

INTERVIEWEE: JUDGE SARAH HUGHES

INTERVIEWER: JOE B. FRANTZ

October 7, 1968, E.O.B. 121, The White House

This is an interview with Judge Sarah Hughes, Dallas, on October 7, 1968 in the office of Joe B. Frantz in the Executive Office Building 121.

F: Judge Hughes, tell us first of all a little bit about yourself. I know that you were a policewoman here in Washington at one time. Just what does that involve?

H: I dealt largely with delinquent children and delinquent girls. I did patrol the dance halls, Union Terminal, and some of the restaurants at night, but largely it was a matter of investigating cases involving women and children for the police department and cases that came to the woman's bureau particularly.

F: You were just a slip of a girl yourself, weren't you?

H: Well, now I don't know about that. I graduated from Goucher College in Baltimore in 1917, taught school for two years, and then I came to Washington so that I could go to George Washington University Law School. I went to law school at night and was with the police department during the day.

F: How large was Washington then?

H: Oh goodness, I can't tell you. You'll have to look it up--300-, 400-, 500,000 people, I suppose.

F: But not the same population character you had then?

H: Oh, completely different from now. The street that I lived on then has become entirely Negro population.

F: What took you to Dallas?

H: I married in my senior year at law school and my husband was from Texas. In looking around for a place to make a living we decided that we should first decide where we wanted to live, and we decided we wanted to live in Dallas and we knew that we could make a living wherever we lived.

F: Was he a lawyer?

H: Yes. He was in the same class with me at law school.

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F: You got more than a law degree then?

H: Yes, I did.

F: You were a district judge in Texas then for awhile?

H: Yes, I was elected to the Texas legislature in 1931 and when I was serving my third term, Governor Allred appointed me judge of the 14th district.

F: That's in Dallas?

H: Yes, 1935 that was.

F: That's not a lifetime appointment?

H: No, I ran for office each four years and enjoyed every minute of it.

F: You must have been highly successful.

H: Well, I was elected.

F: That's a form of success, isn't it, necessary success?

When did you first come to know President Johnson?

H: I became rather intimately acquainted with [his politics] him in 1948 when he ran for the Senate and I campaigned for him at that time.

F: What did you do in the campaign?

H: I made some speeches for him particularly. I went to Houston and spoke to some women's groups.

F: Did you volunteer or did he seek you out?

H: Some body knew that I was for him and asked me to come.

F: Were you sort of given a free-lance job over the state, were you supposed to look after the district, or what?

H: No, I didn't make many speeches. I just made a couple in Houston during that campaign.

F: Were they primarily for the women's vote?

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H: Yes.

F: Did you have personal contact with Congressman Johnson as it was at that time?

H: No, I didn't. I just knew that he was the man that I wanted to be Senator.

F: You hadn't taken any part in 1941 in the special election with W. Lee O'Daniel?

H: No, I didn't. I was too involved in my own race at the time.

F: What personal contact did you have with Congressman Johnson during 1948?

H: I didn't have any personal contact with him. I don't believe that I actually was personally acquainted with him until the 1960 campaign. Of course I knew him, I was for him and followed his political career, but actually being a friend I can't say that we were acquainted.

F: What made you decide that he was the man you wanted in 1948?

H: Well, you just look at people's platform, their background, you decide which is the one that you want. I must say that Coke Stevenson had served with me in the legislature--I had served with him. I was on the opposite side of everything that he wanted to do and actually it wasn't very difficult for me to decide.

F: Nothing in between to change your mind?

H: No.

F: Then were you involved with him in any of the subsequent presidential campaigns in 1952 or 1956?

H: No. My first direct contact after that was when he was running for Vice-President and Kennedy was running for President.

F: You weren't involved in either of those 1956 or 1958 convention fights?

H: No, I wasn't. I never have gone to conventions because there are two factions in Texas, as you well know, and I always wanted the votes of both factions in my race for judge, which is not too partisan a job, you know. So that I had kept myself more or less aloof from Texas politics.

F: Where in the 1960 campaign did you get involved?

