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Gurney, Sue oral history interview

Andrea L'Hommedieu

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Interview with Sue Gurney by Andrea L’Hommedieu

Summary Sheet and Transcript

Interviewee

Gurney, Sue

Interviewer

L’Hommedieu, Andrea

Date

June 9, 1999

Place

Winslow, Maine

ID Number

MOH 108

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Biographical Note

Asuzena “Sue” (Saturnio) Gurney was born in Uma Uma, Hawaii on October 23, 1939. Her parents were Miriam Bartives and Marcelino Saturnio. Her mother was a homemaker, and her father worked on a sugar plantation. They were divorced, and her mother married Martin Kindlepp, who ended up raising Sue and her siblings. She attended Honolulu Business College, and shortly after graduation, moved to Washington to work for Senator Oren Long. She moved to Maine in 1963 when Senator Long left office. In 1970, Sue was hired by Marjorie Hutchinson to work in Ed Muskie’s Waterville field office during the 1970 Senate Campaign. She became a full time employee in 1972. She continued her career with Senator George Mitchell in 1980, retiring when he left office in 1994. At the time of this interview, she lived in Winslow, Maine.

Scope and Content Note

Interview includes discussions of: moving to Washington from Hawaii; moving to Maine; getting hired by Marjorie Hutchinson; Muskie’s Waterville, Maine office; expansion of the Maine offices over time; Marjorie Hutchinson; Waterville political figures; issues in Maine; Colby College sit-in; clean water legislation; changes in Maine offices; impressions of Senator Muskie; Muskie’s family; and comparison with George Mitchell offices.

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Transcript

Andrea L'Hommedieu: This is an interview with Sue Gurney on June 9th, 1999 at her home in Waterville, Maine. Miss Gurney, could you start by telling me your full name and spelling it?

Sue Gurney: First of all, this is Winslow, Maine.

AL: I'm sorry, we're in Winslow, Maine.

SG: Okay, my full name actually is Asuzena Gurney. I'll spell that, it's A-S-U-Z-E-N-A, my maiden name is Saturnio, S-A-T-U-R-N-I-O, Gurney, G-U-R-N-E-Y.

AL: And when and where were you born?

SG: I was born in Hilo, Hawaii, well it's Uma Uma, U-M-A, U-M-A, Hawaii, the big island of Hawaii on October 23, 1939.

AL: And is that where you grew up?

SG: I grew up actually in Hilo.

AL: And when did you come to the United States?

SG: I came to the United States in 1960.

AL: To Washington, D.C.?

SG: To Washington, D.C., I worked for Senator Oren E. Long.

AL: How do you spell that?

SG: Oren E. Long, O-R-E-N, E, I can't remember his middle name.

AL: That's okay.

SG: Esselbert, I think it was. Long, L-O-N-G. He was the first Democratic senator from Hawaii, when we became a state in August 1959, and he went to kind of set up the congressional offices and Congressman Daniel Inouye was the first Democratic representative at the time, and then Senator Fong was the Republican senator from Hawaii.

AL: And how did you get involved politically in Hawaii, what interested you to go that route?

SG: Well actually I was, I had just graduated from Honolulu Business College and I just, and I was working for the ILW, I had just graduated in August and I worked for the union in September. And in January I had a call from the job placement person at the college and he said that Senator Long's office had contacted him to see if he could recommend an individual. They wanted a Filipino person, because he was staffing his staff with different nationalities because Hawaii is multi-racial, and he had a Japanese person, Caucasian, Hawaiian, and they were looking for a Filipino girl to work in the office, and my college recommended me. So she said to go down for the interview and I did, and that's how they hired me, and that's how I went to Washington, D.C. on the staff.

AL: Now, what were the names of your parents?

SG: My mother's name is Miriam Bartives, her maiden name, and Kindlepp. My father's name was Marcelino (*unintelligible word*), and they were divorced when I was about third grade and she married Martin Kindlepp, my stepfather, and he raised me since I was three years old.

AL: How many children were there in your family?

SG: There are nine, seven girls and two boys.

