INTERVIEW I

DATE: DECEMBER 4, 1974

INTERVIEWEE: RUTH PROKOP

INTERVIEWER: MICHAEL L. GILLETTE

PLACE: Ms. Prokop's office, Washington, D.C.

C: I think, Ms. Prokop, you were going to start with your background.

P: Yes. I started working in the summer of 1961. I had just graduated from college, and my first job in the real world was the office of Vice President Johnson, then located in the new Senate office building [the Dirksen Senate Office Building]. As far as my tasks go, just out of college I didn't have a great deal to offer, so I did general office work. I stayed until late summer of 1962, about a year and a couple of months, and then went to work on the newly-formed President's Commission on the Status of Women. The Commission had been announced by President [John F.] Kennedy in the spring, headed by Eleanor Roosevelt as the chairman, and Esther Peterson as vice chairman. I worked at the Commission until it finished its report, and I do not, quite frankly, remember the date. It was somewhere in the fall of 1963, because the report had been presented to Kennedy before he went to Dallas. There is, like, a month's time lag, or something like that.

After Mr. Johnson became President, Esther Peterson was designated special assistant to the President for Consumer Affairs. I began working as an assistant to Esther Peterson the day the Consumer Office was opened and stayed there through 1966.

Thereafter I went to the Department of Housing and Urban Development in the congressional office, at which point I did the work on the Model Cities bill. Later I became a special assistant to the undersecretary, Robert Wood.

I left the government on January 19, 1969, just after President Nixon was sworn in, and went into private practice of law. I practiced law until two years ago and then became Washington counsel for General Telephone and Electronics, handling its litigation. That's still what I do.

G: Now more than ever, I guess.

P: Now more than ever! All I do is litigate.

G: Do you recall when you first met Lyndon Johnson, the first time you saw him or met him in person?

P: Yes, I guess about a week after I started working in his office. I was taken to his Capitol office, P-38, by Juanita Roberts, and I must say I didn't know what to expect. I had probably seen him two or three times as a child. I grew up in Texas, and I remember a senatorial campaign when I was in a crowd and he arrived in a helicopter waving to everybody and then made a speech. But as far as one-to-one human contact, the summer of 1961 was the first time. I was ushered into this large, ornate office in the Capitol. The experience was interesting. I didn't know quite what I was going to meet when I was that age. You knew you were going to meet a myth, and he was every bit the myth that I had heard about. I can't quite distinguish in my own mind a first impression, because I'm quite sure I was overawed by the whole experience.

G: Who did you work with on the staff there?

P: Well, I worked with Walter Jenkins, who at the time was the administrative assistant. I worked closely with Juanita Roberts and with Dorothy Territo. Another young man on the staff, Dick Nelson, and I worked together. I had some contact with Liz Carpenter and Ashton Gonella, and then worked extensively a couple of periods with George Reedy and Willie Day Taylor. It depended on what project I was assigned to work on.

G: Can you describe your work?

P: I was trying to remember exactly what I did do. First, let me say that when I started working in the office, it was a temporary job, because I was going to start law school that fall. I viewed it quite frankly as a summer job. I worked on the front desk as the receptionist, primarily, I guess, because I didn't have the skills of a typist or a stenographer. I could at least answer the phone. I transcribed and did some editing of a lot of speeches, that I do remember. I did a couple of special projects like running down series of bills passed within a point in time. Then I started answering a lot of mail. I used to call it the kiddie mail detail. We had this little book of form letters that you were supposed to personalize and send out. The kiddie letters generally needed a little more attention, because they came from children asking questions. So they needed a little more work than somebody just typing out a form. Primarily they were always asking, you know, how he felt about a particular issue, or something like that. I still have a copy of the form letter book. It's kind of fun to look back over them every now and then. Since I was just out of college, I didn't have a great deal experience-wise to offer the office.

G: How was his vice-presidency as far as his own perception of what he was doing and how

he was tied in to the President?

P: Personally, I think he was a man very ill at ease in that job. It was like watching a caged animal. He wanted to do so much, and there were only certain bounds that he could move in. I think for a man with his background as Senate Majority Leader, the job was too confining. Although I didn't personally experience his Senate days, I had read about and talked with people who knew him as an activist, always getting something done, moving all the time. That was not the situation when he became vice president. Also, it was the general mood around Washington at that time. Then, Washington was a Cambridge/Boston town, and anyone from Texas, and I'm generalizing, represented old politics. I think he felt a lot of pressure to fit in with the image of "new politics" portrayed by the Kennedy Administration. Unquestionably, it was the unhappiest period of his entire career, and I think it showed on him.

G: How so?

P: Well, I'm trying to distinguish between what I saw and what I have since read. I think his moods. I'll just talk about the office. I don't think he was a particularly happy person. He was cross a lot. It was clear to me, and that I can remember very distinctly, the more I was around him during that year, that he didn't feel his talents were being utilized properly. And also I'm getting a lot of this from things I heard and observed in Washington at the time. I knew a lot of the Cambridge people socially, and the kinds of derogatory remarks they would make about him had to get back to him. At that point in time, the White House staff had not realized that they were not going to be able to pass the President's legislative agenda. They were just fresh from the victory of the

presidency and had not yet realized they needed the Vice-President's help on Capitol Hill. I'm not talking about the relationship between Kennedy and Johnson. I'm talking more about the views of the two staffs, and this is the perspective from which I saw it. At that point in time, I think that the approach of the White House staff was that we had to take this man as vice president, and the less he can do in Washington, the better. There were the hundreds of Lyndon Johnson jokes around town, and sometimes the jokes were directed against members of his staff as being less educated and less sophisticated in the art of politics. I have to be honest and say I think this represented the mood around Washington. There were some notable exceptions, but it was very widespread. After hearing all of the comments and jokes, perhaps I read a lot into his actions. Maybe he was always demanding, but he seemed to be more demanding and shorter tempered, but I could understand why.

G: Was he able to keep busy? Did he have enough to do, or how did he compensate?

P: I'm not sure that I was close enough to him at that point in time. He had all the typical duties of a vice president, and he had a lot of obligations. I'd call them more social obligations, more speeches, the kind of things to keep him busy. And at that time, he took quite an interest, a substantive interest, in the areas where he was assigned direct responsibilities. I'm going to fail here on a name, but Hobart Taylor headed up the Equal Job Opportunity . . .

G: Oh, yes, Equal Employment Opportunity.

P: Equal Employment, and I'm sorry, I'm just vague on that first name. He spent a lot of time on that substantive area of Equal Employment, and seemed to enjoy that assignment.

As far as other areas I'm afraid I can't provide a response. This was just my observation of his moods when working in the area of equal employment opportunities.

