
[42] For historical background and a complete list of Joint Sessions, see "Joint Meetings, Joint Sessions, and Inaugurations," Office of History and Preservation, Office of the Clerk, http://clerk.house.gov/art_history/house_history/Joint_Meetings/index.html.

Parliamentarian's Office to find out not just the procedure, which we knew didn't change very much, but even some of the terms—what the box was called, who
[8:00] would carry it, which people would come in in which order—because you're looking at these pictures on television, you want to be able to identify them, and a reporter needs to know what he's describing. There's a lot of ceremony going on that isn't obvious. And so that was what we did. We worked out a script with them so that we knew how to explain exactly what was going on prior to it happening, so the television people could have a running commentary that would track the pictures the audience was seeing. So there have been many events, but that was the most recent, where we worked so directly with them.

JOHNSON: In that case, did you have to start from scratch, or was there any kind of precedent that you could fall back on?

TATE: There was precedent, but this was going to be different. And even in the precedents—the precedents for when we went up to air and how long we were on and that sort of thing—really were for a standard ceremonial count, not for a newsworthy event, where it was going to be described in much more detail. So we were going to need much more detail than we had any background on.

JOHNSON: Since we're talking about the 1970s, how did the atmosphere and the culture of the radio-TV gallery change from when you first started in the 1970s to when you just recently retired?

TATE: Well, the change can really be tracked by the technology because we talked about the film. When you began to have satellite coverage, and you began to have live coverage out of committee hearings, not just when it was the impeachment of the President or the crime hearings with very visible people. It wasn't once every six months; it began to be once a month, then it began to be once a week, then it began to be daily. As we got the infrastructure in place, you had much more

information that you had to find out. I mean, if something is covered, and they're going to do a piece, and they're going to use a little piece of film from it, the reporter will need to know what went on and how it happened and all that. But if you're going to take large segments of it to air, then the reporter needs a different set of information, a different type of information, much more detailed information—statements and agendas—and if there's any changes, who's coming, who's not coming. So those were the kinds of things that changed as the technology changed, just the amount and type of information that was required for them to tell their stories.

JOHNSON: Was there more time to socialize, was it a more laid back atmosphere in the 1970s?

TATE: Oh, much, much.

JOHNSON: Did the staff and reporters have time to get to know each other?

TATE: Oh, yeah. There was a lot of down time. One of the other things, reporters would actually (because there was no television until '79), reporters would have to sit in the chamber if there was a very major debate. Once we got audio and video . . . now most reporters do not sit in the chamber unless it is something akin to the impeachment vote on—or the war vote, a vote of that magnitude, or the tax bill that went overnight. For a major political story, they may sit in the chamber to get the atmosphere because that isn't picked up by the in-house television. The [House] Recording Studio does a six-camera switched feed that everybody gets. And that's what they cut, and that's what they use. That's what you see on air. C-SPAN takes it gavel to gavel; they're the only group that does, but any group
[12:00] could. Any group that's credentialed to the radio-TV gallery. So, you know, that is the material they have to use to cut a piece for the news. So they're watching the same thing that their audience will be watching, and then they decide which

pictures that are available there for them to use. When they sit in the chamber, then they get the sense of what the rest of the room is. And for more description, more reporting. They used to all sit in the chamber because that was the only way to see what was going on.

And we've had sessions that went, I believe the first year of [Thomas (Tip)] O'Neill's speakership, the ending of that session went three days without a break. And reporters would have to come and go and sit in the chamber to take notes, and we'd have to take notes through the whole thing because you had to have a running log because reporters couldn't be here all three days or through the whole weekend. But you don't get very many reporters sitting in the chamber anymore, unless there's a political atmosphere where they want to see who's talking to whom in the corners. That occurred when we had the tax bill, when you had the change in votes in the end; this was under [J. Dennis] Hastert. The drug bill was another bill where you had a political element to it that was going to play out. And you would see it, but you wouldn't see it on camera. So the reporters would come into the chamber then. But you know, before '79, if they wanted to report on it, they had to come into the chamber and sit and take notes themselves.

JOHNSON: Can you describe the average or the typical journalist that would be in your gallery in the 1970s? And then if you could just expand on that on how that might have changed during your career?

TATE: Well, Bob Foster, who's still around, was a typical reporter. He reported for WGN. Joe McCaffery was a radio reporter. Most of them knew their Members very well because there weren't that many reporters, and there wasn't that layer of staff that you now have. You now have a communications director, and a press secretary, and a deputy press secretary, and this is for leadership, but you didn't have that many staff people, and Members of the House will talk to reporters. They don't need to go through staff all the time. Senators have many more levels of staff you

have to go through to get to them, but House Members will talk to reporters almost any time.

But in those days, I mean, they did pal around with them. They knew them—they knew them well. They would go out and have drinks with them. There was a great deal more drinking, there was more socializing, there was more overlooking or ignoring scandals that didn't become just blatant. Once they became blatant, everybody would cover them, but the chairman of Ways and Means, Wilbur Mills, when he had an affair with I think a stripper, that got local coverage at first, because they fished him and her, or her, I don't remember which, out of the Tidal Basin.[43] It was a local story before it became a national story. But because he was a national figure, as the chairman of Ways and Means, it became a national story. So there were stories like that, that would not get the kind of coverage—I mean, now it would be 24 hours. There were personal things that were simply not covered that are now considered fair game. That's definitely a change. Reporters
[16:00] did not report on private lives unless they became so public—as in this case it did—that they couldn't ignore it. And the drinking was one of the things, and womanizing was one of the other things, that was ignored a great deal, where now it couldn't be. Well, I mean, obviously you can't be drinking that much if you're going to be on the House Floor talking at two in the morning, you'd better not be slurring your words because it will be picked up on audio, and you will be able to tell it. So, you know, that kind of atmosphere is different.

