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## O'Connor, Jane Frances oral history interview

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## **Interview with Jane Frances O'Connor by Don Nicoll**

*Summary Sheet and Transcript*

### **Interviewee**

O'Connor, Jane Frances

### **Interviewer**

Nicoll, Don

### **Date**

January 31, 2003

### **Place**

Washington, DC

### **ID Number**

MOH 389

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### **Biographical Note**

Jane Frances O'Connor was born March 13, 1960 in Augusta, Maine. She was one of twelve children born to Barbara (Murray) and Dr. Francis J. O'Connor, both from Dorchester, Massachusetts. Her father was head of radiology at Augusta General Hospital and president of the Augusta Rotary Club in 1965 and 1966. Her mother was an artist and musician who stayed at home while the 12 children were young. After growing up in Augusta in a nonpolitical family, Jane attended University of Southern Maine and later Trinity College in Washington, D.C. In the summer of 1980 she became an intern for Beverly Bustin-Hatheway, accompanying her travels around the state as a field representative to Senator George J. Mitchell, and spent much of the summer helping pack up Senator Muskie's papers, etc. that needed to be preserved. In June 1981, O'Connor accepted a full time position as receptionist in Senator Mitchell's office in Washington, D.C. and stayed in that position for about eight years. After George Mitchell's departure from the Senate, she went to work for a trade association in the Capitol Hill area, where she continued to work at the time of this interview.

### **Scope and Content Note**

Interview includes discussions of: family background; Muskie anecdotes; Beverly Bustin-Hatheway; George Mitchell anecdotes; U.S. Senate staff relationships; and the Washington to Maine car trip.

## **Indexed Names**

Bustin-Hatheway, Beverly  
Cory, Gayle  
Cyr, Doris  
Dennis, Janet  
Donovan, John C.  
Ford, Wendell Hampton  
Gurney, Sue  
Hutchinson, Marjorie  
Mitchell, George J. (George John), 1933-  
Moore, Dottie  
Muskie, Jane Gray  
Muskie, Edmund S., 1914-1996  
O'Connor, Jane Frances  
O'Connor, Barbara Murray  
O'Connor, Francis J.  
Sullivan, Regina

## **Transcript**

**Don Nicoll:** It is Friday, the 31st of January, 2003. We are in the offices of the Edmund S. Muskie Foundation in Washington, D.C. Don Nicoll is interviewing Jane O'Connor. Jane, would you spell your name and give us your date and place of birth?

**Jane O'Connor:** Good morning, Don. My name is Jane Frances O'Connor. I was born in Augusta, Maine on a wintry March 13th, 1960, the daughter of Barbara Murray [O'Connor] and Dr. Francis J. O'Connor, both of Dorchester, Massachusetts. I am one of twelve children, a middle child and number seven, and enjoyed growing up in Augusta, Maine.

**DN:** And where did you grow up in Augusta?

**JO:** Our house was the first dead end street off of Sewall Street, which runs right in front of the State building, right around the corner from the governor's mansion. So the O'Connor children playground was literally the Capitol complex in Augusta.

**DN:** And your father was a physician?

**JO:** My father was the head radiologist at the Augusta General Hospital, and he moved there after he finished medical school, at Tufts Medical School. He moved to Augusta with five children, and then proceeded to have twelve children in the Augusta area.

**DN:** A total of twelve.

**JO:** Excuse me, a total of twelve, proceeded to have seven additional.

**DN:** And was your mother, your mother had plenty to do at home, did she work outside the home, too?

**JO:** My mother had plenty to do at home, and she did not work outside the home until most of the O'Connor children were grown up. She was a musician and an artist, still lives in the Augusta community, and is a member of St. Mary's church, and really loves Augusta, so she's still there.

**DN:** Did your folks have an interest in politics?

**JO:** None of my parents were interested in politics. I think I was the unusual one to have an interest in politics in my family.

**DN:** Your eleven siblings did not get involved?

**JO:** None of my eleven siblings got involved. Most of them went into the medical field or the teaching field.

**DN:** Now, did you go to the Augusta schools?

**JO:** The schools I attended, the elementary, the grammar school, no, not the grammar school; the elementary school was Nash School, which is now where the secretary of state's office is. We were able to just walk down the street, and went to kindergarten there. And then a block away went eight years to St. Mary's School, which is on Western Avenue.