G: Do you feel that he advised the Kennedy Administration on legislative strategy on the Kennedy program?

P: Yes, I think so. When he was called upon. I didn't observe this, but I heard stories from other people. I think that President Kennedy did consult with him. I think that the breakdown came with the people who were implementing Kennedy's program on the Hill. From the perspective of having been around the White House for a while, it is one thing for a president to say to direct his congressional liaison to work with the Vice President on a bill, and another thing for the congressional liaison to make the Vice President actually work a part of the strategy team. I really am convinced that Kennedy's staff--and this is not an indictment of them across the board--were fresh from a victory for the presidency, and they couldn't see how much they needed Lyndon Johnson. On a few major bills I'm sure he did have some very substantive inputs, but I think as a general rule they hadn't yet recognized they were in trouble on the Hill. Again, this is my observations from afar as I did not sit in on those conferences.

G: What about his relations with Senator [Mike] Mansfield, the Majority Leader?

P: I just couldn't comment. I don't think I really had enough knowledge on that one.

G: Is there anything else about the vice-presidential period and his tenure as vice president before we get to the Status of Women, that you remember?

P: I remember specifically, why and when I left the Office of the Vice President and the discussion I had with him about leaving. The mood in the office reflected a lot of just

what I've just described. The question was: would the Kennedy Administration really use the talents of Vice President Johnson? I wanted to be a little more where the action was. I couldn't see the Office of the Vice President obtaining more responsibilities from the White House. I didn't see a great deal of opportunity for myself--that's kind of a side issue. But I think it was those two: a chance for self-improvement, but also that I didn't see the White House releasing a lot of power to the Office of the Vice President. And I think he understood that very well. I think at that age it showed I was relatively ambitious. I remember that the Vice President caught this particular subtlety as the reason why I wanted to leave. May I regress just a moment here? Many of the people on the Vice President's staff were totally devoted to him. And I didn't feel that they were as far-reaching as they should be. His staff was a wonderful group of Texans, primarily. I felt terribly at home, which made me nervous. But it was a little too incestuous, too comfortable, and I guess all of this went into my decision to branch out. It's a long way to say that when I was leaving, I had a feeling that he had lots of things to do except worry about some little peon on his staff leaving, but he showed a particular sensitivity to this kind of reason for moving. When I said I was going to leave and gave my reasons for leaving, he was on the same wavelength. I thought that that was rather extraordinary for a person in his position, saying goodbye to someone that you probably wouldn't miss the next day.

G: What did he say, do you recall?

P: Well, he told me a story about his striking out. I guess everybody's heard it a thousand times, you know, when he decided to come to Washington. But he said that he could

understand. He didn't say anything about the mood in Washington but talked about why someone of my age, *et cetera*, would want to explore new challenges. I was a little worried about that job change, because the Women's Commission was staffed by Kennedy appointees. I had no interest in being viewed as a defection to the other camp. But it did concern me that it might be perceived that way. I can't remember his exact words, but he put my mind at ease about going to the Commission and maintaining my good relationships with his staff.

G: What was the story that he told?

P: I tell you, I'd probably be making it up if I tried to retell it. I just remember it was the story about leaving Texas and the large decision to come to Washington and what a change that would make in one's life, and carrying it forward a little, when he first decided to run for office. You were giving up a comfortable position to start off on something new. It was, you know, kind of rambling.

G: Did he ever talk to you about his study of law when he first arrived in Washington?

P: No, he didn't. I never had occasion to talk with him about that.

G: Can you recall any specifics of his relations, let's say, with individual senators, such as Richard Russell, or Stuart Symington, or Hubert Humphrey, or anything that comes back as you hear the names?

P: I don't believe so. I again apologize to you for not being more prepared for this. I probably could go through a few things that might trigger some thoughts. I really hate to admit that's been so long ago, and I wouldn't want to be inaccurate. I just don't recall any immediately.

G: Did you ever travel with him for speeches or anything like that?

P: No.

G: I see. Well on the whole, summarizing his attitude toward the people that worked for him, was he a considerate employer?

P: That would have to be redefined. He was a worshiped man, and that is a basic difference. He had that unique quality that made people practically lay down and let him walk over them. He would berate them. I have seen occasions where people were chewed out in such a manner that I'm almost convinced to this day that if it had happened to me, I would have walked out, but I'm not sure. And at the same time the Vice President would turn around and do something that no one would do unless they thought a great deal of you.

G: Could you give me an example of the latter?

P: Of course, his generosities after outbursts were legend around the office. I remember when Dick Nelson, then a young staff member, was chewed out in very colorful language for some minor mistake. The Vice President told Dick that he was not worthy of working on his staff. Then thirty minutes later, some of Dick's friends visited the office and asked to meet the Vice President. Obviously, Dick was reluctant, but took them into the Vice President's office. After greeting the men, the Vice President began describing the invaluable contributions that Dick had made to his staff. He was so complimentary that Dick's friends thought he ran the entire office and was responsible for every innovative idea in the last several years. By the time the Vice President finished, Dick had forgotten the chewing out.

It happened to me only once. I was working late one night in the P-38 office and was the only person in the office. I answered the telephone around 7:30 p.m. When Mary Margaret left that evening, she said that the Vice President was out but would probably return later. I answered the phone, and it was a call from David Lawrence. I left a message, "David Lawrence called," and then noted: "I informed him I could not reach you right now, but that you probably would be back in the office." Not having the skills of a good secretary, I failed to write down a return number for David Lawrence. I just presumed the Vice President would use his black book that had everybody in the world's number in it.

I went home around 8:30 and went out to dinner. I wasn't married so I left a note for my roommate that I was going to dinner on Connecticut Avenue. A few hours later, my roommate rushed into the restaurant with a look of sheer panic. She had been in every restaurant up and down Connecticut Avenue until she found me. "He wants you to call him right now!" She said, "It must be a national emergency." Since she did not work in his office, she was just certain the world was collapsing. He had frightened her enough to make her get out and walk up and down Connecticut Avenue looking for me. Well I called him, and I have never been chewed in such a manner. He said, "Which David Lawrence, the columnist or the governor?" I said, "Well I don't know." That was one mistake I never repeated. But that was typical. It was one of the few times I was ever in a position to be exposed to his berating. Perhaps I did not hold an important enough position in his office to rate his frequent rages.

G: Was he more lenient on women than men, do you think?

P: Yes, slightly. I mean, it didn't stop him from chewing out a woman, but I would say that women came off much better than most of the men. And there is another element. If you remember back to that period, I don't think a woman took a chewing out quite as hard as a man. I remember seeing Juanita Roberts come out of his office kind of white every now and then, but I know she didn't take it personally. She always explained that he was under a lot of pressure.

