

George J. Mitchell Oral History Project

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L. Sandy Maisel

(Interviewer: Michael Hastings)

GMOH# 201

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Mike Hastings: The following is a recorded history of the Senator George J. Mitchell Oral History Project, an activity of Bowdoin College. The date is March 15, [2010], it's Monday, I'm in the office of Professor Sandy Maisel in Colby College – at Colby College – in Diamond Hall at the Goldfarb -

Sandy Maisel: - Center for Public Affairs and Civic Engagement.

MH: I do know though, that the Goldfarb Center offers some wonderful lectures to the people of Maine. I attended one with Senator Mitchell here back a few months ago. Could we begin in the standard way, could you state your full name and spell your surname.

SM: Sure, my name is Sandy Maisel, it's actually Louis Sandy Maisel, M-A-I-S-E-L.

MH: And it's pronounced Mā' zəl.

SM: I don't correct people any more. I did for a long time – it didn't get me anywhere.

MH: And your date of birth and your place of birth.

SM: I was born October 23, 1945, in Buffalo, New York.

MH: And your father's full name and your mother's full name.

SM: My father was Sidney Beck Maisel, my mother was Ruthe, R-U-T-H-E, Spero Maisel, S-P-E-R-O.

MH: Spero, so that's not the Greek Spiro.

SM: No, that was Hungarian Spero.

MH: Very good. You were interviewed I think on April the 5th, 2000, by Andrea L'Hommedieu for the Edmund S. Muskie Oral History Project, and I've read that interview. It's available online, and I'm going to try to avoid asking repetitive questions because interested parties can look at that -

SM: And I will go back and look at it too, to see what I said.

MH: But I do have a few questions that I'd like to ask. First, in terms of your own upbringing and political awareness, could you talk a little bit about – you mentioned that your father was an active Democrat. What kind of form did that take, as you best recall?

SM: Well, one of my earliest memories is my father getting a telegram back, it must have been late '40s, early '50. So I was very young. But I remember him getting a telegram – and in fact my family somewhere still has the telegram – inviting him to come to a dinner in Buffalo with President Truman, and how proud he was that he was invited to do that. And mostly I think there was a lot of discussion about politics. He was involved, he knew the people who were leading the Democratic Party in Buffalo at that point. Buffalo had a fairly strong Democratic organization. It eventually became the organization that Joe Crangle was running when Senator Mitchell was active – and before that a guy named Peter Crotty – but my father had a friend, old time friend of his, man older than he was, who was the treasurer of the Democratic Party and had been since Roosevelt was president, and I think that's how he got involved -

MH: Probably more in the fund-raising end of things.

SM: Absolutely in the fund-raising end of things.

MH: Is Buffalo considered to be a Democratic town?

SM: Buffalo is still a Democratic town, but New York state, you know, the city is Democratic and Buffalo is Democratic, and almost everything in the middle is not. I think Albany has been at various times, but Syracuse has had Republican mayors and county executives, as had Rochester and so-called southern tier.

MH: Did you go to public schools in Buffalo?

SM: I went to public schools until fourth grade, and then I went to a country day school called the Nichols School, which went from fifth grade through high school. It was a very – I had a graduating class of forty – and it was a very close knit community. Of those forty I know where thirty-six are now, and I would say I'm friendly with twenty-five of them.

MH: Wow. Now did you have class officers and all that, did you run for class officer?

SM: Actually no, I was the editor of the yearbook, which was – you divided life in those days by the athletic, the popular, and the smart. And I was in the smart group.

MH: You're a tall man. Were you as tall in high school?

SM: I grew after my sophomore year in high school. In fact, I played football. I quit football because I was too small after my sophomore year in high school, and then grew by the time I was

a junior. I probably should have stayed playing football. But I played, I was always involved in athletics, I just wasn't - I was probably better after I graduated from college than ever before that, but I played soccer on a championship soccer team, I played ice hockey (I was a goalie), and I played baseball. And I played everything else too, everybody did in those days. So we were always doing something with a ball, but I was also always doing something with a book, and wasn't very socially adept.

MH: Did you look at other schools beside Harvard?

SM: Yes, there's this school in New Haven I applied to, I can't recall its name right now (*laughter*). No, actually it's an interesting story about the college application process. I only applied to three schools. I applied to Harvard, Yale, and Amherst. And my father and his brothers had gone to Harvard, and that was sort of assumed and it - I suppose you didn't get in to Harvard in those days, but I think it was much, much easier than it is now. The day I went to Yale -

MH: Probably particularly if you had a family -

SM: Yeah, exactly, with family connections.

MH: Legacies were probably more important than they are now.

SM: Exactly. I went to Yale to look at it, and the day I went to Yale it was pouring rain, and you know those grey Gothic buildings in the pouring rain?! That is to this day my image of the Yale campus, and I hated it. And there was a part of me that says I should have gone to Amherst. I think I would have thrived in many ways more in a small campus, and what I tried to do at Harvard was to make Harvard a small campus, and in some ways I was able to do that for myself. But I believe now, when I think with thirty-nine years of experience at Colby - I'm pretty committed to this - that small liberal arts education is in fact better for lots of young people than being part of a great university with great teachers. I tell people this story, and it's absolutely true: I didn't take Henry Kissinger's class because the reading list was too long. Can you imagine?

MH: What house were you in?

SM: I was in Eliot House.

MH: Eliot House. And what was Harvard like in the years you were there, which I assume was probably '61 to '64?

SM: '63 to '67. I came in the fall of '63. There was a great deal of political activism going on right there, in the beginning of the Civil Rights movement and the beginning of the anti-war movement. [They] were both going on - the anti-war movement peaked a little later - but I was very involved (as I said in the previous interview), with Young Democrats, which is where I met

Senator Muskie originally. But I was also involved with Civil Rights groups. I had a black roommate, which sort of today one thinks nothing of that. But, you know, that I had a black roommate from the South was sort of amazing to my parents. I had an Arab roommate as well, which was also amazing to my parents in a very different way.

MH: From which country?

SM: Morocco, and he went on to become a very high ranking official at the World Bank, where he still is today. But we were involved in Civil Rights marches in Boston, and a number of our friends and classmates went down to Mississippi Summer, and this was a time when Boston was a very segregated city. The schools were very segregated, so we were marching against de facto segregation in Boston, as well as de jure segregation -

MH: The days of Louise Day Hicks.

SM: Exactly, Louise Day Hicks was a member of the Boston school board at that time.

MH: (*Unintelligible*).

SM: It was before she ran for Congress, but she was on the school board in Boston, and she believed in segregated schools, and not busing to achieve racial integration. And there were some really very bad things going on in Boston at that time. The South Boston Boston Irish did not mix with blacks, and it was a very tense situation. And the students from Harvard and, as I recall, Brandeis more than BU/BC, were very much involved in all those kinds of protests.

