

George J. Mitchell Oral History Project

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Jeffrey Wade “Jeff” and Mary A. Porter

(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 June 25, 2009, and I’m at 511 Congress Street in Portland, Maine, with Jeff and Mary Porter. Mary, would you start just by giving me your full name, and where and when you were born, including your maiden name.

Mary Porter: Sure, it’s Mary Adele (Federle is my maiden name) Porter, and I was, did you say where I was born?

AL: Where and when, yes.

MP: I was born in Bronxville, New York, on July 23, 1966, but my family moved to Maine when I was nine.

AL: And what were your parents’ names?

MP: Albert Victor Federle, and Antoinette Federle.

AL: And how many brothers and sisters did you have?

MP: Six brothers, and two sisters.

AL: So, a big family.

MP: Yes, I was the eighth of nine.

AL: So you were on the younger end. And talk to me about what your parents did for work.

MP: Sure, my dad was a lawyer by training, but went into business and worked in the shoe industry, and that’s what brought us to Maine. He came to Maine with SCOA Industries [Shoe Corporation of America], which owned shoe companies as part, it was a Fortune 500 company and the shoe business was a piece of it, and he came to Maine to run the shoe shops in Maine and tried to make them profitable. They were losing money at the time. And then as most shoe companies in Maine have done, they went out of business, they sold their business, and that was in the early ‘80s. And my mom was a stay-at-home mom with that many kids, and then later once we were all a little older started working in the schools in Waterville, which is where we

moved.

AL: Oh, you moved to Waterville.

MP: So I'm from Waterville, yes, I think I neglected to say that.

AL: Okay, so the Waterville area is really, most of your memories of growing up come from there if you moved there at age nine.

MP: Yes, that's right.

AL: What was the Waterville community like at that time?

MP: It was thriving, it was one of those places when my parents were moving our family, of course they were looking at schools and what was a nice place to raise a family, and Waterville was I think at the time the fifth largest city in the state, and lots of business and a lot going on there. And it was a wonderful place to grow up, because it was a small community but the lakes were all right nearby, there were great schools, just a very nice, tight-knit community.

AL: And so what did you do for social activities growing up in Waterville, what was there to support that for the kids?

MP: Well, there was the Y, and the Boys Club/Girls Club were two, as younger kids, places that we would hang out, and activities to do. And then Colby had, we lived nearby and so we were always up there in the summer playing tennis, or sledding in the winter and that kind of thing. As we got older it was harder to find things for teenagers to do, we weren't hanging out at the Y or the Boys' Club.

But at the time it was, it seemed like, I think as you got older and to high school, I think any kid starts to feel their town maybe is too small and they're ready to move on, but my memories are all very fond of growing up there, I felt as though there was always something going on, and lots of support. And everybody, it seemed people knew each other, so you always knew you couldn't get into trouble too much because my dad ended up working in the town and I knew the mayor of the town and different people who were involved, and so it felt as though there were people always looking out for us.

AL: Did you know any of the Mitchell family at that time?

MP: Yes, Swish was the assistant principal I think it was in my junior high and so I knew him and his wife, and my parents were friends with them, and then Robbie Mitchell and Janet Mitchell were friends with my parents, and Joe and, well Joe Mitchell was Robbie and Janet's son and he is good friends with my brother and I was friends with him, and my older brothers were friends with the older Mitchell boys. And so, yes, they were just a part of the community and I knew them.

AL: What did you do after high school?

MP: I went to Colby, so I didn't go far. And then my junior year at Colby I went to D.C. for an internship for my junior year, not abroad but away from campus, and through Swish I got an internship in the Senator's office and that's how that all started.

AL: So that's what was your first introduction to that office.

MP: Yes.

AL: Was Swisher coaching at Colby at that time?

MP: He was, yes, and it's funny because I didn't play basketball and I didn't have much interaction with him on campus.

AL: So Jeff, I want to go to you now and talk about the same questions that I asked Mary, and if you could start just by saying your full name?

Jeff Porter: Jeffrey Wade Porter.

AL: And where and when were you born?

JP: I was born in January 1966 here in Portland, Maine, and I've lived all of my forty-three years except for a couple years when we were first married in Cumberland, so we lived within a couple, as the crow flies, probably a mile from where I grew up.

AL: And what was Cumberland like at that time, it's sort of a suburb of Portland but was it much more rural?

JP: I think it all depends on one's background and what they think as being rural. I think I had a perfect childhood. You name it, we had it in Cumberland. We had a golf course, I didn't golf then but we had a golf course, we could go fishing, we spent a lot of time as kids fishing and hunting, great athletics, great trails, skiing, you name it. We had a lot of interesting things to do, tennis courts. Probably considerably smaller than Waterville, Waterville was probably twenty thousand in the days Mary was growing up, and Cumberland was probably at that [time], when I was growing up, probably five, four or five thousand.

AL: And what were your parents' names?

JP: My father's name is John Warren Porter, and my mother's name was Yvonne Goupil.

AL: And what did they do for work?

JP: Both of them were teachers. My mother died when I was very young, so my older brother would have been five, I was two and my younger brother was one, so my dad was a teacher and then he was an assistant principal up in Gray-New Gloucester, at the high school. And then my dad probably remarried six or seven years later, and we got two other brothers in the mix, so there were five boys. All very, very close in age, so it was very interesting, very raucous.

AL: Yes, you had a basketball team.

JP: We did. Basketball wasn't our sport, we played a lot of baseball, we did swimming, soccer, a lot of track, and again, we were outdoorsy kids, families, my dad would, we had a hunting camp up in Lagrange, we'd go up for hunting every year, we'd do a lot of fishing in town. Cumberland still has some amazing trout fishing, but kids don't do that any more. One of my twins is interested, likes to fish a lot so we try to go out once or twice a year, but it's pretty difficult with five kids.

AL: And that's how many you have?

JP: We have five, yes.

AL: And what are their ages?

JP: Molly's seventeen, Eliza's fifteen, Sam is thirteen, and Tate and Isabel, twins, are ten.

AL: So you have a busy household.

MP: Yes, definitely.

JP: We do.

AL: Can you both talk a little bit about the political background in which you grew up? Did either of you have strong political families, or where did your -?

MP: I'd say, I don't, I wouldn't think that either of us would, but I'll speak for myself. I remember my mom running for school board, and I think my dad ran for city council, and then my dad, after the shoe shops closed and he studied for the bar again, to pass the bar in Maine and he ended up becoming the city solicitor in Waterville, and so he then became sort of apolitical because of his position, and stayed out of all of that.

