

George J. Mitchell Oral History Project

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Thomas H. “Tom” Allen
(Interviewer: *Andrea L’Hommedieu*)

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Andrea L’Hommedieu: This is an interview for the George J. Mitchell Oral History Project at Bowdoin College. The date is August 28, 2009, and I’m at the home of Congressman Tom Allen in Portland, Maine, and this is Andrea L’Hommedieu. Tom, could you start just by giving me your full name.

Tom Allen: Thomas H. Allen.

AL: And you were born in Portland?

TA: In Portland, in 1945, April 16.

AL: And I know we gathered some of your background information for an interview you did for the Muskie Project at Bates College so I won’t go into a lot of that background today, but talk to me about your first knowledge of or recollections of Senator Mitchell.

TA: Well my, when I think back, I knew of him because my father knew him, and he was a lawyer in Portland, that’s part of what I knew about him. But when I was at Oxford finishing up my degree, I decided I wanted to take a year off rather than go straight to law school and my father suggested that I call George Mitchell and see if there was a possibility of working for Ed Muskie. So I did, I don’t remember how I did this, or whether I wrote him actually, I don’t know what I did. But anyway, when I came back that fall I wound up working for Senator Muskie, George had made that happen, and I met Senator Muskie out at a hotel. And his first words to me after being introduced were, “Can you get me a couple of aspirin?” So I was immediately a staffer, given an important assignment.

That was September of 1970, and for two months I worked on a Muskie reelection campaign for the United States Senate. And in the course of that, I remember one night both George Mitchell and Ed Muskie, actually no, this was probably in the spring, it was a commencement address at Narraguagus High School, and I had advanced the trip and gone up to Cherryfield. And I wound up driving both of them back on a very dark and windy Route 9 that I had not driven before, and I could tell in the back that there was some impatience, I wasn’t going fast enough. I had both George Mitchell and Ed Muskie, but I was really concerned about the people I was responsible for that night, so, but we got back to Bangor. That’s an early memory.

I would say that in 1970, on election eve, Muskie gave a speech to the nation, Democrats had a

half hour, Republicans had a half hour. He did so well in that speech, filmed from Cape Elizabeth, that he became the front runner for the presidential nomination in 1972, he was widely received. I went to Washington, worked for a month on the Hill for Senator Muskie, and then went downtown to work on the presidential campaign, which was already underway but it had been given a huge boost by his performance in that televised address. But when I was down there, there were obvious tensions, let's say. There are always tensions in a big campaign, particularly a presidential campaign.

AL: Among the staff?

TA: Among the staff. And they were generally between people who had served Ed Muskie long and well in the Senate, most of them from Maine, and then this new group who had come in to run the presidential campaign, and there were some struggles there. Nothing that you would call unusual in that context, but there were staff tensions of some kind, and people on both sides of the divide were saying to each other, "We need George, we need George."

George was then, and you could look it up, but I assume he was in his late thirties, and he was already the person who was so close to Muskie and so adept at managing and at personal relations, that people knew that when he finally came down, as everyone knew he would, and joined the Muskie presidential campaign, he would smooth oil on troubled waters and the campaign would move ahead more effectively, and my impression is that's in fact what happened. He came before I left the campaign to go to law school in July of 1971, or late July or early August, but he had some of the qualities then that he showed throughout his career: patience, intelligence, good humor, capacity to get people with differing views to talk with each other. He really from the beginning had some skills that were unusual in any kind of human endeavor.

AL: And so how closely did you work with him there, in that -?

TA: In that context, I worked with him some but not very much. As I say, I don't remember exactly when he came and joined the Muskie presidential campaign, but my memory is that it was 1971 and probably early '71 because I left at the end of July or early August, as I recall. And then he was obviously a key figure in that campaign through the end.

Then later, when George came back to Maine, he was practicing law, I had finished law school in 1974, I came back here, I joined Drummond, Woodsum, Plimpton and MacMahon, the law firm that I was with for nineteen years, and George was practicing then at Jensen Baird. I wound up playing tennis with him in a regular tennis group with Walter Corey and Scott Carlisle and some other people.