AL: What was your place in the family in terms of age?

SG: I was the fourth.

AL: And what responsibilities did you have, being the fourth child?

SG: Well, I think we kind of took care of each other, you know, back then with a big family, they all kind of had to look out for each other and we had our chores to do. I remember mine was more the outdoor work, taking care of the yard and the gardens because there weren't that many boys. My oldest was my brother, and then the youngest was a brother, so in between were the seven girls.

AL: Has anyone else in your family besides yourself been politically active?

SG: No.

AL: What were your parents' occupations?

SG: My mother's a homemaker, and my father worked for the Hilo sugar plantation at the time.

AL: And what were their religious beliefs?

SG: They were Catholic.

AL: What were their political and social attitudes, were they involved in the community in Hawaii?

SG: I don't remember, but I remember my sister telling me that my mother used to teach the Filipino laborers that came, because they hired the laborers from the Philippines and she taught them English and how to be, I didn't realize it but my sister told me and I was kind of proud to hear that.

AL: What were your parents' relationships with different ethnic groups in the community? I know you mentioned that Hawaii has a lot of different

SG: It's multi-racial, yes. Well, our community was, well it's all races. I remember we had Japanese neighbors on one side, and the other side there's Filipino, and down was Portuguese, and up was Chinese, and down the road were Hawaiians.

AL: So there wasn't separate communities for?

SG: Well they, there's a community, but like one row of houses was Japanese, and, you know, the other side was Filipino, then the down side was some Portuguese people and Hawaiian people. They kind of lived around each other, but still it was, they did things together as a community, I remember that very well.

AL: How did your family affect you as you grew up as far as your outlook, your beliefs and your attitudes?

SG: I think it's coming from a big family and with all mixed races and different languages, you know, we all had to learn each other's languages, a little bit of it, you know, to communicate. I learned to, I think it taught me how to get along with people and to be honest with them and to help each other and live as a community, because I remember everything was together in the community, and the family. I think that's what I learned.

AL: Do you feel that you're much like your parents in your outlook?

SG: I think so.

AL: What were some of the other influences on you when you were growing up, outside of your family? Teachers, or?

SG: Yeah, I think my teachers, I believe, when I look back, we had an excellent educational system and the caring and the discipline and the, I think just getting along with no prejudices and stuff like that. I remember when, at the elementary school I think I was in the sixth grade, there

was a student who had cerebral palsy, if I remember now, because I remember we had to take turns who wanted to volunteer to help her to go through her therapy, it was in another building and, you know, stuff like that. And I remember I used to volunteer to go and I enjoyed watching, taking her and watching her get her therapy and stuff like that. But those are some of the things.

And at the high school I had a, my, our business education teacher, business course, she saw that I guess I was good at secretarial skills and she, you know, kept asking me to do more typing and stuff, and then she had me go to the principal's office and help him in the office. And I remember doing letters for the principal and taking dictation and typing and doing office work, and so that kind of encouraged me to go into that field.

AL: When and where did you meet your husband?

SG: In Washington, D.C. He was in the Air Force at the time, at the, stationed at Boling Air Force Base, and I met him there.

AL: Can you tell me a little bit about your time in Washington, D.C.? Before we started recording, you told me a little bit about how you came to connect with the Maine delegation as it were.

SG: Okay, when I worked for, when I was hired by Senator Oren Long's office, he mentioned that it's just going to be for four years, because we were so homesick. I was only nineteen at that time and, all of us were young, the staff people, and he said, "Well, you know, just be patient," he said, "you guys, it's just going to be for four years and then, you know, I'm not running again and you guys can all go home." So at the, when, in '93 [sic] when he got done, Senator Long got done, well I got married, my husband and I got married in the meantime in '62 and he was due to get out of the Air Force at that time, so, and we were going to move to Maine, so I thought of, you know, maybe finding a job in Maine since we were going to be moving to Maine. And Senator Margaret Smith's office was next to ours and I went to her office to see if she had any job openings over there in Maine, and she told me that she doesn't have an office in Maine, everything is worked out in the D.C. office, and she recommended, you know, going to see Senator Muskie's office because they had an office in Maine. So I went to see Senator Muskie's office, and I believe it was, I went to see Don Nicoll, I think he was the one that interviewed me and mentioned that they, you know, weren't hiring and they just had a small office in Waterville. But, and to stop in and meet Marge when I do go up to Wa-, when we do move up to Waterville.