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- H: I was the cochairman of the Kennedy-Johnson campaign committee in Dallas along with General Carl Phinney; he was the other cochairman and Barefoot Sanders was the campaign chairman. I involved myself very deeply in that campaign. I like to campaign and I even went so far as to put out stickers on people's cars. I did anything and everything that was necessary to get the votes. I tried to get money--did get some. If necessary I addressed envelopes. I made a great many speeches.
- F: In the Dallas area or all over the state?
- H: In the Dallas area. It was completely confined to Dallas.
- F: But not confined to women this time?
- H: Oh, no. I spoke a great many times. I debated with the Republican campaigners and spoke alone at rallies.
- F: Who contacted you in this case to-- How did you get to be cochairman?
- H: Well, the state office in Austin contacted me to be county chairman. Actually the person who contacted me--I hate to say it now because he's a Republican--was Will Wilson. But he was heading the part of the campaign at that time.
- F: Did you know General Phinney before that?
- H: Oh, yes, I knew him quite well. He and his wife were both in Austin at the time that I was in the legislature. She was the chief clerk and he was lobbying at the time. I saw a great deal of them and have kept in touch with them since then.
- F: There was no problem in working with General Phinney then?
- H: Oh, no, he's very easy to work with. He didn't get down like I did and put stickers on cars, things like that.
- F: Did you have any organizational problems in the Dallas area?
- H: Everybody has organizational problems; however I think we ran a very smooth campaign. Of course we had both Johnson and Kennedy in Dallas very early in September of 1960. I drove with them from Fort Worth to Dallas in an open car. Barefoot was in the front seat and I was in the back seat with the candidates.
- F: Was it sort of a 30-mile parade in a sense?
- H: Yes, 30-mile parade and Kennedy spoke to people in Arlington and Grand Prairie.

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F: These were scheduled stops?

H: No, they were not scheduled stops. They were just impromptu. I remember a woman in Grand Prairie reached over to take a handkerchief out of Jack Kennedy's pocket. He held his hand over his pocket and reached over and got Johnson's handkerchief and handed it to her.

F: Did Mr. Johnson make any speeches on this?

H: No, he didn't make any on that coming over here--coming over to Dallas. He didn't during the ride over. There was not much talk because Mr. Kennedy was resting his voice and he was not doing any talking, but I do remember that Mr. Johnson during the ride over said to Mr. Kennedy, "Now here is a woman you should appoint when you have the opportunity to some position."

F: Was there any of that feeling of trepidation regarding going to Dallas that you got later?

H: Not the slightest. Nobody was worried about that at all.

F: The ultraconservatives hadn't become quite as flagrant then?

H: No. And it was a wonderful reception that the two candidates got. I remember the press car was driving behind the car that we were on. We were going very slowly because the crowds were so large. And Liz Carpenter jumped out of the press car and ran into Harris', which is one of our big, big department stores where we turned to go down to the municipal auditorium. Mr. Johnson wanted a shirt, and she ran in and bought the shirt and came back in time to catch on to the motorcade again, we were going so slowly.

F: It must have been an interesting scene in the store. Then what did you do? You went to the auditorium?

H: We went to the auditorium and there they both spoke, Kennedy and Johnson and several other people. Then they left. I don't know where they went; I wasn't with them then, but later they went out to one of the shopping centers in Oak Cliff and it was simply crowded all around. Some of us got out there early and more or less entertained the crowd, while the two candidates were on their way.

F: Did you get out there early?

H: Oh, yes, I got out there early.

F: Did you just sort of tell them what was going to happen?

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H: Well, one thing some of us did was dance on the platform. Just to keep them entertained. And sang and just--

F: Just sort of killed time.

H: That's right until they came.

F: What sort of issues were they discussing in Dallas?

H: All the issues. Foreign policy, domestic problems, just the general issues of a campaign.

F: On the motorcade over from Fort Worth, was there much in the way of political discussion between the two men?

H: No, there wasn't any discussion at all. As I said, Kennedy was saving his voice, and he was really not discussing anything.

F: Was that their sole trip to Dallas during the campaign?

H: Yes. We had some other people before they arrived. The Democratic Women's Committee had had a large reception for the Kennedy sisters and Ethel Kennedy and that was a very great success.

F: Where did you hold that?

H: That was at the Adolphus Hotel.

F: Was that more of a social affair?

H: Yes, it was social. They spoke too.

F: How did their speeches go over?

H: Oh, went over fine. We were all concerned because Dallas County, as you know, is quite conservative and we wondered whether we would have a crowd. But they just--the people just milled all over the place; we had to have police to hold the crowds back and it was very enthusiastic.