I think Members, after Watergate, and after [Richard] Nixon resigned, you had the Watergate Babies come in, and that class all ran on clean government and changing the system.[44] And you did begin to see changes, where the chairmanships were not the fiefdoms that they had been before. You began to see

[43] For more information, see Julian Zelizer, *On Capitol Hill: The Struggle to Reform Congress and Its Consequences, 1948–2000* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004): 164–166.
[44] The term "Watergate Babies" refers to the 75 new Democrats who were elected to the House of Representatives in 1974 in the aftermath of the Watergate scandal.

younger Members demand more attention and demand more of the power structure. So as the power dissipated from just the chairman, there were more angles for stories to come. So members of the press would need to know more about what was going on in a committee than just to talk to the chairman.

JOHNSON: Just a few of the basics about journalists before we move on. The average age, gender, and educational backgrounds?

TATE: Well, they were almost all men. There were a couple of women working out of the House Gallery: Tina Gulland, and Maria Gwaltney, and Mariah McLaughlin. Those were just a few, and then Cokie [Roberts], of course.[45] But there weren't a great many women covering the Hill, and there weren't many women Members either. There were—the average age—it's hard to remember because I was so young. They all looked old to me because I was in my 20s, I was in my mid-20s. But I would say they were probably 40s; they were mostly 40s. And they would spend a whole lot of time just talking to each other and chatting about what was going on among themselves. There were card games occasionally, but that was more in the print gallery. That was not as much in the radio-TV gallery. Our gallery, physically, wasn't conducive to too much socializing.

JOHNSON: How much did the demographics change? There were more women reporters as time went on. Did the age stay about the same as well?

TATE: Well, generally, the House reporters have always been in their 30s and their 40s. You get some 20-somethings, but the 20-somethings usually are in the very, very small bureaus, and they're just beginning to make their names You know, they're just beginning reporting, and they'll be at the small bureaus or doing freelance or that sort of thing. But they've always been sort of in the 30-40 group because, as I

[45] The daughter of two former Representatives, Hale Boggs and Lindy Boggs, both of Louisiana, Cokie Roberts also worked as a congressional correspondent. The Office of History and Preservation conducted two oral history interviews with Cokie Roberts, dated August 28, 2007, and July 11, 2008.

mentioned in the first one [interview], there has been that hierarchy of the House being sort of the place people start to become national reporters. And that used to be, that was very much so in the '80s and '90s, and much less so now. But most of the reporters now I think would probably be an average age of about 40. Now, if I were thinking through them right now, they would be probably in their 40s.

JOHNSON: What was the relationship like between the radio and the TV journalists?

TATE: [20:00] They weren't very different. Radio and television, because a lot of people go back and forth from one to the other—radio's easier to deal with because it doesn't require as much equipment. It doesn't require pictures. We had a couple of radio incidents when the audio was first put in the House Chamber. They did an audio experiment before they brought in television. And there was a time when audio was picked up in the House Chamber from the House Floor. I believe there were two incidents. One was at a Joint Meeting with the President of Liberia, I believe; Tolbert, I think his name was. T-O-L-B-E-R-T, I think. Nelson Rockefeller was the Vice President, and he was in the chair, talking to the Speaker, and I'm not sure—I think it was [Carl] Albert. And he said, "Do you see how light skinned he is? If he were"—he said a remark that was racial—it had racial overtones. It was picked up in audio, and they used it on the news.[46] After that, they began to have a House employee control—turn on and off the audio—because it was picked up on an open mic; it wasn't intentionally picked up. We've had other open-mic instances that television would get some—but radio would get something and use it, and only if it was really extraordinary would television use it because it would just be audio from the House Floor. That was one incident, and each time they were trying to do something to make sure it didn't happen again.

JOHNSON: Was there any sort of rivalry between the radio and the TV journalists?

[46] For additional information, see "Albert Apologizes to Brooke for Racial Remarks," 25 September 1976, *Washington Post*: A2.

TATE: Not particularly. There was between the print—and still is—between print and television. There's this sense that print believes that they are the true journalists, and radio and television are the entertainers. That's how the gallery started, really. Or that's what I'm told, since I wasn't around in '39, that the reason that they were not accepted as members of the press gallery, the print people decided that radio and television people were entertainers and not journalists like they were.[47]

JOHNSON: Can you provide a little background on your promotion to director of the radio-TV gallery? Were you next in line to become the director?