But I have really fond memories of my family sitting around the dinner table talking about politics and events in the world and the country, so I don't think of my family as being political, however, there was always that kind of discussion and awareness of it. And since, actually, my brother has worked for Governor Baldacci as his chief counsel, and so there is a political element in our family, but I wouldn't say I grew up with that.

JP: My dad, there was no question my dad, as a teacher, was a Democrat, growing up. We very rarely ever talked about politics. My political background was interesting. I started having an interest in it in high school, and my uncle, or I should really say my great uncle, who used to live in Phillips, Maine, they were Republicans, they were very close to Olympia at the time, or Jock McKernan, and so at the time, late high school going into college, I was probably a Republican. I really didn't have any strong political leanings, beliefs at that point, and it's only after doing the internship with the Senator that I really had any clue as to what my political leanings or beliefs were.

MP: Don't you have that letter, what was the letter that Elwood used to -

JP: Yes, my great uncle Elwood and [aunt] Blanche, some great Maine names. Yes, there's a letter where I had said maybe I can get an internship with, it was John McKernan, and there was Olympia, and I forgot who the other person was at the time, there's no mention of Mitchell. And of course Senator Mitchell was around at that point, yes, it would have been early in his Senate career.

AL: So where did you go to college after high school?

JP: I went to the University of Maine for a year, and then I transferred down to the University of Southern Maine, and that's actually how I ended up getting the job, getting an internship with Senator Mitchell. It was totally by fluke, I wasn't going in there thinking I was interviewing for an internship in a position, I was actually looking at working for the DEP, I had an environmental interest. And they said, "Well we've got this other interview, would you do it?" And I said, "Sure." And my original thought was that summer I was going to take a job with DEP, didn't get it, they said, "Well, we can get you an internship in the summer for Senator Mitchell." "Sure, why not." And nine years later I worked, yes, I worked for him for just shy of nine years, so it was totally by fluke.

MP: It's funny to hear these different stories or to think about, because Jeff and I met both working for Senator Mitchell, and here we are, well almost twenty years, nineteen years into our marriage and knowing each other longer than that, and our lives would have been so different had he gone to work for the DEP, do an internship with DEP. I had applied to other colleges, Colby was not, I had actually applied to two colleges, was wait-listed at one and got into Colby so I ended, I mean just different things that led us, it's funny how our lives could have been so different.

AL: And there must have been so many interns from Maine over the years in Senator Mitchell's office. Having been an intern in his office, did you have a sense of how many Maine kids got that opportunity?

JP: Oh, I mean, again, actually I-

MP: It seems like a couple every semester.

JP: I worked right there. Senator Mitchell's office was on the fourth floor of that building, so I had to spend a lot of time moving around (*unintelligible*). But, oh, hundreds, hundreds every year. But what's been interesting in this job and other jobs is to see people, what they put on their resume, some kids that, without naming some people, put that they were doing a lot more important things than they really were. They were interns for us, and they have these fancy titles for what they did. I mean it was a great launching pad for anybody who just wanted to have a understanding about how to work in an office, let alone the intricacies of a political office.

MP: Have you spoken with Diane Smith already?

AL: She's on my list.

MP: Okay, because she and I interned together, at the same time.

JP: As did I.

MP: Right, you were here in Maine and we were in D.C.

JP: And Diane and I were classmates over at USM, so, small world.

AL: So talk about your internships, what was it that you really were doing?

MP: Well, I did a lot of answering the phones, going to hearings and recording hearings so that staff could listen to that, just a lot of odds and ends, helping people find information on the computer. I guess it was really more support work, doing the running for people. But it was great, everybody there was so great and really willing to kind of include interns as part of the staff, it wasn't as though we were treated like outsiders or anything.

AL: Were there certain members of the staff whom you supported in that office, that you can recall and describe?

MP: Well, I remember Diane Dewhirst, who was the press secretary, and doing a variety of things for her. One of the things I remember her having me do a lot was read over statements just to edit them, just have another set of eyes, and I always enjoyed doing that. And then Mary McAleney and Gayle Cory, I did a lot of support for them as well.

AL: What were they like?

MP: Well Mary is, I'm sure you've talked to Mary already, she's a very outgoing kind of, laughs really loudly and quick to laugh, and she was great. As an intern, she took us right in, she kind of thought of us as her kids and would bring us out at night and buy us a beer or whatever, because she knew we didn't have any money.

JP: This is not while, during the internship, because Mary would not have been old enough, this was after. I just want to correct this.

(laughter)

MP: Okay, that must have been the summer after.

JP: That was the summer you were working there.

MP: But she just loved Maine kids and wanted to help us in any way she could, she was a great person. And Gayle Cory was just somebody who had such an incredible history, and her knowledge of everybody, because she had worked for Muskie, she just knew all of these people, and the stories she could tell. Yes, she was an incredible woman.

AL: And they were both from Maine, so you had that strong Maine connection as an intern.

MP: Well I think that was something that was important to the Senator, to just have Maine people in his office.

AL: And I know later, his AAs were more national figures than -

MP: Right, when he became majority leader, well, Martha.

AL: Martha Pope and David Johnson.

JP: Yes, but they weren't, Martha was his chief of staff, that was over in the Majority Leader's Office.

MP: But she was his AA in -

JP: But Mary McAleney was actually the AA for the end of the career there.

MP: When he became majority leader, right.

JP: So he had two offices going at the time, and anything having to do with Maine was handled by Mary, anything that would be national was, well there were a number of different people, Rich and others, so yes, it was different. When that happened, there was a definite different feel to the office.

AL: Was there?

JP: No question about it, because there were two different operations.

AL: Did they connect much, those two different operations?

JP: Well they had to, you know, if you're around this one individual, there was always conversations going on. It wasn't as close-knit, at least for those of us here in the state, as the Maine staff.

MP: Right, no, there was definitely that stronger connection with the Maine staff down in D.C. and the Maine staff up here. The Majority Leader's Office was more, it didn't feel connected, it felt -

JP: Well I think it's a classic case of nobody fully understanding what the other person, or fully respected what the other person did. Because we always, in the local office we had certain things we had to do, and then the D.C. office had certain things they had to do, so my internship was totally different than Mary's, and then the Majority Leader's Office was different a third time, so we never really got a chance to work in each one, it was rare for somebody to do both.

So, it's like my job now, I mean I have a certain perspective, my bosses in D.C. have another one, but it's based on where they are. I spent most of my time here initially cutting newspapers, we had to cut those back in the day, and you'd get those, we'd answer the phone, I joined right about [the time of] Iran-Contra so I just, we got deluged with calls. So he went from being a senator that didn't have much, he wasn't known too well around the country, to being at the top of everybody's list very, very quickly, it happened all during the time that I was there so it was always very busy.