G: Did he bring that up later, or was that the end of the particular episode?

P: That was the end of the particular episode. On the other hand, he did hear about one of my political activities outside the office that he remembers for years. I had fallen for a great Texas liberal line, which was: we've got to get Bill Blakely, a conservative Democrat, out of the Senate. To do so we're going to elect this little professor from Midwestern College who was a conservative Republican. The rationale was that he would serve only one term. This was believed to be a way to oust the conservative wing of the Texas Democratic party and allow the liberal wing to take control. You will probably recognize this theory since it represented the Democratic Party in 1972. Well, I participated in an episode that unfortunately had some impact on electing John Tower. We placed some union posters all over Texas which depicted Bill Blakely as the cowboy always ready to draw his gun without thinking. My participation was absolutely minimal. But Mr. Johnson never let me forgot that episode. Someone mentioned to him that I had worked with that labor group and those liberals down in Texas. So two or three times over the period, even once into the presidency, he would make comments to me. He had a marvelous sense of humor. He said, "Have you been down drawing any

pictures in Texas recently, helping elect those senators that were going to just be around for a short time?" So he doesn't forget. No, I never heard anything about Dave Lawrence, but he never forgot the poster episode.

G: Was he more sensitive to attacks from liberals than he was to attacks from conservatives, would you say?

P: Absolutely.

G: Why was this?

P: You want to hear my personal theory?

G: Yes.

P: Okay. If I had to define one fault that ran from the beginning of the rope to the end of the rope of the Johnson administration, it was his standing in awe and not questioning enough the Eastern liberal clique, for lack of a better word. Part of this reflected the mood of how Washington felt, that they gave great deference to an idea coming out of Boston. I think that he always considered himself somewhat inferior in one respect, in that he went to a small school in Texas, and a lot of people in Washington went to Harvard. I think that haunted him from the beginning to the end. It is my judgment that he never fully realized that so many of his personal skills and instincts were just as good as the book learning that came out of the East Coast. I think they are some of the worst snobs in the world, the intellectual elite if you want to call it that. I don't think he would have suffered as much from the condemnation of the social set in New York. It was the people who had an impact on Washington politics that mattered to him. I think that's a common Texas problem, where the height of achievement is to send one's son to

Harvard. I think it unfortunately followed him and hounded him throughout his time in Washington.

G: He seems to have been at odds with the *Texas Observer* for a long time, never appreciating their attacks on him. Do you think that got his goat more than non-Texas newspapers criticizing him?

P: Yes and no. That's a very difficult question to answer. Maybe the *Texas Observer* had a longer history with him. I think after a point in time the *Texas Observer* was not as important as the *New York Times* to him. But I think that somehow it got to him, you're absolutely right, and it followed him.

G: Can you recall any instances here of his being displeased with a point of view?

P: Not specifically, but I can say that I was alert to his dislike for the *Texas Observer*, because at that time I knew quite a number of people associated with that publication. In later years, his focus was on the national arena and the *New York Times* could really impact his programs. But, when he was senator and even during the years of his vice-presidency, it was known around the office that you didn't mention the *Texas Observer*. If you associated with them, at least have the decency not to mention it.

G: I've heard other people indicate that he had a concern for the way his staff people dressed and that he was almost like a father to his staff in terms of counseling them and entering their personal lives to make sure that this was all right and that was okay. Is this true?

P: Oh, absolutely, I agree. I saw it happen with almost everyone on the staff. In fairness, I was in his office for such a short period, but I was very independent and never had any personal contact of that sort with him. I have no question that if I had had some difficulty

or some problem and had wanted his assistance, there wasn't a question in my mind that I could have obtained help. It's just that I didn't, so I didn't have that kind of personal contact. His was just the opposite, often involving himself in problems of the staff, kind of the Big Daddy. I hear a lot of stories told by other office staff about his willingness to help staff. I do know about the tremendous help he offered to the Stegalls during an illness and observed their personal loyalty to him. There was no question in your mind as a staff person if you needed help, you could count on it.

G: I guess we should get on to the Commission on the Status of Women, chaired by Eleanor Roosevelt. You left his staff to join the Commission?

P: Yes. It was at his recommendation that I got the job, and the recommendation of his staff members, Liz Carpenter. She was involved in the formation of the Commission. She was the contact for the Vice President's office to the Women's Commission. Their objective was to get one representative and one staff member on the Commission to represent the interests of the Office of the Vice President. Ellen Boddy of Texas was Mr. Johnson's recommendation for a seat on the Commission and I was recommended for a staff position on the Commission. It was late in the summer of 1962, when the Commission began its work.

G: Did he work with this commission very closely, or through this commission?

P: Not really. This was a Kennedy initiative. President Kennedy had made a promise to women's groups that, if elected, he would study the problems of discrimination. I can't tell you exactly how Liz Carpenter became involved in the Commission. I think today you would have a vice president much more involved in the formation of a commission

like that. But I didn't see a great deal of active Johnson participation. He wasn't asked. This was formed out of the White House. I do remember when Mrs. Roosevelt came to see the Vice President as the Commission was being formed, but it was more of a courtesy call. I know that Esther Peterson, who was the consummate politician, made an effort to assuring that Vice President Johnson that his thoughts would be represented on the Commission. She probably arranged for Liz Carpenter's participation.

C: Is there anything about the Commission that you want to put on the record here?

P: Well, I look at it as perhaps one of the more fascinating experiences of my career. Today, women's rights is a popular movement, but at the time was almost the opposite. As I look back at those reports, all the seeds of what we know today as the women's movement really began at that time. I was in the initial core group, and watched as it began to spread out and finally encompassed so many of the interest groups that now comprise the women's movement. A lot of the initial leaders came for the first time at the Commission. I think you could see the beginning of what has now become a much larger movement. I was trying to think if there was any particular experience *vis-a-vis* the Vice President during those years. I don't believe so. He did not take an active a role, but I kept Liz Carpenter informed as to what was going on and I feel certain she briefed him. But it was a Kennedy-oriented commission.

G: Did Liz have much input on that, do you remember?

P: She would call me on occasions, and when Liz wants an input, she gets an input. Yes, I did everything that she asked me to do. I can't remember all the specifics, but anything she wanted was done. I'm trying very hard to reconstruct, but I want to be careful, but I

do believe--and perhaps if we have another interview, in the interim I will check this. But again, what happened at the Commission merely reflected what was happening in Washington during that period. There was a scheduled presentation of the report, once it was completed, to President Kennedy at the White House. I can't remember whether it was the ceremony itself, or a reception related to the presentation. All the arrangements were made by the White House staff, and they had not included the Vice President. It was so blatant I would have caught it, but that I remember Liz calling about this oversight. But overall I didn't have a great deal of contact with the Vice President's office.

