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Barnes, Mike oral history interview

Don Nicoll

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Interview with Mike Barnes by Don Nicoll

Summary Sheet and Transcript

Interviewee

Barnes, Mike

Interviewer

Nicoll, Don

Date

April 11, 2001

Place

Washington, DC

ID Number

MOH 270

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Biographical Note

Michael Darr Barnes was born September 3, 1943 in Washington, D.C. and grew up in Montgomery County, Maryland. His father was a lawyer and his mother was a housewife. He went to college at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and graduated in three years. Because of the Vietnam War draft, he attended graduate school for only one year, which he did in Geneva, Switzerland at the Graduate Institute of Higher International Studies. After spending a couple of years in the Marine Corps, he went to law school at George Washington University. Through his summer work in 1970, as a clerk at the firm Verner, Liipfert, Bernhard, and McPherson, he contributed to the Muskie campaign and became interested in politics. In 1978, he ran for Congress himself in Maryland, and won by a landslide. His congressional work allowed him to once again associate with Ed Muskie (who helped him campaign) and he was reelected for four terms. Later, as he started his own firm, he worked at the Center for National Policy with Ed Muskie, and succeeded him as the chair.

Scope and Content Note

Interview includes discussions of: Harry McPherson; Harold Leventhal; Democratic National Convention in 1964; Mississippi Freedom Democrats; possible reasons Muskie was not nominated in 1972; and the Center for National Policy.

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Transcript

Don Nicoll: It is Wednesday, the 11th of April, 2001. We are in the offices of Hand Gun Control with Michael Barnes. Don Nicoll is interviewing him. Mike, would you give us your full name, spell it, and your date and place of birth.

Michael Barnes: Michael, M-I-C-H-A-E-L, Darr, D-A-R-R, Barnes, B-A-R-N-E-S, born in Washington, D.C. September 3rd, 1943.

DN: And did you grow up in Washington?

MB: I grew up mostly in the Maryland suburbs of Washington, out here in Montgomery County, Maryland.

DN: What were your parents' occupations and involvements?

MB: My father was a lawyer, his father had been a federal judge in Chicago, and my dad had a career as a lawyer. He ended up as head of the legal office for the local phone company here in the Washington area. And my mother was a homemaker from Georgia. And how they got hooked up was never entirely clear, but a very unusual match.

DN: And did you have brothers or sisters?

MB: I have one older brother who currently lives out in Arizona.

DN: Now did you go to public schools or private schools?

MB: I went to both public and private schools. I ended up graduating from a private high school. And then I went to the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, and then a year of graduate school studying international relations in Switzerland, in Geneva. And it was Vietnam War time so I got drafted and decided not to go into the Army but instead enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps, spent a couple of years in the Marines. Fortunately I was not ever in Vietnam or in combat. The only danger I saw was here in Washington during the riots in '68, and the Marines were patrolling southeast Washington and I was one of those Marines. After the Marine Corps I went to law school here in Washington at George Washington University, and worked for Ed Muskie while I was in law school, so.

DN: And what did you do for Ed Muskie while you were in law school?

MB: Well the first summer of, after my first year of law school, I got a job as a summer clerk at a law firm Verner, Liipfert, Bernhard and McPherson. And among the lawyers that I worked for was a man name Harry McPherson and Harry was doing some speech writing for Senator Muskie, and he asked me if I would help on a speech. And he liked the draft that I did and asked me to do some more. And then I got working with Jack Sando, who was a speech writer for the senator, and sort of assisting. Jack occasionally would ask me to help with this or that kind of a thing, and some of the writing that he was doing and research and whatnot. So that=s how I got into helping Senator Muskie.

DN: This was the summer of -?

MB: Summer of 1970, and the senator was running for reelection to the Senate that year in Maine. And some of what I was working on was speeches that he was using up in Maine for the reelection, and some of what I worked on was speeches that he was doing outside of Maine, more nationally oriented. But I was just, you know, helping out as a very low level assistant

when asked, but thrilled to be asked and involved. It was the most exciting thing that had ever happened in my life, that I had stumbled into this situation in this law firm that was so closely affiliated with Senator Muskie. And as I was there, the Muskie campaign started renting space from the law firm, and it was just terrifically exciting to me. I had a great personal interest in politics and public policy already, and I just felt like the luckiest young man in the world to have, to be, you know, part of, on the periphery of Senator Muskie's campaign and his national possibilities.