My bosses were Sharon Sudbay and Larry Benoit, and I had some great people, and Margaret Malia, Margaret Neal, and I had some great people to work with and I had some great training. And you've probably had conversations with enough people to know, the office, certainly during my tenure, was really a matriarchal system, there were not a lot of guys working in the system. It was a different job, and some people just couldn't adapt to the work that was required. It required you to not have much of an ego, and when you work for your senator, your whole existence is serving his constituents, or serving the Senator and making sure he's got the information he needs. So, it was a very interesting time.

I also had the benefit at the time that, that was just about when he was running for reelection, so I did all of his driving. So I would be in the office, I mean at the end, I spent, there were times that I was spending ninety, a hundred hours a week, and I loved it, it was just, I wasn't getting any time off. As you probably have heard from doing the interviews, Senator Mitchell, unlike almost every other national politician, was home every single weekend, so he was working on Friday and Saturday and Sunday. When Mary and I got married we, and I finally had to say, "Okay, I'm taking Wednesdays off, there's got to be some time," as we started having kids, got to be some time that I can spend with the kids. Because he was, and I just can't imagine, I mean I was just working for him, I was supporting him. He was the one that was out front that many hours a day, which is very, very impressive.

AL: Now was this, are we talking about '82 or '88?

MP: 'Eighty-eight.

JP: 'Eighty-eight.

AL: 'Eighty-eight, right, yes.

MP: Because, so I did my -

JP: 'Eighty-two, I was still a Republican probably.

AL: Right, '82 would have been too early.

MP: I did my internship in the fall, no, spring of '87, and at the end of my internship they asked me to, I remember Mary saying, and Martha, both, "Why don't you take a year off of school and come and work for us?" And I thought, I'm so close, I've got to just finish. And so they said, "Well why don't you come down and work as a receptionist for the summer?" And so it was that summer, I think it was that summer of '87 that Iran-Contra was taking place, and then his famous speech of: "God doesn't take sides." And so the phones were ringing off the hook, it was a really exciting time to be down there, and his star was rising, like Jeff said. And so then I went back in the fall to finish school, and got a job with them right after graduation and came back, and that fall he became majority leader.

AL: So you went back to Washington, D.C.?

MP: I did, yes. And so then in the fall of '88 I came to work on his campaign up here in Maine and did his scheduling with Mary McAleney, and that's how Jeff and I, well we had met, but we started dating then, in that fall.

AL: And how long did you stay working for the Senator?

MP: After graduating it was really just a year. I worked on the campaign and then I went back to D.C., and then Jeff and I got engaged and I came back to Maine. So I wasn't there for very long, and then Jeff continued on.

JP: And I hadn't finished school, after doing my internship they needed somebody in the office so I continued. But it was very clear to me, it was made very clear to me, that you're finishing college, so I took a full load, I was working full time and I was taking night classes, so actually it was the best grades of my college career probably. But I'd do my homework sitting at the Senator's desk at nine o'clock, ten o'clock at night, whenever I dropped him off, wherever he was, and I'd fall asleep. They probably don't know this, but I spent a number of nights sleeping in that building, doing my homework. But it was very clear to me that, you know, I couldn't do that today, but I certainly could do it back then.

AL: And so they kept you on after you graduated, you stayed with them.

JP: Well, I was actually hired, I was in my junior year, so I was hired full time, and then I got my degree at night, finished up.

MP: Well, there were lots of people who came into your office with mental illness or drug and alcohol problems, and I think having Jeff be this sort of imposing figure, the first one you see coming in the door, was a good thing for them, too. Not that that's the only reason they hired you, but I think it helped.

JP: They needed a male around somewhere, I was the token. I'm joking, I'm joking.

(laughter)

AL: So talk to me about how your responsibilities changed, and what they were as the years went on, with your work for the Senator.

JP: I had the benefit, and actually, and it was a great benefit because I got to see everything, I traveled with him basically from York, Maine, to Rockland, over to Bangor, into western Maine and down, so I had the lion's share of the travel. But we had other offices where other people would pick him up, so I got to hear a lot of things. Very early on I was put in a position of a ton of trust only because I was aware of everything that was going on. That was just when cell phones were coming out, and we had this big, enormous, twenty-pound cell phone we would bring with us, I'd have in the car.

MP: Car phone I think they called them then.

JP: It was a car phone; you had to put one of those big antennas on top of your car. So I got to hear the Senator in conversations with other senators and governors, and it was just very neat to see things. But with that, I mean if you've been through the Mitchell Library [*sic*: Archives], it'll be very difficult for you to ever find anything that I've written. I never wrote memos; I was of the belief that whatever needed to be shared with the Senator would be shared privately, so you will find nothing. But you'll see, if you look at a lot of the Washington, the legislative assistants and some of the field reps that we had in Maine, you'll see that constantly, once a week, there'll be a memo on some particular subject. I never did those, and part of the reason I didn't have to was because I was always with him, I always had that opportunity.

AL: Was it something that the Senator appreciated, not having a lot of memos, or did he not really have an idea?

JP: I think the Senator, well again, I was never a senior aide. I started off at the lowest possible level and I worked my way up, by the time I left the Senator's office I was running our office in Lewiston, so I was never a senior aide like Mary McAleney or Rich Arenberg or

anybody like that. But there are still a lot of things that happened in my particular area that the briefing just was provided one-on-one.

You have, in a lot of offices, people that just don't know how to summarize things. After Senator Mitchell became majority leader – let me move back for a second. The Senator never needed staff because they, the only reason he needed staff, because he didn't have enough time in the day, that's the only reason he needed staff. Because if it was driving the car to working the front desk to cutting clips, he'd do it better than anybody else anyways. He really was one of those people, the only reason he had staff was because he didn't have enough time in the day.

So then we'd have people that, everybody wanted to get their point of view in, so you'd have these three, four, five page memos that were being written. And I remember having conversations with Diane and Mary and I'm saying, "Listen, you guys can write whatever you want, I can tell you what I see when he gets those documents. He's overwhelmed. If you want to write a five-page document and cover your behind, go out and do it, but I can assure you that there are times it won't get read." So at the end, when he was a majority leader he had so many things going, I don't know how he kept it all together.

MP: And he still came back.