And then by my senior year, there was the Vietnam War protest going on, and a lot of us were involved in that. One of my good friends and classmates, and still a good friend, is Greg Craig, who served as [] counsel to the president at the beginning of the Obama administration, and Greg was heavily involved in the anti-war movement, worked for Allard Lowenstein and eventually went on and I think [] then for Senator Kennedy in Congress – Ted Kennedy in Congress after that. But a number of us were heavily involved in asking questions. You know, this is the same time that Hillary [Rodham Clinton] was asking those questions at Wellesley, and I went from Harvard to Columbia and was part of the 1968 rioting at Columbia that led to the Archibald Cox Commission and things that came out of that.

There was a protest at Columbia at the end of my first year there, so it must have been over the Cambodian incursion, and there was a group led by a guy named Mark Rudd, who was very famous at the time. We took over Low Library. And there were a bunch of police who were going to storm the library, and there was a group of us, faculty and students, who circled the library, saying essentially to the police, you had to – for days and nights – saying you had to come through us if you're going to take those kids out, and it was a very tense situation. But that gets people involved in politics.

MH: Were you working on your Ph.D. at Columbia?

SM: I was working on my Ph.D.

MH: It must have been hard to concentrate in the midst of all this.

SM: It's the kind of thing you hate to put on tape, but I wasn't a very serious Ph.D. student. I was getting – I viewed it then (I sort of still view it as) – a union card. I wanted to teach, I needed the Ph.D. I hated my doctoral dissertation from the minute I started it.

MH: What was it on?

SM: It was on housing policy in Congress. I was interested in how it was possible that in 1965 and 1966 we passed rent supplements and Model Cities, both of which Senator Muskie was very much involved in, and in 1968 we couldn't pass a rat control bill. And I was trying to figure out what it was that changed in Congress – whether it was the individuals who changed or the mood that changed. The change in the 1966 election was not very different in many ways from the change in the 1994 election, and what some people (my political persuasion) fear might happen in the 2010 election, changed the entire tone of the debate in Washington about what government should be doing and shouldn't be doing. So I was writing about that, and my problem was that nobody at Columbia was teaching me the statistical skills I really needed to come up with a good answer to it, so it was a very fluffy kind of dissertation.

MH: Were you able to get those skills elsewhere?

SM: I have developed them since.

MH: On your own.

SM: Mostly on my own, and with colleagues, some here and some from afar.

MH: Doesn't Colby seem awfully quiet compared to the days that you were going to college?

SM: Colby today?

MH: Yes.

SM: Well, yeah, but not during the Obama campaign, not during the 2008 campaign. There was an incredible amount of activity on this campus during the 2008 campaign, both in the primaries and, you know, before the Maine caucuses and the general election. But not the same kind of anger and anti-establishment feeling. That's happened a couple of times at Colby. Just before I came here there was a very famous sit-in of the chapel by black students – probably more than anything else led to President Strider's leaving Colby in the early '70s. Just sort of the tone that came out of that. And there was a very effective student and faculty led protest against our investments in South Africa at the time that other countries were divesting, which really had

the campus energized and talking about political issues.

MH: And there was - The president who replaced Strider was an Africanist, right?

SM: Right, exactly, and he in fact came – you know – he was a relatively new college president at that time, and he had come from a non-academic background, he went very slowly in terms of figuring out what was the appropriate way to deal with the board of trustees. It was a fascinating educational experience for all of us. And then the other issue that really took this campus, in terms of politically, was getting rid of fraternities, which was a huge political issue, internal political issue but really -

MH: And Colby did that fairly early compared to -

SM: 1984. We were the, I think the second school to get rid of fraternities.

MH: Tell me a little bit about Waterville. You came here you say in 1971.

SM: 1971.

MH: And what is Waterville like, (*unintelligible*).

SM: Well, what Waterville was like in 1971 or what Waterville is like today is very different. Waterville in 1971 was a mill town. We had the Hathaway plant active – I think they had over six hundred employees at the time, and -

MH: Where the Senator's [i.e. Mitchell's] mother worked originally.

SM: Where the Senator's mother worked. But my favorite recollection of the Hathaway plant is, whenever Senator Muskie came to town, he used to go over there and pick up shirts, and they just gave him shirts, you know, it was what was done in those days. He went up and saw the people in the office, and he came out with a handful of shirts. Driving one of Shep Lee's cars around, which Shep Lee also gave the Senator in those days. To use, not to have. To use.

The Hathaway plant was buzzing, six hundred and some employees. Scott Paper had a very big plant in Winslow, which is now closed. The Hathaway plant is now apartments and shops. Scott Paper plant is virtually vacant, some of it's used as warehouse space.

MH: And that's the plant that's just on the other side of the Two Penny Bridge.

SM: Just on the other side of the bridge in Winslow, on what at that point was the new bridge, just opening. It was a two-lane bridge and they made it into a four-lane bridge, during my first or second year here. That's the old bridge – now there's a new bridge named for Don Carter further down the river. Keyes Fibre, which is now the name I can't pronounce, the Finnish name, was buzzing out on the Waterville-Fairfield line. There was this huge amount of mill

activity, and it was sort of a thriving mill town.

And you had this very interesting ethnic diversity. There were no black people in Waterville at that point, there's a small black community now, and there was a, sort of a Republican WASP community who had been here forever and -

MH: What did they do, did they own the mills?

SM: Well I think a lot of them worked in the mills. They were lawyers, doctors, bankers. Waterville at one point had more banks than anyplace in the country I think, per capita. I mean, I don't know what the laws in Maine said at that time. But I think anybody could own a bank and many people did, before all this consolidation. But there was this sort of WASP-y community, a lot of them connected to Colby. And then there were these two ethnic groups, the Francos and the Lebanese. And they competed, but they also came together for Democratic Party politics in an interesting way, but not too many of one or the other. And clearly the Mitchells were very much involved in the Lebanese community, and there was another group that was involved in the Franco community. Spike Carrey was the long-time mayor of Waterville – so you know, an example of that – and it was just fascinating to watch them.

And they were very good politicians and very good citizens of the area, and they had different places where they lived. The Lebanese community sort of centered around the church down on Water Street – Joseph's Market and all that. And this great sort of tradition of people who came over on the boat and what name they took, they took the name Joseph. They were named Joseph because that was their first name. There are all these Josephs in Waterville who aren't related to each other, or barely related to each other. And then the Mitchell family was very prominent in that grouping.

MH: What kind of issues, I mean local issues were there?

SM: Lots of issues about the schools, and where you were opening schools and where you were putting what people in which schools, who was going to get on the ballot in running for office. So there [] were still patrons politics at that point and people were taking care of each other. And there were rivalries I think that grew out of sort of high school sports and things of that nature that carried over to sort of everything in life. And they were just different communities. You know, they were really separate communities.