F: Where did you have it--in the Century Room or upstairs?

H: No, in the ballroom.

F: Did you have any more personal contact with the two candidates during the campaign

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H: No, I didn't have any more personal contacts with either.

F: You went back to stuffing envelopes?

H: Yes that's right.

F: Did you have any problems personally with the religious issue during 1960?

H: No, I don't think that I did. It was certainly an issue in Dallas County, particularly among the lower middle-class. We're a strong Baptist county and there was opposition, but I wouldn't say we had any special difficulty.

F: Did you have any personal contact with Dr. Criswell?

H: I had no personal contact with him, one reason being I dislike him horribly and I would have had no contact--

F: I thought maybe it was unavoidable.

H: No. Another thing that disturbed me was Carr Collins--

F: I was going to ask, was he still ostensibly a Democrat then?

H: I suppose he was but he wasn't voting Democratic. I suppose he still considered himself a Democrat but he had a radio program every day at noon.

F: I heard it a few times.

H: And that really, if I listened, would upset me considerably.

F: Did you make any attempts to answer or to refute--to moderate what people like Criswell and Collins were saying?

H: No, I am a believer in a positive approach to problems and all my speeches emphasized the positive things that would be done by a Democratic administration.

F: Then the election was held. Where were you election night?

H: I think I was at home.

F: You weren't waiting it out then some place?

H: No.

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F: What did you do then after the election? When did you begin to get an intimation that you might get a judgeship?

H: As soon as it was possible for me to do so, I got in touch with Senator Yarborough and met him out at the airport and told him that I wanted to be a federal judge.

F: This was after the election?

H: Yes. As a matter of fact I think it was on his way up to Washington for the new Congress. He said then that he would be for me.

F: Let's go back a moment. You had known Senator Yarborough for some time.

H: Yes, I had known him ever since I was in the legislature. He was assistant attorney general under Allred when Allred was attorney general and he was in charge of land matters. I was very much interested in the public school fund and in the public school lands. There were three bills introduced in the legislature that session, which would have taken away money and land from the school fund. I contacted then Assistant Attorney General Yarborough on a number of different occasions.

F: Did you know Governor Allred very well?

H: Yes, I knew him quite well. I had campaigned for him too.

F: Did Governor Allred and Congressman Johnson have very intimate contact, as far as you know?

H: Not that I know of.

F: Governor Allred never spoke to you about Congressman Johnson?

H: No, after all that was 1935. He wasn't Congressman then.

F: I was thinking of the intervening years.

H: No, I didn't see much of Allred after he left the Governor's office. He was appointed a federal judge you know, and then he quit to run for the Senate. He was later appointed a judge again. I had more contacts with Yarborough because Allred appointed him a district judge, and then he was very active with the bar association trying to get the judges' salaries raised. I had supported him for the Senate too.

F: So you had a long period of friendship with Senator Yarborough?



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H: Yes.

F: That was January of 1961. When were you named judge?

H: In October of 1961, but I also asked Vice-President Johnson for his support. I contacted him on several different occasions and he said that he would support--

F: By telephone or in person?

H: In person and by telephone both.

F: Where did you see him, in Washington or in Austin or--

H: The first face-to-face contact I had with him was during the bar association convention in Fort Worth.

F: This is the state bar?

H: Yes. In July of 1961 he came to the state bar and I talked with him in his room--suite--at the Texas Hotel. He didn't give me a definite promise, I think, that he was for me, but I think that I felt that he was.

F: You went away feeling somewhat optimistic?

H: Yes. At the same time that I was in his suite Henry Wade, who was also anxious to be appointed, was there and I certainly came away with the feeling that he would support me. In contacting both Walter Jenkins and Cliff Carter afterwards, I knew definitely that he was.

F: You knew Carter and Jenkins from having worked in Johnson's campaign?

H: Yes.

F: For future generations tell us how they selected a federal judge in 1961.

H: I'm going to go back. I'm trying to think of whether it was-- It must have been 1960 that I talked with Johnson first about being selected, because--no, it couldn't have been. That was the convention, wasn't it? Yes. It must have been 1961. Yes. How did they select a judge?

F: You and I know the process, but they may not know somewhere down the line.

H: Your Senator recommends somebody and that recommendation goes to the Department

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of Justice. The Department of Justice makes some investigation and makes a recommendation to the President. It's usually referred to the American Bar Association for their recommendation.