JP: Yes, and even as majority leader, he was still home three weekends out of four. I know what that did to our lives and the schedule that we kept, but that was tangential to what he was actually doing as his career. So, I mean it was very interesting because I had a different interaction with all the staff, I mean in a way I was a gatekeeper. Whenever he wasn't in Washington or sitting in an office, they had to come through me. So I'd get these calls late at night, "Oh, well there's an important fax, go pick it up." And it was like, "Yeah." For the first couple years I would do it, and then I was like, "No, no, you didn't get your work done on time and I'm going to go drive forty minutes out of my way, back to get a fax, that the Senator may or may not need?"

I think technology changed everything. I mean that's back when there were no labor laws within the Senate, so I'm working ninety hours a week. Unless you're a primary person in that office, you can't do that anymore, they have to give people time off. And I don't know how a Senate office operates when you don't have people work -

MP: Must have extra staff.

JP: You must, or work doesn't get done, because a lot of people worked very, very long hours, both in D.C. and here in Maine. But it was an interesting time.

AL: Did you get a sense of why he felt it was so important to be in Maine so often?

JP: I think he really, he loves the state, I think that he needed the time with his family where he could just totally be himself. I think that, he would also, I wasn't there at the beginning so I

don't know, I didn't know him for most of his life, but I think that it kept him grounded. I mean here he is, Senate majority leader and he's clicking on all cylinders, and people are telling him how great he is, how great he is. But you come back to Maine and you're doing a town meeting, you got somebody calling you every name in the book, and you got somebody, you have to be sharp all the time. And I think he loved it, I think he really -

MP: Intellectually, is it -

JP: Intellectually, but more emotionally, he got strength from it. Not the same way that, you know, we had an opportunity a number of times to meet Bill Clinton; as he'd do a rope line, he'd get more excited, it really got him going. The Senator, I think, wasn't the same way, but he certainly generated a lot of his strength by his interaction with people. He never hid behind staff, I mean if you wanted to see the Senator, the meeting got scheduled. It might not be in three days, it might have to wait two weeks or three weeks, but it would get done. So I think that it was very fortunate for him, I don't think he ever went 'Washington.' There are a number of senators that, over the years they've forgotten where they've come from. I don't think he ever did.

MP: Well, and I think he had that respect, that he realized what his purpose was, why he was there, and never took advantage of that. And I think it would be very easy to, to stay in D.C. and not come home, and he never did.

JP: Even after he'd beat Jack Wyman eighty to twenty, eighty percent to twenty percent, he still was home three days out of four. I've already forgotten, he lost one small plantation, one small place in the state of Maine and I've forgotten what the name of the place was. And I remember talking to Mary McAleney about it.

AL: It's up north.

JP: It was north, it was up in, it was downeast, I want to say in Washington County or someplace in that area. He went up there after the election and sat down and met and talked to people. And he'd tell a great joke after that, that you know, "It's hard to believe I lost that, everybody came up and told me they voted for me." I mean, he lost, it was like seventeen-twelve, or fifteen to twelve, it was some small number. He could even find a way to make that funny, as opposed to -

And that was a fun election, and it was actually a very respectful election. Jack Wyman was a very, totally different man than the Senator. He was a bright man, but they were totally different people, but it was very respectful. I know that every time that they would meet at debate, or they would meet out on the road, at the Pittsfield Egg Festival or wherever we would meet people, they'd always go out of their way to shake each other's hand, so it never got nasty or personal like you see today where people are looking up nasty things on each other, trying to embarrass the other one. It just shows that you can have good, honest debates and elections without having to go nasty.

AL: Now, I understand from talking to many others that of course the 1982 reelection was a crucial one for him, and that he worked tirelessly to be reelected. And that was before your time with the Senator.

JP: It was.

AL: What did you see in terms of his energy level in the '88 campaign, where he must have had a large advantage going into the reelection.

JP: He did. Again, I was at a level, I wasn't privy to all of the debates that were going on. He raised an awful lot of money, and I know the state better now for having worked for Senator Mitchell than ninety-nine percent of other Mainers, because he was everywhere. I mean every little event. I think that one of the things that Governor Baldacci did when he first ran was really mimic what Senator Mitchell did, that you had – you know, we had this joke, you have more than three people at your house for a cocktail party, John Baldacci would be there, during the race. Well, Senator Mitchell was that same way back in the '88 campaign. He went to little places, little small events. Here he is, Senate majority leader, (no, he wasn't then, after the election he was).

MP: Right, but he was still that national figure from Iran-Contra.

JP: And he's doing small little barbecues all over the state, or high school graduations.

MP: He didn't take it for granted, by any stretch.

JP: No. Oh, and Larry Benoit was my direct boss, Larry and Sharon were my direct bosses, and Larry was so great, he would lie to us day in, day out. It's close, we've got to work hard, we're running the campaign, he kept saying it's close, we got to work. And of course Larry at this point has probably got polling showing that there's a wide spread, and of course had we known that, he probably didn't need to lie to us, but he said you got to keep going after them.

MP: And they were long, those were long days, those campaign days.

JP: But as long as they were, almost every night we'd end up going out together. What I miss about Mitchell's office was, there was a core. We could fight like cats and dogs, we could be mad at each other, you get people chipping at each other, and at the end of the day, you're going and having a beer somewhere together. And that was very, very nice, a very, and again, I look at what I do here today; I don't see it at all. Maybe because I'm older and other people here are older now, but they don't have the time to do that. But it was a lot of fun, but he worked very, very hard.

MP: Well we all admired him, I think, and wanted to do whatever it took. And he was a great leader for us as staff, he set an example and we all were always trying to do our best, because of

who he was I think. We could all kind of joke about him behind closed doors, but when anybody else tried to, it's like a mother and their children, you know, parents can kind of kid around about their kids, but somebody else tries, watch out.

AL: Now, can you tell me about your experience with Senator Mitchell in the airport? Is that what we call it, the 'airport story'?

MP: I really have to?

JP: I already outed you on that one, so you're better off giving your version than me giving mine.

MP: I tried to block it from my memory, so I'm not sure of how much I can remember. But it was when, after the '88 election and I was doing the bulk of his Maine schedule down, I was in D.C., but I was doing most of his travel schedule when he was in the state, because Mary McAleney had been doing it but she was now AA, and so I did it with Mary's supervision.

He always took the same flight out of Dulles on Fridays, and so I was always talking with the, it was a United flight, I was always talking with the United flight people, whatever they were called, the travel agent type people.

JP: It was (*unintelligible*) wasn't it?

MP: No, it was directly with United, but it was a congressional line and so they'd know. And so I typed up his schedule and went and picked up his tickets, and for some reason just never checked the ticket. And the flight had changed. Like it was always, say, at 5:40, and they had changed the flight to 5:10 or 5:15, and so on his schedule it said: depart Dulles 5:40 or whatever, and so you'd back it up, and when he has to leave the Capitol.