DN: Had you been exposed to a lot of political discussion at home, or was this something you picked up ?

MB: Yeah, my father was very interested in politics. He had, as a young man he had run and been elected a uh, of the peace, justice of the peace, is that it? He married people, out in Illinois. And he'd always had a, that's the only office he ever ran for, but he'd always had a great interest in politics. He called himself a reluctant Republican. He was of the old school of progressive Republicans. He was friendly with some of our progressive Republicans in my area, [Charles McCurdy] Mack Mathias [Jr.], Gilbert Gude, and he was of that school. The Nelson Rockefeller wing of the Republican Party, if you will. He was never an official of the Republican Party or anything, but he had these friendships and was very interested in government politics and we talked about it a lot.

And I got hooked personally as a high school student in 1960 when John Kennedy ran for president. Like a lot of people my age, he really appealed to me. I was very excited by his candidacy. I remember watching the first debate between him and Nixon and saying, "Well, if he's a Democrat that's what I want to be," and going down to the local Kennedy for President headquarters in Bethesda, Maryland and signing up as a volunteer. And they got me handing out leaflets and that kind of thing. And so that was my first involvement.

And then a good friend of my father was a man named Harold Leventhal, who was a very prominent attorney here in Washington and was, in 1964, was general counsel of the Democratic National Committee. And he invited me to go as his briefcase carrier and driver to the Democratic convention in Atlantic City in 1964. And that was an amazing experience for me as a college student. It was my summer break from the University of North Carolina. And so I got to go with Harold Leventhal to Atlantic City and sit in the corner in a number of the key meetings at the Democratic Convention when the Mississippi Freedom Democrats, you know were, the question was, who was going to be seated and who wasn't.

And I was literally you know, allowed in the room, and I was the only sort of non-participant in some of these meetings, because I was the guy who would run and get the coffee and whatnot. And, you know, Hubert Humphrey and Walter Mondale and, you know, it was really, and Fanny May Ham or Fannie Lou Hamer there from Mississippi, and Joe Rauh and, you know, all of these negotiations. And they went on late into the night in these smoke filled hotel rooms, we still had smoke filled hotel rooms in '64. And so that was a very exciting thing for me. By then I was totally hooked on politics and believed that I wanted to have a future in some way, involved in this. I didn't know what it would be, but -

DN: But you were interested.

MB: But I was very interested and saw, you know, had seen a little bit of it sort of up close through that experience.

DN: Now, after graduation you went and studied in Switzerland at the international relations. So you had a dual interest in domestic politics and international affairs?

MB: I was always, I don't know exactly why really, I was always interested in international issues and that year in Europe really cemented it. The school that I went to in Geneva, the Graduate Institute of Higher International Studies had students from all over the world, there were Asians and Africans, and it was a very intellectually stimulating and exciting environment. I would love to have stayed there more than one year but my draft board had other ideas. I was, they only let me have that year because I went through college in three years. I sort of said to my draft board, you know, "I completed college in three years, will you give me another year of study?" And they said, "Okay, we'll give you one more but that's it." And they were true to their word. Literally, like two days after my classes ended in Geneva that year, I got my draft notice and had to sign up for something so I, rather than just going in the Army I joined the Marines.

DN: When you went to Verner, Liipfert, that was the luck of the draw?

MB: I was very, very fortunate. Gene Liipfert was a neighbor of our family and just a wonderful man, a marvelous human being. And I don't remember exactly how it happened, but I remember being able to say to him that I was looking for something to do and he said something, "Well, we've never had a summer clerk but maybe we could do something." And I remember my first day there, he asked me, "Well, what do summer clerks get paid?" Because Verner, Liipfert had never had one. I think now they have like thirty every year, but I was the first one in the history of that firm.