TATE: No, there was a person next in line over me, named—what was his name? [Recollects name]. And he was from South Carolina, and he had been on the staff as long as I had. I had not been on that long—I'd started in '72, and this was '81. And Mike Michaelson was superintendent at that time.[48] And it was superintendent, not director, at that time. He had been offered, and had accepted, a job with C-SPAN. So before, when Mike was made superintendent, [name redacted] was over me, and it became apparent he was not going to get promoted, so I applied for the job of deputy director, which I still think is the best job on the Hill because you are involved in everything and not responsible for any of it. Because they decided I'd done a decent job at that point, and we only had a four-person staff. It wasn't as demanding, not nearly as demanding a job as it is now, they promoted me to deputy director, and [name redacted] did leave, as you
[24:00] would expect if somebody didn't get appointed in the hierarchy, didn't get moved up. When Mike decided to go to C-SPAN, Cokie Roberts was the chairman, and

[47] For information on the establishment of the House Radio-TV Gallery, see "The Opening of the House Radio Gallery," Weekly Historical Highlights, Office of History and Preservation, Office of the Clerk, http://clerk.house.gov/art_history/highlights.html?action=view&intID=288; Donald A. Ritchie, *Reporting from Washington: The History of the Washington Press Corps* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005): 58–59.
[48] Mike Michaelson served as the superintendent of the House Radio-TV Gallery from the 94th Congress (1975–1977) until his retirement on October 1, 1981, during the 97th Congress (1981–1983).

she asked me if I wanted to be the director, and I said, "Yes." She said, "Okay." So that was it. {laughter}

JOHNSON: You mentioned in this interview and in the last interview, about the title of superintendent versus director.

TATE: Yes, Brian Lockman was the chairman of the Executive Committee, and he was with C-SPAN. And he decided that he just hated the term superintendent, and quite frankly, Mike had too because he was from New York—I don't know whether he was from New York, but he had relatives from New York, and they always thought of a superintendent as being a custodian. And his relatives never understood what the superintendent term meant. So Brian Lockman decided he was going to change our titles to "director." And that was one of the things he really, really wanted to do. We didn't care a whole lot, and for the longest time, the print people didn't change their title. But he decided "director" just had a much more modern and much less anachronistic tone to it. So he made that a mission. Since all it required was for the [Committee on] House Administration to change the title, and it didn't require them to give us any more money or change our duties or do anything bad, they said, "Fine. If you want to be called directors, you can be called directors."

JOHNSON: In the previous interview, you talked about some of your responsibilities as a member of the staff. What were some of your major duties as director when you first took over?

TATE: Oh, the director has quite a bit more responsibility. All the logistics planning for the events that we do is really up to you to set the tone for it—you arrange which staff is responsible for which part of it. You have to work with the networks on anything that's a major event, like the State of the Union, which is an annual event, and you not only do the State of the Union, but you have to do the

Democratic response or the Republican response.[49] And the Statuary Hall setup for the react for Members of Congress.[50] So it's a good two weeks' worth of work, and you're the one who is assigning everyone to their specific task, but you're ultimately responsible for all of it. The conventions, we've done the conventions since—I know they were doing them in '72. I did not go in '72. In 1972, I'd just been hired, so I was not taken to the conventions. I was the only staff person who didn't go. And in '72, they were both in Miami, and they were very, very hostile. This was when there was a great deal of difficulty in the country at that time. I didn't get involved in that one.

In '76, I was staff, and in '80 I was staff. And when you're staff at a convention, you go and you hand out credentials, and you have an office time that you have to be in the office, and you have a time when you do the floor. When you're handling credentials for the floor, and that's all you have to do. When you're in charge of it, as I was in '84, you make all the arrangements with the parties for all of the credentials, how many our media gets. We were responsible for the
[28:00] independent radio and television. We did not handle the networks. The parties have always handled the networks directly. But by '84, the local stations were starting to do live coverage. So you were handling live stand-up positions; live skybox positions; radio, live radio positions; and then in '92 when talk radio came in, you started doing the radio talk shows. So our portion of the conventions was by far the biggest—they say there are 15,000 journalists who come to the conventions. And there are five galleries—well, the four galleries and the networks. So there are five different divisions of press. And 15,000 press people, and we handle 5,000 of the 15,000. So we handle a third of them with six people. We do all the arrangements. We meet with the press to find out what they want. We meet with the party to find out what we can have. We assign the skyboxes; we

[49] For historical background on the State of the Union address, see "State of the Union Address," Office of History and Preservation, Office of the Clerk, http://clerk.house.gov/art_history/house_history/stateunion.html.
[50] For more on the history of Statuary Hall, see "National Statuary Hall," Office of History and Preservation, Office of the Clerk, http://clerk.house.gov/art_history/art_artifacts/virtual_tours/statuary_hall/index.html.

assign the locations. We put out information about what's available, how much it's going to cost. We negotiate with the parties to be sure that we are providing as much information—we don't handle any of the money. The workspace, all of that is done through our office. And that responsibility is enormous. And how they're going to do this next set of conventions I don't know because they're going to be three days apart. And normally what we do is we go into a city a week ahead, do all of the packaging, get everything ready. The big groups are taken care of while we're there. I mean, there are some groups that come in with 250 people. Some groups come in with one. And quite frankly, some of the groups with one are as much trouble as the groups with the 250.