**DN:** Right at the corner of Sewall.

**JO:** On the corner of Sewall and Western. And I also, then went on to Cony High School in Augusta, and from there I went to the University of Southern Maine for two years. And then my travels brought me to Washington where I completed my undergraduate work at Trinity College in Washington, D.C.

**DN:** And when did you first get connected with the Muskie entourage?

**JO:** Well, I was thinking back to my very first introduction to Ed Muskie. I think I was about six or seven years old, and we had a summer camp on China Lake, and it was one weekend that my father decided to take us all to a chicken lunch or some type of fund raiser for Ed Muskie. And so he piled probably six or seven of us in the car and we all went to some big grange hall. And I can remember as a young girl, very, very small, six or seven, looking up and wrangling to try to shake Ed Muskie's hand. And at the time he had this huge hand and was very, very tall, and very impressive to a young girl. And I remember shaking his hand and being amazed at how big his hand was. He had sort of a Lincolnesque look to me, very, very tall. And that was my first introduction to Ed Muskie. I understand he had a house on China Lake as well, I think it

was called The Birches.

**DN:** Yes, that was at the south end of China Lake.

**JO:** Right, and ours is near Kildare Point which, we have family still living there today.

**DN:** Now, so you met him as a child and had a chance to reach up and shake his hand. And what was your next encounter?

**JO:** My next encounter was as a student at the University of Southern Maine. I had served on their student senate for the University of Southern Maine, and had been talking with my guidance counselor, Dottie Moore, whose daughter worked for Ed Muskie as an intern in Washington. And she was the one that gave me the idea that you could work in Washington, as her daughter did, and sort of led me into that direction. I subsequently came home from college that year and mentioned it to my parents, and they said, "Well just walk up the road and talk to Dan Hickey," who, of course, was a state representative and lived right down the street from us. So I went and knocked on Dan Hickey's door, and Rita Hickey answered the door. And I indicated that I was home for the summer and would be happy to volunteer in any capacity for Dan, or work in the legislature. And Rita said, "Well very interestingly enough, next Monday we're having a fund raiser for Bev Bustin." And, "Why don't you come over to that event and you can meet Bev?"

And certainly I did and I met Beverly Bustin-Hatheway, and Beverly was running for the senate seat representing Augusta and Winslow. And I explained to her that I would be more than happy to volunteer and so she hired me on the spot as an intern for her in the Waterville office, that time of Senator Mitchell. And I told her I didn't have a car, but I commuted with her from Augusta to Waterville that whole summer, and spent most of my time working on the Muskie archives and packing all the boxes for Senator Muskie. And at the same time I, on the weekends, not only did I waitress at Howard Johnson's, I worked on Beverly's senate campaign and that gave me a great background in how state campaigns are run by women, and how they get elected, from door to door campaigning, to marching around the rotary circles holding signs, to absentee ballots, to a great overview on how to run a senate campaign.

**DN:** Was that your first real involvement in politics?

**JO:** That was my first real involvement in politics and I enjoyed it tremendously. I enjoyed working with Beverly, she was very outgoing, and was very willing to share her knowledge of service to a young nineteen-year-old.

**DN:** This would have been the summer of 1980.

**JO:** That would be the summer of 1980.

**DN:** Now you were working with Beverly, and Beverly was then the field director, I believe was the title, for the senator as well as a legislator. And you gave me a brief description of her and her commitments. What kind of a person was she, what was her personality from your point

of view?

**JO:** Well, Beverly was a divorced mother raising two children, very hard driving, up early in the morning, up late at night, nonstop mover. Someone that listened to people, worked well with people, she had a lot of constituents who she would work on different case work. I understand, I think she was the only, the first female that Ed Muskie had on his staff in that position of field director, which was quite unusual. I do understand that Muskie at one point was challenged that he didn't have any women on his staff, at some public meeting, and he said, "Well, what do you call Beverly?" So I respect Ed for that, you know, giving women a chance to move up in political office, if you will.

**DN:** Who were the other staff members in that Waterville office?

**JO:** The Waterville office had two case workers, Sue Gurney and Janet Dennis, both women who were very helpful in teaching you how to take cases over the phone and how to follow through with the various federal agencies depending on what the concern of the constituent was. They, I understand Sue had worked for, it could have been the senator from Hawaii, at one point. I know she was from Hawaiian ancestry and had worked for both Senator Muskie and then Senator Mitchell as caseworkers. So they were very familiar with the field staff and how to operate the office, and staff the senator when he would come into the area for town meetings and appointments.