AL: So then you moved up to Waterville in '63?

SG: In '63, in '63, yeah.

AL: And stopped in the office?

SG: Yeah, and I introduced myself to Marge and mentioned, you know, that I was referred by Don to say hello and stuff like that. And if she needed help to let me know, I'd be glad to come down and help and type, whatever she needed. And then I was surprised when she called me in 1970 to ask if I was interested in working for the senator, Muskie's senatorial campaign, and that's, and I did. And I think it was just for three months, until the campaign was over, the

election, and then I think the next year, that was in 1970 and I believe in '71 she asked if I wanted to work in the office because Janet Dennis was working there and I think she was tak-, she got done because she was going to have her baby. And so I went in and I worked there ever since. It started as a part time, just helping her do typing and helping Doris, her sister Doris Cyr, with the newspaper clippings, and then it developed to more work and then the other offices started to open up.

AL: Now tell me your, what were your impressions of Marge Hutchinson?

SG: Marge was special. She was, she was such a, first of all she's very intelligent and proud, you know. Not egotistically proud, but a proud woman I thought, and very loyal to the senator. She was an ideal employer for anybody I thought, (*unintelligible phrase*), she's so loyal and dedicated.

AL: And her sister Doris also worked in the office?

SG: Doris Cyr, yes.

AL: What was Doris' role in the office?

SG: Doris did the press clippings. I think if you look in the archives there's a lot of clippings, and that was Doris' collections, she did all the clippings and read the papers. And I think what they did was a lot of the PR work I noticed, like if they saw somebody had a baby or somebody died, that was what they did, they sent out the condolences or greetings or, and notified the senator, whatever needed to be done. But they were the contacts for, you know, what was going on.

AL: Now how many were there working in the Waterville office?

SG: At the time it was just Marge and Doris, and then, when I came on board, it was just three.

AL: And Janet Dennis was, left when you came on?

SG: Yes.

AL: Did she come back later?

SG: After the, after the campaign office, Janet worked at the campaign office also, and appar-, and she worked for the office. I didn't want to work full time, but Janet then, by then she was expecting a baby so she got done and that's when Marge asked if I wanted to do it, so I started just like two days a week or some, like three hours a day. It was very limited because I didn't want to work, I still had my children and until my youngest started school full time, then I went on to the full time. I didn't want a full time until then. So that was I believe until '72, then I was on the staff payroll and then worked full time.

AL: And how did Marge, what was her style of running the office?

SG: She was very, very efficient and I think she, she did very well I thought.

AL: How did she?

SG: She was well respected by everybody and very well liked, and she knew what she was doing. And she had a close relationship with the senator and the staff in Washington, so, and the Muskie family, Jane especially. They would call her a lot. For, you know, family matters because Marge had all the records and the knowledge of, you know, anybody they knew and if they needed help. I remember one time she said, they depended so much on Marge, like she said they, Jane thought they couldn't find the birth certificate and Marge knew where it was, that kind of stuff.

AL: The Waterville area, how have you seen it change over the years, politically, from the time that you moved here in '63?

SG: There's not much activity and participation and interest, I think. It's kind of waning. I guess because the, this Muskie generation I think, you know, a lot of them are gone and the younger ones aren't stepping up.

AL: Are there others that you worked with or know in the community who may still be living from Muskie's era that you think would be valuable sources for this project?

SG: I was just trying to write this, and Clayton Laverdiere, I thought of Clayton Laverdiere. He was an editor for *The Morning Sentinel*, and he's still alive. And he's still in the area.

AL: Anyone else?

SG: I think Al Bernier, I think he was a mayor at one time.

AL: Yes.

SG: And his wife Alice. Sheldon Ward, I don't know if he's still around.