And the intermarriages, of which there were some, were sort of few and far between, though. One of them that comes to mind very quickly is Joe Jabar, the current justice of the Maine Supreme Judicial Court, [who] married Rene Fortier (who was I believe Miss Waterville, if not Miss Maine). But sort of everybody said, "Oh, well, they get along well" –you know – "Joe and Rene are married." But I can't name that many. I think – well, I don't know where Yvette Mitchell (I assume it's a French name), I don't know what her background is.

MH: I don't know. I don't know her, so I hesitate to guess.

SM: This is Paul's wife. But just not many. And the community, particularly the Lebanese community, has stayed very strong in Waterville since that time. Terrific citizens of the city, and really sort of in many ways the backbone of the city.

MH: Now you participated in the Senator's – you were here three years and you were already involved in the gubernatorial campaign in '74.

SM: Yeah, I worked in his campaign in -

MH: Can you talk a little bit about that? Do you have any recollections of that campaign?

SM: Yeah. I got involved – and I'll never forget – I was actually working on – worked on – Bill Hathaway's campaign in '72 -

MH: That would have been his campaign against Mrs. Smith.

SM: Campaign against Margaret Chase Smith, exactly. When I got this job at Colby (it was the spring of '71), I was working in Washington. I was actually living in Washington, writing my doctoral dissertation, doing research there and writing. I had lived in New York while I was at Columbia, and my wife got attacked in New York. My then-wife got attacked in New York and we said, "We're getting out of here." And New York was a wonderful place to live if you could afford it, but graduate students couldn't afford it. So we went to Washington where I could do research and do my writing.

And I got this job, and – I don't even know how this happened – but literally within days after I got the job I got a call from Bill Hathaway, who was then a congressman. And I met with Bill Hathaway and this young aide of his named Angus King, and [he] said he was going to take on Margaret Chase Smith, would I work in his campaign. And I'd done a good deal of politics prior to that time. I worked for a guy named Max McCarthy in Buffalo as a high school kid – I guess it was as a high school kid. The summer before my freshman year in college, I got to know Max. He was running for Congress against a guy named John Pillion (this was in 1964 in the Johnson landslide). And a lot of people in my family knew him, just from being around Buffalo. He had been a journalist and sort of a – Buffalo is a small town in lots of ways. And he's running against Pillion, nobody thought he had a chance.

Pillion voted against the admission of Alaska and Hawaii to the union, because he said, everybody knows that you're going to have four Communist senators and two Communist congressmen if they get elected. So he was to the right of Attila the Hun. And I worked for Max, and my working for Max was going door-to-door. That's what I did, sometimes with him, sometimes with his wife – this was in the '64 campaign – just trying to get people to take him seriously. None of us thought he was going to win, and lo and behold, he wins. That was '64. In '66 I was still at Harvard, and I got a summer internship working for him on his campaign back in Buffalo. And my job -

MH: More door-to-door work?

SM: No, at this point I was assistant to the campaign manager. Now this is in 1966, when – we couldn't look it up, because in fact you didn't have FEC records then – but, I'll be surprised if we spend \$75,000 on the campaign.

MH: You were all of nineteen or twenty at this point.

SM: I was nineteen, yeah. No, I was probably twenty – I was twenty. And so I was number two guy essentially on strategy, and with this great campaign manager George Heffernan, who had great political instincts. And he basically had me doing two things. One was to look at each precinct in this district and see where votes could be moved, so that if a precinct was solidly Democratic or solidly Republican, it didn't matter if the margin [had not] changed significantly. And he said, "I want to know where there are people who are going to switch. I don't care if we lose if we get more votes, and I don't care if it's real close if it's – you know, one election's fifty-one/forty-nine, the next one's forty-nine/fifty-one – I don't care. What I care is if one election is seventy/thirty, and the next one is fifty-five/forty-five, then we're moving votes."

So he had me checking precinct by precinct on moving votes, looking at every election. I have a student now doing this on a campaign here for one of the Republican candidates, and they do it all electronically and using GIS mapping. I did it by hand, with this incredibly huge map of the city and coloring it in by hand – most of the summer I did that. Then the other thing is, we had volunteers going door-to-door, and we started asking the questions that in fact the McGovern campaign started asking six years later, which was, are you sure you're going to vote, are you going to vote for us, might you vote or not vote for the other guy. And taking everybody who was sure they were going to vote for us and putting them against our voting list so we could check them on Election Day to see who they were coming out for. 1966, nobody was doing that, and this guy had this idea: "we can do this, this is easy." All it was, was organization. So I did that for Max, and I went back to Harvard. Then the fall of '66 at Harvard is an absolute blur in my mind because I commuted driving back and forth to Buffalo.

MH: That's a long way.

SM: A long way, it was about a three-hundred-mile drive. And I spent four days every week in Buffalo and three days, during the fall, back in Cambridge, just trying to tread enough water that I could get through that semester. So I did a lot in that campaign. Then when I was in graduate school, McCarthy ran for the United States Senate. This was the seat that – it was Bobby Kennedy's seat, and Charles Goodell, a Republican (anti-war Republican), went into the seat, and he was going to be challenged in the general election by a more conservative Republican, James Buckley. And then there was the Democratic primary, and the Democratic primary had a whole bunch of people in it. The three who I remember – Max (my friend), Dick Ottinger (who was a congressman for a long time from Westchester and who's family was U.S. Plywood, and he had more money than anybody ever heard of), and Paul O'Dwyer (who was

sort of the darling of the regulars in New York City). And there was a fourth candidate – oh, and Ted Sorensen was a candidate in that race.

MH: Oh, was it? I thought it was Basil.

SM: Patterson? No, Patterson ran for lieutenant governor then. That was the year Goldberg ran for governor, Arthur Goldberg. So Max is running in this primary. He has no money at all, and I'm a graduate student in New York – and he comes to me, he says, "I want you to take over the five counties of New York for me." I said, "Max, you have no office, you have no money, I know nobody in this area, what are we going to do?" He said, "Publicity. All I need is publicity." So my job was to come up with publicity stunts for Max McCarthy in New York. We went up over Central Park in a hot air balloon to talk about air pollution, he dove into the Hudson to talk about water pollution. We did all sorts of stunts, and it drove the other people crazy because we got press. He had no votes, but we got press. And I said to him, "You're crazy to be running; you can have your congressional seat for as long as you want." He said, "I'm bored in the House." And I said, "I want to do this." So we did it, it was fun, and we lost.

And then Dick Ottinger asked me if I would take over western New York for him – that would be direct western New York – and I was writing my doctoral dissertation, which as I said before I didn't like very much. So I said "Sure, I'll do that." And I was going to move back to Buffalo and run western New York again. Max had a fight with the guy who was the head of the Buffalo organization, a guy named Joe Crangle at that point, who had been his big supporter. And Crangle said, "If Maisel runs your campaign, I'm not going to back you, I'm not going to work for you." So the compromise was, I ran the campaign for everything from roughly Syracuse west, in an office in Rochester (where also I'd never lived before in my life). But it was great fun because I did organize it. There was a guy named Kirby Jones who was in charge of organizing state wide, and I did organizing, the first fund-raising I had ever done (*unintelligible*).