And I want to tell you about George's tennis, because I considered myself a fairly good tennis player. I'd taken up tennis when I was young, I thought my strokes were good, I had a good serve, I thought I was a pretty good tennis player. George had taken it up some time I think in his forties, and so I felt I should be able to beat him. I think I won one set in several years of

playing singles with him. He is a tenacious tennis player, the ball always keeps coming back over the net, no matter what you do with it, no matter how hard you hit it or where you hit it, it just kept coming back. He made fewer mistakes than I did and beat me on a regular basis, but he was a wonderful guy to play tennis with.

One time we were playing doubles out in South Portland, and my memory is it was that four, George and Walter Corey and Scott Carlisle and me. And Scott and Walter had been playing the day before and one of the two of them said, "We were playing yesterday, playing singles." And George said, "Well you brought it up so I assume you won." And he was right. At some level, his understanding of human nature and appreciation of how we all function, that combination of altruism and self-interest that makes us human beings is really a gift, it's really an extraordinary gift. And I think it comes not just out of his intelligence and observation, but out of his life, because it's an American success story and his is a remarkable story.

I remember him telling me on one occasion how he had hitchhiked from Waterville down to Bowdoin College to talk to the director of admissions at Bowdoin about going to college there, but he didn't have enough money, his family didn't have a car, he didn't have enough money to take a bus, if there were a bus at that point, so he just got out there and hitchhiked. It's a terrific story.

AL: And so were you involved in his gubernatorial campaign in '74?

TA: Oh, yes, I was, that's right, I forgot that. I came back from law school, when I passed the Bar exams my wife and I took a trip, sort of a last trip before you immerse yourself in the working world, out west, and we came back in '74, right at the beginning of September, and I joined the law firm and I almost immediately met Woody and Connie Jones. And Woody had gone to Harvard when I had gone to Bowdoin, we were the same age, he came from the Fryeburg area, Connie came from Hiram, and we just became good friends instantly and it was one of those kinds of relationships. And I wanted to help. I may have met him when I just walked into the Mitchell for Governor campaign office, I really don't remember.

I knew when I came back that I wanted to help George Mitchell become governor of Maine. And so I came back, and I don't remember all of the things I did, except one has stuck in my mind. I did whatever Woody asked me to do, and I had a full-time job so I was just volunteering. And Woody came up to me and said, "We need a paper on women's rights." I said, "Women's rights? You want me to write it?" He said, "I don't know who else to ask." I said, "Don't you have a woman who could write that?" He said, "We need it right away," so I wrote it. I always thought I was the wrong person to pick for that particular task, but I did it quickly and got it done in a day or two, whatever it was.

But it was one of those campaigns, it may have been the first closely contested campaign that I followed so intently. And I remember watching that last Jim Longley ad on television, and I had this sinking feeling that Longley was capturing, had momentum over the last weekend that was going to be really problematic. And of course he pulled it out that last weekend.

AL: Did you feel within the campaign that there were areas that were going to cause trouble for you with the vote in Maine; did you see the campaign that closely?

TA: I really didn't. Woody Jones would have a much better sense of that. And I had just walked back into Maine, I was volunteering, and I wasn't close to the Senator in that campaign at all but I cared a lot about it and I just, I remember that feeling, but George was not the candidate then that he became later. As I would criticize myself occasionally for giving answers that were too complicated and sometimes too long, that was his style as well. He learned to be more concise as he went along.

AL: Yeah, that '74 campaign was very "issues" based, if I recall, he had papers on -

TA: He had papers for everything, and he didn't want to talk about Longley. He didn't want to challenge Longley, he let Longley go, so Longley was able to get out there and run for governor without having the kind of push back that anyone would get today. But George just didn't want to attack him, and he really should have because that sort of back and forth in a campaign, some people get tired of it, but at its best it clarifies issues; at its worst, it obscures them. But there has to be some back and forth, some argument, and it can be done at a high level or it can be done at a low level, but it needs to be done, and I don't think George really did it.

AL: Right, and Lewiston was Longley's hometown as well, wasn't it?

TA: Yes, yes.

AL: That we found out over the years that Lewiston-Auburn vote is huge in terms of winning the state.

TA: It is very important. I mean every vote counts the same, but Lewiston-Auburn is an unusual area because it is nominally Democratic but not really, it's -

AL: Socially conservative.

TA: It's a socially conservative, and it can go either Republican or Democratic in elections.

AL: So talk to me about after that '74 campaign, did you continue to know and have interactions with Senator Mitchell?