F: Does the ABA have a sort of permanent committee for this sort of thing, or do they treat each individually?

H: Yes, they do have a permanent committee. It's a permanent committee which is selected, I suppose, each time the bar association meets. But I think the same people are selected each year for a number of years. The committee doesn't change every year.

In the case of Texas federal judges the Vice-President also was consulted, as well as the Senator so that--

F: Because he was Vice-President from Texas or because he had been a Senator?

H: I think it was because he was Vice-President from Texas.

So the President, before he would make an appointment, I understand, would try to get the agreement of both the Senator and the Vice-President.

F: Had you by this time John Tower as your junior Senator?

H: Yes.

F: Well, he belongs to the Republican party. Would they have consulted him?

H: They consult them not for the appointment but they do consult them for the confirmation, I think, to see that there is no objection, but they don't wait for a recommendation from the Republican Senator, I understand.

F: Would the Senator of the minority party know the sort of etiquette of the game sufficiently that he would go along with the majority recommendation in this case?

H: Now, I'm just surmising. I think that he would go along unless he had some violent objection. As far as I know, he didn't object to any of the judges that were appointed in Texas.

F: Tower then accepted the fact that you did have Democrats in command?

H: Yes. Now, I also had the backing of Mr. Rayburn and I feel that that was very important. I went up to see him. Actually I think I talked with him before I talked with Yarborough.

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F: You've known Congressman Rayburn for--

H: Yes, I had known Congressman Rayburn for a number of years. As a matter of fact, you know my name was placed in nomination for Vice-President in 1952 and I had to get Mr. Rayburn's consent to have it placed in nomination. He was the chairman, you know, and he wouldn't recognize anybody unless he knew what they were going to say.

F: Let's go back and pick that up for a moment. Who put your name in nomination and why?

H: You know, I think this is more about me than it is about President Johnson.

F: But we're getting a world of President Johnson--a lifetime.

H: I was president of the National Federation of Business and Professional Women Clubs at the time. We had been active in supporting women for public office. In that year a movement had started to get the name of a woman nominated for Vice-President in both the Democratic and Republican parties. And at the national convention in 1952, the national convention of Business and Professional Women Clubs, the convention endorsed Margaret Chase Smith's Republican nomination and endorsed me for the Democratic nomination. Then they passed the hat around and collected a little over a thousand dollars to be spent by the two candidates for Vice-President.

F: That's quite a Vice-Presidential kitty, isn't it?

H: It is. Most Vice-Presidents don't even have any kitty.

She [Mrs. Smith] was unable to go to the Republican convention because her mother was ill at the time, so I had the whole thousand dollars to spend for myself. I don't think I ever had more fun than at the Democratic convention. I had a platform and a press conference. I visited some of the delegations and I'm glad it wasn't finally put to a vote because I only had 2 1/2 votes.

F: Who placed your name in nomination?

H: A woman--and I can't think of her name--from Montana.

F: Did you get a man to second or did you--

H: I couldn't get any man to second. I had another woman from Idaho to second the nomination, and Mr. Rayburn would only permit the nomination if I would immediately withdraw it. So as soon as the nomination was made, he recognized me to go on the platform and withdraw it.

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F: The Republicans then didn't get a woman that year?

H: No.

F: Are you the first woman of a major party--

H: No, I'm not the first. As a matter of fact, another woman was nominated at the Democratic convention--what is her name? She was a committeewoman at the time and national vice-chairman of the Democratic committee. She's very active this year--

F: India Edwards?

H: India Edwards, yes, her name was placed in nomination.

F: And she withdrew?

H: And she withdrew. We were both very gracious about it.

Well, I started to tell you about Mr. Rayburn. Another thing I did about Mr. Rayburn--this was during the campaign for Truman in 1948. Mr. Rayburn made a speech for Truman and I listened to it on the radio. I don't know whether you are familiar with the Rayburn speeches, but they are very logical and it's the type of speech that you remember what he says. I listened to it and just two or three days later Mr. Truman came into town and he was very late. We had this big meeting in the ball park and again we had to entertain the crowd that was there. All of the local Democratic officials took turns in making speeches. I made Mr. Rayburn's speech the basis of the talk that I gave to the group on that occasion.