But by the time I had finished doing 20 years' worth of conventions, I felt very comfortable that I knew not only going into it what responsibilities I had but also how to make the best decisions with groups, even when some of the groups didn't know they didn't understand entirely what was available to them. What you would end up doing is talking them through—what did they want to accomplish? And then when you realized what their mission was, you could match them with the resources that were available. And in most cases, if you kept competitors in the same markets—or competitors in the same styles equal . . . You would never be able to give them everything they wanted, but you could give them what they needed—and they would be very pleased with the type of coverage they could do. But it was learning each time, the different groups and how they worked and what they needed, and understanding what they needed, so that you could be sure that they had everything they needed, everything that would get the job done for them. And the independents cover a lot heavier than a lot of the networks have lately because they're covering all the delegations, they're covering individual Members. They're covering the parties that go on. It's always a local story, whether it's a national story or not. So that's literally another job on top of your job, and we've done those continuously since the '70s.

JOHNSON: You said that you would go two weeks early onsite.

TATE: Right.

JOHNSON: But even before that . . .

TATE: You'd do site visits, and you do several. It depends on how difficult the site is and if there are any problems with the site, as in Boston they changed the workspace at the last minute. Sometimes they would make changes . . . in Moscone in '84, in San Francisco, the Democrats were preparing to build—some places they go, there are existing skyboxes and then you build platforms that are for stand-ups. And stand-ups are the reporters standing there with the camera on him, with the
[32:00] background of the convention floor. Skyboxes are usually sets that are built in existing skyboxes in existing arenas. But occasionally they would go to a place that was a convention hall, not an arena. They did that in '84 in San Francisco and in Moscone—Moscone was the hall. And in San Diego.[51] At that point, they have to actually construct skyboxes and stand-up positions. And that gets to be—can be very expensive.

We went to Moscone. The way it was designed, there were large struts that held the building up. And the skyboxes were designed in them. And there was obstruction in some of them. So they decided—the [Democratic] party decided—at first they would do different costs for different booths, and this was after they'd already been assigned at a certain price. So we got all the groups together and had them complain because you are kind of the one focus for them. You can generate a meeting and then come up with a strategy that would take care of everybody's problem. In this case, it was unacceptable to have assigned people with an expectation that their cost would be X, and then say "Okay, but the people who got this, it's now going to be three times X, and the people who got that will be

[51] The 1996 Republican National Convention was held in San Diego, California.

half X." You know, that was just not acceptable. So there have been times when we've had to help the groups as a focal point, to raise a question or raise a problem to the parties that was addressed by the parties. And in our case, we always deal not with the political people at the parties, but with the media and logistics people, who are just some of the best people in the world. They are wonderful, and their goal is to make this as easy to cover, and as inexpensive to cover as is possible. So we worked very closely with them, and occasionally there would be something that we would mutually agree needed to be done, but only the broadcasters themselves could do it. And we would be somewhat of the cheerleader to get that together, and the coordinator to help them get the message that they needed to get to the party, to get something corrected.

In New York, I forget which New York convention, but it was a Democratic [National] Convention, and [David] Dinkins was mayor.[52] The networks just went ballistic over the fact that they had been given workspace across the street, as were the independent broadcasters. And that was fine, everybody was happy about that. And then they realized that they were going to have to cable over the street. And that was fine. And then the cost of cabling over the street was going to cost more than—it was going to be like double what anybody had budgeted. And so the networks went to the mayor and said, "This is not going to fly." And they needed for me to represent the independent broadcasters, who were all their affiliates and their stations. So, you know, I got in on that meeting. So there were times when I would represent them as a group, or times when I would be the staff for that group, to get them together on things that needed to be changed for their benefit.

But that's years of experience and years of knowing the convention people. But we go in a week ahead and package all of the credentials. In the Republican case, there are different levels of credentials, but the Republicans also do them by days.

[52] The 1992 Democratic National Convention was held in New York City.

So you not only have—I think I figured out at one point, we handled 50,000 different tickets because even though they were packaged, they were packaged by days and different groupings. And a certain pass would get you to a certain area. But if you had reporters who had workspace in one building, a stand-up in one
[36:00] area, a skybox in another, or were working with someone who did, then you would have to manage all of those tickets. And the way we would do it is to provide the bigger groups—go back to '84—'84 was the turning point. And prior to '84 for the conventions, the locals were all doing film. Nobody was doing live at the local level. And we were not handling the networks. So you would have everyone standing in line for an opportunity to go on the floor. And since they were not going live, it didn't really matter when they went to the floor. Starting in '84, that changed. We assigned the specific locations with specific passes for people to go live. And these were for the independent broadcasters as well. Groups like CBS Newspath and ABC News One would bring large groups of their affiliate stations. The owned and operated stations would come as groups. They would handle their facilities as groups. So you would give them the passes themselves to handle in their group. You wouldn't try to manage ABC-owned and -operated stations, getting their reporters to their locations and to the floor, because there was no way you could coordinate all of those times. So you would give the credentials that that group would need to their manager, and their manager then would handle the floor passes.

