INTERVIEWEE: DR. BARNABY CONRAD KEENEY

INTERVIEWER: DOROTHY PIERCE MC SWEENY

April 14, 1969

M: Dr. Keeney, I would like to open this interview with a very brief resume of your professional career. Mr. Johnson appointed you Chairman of the National Endowment for the Humanities in November of 1965 and you were sworn in in July of 1966. In June of 1965 you had announced your intention of resigning the following June as President of Brown University in Providence, Rhode Island, and this was after eleven years in that office--since 1955. You had been at Brown University since 1946, rising from Assistant Professor to full Professor of History in 1951. In 1948 you became Associate Dean of the Graduate School, and in 1953 Dean of the College.

K: I also was Dean of the Graduate School.

M: Thank you. You received your M.A. and Ph.D. from Harvard, and you did this by 1939. Do I have all this background information correct?

K: So far.

M: I know there is much more to add and I was more or less touching upon times.

K: You didn't ever make me President. I became President in 1955.

M: Oh, I said that backwards. I said that first, but maybe I didn't emphasize it enough.

Dr. Keeney, to begin our interview, I would just like to ask you if you recall the very first time that you met Mr. Johnson.

K: Yes, he received an honorary degree from Brown when he was Majority Leader of the Senate. I don't recall the year; and that was where I met him first.

M: How had he been suggested for this honorary degree at that time?

K: Well, he was suggested, I rather suspect, by Thomas Corcoran, but I'm not sure of that, and he was selected because we felt that he was an excellent Majority Leader; we also felt that there was a considerable possibility that he might become President.

M: I know I can check the date on this, but do you recall if it was in the later part of the fifties? He became Majority Leader in '55.

K: Yes. It was either the late fifties--yes, it was in the late fifties. It was before he became Vice President.

M: What were your first impressions of Mr. Johnson?

K: Well, I didn't see much of him that day. He got there just before the ceremony, I saw him a little bit at lunch, and I had been watching him with great interest in the Senate, and my impressions of him from that were very good, and my impressions from that day were very good. It was the only time a Texas flag has ever been flown in Providence that I know of. My daughter was born in Texas, and she put one out over the house in which we lived. He was quite pleased with that. Unbeknownst to me she put it out.

M: We flew some at Pembroke [College at Brown University], I might add.

K: Did you?

M: When you met him, were there any differences in your impressions from what you knew about him?

K: I was worried about him because he walked very slowly up the steps to the platform when he received the degree, and I was afraid that he might be worse off from his heart attack than I thought. But, no, as you may recall, I had quite a little bit to do during Commencement. I didn't have a lot of time to look at people.

M: Was that too early a date to ask you at that point how you characterized him?

K: Well, you might look up the citation that I read that day. I think that was what I thought about him then.

M: Very good.

K: He's got a copy of it, Brown's got a copy of it.

M: Sir, in September of 1964, President Johnson spoke at the 200th anniversary convocation at Brown University. Do you recall how this was arranged and how it came about and the sequence of events leading up to and through his appearance?

K: I sure do. It was arranged because I asked him, and some of his friends here asked him, too; and he'd enjoyed getting the honorary degree, and he accepted. Now, this was during the campaign, and he was on a political trip through New England when he came. He had been somewhere just before, and he went somewhere just afterwards. And I met him at the airport, together with the Senators and Congressmen and the Governor and we had a calvacade, which was quite well known. This is the one that took him an hour and three-quarters, I think, to go twenty minutes worth. He really relished that. Thousands of people turned out, and I remember particularly that when he stood in the car he seized me by the right shoulder; you may recall that I am quite arthritic and my right shoulder is particularly arthritic, and I was greatly impressed by his physical strength which was quite painful. There was also a great concern by the people who rushed around the car when he would occasionally get out. The Secret Service people weren't able to control them, and they particularly weren't able to control Mr. Johnson, and I had to get out and help them shove the people away from the car.

M: Had there been any advance men before this trip?

K: Yes.

M: Had they talked to university officials?

K: Sure.

M: Was there any effort to get out the people?

K: I dare say there was, but I didn't do it. I had no direct knowledge of it.

M: Were you anticipating such a crowd?

K: No.

M: Did you have any conversations with him during this time?

K: Oh, sure.

M: Would you tell me a little bit about what you all talked about?