F: So you were nominated for the--or suggested for the judgeship by Vice-President Johnson and by Senator Yarborough and by Congressman Rayburn?

H: Yes. I went up to see Congressman Rayburn at his home in Bonham before Christmas that year--before he went back to Washington.

F: When did you first get any information? Did you have any advance notice or were you just called one day and told "This is it."?

H: Well, I didn't have any advance notice. I had been talking-- Well, first of all, you know, I came up to see Robert Kennedy, who was then Attorney General. I did not see him; I saw Mr. [Byron] White, who later became Justice White. He was very discouraging because I was too old. He felt that it wasn't right to appoint somebody who would be able to retire after ten years, because I would be of the age where I could retire. I was not at all encouraged by that visit.

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Now I didn't know this until later. As a matter of fact, President Johnson told me this story. Attorney General Kennedy took some bills up to Mr. Rayburn having to do with the Department of Justice that he wanted passed, and Mr. Rayburn said, "I'll see that these bills get passed if you will recommend the appointment of Sarah Hughes."

F: Mr. Rayburn always knew how to handle things.

H: Yes. So I really--my appointment was due to three men, and I don't know to whom I owe the most.

F: We'll let them share it.

While they're checking you out with the bar association and so on, is this a fairly closely guarded secret or did you have some intimations that something was going on in the background?

H: You mean as far as the bar association is concerned?

F: Well, yes. Did you know that your name was in a sense in the works?

H: Yes I did know it, and I had contacted some of my friends in the bar association to contact some of the members--or one of the members of the committee--the Texas member of the committee. Mr. [Leon] Jaworski was the Texas member. As you perhaps know, they rated me unqualified on account of age.

F: They don't know you on energy, I'll say that.

H: So I knew that I had to buck against them. I do want to add that my appointment, I think, was due in part to the work of the Business and Professional Women Clubs. I called on them. Letters went in from all over this country to the Attorney General and to the President urging my appointment.

F: It wasn't just a Dallas base.

H: Oh no, all over the country. The call was sent out from national office and we have about 175,000 members. I felt as if they assisted a great deal.

F: How were you notified of the appointment?

H: The Dallas Morning News came out with the statement of who had been appointed in Texas--the four judges. The one in Dallas was Henry Wade.

F: Was this a Washington dateline story or--

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- H: I don't remember whether it was or not. I don't know why I called Jerry [Gerald C.] Mann; he may have called me. He says, "This cannot be final. I'm going to get in touch with Vice-President Johnson." And he did. All of the names of the ones in the paper were not the ones who were ultimately appointed.
- F: You mean they missed on all four?
- H: They missed on all four. So in a very few days an assistant attorney general called me and told me that the President was going to appoint me and asked me if I would accept a recess appointment.
- F: And this was when?
- H: This was the first part of October 1961.
- F: How soon did you assume the duties?
- H: In about two weeks.
- F: Did you have any particular contact with Mr. Johnson between then and November of 1963?
- H: I saw him on several occasions socially when I came up here. I always would call or--but nothing of any moment.
- F: Why did you come up here?
- H: Well, I was on the board at Goucher College, the board of trustees, and the national office in the Business and Professional Women Clubs is here. From time to time I came up.
- F: Did you yourself receive any criticism as the right wing began to get a little virulent in Dallas?
- H: No, I was very fortunate that the lawyers always supported me in all of my campaigns for judge. I did run for Congress in 1946 and was defeated. I never had any trouble-- I had opposition three times when I was running for judge, because always somebody thought that they could beat a woman. I really never had any trouble.
- F: It really never became-- Dallas never split over you?
- H: No, there really wasn't.
- F: I think the best thing to do on that November day in 1963 is to tell me about yourself,

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what you were doing and give it narratively.

H: Incidentally I wrote an article for the Washington Post that very afternoon. I don't know whether you have a copy of it or not, but as soon as it happened I wrote it down so that I can send you that if you want it.

F: Fine, but I want it in a little more detail; I want it for the record.

H: All right. As you know, the--

F: Did you have any role for the preparation of Kennedy's coming?

H: No. Luncheon was being sponsored by the business interests of Dallas and they were anxious to erase the episode that had happened a month before when Adlai Stevenson had come.

F: Were you present at the Stevenson--?

