

— DONNALD ANDERSON INTERVIEW ONE —

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

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

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

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

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

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

**ANDERSON:** Indeed. In late summer of 1959, as I was about to begin my senior year of high school, I read a lengthy article in *Time* magazine about Pages in the House and Senate. I decided this was a really extraordinary thing to do. I

had developed an interest in parliamentary government because my mother had worked for many years—and would for quite a few years thereafter—in the state capitol in Sacramento, not very far from our home, in the state controller’s office. And so, frequently, after school or during break periods, I’d go down to the capitol and visit Mom at her office. And I got to know many of the members of the state senate and assembly and would hang around the chambers and watch our legislature in action. I became keenly interested in the process of consensus government.

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

**JOHNSON:** Do you remember what you wrote specifically?

**ANDERSON:** Well, that I had an interest in representative government and politics and [that] I developed that interest watching the state legislature in Sacramento. I felt that it would enhance my own role as a citizen if I could see firsthand how our government at the national level conducts the affairs of the people. I wrote it in longhand, fraught with misspellings. While I flatter myself that I have a great command of the language, spelling it,

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however, has been somewhat more challenging than understanding it. I put a 4¢ first-class stamp on it and sent it off to Washington with the expectation that if I got a response at all, it would be a refusal. And a couple of weeks later I received my first franked envelope from Congressman John Moss, informing me that he received my letter and congratulating me on my interest in Congress and on wanting to be a Page and informing me that he was delighted to be able to bestow the appointment. Call Miss Whomever in his Sacramento office to make arrangements to come to Washington.

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

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

But in any case, Mother and I flew to Washington on one of the first commercial jet flights. Jet transportation by air had just been inaugurated, I think, the previous year. It was a very exciting thing to do. There were no

nonstops from the West to the East Coast. You had to go through somewhere, in our case, Chicago. I'd never been so cold in my life. And we landed at what was then Friendship Airport in Baltimore. (Dulles hadn't been built yet. National didn't accept jets). We arrived at Washington late at night. My first view of the Capitol was of a red dome, since it was being refurbished at the time in conjunction with the extension of the East Front, and the dome had been sandblasted down to the bare metal and primed with red lead rust-preventive paint. It was [a] rather extraordinary sight to see the dome painted red.<sup>1</sup> So that's how I initially came to Washington. When Congressman Moss retired in the '70s after 26 years in the House, in preparing his files for archiving, he retrieved the letter I had written him long before and gave it to me as a keepsake complete with the envelope with the 4¢ stamp on it.

**JOHNSON:** Oh, how nice.

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

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

**ANDERSON:** Yes. It was January 4th, 1960. Mother and I stayed at the old Raleigh Hotel on Pennsylvania Avenue, right across from the old city post office. Early in the morning, we got on the trolley car—they still had trolley cars in Washington in those days—and took the ride up to the Capitol, getting off in front of the Cannon Building, just a few yards from where we're seated now . . . walking across the grounds to the Capitol and of course it

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<sup>1</sup> For information on the construction and preservation of the U.S. Capitol, see William Allen, *History of the United States Capitol: A Chronicle of Design, Construction, and Politics* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 2001).

was a thrilling experience. In those days people didn't travel very much unless they were extremely wealthy. And those of us who lived on the West Coast always had the dream of coming back East and seeing Washington just for a few days, fleetingly, and here I was coming to spend quite a while living here.

We walked into the Capitol, and of course in those days there was no security whatsoever. The Capitol Police officer at the House door was engrossed in a newspaper, and we walked in and asked where the Doorkeeper's office was, which was where I was to report. He directed us. The famous Doorkeeper of the House, "Fishbait" Miller, was in charge of the Page program.<sup>2</sup> We went to his office, I did my paperwork, and was given a list of approved rooming houses in the Capitol Hill area where it was suggested that Pages live, since in those days there was no official housing for Pages. I was also told to come over to the Cannon Building and see Mrs. Cram, who was the secretary to the Democratic Patronage Committee, to pick up my letter of appointment directing the Doorkeeper to put me on the Page rolls. In those days this was a patronage culture. Virtually every single position in the structure of the House was appointed by somebody through patronage. So I came over, picked up my letter, brought it back to the Doorkeeper's office, and that took care of the sign-in procedure.

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

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<sup>2</sup> 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.

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

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

**JOHNSON:** And school at this time. . .

**ANDERSON:** The school was where it is now, on the third floor of the Library of Congress. It was called the Capitol Page School and provided education for Pages of the House, Senate, and Supreme Court. In those days we had four Supreme Court Pages. There were 51 House Pages and 26 Senate

Pages. Something that was very interesting about the transition to the new school—not only its small size and extraordinary location, being in the Jefferson Building of the Library of Congress, clearly the most magnificent high school campus in the world—but it was all boys. And not just all boys, but all white boys. Integration hadn't come to the Page program and wouldn't for several more years. Class began with a prayer and a reading from the New Testament. We did not have prayer in school in California; it was my first exposure to it. I must say I rather liked it at the time but, thinking back, it had to be uncomfortable to the handful of non-Christian Pages that we had because it was so patently Christian. We had the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag and then began our class day, which extended until about 10:30 in the morning, with a midmorning break at 8:00 for 15 minutes during which we would pile in the elevator and go down to the basement coffee shop, where a blind vendor ran a coffee bar operation. We would have a snack and a cup of coffee. Of course, everybody in those days—including us—smoked, even though in the Page handbook, which was scarcely more than a small pamphlet, we were forbidden from smoking. But everybody did, and in the school itself, which absolutely blew me away, the one place where you could smoke was the principal's office. There were several filthy ashtrays on a table. I don't think those ashtrays had ever been washed—just emptied. If you preferred not to go down to the coffee room in the basement you could go into the principal's office and smoke. And I don't know how Dr. DeKeyser stood it, since he was a nonsmoker.<sup>3</sup> The room often looked like an old-fashioned pool hall in the middle of the morning, with maybe 30 guys in there puffing away. But I discovered quickly that everything in the Page booklet was not exactly what it appeared to be.

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<sup>3</sup> Henry L. DeKeyser was the principal of the Capitol Page School when Donn Anderson was a House Page. For information on Mr. DeKeyser, see the 1960 Congressional Page Yearbook.

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

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

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Keep in mind, in those days society was not fraught with the perils that it is today. As I say, drinking was not binge drinking, the kind of thing which seems to be so prevalent among young people today. Drugs simply were not there, they weren't part of the culture. It was not a question of choosing whether to use drugs or not; nobody did, because they weren't around. Neither did people have the same casual attitudes about intimate behavior in those days. It was still an age where there was such a thing as shame. And it was not a double standard. It was viewed as just as shameful



for guys as for girls to engage in intimate behavior. It simply wasn't done among decent young people.

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

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

**ANDERSON:** The curriculum at the Page School was pretty much focused on the three Rs, as it is today—the kind of education that was necessary for college admission: language, history, science, English, mathematics. The faculty was really outstanding. Most of them had day jobs at local colleges and universities, and they were all highly tenured teachers and really excellent. Class sizes then, as now, were small, and so the education was very focused. Page School in those days was a four-year school, like any other high school. We had very few freshmen, but we did have a handful of them. Most of us tended to be either juniors or seniors, and most of us served for a year, maybe two years, as Pages; while there were some that stayed for the full four years, there weren't very many of them.

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I ought to point out that the Page program was not as formalized as it is today. It would probably be more accurate to describe it as a program now

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

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

**ANDERSON:** No. The education of the Pages was surprisingly quite separate from the work experience. Nowadays, of course, a very great effort is made to tie the formal education at the Page School to the work experience and to the business of government, but there was no connection whatsoever. The school was freestanding. It was operated by the public schools of the District of Columbia by direct reimbursement through a congressional line-item appropriation to the D.C. government to provide education for our Pages. We had no guest lecturers, we had no field trips, we had no activities that were school-sponsored, save for a winter dance and a spring dance. And that was really sponsored by the school parents' association, and since we did have a number of parents that lived in the Washington area, there actually was a viable parent-teachers organization. Which, of

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course, wouldn't be possible today because the parents simply aren't in the area. I don't suppose I thought too much about it at the time, but as the years went by, I and others thought that we ought to make a greater effort to tie the work experience—which is why the Pages come here in the first place—to the formal education program administered by the school. We like to style our Pages as student-employees, “employees” being the noun and “student” being the modifier. We bring Pages here to be employees of the House of Representatives, but they are students as well and there ought to be a real connection—which there certainly is today—to tie the two together and to provide an explanation of what they are witnessing as Pages to the academic setting and bring in people from time to time who can share an insight through their own personal expertise into those things.

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

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

We had some jobs in those days that don't exist today, simply because of the changing times. For instance, we had newspaper Pages that would rack the hundreds of daily newspapers to which the House subscribed that came by mail, largely, and so were hopelessly out of date by the time they got here—from all over the country. We had tall, sort of A-frame easels all

over the Speaker's Lobby, and the newspapers had to be put on rods that hung on those easels that were categorized by states and regions so that Members, when they came over, could find their local newspapers where they ought to be. The Pages then kept the lobby tidy during the day, re-racking the papers after the Members had read them, and as new papers would arrive by mail—sometimes a week or more out of date—putting the new ones up and taking the old ones down. We don't have but a few papers in the lobby now, because Members now have information that is immediately available from all over the country, and there's just no need to subscribe to newspapers anymore.

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

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We wore blue suits and black neckties and white shirts, not the more attractive blazer outfits which the young people wear today. If the House wasn't in session, we could wear clothes other than our navy blue suits as long as it involved a jacket and tie of some description or a sweater and a necktie, but always with a tie. And if the House wasn't in session, or had adjourned early, we quit work at 3:30 in the afternoon—the kids work at least until 5:00 today. Night sessions were more the exception than the rule, as they have long since become, so we usually had the opportunity to get home, get our homework done at a reasonable hour. Most of us ate in boarding houses. I ate at Mrs. Eberhardt's boarding house, which was a couple of doors from where I lived on Maryland Avenue. She cooked

meals for the many transient men who lived in the neighborhood. We had a lot of seasonal workers in construction and that sort of thing that would live in rooming houses, kind of follow the work wherever it led them, most of them highly skilled craftsmen, like marble setters and stonemasons. She would have two or three evening sittings and, as I recall, it was \$1.10 for dinner, which was eat-all-you-want-home-cooked food. Of course, you only had 30 minutes in which to eat it because she had to turn the table. It was in the dining room of her house. She could get about a dozen people around the table for each sitting. But you know when you're hungry, and particularly when you're young, you can pack a lot of food away in half an hour, but there was no lingering at the table for coffee and conversation. Up and out, so the next group could come in and eat.

And so we'd go back to where we lived, finish our homework if we had any left, and get to bed at a reasonable hour. We didn't have the distractions in those days that we have today. You know, some people had black and white television sets, but there really wasn't a whole lot to watch. You know, we didn't have our personal music players and the other things which nowadays we can't seem to live without, so life was kind of unadorned and more focused than it is now. We focused on the things before us, which was our homework when we finished the day. We never went out on a weeknight; those things were reserved for the weekend—going to the movies or to the amusement park or whatever it was. But a school night was a school night, and since we had to get up around 5:00 in the morning, we were usually in bed fairly early, by 9:00 or 10:00. People just didn't stay up late in those days so the days were pretty focused.

**JOHNSON:**

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

**ANDERSON:**

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

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

**JOHNSON:**

Was this the *Congressional Pictorial Directory*?

ANDERSON:

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

And it was a little easier, because Members spent much more time on the House Floor. We didn't have electronic voting.<sup>4</sup> And the committees didn't sit nearly as much. And Members would often spend hours in the afternoon sitting on the House Floor, not necessarily following debate but socializing with each other, visiting, sitting in the cloakroom telling jokes and stories. And so there was a lot of exposure to the Members. We actually got to see them up close and personal. It became much easier to learn who they were because they weren't just running in and out every hour or so for a vote, where it was entirely possible, as it is now, to hardly ever see some Members of Congress who just nowadays aren't floor people. But in those days the floor was a much busier place all day long than it is now.

The communications in those days, of course, were considerably less complicated than they are today. The 14 phone booths in the Democratic Cloakroom are still there. The phones were, of course, rotary dial, but when you picked up you didn't get a dial tone, you got a cheery Capitol operator who would say, "Capitol," and then you'd tell her if you wanted an outside line or a long-distance operator or to be connected to a certain Member's office or support office. And using the huge board with all the plugs that we see now only in antique photographs of switchboard

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<sup>4</sup> The House of Representatives instituted electronic voting in 1973. For information on electronic voting in the House, see "The First Electronic Vote," Weekly Historical Highlights, Office of History and Preservation, Office of the Clerk, [http://clerk.house.gov/art\\_history/highlights.html?action=view&intID=94](http://clerk.house.gov/art_history/highlights.html?action=view&intID=94).

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operators sitting at these huge switchboards actually plugging cords into the board in front of them, that's how they would set up and take down phone calls—simply tell the operator what you wanted and she would make the connection for you. And because the Members were somewhat more accustomed to being waited on in those days, Members would simply walk in the door and say, “Get my office,” and you were expected to know who they were. They didn't like being asked who they were; they expected the Pages to know who they were when they walked in. So it was all the more important to be able to recognize the Members so that when Congressman Smith walked in and said, “Son, get my office,” we knew it was Congressman Smith, and if there were more than one Smith as there sometimes were—which one he was. And then we'd get on the phone and tell the Capitol operator, “Congressman John Smith's office, please.” He would stand outside the booth until the call was set up, and then you'd step out and politely hand the Member the phone, and he would get in and be sure to close the door behind him as he sat down on the stool in the booth.