**DN:** Now what recollections do you have of the kinds of materials you were packing away for the Muskie Archives?

**JO:** Well, as an intern, you get various assignments. And when I started in June of 1980, I was working for Senator Mitchell. The Waterville field office seemed to be the field office for Senator Muskie that happened to house a lot of the archives. I understand that he was a young lawyer in Waterville at one point, his, he met his wife, Jane Frances Gray, she's also a Jane Frances, we have that in common, and I was able to pack all the photographs of Muskie's career, the old Senate black framed picture, black and white photographs of when Muskie was governor and when he was an early attorney in Waterville. And we had an unusual swordfish, it was a blue swordfish that was mounted on wood, and it was hanging up. And I always, I always got a kick out of, "How are we going to pack that blue swordfish that happened to be sitting in the office?" But we had, you know, a lot of his files of course as governor and as an attorney in Waterville, and so I got really to understand his life as a legislator just by looking through those pictures.

**DN:** They also had the scrapbooks, I believe, that Marjorie Hutchinson and her sister Doris Cyr kept over the years.

**JO:** Right, right. So the Waterville office seemed to have a lot of the historical files of Muskie, so I was lucky enough to help pack those and ship those on to the Archives.

**DN:** Did you have an opportunity to observe the staff members in relation to Senator Mitchell during that summer?

**JO:** I did. Senator Mitchell was appointed in May of 1980, is that correct? I'm not sure.

**DN:** I think that's right.

**JO:** And so he was in Washington and we would, I think we didn't see him as much, but one of the jobs was to clip all the articles from the local newspapers and fax them or send them to Washington so that at least he would be up to date with the issues in the area. And I do remember him coming to the Waterville area for possibly meetings. But I spent more time with Beverly as a field rep, going let's say, driving all the way to Jackman, Maine for a town meeting and seeing how she would sit and listen to the people and take down a lot of information, representing Senator Mitchell. Because Maine's a big state and it's very hard to be all places at all times, and it's a vital job for the field representative to represent the senator. So I probably only maybe saw Senator Mitchell once during that summer, and then subsequently was offered a position to go back on the staff as a receptionist in June of 1981, to move to Washington, and which I did.

**DN:** So you continued at USM through the fall and winter of '80-'81.

**JO:** Actually, that fall I decided to take classes at the University of Maine at Augusta, continue to work on Beverly's campaign, and I also worked for the secretary of state in Maine, in their election division and helped them process all the paper ballots to the State. I was under, at the time it was Jim Henderson who was the secretary of state, so I did that and it gave me an opportunity to continue to work on Beverly's campaign and see how the campaign worked, as well as work, finish, take some classes and finish. And I did that through I think May of 1981, and moved to Washington in '81 when I was offered a position as a receptionist in Washington for Senator Mitchell.

**DN:** And that's when you transferred to Trinity.

**JO:** That's when I, I moved to Washington, no I worked full time probably for three years before I was able to build up enough money. I was full time on staff, so I ended up finishing school part time and during the week to finish those last two years that I had not completed. And Senator Mitchell was very helpful to me in letting me take, let's say, an early morning nine o'clock class, which means I'd come in the office at ten-thirty. And then I would finish up, Trinity has this weekend program where you can take weekend classes as well, so it took me a little bit longer, but I had an exciting job to fill that out with, and I could pay my own way through. It was interesting, the decision to come to Washington. When I was at USM, I realized that if I even had finished my degree and even got a job in teaching, the money that I was offered as a receptionist in Washington was more money than if I had finished my degree at USM and then even found a job teaching. So for me, I realized what a difficult road that was, and for me working in Washington and saving money and being able to go back part-time, I would have, if I had been given the choice again I would have chosen that because of the rich experience I had working in the Senate.

**DN:** What was it like moving from Maine and the relative quiet of the Waterville office into

the Senate office and there being a receptionist for Senator Mitchell?

**JO:** Well, it's interesting. There's this unwritten rule when you work in a field office and then you move to the Washington office, that the Washington office really doesn't know what's going on in the field office, and how hard the field office staff works, and I can just remember that. And moving to Washington from a quiet field office, and out of Maine, was a big deal. Washington, D.C. was a big city. I moved down with a trunk and a drafting lamp, that's all I came to Washington, D.C. with. And the best thing about moving to the Washington office was that we were a family, we always were a family, and that's why we had such loyalty on the staff. And we had Gayle Cory who, of course, worked many years for Senator Mitchell and Muskie; was like the mother in the office. She did the scheduling, so she was always there if you needed anything. So for a young woman, she was always there to help guide you and make sure that you were well taken care of, if you will. So the difference between the field office and the Washington office was, there was always this conflict about, you know, they really don't know how hard we work up here, and they get all the glory in Washington. It was very interesting.