AL: What's the last name?

SG: Sheldon Ward, W-A-R-D. (*Unintelligible phrase*) but he died. And Dick McMahon was (*unintelligible phrase*). I remember Sheldon and Dick McMahon and Muskie were always together. Pat [Patricia] Gorman, Peter Gorman.

AL: And who was that?

SG: Pat, she was active in the Democratic Party in Waterville, and Joan Arnold, Nancy Hill, all in that group.

AL: Do you have recollections of Dick McMahon?

SG: Dick McMahon, yes, he always, he often would come to the office and visit and just, he would always bring us laughter because he would tell us things that he used to do with the senator and, you know, like the campaigning stunts that they did and how, you know, how they'd tease the senator and stuff like that.

AL: What kind of things did they tease him about?

SG: *(Unintelligible response.)*

AL: Long time ago.

SG: Yeah.

AL: I'm going to pause for just a moment.

SG: Bernie, Al Bernier. Alice and Charlie Landor, I believe Charlie died, though, Charlie Landor.

AL: Yes, his wife is still living.

SG: Okay, Sheldon Ward, I believe Sheldon was a director of I believe HUD or something, I can't remember now. Pat Gorman, Joan Arnold, Spike Carey, Mayor Carey, these were all the local Democratic politicians I would think, or active in the Democratic Party. Marsha Pelletier is Senator Muskie's niece, she lives still in Water-, in Winslow.

AL: She lives in Winslow?

SG: Yeah, I don't know if you have the, some of the family members' names?

AL: We're just starting that phase a little bit.

SG: Okay, Marsha, I think her husband's name is Roland Pelletier. And Ginny Harvey I think is still around, that's Jane Muskie's sister, Virginia [Ginny Gray] Harvey. I don't know, there was Billy Alfond, William Alfond. His father's Harold Alfond, the Alfond family itself.

AL: Alfond, yes, who contributed a lot to the University of Maine.

SG: I don't know if Bill is still around. Doreen Sheive used to work in the, she worked at the campaign office, I remember her, and she worked in the D.C. office. I believe she's still around.

AL: What's her last name?

SG: Sheive, S-H-E-I-V-E, Doreen.

AL: Okay.

SG: She works for the state now. Charlie Jacobs, do you know Charlie?

AL: Yes.

SG: Okay, Charlie would know Doreen because they all work at the State House. I don't know, I was trying to think of the, Estelle Lavoie I remember, I remember when she got hired.

AL: Yes, we just interviewed her recently.

SG: You did? Yeah. And Charlie Micoleau then.

AL: Uh-huh.

SG: Okay. Bangor office, Clyde MacDonald and Ida MacDonald. Oh, I'm straying away from the Waterville area, though.

AL: That's okay.

SG: I'm just thinking of different names as I'm talking here.

AL: Well, let me go on to another question. What do you remember as some of the bigger issues that came up in the office over the years when you worked for Senator Muskie? Were there certain events or circumstances that stick out in your mind?

SG: One is when he be-, was appointed secretary of state, that was quite an event. And the Secret Service, that traveled with him at that time, I remember that was, it was different from, you know, regular senatorial, you know, you don't have Secret Service traveling with you at the time. And when they announced his appointment, and then he came to the office and the Secret Service advanced, that was the first exposure to

AL: Oh, what was that like?

SG: Oh, that was, it was exciting, but, you know, kind of intimidating at first, you know, you see all these men. You see it on television, you know, the advance people coming in and then they tell us that the senator would come up. That was a different experience. But, you asked about any projects or experiences?

AL: Any, yeah, any ex-, issues that came up over the years that your office had to deal with that were interesting, stick out in your mind.

SG: I'm trying to think. Well, I guess during the Clean Water, when he was on the environmental affairs committee, with the Clean Water Act that he was working on, and different legislations that I remember, he always used to go ice fishing in, when he came home he'd go ice fishing or hunting I think. And there was a Arthur Thibodeau that took care of his dog. He had a, I think a beagle or a hunting dog that Arthur Thibodeau took care of for him. I

don't know if he's still around, that might, he might be another one to contact. I don't know if he's still around though.