H: Yes I had a part in the program and I was meeting him at the Chaparral Club right after the meeting. [He was] on his way out when this episode occurred. So the business interests were very anxious to erase that and they made big plans for this luncheon. They did not allot many tickets for the liberal Democrats, and it was--

F: I remember. Eric Jonsson was in charge, wasn't he?

H: Yes, he was the chairman. It was some time before we really were sure that we were going to get the tickets. But I was seated downstairs next to Jan Sanders [Mrs. Barefoot Sanders] and we were waiting. The press came in and we kept on waiting, and Jan began to get worried. She says "Something has happened," and I said, "Oh, no, no, it can't be." And she actually began to cry even before we knew. And Mr. Jonsson got up and said that "We've had news of an accident."

F: He was there?

H: No, no, this was Eric Jonsson.

F: Yes, I say, but Eric Jonsson was there?

H: He was presiding. And he said, "We've had news of an accident, and the President and Governor have been taken to Parkland. We'll give you information as soon as we have it."

F: He didn't say they had been shot?

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H: Oh, no. Just an accident, as I recall it. Of course we all just waited and in about ten minutes he said that "it has been a serious accident. We don't know how serious, but it has been serious and we will adjourn." He called on Luther Holcombe.

F: He knew what had happened though, or did he?

H: I assume that he did but I don't know. He called on Luther Holcombe for a blessing and we all left. On the way out just--

F: You didn't eat?

H: Yes, we had. You see we had already eaten.

F: While you were waiting?

H: While we were waiting. As a matter of fact I think almost everybody had finished before he made the first announcement. On the way out, just as I got--stepping out of the door, someone in a car stopped and said that the President had died. I was with my secretary and court reporter--they had been sitting upstairs. My court reporter is Odell Oliver and my secretary is Gwen Graul. Actually they had known about it before we did, because someone had a transistor radio in the balcony and they had heard about what had happened before we knew anything about it. I said that there wasn't any use to go back to the office.

Incidentally I was going down to Austin for the dinner that night and had my things in the car. I was going with Jan and Barefoot.

F: You were out there in your car?

H: I was in my car, but I was going to transfer my things into their car.

We went on home. They'd--

F: The three of you?

H: The three went on to my house and they went on--left my house right away and went on home. And I immediately called the office to let them know that I was home. When I called the office, someone who answered said [that] Barefoot Sanders, who was then U.S. attorney, was in the office and wanted to speak to me. So he came to the phone and said the Vice-President is on the other line and wants you to go out to the airport and swear him in.

F: Had they been looking for you or did you just happen to hit it right at the moment they



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started looking?

H: They had been looking for me. That was not the first call to my office. The first call was by an aide of the Vice-President, and my law clerk had answered the phone, and he had said that he didn't know where I was.

Immediately after he hung up, the phone rang again and it was the Vice-President. He told John Spinuzzi, who was my law clerk--said that he wanted to find me, and John says, "Well, we'll find her."

Just at that time Barefoot came in the office and at that time the phone rang and I was on the other end of the line.

F: Was Barefoot then with the President or the Vice-President at the time?

H: No, the Vice-President had called him to--

F: Where was Barefoot, at home or in his office?

H: No, he was in his office.

F: He wasn't going to the luncheon.

H: Oh, yes, he had been to the luncheon, but then he went back to his office and the Vice-President had called him to try to find me. I presume you know that he likewise called Irving Goldberg, and Irving suggested he phone me.

F: Why you, may I ask?

H: What's that?

F: Why you in particular?

H: Well, the Vice-President wouldn't have called either of the other judges. I don't know whether you want me to explain why he wouldn't have, but I--

F: I would appreciate it if you would.

H: Well, one of them was Joe Estes, who was a so-called Eisenhower Democrat and was appointed by Eisenhower, and the other one was T. Whitfield Davidson, who had enjoined the Democratic executive committee from certifying Johnson's name when he was nominated for the Senate.

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As a matter of fact on the way home, the three of us, Gwen and Odell and I, had been discussing where the Vice-President would be sworn in. Of course the plan had been for Kennedy to go to the Ranch with the Vice-President, and one of us suggested that possibly he would go on to the Ranch and be sworn in there. Then it was suggested, no, he'd fly back to Washington and immediately be sworn in there. No one even thought that he'd be sworn in in Dallas.

So I told Barefoot "Yes," I would be glad to do it and he said "How long will it take you?" And I told him ten minutes. He said that he would look up the oath of office while I was on my way out. I asked him where the plane was and he described where it was.