TA: Sure, I mean we played tennis together, and we did that for years. And my memory is, I don't have this all figured out, I can't remember the details, my memory is that we did it for a number of years, I think until he wound up spending most of his time in Bangor. Although even then he may have been down here on weekends so we were playing on weekends. I really don't remember, but I remember much of that time we had a Tuesday night indoor tennis group, and there were about six or eight of us who played on a regular basis, and we'd play some singles

and if we had eight we'd play a couple of doubles.

AL: And Harold Pachios, was he one of that group?

TA: I don't think Harold was in *that* group very often. Juris Ubans was part of that group, Walter Corey, Scott Carlisle, and one or two others.

AL: So you'd have dinner and play tennis, that sort of thing?

TA: Sometimes we'd have dinner. Mostly we'd play tennis.

AL: I'd like to get a sense of George Mitchell socially. You talk about playing the tennis, did, was he gregarious, talkative, what -?

TA: No, George was, George has a terrific sense of humor, I mean in almost any group I've been in, which is informal, where he's not doing a speech or something, he has a terrific sense of humor. And I think it comes from that ability to understand other human beings and point out the humorous side of who we are and what we're doing. And I don't mean by that it was personal, but I can't remember a joke, I can't do that, but terrific sense of humor, very, very engaging human being, always.

AL: And so in '80 he replaces Senator Muskie as the senator from Maine, he's appointed by Joe Brennan. Did you have any, were you in that at all, or did you have -?

TA: I wasn't involved in it, but what I heard was that Muskie had gone to Brennan and said, "George is the guy, you really need to appoint George Mitchell." And I have no idea if that's true, how much of a factor it was or anything like that. Joe Brennan obviously makes up his own mind about things, but I'm sure that since Muskie had just been nominated to be secretary of state, his views carried some weight. But in anything like that, there are bound to be a number of different people competing for the position, and I think it's to Joe Brennan's great credit, great credit, that he picked someone for that position, to succeed Senator Muskie, who rose to be majority leader in the U.S. Senate. He picked a quality human being. In fact, someone who I believe is probably the greatest political leader in Maine history in the twentieth century.

AL: After Senator Mitchell went to the Senate, did you interact with him at all?

TA: As I recall I was always somehow plugged into his campaigns. My father was a supporter, a contributor. For much of the time that I was practicing law I was involved in going to fund raisers, helping other Democrats run for office, and so every two years I was involved in one campaign or another. But I wasn't, apart from Dick Spencer's congressional race in 1976, I wasn't running a campaign, but I was involved in helping out, volunteering or contributing one way or another.

AL: Because Senator Mitchell's Senate reelection campaign in '82 was quite an uphill battle,

it looked like, at the beginning. There must have been a lot of talk in Maine as to whether he could win reelection.

TA: There was at the beginning. And I remember George told me once that, after the fact, that what he did, and I'd noticed this generally at the time but this was his core strategy, once he was in the United States Senate, he used that position to drive home two main messages, one was about Social Security, protecting Social Security, and the other was about acid rain. And he just got himself, in a short period of time, identified with two issues that really mattered to people in Maine. And it was a sound strategy. Running for office, you have to simplify what you believe and what you want to accomplish so that people will hear what you're saying. And I think he did that.

Now, of course once he was a senator he was a senator, so it wasn't as if he were a private citizen running, but he made great use of those two years, and I think people grew to feel, rightly, that this was someone of the stature that we expect in our senators. And he may have been appointed, but he turned it around and turned it around well. And I don't remember what I did, but I'm sure I was involved in one way or another in that campaign. I don't remember, I've been in so many campaigns, honestly.

AL: Yeah, that was the Dave Emery campaign.

TA: I am quite sure that our tennis group continued after he was appointed, that we played at least, you know, now and then during the 1980s. At least I think we did.

AL: Well, yeah, because I do know that people have told me that in those two years he came home, he came to Maine every weekend, every weekend he was here, so -

TA: That's a fairly common thing for now. There are people in Maine, I forget who it was, somebody told me, David Emery spoiled it for everyone because David Emery always came back to Maine, every weekend, and before that it was fairly common to stay down there for a while. Stan Tupper, who held my seat in the 1st District from 1960 to 1966, told me before he died that he and Peter Garland, who held the other seat, they used to car pool to D.C., they would share a ride down, stay there for a few weeks, and then drive back, because if they had flown they would have had to pay out of their own pocket. There weren't the same, the compensation wasn't very high, and they didn't have the kind of expense money that would allow them to go back and forth every week. But David Emery did that, and since then I think almost all of us can say that's pretty much what we have done.