G: Is there anything here about the attitudes of some of the women on the Commission who might have subsequently set the stage for what would come later--Eleanor Roosevelt or Esther Peterson? In addition to what you said a minute ago about the foreshadowing of all these things to come, were there any specific philosophies that came out of here that were, you think, later applied to the movement?

P: Okay. That's a good question. Let me use a specific example. At that time, you had a different barrier to break before you could move to the current movement. Today it's a completely changed philosophy. At that time, the accepted philosophy for obtaining rights for women, whether it was Social Security corrections, educational opportunities or legal reforms, was to disguise any images of militancy. In other words, women did not want to be viewed as suffragettes out marching for their rights. This philosophy is now discredited inside the women's movement. Perhaps, you had to go through that initial stage of denying militancy to get where you are today. In my view, the main objectives

in the early 60s was to get the Kennedy Administration committed to the enactment of the basic reforms. A prime example was the position of the Women's Commission on the Equal Rights Amendment. Passage of an Equal Eights Amendment was considered to be out of date. The new theory promoted by Pauli Murray, Yale Law School, was to pursue a Supreme Court decision, interpreting the Fourteenth Amendment as including women. But, today the positions [have] been reversed. Leaders of the current movement have determined that the 14th Amendment route is not a viable option, so they now advocate the passage of an Equal Rights Amendment. I think so much of what was explored in the 1960s was a conservative, cautious approach. Still, I believe that the Commission's work set a national agenda for securing equal opportunities for women. Also, it brought together leaders of women's organizations. I could trace some of the leaders of those women's organizations who later became the catalyst for change on women's issues in later years. Even the conservative leaders became more militant in the late 1960s and 1970s.

G: Can you go into detail on this?

P: I really wish I'd given [it] more thought, because I think this is a particularly important point. For one of the few times, you had Dorothy Height, National Council of Negro Women, and Dr. Polly Bunting [Dr. Mary Ingraham Bunting-Smith], president of Radcliffe, coming together to focus on defining problems faced by women. I guess what I'm trying to say is: initially they had to be conservative since they didn't have public opinion to support their views. The mood of the country was very different in the 1960s. By focusing on the more conservative and politically acceptable approaches to a

particular problem, whether it be the Equal Rights Amendment or equal credit, they could build a base of public opinion to support women's rights. At that time, they were still exploring basic questions. For example, do mortgage companies discriminate against women in providing home mortgages? Well, today that's no longer a question. We did the basic studies on financial discrimination against women. Although conservative, the view was that we didn't have the facts, and we could not charge discrimination without basic data. Today you would run out and charge discrimination and then obtain the data. So while the Commission's position might seem conservative in retrospect, the critical element was the alliances formed during that time. Later, when the issue of women's rights became more acceptable in the country, the Commission's work provided a blueprint for action and a core coalition of women's organizations to push for those rights. Then you had a younger group coming in, interacting with the earlier leaders to accelerate the programs. But the Commission was the nucleus. All the issues currently being advocated by the women's movement can be traced to ideas explored by the Commission.

G: Why do you think they favored a court decision on invoking the Fourteenth Amendment rather than an Equal Rights Amendment?

P: Well, at that time, the Equal Rights Amendment represented the old "feminist," which was not a popular concept in the 1960s. To run from state to state advocating passage of an Equal Rights Amendment was reminiscent of the 1920s. Invoking and expanding the coverage of the 14th Amendment seemed to be a more viable option at the time. You must remember that was an era when expansive interpretations of the Constitution were

in vogue. One great decision after another was coming from the Supreme Court, and there's no reason why you shouldn't seek to include women under the protections offered by the 14th Amendment. Dr. Pauli Murray of Yale Law School and the Commission staff prepared a brief advocating this position. Instead of having business and professional women running to all the states seeking passage of a Constitutional amendment, it seemed more logical to go to the Supreme Court. Admittedly, it was an attempt to develop a more sophisticated approach since the Equal Rights Amendment had been languishing in state legislature for decades. I guess what I am attempting to illustrate is how that position has now completely turned around.

G: Perhaps the time factor, too, thinking that an amendment would take considerably longer.

P: Exactly. And I think that the older feminists at that time felt very strongly that you had to push for an Equal Rights Amendment. We had quite a cleavage and division inside the Commission on that issue.

G: Was Eleanor Roosevelt's presence on that Commission very significant?

P: At the beginning, yes. She died before the Commission finished its work. At the beginning, she invited the entire Commission to Hyde Park for a two- or three-day meeting. She took us over to Val-Kill Cottage and served a chili dinner herself to the forty people present. I'm not sure she didn't cook it also. It was almost a spiritual event that gave the Commission members a sense of their mission. She was in on the very basic planning of the Commission, attending the five or six organizational meetings. But once the Commission got started and broke into committees, she did not actively participate in the day-to-day operations. But I think the entire mood that was set at Hyde

Park was critical to the Commission's success. It's kind of like starting the group off with a great big fanfare: they felt they had to live up to her expectations.

G: I suppose we've come to the Consumer Affairs operation now. You worked with Esther Peterson, I think.

P: Right. I was confidential assistant and later became legislative counsel. I was there from the opening of the office in the Executive Office Building.

G: Do you recall the setting up of the office, the naming of Esther Peterson?

P: Yes. I arrived on the second day after she was assigned an office. At that time I believe we were assigned two rooms. I remember working about four months before we were even on a payroll. That's one thing one always remembers. But I'm quite sure we were operating out of about two rooms, like a reception area and the main office. Four or five people were sitting around the reception area trying to develop some programs.

G: How would you characterize the relationship of the Office of Consumer Affairs with the President?

P: As a missed opportunity.

G: Really?

P: Yes and no, and I will do a little backtracking there. First of all, I think Esther did an excellent job given the time and the place. It's just that I saw so much more that could have been done in that particular office. I think the consumer constituency at that point in time was bigger and more politically viable than it was represented to the President as being. I don't think all the advantages were taken of the consumer movement at that point in time.

G: What areas did the consumer people attempt to go into here where they were rebuffed by the administration?

P: Well, the office started with two issues--Truth in Lending and Truth in Packaging. Also, there was a continuing issue of what kind of organization could best represent the consumer in the government. Was it as special assistant to the President? Was it as a separate, independent regulatory agency? Was it as a department? I believe the major bill pending on Capitol Hill was to establish a Department of Consumer Affairs. I remember working on this question during my entire tenure in the Consumer office. The other issues such as Truth in Packaging became much more alleviated when it was pending in Congress. But the underlying question of how the consumer might best represented in government was a constant problem.