**DN:** Were you able to offer corrections?

**JO:** Yes, I was, I was. You know, the field offices are relatively small, maybe two or three people maximum working, and then in Washington we had close to twenty-four or twenty-five, and the legislative staff were the ones that were really tracking what was happening on the floor for the senator, and that was kind of a totally different role. The constituent services role is so different than the legislative role, and I think, you know, there's, got to be vying for, 'my job's more important' kind of thing, if you will, because we're with the people back in the field staff, and you're in Washington.

**DN:** And what kinds of people were you dealing with as a receptionist?

**JO:** I loved my job. And the best thing about being a receptionist is you get to meet everybody in the state, from every different constituent group, every trade association who has a lobbying presence in Washington would come to Washington to meet the senator and talk about their issues, everything from the funeral directors to the home builders, to the, I don't know, to the florists, to the realtors, to the, any of the groups in Maine, you really got to meet people in Maine. You got to meet, state reps would come down, you would meet constituents, you just got to meet everybody in Maine.

And I had a map of Maine, and I had the framing shop frame it, and they didn't put glass on it, but I took a red pin and any time we had a visitor from Maine I'd put a pin on the map, and you could see the distribution of where everybody was from. So you really covered the whole state, so you got to not only meet Maine people but dignitaries that would come in to lobby the senator. Senator Muskie and Senator Mitchell were both on Environment and Public Works committee, and I think Senator Muskie was on the Budget committee, Senator Mitchell was on Finance, so you would get people, because of the finance related things, you would always get to meet people, other than Mainers, if you will.

**DN:** And how long did you continue as receptionist?



**JO:** I think I continued as receptionist probably for about eight years. And I trained all the interns that came in in the summer, I probably trained about a hundred, a hundred and twenty interns, young kids from Maine that were just doing this for the summer, or with a college, working a semester and moving back. So you really got to meet the sons and daughters of, you know, people in Maine, and they now are grown up and having their own, which was an exciting position.

**DN:** And during that period, particularly in the, through the eighties, did you get a chance to meet Senator Muskie again?

**JO:** Many times. One of the things that Gayle Cory used to search for every year was to get someone to drive the Muskie car to the Kennebunk home for the summer. It seemed like Jane and the kids, some of the kids, would want to spend the summer, as anybody would, in Kennebunk, Maine, in the summer. And so Gayle would try to get a young staffer to drive the car. The car would be packed to the gills with luggage and plants and orchids, and sometimes a little dog, and we'd get it the day before, and then spend all day driving the car to Maine, and the car would then be unloaded, and that way Jane and the family could fly up and by the end of the day they would have the heavier bags and the things they needed for the summer.

So I always thought this was one way to get a free vacation, and we have a family place in Kennebunkport, so I did this for probably close to almost the twenty years that I've been here in Washington. So I would always get over to the house, and Ed would help pack the bags in the back trunk. And one thing I noticed about him, he was so good about organizing the bags to fit perfectly, like a jigsaw puzzle in the back of the trunk. And Jane loved plants, so she would always have some orchids and some plants all piled in the back seat, you could hardly see in the back. And I can remember one time there was this long leafed plant, I think it was probably a (*pothos??*), and everything was packed to the gills and so Senator Muskie then put this plant, and he was just trying to get everything in the door and close the door, and one of the plant vines were caught in the door and it broke. So Ed just kind of looked around to see if Jane was anywhere in sight, and then just kicked the vine underneath the car, which I thought was just so funny. He says, "Nobody sees it here." But he was a genius at packing the back of the car.

So I used to drive that car twice a year to Maine. Sometimes I'd go up at Christmas time and that would be an opportunity for me to go up to our family place in Kennebunkport and stay with my Republican aunts who lived in Kennebunkport. And that's my mother's side of the family, they were the McCabes, and they have had property in Kennebunkport for many years.