AL: And your current position, you go between D.C. and Maine?

TA: I do, you know, it's not that much of a change as the CEO and president of the Association of American Publishers I fly every, basically Monday -Thursday, or Monday-Friday, down to D.C. or to New York and then back to Maine, so I have my weekends free in Maine, which is really very nice.

AL: And you ran for Congress first in what year?

TA: Well, I ran for governor in '94, I ran for governor, that was my first major race after being elected to the city council, but I chaired Bill Clinton's campaign in Maine for president in 1991-92, and that, if I had the bug before, I had it bad after that presidential race, that was very exciting. I'd known Bill at Oxford for the two years he was there; we were friends from that experience, and helped put together that campaign. And I was ready to move on from the law practice, so I left my law practice in '93, ran for governor in '94 and lost that race to Joe Brennan. And then I campaigned for Joe and I thought probably that was going to be it, but then Jim Longley, Jr., the Republican, was the surprise winner in November of '94 for his first congressional seat. And I decided, well, I've built an organization, I've got a fund-raising base, I really love public service, I'll give this one more try. And so I ran for Congress in '96 and won; spent twelve years there.

AL: I have to ask, what was it like to be friends with Bill Clinton? I mean this is a young Bill Clinton, what did, I mean you must -

TA: Well he was a captivating guy at Oxford. I mean, it's interesting, he was in the Rhodes class just behind mine, I was selected and went over in 1967, he came over in 1968, and I got to know him fairly well because in the class of '68 there were three people who wound up hanging around a lot together: one was John Isaacson, who came from Lewiston, who I got to know almost as soon as he arrived in Oxford, because two people from Maine, two Rhodes Scholars from Maine, this doesn't happen all the time, and people told him about me and people told me about him, so we met pretty quickly. His best friend from Dartmouth College was Bob Reich, who had also been selected Rhodes Scholar and Reich and Clinton became very close on the boat ride over – Clinton was seasick and Reich took care of him.

And so the three of them were sort of a trio in Oxford, and Diana and I came back, we'd been married in the summer of '68, we couldn't be married the first year so we got married in the summer of '68 and had a party for a lot of my '67 friends who had been there, so it was sort of an introduction of wives, but we also invited John Isaacson, Bob Reich and Bill Clinton, and I didn't know him as well as people in his own class knew him but I knew him pretty well, and he was engaging, warm, funny, smart, I mean very interesting human being, always asking questions about you. It wasn't the feeling that he was preoccupied with himself, he was curious.

AL: Had -?

TA: But just to follow that up, when he, I had seen him, my cousin Neal ran the National Governor's Conference when it was held in South Portland, in the '80s, and I went by just to say hello to then Governor Clinton of Arkansas, because I hadn't seen him since Oxford. And then when he decided to run in '91 he gave me a call and he said, "I've been invited to an event in Maine, the Portland Democratic City Committee is doing a picnic," he said, "should I come? What kind of event is this, how many people will be there, should I come?" I said, "I don't

know, I'll call you back." And so I called him back and said to him or Craig Smith, his assistant and said, "Two young lawyers had sort of taken over control of the Portland Democratic City Committee, they are young, active, they have three thousand people on their mailing list, they will produce a crowd for you."

So he came, and spoke, we got a great turnout, and out of that we built the Clinton campaign in Maine. He didn't do that well here in the primary, but in the end it all turned out well.

AL: Are there other recollections you have of Senator Mitchell over the years, things I haven't specifically asked you about?

TA: Yes, well I would say we would see each other periodically, when he was in the U.S. Senate, and at other times back here, but my recollections have become much more about his public life. And I remember he wound up – I'd have to go back – he was appointed in '80, he won election in '82, and in one of those cycles in the mid-'80s he was the Democratic senator responsible for raising money and campaigning for senators up for reelection [DSCC 1986]. He did a fabulous job and became majority leader as a consequence of that.

It's a killing job. I just don't think people understand those leadership positions, speaker of the House, majority leader in the House, majority leader in the Senate, these are killing jobs. You have to contend with so many egos, people who believe passionately in very different things, and have to have something that conflicts with what someone else wants. And I remember once, it was a conversation when he was still doing that job. I said, "How are you doing?" He said, "I'm just trying to figure out how to keep doing this job." And you could see, the pressure, the weariness almost at times, that comes from doing a job that requires that much intensity, emotion, concentration over such a long period of time.