So gradually less and less of the floor passes went from us directly to the reporter for a station. It tended to be the smaller groups who would go through the floor pass line because they were the people that didn't have a specific place they had to be to report from, like a skybox, like a seat that was assigned to them. They would just be going onto the floor to get a report, a live report maybe, but probably not live, to get some tape to talk to a Member, to get some color, and then come off the floor. So it didn't make a big, big difference what time of day they went. If they did have a specific speech they needed to do, we would work with them to be sure

that if they stayed out of the line for two hours then, when their mayor of Philadelphia spoke, we'd have them on the floor then. And there were times that we would even do things to assist the different groups—the bigger groups, too, if there was a specific night that they needed something more for their group than they needed all week, then we would try to make sure that we arranged that. But it was just a lot of coordination, a lot of facilitating, and a lot of just knowing the people very, very carefully because, during the convention itself, you're troubleshooting, and you're handling just the floor passes for the smaller groups. And in the convention coming up, there are three days in between.[53] So I don't know how they're going to do it, but I don't have to know. I can watch it on TV this year. {laughter}

JOHNSON: Logistically speaking, this must have been a huge project.

TATE: Oh, it is.

JOHNSON: Did you have the opportunity to hire extra temporary staff?

TATE: No. We would occasionally—we would pick up people at the convention, and we would take the Senate staff with us, and they would help manage the actual event because you are—you're staffing an office, you're doing the credentialing, and then you're staffing the convention, and the convention can go two sessions, so you've got to have people in one facility and people in another facility. Now with cell phones and BlackBerries and all that, you can handle it a lot easier than you could when you physically had to have a place for them to be open because, obviously, if somebody hasn't picked up their credential, you need to have a place outside of the area that's manned, so they can get their credential to get into the
[40:00] area. So you would have to staff two different offices. We would use the Senate

[53] The Democratic National Convention was held in Denver, Colorado, on August 25–28, 2008, and the Republican National Convention took place in Minneapolis-St. Paul, Minnesota, on September 1–4, 2008.

Radio-TV Gallery staff; [they] would go with us for the convention itself and would come in a week ahead.

There were also site visits and planning visits and things like that that go on the month before. And trying, getting a system, the computer system—we didn't even use computers—in the notes Mike handed me from the '80 convention were legal sheets, handwritten legal sheets.

And in '84, in the '80s, we began using computers. And they were very rudimentary. And that was both a good thing and a bad thing, as the computer's coming in, as the event got more sophisticated, the computers got more sophisticated, but you were constantly having to learn what else could we do, what else did we need to know, how much do we need to know. And now, there's just like I was saying, in the information that is now being put out by so many different offices on legislation and details of legislation, is things we had to learn and find out on our own before. But there was so much less of it. And that's the same thing with the conventions. The conventions, there's so much more required, and it's so much more immediate information, so many more groups that need to know what's going on that the electronics are driving what the party wants to know, and what lists you have to have, and it's gotten much more technological and much less one-on-one, which was really where my skills were.

JOHNSON: Did you handle any of the Internet news organizations?

TATE: Yes. Philadelphia, much more so even than LA, but that was the year that the Internet groups came in, and that was before they crashed.[54] That was the year that everybody was saying, "Well, you know, what is the Internet going to be?" And my board wanted me to open to them if they could meet the criteria that

[54] The 2000 Republican National Convention was held in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The Democratic National Convention took place that year in Los Angeles, California.

other newsgroups met, in that their primary goal was to provide news and information. And we do use a slightly different criteria for conventions than we do for accreditation on the Hill. You know, the conventions are parties, and the parties want people there that will cover them in a positive way, and that's fine because it is not access to the House. These people are putting on this event, they want these people there, so we have a much more lax way of—like we do not credential radio talk shows on the Capitol. Their format doesn't work for anything up here, and they also are not really considered news gathering. News comes out of them occasionally, but they're not really news gathering. They're more, just conversational. So they're not credentialed on the Hill. They are credentialed at the conventions because it would've meant from one radio station, you would have the talk show person, the engineer, and the news person, and they'd have to go different places to get their credentials if we didn't take them. And that was a big decision made in the '90s. Did we take them? Did we not? They're not really news in our definition, on a day-to-day basis, but in fact, for practical purposes, it's the same engineers doing two setups—a table goes one place, a table goes another. He's got to get both places; it didn't make any sense logistically to separate it. We did take them.

[44:00] When we got to the Internet in 2000, we didn't know how many groups we'd have, we didn't know how big they were going to be. But we opened up. If they wanted to apply for skyboxes and stand-ups, and could manage the costs and could prove to us that they had stations that they'd be using or that they had a product out there, and if I had a question, my Executive Committee always—any question about accreditation they would review. And if there were groups that were too advocacy, or not news, or really not appropriate for our gallery, then they would make the final decision on it. But you would go on the Web site and you'd see, do they have a news quotient? But there were a lot of groups that we did credential, including one that had a skybox. A couple had a skybox. I think AOL had a skybox because they had news at that time. Many of them no longer are in

business though. That whole Internet bubble crash took down a lot of these sites. And now the primary Internet groups are related to some news organization. There are a few free-standing ones, but there are not as many. And most of the free-standing ones that were not related to an existing news deliverer have ceased to exist. There are a few, but very few that are just free-standing that have all news content.

JOHNSON: According to the [House] Radio-TV Gallery Web site, the first Internet news organization accredited to the gallery, and you said those were stricter guidelines, was in 1994. Do you remember this, and was there any reluctance to accept an Internet organization?

TATE: Do you remember the name; do you have the name of it?

JOHNSON: It was just listed as the first Internet news organization. Or if not the first, do you remember, in general, was there any reluctance?