And I think they had nine lawyers at the time, maybe it was ten, but it was small but successful, very successful firm representing mostly transportation companies, airlines and buses and trucks, and Gene Liipfert was an expert on representing companies before the old ICC. And so I was a summer clerk and, but quickly it got swept up in the other aspect of what the firm was doing, because so many of the people there were interested in helping Senator Muskie.

DN: Did you ever have a chance to talk to Harry McPherson that summer about his experiences with Lyndon Johnson?

MB: I did have a little bit of a chance to do it. I mean I, you know, obviously I wasn't just sitting in his office chatting with him, I was the guy running the Xerox machine. But, yes. And I read his book that he'd written about his experiences as counsel in the White House. And it was a thrill for me to be close to somebody like Harry and working in the same office and meeting him. And he was such a wonderful man, so friendly and open to a, you know, this, some young kid. It was just terrific to have a chance to, and they were all that way. Jim Verner was, couldn't have been nicer, and Berl and, you know, it was a very small firm but a very

friendly and open place. As I recall they had every Friday afternoon a beer hour where they'd all gather and they'd all have a little beer. And I thought, "Well this doesn't look too bad. This is the way law practice is?" It sounded, it looked pretty good.

DN: Now, you started out as a clerk and speech writer, as it were.

MB: Now, that's overstating my role, speech writer, I was helping, mostly helping Jack Sando.

DN: And your involvement in the campaign escalated a bit as time went on.

MB: I got, when Berl took on a more administrative role in the campaign he started asking me to do different things. I was just sort of there. And so, you know, they would need somebody to do this or that and I was always eager to do whatever I was asked and to do more than I was asked. I wanted, you know, I was just thrilled to be even close to any of this, it was so exciting. So I sort of developed a role as an administrative aide to Berl and to others, helping out in any way I could. And ultimately a role that I took on in the campaign, and I was still in law school so I was sort of running from the headquarters on K Street, which ultimately moved over to K Street from the Verner, Liipfert offices, to my classes at GW Law School, which was fortunately just a couple blocks away. So I could sort of run back and forth and nobody in either place really knew that I was doing the other thing, but I was working full time for the campaign and going to school full time.

DN: And you managed that.

MB: And, well I was, I felt very lucky to be doing, I missed a lot of classes but after the first year of law school you can get away with that, I discovered. But one of the fun things that I did early on was when we were getting ready to move the headquarters. They had rented some space at 1910 K Street, and I had the idea that wouldn't it be neat if we could change this address to 1972 K Street, as we were running for president in 1972. So I looked into it and I found that because there was no building between us and the end of the block, it was possible. The post office would let us do this, but you had to do a formal thing with the city. So I had to go down and I used my limited law school training to go down and file a formal thing and got the address changed of that building from 1910 K Street to 1972 K Street. And because my dad worked for the telephone company, I was able, through him, to get a phone number. I checked to see if the phone number USA-1972 was available, and it was. And so we got that phone number through my dad's help. So the address was, Muskie for President, 1972 K Street, and the phone number was 202-USA-1972. So I was, I felt if I didn't contribute anything else to the campaign that I was proud of that.

DN: Two very important PR tools.

MB: That was fun.

DN: And during that, at the end of the campaign I understand you were deeply involved in the effort at the National Convention.

MB: Well, we didn't have anybody left, so I was sort of put in charge. By that time I had become sort of, seen I think, as a jack of all trades in the campaign. And I was still around, I was, you know, I was willing to work for nothing, I mean I was a student, and I think maybe I was working for nothing at that point. I don't remember whether I was even being paid, quite honestly. But I may have still been, I never was paid much, but campaigns don't pay much. But they needed somebody to put together the operation for Miami. And as I understood it a man named Arnold Picker had donated a nice chunk of money for Senator Muskie to keep his campaign alive. So I was given a budget to put together all the machinery for a campaign in Miami as if we were a real, you know, we were still a serious contender for the nomination.

So we had everything. I went down there and we got the trailers and the walkie-talkies and the, we rented motorcycles so that we could have couriers that could zip through the traffic to get back and forth from the headquarters hotel to the convention site. And we even lined up a helicopter, if we would need that, to move the Senator around. And it was great, it was great fun for me. I mean, I had this budget and I'm dealing with top officials of all these companies, and I'm just a kid, you know, I mean.