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



Chicago or San Francisco—cities that were frequently called—then place the call for the Members.

The other duties were, we had running Pages, of course, like they still do, the kids that actually ran through the hallways delivering things amongst the Members' offices. In those days we only had two office buildings because the Rayburn Building was a hole in the ground; it was under construction. It wouldn't be finished for another five years.<sup>5</sup> Its namesake was still the Speaker of the House of Representatives when I came.

[Samuel] Rayburn was a Speaker, not an office building. We only had the Cannon and Longworth buildings, which in those days were called the Old and New House Office buildings; they had yet to be named.<sup>6</sup> And so we had a much smaller physical plant to cover. We didn't have the annex buildings that exist today. Pages once in a while would be called upon to deliver things downtown, like to the White House or maybe one of the executive agencies, in which case we would usually be sent by streetcar, given carfare to do that. But that didn't happen very often. We didn't do much off-site.

The same old buzzer system on the Members' seats still exists that we used to respond to Members' buzzers when they wanted service on the House Floor. The overseers sat behind the Page desks and would call out numbers as the Members pressed their buttons, and using the little cards that we carried in our breast pockets we could locate where that button was and go down and see what the Member's need was. More often than not, he wanted a copy of whatever was pending before the House. Sometimes he'd say, "Go and call my office and tell them there'll be a vote

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<sup>5</sup> To learn more about the construction history of the House Office Buildings, see "The Congressional Office Buildings," Architect of the Capitol, <http://www.aoc.gov/cc/cobs/index.cfm>.

<sup>6</sup> For a detailed history of the Cannon House Office Building, see "Cannon House Office Building: A Congressional First," Office of History and Preservation, Office of the Clerk, [http://clerk.house.gov/art\\_history/art\\_artifacts/Cannon\\_Centennial/index.html](http://clerk.house.gov/art_history/art_artifacts/Cannon_Centennial/index.html).

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shortly and I'll come back after that vote is completed." Members used to have somewhat more flexibility since, when we voted by roll call, votes averaged 25 to 35 minutes. If their name was early in the alphabet, they could vote right away and leave with the security of knowing that even if another vote occurred, they'd have the better part of an hour to come back. Roll call votes weren't as frequent because they were so time-consuming, but when they occurred, Members had more time to get to the House Floor to answer than they do today with electronic voting.

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

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

In fact, whenever he would come to the cloakroom for a cup of coffee or a sandwich or just to sit in the back and smoke a cigarette, the Sergeant at Arms would usually come to the cloakroom first to announce that the Speaker is coming, so that we were all prepared and braced up at attention. Nowadays, of course, Speakers come and go, and nobody pays much more attention to them when they go to the cloakroom than they would to any other Member of the House, but the appearance of the Speaker in the cloakroom was an occasion that required some preparation, and so his messenger was sent in advance to announce that he intended to come to the cloakroom, which meant that if the snack bar was busy, room was made in case that's where he wanted to go, so that he would have room at the counter. Or, if all the chairs in the back were taken, some Member, usually a more junior one, would get up to be sure that there was an armchair for the Speaker in case he decided to sit, and when he would come in, we would all [say] very politely, "Good morning, Mr. Speaker" or "Good afternoon, Mr. Speaker." And if we were very lucky, he might acknowledge us with a glance and a harrumph, but he was never one to stop and visit with the employees; in fact, he didn't visit that much with his own colleagues, except some of his more senior pals.

[44:00]

**JOHNSON:** What about the other Democratic leaders, John McCormack and Carl Albert?

**ANDERSON:** John McCormack and Carl Albert were much friendlier, much more approachable than the Speaker. They both spent a lot of time on the floor. Of course, that's where Members were to be found all day long. The Members tended to spend much more time on the floor. The cloakrooms were always very crowded, and if you had a chance to stand in the corner and listen, just to hear the jokes and the stories . . . We had wonderful storytellers in those days that would just tell stories all afternoon, and the

Members would all sit there and laugh uproariously and, of course, it was a very much inner sanctum for the men. The handful of women Members of the House never sat in the back. They would come in occasionally for a refreshment at the snack bar but never linger, because it was like going into the men's locker room.

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

**ANDERSON:** Well, some of the greatest storytellers who would sit there by the hour were Billy Matthews from Florida—these are all very senior, older Members—George Andrews from Alabama; Mendel Rivers from South Carolina; Hale Boggs from Louisiana, who eventually became a Majority Leader of the House, [Elijah] “Tic” Forrester from Georgia; “Fats” Everett—his name was actually Robert Everett—from Tennessee, but he weighed about 350 pounds, and he had the nickname “Fats.” There were perhaps a couple of dozen of them who would just spend most of their day in the cloakroom. Members weren't under the same strictures of pressure or time constraints that they are nowadays. You know, people didn't come to Washington or the Hill in the numbers they do now, so they weren't keeping endless appointments in their offices all day long. When they'd come to the floor in the afternoon they generally planned to spend much of the afternoon there, or their callers would be sent over to call them off the floor to visit in the hallway.

But some of the stories were reminiscences about political events and happenings, others were just stories that guys tell when they get together about their pastimes: hunting, fishing, going to the racetrack, whatever. I can't say that much of it was particularly lurid or had, you know, a sexual connotation to it. Members' speech was rather more pure, like everybody's

was in those days. There were some topics that were just off-limits amongst gentlemen—or if they were discussed, they were discussed with a certain amount of reserve and delicacy, but not with the no-holds-barred approach to things that people have a tendency to take today. Rather interesting, considering that the place was overwhelmingly male-dominated, that the language and the conversations would not have been somewhat more lurid than they actually were, but it was just interesting to hear the stories about how Members interacted with Presidents in bygone times, how various pieces of legislation that were considered landmark came to be, as they rehashed their involvement in some of the things that they held to be most dear.

[48:00]

**JOHNSON:** You alluded to the handful of women that were Members at this time. Do you remember any of them? Martha Griffiths and Edith Green come to mind.<sup>7</sup>

**ANDERSON:** Sure. There, as I say, weren't very many of them. Maybe 15 or 20, max. Most of them were widows of Members.<sup>8</sup> That was the usual path that brought women to Congress, was succeeding deceased congressional husbands. Every once in a while, Members—women—would succeed on their own, but usually it was through widowhood that they came to the House. They were all pretty tough, hard-nosed people; they had to be to survive in that kind of environment—not abrasive, not strident or shrill, but they had to be assertive to demonstrate that they could hold their own in an overwhelmingly male environment. Otherwise they would be regarded as kind of cute little things, not to be taken too seriously.

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<sup>7</sup> For information on Congresswomen Martha Griffiths and Edith Green, see Office of History and Preservation, Office of the Clerk, *Women in Congress, 1917–2006* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2006): 358–363, 352–357, and <http://womenincongress.house.gov>.

<sup>8</sup> During the 86th Congress (1959–1961), 17 women served in the House and two women were in the Senate. For information on the “widow’s mandate,” the term coined to explain the path to office utilized by many women between 1917 and 1976, see Office of History and Preservation, *Women in Congress: 5–6* and <http://womenincongress.house.gov>.

But we did, because of the seniority system, probably have a surprisingly equitable distribution of chairmanships, because seniority tended to be color- and gender-blind. In those days where Southern Members were extremely senior and solidly Democratic, if chairmanships were chosen by secret ballots, as they were for a while in the Democratic Caucus much later, we probably would not have had black committee chairmen or even women committee chairmen because the attitudes that prevailed in those days would not have accepted that sort of thing. But because Members rose on the basis of seniority, which had its good and bad points, it ensured that we did have some black committee chairmen, as Adam Powell and Bob Nix and Bill Dawson were—all outstanding legislators.<sup>9</sup> And certain women eventually became chairmen of the committees of the House, such as Leonor Sullivan was chairman of the Merchant Marine and Fisheries Committee—that immediately comes to mind.<sup>10</sup> But the women by and large left the cloakroom to the men. They did not intrude, other than to come in for a cup of coffee or a sandwich, but never sit in the back.

In the '70s, when Helen Meyner of New Jersey was elected to the House—and of course she came with a rather extraordinary political pedigree—her husband, Bob Meyner, was a longtime, extremely popular governor of New Jersey, and she was a first cousin of Adlai Stevenson, her maiden name being Stevenson.<sup>11</sup> She one day saw a vacant couch in the back, and she decided to stretch out on it as the men had always done. And to see the looks on their faces, and it was just the shocked silence as they were all staring at Helen Meyner lying on her back taking a nap on one of the

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<sup>9</sup> For more information on Congressmen Powell, Nix, and Dawson, see Office of History and Preservation, Office of the Clerk, *Black Americans in Congress, 1870–2007* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2008): 300–309, 318–323, 292–299, and <http://baic.house.gov>.

<sup>10</sup> Office of History and Preservation, *Women in Congress*: 306–309 and <http://womenincongress.house.gov>.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 526–529 and <http://womenincongress.house.gov>. For more information on the American politician and United Nations ambassador, see Anthony Lewis, “Adlai Stevenson Dies in London Street at 65; Johnson Leads Tribute,” 15 July 1965, *New York Times*: 1.

couches. It had never been done before. The idea that a woman would take off her shoes and lie down on a couch like they had been doing for generations was just stunning. And I don't think she ever thought about it. I don't think it was any conscious effort on Helen's part to integrate by gender the back area of the cloakroom. She was tired and decided to take a nap.

[52:00]

**JOHNSON:** Right. Did the logical thing.

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

And it's kind of like so many things: once the ice is broken, it's no longer exceptional; the next time it happens it's less remarked upon and less noticed and very quickly becomes accepted, but the first of anything is always the most difficult. After that, the adjustment is generally much easier than anticipation of the adjustment.

**JOHNSON:** What about the African-American Members at the time? You mentioned Powell and Nix, and then also Charlie Diggs was in the House.<sup>12</sup>

**ANDERSON:** Charlie Diggs was in the House.

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

**ANDERSON:** Yeah. Bob Nix, who was from Philadelphia, was definitely a floor Member. He spent his entire afternoon on the House Floor. When not sitting back

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<sup>12</sup> Office of History and Preservation, *Black Americans in Congress: 310–317* and <http://baic.house.gov>.

in the Pennsylvania corner, which still exists to this day, he would often sit in the cloakroom wearing his sunglasses, which he was never without, and puffing on his pipe.

And he always seemed to be embraced broadly by his colleagues. I think if there was racism—well, there was no question about racism—but it was not terribly overt. As a matter of fact, I was often surprised that some of the worst racist remarks that I heard from Members of Congress weren't from the Southerners but were from some of the Northern liberals that would use some of the magic words which nowadays would be so offensive and career-killing if anyone were to be heard using them. But I heard Northern liberals often using some of those slurring words regularly—and, of course, being careful to notice who was around, but rather unguarded about it—where I heard frankly rather little of it from the Southern Members. You know, whatever their views or prejudices might have been, they kind of did what they did without giving a great deal of voice to it.

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

**ANDERSON:** Adam Clayton—well, I don't know that I would call him flamboyant. He was an elegant man. He was a very tall, handsome man, a really imposing figure. I mean, he would have drawn attention in any setting where he happened to appear. He was always very well and tastefully put together, paid a lot of attention to his grooming and his ensemble. He was a real gentleman, a very warm, friendly person, very approachable. He was viewed very fondly by the staff, and he was one of the best legislators in the House. I don't think anybody, regardless of their personal views of Adam Powell, questioned his ability as a Member and his understanding of the complicated subjects that he dealt with. He was chairman of the House



[56:00]

Education and Labor Committee, which had a very broad jurisdiction. And he handled that with great adroitness, a great depth of understanding of the issues within the province of that committee. He had, of course, his own personal problems with, after a while, not showing up very often to attend the House, and he was under a certain legal situation in New York where he had accused someone of something and was under threat of subpoena if he showed up in New York, which he could only do on Sunday, when the process wasn't served.

**JOHNSON:** Right.

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

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

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

**ANDERSON:** Oh yes, “Fishbait.”

**JOHNSON:** What do you recall about him?

**ANDERSON:** Now “Fishbait” absolutely was flamboyant. As you can imagine, with a nickname like “Fishbait,” there has to be a character that goes along with it. “Fishbait” Miller was a native of Pascagoula, Mississippi. And he came to Washington as a 20-something under the patronage of Bill Colmer of Mississippi, who represented that area along the Gulf Coast, which he did for more than 40 years. Mr. Colmer brought him up as a clerk in the House Post Office. And like so many young people who come to the Hill, he kind of turned that into the beginning of a long career—rather like myself—that spanned decades. He eventually became the Doorkeeper of the House, which until a dozen years ago was one of the officerships of the House. The Doorkeeper was primarily responsible for a variety of services to the institution: the barbershops, beauty shops, the folding room, the document room, the Pages, the doorkeepers, the prayer room, things like that. And “Fishbait”—his name was actually William M. Miller—kind of created an aura about himself and about his office that probably didn’t historically go with it. He created a national image. He was highly visible. He kept an extremely high profile, which of course nowadays would be most unwelcome among the servants of the House, and I’m not sure ever [60:00] was encouraged. Throughout my career I always felt that anonymity was my great shield. The less publicity I got, the more effective I thought I could be and the better I could do my job. So I avoided press exposure; I did not like to see my name in print or my face in the paper or on television.

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

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

**JOHNSON:** Did that include Members?

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

I remember my late grandmother came here in June of 1960 with my grandfather to attend my graduation from the Page School, and I introduced her to my boss, “Fishbait” Miller, and he planted a kiss on her

cheek, and she, I could see, was absolutely thunderstruck. I should have prepared her for that, I guess I neglected to. And she kind of pushed him away and said, “Sir, that is a liberty that I reserve for my husband and other near relatives.”