F: It was at Love Field?

H: It was at Love Field.

F: Now where do you live in Dallas?

H: I live in Highland Park.

F: So you were on the right side of town.

H: Yes, it does only take me about ten minutes to get there.

So on the way out I--everybody wants to know what I was thinking about. I was thinking first of all that I must not think about Kennedy; I must think about the country going on.

F: Were you driving your own car?

H: Yes.

F: That gives you something to think about.

H: Yes. And another thing I was thinking about was that I must get there in a hurry, because Vice-President Johnson is always in a hurry and wants things done right now and I shouldn't delay. And the other thing that I was thinking about was what the oath of office was, in case Barefoot couldn't find it. I was brash enough to think that I could give the oath without having looked it up. You see I swear so many people--jurors--and I've given the oath of office to other public officials; I've sworn in many, many young lawyers and they always have to swear to perform the duties of the office and uphold and preserve the Constitution of the United States and I was quite sure that those were the two things that--

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F: The oath is basically the same.

H: Yes, the same. So when I got out there I saw the plane. It's a beautiful plane, as you know.

F: Where was it?

H: It was on the right as you go out. Do you know that statue that is in the front of the airport, the figure holding out--it's a woman I guess--her arms?

F: Yes.

H: Well, it was just about there. There was a little road that turned off to the right. There were some police officers stationed there. I had seen them and they knew me. Campaigning with police officers is always something you must do because you know they've got a vote. So I knew who they were. I told them what I wanted and one of them who was on the motorcycle went out to the plane to check and then led me in in the car. I met--as I got out of the car--

F: You drove right up to the ramp?

H: Close to it, yes. As I got out Chief [Jesse] Curry was there (he's the chief of police) and he said "Mr. Sanders wants you to call him."

Well, I knew that Barefoot had the oath by then, but I said "Well, I know what the oath is." So in place of calling him I went on up the ramp. And somebody, I don't know who it was, met me and I then said "I don't need the oath of office; I know what to say." But in just a moment somebody handed me a copy of the oath. I understand that someone had telephoned to the Attorney General and had gotten a copy of the oath. I wasn't told that but anyway I was handed it.

F: Barefoot didn't dictate it to someone.

H: No, he didn't dictate it. And then somebody handed me a book and said "This is a Catholic Bible."

I walked on into the second compartment and there were a lot of people there; the Vice-President and Mrs. Johnson were there and neither--none of us said anything. I embraced both of them and then the Vice-President said, "Mrs. Kennedy wants to be here. We'll wait for her."

F: She hadn't come from the hospital?

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H: She had come from the hospital and was in the rear of the airplane. So we waited a few minutes and she did come out and he, Vice-President Johnson, told her to stand on his left and Mrs. Johnson on his right. And I leaned over to her and said "I loved your husband very much."

Mr. Johnson turned to her and told her who I was; that I was a district judge who had been appointed by her husband. Then I repeated the oath of office and the Vice-President repeated it after me, he had his hand up--one hand up, and the other on this book.

F: Did you do it in short phrases?

H: Oh, yes, I have learned that under tense circumstances people don't do very well at remembering long sentences and it's better to make them short. Just as soon as--and the oath of office is in the Constitution, but it does not contain the words "So help me God!" Well, every oath of office that I had ever given ended up with "So held me God!" So it was just automatic that I said "So help me God!" He immediately leaned over and kissed his wife and Mrs. Kennedy, and I said something to him that the country was behind him and I knew that he would make a great President. He turned around and said to the pilot, "Let's be airborne."

I hurried out and as I went out, I handed this book to someone and whoever it was I handed it to said, "Don't you want to keep it?"

I said, "No, it doesn't belong to me." I got out and Senator Yarborough had just driven up and he got to the ramp too late. They had already pulled the ramp up.

I went home.

F: Quite a day.

H: Yes, it was.

F: What did you do the rest of the day?

H: The rest of the day I spent being interviewed by the three networks, four networks I believe.

F: At home?

H: At home. I was called by someone at the Washington Post and asked to write this article.

F: When did you get to bed?

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H: Oh, I don't know. I probably went to bed early because I always go to bed early. Nothing deters me from going to bed early.

F: I didn't know when you got your living room cleaned up of people.

Did things begin to die down immediately, or did you still--

H: What do you mean "die down?"