Well, he got to Dulles and realized he was late and might miss the flight, and so I'm on the phone with the United [Airlines] people saying, "Can you just hold the plane?" And they were saying, "No, Congress told us we're not allowed to do that anymore." And I think that had been one of the things in the past, that they held planes for congressional [members].

JP: And remember that had that been at National, he probably would have made his plane. But Dulles, you had to take that tram -

MP: You have to take a shuttle -

JP: Shuttle all the way out there, so that took an extra amount of time.

MP: And that was it. And so he then had to sit in Dulles for like three hours till the next flight, and what a waste of his time. I can't remember if he missed something that night, he probably did, he probably had a dinner that Friday night. Oh, it was awful, I mean I was ready to

just -

JP: And what was really great about it is, he didn't, at the time Mary and I were dating, so -

MP: Right, and he didn't know.

JP: So Senator Mitchell very rarely lost his temper. There were certain people, after a while I could see, he would do it around me, but if he had something that he wanted to say that was less than complimentary, there were very few people, one or two people maybe in the office that would ever see that.

MP: Right, well Martha was one, because Martha was the one who said, called me in and said, "What happened here?" And so we talked.

JP: And he was still -

MP: From Dulles, the Senator called and said, because they knew how upset I was.

JP: No, he didn't know.

MP: Martha I think must have told him because he called me.

JP: You didn't, no, I remember, you didn't, he did not call you, and that's what had you worried. You didn't talk to him for like two days after the mistake.

MP: Oh, I don't think it was that long.

JP: Because I got, well, I was on the other end, I was picking up the Senator, and he was still mad at that point, he was, *rrrr-rrr-rrr*, mumbling under his breath. Of course, he had no idea that we were dating.

MP: And I had already told Jeff, I called him, "Oh my God."

JP: Just totally mortified, yeah. I'm waiting at the airport, "Okay, I guess I can go home now because he's not going to be here for another three hours." And then he, well, he just didn't call you for a couple days. Then he finally called and it was all fine and everything.

MP: Right, and he, of course in his way just, oh, if that's the only mistake I ever made, I would have been in good shape. He was very kind about it, but oh, it was awful.

JP: But had it been the Senator arranging that schedule, he would have triple checked the time; you can never be too careful.

MP: And it was lesson, I was a young kid out of college, it was a lesson for me, like "Oh".

But years later when he was retiring, Gloria Borger from *Newsweek* was traveling with him in the car, when Jeff was driving, she was interviewing him in the car and traveling with him, and she said, "Well, so what gets you mad, what sorts of things?" And of course he brought that story up. So, I'll always have that spot in his mind, whether for good or bad.

AL: Now Jeff, talk to me about driving the Senator, some of the experiences you had, and give a, you've sort of mentioned peripherally how you got to get to know him a little bit that way, can you expand on that?

JP: Sure, in that '88 campaign we were everywhere, we traveled every single place in the world. The car for the Senator was his one place during the day where he could just relax. I learned very early on, the Senator was not a chatter, he would not be having conversation just for the sake of keeping, you know, so dead air, he had no problem with dead air. So what I learned after a while was that whatever event, if something had gone wrong in the event or I wanted to get more information out of him, I'd stoke him up, I'd just oh, can you believe the way that jerk, what he said, and then I'd get a minute or two out of him. But then he checked out.

So he would sleep a lot of times, and what I had heard from a former staffer was that if you ever get lost, just tap on the brakes and he'll wake up and he'll be able to tell you where you are and he'll give you directions. He was a very good backseat driver, although he was in the front seat, he always knew where he was, and I had to use that twice, when I was going from Farmington to Rockland one night, it and we were listening to the baseball game and he'd fallen asleep, and I had no clue where I was. Tapped on the brake, and he said, "Oh, you're in Cornville, take a right here." I don't know how he knew those things, I mean having always been to the, you know, maybe because he's traveled the state so many times.

But it was very interesting. When we got the cell phone, after a while we'd get phone calls, he'd get phone calls from sometimes world leaders, sometimes the president, there was always so much that could occur in those type of conversations because of concerns of security. And he was very good about things; what it taught me was that you should always know what you're talking about. You're just not going to be, you can't wing it, and he was not, he didn't wing it, he always had done his homework, he knew what he was doing before he walked in a room. Didn't mean that he wasn't surprised sometimes by questions, but he always was just one of those people who had so much knowledge about issues, so he was always able to work his way through.

He would do high school graduations, he'd speak at high schools for other reasons, assemblies, and he's always have a Q&A, there would always be question and answer as part of it, so you can get questions all the way on curfews, do you believe in curfews? To, what's the situation in Israel and how should we handle it? So intellectually you have to be up to speed to be able to handle that, and he just always was. It was a great opportunity for me to learn about everything that was happening in the world, because as a senator, at one point or another it came through the office, and he was at the time one of those people that, one of those five or ten senators who really was at another level, he and Bob Dole were just very good friends, and you could see them

have conversations, they were always very cordial to each other, even when they were fighting over issues, as majority leader and minority leader.

MP: I think he appreciated you in the car because you were quiet, you did understand. There were I think -

JP: Yes, we had a few other staffers that -

MP: Others who just took it as an opportunity, I think, to ask him about certain individuals and cases, and to talk to him. And I think he appreciated that Jeff was the way he was. Although there are a few times I think he was afraid of you because you didn't sleep at all.

JP: Yes, I was burning both ends at one point.

MP: At one time I think they gave him the day off, because the Senator was a little concerned about his own safety.

JP: That was probably true.

AL: I'm just going to flip the tape over real quick.

End of Side A

Side B

AL: We are now on Side B. And I guess I'd like to ask you, Jeff, what was it like to be in the car driving the Senator, and him getting these phone calls and you sort of knowing these are important phone calls? I mean, did you try not to listen, or did you listen and knew you weren't going to -?

JP: No, I think that after a while he had a certain comfort level that I wouldn't share a lot of what happened in the car with staff. I viewed that as, if it was something that was important the Senator needed to share with staff he would. I kind of viewed it as, this is the United States embassy and nobody is allowed in. Occasionally I share what happens, I would always give feedback as to: what happened on the trip; was the schedule too tight. And the Senator, he was so precise, it was amazing. They'd put his schedule together and they'd put it like exactly how they wanted it, he'd change it by three minutes here, or seven minutes there, just so he had a little bit of control, some control of his life at the end of the day.