I remember going into a bar with – it must have been electrical workers, because the people were working at either Kodak or one of the high tech places in Rochester. And my job was to get huge contributions out of these guys, which was ten thousand dollars, which was all they could give. And the rap on Ottinger was, his mother had all this money and she was giving it to him. Why should anybody else give him money – which was a perfectly legitimate rap in many ways. I think that campaign only cost three million dollars to run for the United States Senate successfully in New York.

And I went into this bar, and at this point maybe I'm twenty, twenty-one, twenty-three. Twenty-three, twenty-four - And I was drinking martinis, you know. I'm a graduate student, I know martinis, and these guys are shooting big beers. And I said, "I'm going to be under the table before I know what's happening." And I gave the bartender ten bucks, and I said, "Keep pouring me those martinis, but all I want is water with olives in it." And I drank water with olives in it – they were drinking beer the rest of the night – and I got \$10,000 out of them. I thought it was a great success.

Anyway, so that's my political background. I moved to Washington and Bill Hathaway calls me up and says, "Would you work on my campaign?" And I said, "I don't know anybody in the state of Maine. I haven't been here since I was a camper, or a camp counselor." So I move up, come up to Maine, and I help him out. I don't remember what I did in that campaign but I was doing nothing – I was trying to get Young Democrats organized at Colby and things like that – but I got to know people and I went to meetings with him.

And then when George was running for governor, I had met him and I knew the family – some of the people in the family in Waterville. And Nancy and Bruce Chandler were very active Democrats at that time (Nancy went on to become a member of the Democratic National Committee and Bruce was a lawyer who eventually became a Superior Court justice), were doing a lot of work, and I said, "I will organize Colby students to do specific kinds of tasks, whatever you tell us to do, we'll do." We had an office downtown in Waterville, and we did a lot of door-to-door in this area. But we did all of the direct mail, and direct mail then was hand stuffed, hand stamped, hand address – and we did all of it with Colby volunteer students going downtown.

MH: People think direct mail now, they think all computerized. It was a lot of work.

SM: That's right, it was labor. And in many places the labor was done by – this is how sexist our society was – in many places the labor was done by wives of male union workers. That's what we did in Buffalo. Here it was all done by Colby College students. But I met great people, I spent a lot of time with Bruce and Nancy and Tony Buxton and -

MH: Did Colby ever give you any flak for organizing students?

SM: No.

MH: Good.

SM: Well, I'm trying to think why not. But I think -

MH: That isn't always the case at a college.

SM: I think the 'why not' was because the chairman of my department at that time was Al Mavrinac, who was also a pretty good Democrat. And Bob Strider was a Democrat, so – and there may have been another one. They didn't even give me flak when I ran for Congress, so – they told me it was a stupid idea but they didn't give me any flak. So I worked in that campaign and I got to know George, and I learned a lot of lessons in that campaign about politics. I was part of the group that tried to convince him that you don't go to county fairs with a coat and tie on, and to loosen up, and it was very, very difficult for him to do that.

But I also remember him saying on election night, in that fall, and that was, there was a primary that year and he beat Joe Brennan in that primary -

MH: His old boss.

SM: His old boss. And the person who eventually appointed him as well. I mean it's sort of a fascinating relationship. But I remember after he won the primary, he was going to the general election, and a bunch of us were in Portland on that night [of the general election], and he said, "I'm going to lose" – this is to Longley. Nobody thinks he's going to lose to Longley, right? And I said, "How do you know?" And he said, "Because I was walking down Congress Street and every time somebody looked at me they put their eyes down." And I remember when I ran, I knew I was going to lose in the same exact way. People looked at me – and down here and weren't looking at me – and I said, "Oh God, am I in trouble!" You feel it, I think.

MH: What do you think – you were involved in that '74 campaign for governor, which he lost, lost in the last couple of weeks.

SM: Think about it.

MH: Yeah.

SM: Great campaign slogan.

MH: What did he learn?

SM: Well, he knew a lot about politics, and I think one of the things he learned is the old adage, you can't be your own campaign manager if you're running a campaign. And I think he tried to micro manage too much of his campaign. But more than that, I think he sort of learned how to relate to people not as the very smart professional lawyer campaign guy, but as somebody who was listening and empathizing. And he became masterful at that. It was not easy, because I think his nature is basically shier than that. But he really became I think masterful at listening to what people were saying, and responding. And also, sort of the outward manifestations of who he is, changing how he appeared – which isn't changing who he was inside – but how he appeared. And part of it was, I don't think there was any self deprecating humor in '74 that I remember. By much later, when he was running in '82, he'd understood that you poke fun at yourself, and he still pokes fun at himself. He's a very serious man, as you know, and has taken on incredibly, incredibly important causes, but he's never sort of lost sense of the fact that Swisher [i.e. John Mitchell]'s more important in Waterville than he is. Certainly Swisher will never lose sense of that.

MH: You've known Swisher for a while -

SM: I've known Swisher -

MH: Was he here when you arrived?

SM: Oh yeah. He was here before I arrived. He's been the assistant basketball coach at Colby longer than Dick Whitmore's been the basketball coach, and Whit's in his thirty-ninth year.

MH: I'm not supposed to say who I've interviewed, but everyone who is Waterville connected or Colby connected speaks so highly of the guy.

SM: He's a terrific guy, he really is. If he was going to listen to this I would give him some grief – as he would give back – other than his golf game.

MH: Tell me about your own run for Congress in '78. Now, you prevailed in the Democratic primary?

SM: No, not, no, no. I was working in Washington in the summer of '77 on something called the House Commission on Administrative Review, and so in 1974 David Emery beat Peter Kyros. 'Seventy-six the Democrats had about six or eight candidates, tore each other apart in the primary. Rick Barton eventually won that primary and then lost to Emery. And I thought at the time that it was embarrassing that David Emery was representing me in Congress. I thought he had no life experience. I thought he was not very bright. I thought he – I think he's gotten brighter since, he's learned some things – but I think at that point he really, he didn't do anything. And he was a caricature of a congressman.

And I became a professor because I wanted to be a politician. I knew professionally – I wanted to be a public servant, not a politician. I wanted to do something in Washington. I knew professionally, as a political scientist, that you have very little chance to doing that. So I literally said, "All right, if I'm not going to do that, what am I going to be happy with doing the rest of my life – so that if I might have a chance to do it, but if not I'm not going to be disappointed." And I debated between being a lawyer and being a professor, and I decided I did not want to spend my time working umpteen hours on somebody else's cause that I might or might not believe in, in order to make money, in order to maybe run for Congress, as opposed to dealing with young kids all the time and trying to excite them about things that I was excited about, then I might run for Congress or not.

So '77 I'm down in Washington working on the Obey Commission. I'm watching Emery, and I've decided I -

MH: The Obey Commission was for reorganizing the House, right?

