2009-13-09

RECORDED INTERVIEW

OF

SENATOR DAN INOUYE

CONDUCTED BY

CHARLES FEDULLO

WITH

PAUL MCCARTHY

IN WASHINGTON, D.C.

June 9, 2009

Part 1 of 1

UAF ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

SENATOR TED STEVENS PROJECT

Transcribed by:

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INTERVIEW OF SENATOR DAN INOUYE

(Beginning of Part 1 of 1 of recorded interview.)

PAUL MCCARTHY: Again, we thank -- thank you for your kindness and your time.

CHARLES FEDULLO: You're a very busy -- a very busy gentleman, so we do appreciate your time.

This is oral history Senator Ted Stevens. The name of the narrator is Senator Dan Inouye. The name of the interviewers are Paul McCarthy and Charles Fedullo. The date of the interview is June 9th, 2009. The place of the interview is in Senator Inouye's Appropriations Office, Side A, Tape 1.

Senator Inouye, you knew Senator Stevens, he calls you a brother. Where do you two forge your relationship? Where did you meet? Walk us through that.

SENATOR DAN INOUYE: Well, I had no idea who he was until he arrived here in Washington. And immediately I saw and felt some kinship because, one, we were of the same age; two, we were in World War II, both of us in a combat situation.

Third, we both represented former territories and, as such, we were well aware that our constituents had been

shortchanged over the years. You know, we have laws that applied to the 48 states, but somehow it doesn't apply to Hawaii. For example, the interstate highway system, but we pay all the taxes like everyone else. And we're always considered foreign as far as travel is concerned, so government employees are discouraged from going to Hawaii. And so little things like that.

So we had a commonality. And it was natural for me to get together. And slowly we began to find ourselves conferring with each other. I realize, and obviously, he's a Republican, I'm Democrat, and -- but I found him to be forthright, for one thing.

And the other thing that impressed me was that he obviously studied. He very seldom discussed the matter that he was not fully instructed on or advised on or studied. So it was interesting chatting with him.

Well, we got to be friendly enough that when Bob Bartlett's statue was presented to the Congress of the United States by the Legislature in Alaska, the question came up as to who should make the presentation speech.

At that time, you had two senators from Alaska; one was Mike Gravel, and the other was Ted Stevens, and Ted just got there. And I knew Mrs. Bartlett because I had served with her husband on a committee, the Commerce Committee then. And so she inquired.

I'm saying this because they are all passed away.

CHARLES FEDULLO: True.

SENATOR DAN INOUYE: And she said, "Does a Democrat have to make the presentation?" Because Bob Bartlett was Democrat.

"I don't know." I said, "I would think that, since you are the wife, you would have a lot of weight in this decision."

I said, "If you wish, you could call up Ted Stevens, and I'm certain that he would be very happy."

"Oh, can I?"

So here is Ted Stevens making the presentation of Bob Bartlett's statue. And I think that surprised Ted because Mrs. Bartlett apparently told him, "Dan said it's okay for me to ask you."

Our relationship just grew and grew. And after awhile, we found ourselves on the same committee, same -- serving on the same subcommittees. We were on Commerce together, Appropriations together. So we had many things in common.

There's another footnote that most people are not aware of. He has Native Americans and I've got Native Americans. I've got Hawaiians, he's got Indians and Eskimos, Aleuts and such. So there are many things in common.

And I'd go to Alaska and learn a few things. For example, as a result of my trip there, and he took me through all these outlying tribal areas, and he said, "Do you realize in the wintertime the only way you can come in is by sled. Or a helicopter, if you can afford one."

And so I said, "What happens when someone gets hurt?"

"Well, there's a telephone, which doesn't work too well."

So the concept of Telemedicine began out there, which is now in every hospital. Well, that's made in Alaska. So we have many things in common.

CHARLES FEDULLO: You worked alongside each other, as you said, for many years, but it seems like defense funding is one area where you two spent a lot of time.