But I got in trouble. There were staffers that wanted me to tell them everything that was happening, what was going on. I said, "I'm not going to do that." I always viewed it, I worked for him and there needs to be a place where he can just be himself, so I was very loyal to him in that way. And I still to this day, Mary and I, I've shared some stories with Mary, but there are things that I won't share because it's his life. I mean, I'll talk about the public things and the interesting parts of the Senator, but he was, he was just an amazing person to work for.

What I loved most about it was when he'd get involved with doing an interview with a reporter. We've had, I'm trying to think of the different people that I've driven the Senator with, all the way from Barbara Mikulski – remember when we had the Jeep Cherokee? So I've got the Senator (*unintelligible*), and Barbara Mikulski's, I don't know, four-ten or four-, very, very short, so she had to get up into the Jeep.

And the other thing is, working for the Senator, if you were going to drive the Senator you had to drive an American car. Okay, here I am, the newest employee, I'm making twelve thousand a year, I don't have two nickels to rub together, and I had to go out and buy an American car. So I got one, and then it was not a particularly great car to drive in, it was just too low to the ground, so then they finally allowed me to rent a car so that I could travel with the Senator without me going broke.

I'm trying to remember where we were going, but he was being approached about being Senate majority leader, excuse me, being approached about commissioner of baseball. He had a contract with him that he was reading, about the job. They had really, really wanted him, like if they really wanted him to be secretary of state under, he probably would have done it. But he wasn't going to lobby for the job the way other people did and (*unintelligible*) the job. And of course I'm dying, because that would be my ideal job, I'd love to be a staff member in the commissioner's office.

MP: Well that's one area you always said you felt as though you had superior knowledge, was the Red Sox.

JP: Well, we debated that actually, we would have, you know, that was an area we both shared, the love of baseball.

AL: Yeah, talk about that, because I know that's a common thread for Senator Mitchell.

JP: Well, we would, on those late night drives from Farmington to Rockland, or York to Bangor. He loved to travel at night, he didn't waste a second. So we'd finish an event at ten o'clock and he had to start the next morning four hours away, well we were driving that night. What was great was we never, I was never smart enough to say, "Mary, listen, he only can travel at these times, this is the Red Sox schedule," because it was something we could listen to the whole time. So, but we would have debates. I remember, I can't remember what, I remember when Curt -

MP: I thought it was Bill Buckner, weren't you in the car with him?

JP: No, no, it was the, he was for the Dodgers, Eckersley was on the mound in a game that Los Angeles got -

MP: Oh, the guy with the leg.

JP: Gibson, guy could barely walk. He gets up, and we're listening to this on the radio and they're describing it, then hits a home run, a walk-off home run, and we talked about that for a while. We talked a lot about baseball, I mean he really, truly loved baseball. We went to a number of games, I remember being at, oh, what were they called, the Maine Guides, down in Old Orchard, and Lou Gorman was then the GM for the Red Sox, and we got to sit in the owners' box down there for two or three innings. Of course, I'm sure the Senator had done that type of thing millions of times. I had never done that, and it was pretty cool, I'm talking to Lou Gorman, we're talking about, I played baseball at USM and one of the kids that I played with was now in the AA system for the Red Sox. And Lou, I said, "Oh, do you know Vinny (*name*)?" And he says, "Sure, he's having a good year." I mean it was just nice to talk to baseball people. It was a very, very cool job. And I remember at one point we went so far as thinking this baseball commissioner's job was going to happen, started scouting out a place to live.

MP: Down in New York.

JP: Yes, we were thinking we were going to live in Mike and Lori, your brother's basement.

MP: Right, my brother was down there, we talked about, 'oh, what would we do,' and we had probably two kids then?

JP: Yes, how much money would it -

MP: Three, because I was pregnant with Sam I think, yes.

JP: How much money would you need to make just to live.

MP: That's right, we really were, that was - oh, that would have been fun.

JP: I remember joking to him after the fact and I said, "You got to stop thinking about what you want to do in your life, you got to think about us." He thought that was pretty funny.

AL: I've been told to ask you about the story, it's called the chocolate lover's fling,' can you -?

JP: I was asking her about this today. I'm not so sure, unless it's what we talked about this morning, is that he would always get lots and lots of chocolate. I often joked, and it's probably not the greatest thing to say, but I would often, because I have a really good sense of humor, I said, he probably would have sold secrets to the Soviets for enough chocolate. He was a big, big chocolate hound, so whenever we'd go to these events he'd always get, you know, I'd leave there with quite a few -

MP: Plates of [chocolate].

JP: Of course, I'd be the one carrying them, that somehow I was hoarding the food, but in reality the chocolate was for him, he loved chocolate.

MP: The story that was better was the 'fresh squeezed orange juice story.'

AL: Well, what's that one?

MP: Well Jeff, this is during the campaign I think, and the Senator called Jeff at six in the morning and said, "Could you get me some fresh squeezed orange juice?" And it was a Sunday morning, before I think grocery stores were open on Sundays, right before that, the repeal of the blue law, is that what it was? And so Jeff's driving all over kingdom come to try and find fresh squeezed orange juice.

JP: Two-and-a-half hours.

MP: Yes, he wanted fresh squeezed orange juice and the paper, I think.

JP: The paper was the easy one.

MP: That was easy. But everything was just regular orange juice.

JP: Again, and I was young enough, I was given a [task], that's what he wanted so I'm not going back until I've got that, and I finally was, I forgot, in one of the hotels, I had to finally go into one of the hotels that had fresh squeezed orange juice, but it was a good, two, two-and-a-half hours of time.

MP: Yes, and I think, didn't he say, oh -

JP: And he said, "Oh, no big deal."

MP: "Oh, Tropicana, that would have been fine."

JP: Yes,"... that would have been fine." I was like well, I'm pretty literal, you said X and I went to find X. And of course I probably stopped at twenty stores and restaurants, you name it. It was pretty bad; I got razzed pretty hard about that one for a while.

AL: You mentioned the Senator's relationship with Senator Dole; in what settings did you observe that?

JP: It was mostly, they would talk on the phone quite a bit. Yes, I think I only saw them together once, and that was when I was down in D.C. Actually, didn't we get our picture taken with Bob Dole?

MP: I don't think so. You might have, I don't, not as a family.

JP: I think I did at one point. I mean, I spent my entire career here. I think that there was a time when I might have gone to Washington, but they're just two different jobs. Any job that I would have gone down in Washington to do might have been more exciting from a policy standpoint, but really wouldn't, I would not have had anywhere near the direct contact with the Senator. And so to me it never made any sense, I had the best of both worlds right here in Maine, and I still got to go down to D.C. and visit.