G: Were there interests competing within the administration with the consumer movement?

P: Oh certainly, yes. At that time, there was significant opposition by business organizations. I'm interrupting a bit here, but there was a strong reaction by the business community who viewed the Consumer Office as a much bigger threat than it could actually ever be. But not having had a strong consumer voice in the government previously, I don't think a President or anyone else knew quite how to deal with consumer issues. You know, what is a consumer? Everybody is a consumer; is this really a separate voice to be heard. In contrast, business interests were easy to define. Business had had a traditional method of representation in Washington. Numerous times business representatives would sit on someone at the White House: "What are these crazies doing at the Consumer office?" So yes, I would say quite definitely there was an

influence there.

G: Was this primarily the advertising profession?

P: Absolutely. They were very strong, particularly during the period of the Truth in Packaging. They had, quite frankly, the ears of two or three special assistants, other special assistants to the President, and had a right to be heard.

G: Let's go into this, but one of the questions I wanted to ask here is: were there other significant business interests besides advertising that were opposing you?

P: Well, you had the traditional Chamber of Commerce, the National Association of Manufacturers, and other traditional businesses with lobbying offices in Washington. I remember the advertising interests because of the Truth in Packaging bill, but the Chamber of Commerce opposed almost the full range of consumer programs.

G: Let's talk about Truth in Packaging and the advertising opposition here. Do you remember the genesis of the bill itself?

P: Oh, boy. Well I certainly would and I should, I know. I'm going to be honest with you and tell you that I do have a whole box full of records at home, and I'd probably have to go back over. I would have done that prior to seeing you if I had known.

G: Well why don't we reserve the next session for that?

P: Okay. I do have records at home that I think I could refresh my recollection a lot on that particular period.

G: Good. Is there anything that you want to elaborate on now with regard to the advertising profession's opposition to this? I know they worked through Jack Valenti.

P: Yes, they did. I know you have interviewed Esther, and I know she gave a very good

picture of the opposition. But I do remember that Jack Valenti sat on her. I'd like to talk for just a moment about her end of it, if I may, which is a different perspective. I've shared most of this with Esther. She knows exactly how I feel.

A lot had to do with--I call it the coalescing between the consumer and the women's movement, plus the factor--may I ramble a moment here?

G: Sure.

P: Okay. Initially, Esther Peterson was a Kennedy appointee. She never felt comfortable with President Johnson. She thought highly of him, but she never was secure in her position *vis-a-vis* President Johnson because of her close ties to the Kennedy Administration. So she approached her position as Special Assistant with a degree of wariness that might not have been there had she not have been associated with the Kennedy Administration. So there was this initial reluctance. Also, there was the reluctance of being one of the few women in the administration. Esther was not an aggressive woman. She was fantastic in selling a bill on Capitol Hill. No one holds a light to her with respect to her lobbying skills. But I don't think she was the type to go to the President and assertively argue for her positions, as I later observed in Betty Furness. I think that because of her background and her personality, she opted to go through other special assistants--first Jack Valenti and then Marvin Watson and Joe Califano--instead of going directly to the President. I think that most of the interference of people sitting on her, which they certainly did, came about as a result of her unwillingness, and later her inability to go in to the President. She often said, "Jack Valenti's trying to sit on me. I think the President should know that," but she never took the issue to the President. This

was the genesis of the problems, and gave Jack Valenti and later Joe Califano, a tremendous leverage over the consumer program. And as you probably well know with these tapes, the name of the game at the White House was how a special assistant could acquire the most control over the greatest number of programs. The Consumer program was always a marvelous target. It was a troublesome program, sitting inside the White House, and it affected the largest interests in the country, business. At that time, business interests feared that Consumer office. They didn't understand the consumer movement. It was new and had a representative voice at the top of the government.

G: Let me turn the tape over.

(End of Tape #1)

(Begin Tape #2)

G: Okay. We were discussing the White House assistants and their never-ending search for programs to control. How would they do this? Can you give an example of how one of them would place himself between Esther Peterson and the President?

P: I think, as maybe I stated before, it was an interaction of two people. Esther always felt she should go through someone to get to the President. Instead of Esther Peterson picking up the phone and calling Juanita Roberts and saying, "I want to see the President at his convenience to discuss X, Y, and Z," she would send her request through Joe Califano or Jack Valenti and would not exert her prerogatives as a special assistant. I'm not being totally critical of Esther here, because there were many pressures operating on her at the time, and I happen to think [that] within the bounds, she did a superb job. For example, she would send a recommendation to the President to obtain assistance on the

Hill for a bill, and there would be no answer. Alternatively she would get a negative answer through the special assistant: "This can't go to the President; he'd never buy this." Someone else was always speaking for the President, as opposed to her sitting down and having some give and take with the President on the issue. As a result he was never made aware of the great potential of the consumer movement.

G: What about the Department of Labor in the relationship between that and the Consumer Affairs office?

P: Well, that was another issue. As a matter of fact, most of the people who worked in her Consumer office came out of the Department of Labor or had a background in organized labor. In my view, this encouraged a distrust and fear of business in the Consumer office staff. In turn, the staff's apprehensions caused the consumer movement to be viewed as a labor-oriented movement. I will say, however, that the greatest source of support for consumer legislation came out of the AFL-CIO. Also, Esther's relationship with the labor movement was accentuated since she was serving simultaneously as Assistant Secretary of Labor.

G: Do you think she had too much to do?

P: I certainly do. Two jobs of that caliber are too much for any normal person to hold. I think again this was a problem of Johnson's staff not recognizing the potential benefit of a strong consumer program. This is an idea that I think could have been sold to President Johnson. He was a human-oriented person, and a good, strong consumer movement was something he would have backed. I think that it was given a back seat, because it wasn't sold enough to him.

G: Was Secretary [W. Willard] Wirtz involved in helping advance the consumer case to the President?

P: I think so. I do know that Esther, on a few occasions, went through Secretary Wirtz to get to the President, because she knew he saw the President quite frequently.

G: Can you remember any examples of these?

P: There was one specific bill, but I can't remember which bill, that I worked on. She just could not get any action out of the White House staff and went through Wirtz. I think I can check that and perhaps give that to you next time.

G: One of the things that she told me of interest was discussing the boycotts, specifically, I think, the Denver boycotts, that these boycotts were originated by Republicans to embarrass the administration--local Republicans.

P: I think that's probably true. I do remember the boycotts. I was trying to remember the circumstances. But I wouldn't have any reason to question that.

G: Was that generally known at the time?