AL: Do you remember the Colby College sit-in?

SG: In the office, was that in the office? I remember, I couldn't remember if that was Mitchell or Muskie, that's why I

AL: Yeah, Muskie.

SG: It was Muskie, that's right. I remember when they presented that letter, I don't think Marge was with us at the time, though. I can't remember who was

AL: Janet Dennis I believe was there.

SG: Yeah, Janet and I, but I can't remember who the field representative was. If it, it was Beverly Bustin? I can't even remember what the issue was. But I remember now it frightened me. But we, I left, Janet stayed, I went home. I can't remember who stayed with Janet. Maybe it was Larry Benoit.

AL: Maybe.

SG: I can't remember. Oh that was a sit in at the time Muskie was appointed secretary of state, that's right now. That I think was the issue, it was something about the secretary of state.

AL: Yeah, it would have been around that time.

SG: Yeah, it was because that's why, that's why they demonstrated.

AL: How was it handled? Do you remember the resolution?

SG: I think it was, I remember that it was late at night and they, I think they came in like two in the morning, it was dark, and then they, I don't know if it was the police, but they got out without incident. But they, I, if I can remember it vaguely, how it was resolved is that Muskie, they couldn't take it up with Muskie because he was in transition, I think that's how it was, I think that's how it was handled. So it was kind of moot to, you know, to demonstrate against him because he can't effectuate whatever they wanted at the time because he was, he wasn't legally the senator yet because he was, and he wasn't legally the secretary of state because he wasn't sworn in yet. I think that's how they, if I remember. I can't remember who was the administrative assistant at the time, too. It might have been Leon Billings, was the administrative assistant at the time.

AL: Tell me about Larry Benoit. Who was he and what did he do, what kind of contact did he have with your office?

SG: Larry, I think when he was hired, it was just the Waterville office and I believe we opened

the Lewiston office and that's when John Delahanty staffed that office, and I think he left to go to law school and I think that's when Larry was hired, and he opened up the Portland office. And he I think was the field representative at the time. But Marge was still working there. And after that it was, the Bangor office was Clyde and Ida. Larry was working for, had worked Peter Kyros, Jr., I mean not, no, senior, I'm sorry, Congressman Kyros. He was (*unintelligible word*), that's how he knew Larry, but I didn't know him personally but he was in charge of opening the offices and more or less supervising them, the Maine office staff, Larry's position. And he was, he's good at it I thought.

AL: So all the offices in Maine he would oversee?

SG: Yes, as they opened. See, it was the Portland office, and then the Bangor office was opened and was staffed by Clyde and Ida MacDonald. It was basically just two people, the field representative and the case worker. And then after the Bangor office opened I think, Presque Isle was Mary LeBlanc manned that office, and then he went to, then the Biddeford, it was Judy Catarat there. And then the Rockland office was last, and that was Tom Ret-, no, was it Tom Retachi? Tom, I get mixed up with the staff of Mitchell and, because Tom was hired after, during the Mitchell office.

AL: Did you interact with Clyde MacDonald over the years, him being in the Bangor office? Did you get to know him a little bit on a personal level as well as political?

SG: Just working, but Clyde was, I like Clyde, he was good. He got the, well, he, I understand was a professor at the UMO, so I looked up to him as, you know, the teacher image for me. And he was very kind and helpful when we needed help, he was there.

AL: Who were some of the local political figures in this community that you have recollections of, who were very close to Senator Muskie?

SG: The political?

AL: Yeah, people who maybe would stop in the office and who had close connections to him when he started his career in the '40s?

SG: Well, I remember Ed Vodak, now, I don't know if he's still around. He owned Yard Goods Center here in Waterville and he, across from the office was Joe's Smoke Shop, I can't remember his name. Jerry somebody. But the owner of that Joe's Smoke Shop on Main Street in Waterville.

AL: How about Dick Dubord?