I remember another conversation with him that was after he had left being majority leader, he had been sent over to Northern Ireland, he'd helped to work through that whole process, and he said, "Well you know, what we did over there was based on lessons I've learned in the United States Senate, which is that people who have to compromise to get something done but really don't want to compromise, only do so if they have a deadline. And in Northern Ireland," he said, "based on that learning from the United States Senate" – I forget how long he'd been there, I mean maybe it was a couple years, I don't remember exactly, but he finally said to the parties on both sides of the divide – "I'm leaving on Good Friday." And I don't remember whether there was another two months to go or three months or whatever it was, but he was leaving, and the peace process was over. And he said, "I will do everything I can between now and then to help you get to a conclusion."

And he told me that they didn't work perfectly, but they lined up a schedule, they negotiated a schedule and then implemented it as best they could. The schedule was, on such and such a date, a Protestant leader will give a speech and say this, and two days later a Catholic leader from a particular group will stand up and respond to that and he will say that. And four days later, another Protestant leader will stand up and say this, and you'd schedule the progress that would

take them toward the conclusion. Of course it didn't work out exactly as planned, but one of the difficulties in bringing the warring parties together I think is the fear of the future. And that sort of strategy was one that allowed them to stand up and give a speech and know that the other side was going to respond to it in a particular way. And it removed some of that fear of the future. And so that's how they wound up getting to the Good Friday Agreement, according to what George told me.

He's an incredible human being. His knowledge and experience of the lives of ordinary people, married to this incredible intellect, plus this gift for managing controversy, is, it's very rare. He's an extraordinary leader.

AL: I guess in conclusion, I just wanted to ask you a couple questions about your experiences in Congress, and what you saw. Did you see things change over the years you were there, or, I mean I've heard that over the years that the nature and character of Congress has changed in some ways, in terms of how you get bills through and the interaction between people and the level of civility. Did you, what were your experiences?

TA: Well first of all, the biggest changes occurred just before I got to the House. I had Republicans and Democrats agree, people who have been around for a while, both sides of the aisle agree that the House changed when Newt Gingrich arrived. And Newt made politics much more personal when he went after Jim Wright, the speaker. He just went after him in a very personal way, and that whole approach kind of soured the House.

Now, Newt would say that that was the only way to shake up the Republicans and make them competitive again, and it may well be true. And he kind of understood the modern media better than a lot of people who were there, so if it hadn't been him, it may well have been someone else, but that is one sort of factor.

By the time I got there the Gingrich revolution was two years old, and Tom DeLay had developed an awful lot of power and I have a lot of respect for many of my Republican colleagues in the House, but not for Tom DeLay. I don't think he had any appreciation for custom, decorum, the things that hold an institution together which are not written down in rules.

For example, it was he who really drove the impeachment of President Clinton, and he did it by refusing to allow a vote on a censure motion, because he knew that there was overwhelming support for a censure of President Clinton's conduct, but he was not going to allow that because that meant that impeachment wouldn't pass, and if he could squeeze out the votes to impeach the president, he was going to do it.

So those changes had occurred. During the Muskie era, there really was a sense - Woody Jones once said to me that, and when we were both working in Washington you really had a sense that people on both sides of the aisle were trying to do the right thing, trying to figure out answers, and that became less and less true.

Now I have a theory which is different from other people, based on my experience. I don't think it's just because we have to spend more time raising money, that we don't live in Washington on weekends and go out to dinner with people on the other side of the aisle, or spend more time together. I think all of those are partial factors, but the most important factor is that from the Reagan administration, which was a lot more pragmatic than this last Bush administration, the Reagan administration passed some massive tax cuts and then realized that they were increasing the deficit to a dangerous level, so they turned around and did tax increases. People don't remember that today, but they did it because they were worried about the deficit, they were able to change a policy in midstream because they had gone too far.

The Bush administration and the Gingrich/DeLay Congress were not capable of doing that. They became absolutely rigid in their view that you just keep cutting taxes as long as you can, they lied to the American people when they said tax cuts pay for themselves; they don't, they don't even come close to it. And so what was going on during my twelve years was, we didn't believe that they believed what they were saying, about Iraq, about tax cuts, about climate change not being scientifically proven. We couldn't believe that they believed that stuff. And that leads you to attribute motives to the other side that are not good, let's just put it that way.