[64:00]

And, of course, you couldn't insult him or embarrass him. He was just not the kind of person who could ever be embarrassed. He was absolutely impervious to that. But he was kind of a clownish, almost boorish, individual. He went from being sort of cute and eccentric to being bizarre, which eventually led to his defeat in 1974, when he lost his office to Jim Molloy.<sup>13</sup> But he was an interesting person to work for. If he liked you, he was your best friend and would do anything he could for you. However, if you rose to a certain point where he viewed you as a possible threat, if you were getting to be too visible or developing a constituency amongst the Members of your own then he could turn on you like a stray dog, and be very cruel and very mean and try to suppress the fact that someone around him was becoming a threat in terms of their own achievement or developing bona fides amongst the Members. For many years I was most devoted to him, and he was very good to me, and then I reached a certain point after many years in the cloakroom where I think he viewed me as something of a threat because I was developing a constituency and a credibility among the Members. And the relationship suddenly cooled, to almost iciness. And we were not on particularly good terms when he left the service of the House.

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

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<sup>13</sup> Doorkeeper of the House from December 19, 1974, through the 103rd Congress (1993–1995). For information on Jim Molloy, see Martin Tolchin, “The Keeper of the Door and Other House Parts,” 5 June 1985, *New York Times*: A18.

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

JOHNSON: But while you were a Page?

ANDERSON: No, the Officers of the House were remote figures of some reverence and awe. It was a place where the hierarchies were much better observed in those days than they are today. It would be unthinkable in most cases for people on staff to call a Member by his or her first name. It just wasn't done. If you developed a friendship and developed that kind of intimacy where first names would be used, you never did it in front of other people; it was reserved for private occasions. But there was always the very respectful interval, which was rather typical of society generally in those days, where the honorifics of "Mr." and "Miss" and "Mrs." were much more widely used than they are today, where they have fallen into almost total disuse, much to my regret.

Officers of the House did whatever they did from their rather grand offices in the precincts of the Capitol. We didn't see much of them. Mr. Roberts, who was the Clerk of the House at the time—Ralph R. Roberts from Indiana—had been the Clerk for a very long time and would be for a few more years afterwards.<sup>14</sup> Very imposing man—tall, trim, black hair, always was partial to inky-blue suits and very dark subdued neckties and white shirts. Of course, that was pretty much the uniform that most men wore in those days—very conservative business attire. Very dour, kind of pokerfaced, hardly ever cracked even a trace of a smile. And, of course, I learned early on that next to the Speaker, amongst the officers of the House, the Clerk was the most prestigious of the officers. And as a result, he had a wonderful office, now the Congressional Women's Sitting Room,

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<sup>14</sup> Clerk of the House from the 81st through the 82nd Congress (1949–1953) and from the 84th through the 89th Congress (1955–1967).

just off Statuary Hall—which had been the Clerk’s Office for 105 years—would be for 105 years—before it was moved to the suite in the East Front extension that I later occupied.<sup>15</sup>

And one day I was sent to carry something to Mr. Roberts personally and went to his office. And, of course, there were only a couple of people in the reception room; staffs were very tiny in those days. And they said, “Oh yes, he’s expecting that, go right on in.” And, of course, it was this wonderful vaulted-ceiling room with antique furniture, including the couch on which President John Quincy Adams died in that very room in

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1848.<sup>16</sup> And Mr. Roberts was sitting arrow-straight behind his desk, which was a large partners desk. I used it myself later on. And I almost bowed as I handed him the envelope. And I started to withdraw, and he very kindly asked me what my name was, and I told him. And he said, “And where are you from?” And I said, “Sacramento, California.” And he said, “And you’re enjoying your Page service?” “Oh, very much so, Mr. Roberts.” “Well, sit down and tell me about it.” And he motioned me to sit on the Adams couch. And I knew about the couch, was the first time I’d ever seen it. And I certainly didn’t expect to be invited to sit on it. And with barely the trace of a smile throughout the conversation, which lasted perhaps five or 10 minutes, he asked me about how I was enjoying my experience as a Page. And I asked if he would mind telling me about what he did as the Clerk of the House. And he was forthcoming about that. And I sort of made up my mind then and there being Clerk of the House has to be the

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<sup>15</sup> Originally reserved for the Speaker and later for the Clerk of the House, H-235 was designated in 1962 as the Congresswomen’s Reading Room. In July 1991, the House of Representatives honored Congresswoman Lindy Claiborne Boggs by naming the room off of Statuary Hall after the Louisiana Representative. See, Donnie Radcliffe, “A Room With a Past for Lindy Boggs,” 30 July 1991, *Washington Post*: C2; for information on Congresswoman Lindy Boggs, see Office of History and Preservation, *Women in Congress, 1917–2006*: 500–505 and <http://womenincongress.house.gov>.

<sup>16</sup> For information on the death of John Quincy Adams, see “The Death of Representative John Quincy Adams of Massachusetts,” Weekly Historical Highlights, Office of History and Preservation, Office of the Clerk, [http://clerk.house.gov/art\\_history/highlights.html?action=view&intID=14](http://clerk.house.gov/art_history/highlights.html?action=view&intID=14).

best job in the world, and my fantasy as a 17-year-old high school senior was to be the Clerk of the House—little knowing that 27 years later I actually would become the Clerk of the House.

**JOHNSON:** That dreams can come true in this case.

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

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

**ANDERSON:** Go ahead.

*End of Part One – Beginning of Part Two*

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

**ANDERSON:** Sure. In the House of Representatives, as in other areas of American society, distinctions were more carefully and clearly drawn than they are today. When I came here, I was brought up in a culture of officers and

enlisted men, the enlisted men being the people who were the servants of the House who served the Members and the Members being the officers, with a little “o,” and that distinction was very clearly and carefully observed. Only the most senior employees ever called a Member of Congress by his first name, and then not very often; it just wasn’t done. We were always very meticulous about “Mr.” and “Mrs.” and “Mr. Chairman” and “Mr. Leader” and “Mr. Speaker,” whatever the appropriate appellation happened to be.

And as society changed, of course, the House—which was always a reflection of American society—started changing with it; informality became more commonplace. Members, far from preferring to keep the distinction, started encouraging the staff to call them by their first names, which I always abhorred. I think when lines of responsibility are blurred, it makes people on both sides . . . makes it more difficult for them to carry out their duties. I always felt that I could do my job better if I could keep an interval of separation. There comes a time when Members of Congress, just like anyone who occupies a superior position, has to come down on a subordinate. And if you’ve engaged in debauch or have a very personal, familiar relationship, it’s awfully hard then suddenly to become hard-nosed and demand the kind of respect and service and immediate obedience which must exist when people’s responsibilities are clearly distinct.

I have always been rather uncomfortable about calling Members of Congress by their first names. As I got older and they got younger, and I stayed here longer and they came more frequently, it became kind of awkward not to, particularly if they insisted. And so with some reluctance, I started calling Members by their first names. And even with, you know, some of them I never could bring myself to do it; the respect that I had was just so much that I couldn’t possibly use a first name. You know, some of



the Speakers I have served, if not directly, have certainly given me clear hints that it would be acceptable if I chose to do so, to use their first names. I think they sensed the fact that if they asked me to, it would put me in an uncomfortable position because I'm reluctant to do it. So that option is kind of there by implication—that it'd be okay with them if I decided I wanted to pick up that option. I never have. For instance, in the case of the current occupant of the chair, Speaker [Dennis] Hastert, I knew him for years as "Denny," from the day he took his seat in the House. But once he became the Speaker, I've never called him Denny again. I've always called him "Mr. Speaker." It's a singular position, and I think that must be recognized. And the Speaker and I are no less friends because I have made that distinction, any more than with the two Speakers I served as their Clerk, Speakers [James] Wright and [Thomas] Foley who clearly would not have been the least bit offended by my calling them by their first names and even kind of gave me the option of doing it. I never did. And so we maintained that respect and that, I think, healthy interval and at the same time enjoyed a closeness and a confidence and a mutual respect.

[4:00]

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

**ANDERSON:** Well, there were a lot of role models. I've always been a good listener, and I like to think that I've been a good observer. That was the way my mother trained me, to watch people and listen. I think, quoting Benjamin Franklin, that "It is better to remain silent and be thought a fool than to speak and dispel all doubt." And Mother always said, you know, "Watch out for the quiet fellow, because he's listening, he's paying attention." And as the time went by and I was exposed to the movers and shakers of the

nation, I started making critical judgments as to why some rose above the others in terms of leadership and the respect and the influence that they could wield within their peer group and why that occurred. And to those that seemed to be kind of always in the pack or even those who were from time to time conspicuous failures that just couldn't seem to handle the responsibility of high elected office. And so I was influenced both by positive and negative examples, because a negative can be a reinforcer, too, in terms of a lesson learned as to why something should be avoided.

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

[8:00]

what was on his mind and that when he said something, that was what he was truly thinking. That there wasn't an ulterior motive or a hidden agenda.

And I always tried in my own dealings—as I grew in stature within the structure of the institution—to be approachable but at the same time try to ensure that when I had to act sometimes negatively, that I could do so effectively. I liked to be, you know, known to my employees [so] that they felt comfortable around me. Clerks had a tendency to be rather remote people. Clerks just weren't seen very much, even by their own employees. And I remember when I became the nominee of the Democratic Caucus in 1986 in December of that year, and one of my soon-to-be department heads invited me to his departmental Christmas party, which was in one of the committee rooms in the Rayburn Building, and said, you know, “Come on over, we'd love to see you.” And I hadn't taken office yet, but I would the following month, and so I came in, and people in the room kind of looked because they knew that in a few weeks I would be their employer, and the place almost fell quiet. And I said to the department head, I said, “Well, why don't you take me around and introduce me to these good people, some of whom I already know and others that I don't; [it would] be a nice occasion to establish a rapport in a purely social setting.” And I remember being introduced to one fellow who was in his late middle age, I would judge, at that point, and he said, “Hey, you're the new Clerk, you're the man.” And I said, “Well, yes. I will be next month.” And he said, “I've never met a Clerk before. In fact, I don't think I've ever even seen one.” And I said, “Really? And how long have you been a member of the Clerk's organization?” “Twenty-four years.” That gave me a message right there: I will give myself much better exposure. There's no excuse for anyone not to know who their employer is or having never met their employer or a series of them.

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

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

**ANDERSON:** Sure. Making constant judgments as to why some clearly succeeded far more than others. What was it? And there were some who, at least for the short term, were successful because they were bullies. They were really nasty SOBs, they were scary people. And you can intimidate for a while. Fear can be a motivator, and sometimes it's not a bad motivator at least to have a little bit of fear in the equation. When it takes over, though, it lasts only for so long, and you develop such hostility, that people will seize on it to be your undoing as soon as they possibly can. There needs to be a certain dread of the boss, but it shouldn't be an unwholesome fear or something that is intimidating. But to know that the boss, you know, has the right and will assert that right, you know, to be in charge when it's necessary to do so. You know, you have to leave a workforce with that understanding that no matter how nice a guy or person you are, that you can assert authority effectively when you need to. And they need to understand when that moment has arrived that the other cordial relationships are set aside for the time being while something has to be done or achieved.

[12:00]

But I just watched that process for a long period of time. As I say, the journey took me 27 years before I was elected Clerk, so I had a lot of time to study and observe. I never wrote anything down, but I made a lot of mental notes about the people that I liked and why I liked them and why

some were clearly more successful than others—why some people enjoyed a respect and a trust and a fondness and others didn't . . . where there was no fondness or trust or real respect. And I hoped that I would adopt those good points and avoid the bad points.

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

**ANDERSON:** Yes.

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

**ANDERSON:** Oh, must I?

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

**ANDERSON:** “Fashionable young political aspirant who recently made his political debut on Capitol Hill.” Well, perhaps I made my debut—it didn't seem to make the papers at the time. But who would have known at that time—of course, to me to have been a Page was the be all [and] end all; if my career had started and ended there, to this day I would have reflected on it no matter what I achieved later in life as one of the most extraordinary things that a young person could have done. As I say, it led me all the way to the top of the tree. As the time passed, I ran out of rungs in my ladder since the Clerkship is the highest office within the gift of the House to one of its servants. And even though I had a certain hope, it wasn't until the three or four years immediately before the event that I thought it was actually within the realm of possibility that this might happen. And I still to this day have not quite gotten over the fact that it did happen. People occasionally will say, you know, “Aren't you disappointed that you're not

the Clerk of the House anymore?” No, not at all. I would have been disappointed if I had never become the Clerk of the House. But so far, only 33 Americans have ever been the Clerk of the House, and I’m one of 33 who could comfortably fit in this room right now, all together.<sup>17</sup> Not bad company, I think.

**JOHNSON:** Not at all.

**ANDERSON:** So I have no regrets at all. I miss it, but not a lot. I kind of like my life as it is now—sort of free from stress and aggravation—and I can focus on other things. But really, very little was left undone. Let’s see, well, I did leave behind my 1959 Chevy Impala, which was not quite a fate worse than death. And I did find indeed that living in Washington has its compensations.<sup>18</sup>

**JOHNSON:** One thing that I wanted to ask you, it’s just a simple point, but I thought something that was important nonetheless. You were coming from such a long distance and hadn’t lived away from home. Were you homesick at all?  
[16:00]

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

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<sup>17</sup> For a complete list of Clerks, see “Clerks of the U.S. House of Representatives,” Office of History and Preservation, Office of the Clerk, [http://clerk.house.gov/art\\_history/house\\_history/clerks.html](http://clerk.house.gov/art_history/house_history/clerks.html).

<sup>18</sup> Reference to Mr. Anderson’s senior page in the Capitol Page School yearbook.