SM: It was a House Commission on Administrative Review, and I was a research director.

MH: Administrative review.

SM: Yeah, I was a research - It came up with the House Ethics package, it came out with the administrator of the Congress -

MH: Because I was working in the House at that time, and I remember the Obey Commission.

SM: It was chaired by Dave Obey, a very young congressman (this was in '77, he was first elected in '69 from Oshkosh). I worked for a guy named Norm D'Amours, who was a congressman from New Hampshire at the time. Bill Frenzel was the ranking minority member, Lee Hamilton was on the commission as a congressman. It was a great opportunity, and I became the director of research. I got a call from the staff director, who was a former professor of mine, saying "I need somebody desperately. The guy who I have is not doing the job and he's an alcoholic and I got to get rid of him." I go down there – it turns out it's a friend of mine, I didn't know that's who it was – who he fired to hire me. A little difficult. But I took on this job, and I could hire some staff people and did really interesting academic research to apply to this. Got to know Dave Obey, which is a trip in and of itself.

Anyway, so I'm watching him and I'm getting more and more frustrated, and I said, "Okay, I'm going to do this. I don't want to be here as a staff person, I want to be here as a member if I'm going to be here []." At this point, nobody had declared their candidacy to run against him, so I began doing the things that you have to do to get a candidacy ready, including finding a pollster in Washington and people who would work on it. Try to figure out how much money I could raise and where I was going to raise the money. Who was going to run my campaign, all those kinds of things. And nobody's running. There's not a name whispered out there, although there were people whispering that I didn't hear.

Eventually Dick Spencer, who was a state rep a year ahead of me or a year behind me at Harvard (very smart guy, lawyer in Portland) decides he's going to run. And he is a state rep who has the state rep- There was a group of young state reps who were all sort of with each other and the smart young people in the legislature at that point. Tierney was one of them. And I look at this race and I said, "You know, he's got some advantages, I have some advantages, it's worth a shot." And I really thought if you didn't get Emery that time, you'd never get him. And there was all sorts of history, that once somebody's in their third term, they're there for as long as they want to be – who knew he was going to run for the Senate four years later?

So I get in, and then I began to build an organization, began to raise some money, when I came back [p/o] in the summer of '77. And I'm thinking it's going to be a tough race, running against an incumbent's going to be a tough race. I figured out what I could do at Colby, what I couldn't do. I said I wasn't even going to take a leave, that I was going to change my teaching schedule so it was very light during the spring of '78, and I was going to see if I could get a lot of students involved in my campaign, which I eventually did.

And I got a poll done by Bill Hamilton, who was a big Democratic pollster at that time, who I'd met because he was polling for the Obey Commission. He did it for me at his cost, and he said, "Sandy, you know, you maybe can win this primary, this Spencer's the only one in it. He's unknown, despite the fact that he's a state representative, totally unknown. Your issues are about the same as his, he's got some geographic points you don't have, you might have some that he

doesn't have." He went on, he said, "It's not a slam dunk but you got a chance." He said, "I don't have any idea how you're going to beat David Emery." He said, "I have never polled for a Democrat where the Republican is so popular. [] You should get out of this race because you're going to lose the general election if you win the primary."

And there's an interesting psychological thing. I think once you say you're in a race, you're in a race. You know, I didn't want to hear that, and I didn't hear it. I have it somewhere still, I can see it in writing, but I stayed in. And then two other guys got in the race: Guy Marcotte and John Quinn -

MH: Marcotte from Biddeford.

SM: Marcotte was from Biddeford, and that took away one whole area of the state, where I had a whole bunch of people working for me, even though I was wrong on all the issues, but they didn't like Spencer – these people personally didn't like Spencer. I lost all those people to Marcotte as soon as he came in. John Quinn was a consumer advocate for the state at that point. He put out, just before he left the consumer position, "John Quinn's Guide to Selling a Lemon," which he sent to every house in the state of Maine, paid for by the state. And I have to say, in the naivete that I exhibited was so amazing, I didn't ever reassess what a four-person race as opposed to a two-person race meant to me. And in retrospect, it meant I couldn't have won. But I was too committed to get out.

The person who was running my campaign, who I prefer not to mention, basically said she doesn't want to do this anymore. I got a student to run my campaign. Well the entire campaign at the end of the time was run by Colby students, some of whom have become my very good friends thirty years later – four, five of whom have started a research and student internship fund in my name at Colby, which they've endowed in my name. It's very cool to have these friends who are ten or eleven years younger than I am but who have been my friends for thirty years. And we ran this campaign and I said – I had some local people who were helping me raise money – and I said to John Eustis, who was my treasurer, "So you've got two jobs, John, keep me out of jail, and I want every i dotted and t crossed in our file. [] And keep me out of debt, because I understand this is a long shot and I don't want to mortgage my children's future to my ego."

We did all these debates and we were on television. I had a great advertising guy who I thought did a good job, and I was getting more press than anybody else because I would put out a press release every day for three months, on a different issue. You know – we recycled them, but they were different issues. The press wouldn't print them all because they said nobody else will say anything. I said, "You shouldn't print my stuff because nobody else is saying anything?" I said, "I'm demonstrating to you I understand these issues, what we're dealing with in Washington."

About two weeks out, I was talking to – oh, I can't think of his name, the guy who was covering for the [*Portland*] *Press Herald*, it was before Jerry was doing politics, I think.

MH: Oh, the guy that developed the opinion pieces.

SM: No, no, that's Jim Brunelle. I can't think of his name. Anyway, and he said, "You know, we were just talking about it in the newsroom" and he said, "None of us know what's going to happen in this primary." Nobody's polling at this point – Spencer's spending a fortune. I've spent forty-two-, \$43,000 that I've raised, it's all committed. He said, "But we think it's going to be very, very close." I said to John Eustis, \$10,000 more, my money." He said, "You told me no debt." I said, "\$10,000 more. [] I'm not going to lose this race for \$10,000." So we took \$10,000 and threw it in the last week on advertising. I ended up finishing fourth by I think twelve hundred votes from first. So nobody knew what was happening -

MH: That's very small.

SM: It was a very small margin. And Quinn, in fact -

MH: It's less than a House seat in Maine, I mean typical, average House seat.

SM: And John Quinn won the race. And he won the race (I did a study later because I developed some methodological skills) – he won the race because Joe Brennan was running for governor, and there was about a 0.8 correlation between the Quinn votes and the Brennan votes, and it was that Chevrus group down in Portland, that he just killed us all down in Portland. And Marcotte came in second, I think Spencer came in third.

MH: They were running as a pair almost.

SM: Almost, but not -

MH: I wouldn't call it coattails at that point, but it was probably together, they were getting out the vote in Munjoy Hill.