SG: Dick Dubord, I didn't know him but that was during, apparently he had died before, but Dr. Dubord, his brother, Robert Dubord, is good friends of the Muskie family as well. Sam Shapiro, Sam Shapiro, I'm trying to think

AL: How did your office change over time, you're Waterville office? Did you see a lot of

changes from the time you started?

SG: Oh yes.

AL: In what ways?

SG: Well, it was the only office but it was more of a, Marge didn't handle legislative work, you know, that work was done in D.C. She did more on the PR work, like I said, like birth announce-, you know, special events or special occasions that she would notify the D.C. office after, you know, looking at the, reading the papers. They read every paper in Maine, this office, and, you know, took all the special events and what's happening and things that the senator needed to know through the press reports. And I remember asking her how come there's more work now, because, after she hired me, you know, there seemed to be more work. Well, at, she said because when she was talking to the, I think it was Dick, I don't know why Debbie Wills comes to mind, one of the case workers up there, I think she was handling military cases in D.C. and talking to Marge and she was saying, "I've got so much, I'm behind in my work." So Marge offered, she, "Well, send me some work and I'll help you." So, she, "You mean it?" She said, "Yeah." And I was there too, she says, "I've got Sue," so she started sending it and then it got more and before you know it they were doing more in their office, and I think that's how the changes came about to open other offices and have more outreach to the state at the local level, and the people can talk to the case workers or to the office, and we can report firsthand to the senator whatever's going on immediately. And the people liked that better I think. But then, that's how it started to grow, the office, I believe. They opened one in Lewiston and Portland and Bangor and then. But the, like, Doris' job was doing the clippings and she had, she has a beautiful, I don't know if you've ever seen the albums back, you know, that was Doris' project and I remember helping her with that, and she was very good at it. But I noticed that stopped eventually. It was done by D.C. office and see, I guess the work changed. There weren't just these, we did more case work here and the press section took over the clippings and the news reports. Although we, each office had to read their local newspapers and, you know, report the events to the D.C. office. But it got to be more case work, or whatever came to the office.

AL: What were your over all general impressions of Senator Muskie?

SG: Well, I liked him as a boss, and I admired him for, you know, for what he's accomplished for himself, considering the background. And to me he, he's the type of person that knows where they came from, you know, that kind of people. And that's what I liked about him. And when you work for somebody like that, you don't mind working harder because they're good to you. And he never, I never saw him grouchy when he came to the Waterville office, when Marge is there, and I think, I remember one of his aides, can't remember who it was, mentioned, he said, "Jeepers," he says, "I can't believe how, his change in disposition when he's in the Waterville office. He, I guess he mentioned he was so ugly let's say half a, two hours ago, but I just can't, I can't imagine," he said, "the change in his disposition." But I think when he comes to the Waterville office, it's like, when you go in, you come home, you have that feeling of I'm home and you kind of feel happy, and I think Marge, Marge mentioned it also. And whenever he would come to the office, it was kind of like, your family's coming and you've got to pick up the house, the office and stuff like that, but, there was a lot of fuss and bother because the senator's

coming. She'd set up his office, make sure it's, you know, whatever needed to be done for interviews and stuff like that. But I always remember whenever he came we would line up, Marge would be at the d-, first and then Doris and me, and I'd follow them and so. But he always hugged everybody when he came in

AL: Oh, he did?

SG: Yeah, he kissed us and hugged us. And that, that to me is why I, you know, I always admired that man, because he was, I saw the gentle part of him. (*Unintelligible phrase*) he's grouchy and stuff, but I saw the different side, and Marge mentioned it also, because he's happy here in the office. And he impressed me one time, he, his, he had a very heavy, he always had a heavy schedule and he came in and he said, "I'm going to take a nap for ten minutes and I'll be in for whatever he had to do." And by golly, we, you know, shut the door and he had the couch that he, I think those power, and he came out exactly ten minutes, I said, "I can't believe it." Nobody, you know, we didn't wake him or anything, it's just, no, he, he has a I guess biological clock. Some people can wake up in ten minutes, and he does that. I said, "So," I said, "well that's something, you know?" But that's, was the casual atmosphere in the office when he came to the Waterville office.