K: I don't really remember. There wasn't much. He spoke that day on a variety of things. That was the day he endorsed the bill to establish this organization. I liked that a great deal.

M: Since you have mentioned this organization, I'd like to continue with that. Of course, the National Foundation on the Arts and Humanities was created as an independent agency by the National Foundation Arts and Humanities Act of 1965. I'd like to more or less discuss what your role and your activities were in bringing about this legislation.

K: Let me tell you one more thing about the President's visit to Brown. He spoke, of course, and then he left, I think, to Hartford, although I'm not sure. And Governor John Chafee [R.I.] was scheduled to go next, to speak next. He's a Republican, of course. He's now Secretary of the Navy. And John [Chafee] rose, smiled happily at the crowd and said, "Wasn't it nice of all those people to go out to the airport to meet Barney Keeney?"

M: I hadn't read that.

K: Well, I was long an advocate of--going back to your question of federal support for the humanities and social studies and the arts--and I had frequent conversations with Congressman John Fogarty on that subject, and he introduced one of the first bills. Then, in 1963, the American Council of Learned Societies,

the Phi Beta Kappa, and the Council of Graduate Schools in the United States, organized a commission on the humanities which published a report. I was chairman of that commission, and we sent copies of it to the President and to all members of Congress, and Congressman [William] Moorhead [Dem. Penn.] very speedily introduced a bill carrying out the recommendations of this commission. They were for the establishment of a foundation on the humanities which was also to support the arts. I spoke in favor of it a number of times after that and of course I testified. The bill that was passed was one initially introduced by Congressman [Frank] Thompson [Dem. N.J.] and then modified. He had long been an advocate of support of the arts. There had never been any movement in Congress for support of the humanities until 1964. Thompson worked with the administration and he worked with Senator [Claiborne] Pell [Dem.] of Rhode Island, who introduced a similar bill in the Senate. This bill put together support for the humanities and for the arts. There were not enough people in the Congress who would have supported either of these separately, but there was sufficient support to support them both separately.

M: Did your report from the commission on the humanities come out before Mr. Johnson spoke at the--

K: Oh, yes.

M: And so he had seen it when he came to Brown University for the convocation?

K: I doubt that he read every word of it, but it was sent to him. I don't know that he saw it.

M: Well, I have read his remarks and he did speak about Federal support at that time. When do you think you had your first strong response or indication that the Executive Branch, or the President, the White House was behind the establishment of such a foundation?

K: I suppose when they sent the bill up.

M: Did you have any conversations before that?

K: No.

M: I believe, and please correct me if I am mistaken--

K: We were, by the way, never able to get President Kennedy's attention, either directly or through any of his advisers.

M: I think the emphasis in some of these reports was on the fact that there was definitely felt to be a lag in cultural and social development due to emphasis on science and technology. Was this your feeling, sir?

K: I didn't feel that as strongly as some other people did, but I thought that there was a great deal that could and should be done with more ample funding for the humanities.

M: Traditionally, this is something Congress has sort of stayed away from.

K: That's right. They haven't gotten very close to it yet, either.

M: Did you have much opposition or resistance, to this through the Congress?

K: Oh, sure. There wasn't any significant opposition in the Senate, but in the House Congressman [H.R.] Gross [R. Iowa] led an effort to have the bill recommitteed when it was reported. You may have seen the debate on that. That motion was defeated. Each year that the appropriation has come to the floor, there has been an effort to reduce it. Last year when the reauthorization bill came to the floor, it recommended quite a large sum of money. That was cut back drastically. It was put back in the Senate a little bit above what it had been before, and the conference report was accepted in the House, but not without debate.

M: What do you see has been the main reason for the cutback in your budgetary allocations from Congress?

K: Well, I think that the main reason is the fiscal stringency resulting from the war in Vietnam. The second reason is that many of the members of Congress who see this as an admirable thing don't see it as a matter of high priority, and in times of fiscal stringency, they feel it is something that can be cut back. Then there's a group that are simply downright hostile to it.

M: What are their reasons?

K: Well, their reasons are this is not an activity in which the government ought to engage itself. That is the basic reason.

M: When you testified in February of 1965 on the bill, what did you see then as the main obstacle to preventing this?

K: I didn't expect that it would pass at all that year. I thought it would take quite a while.

M: To what do you attribute its passage?