**DN:** I forgot to ask you earlier, were your parents Democrats or Republicans?

**JO:** My parents were Democrats. They loved Ed Muskie, and they loved George Mitchell. You know, they say that there's thing about children voting the way their parents vote, so when you do polls in elementary school you can really find out how the parents really want to vote. But I can remember, for example, when George Mitchell ran for governor and I remember his ads, and I remember asking my parents, "Well, who do you like?" And they said, "George Mitchell." And that sort of, I kept my eye on George Mitchell after that. I thought, hmm, okay,

he's able, he's bright, he's intelligent. The only thing about Senator Mitchell was that he came across on his ads with his dark glasses as kind of stern, a little bit unapproachable, a little bit stern. And while he lost that primary, you know, and I think in subsequent years he got softer glasses, and he was, he learned to be much more approachable as a politician, if you will, or a legislator. He seemed to relax a little bit more, laugh a little bit more, and I think people like that, you know, they feel like -.

**DN:** Did you, now obviously your first impressions of him from that campaign probably differed from your impressions of him when you went to work for him.

**JO:** Right, right. Well, that was in '7-, I think he ran in '76, I was sixteen years old at the time. And then when I moved to Washington I was twenty-one, after when I was twenty working with Bev and getting the feeling of how to run a senate campaign and how to staff, work in a field office. I had had a good grounding, so when I moved to Washington I really was very fortunate to be able to have the experience I had. And he was very respectful; we always had a respect, a very healthy respect. There was a distance between the senator and his staff, there was no joking around. It was always Senator; never, ever called him George. I can even remember Gayle Cory, who of course worked with him in Senator Muskie's office, you know, never calling him George either, even though they were of the same age range, you know. Very, very respectful, and he took things very methodically, you know, always very, very thoughtful.

**DN:** Did you get a sense of the differences between Senator Mitchell and Senator Muskie?

**JO:** Yes, I did. Senator Muskie was fortunate to have a wonderful companion and wife in Jane. Jane is easy to talk to, gentle, caring, and he was fortunate to have a good partner in Jane, and to have five children who were good kids, you know, they were not snobby, not stuck up. But you know, they very well, could have easily in the exposure and the experience they had, but they were just a good family. I think that probably was a great grounding for Senator Muskie, you know, a family dog, whereas Senator Mitchell had a different type of family at that time. He had just one child, and um, you know, he didn't seem to have that strong family unity that I think Muskie had. And I think, you know, you can't, you can't underestimate how strong a family is to grow up with. Subsequently, of course, Senator Mitchell now has a larger family, and that pleases me greatly because I always felt that he was a very kind, fatherly type, like Muskie would have been.

**DN:** Now, you observed Senator Mitchell from the time, almost from the time he became a senator through to . . . .

**JO:** When he retired in '94.

**DN:** And did he change much over the years?

**JO:** You know, that's a good question. I had an opportunity to work with him, not, I was a receptionist so I was sort of, sort of the gatekeeper, if you will, and I find that, I didn't find that he changed too, too much. To me he was always wonderful, he was always, I could always make him laugh.

I can tell you this funny story, one time, when you answer the phones in a Senate office, it's very busy and many senators had two people answering the phones. But in our office, being the frugal person Senator Mitchell was, he only had one person. So I was madly answering all these lines, all the personal calls of the staff and all the senators who were calling in, and it was quite a juggling job, if you will, bouncing the phones.

And I can remember one Thursday afternoon I was really, you know, just, I couldn't wait until Friday, couldn't wait until the week was over. So I decided that I'd do something, you know, a little bit different. So when I answered the phone, instead of the normal "Senator Mitchell's office, may I help you?" I decided to put on a Spanish accent. And I said (*speaking with Spanish accent*), "Senator Mitchell's office, may I help you?" And the person on the other end of the line said, "Get me Lynn, please." And I said, "May I tell her who's calling?" And he said, "This is the senator." And then I said, "Oh no," I was caught. So I transferred the call to his secretary at the time, and I said, "Lynn, it's the senator. Can you pick it up?" And then I thought, "Oh no, I'm going to be fired." He was over in the cloak room and he was calling back to the staff. And then, so I was waiting the whole time thinking, "Oh no, I messed up. He's going to kill me." So he walked by the front door and looked in and he said, "Senorita, that was a funny way you answered the phone today." And I said, and he kind of had a smile and a twinkle in his eye, and I said, "Well, Senator, you can tell it's almost Friday." And so, it was interesting, I never, ever fooled around like that again. But he handled it pretty well.