AL: Do you still get together with the old staff, are there occasions that you make, that you all make a point to see each other?

JP: We do. It's dwindled late- You know, it was, for years we would get a larger group, people are peeling off, people are all over the place now, it's more challenging. It seems like the last three times, I've been traveling somewhere internationally, and you went to them.

MP: That was to the Mitchell Institute dinner, I think.

JP: No, there was something you did up at The Silent Woman years ago, probably seven or eight years ago, and I was someplace. I think I was over in The Hague or something.

MP: Yes, well and I think again, it goes back to Mary McAleney who tends to try and get everyone together.

AL: So she's the -

MP: Maternal role a little bit, yes, I mean she really did sort of take that on as -

JP: I think the last time, well we, our third child is a boy, and we went out to Mary's place that she was renting out on Long Island [Maine], and a slate table fell and almost totally severed his toe. It was just dangling on, and Long Island's the furthest island out, and you've got these three guys that all weighed two-eighty or above on the rescue, getting on a fireboat, bringing Sam in saying, "We can't have the entire family, it's not enough room." And I finally said, "Listen, I'm going, if anybody has to leave, one of you has to step off," because at the time, the five of us didn't add up to one of them.

MP: Well, and so Mary's always saying, she's building a place out on Long Island, or maybe it's done, and she said, "You can come out there, no slate tables." So she talks about having groups get together, but it's hard.

JP: Yes, I think like there's another group in Mitchell's office, but again, we were both Mitchell employees, ended up, when you think about everything we've done in our own lives and so much of it we owe to Senator Mitchell. Mary and I finding each other, our five kids, my career track, Mary's career track, I mean so much of it comes back to him. Now, he may not know all of that, but without those circumstances, we'd never have been the same. I've been in

politics now for eleven years as a town councilor in Cumberland; that probably never would have happened without what I learned in his office.

AL: Public service.

JP: The public service thing was already there for me, and that's one of the reasons that I enjoyed working for Senator Mitchell. But [I've] been on a couple boards and committees and nonprofit boards, I've called the Senator on one of them and he donated some Red Sox tickets to one of our auctions. He's just been very good.

Like one year, right after 9/11 we went down, as a family, down to Disney World, and he was able to get us some tickets to go, it was just nice. I mean we've always had, we were never folks that were asking for strange things or, I think both of us made it pretty easy on him, except when Mary wasn't able to keep track of his schedule.

MP: Left him at the airport.

JP: But I, he didn't get as mad at me, but I was late picking him up sometimes.

MP: Really? You?

JP: I was, I was, yes. And that, I'm very anal about that, and I'm sure that that's where it comes from: "We're going to do something at ten thirty today, well you better be here at ten thirty because I'm looking at my watch at that point."

AL: I get a sense that that's one of the things that would sort of upset him, was not being able to have control of staying on the schedule, is that the best way to put it? Are there other things that you observed that would, what types of things would, maybe he had to work at to keep his composure?

JP: I think that he, I guess in general, I think the one thing that probably, that I'd see on occasion is just, he needed his time, he needed to be away. The phone was a blessing for a while, and then there were times that he'd turn it off, and of course we told everybody that we were just out of range. And that was what we did.

And there this one, that—I still can't believe that I did what was asked. Diane Dewhirst had heard some rumor out there, [that] the Senator had been shot. And I said, "He just went in the bathroom." She said, "You've got to go in and check to make sure." I said, "I'm not going into the bathroom to check to see if he's still alive, I just saw him walk in there." And then she finally badgered me and I walked in and I said, "Senator, Diane said I had to come in and —"

MP: "She thinks you've been shot." I remember that.

JP: It was typical of some of the neurotic people that we had. Press people are their own

different, they march to their own different drummer. But yes, that was a good one. And until he started trying to get, he loved McDonald's, we ate a lot of McDonald's over the years.

AL: Did he have a favorite, what he wanted to order, was he consistent in what he wanted to get, or do you recall?

JP: Yes, I don't recall any more.

MP: I remember what he ordered from the Senate cafeterias, it was always like grilled cheese with tomato or something, and it was always the same thing, when you ran down to get him lunch, grilled cheese and tomato.

AL: Did you ever accompany him, well you must have if you were driving, to dinners and [those] sorts of things?

JP: Oh yes.

AL: With personal friends, or was it always business?

JP: With personal friends, generally I wouldn't be there. You know, he'd go to dinner with Harold Pachios or -

AL: Shep.

JP: Shep, or Donny -

AL: Peters.

JP: Donny Peters, yes. I'd go to the house sometimes, we'd stop for an hour or so, but after Mary and I started dating it got a little bit easier, because Mary's house was right up the street, so I didn't have to be there. He needed places he could go where people weren't looking at him and judging him or, and I think that's the -

MP: And razzing him a little bit, probably.

JP: And I'm probably the only person that would give the governor of South Carolina a little bit of break, not for what he did recently, but he apparently had this history of just disappearing. He needed to go someplace just to get away from it, that he didn't have security with him all the time.

And that's one, the Senator refused security, I mean that was, it was me. He never believed, and I agree with him, that anybody was ever going to do anything violent to him. There were times when people were very disruptive or could be just rude, but my job was to just move him out of those situations. Or when he's at an event, I was constantly having to be the jerk, "Okay, we've

got to go.” These Rhodes Scholars down in Washington would put together these great schedules that gave us fifteen minutes to do something that it was going to take me twenty minutes to drive going the speed limit. And of course we were always going to be held a little bit later than possible.

So I was speeding all the time, and most of the time he wasn’t aware. A lot of the time when he was aware he’d say, “Well you got to slow down.” I said, “Well, I got a job to do, you’ve got me, I can’t get you there in this time.” I got caught speeding with him once, in the car, he was sleeping, and I got a speeding ticket.

MP: And did he wake up when you were getting it?

JP: He did wake up. The cop made us, you know, “Who’s the guy?” He kept flashing it in his eye until the Senator woke up, so I got the double benefit of -

MP: He thought maybe you -

JP: Having to pay for the speeding ticket, and have the Senator mad at me because he got woken up. Yes, it just is interesting, you think about all the different cogs that are moving in a Senate office, and it’s amazing that there aren’t more problems. Because generally you have, at least in the Maine staff, all of them had very strong Maine connections. In D.C. still, most of the people had strong Maine connections, there was enough there that we always knew that ultimately the decision would be the right one of the state.

That’s not the case in a lot of senators’ offices. Actually, what was it, when Obama first took over, the lion’s share of those staffers that took over that first year were Daschle staffers.