K: That was a period that I think when the President was able to get most of the things he wanted passed, it was a period when the Congress was rather more expansive than it has been since and willing to try new things more than it is now. I think it was just one of those happy coincidences followed by a very unhappy one.

M: During the hearings in 1965, did you have any contact with the White House or with Mr. Johnson?

K: No. I've never been close to Mr. Johnson in the sense of seeing him frequently.

M: When were you first approached to be the possible chairman of the Endowment for the Humanities?

K: It was sometime during the summer of 1965.

M: How was this done, who did you speak with--

K: John Macy [Chairman, Civil Service Commission] asked me.

M: Did he discuss with you your qualifications for this?

K: No. He asked me if I wanted to be Assistant Secretary of State for Cultural Affairs, and I told him I didn't want to be Assistant Secretary of State for Cultural Affairs, but that I would like to have a crack at this job, and he said he thought that would be a better idea, and that's really about all he ever said about it.

M: Were you surprised when he approached you on the Assistant Secretaryship of State?

K: No.

M: Did you have any prewarnings of that?

K: No.

M: Did Mr. Macy come and see you?

K: No. I came down here.

M: Knowing that he was going to speak to you about a government position?

K: Well, he asked me to come down and I had some other things to do here and we worked out a date when we could do both.

M: Did Mr. Macy indicate that he would speak to the President about your becoming chairman of the Humanities Agency?

K: I really don't remember. I honestly didn't pay much attention.

M: All right. Let me just ask you if there is anything else you recall regarding your appointment and accepting it?

K: These things are done rather curiously. I never have had a formal offer, written offer. John [Macy] called me up one day and asked if I would take the job and I said yes. But I never received anything in writing which rather annoyed me. And then the President announced it. I knew he was going to, but I didn't know when. And he announced it on a day during which I raised three and a half million bucks for Brown [University] and my father died, so it was quite a memorable day.

M: I didn't hear the first part of that.

K: I raised three million bucks for Brown and my father died.

M: I guess you do remember it.

Is there anything else you recall about it?

K: No. I don't pay much attention to these things.

M: Before I ask you some more questions directly about the foundation, let me ask you if you became involved in the somewhat small controversy in April 1966 regarding the appointment of several scholars--some 26 I believe it was--to the Humanities Council, of which one of them was Meredith Wilson.

K: Yeh, I know that.

M: And I believe that some of the music faculties at some of the colleges objected to his commercial interests.

K: Yeh. I suggested Meredith Wilson.

M: Oh, did you?

K: Sure, I suggested both Meredith Wilsons; you know, there is another Meredith Wilson who was then President of the University of Minnesota and is now Director of the Study of the Behavioral Sciences at Stanford [University]. Well, I suggested the Meredith Wilson who was appointed because I think one of the things that this foundation has got to do is to speak to the people, and he's quite good at speaking to the people.

M: Do you recall what happened when that first was raised, the issue of whether he should--

K: Well, he was already appointed. There was a lot of noise about it. I paid rather little attention to it, except to be distressed by it. He came to one meeting of the council, and then his wife became very ill and she died and he resigned.

M: Did you have any discussions with any members in the executive branch about his appointment?

K: Yes, they called me up about it.

M: Who called you up?

K: I think it was John Macy or one of the young men who was working for him, and I suggested that they ignore it, and they did.

M: As Chairman of the Endowment for the Humanities, how often did you see the President, Dr. Keeney?

K: Not very often. I went over once or twice to tell him what we were doing. I went to a few parties at the White House, things like that.

M: Can you tell me a little bit about some of these meetings?

K: Well, I can tell you the most important things and that is that the President made no effort and made considerable effort to avoid influencing our policies or our selections of grants. The closest that he ever came to doing that, he did it in a perfectly appropriate way, was when I told him that we had recently made a grant for Oral History of Eisenhower and Stevenson, and he said it would be nice if you did something like that for Harry Truman, and a couple of years later we got a good application and did. But he was admirable in keeping his hands off of it and so did his staff. And, of course, it would be a very bad thing if this were politically controlled or even manipulated. And that's why I didn't see him very often, and that's why he didn't see me very often. He did not want there to be a connection between the White House and this organization.

M: When you did have any dealings with the White House, did you deal with a particular member of the staff?

K: I generally dealt with either [Douglas] Cater or [Harry] McPherson, and later with Harry Middleton. By the way, I should say that I'm personally very fond

of the President and I'm a great admirer of his, and I think he likes me. I don't want you to have the impression that there's any coolness, that that was the reason we weren't in frequent contact. The relations were very good. They never asked me to do things that weren't directly related to this.