P: I was trying to remember how that came about. Yes, I accepted it. If you had asked that question, I would have said yes, but I can't remember where I got the information, whether it was from hearing it from Esther or someone else. But I think it was generally known at that time.

G: I got the impression that it was something that she discovered later to her surprise and that the only indication that she had at the time was [that] at one boycott, all the women were lavishly dressed in furs and--

P: (Laughing) You are bringing it back a little more vividly. I'm not sure about the time

periods, frame, but Esther brought up the subject when she asked me about the Texas mink coat demonstrations. She said that the mink coats gave her the clue that it was a Republican group.

G: Oh, really? Well, was that in relation to Texas?

P: No. The subject came up in connection with earlier demonstrations in Texas. Two of the better known mob-type scenes in Texas were the demonstrations against Adlai Stevenson and Lyndon Johnson in the early 1960s. We analogized the two events during a plane trip to Texas. She asked if I could identify a Republican group if I walked into an event. I said, "Oh, you mean the Mink Coat Mob." And I said, "Certainly you can tell the difference between a group coming out to support an issue and any event organized by the Republican Party." I explained that the difference was like going to a Junior League party versus going to a precinct meeting. I now remember that conversation.

G: That's fascinating. Did she apply it to the boycott?

P: I want to be careful here, but I think she was telling me that she thought it was a Republican-inspired boycott.

G: That's a fascinating concept, though, it really is.

P: I'll give you an analogy in Washington, D.C. You can go to the Women's Democratic Club and watch the people who come in the door. And that's a pretty nice group of Democrats who are not poor if they belong to the Club. On the other hand, I could go to the Capitol Hill Club, which is Republican, and I could tell you where I was by just watching the people walk in and out.

G: Can you go into the boycott episodes in any more detail?

P: No, I can't.

G: Can you remember her going out to [Denver]?

P: Yes, but I don't have any specific recollections of that trip.

G: Do you have any recollections of the White House reaction to her participating in this?

P: Yes. Can you refresh my memory just a moment at the point in time of the boycotts? I apologize to you, but--

G: Wasn't it 1966?

P: I think it was just before I left her office. That is my recollection.

G: You went to HUD [Department of Housing and Urban Development] in 1966.

P: It was very late 1966, like in September, when I went over, and then I was back and forth for a while.

G: I don't have much here on the boycotts, but I got the impression that in Denver it was 1966, and she more or less, I think, was out there at the time, and she endorsed it.

P: That's right. She did endorse it, that I remember, and the reaction-- I'm trying to pinpoint it in time. I was always taking flak in the Consumer Office, and it just depended on what the issue was. Again I want to be very careful, because I think this was just before I left her office. I think it was an issue where Jack Valenti was "up in arms." He had received a tremendous number of calls from the Chamber and various other business groups. I am vague.

G: Well now, you had two different advertising groups here. You had the AFA [?] and the AAAA [American Association of Advertising Agencies].

P: That's right.

G: Do you remember the difference between the two groups?

P: No, to be honest. I have really been away from consumer affairs since 1966.

G: Well, didn't one represent a group of larger advertisers, the larger firms, say the Madison Avenue firms?

P: That's right, and the other represented the smaller, and as I remember, the more conservative firms. That's reaching way back.

G: The AFA, I think, was the smaller.

P: Yes. But I have really been away from that area.

G: Okay. I was going to show you a headline here. Do you remember this?

P: *(Laughing)* Yes. That is right. I had forgotten, as a matter of fact, how vicious they were. Yes. Printer's ink. (Pauses for reading) Yes, I do. That is going back, but I do remember that.

G: Do you recall any communication with the White House on this particular episode?

P: No. Well, yes, I do know there was lots of communication with the White House, and I do have some memos related to that period. So I will really try to go back and reconstruct it a bit. I do feel a little badly for being so vague on some of this.

G: Well, it's certainly to be attributed to us. We generally give you more time to get ready.

P: I would have at least gone through some old records. It's very interesting when you're involved in an area. But I have been completely away from it since 1966.

G: Do you want to get into HUD [Department of Housing and Urban Development] and your work there?

P: I think that was perhaps the most interesting of my jobs. I know that you're short on

time.

G: No, I have plenty of time.

P: Maybe I'll just start off and you can stop me. I went to HUD at a very interesting time. It had just become a Department after being an Agency for so many years. It had been turned upside down and thrust into playing a central role in President Johnson's legislative efforts. Housing and Urban Affairs became a critical part of the Administration's Great Society agenda. As a result, some of the more interesting people in Washington were attracted to working at HUD. It was a very exciting period--working on new programs and forming a new department. The people that I worked with at HUD were outstanding individuals. I remember layers of talent at HUD and how we were batting ideas back and forth every day ideas. Going back to the first of our tape, there is an interesting analogy. That is, the Cambridge and Boston group in Washington. It is ironic that I observed the highest degree of loyalty to President Johnson by the Cambridge/Boston group that was selected to work at HUD. While Bob Wood retained his contacts with Kennedy appointees, I can say that from 1968 through the beginning of 1969, I never saw him waver one time in his support of President Johnson. I found that to be fascinating irony. In some respects the people that a lot of the Texans had feared the most became the most loyal supporters of the President and his programs. Most of our time was spent on two key programs--Model Cities and Rent Supplements. For the first time I became involved in sophisticated lobbying techniques being developed in the White House and then siphoned down into the agencies. That experience gave me an entirely new perspective of what was going on inside the Johnson White House. Prior to

that my contacts had been primarily with the Johnson staff that dated back to the years of the vice-presidency. A new group, under Barefoot Sanders, had assumed responsibility for the President's legislative program. Dorothy Territo mentioned on the phone today the Bob Hardesty operation. We established the Hardesty operation at HUD and I was assigned to run the HUD operation. Later I actually went to the White House and worked with Bob on some specific projects, which I'll get into. How much would I be repeating to kind of start on the Hardesty operation?

G: That's fine.

P: Okay. I was sent to a meeting at the White House by Bob Wood, Undersecretary of HUD. The purpose of the meeting was to develop a comprehensive plan for securing passage of the Great Society legislation. Also, we discussed how to write good legislative histories for the bills and how to promote the achievements of the Johnson administration. First, an operation was established inside the White House, and then a similar operation was established in each agency. At HUD we would prepare a speech for each congressman who supported whatever bill might be pending on the floor. During the floor debate on the HUD Bill, the congressmen would deliver the speeches we had prepared, supporting the administration and urging passage of the bill. Often we would write as many as 100 speeches in one night to support a bill that was scheduled to be on the floor the next day. Early the next morning HUD's congressional liaison staff would deliver the 100 speeches to selected congressmen. The congressional liaison offices in each agency were responsible for selecting the congressman and distributing the speeches. For example, if the Model Cities bill was scheduled for a floor vote, we

would call HUD's congressional liaison office and say: "Give us a list of all the supporters of Model Cities bill who might be willing to give a speech on the floor." By mid-day, the congressional office would produce a list of 100 congressmen. Then we would spend the next ten to twelve hours writing speeches to support the Model Cities bill. For conservative members, we would prepare speeches stressing certain elements of the bill; for liberals we would stress other provisions of the bill. Also we would incorporate information provided by HUD's program offices, describing projects in a particular congressional district and how the pending legislation might benefit that particular congressional district. When the bill cam up for a vote, the various congressmen delivered the speeches and thereafter reprints of the speeches were mailed to the individual congressional districts.