SM: Exactly, it was really interesting to watch, in retrospect. And frankly, losing that primary saved me a ton of money, because he then got killed by -

MH: Running from the edge of the district must have been difficult too, because you're right -

SM: I was, I lived on -

MH: You could probably see the 2nd District.

SM: I lived in Clinton. – as much as Sarah Palin can see Russia. Probably more. I lived in Clinton at the time, so I was in fact three miles from the edge of the district. And I made a commitment, which I only broke twice, that I'd sleep home every night, because I had very young children and one of the things I was – one of my issues was – that David Emery doesn't understand what it is to be a family man. So I would go down to Kittery, and come back. And it

didn't make any difference. None of those things made a difference. And if I'd won the primary, I would have lost the general election. Because Quinn ran a pretty good campaign and he got killed in the general election to Emery. But I learned a lot, made a lot of friends -

MH: What do you think was the reason for Emery's strong appeal in a general election?

SM: Well, it is what I think we have done with the Republican Party in this state generally. You get a sort of moderate, not flag-waving Republican who is one of us, and he was, you know, he was everyman. That's what he was, and people like that. And the rural people like that, and nobody else - nobody has anything bad about - there was nothing bad about David Emery. Once you get an incumbent in, if they do pretty good constituent services, it's very hard to beat them. I think George beat him in 1980 - in 1982 - because George had done a very good job and really mended a lot of fences, people think, and demonstrated that he could be much more effective.

Maine people, I think - Michaud will be an interesting test of this, I think - Maine people I think have a different sense of people who are in the House for us and people who are in the Senate. People in the Senate are national leaders, and Senator Collins has played this up very well. I don't think Senator Collins is the smartest person that's ever represented us, but she is very clever at becoming a national leader in a certain number of issues. Senator Snowe is clearly a national leader senator. Cohen was clearly a national leader, Senator Mitchell was, Muskie was, Margaret Chase Smith was, and I think people see that in Maine, and they never would have seen that in David Emery. He wasn't going to take it to the next step. I don't think they see that in Mike Michaud - I don't think he's going to take it to the next step. But they did see it in George, that he was able to become really a national leader very quickly, as he demonstrated when he was in the Senate.

MH: Did you follow his - were you following his career in the Senate after he was appointed? I mean, did you stay involved?

SM: I didn't stay involved - I followed his career. I mean I follow him because he's in the Senate every day now, so -

(Telephone interruptions)

MH: In your 2000 interview you point out that Republicans seem to run for statewide office kind of apart from their party structure, and Democrats seem to be successful when they run within the party structure. Now, Emery seems to be a bit of the anomaly there, because he seemed to be quite part of the party.

SM: He was part of the party, but when he was running - don't forget, when he ran originally in 1974 he was put up as a sacrificial lamb. He was one of only four Republicans in the country to beat a Democrat in 1974. And he didn't beat a Democrat; Peter Kyros beat himself. Peter Kyros became one of the most reviled people in the state of Maine, and part of that was because

he got challenged by a very good candidate who ran against him, Jadine O'Brien, in the '74 primaries. And she pointed out all of his flaws, and Emery just 'aw shucks-ed' his way through the election. But he wasn't so much the candidate of the regulars as he was the sacrificial lamb put up by the regulars, and lo and behold, he won. He was a, I have to look it up, but he was something like a twenty-six year old guy who'd never had a job, never -

MH: Twenty-four, I think. He -

SM: He didn't become eligible to serve until after he was elected?

MH: Right, I think that was the case, I think he was elected, he was elected. But before he was sworn in he reached the required age.

SM: [] He'd been something like an undertaker's driver or something for a while, I mean he was nothing. And no family, no life experience, been a state rep, and they put him up and lo and behold, and he's a tall, gangly guy who sounded like he was from Downeast Maine.

MH: What did you do after the lost election in '78?

SM: Cried. No, actually I took my family and we went to Europe for about a week-and-a-half, to get over that, and we had some good friends who were living in England and spent some time with them, and then I came back and I had to work to get tenure at Colby.

MH: You didn't have tenure by that time, okay.

SM: No, just up to that point.

MH: Tough year for you.

SM: I had to write a book. I wrote a book about that election, which was (the book that actually has in some ways cemented my scholarly career) was called *From Obscurity to Oblivion*, and it was about my race for Congress, and everybody else who ran for Congress in 1978. I did a survey of everybody who ran for Congress, I went around the country and interviewed these people, and it's where I sort of learned about the difference in how you run a campaign, and it sort of cemented to me how decentralized our election system is: how you get on the ballot differs from place to place, how you can run a campaign differs from place to place, what people accept in Chicago or Rhode Island you'd be run out of town for in Maine or Minnesota. So it's a very interesting process, and I've studied congressional elections since that time.

MH: Two other questions here. You indicated that your first Maine election was working for Bill Hathaway. Now in '78, Bill Hathaway loses to Cohen. Did that have any effect on your, in other words did that - Now of course you were in the primary -

SM: Yeah, I lost the primary.

MH: You left, lost in the primary.

SM: Bill came to a number of the sessions that we were at; he was assiduously neutral in our primary. And we actually – the four of us in that primary never tore into each other, except for that Guy Marcotte called me a baby killer because I was pro-choice, and the others were. I can't imagine Dick Spencer wasn't pro-choice, but he did not get the rap of Marcotte the way I did.

MH: The other question I wanted to ask was, in your political working for other people's campaigns, have you done much work in the northern part of the state?

SM: No.

MH: Traveling or -

SM: I've traveled up there some, but I've never done any political work, ever.

MH: Is this still the 1st District?

SM: Waterville is not the 1st District, Waterville is now the 2nd District, although I live in Rome and Rome is still the 1st District.

MH: Where is Rome in relationship to where we are now?

SM: Twelve miles.

MH: Twelve miles, so it's still, you're right on the edge.

SM: Right on the edge, yeah, and it'll probably go, after this census -

MH: Do you think that Maine will end up having one congressman -

SM: No, I think we're all right for at least this [reapportionment], at least this census – and maybe even one more. But it's going to be tight. But the 2nd District is a very different breed. I mean, look at Tom Allen's campaign. And he spent a lot of time working up there, he never could shed the image of being a Portland candidate. It's actually sort of the only reason I think that Pat McGowan has much of a chance in the gubernatorial primary, because while Rosa Scarcelli is claiming that she's from Lewiston, Pat McGowan is the 2nd District kind of guy and -

MH: It's always seemed, historically it seems much easier to run south than it is to run north.

SM: Yeah, I think that's right. George is one of the few exceptions to that rule. Well

Muskie, but you know – Muskie was sort of a – he wasn't a Portland guy. Think of how few Portland people – Joe Brennan and George are really sort of the two Portland people I can think of – who won statewide. Olympia's now down there, but she certainly wasn't from there; and Susan isn't from there.

MH: And Susan Collins has a – I know she lived in Standish for a while, and she has the folks in Caribou. She lives in Bangor; she has [] put her anchor down in several spots.