AL: What do you think his strengths and weaknesses were as a politician?

SG: His strength I believe was his convictions and his knowledge of whatever he was working on and whatever issue he believes in. And I guess he can be effective because he has that ability, you know, to debate and have the knowledge of, being assertive with what he believes in. His weaknesses I would think would be his family, his love for his family. Like what happened with the campaign, like they said

AL: In New Hampshire?

SG: In New Hampshire, yes. I mean, that shows part of his weakness I think but to me it's not a weakness, love is not a weakness, but that would be the only thing I can think of as far as weakness goes, and, like some people he had a temper but I never saw that temper so I can't comment on that.

AL: When did you leave Senator Muskie's office? Was it at the time that you went, were you part of the staff that went, that went from Muskie to Mitchell?

SG: Yeah, yeah, he just, Mitchell just kept the staff, those who wanted to stay on I mean, naturally we wanted to stay on. Because, well I knew Senator Mitchell anyway because he was a campaign director for Muskie's senatorial campaign in 1970 when I worked, so I knew what he was like.

AL: And did you stay with Mitchell until he left?

SG: Yes, until 1994, that's right. There was no, no problems in transferring loyalties to Mitchell.

AL: Were the offices run similarly? Or what were the differences between the Muskie offices and the Mitchell offices?

SG: The Mitchell office I would say, well I guess because as I got older I got more experience, I was more comfortable with Mitchell's office because I guess be-, I had the feeling, I mean, and I think the others did too, was he trusted us because he kept us, you know, without interviewing or anything. He just trusted Muskie's choice of staff and I've, to me I felt it was a compliment that he just kept us, and so I, and the, and he just let us continue the work we were doing and appreciated it. And that to me, told me a lot, and you have to be, I'm kind of grateful for Mitchell too for keeping us, and like I said, there was no problem in transferring loyalties to him as well, to Senator Mitchell, because they had the same qualities, they're good people, you know. Good family men and kind.

AL: Did they have different ways of relating to the staff?

SG: Mitchell was more, he acknowledged the staff I think more than Muskie did, and I think at the time, with Muskie, the staff was growing together and I think at one point, or I remember, because I got a letter, see this, I thought I'd bring this up, I got this from him on a case. Because people would, this letter of acknowledgment from Muskie for what I did for somebody, people sometimes would write to the senator and say thank you and they'd mention the case workers who worked on the case and apparently she mentioned what I did for her, so, stuff like that. But, Muskie, like I say was tall and intimidating, so he's not as approachable as Mitchell was. Mitchell, you could sense, was more reachable I guess you would say. But I guess he's prob- . . .

End of Side A

Side B

AL: We are now on side B of the interview with Sue Gurney on June 9th, 1999 at her home in Winslow, Maine. Miss Gurney, I just have a couple more questions, one of them being what do you think Senator Muskie's major contribution was to the state of Maine during his Senate years?

SG: I believe that he brought pride to the state as well, you know, because his name is known nationally. And when you travel and you say you're from Maine and they say oh, Senator Muskie's country, stuff like that you know. He brought pride to Maine and I think the legacy would be Clean Water Act, environmental issues. I think he was the budget committee, too, he was the first one to, I think he introduced the bill so, and he was the chairman of the budget committee. I don't know what other issues as far as the . . .

AL: Okay, is there anything else that I haven't asked you that you feel is important to add about you and your times and your work with Senator Muskie?

SG: Other than I just feel I was fortunate and blessed because when I think back, the three bosses I had were the three senators, and all were firsts. Senator Oren Long was the first

Democratic senator from Hawaii when we became a state in 1959, Senator Muskie was the first Democratic senator from Maine and became the secretary of state, and Mitchell, Senator Mitchell was the first Democratic senator to become Senate majority leader, and he was appointed instead of elected, initially. So the (*unintelligible phrase*) all three of them, and I'm grateful for that and I was, I guess I was just lucky. But, and it gave me enough years to retire as well.

AL: Great, thank you very much.

SG: You're welcome.

End of Interview

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