And there was another time early on in which Jane Muskie was visiting the Senate for the Senate wives blood drive I think, or for their monthly meeting. And Jane had a camel haired coat, and she had black leather gloves, and she hung her coat in the reception office and then, you know, she would have the luncheon with the ladies and then come back. It had to be around Christmas time, because Regina Sullivan and I went out to get the office Christmas tree, which we would go someplace and then stick it in my car, my Chevy Chevette hatchback, and drive it back to the office and then have the shop downstairs build a stand for it, and we'd have a Christmas tree in the reception office. One of the interns at the time also had a camel haired coat, and she was quite a tall gal, so I thought I was taking her coat. So I took what I thought was the intern's coat, but then when we were in I said, wow, these are pretty nice gloves for an intern, oh well. And I was, we were on our way getting the Christmas tree.

Well, when I came back, it turned out that I had Jane Muskie's coat. And, boy, did I get a chewing out from the AA at the time who said, "You don't realize, we don't do this to the Muskies, these are the Muskies. Jane's been waiting for her coat." Well, the funny thing is, I really don't believe Jane was that upset, but it was like the staff, it was like, 'we don't do anything to the Muskies, they are the Muskies', you know. Because of course, you know, Muskie was very well respected by the Mitchell staff, of course, so.

**DN:** Did you have any opportunities to observe Senator Muskie and Senator Mitchell together?

**JO:** Not really. I think Senator Muskie was then with Chadbourne, Parke [law firm], I think at that point, and I think they would probably talk on the phone a lot. I don't remember Senator Muskie coming that often to the Hill unless he was representing a client, and in that case it was

very respectful I think, as a relationship.

**DN:** How important was the Maine connection for Senator Mitchell? Did he feel it very important to get back to the state, even during the period when he was majority leader?

**JO:** He really did. I was really impressed, and of course you can see this in the archives of all the schedules, Senator Mitchell went home every weekend, every weekend the scheduling staff had to book a flight back to Maine. So he'd be gone on Friday when the Senate recessed, and come back on Monday or Tuesday, whenever the Senate would come back in. So he was home every weekend, and had a full schedule. He was tireless. Most of the time the Senate schedule starts at nine, if you look at the committee, the schedules of the committee hearings. And so the day would start at nine, which in Maine terms wasn't early at all but in Washington that was the time things started, and it would go into the evening. Not only would the Senate business be late into the evening, often he would have to do fund raisers. And so the life of a legislator, while it appears glamorous, is very exhausting. And I could tell, I could tell how much of a, how exhausting the weekend travel would have been every weekend for him. But he was able to maintain quite a presence and not show how exhausted he could be at times.

**DN:** Now through those years, he assumed more and more national responsibilities, first as the campaign committee chair for the Democrats, and then as majority leader. That must have put added pressures on you.

**JO:** Well, with seniority comes a lot of benefits. When Senator Mitchell was chairman of the DSCC and the Democrats won, I think this was in '86, control of the Senate, they created a position, deputy president pro tem of the Senate, which they gave to Senator Mitchell. And along with that came a small office in the Capitol, a hideaway, and it was a beautiful office facing right down the mall, and we moved two staffers over to that office. And then, of course, as majority leader, we had a larger staff and the opportunity to have more people help out on the staff, and a larger office. So I just find that Senator Mitchell was brilliant. Often, he remembers the Muskie years. When Gayle came in in 1958 she said there were only three people in the office, it was herself, the senator, and probably you, Don.

**DN:** No, it was, John Donovan.

**JO:** John Mc..., John Donovan. So they opened all the mail, answered all the calls, and really ran that office. When Mitchell came on Muskie's staff, it probably was after he was established as a senator and they had more people. I think Mitchell always remembers back to the Muskie years when things were lean, and you could do things with a smaller staff. So he was one that they always say really didn't need as much staff. Most of his stuff was in his head. He spoke slowly, but you could tell his wheels were going. And you could never, he was very careful in every, he was very methodical in everything he said. They always say that they didn't have to correct the Congressional Record because most of the time it was almost perfect, if you will.

So even from when I handled the photographs for Senator Mitchell, many people wanted autographs of Senator Mitchell, and the photograph he had was a black and white photograph. We did have a color photograph, but he just remembers the Muskie years where you just sat,

took a black and white picture and made the copies of that, and that's how frugal he was. He remembers the Muskie years when the Senate was a lot smaller, and the staffs were a lot smaller, and I think he always kept to that frugal nature.