SENATOR DAN INOUYE: Well, that's another area of common concern. Alaska is a major military bastion, Hawaii is the same. We are in the same clan. The Commander in Chief of the Pacific Region handles Alaska and Hawaii. We have common concerns about the potential threat of -- in the Asian Pacific area, and so it's a natural that we would confer with each other.

CHARLES FEDULLO: You -- what did you think of him on a personal and on a professional level? People -- we've talked to people who say he was very intellectual and

understood the legislative process very quickly. What did you -- what was he like to work with in that capacity?

SENATOR DAN INOUYE: Well, he was one of the real pros on legislative process. He knew his way around and he caught on very fast. But it should be noted that, before he got to the Senate, he was in the government. He was in the Interior Department, so he was well familiar with the bureaucracy of the government and the process that one had to go through to get legislation carried out. So it was not a strange assignment for him. He was prepared.

CHARLES FEDULLO: What about people in Alaska? He's famous, I would imagine here, as well, for his temper. The Hulk tie and the occasional bruskness. Some people say it was used as a tool, others say it was a detriment to him. You have a very different approach. What did you think of the temper?

SENATOR DAN INOUYE: I used to tell people he's a pussycat.

CHARLES FEDULLO: That's the first -- that's the first time I've ever heard that, Senator.

SENATOR DAN INOUYE: Because, well, at least we've never had a shouting match. He's never shouted at me, and I don't make it a practice to shout. But let's put it this way. He's -- he gives the impression of being tough. He is strong minded, no question about that, and when he really

believes in something, he pursues it. And he's persistent. Those are his strengths. But I tell him once in awhile that, you know, acting tough I can understand, but some others may not. I personally think that it's his way of getting the point across.

Can I cross this spot out?

CHARLES FEDULLO: And could I ask you to repeat that, that he's a pussycat?

SENATOR DAN INOUYE: Well, I told people, I've told friends of mine that, as far as I'm concerned, Ted Stevens is a pussycat. And, well, I don't know if he -- he'll feel hurt if I found out -- if he found out that I talked about this, but I've seen him get teary when we discuss matters of emotion and gravity, and that's why I call him a pussycat. He's softhearted.

CHARLES FEDULLO: One of --

SENATOR DAN INOUYE: He's concerned about other people getting injured. Things like that.

CHARLES FEDULLO: One of the more -- he asked you to give him -- be a character witness for his trial. Was that difficult for you?

SENATOR DAN INOUYE: Hell, no.

CHARLES FEDULLO: Not in that he -- not in that he would ask you, but in that he was in that position.

SENATOR DAN INOUYE: In fact, I went up to him and

I said, "If at any time you think that my involvement can be of help to clarify the situation, let me know."

CHARLES FEDULLO: What was your view of the whole process? You know, what happened with the case, the -- the indictment, the case, the conviction, and then it being thrown out?

SENATOR DAN INOUYE: Well, the words I'd use cannot be usable for this occasion. But what I told him was that, in nice language, the government was not carrying out its responsibilities. That they had nothing against him. If he could have been convicted for what he allegedly did, then a lot of his colleagues, including me, would have been convicted.

And this whole episode must have been extremely taxing on his spirit and soul because, number one, it involved someone he considered to be his friend. And then to have your friend make statements that obviously are not truthful must be painful. It's bad enough having someone who is your adversary do that, but to have a friend, one at least you thought was your friend, and to use him to get away from his shortcomings. And I thought the government was so unfair to him. So I have no hesitation.

CHARLES FEDULLO: Do you think it taints -- he -- he's looked at as probably the most influential person in the history of the State of Alaska.

Do you think what happened taints his legacy at all?

SENATOR DAN INOUYE: Well, I think it had an impact, at least at that moment, because he lost the election. I would think that, if it weren't for this investigation and indictment, he would have sailed through. Almost without help. Here's a guy who is -- has delivered for Alaska. And -- but he lost.