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

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

Washington, D.C., to California just because you wanted to hear someone's voice, it was expensive.

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

**ANDERSON:** Yes. Yes, the only thing that we got was our education, which we still provide free, but out of my paycheck, which after deductions was \$218 and change each month, I had to pay for room, food, clothing, entertainment—anything else that came up. Granted, though, everything was kind of cheap in those days. And there wasn't a whole lot to spend money on. And I have often pointed out that on my modest salary as a Page, I probably had more disposable income than at any other point in my life until I was elected Clerk of the House, when my salary spiked. You know, nowadays there's so much that somehow while we don't seem to need it, we can't live without it. Where you can spend every penny and much more on all this consumer stuff that is constantly being produced to tantalize and tempt us. But in those days, there really wasn't much to buy unless you were a clotheshorse. There wasn't much to spend money on. Food was cheap. Entertainment was cheap, which took the form mainly of going to the movies, which hardly cost anything. Or you could go to the ballgame for 75¢ or a dollar at the old Griffiths Field [Stadium], where the Washington Senators used to play. That's where I saw my first Major League Baseball game. So you know we weren't spending tons of money. There just wasn't much to spend it on. You'd have to work at extravagance in order to eat up your paycheck.

[20:00]

That gold ring I just showed you—my Page ring—when I bought that ring, this was the top-of-the-line-ring. I could not have spent more on my Page ring from Jostens if I had wanted to. It cost \$35. It's a 14-karat ring. But just to put it in perspective, my rent was \$30. So it was more than a



month's rent. You know, all of that seems laughable today, but you know, I kind of thought about it before I paid \$35 for that ring, did I want to spend that much money. And, you know, now we'll go out to dinner and spend \$35 and think nothing of it. But there were good times. We always had plenty of money. I managed to put some aside. I didn't need to spend everything that I made.

**JOHNSON:** Before we move on to other topics and wrap up your time as a Page, I wanted to ask you about the lunch counters in the cloakroom. So Helen Sewell and her father were on the Republican side.<sup>19</sup>

**ANDERSON:** Yeah.

**JOHNSON:** But who was on the Democratic side?

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

So Clint and Virginia Gibson took over from Mr. King; I think he decided to retire. I think he was quite old, and he left, I believe, in the '40s. There

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<sup>19</sup> For information on Helen Sewell, see “Longtime House Employee Helen Sewell,” Weekly Historical Highlights, Office of History and Preservation, Office of the Clerk, [http://clerk.house.gov/art\\_history/highlights.html?action=view&intID=88](http://clerk.house.gov/art_history/highlights.html?action=view&intID=88); Bree Hocking, “Friends Remember the Smile Behind Café Helen,” 24 July 2006, *Roll Call*.

[24:00]

were a lot of Members that still remembered and spoke fondly of Mr. King. And they were there five days a week, whether the House was in session or not, and very rarely were in session on Friday, but they were open, and there would be a few Members who would come over in midday and have a sandwich. Once in a while the Speaker would come in and have a cup of coffee, which of course would always create utter silence because we were afraid to open our mouths when he was in there, and sometimes he would just be in there by himself having a cup of coffee at the snack bar. But they had good, freshly prepared food, very reasonable. They made real milk shakes with real ice cream. In fact, I have the old milk-shake mixer that came from the Democratic snack bar when it was replaced with a much newer, sleeker machine. They were going to trash the old one, which was perfectly serviceable. So I asked if I could take it home. Someone said, "Sure, we're just going to throw it out." And I'm very proud of that old milk shake machine.

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

But they were fascinating, and they still are places where, you know, they're very small and compact, and the Members would kind of stand there shoulder to shoulder and talk about things that were very important, cut their deals, and make their agreements and discuss things rather candidly. Because the cloakrooms are really their private space, and, you

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<sup>20</sup> For information on Raymond Roebuck's career in the Democratic Cloakroom, see *Congressional Record*, House, 98th Cong., 1st sess., (1 August 1983): 22035–22043.

know, if you were the soul of discretion, you could kind of stand nearby and pick up on a lot of things and, you know, as long as you didn't run your mouth about what you heard, you were kind of taken for granted.

I remember when Mr. O'Neill was the Speaker, I used to see him often come in by himself when there wasn't anybody at the snack bar and get a cup of coffee or something, and then lean way over the counter, and it looked like he and Raymond, who ran the snack bar, were whispering in each other's ears, and I often thought what are Raymond and the Speaker talking about. It's so mouth-to-ear, so clandestine-looking. And I finally couldn't stand it anymore. And I one day said, "Ray, what do you and the Speaker talk about so confidentially? Not that it's any of my business, and I'm sure you'll tell me if it's not, but I see you kind of 'shushing' together all the time." He says, "Are you kidding?" And I said, "Well, no, I'm kind of curious." And he said, "We're talking about sports." He said, "We're both big fans, you know; he follows the same teams and games that I do. And so that's what we're talking about. Occasionally it might involve a little wager." "Oh, okay." I thought, isn't this great, you know. The Speaker, you know, always looking to Ray as his source of turf information as to what's going on in the world of sports, because Ray really knew his teams and the various competitions and rankings. And the Speaker loved that. He was an avid sports fan.

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

**ANDERSON:** Yeah, yeah. And I used to tell new Members that, you know, take some . . . and I participated in new Members' orientation . . . that, you know, you're overwhelmed when you start here, with all the things you've got to learn, and got to do, and get your committee assignments and choose your

staff. And learn, you know, how the House functions. But take some time and make sure you just force yourself to set it aside to stay in the cloakroom or sit on the House Floor. It's a very informal place. If a seat is not taken, it's yours. Sit down and you might find yourself sitting next to a senior committee chairman or your party leader or the Whip or even the Speaker. And it's a good way to break the ice and start cementing relations with your colleagues. And rather than taking your lunch at your desk or going to the restaurant, come over and stand at the snack bar. You might be having a sandwich with the Speaker, and it's a good way for him to get to know you, and you can know him and get a head start in cementing your relationships. Very casual. You know, if there's a spot open, it's yours; it's not reserved for anybody. And a lot of Members told me they followed that advice and started coming to the cloakroom, even if it was only for 30 minutes. The chance to get to know people informally, without an agenda. You know, I'm not sitting down because I have something I have to talk to you about; I'm just sitting down because you're here and I'm here. You know, where are you from, you know, what about your family, the kind of thing that people have in common. Did you move the wife and kids here? Or leave them at home? Or, you know, whatever. It's a good way to start developing friendship.

[28:00]

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

**ANDERSON:** Sure.

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

**ANDERSON:** Jim Kolbe, who was a Senate Page. He was Barry Goldwater, Sr.'s Page in the Senate for four years, I might add. He was the one person in our class

who would have utterly amazed me if he had not become a Member of Congress someday. I told him that just recently, in fact, at his Christmas party last month at his house, which is just a block up the street from where I live. I told him, “You know, Jim, I would have been most surprised if you had not become a Member of Congress.” And, of course, he’s announced his intention not to seek re-election after 22 years. Ron Lasch was also our classmate.<sup>21</sup> Republican. Stayed on for a total of 40 years. He just retired five years ago. Ran the cloakroom for the Republicans, parallel to the time I ran the cloakroom for the Democrats and then became a minority officer, not that those titles had any real bearing to those offices. And they used to use them, but they don’t anymore. And he just retired five years ago. So at one point, there were three members of our class still in the service of the House, one as a Member, one as an officer, and the other as a minority officer. So out of the small senior class not bad, I think.

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

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<sup>21</sup> Ron Lasch was a House employee for more than 40 years. For information on his career, see *Congressional Record*, House, 106th Cong., 2nd sess. (11 July 2000): 5820–5821.

address since 1800; we're not going anywhere. We'll be here if you decide you want to come back, but don't lock yourself into a commitment too early on."

[32:00]

And politics is a fickle business: For some of us it works out just fine, for others it's a life of disappointment and frustration. In my case, everything went swimmingly well. As they say, I've lived a charmed life. Others don't find that kind of progression involved. So many of them go on to other things. What we're trying to do with the Page program—and I think then, as now—is not run a school for candidates, but run a school for good citizens. To sensitize young boys and girls from our society as to what representative government is all about, what it means to be a committed, involved, enlightened citizen of the republic. And how to participate more actively and more ably in the body politic. And if that takes the form of holding an office someday, that's fine. But that's not the only way, you know, to practice citizenship, and there are all sorts of avenues for those who feel a commitment to do something for the public good. The private sector is full of those options, just as the public sector is.

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

**ANDERSON:** I'm sure the moment I get up from this table, I'll think of 100 things that I would like to add. To me, being a Page was one of the two most formative experiences that I had, and the other came not too many years later: being a Page and serving in the military. Finding worlds and horizons beyond my own limited view of things, meeting people that I otherwise never would have had any exposure to . . . While society is much more mobile now, in those days you had a tendency to stay pretty close to where you grew up and kind of do something nearby. People didn't move around that much,

and the diversity of the world was more of an abstraction than it was a reality which you understood from experience. So, serving here as a Page, seeing the United States literally come together in that one room, and then later serving in the United States Army and being thrust into a bunkroom with people I otherwise never would have met and probably wouldn't want to have met, but then becoming associated with the brotherhood that comes from doing something that requires teamwork and a lot of commonality, I think were two of the most wonderfully formative experiences that I could possibly have had. And while I would gladly be a Page again, I'd sooner open my veins than go back on active duty, which probably would kill me anyhow. A lot of time has transpired since then. But I wouldn't take back a minute of either of those experiences.

**JOHNSON:** Thank you very much for everything today.

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

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

— DONNALD ANDERSON INTERVIEW TWO —

**JOHNSON:** This is Kathleen Johnson interviewing Donald Anderson, former Clerk of the U.S. House of Representatives. The date is February 23, 2006, and the interview is taking place in the Legislative Resource Center, Cannon House Office Building. This is the second interview with Mr. Anderson. In the previous interview, you discussed your time as a House Page. Today, I was hoping that you could talk about your time as a House employee before you were Clerk. I read that you were an elevator operator, and I was curious about the time period.

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

At that time, I was an undergraduate at GW [George Washington]. I originally was under the elevator patronage of the late George Mahon of Texas, who became chairman of the House Appropriations Committee and also was for a number of years “dean of the House.”<sup>22</sup> The elevator was, I thought, a delightful job. A lot of people have been inclined to dismiss it, but if you're a social person, you get a chance to chat with

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<sup>22</sup> An unofficial title given to Representatives with the longest continuous service in the U.S. House of Representatives or from a particular state delegation.



people all day long, and in those days, this was literally the little village on the Hill. It was a very small place compared to what it is now. You really got a chance to know the people who worked in the congressional offices by name. Most of my passengers got on, I didn't even have to ask them their floor. I knew exactly where they were going. They knew me. It was a very friendly, almost like a neighborhood, environment. I enjoyed those years on the elevator very much. I later was on the elevator patronage of James H. Morrison of Louisiana, better known as Jimmy Morrison, who just died about three years ago. He was almost 100 years old when he finally passed away.<sup>23</sup>

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

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<sup>23</sup> For more on the life and career of Congressman Morrison, see John Pope, "James Morrison, 91, Former Congressman," 22 July 2000, *Times-Picayune* (New Orleans): B04.

never really worked in a Member's offices. But I enjoyed those years on the elevator very much.

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

**JOHNSON:** Very different from now.

**ANDERSON:** Absolutely.

**JOHNSON:** When did you become an assistant enrolling clerk?

**ANDERSON:** I was appointed assistant enrolling clerk in late 1963, probably November or December of that year. I was appointed to that position by Congressman Morrison. Keep in mind that this was a patronage culture in those days. It would be easy to say that 99 percent of all of the jobs on Capitol Hill were appointed by somebody. There really weren't any career protections. There was a vacancy, and Mr. Morrison was senior enough to get the job, and thought I would probably like to move from the elevator to something that was a bit more career-building. It was interesting work. I was very excited about it. It was the first time that I had a desk and chair of my own. The

enrolling clerk's office, which was room H-157 in the Capitol, which is now a Member's hideaway, was a very ornate, high-ceilinged room with a large window looking straight down the Federal Mall. It was a magnificent space with a frescoed ceiling and a carved white marble mantelpiece. It would be unimaginable to find staff spaces like that today.

**JOHNSON:** Definitely.

**ANDERSON:** As the years went by, all of those little staff treasures gradually became Members' offices. In fact, one of my coworkers, Louis Breskin, who was a fairly elderly, smallish man from Chicago, who had been an enrolling clerk for many years, always hated it when any of us brought Members into the office because of course we all had friends that were Members.<sup>24</sup> He used to admonish us, "Don't do that because some Member will grab this." And sure enough, as it turned out, many years after he had retired, the irony was his own Member, Dan Rostenkowski, when he became chairman of the Ways and Means Committee, obtained that room as his own Capitol hideaway. So we were very, very protective of that space.

[8:00]

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

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<sup>24</sup> According to the *Congressional Directory*, Louis Breskin worked as an assistant enrolling clerk from 1952 to 1969.

parchment, but is actually a heavy archival paper, parchment having not been used for enrolling bills in perhaps 150 years now.