But we were ready if there were, you know, if there was a breakthrough and we were, you know, in a position to go after delegates for the senator, we had all the stuff. We had everything that a real campaign would have thanks to Arnold Picker's money. Money was not really an object, we were as well equipped down there as any candidate could be. That was a lot of fun. I spent I think six weeks in Miami putting that all together, renting the trailers and getting the phones put in. And of course, in those days computers were not an issue, but we had typewriters, electric typewriters and everything all set up there, we were ready to go. Unfortunately we didn't really, in the end, need them as much as we had hoped we would.

DN: Now during that entire period from 1970 on through the end of the campaign, had you actually met or been involved with Senator Muskie directly?

MB: Not really. I had met him, but basically I had shaken his hand a couple of times. I'm sure he did not know my name. And that was actually a source of some humor among those of us on the campaign staff who labored, you know, eighteen hour days, seven days a week, that we knew he didn't know who we were. And we used to, some of us used to joke that he would come to visit and that somebody would have given him a list of our names, but it would be, you know, it would have been Nicoll, Don, Barnes, Michael, and he would say, "Oh, Barnes Michael, it's great to meet you," great to, you know, thank you for your help. Because we knew that he was out running around doing other things. But there was some, some sort of joking among the lower level staff that he had no idea who we were. But that wasn't his role at that point, he had other things to do.

DN: You came into the campaign when it was very upbeat and -

MB: We were going to win, we knew we were going to win. There was no doubt in 1970, after he was elected, reelected to the Senate. And he did that great speech from his home in Kennebunkport on national television. I remember really, with tears in my eyes, watching that

speech and being so proud of that speech and of him and being associated with him. We were all extremely confident, I'm sure overconfident.

DN: Actually that was delivered from outside the home of Harold Pachios= father=s house in Cape Elizabeth.

MB: Oh, is that right? I always thought it was from his place there.

DN: That image was conveyed, but it was actually outside Harold=s father=s home. Now, from your perspective, thinking back to '70 to '72, what went wrong in the campaign, and was it something that stemmed from the campaign itself or was it the result of forces beyond your control? Or did you have a view of it?

MB: Oh, I was probably too close to it emotionally to have a, I mean I was really emotionally engaged. I mean, for example, we got a dog during that period and we named the dog Sixtus, which was of course Ed Muskie=s middle name. And we called Sixty, we called the dog Sixty. We had that wonderful dog for many, many years. The dog was one of a number of puppies born to a dog owned by somebody else in the campaign who lived out in Bowie, Maryland. I remember going out to his house to get the dog, Bob, Bob -

DN: Would it have been Squier?

MB: No, it=ll come to me. But in any event, that shows, you know, I mean our dog was named after him and our life was, you know, I was just married. I got married the summer of 1970 and, you know, we were really totally into Ed Muskie.

DN: Did your wife get involved in the campaign?

MB: Really only vicariously, I think. She would go to events with me where there were campaign, you know, people from the campaign. But all of our friendships and everything was really within the campaign at that time. I mean I just, it was my life almost entirely.

But why did we lose? Well, you know, everybody talks about the alleged tears in the snow outside the *Manchester Union Leader*. I don=t know. We had everything going for us in the traditional sense. Muskie had more money, more endorsements, more support than George McGovern. McGovern had an issue that he was riding more effectively than Muskie was riding the issues. Maybe there was just overconfidence in the campaign that we didn=t have to have point of issues, but to win a Democratic nomination you need to appeal to your activists and McGovern was doing that more effectively, perhaps.

There are probably a thousand reasons why it didn=t in the end win. Part of it was the way the press played things in those days. I think the press is a little more sophisticated about the way they play things. You got to really win a primary to be said to have won it. People thought we had lost the New Hampshire primary even though Muskie won it. It was very frustrating to me. I had been up in New Hampshire working in that primary. I was in charge of a phone bank in Nashua, and we were very proud that we did very well in that area of Maine [sic; actually New

Hampshire], those of us who worked on the phone bank. And we did door-to-door stuff. And I was up there for about a week or ten days before that primary I guess, they sent me and I just, everybody went up. And, but it's still a nightmare that he wasn't nominated because he should have been, and he should have been elected.