G: Where'd you get the talent to do this?

P: I was in charge of the project at HUD. There were two other special assistants to Bob Wood who always helped out. Among the three of us, we could obtain initial drafts from the legal division, from public affairs, and from all the program offices. All the initial drafts were delivered to my office around 4:00 p.m. Then, all three special assistants would spend the night editing and rewriting the speeches. One set of secretaries would stay until midnight and then the second set would begin work at midnight. Basically, it was a cut, past, edit and typing job, but it was always challenging.

G: Who would contribute the local issues?

P: The local issues was a ongoing project that had been underway for some time. Initially, we would work with the congressional liaison office and prepare a "target" list of

members necessary to pass the bill. Then we would call on the Assistant Secretaries to provide lists of communities in various congressional districts that had submitted projects to HUD.

G: Which ones stood to gain.

P: Exactly. Often we had to pull [all] of this together overnight so it involved a lot of cutting and pasting. I have a great story about this. Preston Brown, on of the special assistants, had just arrived at HUD from a staid New York law firm where he might work an entire week on one page of a securities document. He was exceptionally talented, but had no experience in Washington. The day he arrived, Bob Wood said, "Put him into the Hardesty operation right away." Preston asked: "What do I do?" He stared in disbelief when I told him that we had something like 100 speeches to prepare that night for the House of Representatives. He had been taught that Congressional speeches were the products of a deliberative and lengthy thought process. We assured him it was easy and that we would show him how to do the job quickly. Also, the situation that night was complicated by the fact that Preston had a new secretary who had not worked previously with our operation. In any event, by 11:00 p.m., he was writing speeches as fast as anyone else. But, he asked, again and again: "Do congressmen really give these speeches and are they actually printed in the *Congressional Record*?" I explained, "We clip, paste, edit and retype tonight; then tomorrow we send the speeches to the Hill with copies to the White House. Then when the *Congressional Record* is printed the next day, the Hardesty operation can determine how many of our speeches were used in the House." He was awed by the entire operation, but worked very hard that night.

Unfortunately, his new secretary made one mistake that Preston failed to catch. She mistakenly combined two speeches into one speech. The speech began by: "Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the Rent Supplement bill . . ." and continued to list all the reasons for supporting that bill. Midway, the speech began all over again, "Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the Rent Supplement bill . . ." and continued to list slightly different reasons for supporting the bill. By the time Preston discovered the error the next morning, the speeches had already been delivered to the Hill. He panicked and said, "I'm going to lose my job. I have committed the greatest error in the world." I reassured him that the congressman would probably correct the error and select whichever of the two versions he wanted to deliver on the floor. Well, I've never seen anyone so nervous until the *Congressional Record* came out the next morning. If I'm not mistaken, it was Congressman Keys [James Kee?] of West Virginia. Printed in the *Congressional Record*: "Dear Mr. Speaker . . ." and halfway through the speech, "Dear Mr. Speaker . . ." He's a very good Washington attorney today, very sophisticated in the ways of Washington, but we have often laughed about that speech. This story illustrates how quickly we had to generate speeches that proved to be an effective legislative tool. Also, it is an interesting commentary on how much work the executive branch was doing for the legislative branch. I think that that is a story all unto itself. My career at HUD is how you helped the legislative branch and how you really did, at least in the housing area. At that time, almost every idea came out of the executive branch and was sent to the Hill for action. The legislation and most of the "legislative history" was drafted in the executive branch. The administration even had an input into the drafting of committee reports. I

went to the Hill to help rewrite a committee report to ensure the proper legislative history. When an act is challenged in court, the legislative history is crucial to a proper interpretation of the act.

G: Did this begin with the Johnson Administration in the latter years here, or was it done before in a slightly different form?

P: I think it was slightly touched on before, but I think this was the first time such an approach was undertaken on a large scale.

G: The Hardesty operation was essentially something new, is that right?

P: That's right. That is my judgment. I don't know exactly how Larry O'Brien, for example, handled the Hill under President Kennedy. However, the breadth and extent that such an approach was used across the entire executive branch was new.

G: Did it ever reach a point when, attempting to stress the particular views and interests of one area, you would end up in more or less conflict with another speech that you had written for someone else?

P: Certainly! In fact, this is one of the interesting aspects of the Hardesty operation. I want to be careful, but we did examine the psychological aspects of the personalities of certain members.

G: Oh, did you really?

P: Yes, we did. I did an extensive paper on [Congressman] Joe Evins of Tennessee [to] determine the most effective methods to obtain his support. He was a very key person in the passage of the Model Cities, and chairman of an appropriations subcommittee. I spent almost 2½ months pulling together information and reviewing approaches that

could be made to Congressman Joe Evins of Tennessee. It was nothing sinister, and I've been very careful in my own mind to delineate this in the years since, now that we've heard so much about the extents to which this could be taken. All of the information in my report came from published documents and by interviewing people who knew him. Today, I would not want anyone [to] read the report, but it contained no private or confidential information, and clearly provided cites for all quotes and interviews.

G: Do you think it paid off in terms of--

P: Yes! That one happened to be successful, but one probably tends to remember the successes. While other reports were not as extensive, the Joe Evins profile was about fifty pages. It covered the people assigned to visit him and the degree of deference that should be paid to him. For example, Joe Evins had great admiration for people educated at Harvard. One assistant secretary at HUD, Charles Haar, was professor of law from Harvard. He and I worked together perfectly, but as a communicator, he wasn't the kind of person that typically was sent to the Hill, because he couldn't relate to a flea. He doesn't think that, but that was his reputation. A key part of our strategy in obtaining the support of Joe Evins was to have Charlie Haar visit him, explain each provision and pay deference to Joe Evins' views and proposed amendments. It was a difficult assignment for Charlie but he was concerned enough about funding for Model City legislation that he spent hours with Chairman Evins. That was the far reaches of the Hardesty-type operation--concentrating on the personalities of the key players. All of this emanated from the initial concept of how to structure a legislative history, how to influence the thought processes of members of Congress and how to ensure that the courts would

uphold the great society legislative acts. To me, that was the underlying concept of the Hardesty operation.