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

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

**ANDERSON:** That's right. At the time I started, Ralph R. Roberts was the Clerk of the

House.<sup>25</sup> He had been the Clerk for a great many years, and would be for a few more, and then continuing under the next clerk, W. Pat Jennings, who was a former Member of the House who became Clerk in 1967.<sup>26</sup>

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

**ANDERSON:** Mr. Jennings was probably the first modern Clerk of the House, at least I'd like to think of his 20th-century methods and technologies. Mr. Jennings had been a Member of the House from southwestern Virginia, and he was defeated for re-election in 1966 and needed a job with prestige and a good salary in a hurry. There had been disaffection, among mainly the more liberal Democratic Members of the House, with Mr. Roberts, who had become rather remote and aloof as the years had passed and had done little, if anything, to advance the use of modern technologies and business methods in the Clerk's Office. I think, like so many people, as years passed, he became rather isolated and had a false sense of security in the office that he held and felt that it would be his for as long as he wanted it. He refused to recognize the challenge that Mr. Jennings had started with mainly the members of what was called the Democratic Study Group, which was a fairly large group of liberal Democrats in the House.<sup>27</sup> Some of the leaders of that group were the late Philip Burton of California and Frank Thompson of New Jersey. They decided that they wanted a Clerk that was more progressive and more in touch with the Members, and so they mounted the challenge. That was when officerships were still competitive,

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<sup>25</sup> Ralph R. Roberts served as Clerk of the House from the 81st through the 82nd Congress (1949–1953) and from the 84th through the 89th Congress (1955–1967). For a complete list of House Clerks, see “Clerks of the U.S. House of Representatives,” Office of History and Preservation, Office of the Clerk, [http://clerk.house.gov/art\\_history/house\\_history/clerks.html](http://clerk.house.gov/art_history/house_history/clerks.html).

<sup>26</sup> W. Pat Jennings served as Clerk of the House from January 10, 1967, until his resignation on November 15, 1975.

<sup>27</sup> Founded in 1959, the Democratic Study Group is a Legislative Service Organization (LSO). For information on the Democratic Study Group, see Matt Pinkus, “Democratic Study Group,” in Donald C. Bacon et al., eds., *The Encyclopedia of the United States Congress Volume 2* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1995): 633–634.

when you could actually run for one. It has been decades now since there has been a real race for one of the House offices. That was perhaps the next-to-the-last time that there was a real competitive race for a House office.

Mr. Roberts had gone off to Florida during the long interval between sessions, as was his custom to do when the Congress adjourned *sine die*.<sup>28</sup> In the meantime, Mr. Jennings and the members of the Democratic Study Group were organizing their forces for a challenge, which they brought off very successfully when the Democrats met to organize in December of 1966, preceding the commencement of the new Congress. Mr. Roberts was really taken quite by surprise. He did not see it coming. He did not expect it. Mr. Jennings, who had been a very successful automobile dealer . . . Mr. Jennings, I think it's important to note, grew up in dirt-poor poverty, and he actually knew what it meant to be hungry. A very smart man, and a very able businessman. He, by his own acumen, made a sizeable fortune as a businessman, mainly in the automobile business in Marion, Virginia. He owned the Jennings-Warren Motor Company, which was one of the largest dealerships in that region of the state. [He] got into local politics, had been the county sheriff in Smyth County, or perhaps it's pronounced Smyth County by the way it's spelled in Virginia. And then stood for the House of Representatives, and I think served 10 or 12 years in the House and was also a member of the Ways and Means Committee, which was rather a testament to the way he was regarded.<sup>29</sup> He tended to be—I wouldn't say particularly liberal, but rather liberal for his region of the country in that time frame. I think he was rewarded for his party loyalty by being given a particularly prestigious seat on the Committee on Ways and Means.

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<sup>28</sup> From the Latin meaning "without setting a day." A *sine die* adjournment signifies that Congress has adjourned or suspended business at the end of an annual or special session.

<sup>29</sup> Congressman Jennings served for 12 years in the House from the 84th through the 89th Congress (1955–1967).

At the time, I remember it was widely remarked, “Isn’t that interesting, choosing a former Member to be the Clerk of the House?” People were not familiar with the fact that there was a precedent that was very old and well established. Later, when I became Clerk, I did a little research and found that of the—at the time, 30 clerks of the House—I was number 30—that 12 of my predecessors had been Members of Congress. One of whom was even a United States Senator, Richard Young of Illinois, who became Clerk of the House. Most of them were in the 19th century, though there were a couple of former Members who served as Clerk of the House in the 20th century. So the fact that Pat Jennings, a former Member, became Clerk was not without substantial precedent.

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

I was working in the House Finance Office some years later, in 1968, when the finance office became partially computerized. For the first time, the House payroll was produced with a computer. By today’s standards, it would be considered a real antique, but it was quite revolutionary at the time since the paychecks used to be all produced manually in giant

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American Totalizer accounting machines, which were desk-size pieces of equipment. There were about seven or eight of them in one room of the finance office, where in the week preceding payday, members of the finance office would sit and literally, by hand, on these giant accounting machines, produce the several thousand paychecks for the employees of the House. He [Pat Jennings] installed a computer that was over in the Rayburn Building, and the computations would be done on sheets that had a magnetic strip on them. When complete, those sheets would then be carried over to the Rayburn Building and fed into the computer that would then produce the paychecks. He did something that was quite daring. The first month that the House paid using computers, produced the pay vouchers, he junked the accounting machines. There was no redundancy, no fallback. In case the computer had hiccoughs and wouldn't work, there was no way to produce the paychecks except by inserting them one by one into a typewriter.

**JOHNSON:** That was very daring of him.

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

Mr. Jennings, for his good instincts as far as business and management, was shall we say . . . personal relationships were not his strong suit. He was very much disliked by his employees. He made no effort to establish any sort of personal rapport. He did quickly run afoul of the Members of the House because he still viewed himself as a member of the club. Around here, you're either a Member, or you're not a Member. There is no middle



ground. Granted, the Officers of the House are sort of a hybrid. The five of them are neither fish nor fowl.<sup>30</sup> They're not Members, but they're not really employees either, since they are elected by the House under a provision of the Constitution. But nonetheless, they are the servants of the House, and Mr. Jennings pretty much viewed himself as a member of the club, rather than as the servant of the House, and found that he could not act with the insularity that he did when he had been a Member, that he was responsible to the Members of the House, and that his actions were subject to their oversight, either approval or disapproval, that he couldn't operate the Clerk's Office as he would his automobile dealership. So within a few years, there was a feeling amongst the Members, particularly the Democratic Members, that this was a mistake that perhaps ought not to be repeated. In the future, we ought not to have a former colleague serving as an Officer of the House. I personally doubt that that will ever happen again, even though there was abundant historic precedent for former Members, from time to time, serving as Officers. I cannot imagine that in the future, that would happen again, for that very reason. It's very difficult to make the change. It's much easier to move up and adapt to a new status than it is to move down and give up the prerogatives that are uniquely and exclusively those of Members of the House.

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

**ANDERSON:** Right.

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

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<sup>30</sup> During Donn Anderson's tenure, there were five House Officers: Chaplain, Clerk, Doorkeeper, Postmaster, and Sergeant at Arms.

ANDERSON:

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Sure. For one year, 1968, I worked in the House Finance Office. Mr. Jennings had restructured the legislative operations area of the House. In the process of so doing, my particular position in the enrolling clerk's office was eliminated. So I was transferred to the finance office. Not a matter of undiluted joy to me at the time because I enjoyed being part of the legislative machinery of the House, and the finance office did things which would be found in any organization that meets a payroll and pays its lawful obligations. It was a payroll and dispersing operation not unlike anything that would be found anywhere else in government—or in the private sector, for that matter. I really longed to get back into something that was legislative in character.

The Democratic Cloakroom, which I worked for my year as a Page, did—and still does—have three managers, a manager and two assistants, plus the six Pages that are assigned to work for them in the cloakroom. For the period of the probably 1940s, '50s, and '60s, there had been no movement at all in the three managers. They were there forever and ever, amen. And then finally, at the end of 1968, Colonel Emerson, who wasn't really a colonel but he was a Kentucky Colonel, but always enjoyed being called colonel and everybody indulged him in that.<sup>31</sup> Colonel Emerson had been the manager of the cloakroom since the 1930s. He finally retired and went off to Florida to live out the happy remainder of his life, which caused the first upward mobility that anyone could recall. It created a vacancy in the second assistant position in the cloakroom. Fortunately, my Member, who at the time was the late Hale Boggs of Louisiana, who was the Majority

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<sup>31</sup> Colonel Emerson served as the longtime manager of the Democratic Cloakroom. During Glenn Rupp's April 28, 2005, oral history interview with the Office of History and Preservation (Rupp was a House Page from 1932–1936), he recalled, "Emerson was made a Kentucky Colonel by one of the Members from Kentucky that liked him, and they became friendly. And after he was made a Kentucky Colonel, everybody called him 'Colonel Emerson.'" For more information, see "Cloakroom Tender Is Kentucky Colonel," 4 August 1935, *Washington Post*: 12.

Whip; Mr. Morrison also having been defeated in 1966.<sup>32</sup> I was picked up by his fellow Louisianan, Hale Boggs. So when the vacancy occurred in the cloakroom, Mr. Boggs went to Speaker [John] McCormack. The three manager jobs in the cloakroom belonged to the Speaker. They were the Speaker's personal appointments. Interestingly, many jobs around the House belonged to state delegations, or even to cities within states, if they were big cities. And for some reason, one of the three manager jobs in the Democratic Cloakroom had been for quite a long time a California job. And it just happened that I was from California, so that knit rather nicely. Mr. Boggs, the Majority Whip, of course, had the stature to suggest my appointment to the Speaker, and I just happened to fit the mold because I was a Californian by birth and by identity. So Speaker McCormack appointed me the assistant manager of the cloakroom. The new manager, Art Cameron, who continues to be a very successful lawyer in private practice here in the city of Washington, like myself had been a Page, though some years earlier, and had worked his way up the ladder within the structure of the House and worked in the cloakroom for quite a long time. And had very much longed to be manager, but had to wait years and years and years before he had that opportunity. He became manager in January of 1969, but by then he was also admitted to practice in the law. In the spring of 1969, Congressman Claude Pepper of Florida was successful in establishing the short-lived Select Committee on Crime and asked Art if he would help him establish the new select committee.<sup>33</sup> It had been so long since the House had created a permanent select committee—the last one being the Permanent Select Committee on Small Business—that very

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<sup>32</sup> Designated to assist party leadership in managing the legislative program on the House Floor, the Whip keeps track of all legislation and ensures that all party members are present when important measures are to be voted upon. For a complete list of Democratic and Republican Whips, see [http://clerk.house.gov/art\\_history/house\\_history/dem\\_whips.html](http://clerk.house.gov/art_history/house_history/dem_whips.html) and [http://clerk.house.gov/art\\_history/house\\_history/rep\\_whips.html](http://clerk.house.gov/art_history/house_history/rep_whips.html).

<sup>33</sup> For information on the committee, see “The House Select Committee on Crime,” Weekly Historical Highlights, Office of History and Preservation, Office of the Clerk, [http://clerk.house.gov/art\\_history/highlights.html?action=view&intID=371](http://clerk.house.gov/art_history/highlights.html?action=view&intID=371).

few people remembered how it was done. Art happened to have been here when that happened, and he was intimately familiar with the creation of a select committee and what the functions of a select committee were. Mr. Pepper asked him if he would come aboard as chief counsel, and of course he was anxious to do something that was lawyer-related. So after having waited years to become manager, he held the job only for six months, and then in June of 1969, he left the cloakroom to help Mr. Pepper with the Select Committee on Crime. Which meant that having been there only six months, I moved up a notch to first assistant, and Bob Rota, who had been an assistant manager of the cloakroom for many years, became manager. Then three years later, when H. H. Morris, known as Hap Morris, the longtime Postmaster of the House, decided to retire, the Members of the House, the Democratic Members, decided that Bob ought to become Postmaster of the House.<sup>34</sup> So within three and a half years, I went from brand-new second assistant to the manager of the cloakroom. A rather meteoric rise, considering how slow things had evolved in the cloakroom prior to that.

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

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

But let me describe the cloakroom historically and in terms of its evolving function. The cloakrooms are two L-shaped rooms at the rear of the House Chamber that were created in 1857, when the new chamber—well, at least new in 1857—was built, and provide lounge areas and places where the

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<sup>34</sup> H. H. Morris served as Postmaster of the House from January 5, 1955, until his resignation on June 30, 1972. Robert V. Rota served as Postmaster of the House from July 1, 1972, until his resignation on March 19, 1992. For a complete list of Postmasters, see “Postmasters of the House,” Office of History and Preservation, Office of the Clerk, [http://clerk.house.gov/art\\_history/house\\_history/postmasters.html](http://clerk.house.gov/art_history/house_history/postmasters.html).

Members could store their belongings, since they didn't have offices. Members weren't accommodated with private offices until 1908, when this building [Cannon House Office Building] was opened.<sup>35</sup> Until then, just a handful of Members in the leadership had office space provided by the House. The others used the House Floor as their offices. They sat at their individual desks on the House Floor all day long, if the House was in session or not, and conducted their meager business in longhand without the support of staff. Just like some of us from my generation can remember in our schoolhouses, in the back of each classroom was a cloakroom, where we would leave our umbrellas and raincoats and lunch buckets. Well, the Members of the House had the very same arrangement. The Democrats and the Republicans each had their L-shaped rooms at the rear of their chamber, where they would leave their briefcases, books, papers in numbered cubicles and their cloaks and hats, umbrellas, or canes, whatever they carried with them, on numbered hooks, each one having a numbered hook to hang their coat on. Thus the origin of the rather quaint term "cloakroom" because it was really exactly that.