M: On what occasions and what subjects did you talk with Douglass Cater or Harry McPherson or Mr. [Harry] Middleton?

K: Oh, usually about things like our appropriation, authorization, or things like that Egyptian temple of Dendur which we were asked to select a recipient for. This was a temple that the Egyptians gave us before they got mad at us, and it was a small temple that was on a site that's been inundated by the Aswan Dam since they offered it to the United States.

M: What was it called again, sir?

K: Dendur, D-e-n-d-u-r. And nothing was done about disposing of it; finally it got embarrassing, so they asked us to select a recipient which we did. Other things like the proposed Woodrow Wilson Center for Scholars which directly involves this organization in which I got involved, too. Once in a while when I knew we were going to make a potentially embarrassing grant, I'll tell them, but that's about it.

M: What do you mean by potentially embarrassing?

K: A grant to someone who is open to attack either because of his personal life or his political beliefs.

M: Who are some of these?

K: I don't care to tell you.

M: Since assuming this position, sir,--

K: Oh, I know another thing we talked about and that's new members of the Council.

M: Were those your recommendations?

K: Some of them were, but some of the very best ones I don't recognize the names. They were chosen by the President himself.

M: Who were these?

K: Let's see. Emmette Redford, Professor of Government at Texas, John Roche who used to be the President's assistant, William Morgan who is pastor of the University Methodist Church in Austin, Robert Ward who is professor of political science at Michigan, and they are some of the people we've got. Have you seen a copy of the new annual report?

M: I don't have one; I have seen it. If you have an extra, we will take it and put it in the file.

K: Good.

M: Thank you.

Are there any other areas that you discussed with the White House?

K: I don't think so. I used to, from time to time, indicate to the President that we needed more money, and he'd get quite discouraged on such occasions.

M: Did you do these in the form of written reports or requests?

K: No, usually I just spoke to him.

M: Did you have easy access to the President?

K: Anytime I wanted to go, I could, yes.

M: Since assuming this position, what would you consider--this is a rather large question--what would you consider the most significant achievements of the Foundation?

K: Surviving!

M: Let me ask you to explain your answer.

K: Well, this is a very vulnerable operation, and it's an operation that lends itself to controversy. It's quite easy to make grants that will irritate more

people than they will please. On the other hand, there's no question but that one has to make the grants on the basis of merit. And so we have made them that way, and some of them haven't pleased a good many people particularly in Congress. But we have lost only one consistent supporter in Congress, and there's one person who--no, wait a minute, we've lost some more than that. We've only gained one consistent supporter. We've lost five or six, I guess. And every time it comes up for an appropriation and every time it comes up for reauthorization it's open. In another vein, I'd say the most important thing that we have done is to begin to get scholars in the humanities interested in the use of their knowledge in comtemporary affairs. And that is a very significant thing.

M: How do you mean interested in contemporary affairs, sir?

K: Well, traditionally historians and scholars of English and the like have regarded the justification for their work as the knowledge itself. I've taken for many years the position that this knowledge can and should be brought to bear upon the present and future situations. We now have quite a number of first-rate people who are beginning to feel that way.

M: Have these come to affect the current situations yet, or is this just in the initial stages?

K: Well, you mean, did they have a decisive effect on public decisions, and the answer to that is no. But I'm speaking, for example, Friday at the Medieval Academy of America which is about as scholarly an organization as you can get. And there are three of us who are going to speak, and the subject is "What Can We Learn from the Medieval Universities for Today's Universities." Now, that wouldn't have happened three, five, or ten years ago.

M: I see.

What do you consider some of the most successful projects or grants?

K: Well, we have a fellowship program which, despite its inadequate size, has operated very well. I think our grant to the modern languages association to edit the text of the great American writers of the nineteenth century is coming along very well. Our program to help people equip themselves fairly quickly to teach Black Studies is the only thing there is in that line now, and it's been quite successful, and it will be more successful. Some of our grants to colleges and universities to rethink their curriculum and teaching has been quite useful. It's really hard to say at the end of three years which have been the most successful, but those are the ones I would pick out at the moment as the most conspicuous ones. I think by and large we've made good grants and some extremely good grants, and we've made some mistakes.