DN: After the campaign what did you do? You still had some law school time.

MB: Yes, I finished law school and then, I was fortunate despite all the time I spent on the campaign, I had done well enough in law school to get a good job. I went to Covington & Burling here in Washington as a young associate and I was there for three years. And then I was, I remained very active in Maryland Democratic politics after the Muskie effort, I remained very, very involved. And in '75 the governor of Maryland appointed me to the state public utility commission, public service commission, and I did that for three years. And then I ran for Congress in 1978 and -

DN: Which district was it?

MB: The suburbs of Washington and Montgomery County, the eighth district of Maryland. That was a situation where, you know, nobody thought I had a prayer of winning because the incumbent Republican was, you know, considered definitely going to win it. And so nobody serious ran for it. I had never run for office in my life. And none of the potentially serious candidates thought that the incumbent was vulnerable, so they didn't run. Sort of like Bill Clinton in 1992, you know, all the serious candidates for president didn't run because they knew George Bush couldn't be beaten, so Clinton ran and shocked everybody by winning.

Well that's sort of what happened to me, I won in an overwhelming landslide, fifty point one [50.1] to forty-nine point nine [49.9], with the help of Ed Muskie. And it was actually very important help because it gave me credibility. Here's this young guy, had never run for anything. But Ed Muskie campaigned for me and was very generous in lending his name and picture in all my brochures and everything. I highlighted my association with Senator Muskie as much as possible because it did, it showed that, you know, that somebody serious thought that I was okay. And he was very popular in my area and very highly regarded. And it was I'm sure just enormously helpful to me to have that association with Senator Muskie.

DN: How did that come about?

MB: That he helped me? I think, I think the intermediary that persuaded him that he should get involved and help me, I think it was Leon Billings. I'm not positive of that, but I know I didn't just pick up the phone. I didn't have that kind of relationship with him.

DN: Had you seen him at all between '72 and -

MB: This was '78. I had seen him, yeah, there'd been some, a couple of events. I don't remember, there'd been some events.

DN: But it was strictly around events, not (*unintelligible word*).

MB: Yeah, I didn't have a personal -

DN: Or a working relationship.

MB: Working rela-, I don't think I'd had any professional contact with him in that period, I don't believe I had. But the Muskie family, by that I mean those of us who had been part of that campaign, we all stayed together in many ways. And to this day some of my very best friends are people that I met then. Lanny Davis, Keith Haller, Kevin Solbin, some of the young guys that, we were all, you know, toiling in that campaign together. To this day I see them frequently and we're very, very close and have still very warm relationships with a lot of the people from the campaign. But I don't think I saw the senator during the interim there particularly other than, you know, fleeting events. And I doubt that still he really knew who I was.

DN: When did he, do you remember the first event in which he participated?

MB: Well he came to, I think it was actually the only event that he did for me in the campaign, but it was very important. It was my kickoff where I sort of announced. I'd already announced three or four times, but we kept announcing because every time I did it we'd get a little more attention. And we did an event at the Bethesda rescue squad building and I had Senator Muskie as the honored guest for this event. And he was great, he gave a nice talk and endorsed me and it was very, very helpful. It wasn't the first event I had done, but it was sort of a big kickoff in the spring of 1978. The primary was not until September so, they have a late primary in Maryland in the non-presidential years, and it was very, very important that he did that. And I think it was Leon who had arranged that.

DN: Did he give you any advice about campaigning?

MB: Well, he, I used some of his awful Maine puns and jokes on the campaign trail and loved to ascribe them to him, because it helped cement the fact that I was, you know, someone who had worked for him. I don't recall him giving me any specific advice, but I'd seen him very effectively use humor. I'd heard him up in Maine when I watched him speak a couple of times, he used that line about the Maine farmer to the cow, thank you for a warm hand on a cold morning. I'd heard that more than once. And I don't recall him giving me any specific advice about how to campaign.

DN: After your election in the House, what committees were you assigned?