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As time passed, and as we moved into the 20th century, the House and Senate provided its Members for the first time with office space. So the cloakrooms were no longer needed for their historic purpose, and they became rather cozy sitting and reading areas—very private, Members-only spaces, not very big. Certainly couldn't accommodate but a fraction of the membership of the House. For many years, we had nine large, comfortable club chairs and eight long couches in the Democratic Cloakroom, where Members could sit and read, have a sandwich, take a nap, or just visit with each other in a very, very private space. As telecommunications advanced, telephones were added to the cloakrooms. In the early 20th century,

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<sup>35</sup> For a detailed history of the Cannon House Office Building, see "Cannon House Office Building: A Congressional First," Office of History and Preservation, Office of the Clerk, [http://clerk.house.gov/art\\_history/art\\_artifacts/Cannon\\_Centennial/index.html](http://clerk.house.gov/art_history/art_artifacts/Cannon_Centennial/index.html).

probably no more than two or three of them, I suspect. Some of the people who were there when I came recalled that before the phone booths were put in, there were a couple of mantelpieces that had one or two phones sitting on them, and Members sort of used them on a help-yourself basis. The phone booths, which are still there, were built in 1947, and by then, telephones had become of course an essential part of congressional communications, just as they had become an essential part of American life wherever it was to be found. The cloakroom staff had evolved from being sort of a custodial staff that kept the place tidy and presumably emptied the ashtrays or hung up the Members' cloaks, evolved into an information and floor support activity for the two parties.

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

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In any case, my duties, and that of my assistants, were to constantly monitor activities on the House Floor—the parliamentary situation, the progress of the legislative schedule, the changes. Even though the cloakrooms fell under the Doorkeeper of the House, they were really always a leadership function, since we were mainly administratively tied to the Doorkeeper, but in a practical, functional way, worked for the Democratic leadership organization, providing the Members with current,

up-to-date, highly detailed information as to the legislative schedule, the party position on the things that were scheduled. One of the things that I thought was a great deal of fun, and for which I developed quite a good reputation, was being able to forecast or predict the activities and schedule of the House. It's like anything else that, no matter how complicated it might be, if you've done it for a long time and developed a keen sense of what it is that you're doing, you can actually become very good at being able to forecast or predict how the schedule will fall into place, the elements that will be involved, time frames. One of the things that I did, and if I may indulge in a little self-flattery, did very well, was to be able to help the Members put their own schedules together by giving them a pretty sound guess as to when votes might occur, when the last vote might occur—always something very important so that they could plan their evenings, or in many cases, as the week drew to a close, decide which flight they would be on to get back home for the weekend.

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

**ANDERSON:** Oh, no, no, no, no. Everybody did that. That was part of the job. It was the expectation of the job since the cloakroom staffs had a unique vantage point being always there on the House Floor. The Members came and went all day long. Other people came and went all day long, including the Members of the leadership. But we were always there, always watching, always listening, gathering information from a wide variety of sources—the counsels to the committees that had legislation before the House, the Members that were involved in the management of the legislation. After a long period of study and observation, you came to know intuitively which committees were able to do their business more expeditiously than others.

There were some committees that always seemed to be embroiled in great controversy and difficulty when they brought legislation to the House Floor because of the personalities involved. Some committee chairmen were much more adept in management on the House Floor than others, who managed to work things out in advance of a measure coming to the floor, where others kind of wrote legislation on the House Floor, which always meant it was kind of open-ended and freewheeling, difficult, contentious. You just got to know, through the personalities involved, the nature of the issues involved, what the elements were going to be and could make a pretty good prediction as to how long a measure might take, what the real elements of difficulty would be. It's one thing to start off knowing that there are going to be 30 amendments to a bill. Members have announced that they have 30 different amendments that they intend to offer. Everybody might know that in advance. Well, that might give the impression that it'll take hours or days to dispose of all those amendments. When in fact, a little bit of spadework will turn up that

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perhaps 20 of the 30 amendments are considered non-controversial, technical in nature, or agreements have already been made by the two sides as to how to deal with those amendments. Of the remaining 10, perhaps only three or four have extraordinary controversy attached to them. The others will have a certain amount of perfunctory debate and then will be disposed of. So things aren't always what they seem to be. It takes a long time to develop that kind of sense—certainly not unique to the House Chamber. There are many aspects of business and work life where people become good at what they do because they have a sense of how things will either fall together or fall apart. It's kind of the workplace sense that people pick up once they've done something for a long time. The fun and the challenge is the multiple personalities that are involved and getting a sense of who the players are. Also, a lot of it is listening to the conversations that go on, often invariably, so you get a sense of what



the deals are that have been made or that haven't been made. And then you can develop a pretty good sense of how something is going to proceed once it comes to the House Floor.

I had a huge reputation for being able to forecast the business of the House, and long after I left the floor, when I became Clerk, I had Members who had been my regular clients or customers calling me in the Clerk's Office to find out about how the business of the day was going to go, or what plane they could catch, and I had a very hard time convincing many of them that I didn't do that anymore. And that to make judgments about chamber activity, unless you're there and follow it constantly and diligently, it is folly. You just can't do it. You haven't the resources; you haven't the understanding to make those critical judgments. I have gone on to other responsibilities, and I don't do those things anymore and that it would be irresponsible of me, now as Clerk of the House, to try to dabble in those things because I couldn't do them well anymore.

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

In terms of many of the services that we provided for the Members, in addition to giving them a rundown of the day's agenda and what elements

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were involved, we also handled the bulk of their *Congressional Record* material for speeches not actually delivered in the course of debate. Statements to be included under general leave to print. Members of the House have a freedom of speech which is unique to Members of Congress. The speech and debate clause of the Constitution protects them in what they say, that ordinary citizens don't have. They can say things within the confines of the chamber walls that you or I would be sued for if we recklessly said those things elsewhere. And they can be sued if they say them elsewhere, too. But for material that goes into the *Congressional Record*, whether uttered or not, that is protected by the speech and debate clause of the Constitution.

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

This huge amount of material mostly came to the two cloakrooms. Members' offices would prepare their statements, have them signed, and send them over to the cloakroom. We would note the fact that we received them. It was very important to keep track of what came in, so that in case something didn't appear in the *Record*, we were able to protect ourselves by saying, "Yes, we received it, and we did send it on to the reporters of debates, wherever it had to go." So we knew that it got at least to us. If we didn't keep track of what came in, it could be he said, she said forever about whether something was submitted or not. What I and my assistant would do would at least give a cursory look at all the material that came in—and huge volumes all day long from Members' offices—to see that it was clearly identified as to what it was, [to] which bill or debate it was relevant. That it was signed because submissions had to be signed by the submitting Member. It's certainly not our responsibility to authenticate the signature, but to see that there was a signature affixed. And then to the extent that our time permitted, sometimes just go over it to make sure that it was properly prepared. Members, of course, can't possibly prepare all the statements that they submit for the *Record*, and they'll tell the various people on their staffs, prepare a statement for me on something-or-other and make sure it gets in. Many staff people just aren't expert into how things for the *Record* should be prepared. So we always try to provide that little extra buffer of protection by looking things over to make sure that they were quite right before they went in or were clearly marked as to what issue they related to.

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Members also can, without limitation, extend their remarks in the Extension of Remarks section of the *Record*, which is clearly speeches that have not necessarily any relevance to what the House did—or the Senate, with regard to that body—in a particular day. There are, however, limitations on extraneous material, which is material other than a

Member's own original thought. For instance, the inclusion of articles, tabular material, that sort of thing, which of course runs up the cost of the production of the *Record*. To make sure that Members aren't irresponsible as to what they include as extraneous material, there is a limitation as to how much they can include, unless they in advance get a cost estimate for the production of that material and then ask separate permission that, notwithstanding the extra cost, they be permitted to print it. So we would try to watch those things, too.

We would also make, at the end of the day, what were known informally as the shotgun requests, which were leaves to print, where we would request, on behalf of the Members, permission to print an extension of remarks or, if there was an over-cost involved, get some Member to make that request on behalf of a colleague. What we would do each day at the conclusion of legislative business, each side would get a Member, usually a more junior member, to read the shotgun requests, which were the long lists of Members who wished leave to print extensions of remarks or perhaps to reserve special orders, which was kind of a subterfuge. They usually would get a speech into the body of the *Record*, as opposed to the Extension of Remarks section, because you didn't actually have to take your time in order to include a statement. You could reserve the time and then submit the statement in writing. But it was kind of a clever way of looking like you actually spoke when you really didn't. However, as time passed, those speeches were also printed in italics to differentiate them from the speeches that were actually delivered. We handled those requests at the end of the day, and occasionally we would be called by committees to get permission for their committees to sit while the House was engaged in general debate or operating under the five-minute rule, which is the amendment stage of consideration, because the rules of the House prohibit committees from sitting while the House is in session, unless they have leave to sit. Certain

exclusive committees can sit at any time they want without permission—the Rules Committee, the Appropriations Committee, House Administration; I think there are a couple of others. But the other committees of the House, in order to sit legally, have to have leave to sit while the House is in session. So we would run the traps on those requests, get the information, and then usually I or one of my assistants would go over to the Republican side and check with the Members who were likely to raise objection, explaining why we were doing this, what the issue was that was being discussed in a particular committee, and that it had been cleared with the ranking Republican Member on that committee, so that this wasn't any kind of end-run, that everything had been done quite correctly. We did that all the time. It gives you an idea of the services that we handled in the cloakroom—*Record* material, committee requests.

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

hours a day. There was always someplace somebody could call, including Members themselves. It was considered quite an extraordinary thing.

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

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

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

[56:00]

Billington, the Librarian of Congress, some years ago, when the Jefferson Building was celebrating its centennial [1997], made the rather sage observation that he agreed this was indeed the Information Age, but he also added, “Alas, how much better might we be if this could be truly described as the Knowledge Age, or best yet, the Wisdom Age.”<sup>36</sup> But it’s the Information Age so I decided that since there was the demand for the information, and we just didn’t have the means to get it out, we could use another telephone dial-in number. That worked wonders. It, again, satisfied, at least for the time being, the need that people had for more information.

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

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<sup>36</sup> In 1987, James H. Billington became the 13th Librarian of Congress.

that he gets that information.” Then click the receiver, and the operator would come back, and we’d go to the next name on the list. That’s how we put out a Whip call.

Then about the same time the first recordings were put in the cloakroom, we’d had an automatic Whip call system. Instead of a recording that you called, it was a recording that called you. But because of the cost of the equipment, each cloakroom didn’t get one. There was one system with two sets of automatic-dial numbers. Whichever party got to the chief operator—the only neutral ground where we could find to put that wonderful new equipment was the chief operator’s office—whoever got there first got the use of the equipment, excluding the other side until we were done with it. Say Mr. Boggs as the Majority Whip came in and said, “Donn, put out a Whip call that at 3:00 we’re going to have a vote on the Jones Amendment to H.R. 1234, and Democratic Members are expected to vote ‘aye.’” I would then call the chief operator, who was located over in the Dirksen Senate [Office] Building, and dictate the message to her. She would then record the message and send it to the Democratic group. If the Republicans decided they wanted to do the same thing at the same time, they had to wait until our message had run, which was about five or six minutes plus the time it took to dictate and the Capitol operator to record it and send it. So they might have to wait 15 or 20 minutes before they could access the equipment. And of course once we had the equipment, obviously there was a desire to use it more and more. It’s like anything else. When you’ve got it, you enjoy using it. You get a new car, you drive it more than your old car, simply because it’s got a lot of new things that you like to play with. So it was getting to a point where either we had to wait while the Republicans used it, or they had to wait while we used it. I proposed that—notwithstanding the rather substantial additional cost, it was something that clearly was in the interest of both parties—why

[60:00]



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

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

Then beepers were becoming somewhat commonplace. It wasn't the omnipresent little gadget that people carry around with them all the time now, like the BlackBerries. But some people, particularly in the professions like medicine, were carrying beepers. People that had to be on call, that had to have an umbilical to wherever it was that they worked. I thought it might be something that the House at least prospectively ought to look into as a way of communicating with our Members to give them a range

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

**JOHNSON:** What time period was this?

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

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

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

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

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

[68:00]

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

**ANDERSON:** Sure.

*End of Part One – Beginning of Part Two*

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

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

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

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

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

[4:00]

When I came, 46 years ago, the only notification system they had were the bells that rang in the hallways. They still have them. It was the most generic information there was. Two bells, a vote has begun. What is it on? No idea. Just, a vote has begun. Three bells, a quorum call. That was clear enough. Quorum calls are about quorum, period.<sup>37</sup> And then it was another decade before there was anything to explain what that two-bell signal meant, unless you could get to a phone and call and find out what the vote was on. So this opened tremendous new horizons for the Members in being acute constantly to what was happening.

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

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<sup>37</sup> A quorum is the minimum number of Members needed to be present for the House or Senate to conduct business. The Constitution requires simple majorities of Members to achieve a quorum; in the modern chambers, given no vacancies, the minimums are 218 for the House and 51 in the Senate.

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

**JOHNSON:** Since you brought up television, and we're talking about technology, two of the major technological advances in the 1970s were the implementation of electronic voting in 1973, and then the first live televised proceedings of the House in 1979.<sup>38</sup> Can you just take a moment to talk about how these two changes affected your job, and then also how they affected the House in general?

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

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<sup>38</sup> For information on electronic voting in the House, see "The First Electronic Vote," Weekly Historical Highlights, Office of History and Preservation, Office of the Clerk, [http://clerk.house.gov/art\\_history/highlights.html?action=view&intID=94](http://clerk.house.gov/art_history/highlights.html?action=view&intID=94). For information on the televised proceedings of the House, see "Electronic Technology in the House of Representatives," Office of History and Preservation, Office of the Clerk, [http://clerk.house.gov/art\\_history/house\\_history/technology/tv.html](http://clerk.house.gov/art_history/house_history/technology/tv.html).

shouting, “yes” or “no”—this high theater of the moment of decision, when the American people come together to decide through the 435 Representatives how they will deal with their national agenda, establish their priorities, deal with their hopes and aspirations and their fears and anxieties. To me, electronic voting has always seemed to be terribly bland. It lacks the theater of roll call. But it was something that had to happen.