F: Well, did people begin to let you return to any kind of normal--

H: No, I had a great many people interview me for newspapers and magazines, and it seemed to me as if I would never finish talking to them about--

F: Was your court in session at the time?

H: Yes.

F: So you were having to put that around a daily or nearly daily court session.

H: Oh, yes. Of course, I did not hold court the remainder of that day. But that was the only time when-- I came up here for the funeral too.

F: Where did you stay?

H: I stayed with a friend of mine--Lisa Sergio out in Georgetown.

F: Did you go to the church?

H: Yes, I was with Lisa, and I went down to the Capitol and we did get in the rotunda. We met one of the other judges, Judge James Noel. We met him up in the Capitol and he went with us then to the church. I never would have made use of the fact that I was the one who had sworn in President Johnson, but he didn't hesitate to say it on many different occasions in order to get us through police lines, and so forth and so on, and also into the church. We got into the church by that.

F: Did you contact Mr. Johnson on that trip?

H: No, I didn't.

F: And you weren't bothered here by--

H: Oh, no.

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F: You were reasonably anonymous.

H: No [Yes].

F: Then you went home and went back to work more or less as usual, but not quite.

H: Yes, except that whenever I made a speech, newspaper reporters would have me go over the whole thing.

F: You must have gotten awfully tired of the--

H: Yes, I have gotten extremely tired of it. When I'd make a speech, if there were questions, I would frequently be asked about it.

F: I don't imagine you'll ever be allowed to forget it because you were there at a moment in which the whole world was watching.

What contacts with President Johnson did you have after that?

H: Well, I came to his inaugural.

F: Were you just another guest or did you have some function?

H: Well, I didn't have any function but he had me up in the Presidential--

F: Quarters?

H: Not the Presidential quarters--where you view the parade. The viewing stand. I was there. He saw that I got invitations to the ball and all the other functions that were connected with the inaugural.

I had been to the White House once before his election for a State dinner; I have been to two judicial receptions at the White House. I came up when he signed the bill to make women eligible for any office in the armed services. I've been down to the Ranch a couple of times. I think they were both when he was--one was when he was Vice-President and the other was right after he was sworn in as President. That was when the United Nations' people were down there--you remember he had about 30 down there. I was there on that occasion.

F: As a federal judge you couldn't take any part in the campaign in 1964?

H: No.

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F: So you just sat that one out.

H: Yes.

F: Did he name you to the UNESCO--give you the UNESCO commission or is that independent of the President?

H: No, that's a Presidential appointment. He appoints--the President appoints 40 of the members of the U.S. National Commission. The other 60 are named by--they are organization representatives, but they likewise receive a Presidential appointment though they're actually selected by their organizations. But he selects those that are at-large and they come from local, state, and federal government and then some of them from various interests--education, science, and culture.

F: Is that a term appointment?

H: Yes, it's a three-year appointment.

F: When were you appointed?

H: Well, I was appointed first in 1963.

F: You're in the second term then?

H: Yes.

F: What have you done in that position?

H: Well, I have been on the executive board and this is my second term as a vice-chairman of the commission.

F: Are the vice-chairmen split into certain interests or just general vice-chairmen?

H: No, just general vice-chairmen. There are three vice-chairmen.

F: Do you concentrate on anything for UNESCO or again, as a vice-chairman are you sort of over all--

H: Well, for two years I was chairman of the nongovernmental organizations committee; that is the work--you see, the United States commission for UNESCO has a double function. It makes recommendations to the general conference in Paris as to items on the program; and then it attempts to interpret the program to the people of the United States largely through organizations. The organizations are urged to help to carry out the UNESCO

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program. So I was chairman for two years of the organization committee which was--its duty was to try to work with the various organizations that were represented on the commission and urge them to make UNESCO better known by their members and urge them to participate in the UNESCO project.

Then last year in 1967 the general conference in Hartford, Connecticut was on youth and I was chairman of that conference.

F: Do you meet in various places?

H: Yes, we do meet in various places--the general conference does. Since I have been on the commission, we have met--it's every two years and there have been three meetings since I have been on the commission: one in Kansas City, one in New Orleans, and last year in Hartford.

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F: As we were leaving the building, Judge Hughes said, "I forgot one thing I would have liked in the record. Every time the President sees me, he kisses me, and you know I like that."



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