TATE: Actually, no. Our group—our Executive Committee—has always felt that if you do audio and video, and it's news, then we want you. Because, well, you don't want your competitors out there seeking another place to go. We didn't want them to end up asking for another gallery like the radio-TV had to ask for a gallery from when print wouldn't let them in. We wanted them, if they were doing audio and video, to be a part of our gallery because they would be competing with our reporters for access and for space. So if they were going to be going by the same rules we were because they were going to carry the same equipment—if it's audio and video, you've got to have cameras of some sort, you've got to have recording devices of some sort. So you want those people to be playing by the same rules we are. And what we're dealing with now is the fact that the equipment is getting much smaller, and the definition of a journalist is changing.

Is a citizen-journalist with a camcorder? You know, my cell phone takes pictures. My digital still camera that I have from my grandchildren takes video. I have video pictures of my frogs. When I was on a trip, a friend of ours had a video camera that he took pictures of the Beijing Opera, in performance, with no extra lights, and could plug it into the television and play it back, and it was usable. You've seen pictures from cell phones of the bombings in London. Now, at what point do you decide is that a journalist or not? That's something my board is much more concerned with than Internet sites that have news on them. Internet sites with news on them are a slam dunk. But are these other individuals who are providing news content, are they journalists? Or is a citizen-journalist, by definition, a citizen or a journalist? That's something they're struggling with right now. But just accepting Internet—Internet news providers—no, that was never a problem. They just had to have audio and video. And a lot of them didn't in the

[48:00] beginning. Most of them start with print and then add a quotient. One of the things we wouldn't do is "on spec." You couldn't tell us you were going to have something up on the third of October. You needed to have it up before you get credentialed.

JOHNSON: You mentioned the use of computers for the conventions. What about computers for the gallery? Do you remember about what time you had use of them?

TATE: It was probably in the '80s, I guess, because I know we had them for the conventions. And one of the things I'm proudest of, and partly from working with our Parliamentarian friends, is that when we began using—when we began using computers on a regular basis to do most of our work in the galleries, we asked if we could put a computer in the chamber, to take notes. And this was very early on. There were no computers on the floor at the time, or if there were, there were very few. They were just at leadership desks. But we felt like we could do a much better job of keeping notes if we had computers and didn't have to take longhand and then go back in and type it up. That seemed like an incredible waste of time.

And the computers were quiet. And we were far enough up. And the Parliamentarian said, "Yeah, there's no reason why you can't do that." They did not give permission for reporters to bring computers in, but reporters really hadn't asked to do that. On the Senate side, they've never been able to get that permission. They still do longhand notes and go in and type them up. Now, the Senate doesn't work like we do, but our log is now time-coded and color-coded, so that a Member—you hit a set of keystrokes, and you get the Member, his name (and it's in color), and his state, and whether he's a Republican or Democrat. So it's a visual log, as well as a written log. So you can easily see—and the time code is in it because for radio and television, you need to go to the tape, and you can do that from the time code we have. We don't publish it because it's not for outside consumption. It's simply for the reporters. But it's the same log that we've always done, just in a much more sophisticated and much more technically ideal way, and it has the blocs of votes. So if you're looking for a specific vote, you can go back to that vote very quickly. Now there are ways, there are Web sites that have not only the log, but they have audio and video that if we miss anything—if for any reason our computer crashes or something like that, we can do—we can go back to the recap and get it for a reporter in case he was not able to see it, and something that wasn't news when it happened, but became news because of something after that. So there are now ways to even go back and recoup it. When we first started doing it, ours was the only list like that. We were the first ones to put computers in the chamber. And that was with, you know, just because the Parliamentarian trusted us not to be doing anything we shouldn't be doing. It was just another way of doing it.

We also added a television in the chamber. There was one year when the House had so many freshmen, the House changed so dramatically, and I can't even remember what year it was, but there were 94 new Members, almost as many new

House Members as there was in the entire Senate.[55] It was a quarter of the House turned over that year. And trying to learn every one of those Members before they spoke, so that you could get their names up when they stood up to speak, we were so concerned that we weren't going to do a good job with that that we

[52:00] persuaded them to let us put a TV in there with audio muted, and we keep it on the House broadcast system because they put the names of the Member who's speaking up. So it's another tool so we don't miss anything. Unfortunately, what it does is make us lazy. We don't learn the Members' faces as quickly as we used to because we know we've got this crutch.

JOHNSON: Something to fall back on?

TATE: Yes.

JOHNSON: What about the Web site that your gallery has? Do you remember about what time you created your first Web site and what kind of information was included on it?

TATE: Very little. It was, I think right now, I think we've got the best Web site of—I don't know if you've looked at the other galleries, but I think ours is by far the most sophisticated. And I think it provides an enormous amount of information about the gallery, about the history of the gallery, and about what's going on on the floor, and what's going on the schedule, and logistics information for specific events, and links to things that we know our reporters are interested in that we're not handling directly—like the officers, in May they do that memorial out on the House, on the West Front, and we don't deal with it directly, but the police do, so

[55] In the 1992 elections, there were 93 open seats in the U.S. House. More than 100 Representatives won a seat in the House for the first time, making the freshman class of the 103rd Congress (1993–1995) one of the largest in House history. For a list of the number of freshmen Members for each Congress, see Mildred Amer, "Freshmen in the House of Representatives and Senate by Political Party: 1913–2008," 20 August 2008, Report RS20723, Congressional Research Service, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

we link to the police for their logistics information.[56]

We reworked our site about two years ago. And we really went through, worked with the House. The CAO's office has been very good about supporting all of the equipment we needed. And we have had cutting-edge equipment as long as I've been here. They've been very supportive of giving us the best and the first of anything that we needed. And they worked with us on the Web site, and they worked with us on the first Web site we had for the conventions that allowed people to apply online. That was the first one we did online was not last convention, it was the convention before—so it would have been 2000, not 2004.