MB: Well, I was lucky, I got on the foreign affairs committee which was my first choice. Although actually, I say it was lucky, not many people wanted to be on the foreign affairs committee. They all wanted to be on appropriations or commerce or, you know, the committees that control a lot of money. I wanted to be on foreign affairs, I had this interest in foreign policy.

And then, of course, the senator went to become Secretary of State while I was in the House, and I had the chance actually then, to work with him a little bit. He came and testified before my committee, and I think by then he was beginning to know who I was. And, in fact, I have a

photo on my wall of me in his office when he was Secretary of State that, again, I think Leon probably arranged for me to go over and have a chat with him and have this photo taken, which I think I used in my brochure for my reelection campaign in '80. That, yeah, that must be, yeah, that would have been when I used it. That photo got a lot of attention and he wrote a nice little inscription on it that I have here on my wall.

DN: And after, you were in the House how many terms?

MB: Four terms, from '78 until I ran for the Senate in '86.

DN: And during the period while you were in the House, and after he had served as secretary of state, did you have any continuing interchanges with him?

MB: Not a lot in that period. I'm trying to recall. I know I saw him from time to time, but nothing particularly. It was after that really, that I had the opportunity to work closely with him and get to know him far better than I ever had when I was working for him. And that was when he and I were both very heavily involved with the Center for National Policy.

DN: And how did that develop?

MB: Well I had been involved along with some other Muskieites in the founding of what became the Center for National Policy. We started, after the '72 campaign a group of us started what we called the Democratic Forum. And it met, for a while we met once a month at a home, Keith Haller=s home, up on Capitol Hill, Keith had been a campaign worker in the Muskie campaign, he=d been one of the youth coordinators. And a group of us started this thing, but we, also had pulled in a couple people from the McGovern campaign and the Jackson campaign, it was more than, but it was the, the key people were Muskieites who started this thing. Harold Wolfe was involved with us, and Lanny Davis. Anyway -

DN: Was Madeleine Albright involved at that point?

MB: A little bit I think, I think so. And then we, it became a little bigger deal and we started holding our meetings at the National Press Club. And we started inviting speakers, and I think Senator Muskie, I=m sure he was one of our speakers. And we had a lot of pretty prominent speakers, came and talked to this group of young activist Democrats at the National. . . . I think one of our earliest speakers when we did it up on Capitol Hill was Harry McPherson, I think we had him come talk to us. I remember him being at one of them, and I think he was there as a speaker. My mind may be playing tricks on me, he may have just been there to hear somebody else, but I know he was there, in Keith Haller=s living room. But, then we put on this group with what we now call, we=ve changed the name, we call it the National Democratic Forum. We started publishing a magazine called *Democratic Review* which we published for about a year and a half I guess, maybe two years.

And then when Jimmy Carter was elected president the group sort of disbanded. A lot of the people went into the administration, and so the group sort of disbanded. I ran for Congress and, but then after Reagan won in '80, Ted Van Dyke who had been involved with us in the early

group, decided to start it up again and he changed the name to the Center for National Policy. He used the same legal entity to create this new entity based on the old tax deductibility that had been obtained for the earlier organization, and etcetera, etcetera. And Ted started up the Center for National Policy.

I was in Congress at the time and helped him get it off the ground, and he put together a board. And I think his first board chair was Terry Sanford I think, I'm ninety-nine percent sure that Terry Sanford was the first board chair. And then Terry was followed by Cy Vance, who was I believe briefly board chair, and then Ed Muskie became board chair. And Ed was board chair for quite a while, I don't know how many years, but for a good long while. And when I left Congress, I became quite active with the Center. I was on the board and quite involved and had a chance to spend a fair amount of time with the senator. And ultimately he decided that he wanted to step aside in the early nineties as chair. He'd been very active. He'd traveled to Asia as chair and done a lot of other very important things with the Center, but he decided that he wanted to step down as chair. And the board decided to name him chairman emeritus of the Center, and the board asked me to serve as chair.