[8:00]

The most precious commodity of the House has always been its time. If you look at the evolution of the rules of the House, in many cases, some of the most ferocious debates that we have had over changing our procedures have dealt with the economy of time. How to deal with the ever-increasing pressure of a nation that has become larger and larger and more complex and diverse and contentious and squeeze all of those needs and all of those issues, all of those ideas, into a 24-hour day. When we began in 1789 there were 24 hours in the day. In 1789, there were but 13 states and 4 million citizens, most of them living in rural America. Their cities, such as they were, were very small. The issues facing the 65 Representatives in the first House were terribly important—dealing with the new Republic and the wilderness of North America, but they were fairly straightforward and unadorned: raising revenue to pay for a revolution; to supply the needs of the new government under our Constitution. Not a lot of issues, but they were very important. But the Members had a leisure of time. When they came here, they stayed. They didn’t have to rush off to all sorts of places. But very quickly, almost overnight, our nation began to grow very quickly from 13 states along the eastern seaboard of the United States, with inevitable westward expansion. New states, new territories; the inevitable move towards the western ocean. Immediately, the first great waves of primarily Western European immigration began, with many tens, hundreds of thousands of people fleeing the old regimes of Europe to engage with us in our new and extraordinary experiment in personal liberty, freedom of



thought and action—things that were unheard of, even in the enlightened democracies of old Europe. And of course, it was the dawn of the age of industrialization, the technological age. Things were changing very rapidly. So the nation grew almost geometrically in geography and population, and the complexity of the issues dealing with a very diverse and rapidly expanding society, and nonetheless, we only had 24 hours in a day, as when we began in 1789.

To try to make all of those things, all of the needs of this extraordinary, vast, and complex nation and society fit into 24 hours which Congress could not add to. Congress can do all sorts of amazing things, but it has never been able to add hours to the day. So we have to make everything fit into those 24 finite and precious hours. Voting had become a very big time-consumer. On average, with a roll call vote, we spent 25 to 35 minutes on a single vote. If you had half a dozen of those in a day, that was several hours consumed in the purely mechanical process of voting, not in the exchange of ideas and information and question and answers and dealing with the momentous issues of the day, but in the mechanical process of deciding. It was very clear that something had to be done. As attached as we all were to the old way of voting, it was clear that we needed to force upon ourselves a method of voting that would economize on our precious time. Electronic voting was the solution to that. It turned out to be, at least in its early years, kind of a false economy. But with the advent of electronic voting, we were able to reduce voting to a minimum of 15 minutes, which was at least half of what we used to spend on a single vote. “Aha!” We have cut our voting time in half. But it became so easy and so convenient to vote electronically that we had many more votes than we used to. We went from perhaps having a couple of hundred votes in an annual session of the House, to—I think at the high watermark, we got up to 700 or 800 votes and quorum calls in the space of a single year.

[12:00]

So we were burning up much more time in the process of voting and obtaining quorums than we ever did before because it was so easy.

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

**ANDERSON:** Yes. So then the rules had to be further refined to make it rather more difficult to demand and to get a vote, such as raising the number necessary to stand for a vote in the Committee of the Whole from one-fifth of a quorum, which was 20, which had been the immemorial observance.<sup>39</sup> We raised it to 25, and then I think to 30, in the effort to suppress the number of votes in the Committee of the Whole. We also gave the Speaker the authority to postpone and cluster votes so that they couldn't interrupt constantly the business of the day. So that if votes were demanded and ordered, the Speaker had the prerogative of postponing them and holding them together in a cluster at a particular point in the day's proceedings, so that Members weren't constantly jumping up from whatever they were doing in committee or in their offices and running over to vote, and maybe getting another 15 or 20 minutes at their desk and then coming back to vote again. It was terribly disruptive. So it was kind of cause and effect. When the effect wasn't what it was hoped to be, we had to fine-tune and tweak the rules further to get things under control.

There was even some talk about the Speaker using his authority—which he has always had, but has been historically loath to use—of refusing to recognize demands for votes on the grounds that in his view, they were dilatory, purely obstructionist in nature. The Speaker has always had that extraordinary power to refuse to recognize for something that may be

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<sup>39</sup> The Committee of the Whole is a parliamentary procedure whereby the House dissolves into a smaller body for the purposes of expediting legislation and debate. The committee can then debate and amend legislation with a quorum of only 100 Members. The committee dissolves itself back into the full body of the House for final votes on legislation.

entirely parliamentary on its face, but clearly meant to obstruct or to delay. The Speaker has been very loath, historically, to use that awesome power—all Speakers. It has very, very seldom been used by the chair, but there was talk that perhaps the Speaker would have to do that in order to get some control on this very easy and convenient and time-consuming new practice of electronic voting.

[16:00]

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

**ANDERSON:** Yes. It became operational with Speaker Albert, who was one of the prime movers behind it. Electronic voting was mandated by the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1970, which was the first major reorganization of congressional operations since the similar act of 1946, though the Act of 1970 primarily was a House measure.<sup>40</sup> There were only a few parts of it that dealt with joint items in operations between the House and Senate, but it was 90 percent dealing with the methodology of the House of Representatives. It mandated that the House must, in an expeditious way, impose on itself some scheme for recording the Members' votes electronically. The challenges were how do you do it without vandalizing the historic and ornamental chamber, since high-tech and architecture don't necessarily blend very compatibly, particularly with a large historical element. It was done so cleverly that it virtually disappears when it's not in use. The only things that are always visible are the very discreet, small voting stations attached to the Members' seatbacks at various locations on the House Floor, which most people would be inclined to miss because they are small and unobtrusive. The main displays, which disappear into the wall when they're not in use, and the summary displays as well. Then how to make it convenient where there are no assigned seats? How do

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<sup>40</sup> For more information on the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1970, see David C. King, "Act of 1970," in Donald C. Bacon et al., eds., *The Encyclopedia of the United States Congress Volume 3* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1995): 1281.

Members who have no place assigned to them on the House Floor vote? Of course, the voting ID cards, which are compatible with every voting station, solved that problem. Where Members vote is simply a matter of convenience, at any of the 50 voting stations on the House Floor. They simply insert their card into the nearest one to cast their votes. Very simple indeed.

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

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I never believed that that practice was widespread, but only occasional, and know of no particular circumstance personally where it ever happened, though I never doubted that it occasionally did. The voting cards are something else. They all kind of look alike, unless you get close enough to read one. Who’s to say that a Member can’t walk up to a voting station and insert his or her voting card and then in another pocket pull out another voting card and insert another one and vote another time? Or go to a different station if they don’t wish to be so obvious. That did become

an issue fairly early on, where it was clear that some Members were being recorded who simply weren't there and had in all likelihood given their voting cards to colleagues who would be there to cover their behinds while they were absent.

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

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

**ANDERSON:** Could also change their vote. But I had Members early on saying, "Can I leave my voting card with you in the cloakroom so that I'll be sure that it'll always be here when I am?" I saw nothing but mischief in that, and real peril for myself, and I said, "Congressman, I can't do it. I cannot be the custodian of your voting card. What if someone else comes in and demands it, and says it's on your authority? It puts me in the terrible position of having to say no to a Member who perhaps you've authorized. And the offense is yours, not mine, but I am drawn into the situation." I had to be very hard-nosed and absolutely refuse. I did refuse.

When Mr. [Thomas “Tip”] O’Neill was the Majority Leader, and of course he had a seat behind the leader’s table on the House Floor with a locked drawer in the table, and he left his voting card in his wallet—his voting card wallet—in the drawer, locked in the leader’s table. But I had a key to the drawer, which he wanted me to have in case he forgot his key, which he never carried. So about five or 10 minutes before the House met each day, I’d walk down and unlock his drawer so that he could have access to his voting card. I only did it because, number one, the card wasn’t in my personal custody, it was in the leader’s drawer in the leader’s table. I simply unlocked the drawer so that he had access to his card. I never touched the card. One day, I had forgotten to unlock the drawer. We started with an early vote on the *Journal*. Mr. O’Neill couldn’t get his voting card out to vote, and “Fishbait” Miller, the none-too-discreet Doorkeeper of the House, came running across the House Floor into the cloakroom, yelling my name and shouting, “Mr. O’Neill wants his voting card.”<sup>41</sup> Then a dozen or more Members turned around and said, “Oh, can I leave my voting card with you too?” Then I had to explain that I don’t have his voting card. It’s in his drawer, which is locked in his table. I gave “Fishbait” what for. “What are you doing? You’re killing me announcing that I have Mr. O’Neill’s voting card,” which I didn’t, number one. He could never do anything discreetly. In any case, the voting cards became a real problem in that respect. It was easy to forget them, mislay them, pass them. We had to depend on the Members’ own sense of duty and responsibility and honor and integrity that voting cards would not be passed.

[24:00]

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<sup>41</sup> 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.

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

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

**ANDERSON:** No. Like I said earlier in this discussion, for every advance, there are certain new questions, challenges. Nothing is everything it seems to be. You have to deal with the new challenges that changes . . . well, there's nothing that's insuperable. Of course, in the decades now since we have voted electronically, everybody has become quite comfortable with it. We have adjusted the rules to deal with some of the things that were not anticipated when it was first installed. The Members are keenly aware of the fact that they cannot pass their cards. They must be physically present to vote on their own behalf. The penalties would be very grave indeed. I

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don't think card-passing goes on. I think the Members firmly understand that it is a very, very high obligation and a responsibility invested in them by their constituents, which they cannot gratuitously pass on to anybody else. They take the franchise with the great seriousness that it deserves.

**JOHNSON:**

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

**ANDERSON:**

The answer is yes, it reflected all of those things. The evolution of the services and the duties of the cloakroom, my individual responsibilities. Manager of Telephones . . . when I first started, when it was a telephone-answering operation, it was strictly that, was a proper reflection, I think, of what the job entailed. But we became more and more a leadership information arm. In fact, for a long time, the principal way the leadership diffused information amongst our membership . . . information services or floor services was a much more accurate description of what we did in the cloakroom because in addition to leadership, program, parliamentary information, we also provided the wide range of personal services for Members. Handling their *Congressional Record* material; receiving their bills for introduction; the filing of reports; committee requests, permission to sit and that sort of thing; permission to print in the *Congressional Record*; leaves of absences for Members that had to be away; taking pair requests, which is another subject entirely.<sup>42</sup> The House no long has

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<sup>42</sup> A procedural practice previously allowed under House Rules, Members anticipating an absence for an upcoming floor vote could enter an informal agreement to "pair" with another Representative without an indication of how



pairing, but it used to use it very widely. A rather arcane custom. So as these things evolved—and of course with the new technology, with the recorded information messages, the Whip calls, the radio paging system—it ratcheted up the description of the multiplicity of functions and responsibilities that were vested in the cloakroom. So we occasionally tweaked and tuned our titles to reflect our changing roles.

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

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

**JOHNSON:** This was the same for the Republican Cloakroom?

**ANDERSON:** Yes, exactly. In fact, a few years ago, the change was finally made which was clearly obvious long ago, and the cloakrooms were moved from the Clerk of the House, which inherited them from the former Doorkeeper,

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either would have voted—referred to as a “general pair.” House Rules before the 106th Congress (1999–2001) also allowed “specific” or “dead” pairs, where Members on opposite sides of an issue could record how they would have voted if they had been present in order to nullify the effect of absences on a recorded vote.

since that office was abolished, and transferred, in the case of the Majority, to the Speaker, and in the case of the Minority, to the Minority Leader's office. So they are actually employees of the Speaker or the Minority Leader, which makes a great deal more sense. They are no longer part of the Clerk's organization.

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

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

The House is operated by majoritarian rule. Clearly, if you have the votes, you can always do what you want to do. You can always roll over the Minority. I always found that it makes much better sense and life considerably more delightful if you can have the Minority pleasantly cooperative with what you're trying to achieve. I learned early on that it not only made sense, but it was frankly imperative to cross the center aisle and to establish and build bridges with the Minority. So when I ran the cloakroom, when time permitted, I would cross the aisle and perhaps have a cup of coffee at the Republican snack bar, visit with my colleagues and the Members over there. When we had leadership requests from my side,

since I knew the Republican Members who were the key players on the House Floor and they knew me, I could sit down not as a stranger or as the emissary from the enemy, and explain why we wanted to make a particular request and also give them my personal assurance that it had been properly vetted by the Minority. I would never mislead because you only have to do that once and you'll never be trusted again, and that relationship is ruined once and forever. So when I went over to talk to the Minority Leader or the Minority Whip or the various Republican Members who were sort of the floor watchdogs and explain that this is what we want to do, and these are the people that it has been cleared with, and indeed it has been cleared, they could take it to the bank. I developed a feeling of trust on the Republican side that was terribly important. They'd share information with me as to what it was—unless it was really proprietary—what it was they planned to do. Or occasionally, this is what we're going to do, but you can't tell anybody, but so that you're prepared to explain it when it happens. But if you tell anybody, we'll never share it with you again, so that I wouldn't be blindsided. But when some peculiar parliamentary maneuver would occur, I knew that it was going to happen, and I had the means already at hand to explain that to the Members of my party instantly, without standing there scratching my head, going, "What?" I could immediately say, "Well, this is what they're trying to do." But I couldn't break confidence and tell anybody in advance that this is going to happen. But it was on the sole basis of personal trust and responsibilities that I could get this information. And I would do the same thing with them. "Look, we're going to do this. You can't tell anybody." But then, this was strictly at the staff level between the cloakroom staffs, so that you can explain it when it happens.