JOHNSON: Did journalists at the time have any input on what was included on the Web page? Was some of this prompted by what they were asking for?

TATE: I think the way it looks now, we did get them to look over what, you know, we did ask if they had anything else they wanted on there, and we tried to include anything they suggested. But it was mainly brainstorming with the staff, I would say. Eighty percent of it was staff driven, and 20 percent of it was reporter driven. We have had to make some adjustments so that the House and Senate information was as similar as possible, and there was this complete—you could go to one place and get all the information of a schedule. You wouldn't have to go to the House and get the House, and go to the Senate and get the Senate. You could get all of the stuff, all of the schedule on one. And, of course, the Executive Committee information is universal to both. I would have to ask Andy Elias or Bev Braun.[57] I guess the first Web site would've been when Bev was here, so we've had a Web site of some sort probably since the mid '90s, but I would have to get a date for you.

[56] Reference to the Annual National Peace Officers' Memorial Service held on the West Front of the Capitol.
[57] Reference to House Radio-TV Gallery staff.

JOHNSON: You mentioned just a few minutes ago the House Recording Studio. Can you provide an example of how your two offices might have worked together?

TATE: We worked together very closely on a lot of issues. The House Recording Studio—most people believe that C-SPAN has the cameras in the chamber. I think everybody at C-SPAN, my office, and about six other people in the world know that that's not true. Including Members that think that. But the House Recording Studio has the six-camera switched feed of the House Chamber every day, through special orders. They provide that to all accredited members of the gallery. Any accredited member of the gallery can use any portion of that for news
[56:00] purposes. Most of them use it for spot news stories, just little snippets of it. Sound bites is what they call them, from the floor, of a particular story, a particular event.

The other—I've mentioned that there are times that we were traditionally allowed to bring additional cameras into the chamber: opening day, State of the Union, Joint Meetings, and Joint Sessions. And, of course, State of the Union is a Joint Session. And the Electoral College. Those are the days. There used to be a lot of ceremonial events that we would bring cameras in for as well, too. We've never had any Speaker challenge if we wanted to bring them in on those days. Sometimes we don't bring cameras in on those days. We always do for State of the Union. And now we're up to nine cameras, and two feeds from the House Recording Studio, three manned cameras on the floor. A couple of—no—three manned cameras on the floor, because we have the jib camera now. And two robotic cameras—and one, two, three, four cameras, manned cameras up in the chambers. And we also get a couple of camera feeds from the recording studio for our Joint Sessions.

When the President speaks, the presumption is everybody in the country will want to know what's going on. Half of them don't watch, but if they do, it's a great show. And that's part of the selling point. If you don't make it an interesting visual

experience, people who are watching television are going to switch to something else. It's important for people to know what their President is saying. He's talking to them, whether he's talking to the Members in the room in a Joint Session is incidental. It is important for people to know what he's communicating. He's using that room and that forum to communicate to the American people. And it's up to us to make it as good a television show as we can.

And fortunately, the last Speaker (Hastert) had a gentleman, Ted Van der Meid—who was his legal counsel—was in charge of the chamber. And CNN came in with the idea of this jib camera in the back of the chamber, and I didn't think we'd ever have a prayer of getting it, but you've got to give it a try. And David Bohrman—who I have worked with at prior conventions—he had run one of the Internet groups that had done a convention's skybox in 2000. So I had known him from then. He's now the bureau chief for CNN, and he wanted to do something that had some pizzazz to it, that had a better look to it, and would really give you a feel that you were in the room. So he came up with the idea of this jib camera, which is a huge piece of equipment. I can give you pictures of this. But he wanted to see it—it gives you the look like you have in a sporting event, where it goes up the aisle. But it has this great huge arm. And it takes up space, and that's precious on the House Floor. Because it made good television, and they were able to demonstrate it and show they were able to put it in a place that did not take up more than two or three seats. The seats were not for people that couldn't be moved. This is on the floor, and the operation of it didn't interfere with any of the security operations—we checked it out with all the

[60:00] Officers of the House to be sure it didn't create a problem we were not aware of. They let CNN try it. And it looked good, they liked it, and we used it again last year.

Each time we tried something, we would have to get permission from the Speaker's Office, and from the Officers of the House that this would be a trial, and

if it worked, we'd go on with it. If it didn't work, we wouldn't. And each one of these additional cameras was added because we started off with four cameras in the chamber, and now we're at nine and counting. I don't know that there are any more places we can put cameras in there because it's not that big when you get it all wired.

JOHNSON: For a big event like the State of the Union, where are the journalists assigned seats? Where are they in the gallery?