So I took over following Ed as chair, and served as chair from about '93 until last year when I stepped down and we got Leon Panetta to take over as chair of the board of the Center. So during that period when I was on the board and he was chair, and then during the period I was chair and he was chairman emeritus until his death, I got a chance to spend quite a bit of time with him and I really, really enjoyed that and felt very lucky. It was just always, I always looked forward to a meeting if I knew he was going to be there because I knew it would be fun, I knew it would be intellectually stimulating, and I just felt very fortunate to have that association.

DN: In those board meetings, what were the kinds of issues that you were dealing with?

MB: Well, we were talking about, we were always talking about how to raise money. But we were also talking about what policy issues to get involved in and how to do so. The Center got very involved in the Vietnam issue and whether the U.S. should normalize relations with Vietnam. And Senator Muskie took a leading role in arguing that we should. He led at least two, I think, delegations to Vietnam, of the Center. I was supposed to go on those but was not able to. My law practice at that time was, just, you know, interfered with my ability to take off and do that, so I wasn't able to go. But [Maureen] Mo Steinbruner and others from the Center went along and Mo sort of led the staff operation. And, of course, having the former secretary of state, a distinguished senator and presidential candidate was a very big deal wherever they went. And so they were welcomed as though he were a head of state over there.

And then when he came back he testified before Congress and made the case that, I believe the Center was really the first organization to make the case that the U.S. ought to normalize relations with Vietnam. And President Clinton and the Congress decided to do that.

DN: Now, it appears that the board of the Center was actively engaged in meetings not only in the housekeeping details, fund raising and overseeing the management of the Center, but also discussing and debating the substantive issues that you wanted to explore.

MB: Yes, yes, and of course having this individual who knew so much about everything related to the government. I mean here=s the guy who was the leading expert in the country on environmental issues, on the budget, on, you know, so many foreign policy issues, was just an extraordinary asset to have for an organization like the Center that was trying to help frame the national policy debate on both domestic and international issues. And terrible, terrible loss obviously in a million ways when he died, but to the Center it was a huge, huge loss.

DN: What was his style in the discussions?

MB: His style was, there was always a little humor, but a little prodding of, you know, the way he felt things ought to be going. But always very gentle, none of the temper that we sometimes hear about. I never, in my time, saw that. I guess I was never a staffer who was close enough to witness the explosions. I hear about them. I mean, when I was working on the campaign I would hear, he blew up yesterday about this or that thing, he got upset about his schedule or something. And I remember somebody saying that he yelled at him. They took in his schedule card one time and he yelled, "More white space! More white space!" He wanted less writing on his schedule card, less, fewer appointments. But in my association with him he was always thoughtful but always a little touch of humor, which I think, you know, helped him move things along toward his view in a way that I=ve tried to learn from. Maybe I=m not always successful.

But I think he set a good standard for how to get other people to think positively about what you=re trying to convey.

DN: As you look back on your own experiences in connection with him, and your knowledge of what he did, what do you think are his major contributions as a public figure over the years?

MB: Well, the environment, clean air and clean water, the federal budget process which to this day is the beneficiary of the work that he did. I would have to say those were the two most important at the national level. I=m sure Mainers can identify a lot of specific things in Maine, but those would be the ones that I would cite.

DN: Any contributions not associated with a specific issue, but the way he carried himself, did his work?

MB: Well I think he set a standard for his colleagues, and I hear this. When people hear that I worked, you know, when people who served with him in the Senate or whatever hear that I worked for him, they invariably talk about the respect that they had for him and for the dignity with which he carried himself as a senator. And that he didn=t speak on every issue in the Senate the way a lot of senators do who want to get on the evening news. He spoke a lot less frequently than many of them, so people tended to really listen when Ed Muskie got up to speak. And he clearly helped set a standard that the current political process could benefit from. We have so much screaming these days, and he was not, in public discourse, a screamer. He was a very thoughtful, calm individual in that respect. Although I saw him a couple times in committees where he could be pretty tough, but with dignity. I mean, he could be pretty tough on witnesses, now that I think back on it. I saw a couple of examples where he worked people over pretty good, but he brought a, and part of it was his bearing. He was Lincolnesque, as everybody says, and he really was. I mean, part of it was the bearing that brought a certain

dignity to everything he did.

DN: Thank you very much, Mike.

MB: Thank you.

End of Interview