SM: But she's a 2nd District person, she worked for a 2nd District congressman, she's a 2nd District person. I guess Angus [King] was the 1st District, but Angus was really an outsider when he ran, he wasn't known as a 1st District person. Coming out of Portland – I mean, I think being a Portland lawyer, or a Portland businessman – is a very hard place from which to run statewide in Maine.

MH: I don't want to deal too much with this year's elections, but what do you think of all these candidates. As we speak, there are I think twenty-four candidates -

SM: Well, we'll see. We're recording this on the day they have to file, except for the Independents. There are twenty-four counting the Independents. I think there are sixteen Democrats and Republicans who still have papers out there. It's a lot of candidates. You got an open seat. What strikes me as odd is why anybody would want to be governor of Maine. I can understand why you want to solve the problems of Maine, but you have really intractable problems with an amateur legislature, and a governor who gets paid not enough to, you know - Adam Cote, who I think could have gotten the nomination if anybody in the Democratic had an inside track, basically couldn't afford to be governor of Maine. He's got four kids and he said, "you can't do it on -," I think it's \$75,000 [], something like that. It's giving up huge financial sacrifice at a time when his kids - At least you'd be putting money away for college. Not that, you know, for the average Mainer that's still a lot of money, but for the person who's giving up a position to run for that, there's a sacrifice.

I think there are very few who are catching on. I think the public is not interested in the race right now. I think those who can portray themselves as outsiders have a leg up. So while I am a Democrat, I believe in two party politics, and I don't think we were particularly well served for eight of the twelve years in which we've had an Independent governor recently. I think that Eliot Cutler, if he spends a lot of money, has some chance, even though he's a former Democrat, now running as an Independent. I think Rosa Scarcelli running as sort of the outsider is going to do better than people think she's going to do.

MH: Now most of these are -

SM: Now this is going to be – people are going to be listening to this ten years after this happened, and you know, she'll end up with no votes, and what do I know? But I don't think that's the case.

MH: There's been a lot of talk in the local press about the campaign financing law in Maine, the Clean Election Law, can you speak to that a little bit? Because I suppose that's a good situation?

SM: I opposed it when it went into effect. I thought that the barrier that you had to get over to get money was too low, and I think that showed in the last gubernatorial election. I think this time raising it to [] 3,250 five-dollar checks makes it a significant barrier. And I think what you see is the candidates are struggling – they have till April 1st, I believe, to do that – the candidates are struggling to reach that number. Libby Mitchell, who's got quite a good statewide organization is struggling; Pat McGowan is struggling. And I think it does say: if they make it, it makes some sense.

I just don't believe necessarily that the ability to raise money should be something that disqualifies you from office. I think in a time of financial crisis, which the state is in right now, this is a funny way to spend money. For the state house, I have been impressed. I opposed it – I have been impressed by the number of seats that have been contested that were not contested before, and I think that's a very good consequence of it. On the other hand, I think it just sits out there and begs third party candidates to run for the state house. And it also begs people who probably don't have any business running to run, and I worry about that. But the excesses of money that people are spending is also worrisome, so I think you have to get a balance.

MH: This is like a giant puzzle this year, trying to figure out -

SM: Well, I would -

MH: Even [what] the design of the primary ballot's going to look like.

SM: Yeah, I don't know – I haven't even seen that. Well they don't have it yet, because they don't know who's going to qualify for it, but it's going to be a very -

MH: I mean figuring out who's going to drop out between now and the primary for lack of finances.

SM: Well, we'll see who files today. And then those people will still be on the ballot. I think there's a day in which they can remove themselves from the ballot, but I doubt very many of them will. I think some will not file today probably. But it is very confusing, and I think the voters – you know, a big D and small d democrat – I think the voters have difficulty making good democratic decisions if you've got so many people on the ballot that they can't figure out the difference among them. And for these candidates to distinguish themselves, when the press is covering it not at all (because people aren't interested), and the press – you know, none of the papers in this state have adequate staffing to do good political reporting any more. I think *Bangor Daily News* does it now as well as anybody does it, but the Portland and the Waterville and Augusta papers are scandalously understaffed.

I think it's going to be very, very difficult to figure out who you're going to vote for. So it seems to me, those people who can distinguish themselves in some way. Let's say – I don't know if this is the case – but let's say Steve Rowe (former attorney general) might be the one who most of the insiders think is the best qualified to be governor. Where's his constituency? The people who live in Augusta and work in Augusta are not a constituency. And I don't see how he distinguishes himself. I don't see how John Richardson distinguishes himself. I don't see how Libby [Mitchell] distinguishes herself. By her Southern accent?

MH: Maybe they need a hot air balloon.

SM: Well, they may be able to do it. So the two I can see distinguishing themselves – and again, I'm not saying whether I think they'd be the best candidates or the best governors, I think those are different questions – are McGowan and Scarcelli. McGowan because he really is a 2nd District guy. But he's got I think a problem of being so closely tied in the public's eye, those who know about him, to Baldacci, that that's a problem. And Scarcelli because she isn't tied to anybody, and I think that's an advantage to her.

MH: Let me ask you, you just raised the subject of the press here. How has the press changed in its impact on statewide politics?

SM: There is no press covering statewide politics anymore. There *is* no press covering statewide politics anymore. There is Mal Leary, who's been here forever, and fleeting people in and out in Portland and in the other newspapers. And they, you know - Do a content analysis of the number of stories on the congressional or gubernatorial races, or senatorial races the last time in the press: there's none. And so you get -

MH: You think it's the blogs having taken the place of the daily newspapers?

SM: I don't believe so. I don't think people are reading those. What is it – the Maine, asmainegoes.com – I don't think they get that sizable readership other than people like you and me who care about it. But I don't think the average person walking down Main Street – I don't think my wife (who is a Ph.D. economist and cares about the outcomes) reads those kinds of blogs. So I don't know where people are getting their news.

MH: Yeah, and it doesn't seem to me that the Rotary Club circuit is powerful as it used to be either.

SM: Nope. It isn't.

MH: They're people that are my age, I mean they're sixty and above and -

SM: I don't know. I just don't know how people are distinguishing themselves, and therefore you get the government you deserve. But it's a problem nationally, in terms of what the press is doing, and the cut backs in the press, and the sort of lack of seriousness of what's being

portrayed in the press. At the national level, I think you can make some sense about the blogs for people who are following politics, but I don't think you can do it on a state level. In some states maybe, but not here.

MH: I'd just like to cycle back a little bit into – did you have any assignments or any sabbatical leaves or assignments in D.C. when George Mitchell was in the Senate?

SM: No.

MH: Did you get to visit him at all down there?

SM: Yes, and in fact I did -

MH: What were the -

SM: I was down there, I was in Washington but doing research and – I'm just trying to figure out when he left the Senate.

MH: He left in, well he announced in April of '94, and he was out in, he was gone by the 2nd of January in '95.