TATE: Well, they're in the same section in the gallery. You know, the print gallery has a large section of seats, about 100 seats. And on either side, the periodical gallery has about 13 seats, and we have about 13 seats. But for a State of the Union, most of ours are taken up with live gear, whether it's live television gear for the pool, the network pool, or whether it's live radio from the room, there's always been live radio broadcasts from a State of the Union. And these reporters have seats with headsets and microphones. And this last year, we had the first live television audio from the room. We were not allowed to put a camera on any of the TV reporters, but we had TV reporters doing the same thing that radio reporters were doing, which was introducing the President, speaking over applause, and exiting the President. They're not allowed to have newscasts, they're not allowed to do any promotions or anything like that, but they are commenting from the room. And the TV people came to me—Mike Viqueira with NBC—and said if anything were to happen, radio would be in there describing it, TV would not. And we want to try to have TV. So we opened it up to TV, with the approval of the Speaker, and with the approval of the Officers of the House.

JOHNSON: Is this—the State of the Union specifically—is this a joint operation with the other press galleries or does radio-TV really take the lead?

TATE: Radio-TV takes the lead. The print people have to give credentials out for their

seats, and they have to mark seats, and they have to get their people down to the Statuary Hall.[58] We do everything else.

JOHNSON: How has this event changed during your tenure?

TATE: Oh, the first people that we had in Statuary Hall were from ABC, and I think that was in the mid-'80s. And they had one position. We'd have files on the dates of these. We had one, one year, then we went up to about five groups that were in there. At one point, we had 30 cameras in there. We realized that didn't work—the [Capitol] Police didn't think it worked, we didn't think it worked. So we limited it now. I think there are either 21 or 22. I have one person who does nothing but that. And they're stationary positions. There's network lighting brought in. The Architect [of the Capitol] assists us with extra power. The setup requires the Sergeant at Arms to close down Statuary Hall from about 1:00 on so that we can do the setup. Each group has to be in and swept by a specific time. There has to be a coordination of who is in which group. If we've got more groups than can fit into the assigned number of positions, then we have to marry the groups. What one of my staff people who's done it most recently—he's done it several years in a row—is Jay Rupert, he talks to each group about what they're doing, and what timeframe, and could they work with someone else, and how many groups are there, how many interviews are they expecting to do, so that there will be groups that if they're not going live, but somebody else is, they

[64:00] use one camera, and both of them use the same area. So that has become the react position for all of the Congress, House and Senate, after the speech. Sometimes they leave before the President finishes speaking to get to the live shot. It's going to make the 10:00 p.m. or 11:00 p.m. news all throughout the country.

So it's an important way for not just leadership. Leadership's always going to be

[58] Also called the Old Hall of the House, the media conducts many post-State of the Union interviews with Members of Congress in Statuary Hall.

listened to, but it's an important way for lesser-known Members of Congress to reach their audience, immediately, about what they think about—regardless of who the President is, what his speech was about, and what it means to his constituents. So you know, anything that we're doing that makes Congress more understandable to the people, I think, is what our mission is all about.

And that is about a two-week setup because you have to give—you have to be sure people have the right credentials, and that they have the right timeframe, and you have to talk to the press secretaries, and the press secretaries have to have—the map is the most essential thing—a map of Statuary Hall that tells each group, each Member of Congress where the groups they're going to be interviewed by, where they're located. And the press secretaries can't wait to get that. We publish it, and we put it out.

JOHNSON: Your office designs it?

TATE: Our office designs it. Our office creates it. We do signs. One year, we had—each time—we come up with something new. One year, we went down there, and people had started putting signs up. There was a CBS eye on one of the statues. And we said, "Oh, no, no, no, we're not doing this. We are not advertising. {laughter} We are allowing you to use this very special room [Statuary Hall]." So we went and made standard signs. We wouldn't let them use their own signs so that there would not be any kind of advertising there. I think we got them done by one of the graphics offices, either House or Senate; they're just standard ABC, CBS, whatever. So people know where they're going. We also have locations in the balconies of the Cannon Building and in Russell. The Senate does the Russell ones.

JOHNSON: Well, based on the example you just provided, was it difficult to find a balance between meeting the needs of the journalists and the news organizations and then

also trying to make sure there was a semblance of order and decorum in Statuary Hall?

TATE: Well, we do describe it as "organized chaos." And you know, whether or not it stays there is something because it is very congested for a short period of time. It's very well organized, but it's very congested for a short period of time. Yes, there is a balance that you have to find. And at times, it's gone back and forth. We try very hard to work with the [Capitol] Police to be sure that we have kept proper aisles so that people who do not want to be stopped can continue to move, and people who do want to do interviews can be interviewed. So it's trying to satisfy both of those needs, both very important needs. Whether they'll keep it in Statuary Hall once the [Capitol] Visitor's Center is finished, whether they'll move it into an area in the Visitor's Center, I don't know.[59] That's something that we're prepared to do, but not suggesting that they do. We did wire the Visitor's Center quite thoroughly to be sure that if they were to move it into the Great Hall or someplace else, we would—we'd be prepared to do that.

JOHNSON: Well, I know we're running out of time.

TATE: Yeah, got to get to the dentist.

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

TATE: Not today.

JOHNSON: Okay, great. Thank you.

[59] The Capitol Visitor Center opened on December 2, 2008. For information on the nearly 580,000-square-foot addition to the Capitol, see "Capitol Visitor Center: Project Information," Architect of the Capitol, http://www.aoc.gov/cvc/project_info/index.cfm.

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