G: That's fascinating.

P: Don't test me. I could go on for hours about that period.

G: Well, do. Can you recall any other specifics here of approaches to particular congressmen on this Model Cities legislation?

P: Yes. We analyzed all the Congressional districts, bit never to the extent we went with Congressman Evins, because we could see him as the key.

G: What else did you do in connection with him?

P: There was the traditional political issue on how to give his district a Model City and how to make certain that its application met all the qualifications. Also, we took a more sophisticated approach by educating Congressman Evins to become a statesman who was on the cutting edge of modern urban policy. Thus, it was a mixture of old politics and an educational effort. I think it was a unique bill in that regard.

G: Did the congressmen that you were seeking to influence have much influence themselves on the nature of the bill?

P: Yes. Your efforts spread out as the bill progressed through Congress. Initially, we spent a considerable amount of time working with members of the committee and then when the bill moved to the floor, we worked with all members of Congress. If I remember correctly, we had two approaches to a vote on the floor. At that time, a good liberal program could command a majority vote. Your primary task on bills like the Model Cities was to provide each member with all the necessary information and make them

look good in their districts. That was the goal of the Hardesty speech operation. There was never a clear line between the Hardesty operation and the approach designed to pass a particular bill.

G: That's fine. The detail is fine.

P: But yes, we did individualize the approaches to certain members of Congress. In the final analysis, it was an issue of who was on the "yes" side of the ledger and who was on the "no" side. With respect to the "yeses," you had to pay enough attention to make sure that those members didn't get off base. On the "no" side, you didn't waste a lot of time. So you targeted the group which could go either way, and those were the ones that required the most work. All kinds of approaches were made to those members. You couldn't outright give everyone a Model City. That would have defeated the purpose of the program. Admittedly, there was a little compromising of ideology, but not a lot. If a project was a real dog, with the possible exception of Joe Evins, it was not going to be selected as a Model City just because its congressman was a crucial vote. That was essentially the bottom line that had to be explained to congressmen, because some saw it as the magnificent opportunity to bring a Model City to their district.

G: They rejected a number of them, didn't they, proposals that just didn't measure up.

P: Indeed. And they were the dog projects. When the Model Cities program staff rejected a project, that was an important voice in the selection process. I know because I investigated several rejections. You would take a second look when a powerful member was involved, but if the project was a real dog it was turned down. I cannot remember the ratio of turndowns to approvals, but the numbers were quite high.

G: What about cities in Texas? Did they generally enjoy a more lenient looking-over?

P: I think so, to be honest, but there's also two basic reasons. First, you had many powerful members in the Texas delegation that held key positions in Congress. Second, it is the normal inclination of a bureaucracy to move cautiously when dealing with projects from the home state of a sitting president. It's not a spoken word. So I think many Texas cities received the second look treatment, but I never saw a conscious effort to approve all Texas projects. Nor did I observe any pressure from the White House to favor Texas cities. I've got a great, great story, and then I think we had better quit, because you're late meeting someone.

G: I can extend mine.

P: One of the great stories at HUD involved a low-income housing project called The Fishpond in Austin, Texas. This was a project that the White House wanted to dedicate before the President left office. I remember we moved mountains to get that project finished on time. President Johnson was scheduled to visit the project and word came from the White House--I believe it was Joe Califano or Larry Levinson--that he would want to see some grass surrounding the project. Well, at the time it was just bare dirt, so we sent a team to search all over South Texas for enough sod to cover the project grounds. The conclusion was that even if we used all the sod trucks available in South Texas to bringing it to Austin, we still had one lot without grass. Since grass seeds wouldn't grow fast enough, we struggled over what to do next. This is an example of how the bureaucracy tries to meet the demands of a President, even if unreasonable. We worked all weekend trying to find a solution. We were terrified that President Johnson

would arrive at the project, see the bare ground without grass and throw a fit. As I remember we had six or eight people on telephones calling everywhere trying to buy grass sod. After working all weekend with little success, our only option was to have a sign painted and placed on the bare plot that said: "Do not step. Grass planted here." That was the only time I saw a concerted effort to, "Get this project done in Texas now."

G: They did put the sign up, I take it.

P: They did put the sign up, yes.

G: Was this the fish hatchery?

P: Yes! Still to this day, there are a few people who ask me if it's sunk in the ground yet, and they asking, in a joking manner, "What's the statute of limitations?" That was the one time where there was personal pressure to get a project complete in Texas.

G: Do you feel that the outcome of Model Cities as far as the way the legislation ended up was what you had wanted it to be from the first?

P: It was not the pristine bill, but it was an excellent compromise. I think it was all that could have been realistically expected at the time. There was no question we wanted to include more cities and more projects on a broader scale, but I think given all the other social demands on the system at that time, Model Cities fared very well.

G: Do you think it was spread out too much within a particular city? I know there was a constant attempt to enlarge the target area to include virtually all the city.

P: Yes, that was the constant battle. There were compromises on that. It would have been better to enlarge the target areas. But the smaller the area improved the chances of producing a true model. I still think that, given all the forces that came into play during

the passage of the bill, the program started on a solid base. It's a tragedy, as most people would tell you, what has happened to the program in the intervening years. I think the bill that came out of Congress was a base upon which you could have expanded the program. Clearly, it needed improvement and constant reevaluation, but to move the program forward required a commitment by the next administration. This is what I regret the most.

G: I've always felt that it was a relatively radical concept, because it bypassed so much of the local power structure. Did it in fact, and did this cause problems?

P: As initially conceived, it was designed to bypass local power structures to an even greater degree. But again, that was part of the compromise. As the bill went through Congress, everyone began to demand a larger part of the action. We had to meet those demands halfway. I might have held out for the more radical approach. But, to get it started, you had to pull it from local power structures. I think Model Cities was a program that should have been operated for a couple of years and then subjected to cold, hard evaluation and analysis. This kind of evaluation process was probably necessary for all the social programs enacted during the Johnson administration. So many of the Great Society programs involved new and innovative approaches to social problems. Many needed revamping after a few years. One of my favorite examples is the OEO Legal Projects. No greater concept came along, but it needed constant reevaluation as the program evolved.

G: One thing that we might talk about next time that I thought I would throw out this morning is: do you remember the programs in individual cities, and did you have a

favorite? Did you think that one city had the best program?

P: I'd have to go back and reconstruct a bit there. None really strike me offhand.

G: Did one present notorious problems?

(Buzzer sounds)

P: Excuse me just a minute.

(End of Tape 2 of 2 and Interview I)

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