SM: I don't think I was – I also can't figure out what year I went down to Washington, but I think it was after that. I used to visit him quite frequently down in the Senate office. I had a number of former students who were working for him and spent time with them. Grace Reef was -

MH: Oh yes, I worked with Grace.

SM: Grace was one of my early students at Colby. Well not so early, she was here in, she must have been about the class of 1980 or '81 – and Nora was one of the people who raised [money for] my campaign, way back when. I observed what he was doing, I saw what he was doing when he became majority leader. We for a brief period of time ran a Mitchell series of lectures up here in which he brought experts. We did either two or three years: we did one on the health care debate; we had one on policy towards the Soviet Union; and when he was majority leader he brought people up with him to speak about their subjects at the Colby campus.

MH: Do you have a formal intern program down in the Senate?

SM: No, we never had a formal intern program. We have an informal intern program – we probably almost always had an intern there -

MH: David Lemoine must have been one of your students.

SM: David Lemoine *was* one of my students -

MH: Current state treasurer, (*unintelligible*). David was very proud of his, I worked with David, and he was very proud of his Colby roots.

SM: Oh, it's because you Bowdoin guys, you know, dominate. You know the story that Senator Mitchell tells about Colby and Bowdoin, don't you?

MH: Well, I'd like to hear it from you.

SM: Well you've heard it I'm sure from lots of other people. But every time he speaks at Colby, in one way or another he gets this story in. He graduated from Bowdoin and was waiting for his commission, I guess, to go into the service, and there was a period of time he didn't know what he was going to do. That was the time we were building this campus – the Mayflower Hill campus – and his father worked on the grounds crew at Colby at that point. And he got George, he went to probably George Whalen (who was the head of physical plant at that point), to hire George Mitchell to work on the grounds crew while he was waiting to go into the service. And he was out there, in fact the lawns out here at Foss Hall; he shaped those grounds. That was his summer job, to make those lawns. And his father used to tell the story that in order to work on the grounds crew at Colby, you have a Bowdoin degree – which we all think is in fact true. And the Senator tells that story very frequently when he is speaking on the Colby campus. In fact so frequently that there are people in the audience who mouth it along with him as he's telling it.

MH: When was the last time you saw the Senator?

SM: He came up and gave a talk. The Goldfarb Center has a George J. Mitchell Distinguished International Lecture Series, that his family helped to establish, and we've had it four or five years now. Mary Robinson spoke, Secretary Albright spoke, George has spoken now twice, and he came up and spoke about the Middle East – I'm missing one speaker, I can't remember who it was – spoke about the Middle East last fall, and he was terrific. In fact, if you open that door you'll see his picture smiling at you, because I have a poster of every event that the Goldfarb Center has run on my door, and he is still visible. The door is now three deep in posters, so people get covered up.

MH: Did you get a chance to spend some time with him at that lecture?

SM: I had dinner with him that night.

MH: How did you find his spirits, given the hard task that he has?

SM: He has a terribly hard task, and he was amazingly not discouraged, it seemed to me. I would think this week he is amazingly discouraged. This is the week in which Vice President Biden was in Israel and the Israelis announced sixteen hundred new settlements in East Jerusalem while Biden was there. It was the worst slap in the face to the American government by the Israelis ever, I think, and I think, in my view is really leading to a crisis in American-

Israeli relationship right now.

MH: And even Netanyahu seems to -

SM: Have figured it out.

MH: Have recognized that it's catastrophic for the (*unintelligible*).

SM: Yeah, the ambassador to Washington is back in Jerusalem right now, talking about that there is a crisis in American-Israeli relations that rivals that of the Carter administration.

MH: I think it was almost a double whammy, because there was a possibility that the Irish settlement was going to be derailed, and I guess that was fought back, but -

SM: Yeah. His spirit in doing this, and his energy – and somebody who is not a young man – and dedicating his life to this, is I think something that our students marvel at when they see him and meet him. They just were so taken by what he is doing, and his serenity in talking about the Middle East. And frankly, his dedication to this lecture series at Colby, which he committed when we did this, and his brother Paul and his nephew Billy started raising a lot of money, and some of his cousins participated, and he's made some contributions to this fund. And his dedication to keeping doing it – we hope very much that Vice President Biden is our next speaker, which he is going to work on.

MH: Andrea L'Hommedieu, ten years ago, asked you the same question I'm going to ask you now, and that is, is there any reflection about George Mitchell or special story you'd like to tell? She was asking the question about Muskie, but is there any thought you have about him that you'd like, before we draw this to a close?

SM: Well, a number of great memories of times that I have spent with him. But of the two that strike me are, one is, I just love to see the interplay between him and his brother "The Swish," Johnny, because there is always, when he's at Colby, we make a concerted effort to always have the Mitchell family here, and there is always some poking fun at the Swisher, that everybody in the room enjoys. Swisher tells the story about going up the Interstate, and George is driving with him, and the toll taker recognizes the Swisher and not George, and things of that nature. There's stories like that, that are just fun to listen to, and you see the banter and the interplay and you say, these are guys who came from the poorest section of Waterville, and because of the great, I think, incredible role models set by their parents, really have made incredible contributions – not just George, which we all know about, the contributions to the state and nationally, but Swisher and Paul and Robbie to the – and Barbara and her late husband Eddie Atkins – to the Waterville area. It's really been an astounding American success story.

The other one – which I can't remember the story I told about Muskie, because there was a similar story in my life with Muskie – but this is my favorite George Mitchell story. When he was in the Senate he used to come up here and speak almost every year in a class, and I would

introduce him to the class. And after I had run for Congress and lost (and I was considered a fairly liberal Democrat by most people), I used to get up there and speak, and he would stand next to me. And one day I'm up there, and he's standing next to me, and all of a sudden he moves around to the other side, going from my left to the right. And he just looks out at the audience and says, "I never want to be to Sandy Maisel's left." And I thought that was a pretty good statement of what our relationship is.

But he has been a role model for our students, and somebody who I think has [] - Both when he was a candidate the first time, and as a district judge, I remember going into his chambers when I was considering running for office and saying, "Does a Jew from western New York who wears bow ties have any chance running for Congress, or am I foolish to even try this?" And we had a long serious conversation in which he basically said nobody's prejudiced against Jews in the state of Maine, they treat people the way they deserve to be treated, so if you lose, that isn't why you're going to lose. And I think he was absolutely right. He never felt that he lost because he was Lebanese, in this area, although other people did feel - He didn't carry Waterville in that '74 campaign, and it was very bitter for him, and for his family, but he never thought it was prejudice. I think he thought it was he didn't run the right campaign.

And as a United States senator, and since as a negotiator, and as somebody who's demonstrated his loyalty back to the citizens of this community and this state, I think he is an incredible role model. We've had a lot of Mitchell Scholars at Colby, you know. They think he walks on water, and so do I.

MH: Thank you very much, Sandy Maisel.

SM: Thank you.

End of Interview