Another thing he did was he never, he very rarely took foreign trips. He did a couple of (*sounds like: codells*), I think he went to Russia once, but he didn't want to appear that he wasn't doing what he was elected to do, and that's what, he always kept the connection back with the state.

So, the pressure obviously was heavy when he was majority leader, but as an astute attorney he was able to get these ninety-nine egos to compromise, and that was his skill, was compromise. Getting to listen to everybody and somehow come up with a fair resolution to a lot of the issues as majority leader. He, he was, he always, I just never saw him lose his cool, you know, he was able to keep it. And I think I read somewhere that he said that "If you lose your cool, you lose the argument." So he was always listening and trying to find solutions, like a good judge.

**DN:** Did he influence the staff not to lose their cool?

**JO:** No, we had some real quirky staff people that always would run around and, you know, be really, you know, self important about the issue that they're representing. And we always had to keep our memos down to one page, you know, one or two pages, but. Mitchell was a good reader, very studied, could read it, knew it, maintained a lot.

**DN:** And when you finished with Senator Mitchell, and Senator Mitchell finished with the Senate, you went off to work -?

**JO:** Right. You know, that was a tough time. Mitchell made his announcement in March, and after working in the Senate for close to thirteen and a half years or so, it was a real family, I mean the staff was a family. And it was like the break up of a family, often, it was really hard to, after working for a long time in the Senate and loving the job, I, it was trying to decide where to go from there.

And I ended up knowing some folks that worked at a trade association in Washington D.C. that represents hospice and home health care. And home health care was a big issue for Senator Mitchell, so they were familiar with Senator Mitchell's stands, particularly when he was majority leader. And I had known a number of people in the Senate who I had worked with, who had subsequently gone there, so that I had ended up going to a trade association. And I've been there with the exception of one year in between ever since, so that's been about seven years, six or seven years.

**DN:** So you're still enjoying public arena in a way.

**JO:** I am indeed; our offices are about seven blocks from the Capitol, right across from Eastern Market, so yeah. I really like Capitol Hill. It's so funny, someone used to say, well Janie, you get off Capitol Hill, you don't know where you're going. Because Capitol Hill can be all encompassing, you know. As a young staffer you could really look at the senator's schedule and find out where all the receptions were and go and then eat all the free food at the receptions, it

was really easy. You know, a lot of fun.

We had softball teams, baseball teams, I played softball with Senator [Wendell Hampton] Ford from Kentucky, their office was across the hall from ours for years. And they had a football team, a coed football team, I played with them, and then every year of course we had a softball team, and that's what the interns liked to do, go down to the Mall at three o'clock and wait there to hold the field, and then the rest of the team would come down after work. So that's one of the great things about the Senate, there's a lot of a -

**DN:** Has the Senate and Senate staff relationships changed over the years that you've been there and around the Hill?

**JO:** Every senator is different, every senator's personality is different, so it really is dictated by the senator and how he operates and how. For example, Senator Ford from Kentucky, who I mentioned his office was across the hall, he was someone that would come to our softball games, and then take us out to Hawk and Dove, and he'd pay for the burgers and the beer afterwards. I can't see Senator Mitchell doing that, he's too frugal. But he was very approachable, he liked to be called Wendell, for example. Senator Mitchell we never thought about calling him anything but Senator, and I'm sure the same thing with Senator Muskie. And one of the interesting little things is we always called them by their initials. Like, if you looked at the schedule, ESM, Edmund S. Muskie was [sounds like] "Esem". And the Senator Mitchell, George J. Mitchell, GJM was [sounds like] "Jijem", so you'd see the schedule it would say "Jijem" schedule, and that was like our little nicknames, if you will, of the senator in the Senate staff.

**DN:** As you look back, what do you think you learned most of all from working for Senator Mitchell?

**JO:** Oh, that's a tough question. I can't really answer that with anything but, I really liked the way he handled people. He was very respectful with anybody that came in the office, he listened, he looked in their eyes, he listened, and was very thoughtful. And that's what I learned from him, I learned always to respect someone no matter what their issue is, no matter what their position is on anything. And um, you know, he was very gifted.

**DN:** And looking back on your experiences with Senator Muskie, did you learn anything beyond how to pack the car well?

*[laughter]*

**JO:** Well, I learned that he was somebody that whenever I was around him I felt like I was in the presence of something important, and you don't get that feeling very often. So you just try to pay attention. And he was a good man.

**DN:** Thank you very much, Jane.

**JO:** Thank you, Don.

*End of Interview*