CHARLES FEDULLO: How would you -- how would you rate his skills as -- as a legislator? What would you say his strongest trait was?

SENATOR DAN INOUYE: His word was good, which is something you can't say for everyone. You can depend on his word, a promise. You can take it to a bank.

Secondly, you can almost assume that his decisions were based upon much concern and study, so it's not without thought. For example, even with our friendship, if I should say, "How about spoilers?" He would say, "Let me look at it." Which is the way it should be.

PAUL MCCARTHY: Absolutely.

SENATOR DAN INOUYE: And I would do the same, I'd go home and study about it.

There's one thing that many people don't realize. We disagreed more often than we agreed, and yet we were considered and I consider myself good friends. And as we've always said to ourselves, we disagree, but we're not

disagreeable about it. That makes a difference.

CHARLES FEDULLO: You two seemed to have, in the research we've done, almost made a decision that you were going to work together, political parties be damned, and that you would, because of the connection, as you said, to aboriginal peoples, and because of the correction of -- connection of being both not part of a contiguous United States --

SENATOR DAN INOUYE: And the military.

CHARLES FEDULLO: -- and the military.

SENATOR DAN INOUYE: National interest.

CHARLES FEDULLO: If -- if you stuck together, there would be much success for both of you. Was there an "aha" moment? Was there a moment where you knew this is a relationship that is going to help us for decades to come?

SENATOR DAN INOUYE: Well, I didn't look at it that way. If my thought process was in that line, I'd be using it, say, to get along, say, in an office. So no, I -- I felt that our relationship was good for our states and good for our nation.

CHARLES FEDULLO: What about we've talked about his strengths as a lawmaker. Did he have weaknesses?

SENATOR DAN INOUYE: Well, I don't know whether you should call it a weakness, but, you know, every so often when he gets gruff and he gives you that belligerent look,

but I think there are ways that we communicate, I communicate differently. But we found some relationship where I could communicate in my way and he could communicate in his way, and we get along.

PAUL MCCARTHY: One of the biggest challenges to him early in the term was Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act. And it seems unique and the approach seems unique in settling --

SENATOR DAN INOUYE: His approach was very unique. And at a time when -- and, well, even now, Native Americans are not looked upon too kindly by the rest of the population. There are many among my colleagues who feel that they are getting special treatment, and I try to point out to them that, well, this place was theirs. And we seem to forget that we went out of our way hoping to massacre; not just push them aside but to kill them all. The Trail of Tears is a disgraceful chapter.

And -- and so, for example, we have a committee, a Select Committee on Indian Affairs. And when the word "select" is added before a committee, it means temporary. Select Committee on Iran Contra. You know that it's not going to be a permanent committee. Or Watergate.

Indian Affairs Committee, that's an unimportant person, five members. I was asked to come in because one member quit, that left four, and they couldn't find anyone

to replace him, and they said that if I don't get on, the committee will be made up of three: Two Democrats, one Republican. So I said, well, I'll get on.

And I would have to say I was rather typical at that time. I knew very little about Native Americans other than Hawaiians. And when I learned about Indians, I must say, I got angry. To think that my country did that, but that's the way we develop ourselves. Evolve, evolution. After all, the author of that sacred document that has the phrase, "We hold these truths to be self-evident," he had 200 slaves.

PAUL MCCARTHY: Right. It takes awhile.

SENATOR DAN INOUYE: And the honcho, the President at that time, why, you know, the man to become the President also has slaves. But they drafted the Declaration of Independence. This -- this process takes patience.

PAUL MCCARTHY: It seems like such a radical departure from the way we were treated, Native Americans, and I know hearts have been faltered, and the Senator was -- helped assist with during that net loss -- net loss, things in 8(a)s.

SENATOR DAN INOUYE: And I used to watch him talk to the leaders, and his advice and his support did a lot because the way the system was established, it could have been wiped out. They could have sold all the shares.