And so I think that what the country needs now is not to have senators go out to dinner more with each other, although that would be nice, but I think that on the Republican side there needs to be a movement back toward a pragmatic center, because there are very few people there now. I would be astonished if more than two to three Republican senators vote for any kind of health care reform that the Obama administration and the Democrats put together, because they just don't believe that government should have a bigger role in health care. And those ideological divisions are, I think, the single most important factor in producing a politics that is gridlocked in the absence of overwhelming majorities. And America needs two evidence-based parties, not one.

I think Democrats have, we have all sorts of issues and all sorts of problems, but we're not wound into such a tight ideology that we always have the same position regardless of what the state of the economy is, or the question of war or peace or what's going on in the world.

AL: Right, it's the ability, when confronted with new information, to be able to take and process it and possibly make a new decision.

TA: Yes, that's what the Republicans are missing right now. It wasn't always true, and hopefully it won't be true again, but if you look at the Obama stimulus package, I mean that was an effort to save not just the credit system and the banking system, but the whole economy from collapsing. And three people, three Republicans voted for it out of, in both the House and Senate together, three senators, that was it. And it's because it necessarily involved high levels of government spending, to which they claim to be always opposed. And so even when the economy's going into a panic and private spending has dried up and you're staring at an abyss of a second Great Depression, they can't change the policy.

And that's what I mean by a kind of rigidity, a kind of view of the world that is immune to evidence of what's going on at the moment that is crippling. And so I think that the country needs more George Mitchells, but it also needs two parties that both have a pragmatic center, and not a rigid ideological center. And it takes two. I'm making a plea, I'm making a plea for the Republican Party to be more pragmatic, and if it becomes more pragmatic, then some of these divisions that seem insurmountable today would be manageable.

AL: What was it like for you to serve in Congress with, well for quite a few years of your service, having the senators from Maine being Republican?

TA: Well, first of all in Maine, senators of either party get incredibly favorable coverage in Maine. It's almost as if the media in Maine feels like we're a small state, we only have two senators – of course every other state only has two senators – but we somehow have to take care of them. And so criticism of senators in Maine is typically muted by the press, and that's probably because the Maine press is very, well let's just say, not very aggressive in, not really adept at asking what I would call 'follow up questions.' And so, and this was true for me, too, they take our press releases, they interview, what do you think, and they say fine, they don't say, "Well what do you mean by that?" Or, 'what if this or what if that?' I mean the Maine press is mild. And I actually don't think it's good. I got the benefit of it, but I don't think it's a particularly good way to do journalism.

But I should say this, that my most recent contact, regular contact with George Mitchell was in his support for my Senate campaign against Susan Collins, and he was fabulous. He came to events in, an event in New York, he raised money for me from friends, he spoke for me, for several days near the end of the campaign he was in Maine promoting my campaign, raising money for me, helping me out, and it meant a lot. He did a television advertisement for me. I'll always be grateful to him. I just think he felt I was the best candidate and he was going to do everything he could to help me, despite a schedule which, when he left the Senate he didn't slow down very much, I mean he had a very busy life and now it's even busier still because he's President Obama's emissary to the Middle East – and talk about difficult problems, problem areas, that Israeli-Palestinian conflict is *the* most difficult on the planet.

AL: Well thank you so much. I did want to just add that your papers have recently come to Bowdoin, and I wanted that in the transcript so people can follow the transcript to your papers for research at some point.

TA: Oh they will, but I'm doing some writing and I think that when I finish this project it'll provide some guidance, at least to how I saw the twelve years and what I was doing and not doing. I'm grateful to Bowdoin for taking those papers, because I think I served during an incredible period of time. I would have preferred to serve in the majority, don't get me wrong, but from a presidential impeachment to the 2000 election to the attacks on 9/11 to the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq, and really the collapse of our image in the world over the mishandling of the Iraqi conflict, and then leaving amid the worst economic decline since the Great Depression. Yes, we had a full plate, and the tragedy is that the Congress as a whole didn't work

very well in those years, and I think we're on a better path now but we'll see.

AL: Thank you so much.

TA: You're very welcome.

End of Interview