M: Are there some that have not been as successful in your work?

K: Oh, sure. If there weren't, we would not be doing a good job, because we would be putting our money on a sure thing.

M: Can you tell me what they are?

K: I don't know yet.

M: Oh.

Could you tell me what areas have caused the most problem or opposition or resistance?

K: Yes, the research grant. We made the mistake the first year of announcing the subjects, and if you take any list of research grants in any field, they are funnier than hell. And one man who is a very good scholar, to whom we gave a grant to develop the history of the cartoon, which was then an extremely important subject.

M: The cartoon?

K: Yes. And unfortunately in his title he called it the comic strip because he was interested in the strip cartoon, and unfortunately we released that. And

that caused quite an uproar, and then somebody found out that he was a virulent opponent of the war in Vietnam and in those days you had to be a senator to be an opponent of the war in Vietnam. He was also a British subject so that cost us money.

M: Is there a restriction to these being only American scholars?

K: There is now. A grant to a university, the university can use foreign nationals, but grants to individuals have to be made to Americans. The reason for this actually is not the case I just gave you, the reason is that we have so little money that we felt that we should so restrict it and the act requires that the funds be used to develop the humanities in the United States.

M: Did you ever talk to the President or with the White House staff about any of these specific grants?

K: No, excepting as I told you when I warned them of some that we were about to make.

M: I think we've already discussed the need for there not to be any governmental restriction or control over the policy--

K: Of course there is through the appropriation process.

M: Is there any problem of overlapping or duplication with the Endowment for the Arts?

K: Sure. A good part of the substance of the Humanities is Art and Literature--visual art, and we try to do studies in the uses of arts. They generally support the visual and performing arts, but it's a very hazy line between the two.

M: How was it resolved?

K: Well, I'm not sure it is resolved, but our emphasis is on research and teaching and theirs is on performance. I think that probably is performance or creation.

We don't make any grants to writers to write, nor do we make any grants to musicians to play. We may make a grant to an educational institution to bring in musicians as part of the humanistic education of the students, they don't. They do a little bit, but not very much.

M: You mentioned among the project studies, programs on the Black Studies. Was this in response to the issue being raised, or had you already gotten into this as an endowment?

K: We had already gotten into it in research grants, and then Saunders Redding who was then on the staff suggested that we should help people get to a level to teach subjects that they weren't thoroughly familiar with. That came at the beginning of the agitation for black studies programs, and we went ahead and did it.

M: What is your feeling about these black studies programs?

K: Well, I think that if they are treated as a separatist matter, they can be very unfortunate. I think if they are treated in the context of American history and American civilization, they remedy the gross neglect of past teachers and scholars.

M: That's interesting. You feel that there has been a neglect.

K: Oh, very definitely, yes. Actually, there's really very little known about the history of the Negro in this country excepting in wholesale terms, and there's almost nothing known in this country about Africa where some 10 percent of our population originated. And a great deal of what is known ain't so.

M: Have you been particularly pressed for many more grants and aids in this area since this has grown up?

K: Well, we've actually tried to stimulate it rather than waiting to be pressed. We invited the applications for the Institutes we had to help people learn to teach the subject.

M: In just recalling, thinking back over your assignment in this position and your appointment, do any particular events or projects that the foundation undertook really stand out in your mind?

K: I think I've mentioned many of them in some of the grants we've made and some of the congressional disputes. The Council is rather an interesting body. It is an excellent group. You don't know much about boards, I dare say. They usually start out trying to run the operation in the managerial sense. This board learned very quickly that they can't do that, and they now concern themselves very much with matters of policy and are extremely helpful in it. They are required by law to make a recommendation on all applications and they do that very conscientiously.

M: Dr. Keeney, where does this foundation go from here? How much government assistance do you need or do you think the foundation should have?

K: Of course, I don't know where it's going from here, but I know where it's going to try to go from here. We're going to try to build up the authorization and the appropriation. I think that probably there ought to be something of the order of a $100 million dollars a year spent the way we're spending this money, and I don't necessarily think that all of it ought to be spent by the government, but I think the large part of it has to be. The real deficiency in this country today is that we only use part of the knowledge we have. We only use the scientific, and technological, and to some extent the social knowledge we have. We don't use the humanistic knowledge at all in practical things, and the main mission as I see it of this organization is to encourage the use of that knowledge.