MP: Yes, and it makes a difference.

JP: Well, because they were all - He needed help, at least initially. That’s why I was shocked when Daschle came out so supportive behind Obama initially, then it made sense once you remember the history.

AL: And I know when Senator Mitchell was first appointed to Muskie’s seat that Senator Muskie’s staff, a lot of them went directly or basically stayed in the office.

JP: Some did, some didn’t. Some, like Gayle, went over to secretary of state, but she came back. And Gayle was, she was just a godsend for him, he just needed, he is probably not given a lot of credit outside of our, those of us who know, but he really was such a strong role model for women, he had very strong women that ran a number of his offices. As I said, you look at both Maine [and DC staff], actually we were probably, what, seventy-thirty, or maybe even eighty-twenty.

MP: Yes, there were a lot, yes.

JP: And his senior staffers, his most senior staffers, there were always probably more women than there were men, and I think that's unusual. I don't know any more because I haven't, I don't keep track of it, but I thought it was unusual.

AL: And during the time you were driving the Senator, do you recollect if Senator Mitchell ever had phone calls with Senator Muskie about issues?

JP: I don't remember that, although I do remember bringing Senator Muskie, I do remember, what is his name, he was eighty-eight years old or something, Quentin Burdick, he was a senator from North Dakota, and they brought him into Maine and brought him down to Senator Muskie's house in Kennebunk, because he at the time was trying to woo people for the Senate majority leader.

I do remember doing something, a man outside came back in, [and I] had to go get something. As I was walking back out I forgot the screen was shut, so -

MP: Went right through it?

JP: Went right through the screen, bent the screen.

MP: At Senator Muskie's house?

JP: Yes, Senator Muskie's, and I've always been told Senator Muskie is very tight with a dollar, and I was -

MP: Has a bit of a temper.

JP: Yes, and I thought I was dead, I thought I was absolutely dead; it was a pretty funny story. I literally did not think I was going to have a job by the end of the day.

AL: What was his reaction?

JP: Well, I think Larry Benoit was there and Larry, we helped get the door up and -

MP: Quickly, quietly putting it together?

JP: No, it was seen, everybody saw what was going on, and I can't remember whether Jane was there or not. I'm losing more information now than I can remember, but it was pretty embarrassing. I know that they talked quite a bit, but I don't remember ever being in the car when they talked.

AL: Did you ever get a sense of what Senator Muskie's influence may or may not have been on Senator Mitchell's career?

JP: Just from what he says. I think that what he said publicly, just, here he is, is a kid who had no real political background or desires and was plucked out, dropped into his office, and the Senator took a huge amount of abuse from Senator Muskie. Senator Muskie had a very, very, very bad temper, but he only directed it at certain people, and I think the Senator, when he was there as his executive assistant, that's what they were called back then, right, EAs, executive assistant?

AL: Yes, which is a little different than the, what's now called chief of staff, but then called AAs. So yes, two different positions.

JP: Well see, in our day it was funny, because we didn't have a chief of staff until he-

MP: Until he became majority leader.

JP: The majority leader, it was, the AA was the top person. Yes, but he would talk about having, the Senator would just get ripped up one side, down the other, most of the time having nothing to do with what he had done wrong. But Muskie had needed an outlet and the Senator apparently could take it.

AL: Is there anything that I haven't asked you that you think is important to add?

JP: Well you've probably, others have said this, again, I grew up in Cumberland, Maine, which is the southern Maine, you look at the number of kids that he has plucked out of Dover-Foxcroft or Guilford, kids that did internships, or Sangerville, you look at all of the people we would have -

MP: Farmington.

JP: Farmington. Have you talked to Kelly Currie?

AL: Not yet, but -

JP: Kelly's from Farmington, yes.

MP: Yes, his dad taught at UMF and he's -

AL: Well, that's an interesting connection, and that's my same background.

JP: Kelly's probably in, Kelly's in his -

AL: He's in New York.

JP: Fifty, now?

MP: No, no, no, he's only a few years older than us.

JP: We're forty-three.

MP: Yes, he's forty-five or forty-six. Don't tell him Jeff said he's fifty.

JP: He's older than that, he's probably forty-eight.

MP: No-o-o.

AL: Yes, we're hoping to have him interviewed.

JP: Because Kelly has a lot more to offer.

MP: Well, and then he went to Ireland with him.

JP: To Ireland, right. No, just the number of kids that have had opportunities, and who's to say that that internship, where that might have led them. It opened their minds. So many kids coming out of small communities, again, I did my entire time here, but the kids that went down to Washington, it opened up a whole different career for them. Gary Myrick, and Gary was either from Sangerville or Guilford, and he ended up being in the sergeant-of- , not sergeant-at-arms, what was the, no, what was the one, what was the place, right off the Senate chambers.

MP: The Senate floor, I thought that was sergeant-at-arms.

JP: No, it's not. But you're doing a lot of the research on different bills, and it's a pretty neat thing -

AL: Not the Cloakroom?

MP: Cloakroom, there you go.

JP: Yes, the Cloakroom. And that's where Gary, but I'm sure had Gary never done the internship, he never would have - You know, it's a classic case of when a door opens you just don't know where it's going to lead.

MP: Well, and I think he really believes in the American dream, and he talks about that when he makes speeches. And I think he saw his role in the American dream a bit in helping these kids, giving them the opportunity. And if they worked hard, they would make it on their own. And I think he, by going to every high school and speaking, that was part of it, and then with the scholarships now -

JP: Mitchell Scholarships.

MP: I think that's the other piece where he's leaving this legacy of trying to lift up kids from Maine who often come from poorer backgrounds.

JP: From a policy standpoint, he's the only person that I've ever heard make the connection. He was known as a great environmentalist, but I think people just assumed that he was a crunchy green, that he was a green, he cared about the environment. He did, but he's the only person that I know that ever made the connection between the environment and health, health care, those two issues to him were totally linked. All of these health problems that we had in the state, going back fifty, sixty years, were in many ways because we had polluted our streams and our rivers and our air. Having him grow up where he did, on the Kennebec, when it was a stinking, open sewer. People that had money were away from the river, people that didn't have money were on the river. It's interesting how that's flopped around, that waterfront property is all about wealth now.

He's the only person that I've ever heard use that analogy, connect the two of them. I think he was very successful environmentally, but I think that that and health care, they are so linked, but you still don't even hear it talked about today, unless you're talking about more kids having asthma, but they're the same issue. I can't think of anything else, can you?

MP: No.

AL: Thank you both very much.

JP: Enjoyed it.

MP: You too.

End of Interview