[36:00]

**JOHNSON:** So it was a professional courtesy.

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

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

**ANDERSON:** No. It's just something I did. It was obvious, it was practical, and it worked. My leadership certainly approved of it because it made life easier for everybody. They didn't have to put out any brush fires. We didn't start them, and we didn't have to extinguish them. It made things run more smoothly. I don't believe that things that aren't partisan need to be made partisan. As Speaker O'Neill, my friend and mentor of many years, used to say, "We can disagree without being disagreeable." He held the age-old view of the House that—in fact, it's Jeffersonian in its origins—that we should dispute with each other at the level of the issues and never turn it into personalities. That nobody should be faulted because he or she is of a different mind. That nobody holds a monopoly on truth or virtue. That we disagree for honest and respectable reasons, and that we should accept that. But to say that somebody is flawed, or somehow not to be trusted, or to be suspect simply because they hold a contrary view, makes no sense at all to me. But it was always based on trust and respect, and if that was ever violated, then of course those things went out the window.

[40:00] Those are things that have to be maintained unfailingly because the first time you violate trust and confidence, you'll never have an opportunity to

do it again, because you'll never be brought into a situation of trust or confidence.

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

**ANDERSON:** Oh, with great joy. My first job, of course, was as a Democratic Cloakroom—or as was said in those days—telephone Page. It always made me very proud of the fact that the six kids that worked in the cloakroom were teenagers—16, 17 years old—because the training we gave them, and the insistence on excellence. Young people's minds are like sponges; they can absorb a lot—probably more receptive to new challenges than older people. I was always very proud of the fact that our hundreds, if not thousands, of daily callers, most of whom did not realize they were talking to teenagers holding their first real job, thought that they were talking to experienced adults because of the quality and reliability of the information that they were given by the kids. I would take a certain measure of pride in the training that we insisted on giving them, but also on their diligence and initiative in being open to that training, and learning their jobs and being able to pick up almost a foreign language. We use terms and words—we call it "Parliamentese." It's a language that's not spoken elsewhere. It's unique to our institution. And also have to deal with a very high-pressure environment and a very small space, surrounded by very important people doing very important things, and nonetheless keeping their focus on their own jobs, which is to serve those people. Not to simply stand there in wide-eyed awe of these people, but to deal with them and deal with them reliably. And then to give information to Members, their staffs, general public, that is good, solid information about unique situations. I think it says a great deal about the intelligence of the young people that are sent to

us. We don't choose them. They are chosen elsewhere, and we have to do what we can to fit them into the needs of the House. The kids nowadays are much smarter than we were when we came. They know more. They deal with a world that is more challenging in many ways, and in many ways more perilous, than we ever had to deal with.

[44:00]

I also think that it's very, very important, in a world of very important adults carrying around a lot of parliamentary freight, that to have young people in our midst to remind us of our own mortality and the fact that we don't always have all the answers we think we do. Young people will, from time to time, ask important "why" questions. "Why do we do that? Why is something done in a particular way? Why don't we do this, and why do we still do that?" There are legitimate answers for those questions, and it is insufficient to say because it has always been that way. That's a brush-off. But there is a rationale for everything. And if there isn't a rationale, then perhaps that question has real salience. "Why do we do it? Why don't we stop doing it right now?" I mean, it has no meaning anymore. But we don't often think of those things. But a fresh view, particularly with the innocence of youth, often creates a situation where we start looking at things in a different way. I know that over the years, kids have asked me "why" questions, and I got to thinking about it. You know, they've got a point there. Maybe this is something that ought to change. Or maybe we ought to do something that we're not doing. This fresh view is important. Of course, sometimes they simply don't understand, and it would seem to them to be questionable, when in fact there's a firm rationale for being it. When you explain it to them—"Oh yeah, sure, I understand it, yeah. I see what you mean." But it causes us to examine things. But I think it's just wonderful to have the kids in our midst. There's a certain freshness and vitality and spontaneity that young people have, that older adults don't. You get locked into a pattern, or you become sort of a set piece on stage.

You feel that you must be a certain way. The young people don't have that burden to carry. They're spontaneous. They react to their surroundings without ulterior motives. It's like when we're very young, we play for the sheer joy of playing. There's no agenda. As we get older, play is joined with an agenda. We play to achieve certain social goals or certain economic goals. But it's not playing simply for the joy of the game.

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

**ANDERSON:** Well, number one, the integration of the Page program. Until the mid-'60s, it was all white boys. Then in 1966, we integrated by race.<sup>43</sup> Of course, for a while, there was a rush to make up for the inequities of the past, and we had a lot of minority Pages being appointed, where Members wanted to show that their heart was in the right place. Then that settled down, with nobody trying to achieve any particular racial goal or quota. Then in 1972, we—for the first time—permitted girls to become Pages.<sup>44</sup> Can you imagine, that late in the 20th century? Every time you contemplate a profound change, the contemplation is really much more difficult than the change itself. When it becomes a *fait accompli*, you accept and you move on. But to get up to that awful moment of making the change, when something has been locked in stone for so long, that can be a matter of great concern. We were very concerned that girls wouldn't be able to carry the burden physically because the work of Pages is physically very demanding. Could they carry big bundles of *Congressional Records*

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<sup>43</sup> On April 14, 1965, Frank Mitchell became the first African-American Page in the U.S. House of Representatives. For information on this milestone, see "Frank Mitchell, the First African-American Page," Weekly Historical Highlights, Office of History and Preservation, Office of the Clerk, [http://clerk.house.gov/art\\_history/highlights.html?action=view&intID=134](http://clerk.house.gov/art_history/highlights.html?action=view&intID=134). The Office of History and Preservation conducted an oral history interview with Frank Mitchell on August 6, 2008.

<sup>44</sup> The Senate first appointed female Pages in 1971, and the House admitted its first female Pages in 1973.

around, and the stacks of American flags, and the boxes that have to be delivered every day? As a practical matter, we found out, and we often used to say, as Page supervisors, the girls do twice the work with half the supervision that the boys do. If anything, it measurably improved the effectiveness and the efficiency of the Page program, to have the young ladies. Of course, once Speaker Albert himself broke the ice and appointed the first girl.

[48:00]

**JOHNSON:** That was Felda Looper.<sup>45</sup>

**ANDERSON:** Felda Looper from Oklahoma—his home state. Then everybody rushed to appoint girl Pages, where boys became almost an endangered species. It was like three-quarters or more girls. Then that settled down. But it's interesting to note that since girls became a part of the Page program, with rare exception, every year we've had slightly more girls than boys making up the Page program. The explanation, I think, can be found in a variety of ways. Girls, intellectually, clearly mature at an earlier point than boys do, where they can focus on things like politics, issues, the kind of things that are cerebral, involved with American government. They also aren't so tied down to the concept of team sports because we don't have any athletic program at all in connection with the Page program. A lot of guys are reluctant to give up the team to come to Washington to be a Page. So there are a couple of reasons that we have usually more girls than boys. Sometimes considerably more girls than boys—where housing can be an issue because of course we do segregate them by gender in the dormitory. We do not have an open dorm. But it works. And it works out very well.

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<sup>45</sup> On May 21, 1973, Felda Looper became the first female to serve as a Page in the House of Representatives. For a brief summary, see "Felda Looper, the First Female Page," Weekly Historical Highlights, Office of History and Preservation, Office of the Clerk, [http://clerk.house.gov/art\\_history/highlights.html?action=view&intID=134](http://clerk.house.gov/art_history/highlights.html?action=view&intID=134). The Office of History and Preservation conducted an oral history interview with Felda Looper on May 21, 2007.



So those were the two big changes that occurred: gender and racial integration.

The next big step, which was a profoundly important one, and one that was long overdue, was the provision of supervised housing for the Pages. When I served as a Page, virtually all of us lived in so-called approved rooming houses on Capitol Hill, where we were actually well supervised. Little old ladies with whom we lived wouldn't put up with any nonsense, and they were pretty strict about what we did and how we lived our lives. But one by one, the little old ladies either died or moved to Leisure World, and the approved rooming houses were gone.<sup>46</sup> Then the kids started renting and sharing apartments around Capitol Hill, and as Jim Oliver observed, during the day they were always responsible to somebody, but at night, they were not responsible to anybody, or sometimes irresponsible to somebody.<sup>47</sup> Society had changed.

When I was a teenager, drugs were not part of the scene. It was not a question of deciding whether to use drugs or not. They weren't there. Nobody used them. Alcohol—it was the thrill of the chase, to get away with having a drink. But nobody did it with the—at least not in my crowd—with the purpose of getting drunk. It was just to get away with it. Now of course we have the problem of binge drinking. As far as intimate behavior was concerned, it wasn't a double standard that it was disgraceful for girls, but for the boys who were predators, it was all right. It was unseemly and unacceptable, at least in my crowd, for either boys or girls to behave in intimate ways. We were prudes! We were old Puritans. That was the way we were raised, and there was still a concept of shame in society. That of course has changed, for a lot of reasons. A revolution in

[52:00]

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<sup>46</sup> Leisure World is a retirement community in Silver Spring, Maryland.

<sup>47</sup> Jim Oliver was a longtime employee in the Republican Cloakroom. For information on his career, see *Congressional Record*, House, 109th Cong., 2nd sess. (19 December 2007): 16899–16900.

thinking in the '60s, the Pill . . . a lot of things that used to be chiseled in stone are now gone. Of course, nowadays we have sexually transmitted diseases that aren't just annoying, they're lethal—with AIDS. We didn't have to worry about those things. First of all, we didn't engage in those activities, where kids nowadays do. It all blew up in our face in 1982.

Jim Molloy, the Doorkeeper of the House, had for years been pleading with the House to provide some supervised housing for the kids.<sup>48</sup> He knew that eventually we would have a serious problem. And he was right. He was prophetic. In 1982, it happened.

*A 40 second segment of this interview has been redacted.*

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

*A 1 minute, 25 second segment of this interview was redacted.*

In any case, two Members of Congress were censured at the bar of the House. One was defeated. One employee went to prison—and that was the one involved with drugs—and the other employee lost his job. Everybody seemed to be satisfied. There was something to offend everybody. Well, we almost lost the program. Speaker O'Neill appointed the Alexander Commission, which was a committee headed by

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<sup>48</sup> 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.

[56:00]

Congressman Bill Alexander of Arkansas, who was the Chief Deputy Majority Whip, to study the Page program that we needed. “Why do we have it? Is it justified in continuance? Should it be replaced or supplanted by something else?” We came within a hair’s breadth of losing the program. I know Jim Oliver and I expended a lot of personal capital because we believed so strongly in the importance of the program.

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

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

So the happy result was we got our dormitory, and we got a new school, vastly superior to the old. Our kids have been getting smarter, expecting more, demanding more, and we hadn’t been providing it to them in terms of formal education. So we got back into the education business that we got out of in 1946 with the Legislative Reorganization Act of that year and hired a faculty, got accredited, set up a curriculum. We are now providing a challenge to our young people that they expect and deserve. It’s a very high-quality education. We have a dormitory where they live under very strict rules. They have to read and sign a code of conduct before they commence service, and their parents also have to read it and subscribe to it. The penalties are unfailing. If there is an infraction, they get sent home. And they know it.

They are a privileged group. There are a maximum of 78 of them, out of probably thousands of young people who would like to be Pages. If it's illegal anyplace else, it's illegal here. So we lean on them very hard about . . . if you have to have a cigarette, no matter what it's made of, or a refreshing cocktail, or engage in some kind of intimate behavior, or immoral or unethical activity, you're out of here. First offense. No second chance; no second bite of the apple. If we ever did that, we'd have anarchy because we'd have to have a second bite of the apple times 78. Can't do it. It's tough to toss the kids out, but we do it. We are very happy right now. During the previous academic year, nobody got sent home. It hadn't happened in a number of years. We just completed the first semester of the current academic year, and nobody has been sent home. We've got our fingers crossed that we can make it two years in a row. The infractions, such as. . .<sup>49</sup>

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

**ANDERSON:** Well, we had gradually raised the floor. Of course, when I came, and forever, we had Pages from all four years of high school. We had very few freshmen and sophomores, but we did have them. What we did in the Legislative Reorganization Act of '70 is we changed it to juniors and seniors. It meant we still had some 15-year-olds from time to time because not an insignificant number of juniors can be 15 years old. Then after 1982, we changed it to juniors only, for a lot of reasons. We brought in three professional educators—each one of them had an educational,

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<sup>49</sup> Donald Anderson serves as a member emeritus on the House Page Board, an organization created in 1983 to oversee the House Page Program.

professional, national association—to advise us in creating our school, which we had decided that we wanted to do. We knew that we wanted to change it to a one-year program. The debate was over should it be junior or senior year. The consensus was that it should be your junior year, for a variety of reasons.

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

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

**ANDERSON:** Well, we decided to get into a rotation of the assignments. The duties of the Pages hasn't changed. One thing that we don't do, though, is we do not permit them to work in their sponsoring Members' offices. I mean, they're not paid by their Members. They're paid by the Clerk of the House. Their duties are spelled out very specifically in their job descriptions as classified House employees, so they can't work outside of the duties that are spelled out officially. But when we used to make job assignments among the Pages, whether it was running Pages, overseers,

documentarians, the Speaker's Page, cloakrooms . . . once you got that assignment, that was it. Of course the kids that were runners—that was all they did—was run the errands through the hallways. That was considered to be not entirely fair and not really in the interest of a broad familiarity with various aspects of House operations. So one of the things we mandated was an aggressive program of rotation. Not every kid can obviously do every job, but what we try to do is create an equal amount of time spent doing something that is floor-related or running the errands through the hallways.

[64:00]

**JOHNSON:** So they get a more balanced experience.

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

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

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

**JOHNSON:** Great.

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

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

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

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

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