M: Do you feel that you can more or less credit Mr. Johnson with the establishment of this as a federally-supported agency?

K: Well, to this extent. It would not have been established had he not endorsed it. But it also would not have been established if there were not people in

Congress who believed strongly in it--people like Thompson, Pell, [Ogden] Reid [R. N.Y.], [Ben] Reifel [R. S.D.], [Ernest] Gruening [R. Alaska], Fogarty.

M: Did you say Reifel?

K: Yes, he's the representative from South Dakota. He had nothing to do with the initial establishment of it, but he's had a good deal to do with its survival.

M: Do you see that it will continue?

K: I think so, but I'm not sure yet. I think that when it got through the first reauthorization that it probably became a permanent organization. I think there may very well be a reorganization in this part of the government and that it will be put into something larger such as a national foundation that will include this and the National Science Foundation.

M: Do you see this as imminent?

K: I don't see anything as imminent right now.

M: Dr. Keeney, I would like to discuss with you some other areas that are not directly related to your position. They are things that would come up in the way of arts--for instance, did you attend the White House Arts Festival in June of 1965?

K: No, I wasn't here then. I'm awfully glad I wasn't.

M: I think another element where there has been a lot of attention given is what has been called the Eastern Intellectual Block, and their growing dislike or disagreement with Mr. Johnson. You are of this element.

K: No, I'm not.

M: Only in that you come from the east and you have been at what is considered the Ivy League institutions. Let me just ask you what you feel about this, how this began. Was there a particular event that stimulated it or an issue? and why?

K: I think this crowd decided to dislike Mr. Johnson before he came in on the grounds of intellectual snobbism. Some of the people in this crowd don't think that there are any intelligent people outside of Cambridge and New York, possibly a few in Boston. And they were laying for him. I think the war in Vietnam had more to do with stimulating and exacerbating the situation than anything else.

M: Mr. Johnson was quite concerned by the fact that he was having to communicate with them or sway them over. Did he ever discuss this with you just in conversation?

K: No, and the truth of the matter is that as far as I can see it, once he got really hurt by them he made very little effort to communicate with them.

M: When are you thinking of?

K: I'm thinking of around 1967.

M: Have you, Dr. Keeney, read any of the books that have been written about Mr. Johnson and his administration?

K: No. I have read a number of articles which are based on books.

M: Some of them have been written by people from this group. Do you think that they understood or were too prejudiced in writing about Mr. Johnson?

K: It's very difficult to comment on a book that you haven't read, but I think the answer is yes.

M: Did you ever make any suggestions to any members of the staff on how to improve relations?

K: Yes.

M: What were they?

K: Well, I had some talk with John Gardner [Sec. of HEW] about this, and I had some talk with Sol Linowitz about it, and what I was suggesting was that he

take some important issues, one at a time, and set up some meetings in the White House where he would listen to intellectuals on the subject. And that's about as far as it went because everybody felt that he was in no mood to do that.

M: Did you ever discuss with Mr. Johnson or any of his staff the war in Vietnam?

K: No, I made it a point to not, excepting when I was sworn in. I mentioned to him that we had to have more money, and he brought up the war at that point and said as long as that was going on, it was quite unlikely that we were going to get more money.

M: Do you think Mr. Johnson had a commitment to this type of development of a foundation, federally supported?

K: He had a commitment to it to the point of having it established, but it was not a high priority for generous funding. In peace time I think he would have acted differently.

M: Are there any other thoughts that come to mind regarding the very strong criticism by the intellectuals that they gave Mr. Johnson?

K: Well, I'm not particularly sympathetic to the crowd that gave these criticisms and nor are they to me. I think sometimes they were right, but usually they were at least partly wrong, and always they overstated their position.

M: Were you ever approached to sign any of these petitions?

K: Sure.

M: Could you tell me a little about those?

K: Well, I never signed petitions, so the conversations weren't very lengthy.

M: Did you in supporting Mr. Johnson or by being a part of his administration come under any attack?

K: Why, I always come under attack; you know that.

M: Were there specific instances of this?

K: I don't think there was anything particularly interesting.

M: Have you done any travelling in this work for the Foundation?

K: Oh, yes.

M: Quite a bit?

K: No, not very much. I make a few speeches, go to a few meetings, go out and raise a little money. I'm usually here three-quarters of the time.

M: Has Mr. Johnson or his staff approached you on your opinion on any of the domestic legislation, particularly the aid to education?

K: Well, as a routine matter, we get sent new legislation by the Bureau of the Budget to comment on, and that would include that kind of legislation. Then, I've had frequent and lengthy discussions with Harold Howe II and others about new legislation.

M: Who?

K: Harold Howe, the Commissioner of Education. And I've been on quite a number of task forces to recommend new legislation.

M: What task forces?

K: Task forces to recommend legislation on education and in science.

M: What did you think of this approach or procedure for developing ideas by the method of using a task force?

K: Very little. They were always organized later than they should have been and given too early a deadline. I'm talking about the internal task forces. I'm not talking about the external task forces. What they tended to be was a compromise between departmental and agency interests.

I thought a great deal of the President's education program. I think he got enacted more constructive legislation in the educational area than all the other presidents put together.

M: Did any of the task forces you were on directly result in legislation?

K: Yes.

M: What ones were these?

K: Well, one was the amendments to the Higher Education Act, the Educational Professions Development Act.

M: Any others?

K: I don't think of any off hand. See, I came in after the major legislation was done.

M: Were there any other areas that you particularly worked on either in task forces or making recommendations?

K: I was on a task force on academic science, and I was on a task force that Alice Rivlin [Dep. Asst. Sec. HEW] chaired last summer and fall which made some general recommendations on educational legislation which of course came to nothing. They were recommendations for Mr. Humphrey's administration.

M: How were you approached to work on these task forces or asked for recommendations?

K: You just get a memorandum appointing you to it.

M: Sir, did you have any prewarning of his March 31 withdrawal?

K: Not direct, but I was pretty sure that he was going to do it.

M: Why do you say that?

K: Because I was pretty sure he was going to do it. I don't know why I was sure. It didn't seem to me that he was in a tenable position and it also didn't seem to me that he was having a hell of a lot of fun. And when you get that combination of circumstances, people don't usually run for reelection.

M: Then you were not surprised?

K: I was not at all surprised. I was upset but not surprised.

M: I think I would like to ask you some round-up type questions. What do you think has been Mr. Johnson's most significant achievement during his administration?

K: His educational and social legislation and the enforcement of it.

M: And his failures?

K: His greatest failure is that he tried to govern on the basis of the consensus after the consensus disappeared.

M: Dr. Keeney, we only very superficially touched on many works of the Foundation and your association with Mr. Johnson. Have we left anything out or are there any other areas we should cover?

K: Actually, in the amount of time you've had, I think you've done a very good job.

M: Let me just ask you one last question. Drawing from your background as an historian, perhaps you will not want to answer this. But how do you think history will judge Mr. Johnson?

K: Better than his own times. I think they'll tend to look more at his achievements than people do just now. I think he'll probably go down as one of our better Presidents.

M: To what do you attribute the most stringent criticism of him and perhaps the loss of his consensus?

K: The war.

M: I have no further questions.

K: Well, thank you very much.

M: Thank you.

K: Come again.

GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION
NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS SERVICE

Gift of Personal Statement

By Barnaby C. Keeney

to the

Lyndon Baines Johnson Library

In accordance with Sec. 507 of the Federal Property and Administrative Services Act of 1949, as amended (44 U.S.C. 397) and regulations issued thereunder (41 CFR 101-10), I, _____, hereinafter referred to as the donor, hereby give, donate, and convey to the United States of America for eventual deposit in the proposed Lyndon Baines Johnson Library, and for administration therein by the authorities thereof, a tape and transcript of a personal statement approved by me and prepared for the purpose of deposit in the Lyndon Baines Johnson Library. The gift of this material is made subject to the following terms and conditions:

1. Title to the material transferred hereunder, and all literary property rights, will pass to the United States as of the date of the delivery of this material into the physical custody of the Archivist of the United States.

2. It is the donor's wish to make the material donated to the United States of America by terms of this instrument available for research as soon as it has been deposited in the Lyndon Baines Johnson Library.

3. A revision of this stipulation governing access to the material for research may be entered into between the donor and the Archivist of the United States, or his designee, if it appears desirable.

4. The material donated to the United States pursuant to the foregoing shall be kept intact permanently in the Lyndon Baines Johnson Library.

Signed Barnaby C. Keeney

Date 5/22/72

Accepted Harry S. Middleton - for
Archivist of the United States

Date September 30, 1974