PAUL MCCARTHY: Right. Right. Right.

SENATOR DAN INOUYE: But he encouraged him to hang on, keep it together, which they did. Now one of the problems is that they've become too successful.

PAUL MCCARTHY: Right.

SENATOR DAN INOUYE: You want to smile, but some of the people around here are serious, you know.

PAUL MCCARTHY: Absolutely. Absolutely. Absolutely.

SENATOR DAN INOUYE: They don't want to see the downtrodden get successful.

CHARLES FEDULLO: It's interesting that the billions of dollars from needing to sell that to survive, the billions of dollars, like you said, the Senator said to hang on. Along with -- with Native Claims and providing a whole different structure for Alaska Natives, what are some of the other issues that you think were important with Senator Stevens when he began in the Senate 40 some years ago?

SENATOR DAN INOUYE: Well, here was a fellow who was not a Native Alaskan; he, I think, spent more time surfing. And his background was not typical. He wasn't brought up by his parents. With that background, to have someone emerge the way he did, takes an extraordinary person. Most would have just crumbled away and maybe used that as an excuse, you know, I didn't have a family life, et cetera,

but he overcame all of that.

And -- well, let's put it this way. How many people who would stutter would consider giving speeches? But he's got the guts to do that. And so, well, I miss his presence here, but I see him as often as I can. In fact, last week my wife and I had dinner with he and Catherine and his little baby girl and her husband.

CHARLES FEDULLO: Wow.

One of the biggest frustrations people mentioned in the Senator's time was the inability to be successful with ANWR. Do you think he could have done anything more? Any different approaches that may have been helpful? He was very effective at working across party lines. ANWR was the one issue where he had a disagreement with Senator Byrd. Any thoughts on the ANWR process, things he could have done differently?

SENATOR DAN INOUYE: Well, I don't think he could have done better than what he did because I went along with him, but if I had listened to the detractors, and they were well organized, and the ones who are organized didn't know what they were talking about, so when I checked the facts and I said, "What are they concerned about?"

In fact, I figured out proportionately, ANWR would be the size of the state of California, and the area to be drilled would be the size of Los Angeles. You know, we're

not talking about a land mass that covered any significant portion of Alaska, it's just a small bit. And at a time when we are paying outrageous -- we still do -- prices for gasoline, why can't we develop on our own?

And I don't -- I'm not suggesting we drill all over the country, but here we could have done a little. But the -- I must give a lot of credit to the organizations that are opposed to this, and I think their efforts were not correct.

CHARLES FEDULLO: Over the 40 years --

SENATOR DAN INOUYE: And --

CHARLES FEDULLO: Oh.

SENATOR DAN INOUYE: -- and I usually support their activities, but not on this one, I told them straight out. And then made it a cost leverage because they needed something to win.

CHARLES FEDULLO: Did you see his directions change over the time in the Senate, different issues? He came in with, you know, working on ANILCA, just finished Statehood, pipeline. Where did you see issues change and shift during his time in the Senate?

SENATOR DAN INOUYE: Well, if changes came, they were subtle because our friendship didn't change. If there were changes of significance, I suppose our relationship would have changed accordingly, but I don't sense any change

of that significance.

CHARLES FEDULLO: What about there's two moments in the Senator's life that people regard as -- as the most difficult for him. Personally it was losing Ann in the plane crash, and professionally it was losing the election to Senator Dole for majority leader. Would you feel comfortable talking about those two issues at all?

SENATOR DAN INOUYE: Well, when he lost Ann, I think most people were convinced he'd quit after that. And I was one of those who felt that that's the worst thing he could have done. He would have sunk. And many of us just encouraged him, keep on going, stay active.

And it was a personal thing with him because he used to tell me, she dies, he lives. In the same plane. And I said, "Well, that's the way it is."

I used to be in the infantry and we'd go into a battle, you'd be right next to me, you get your head shot off, but all I get is your blood splattered on me. And these things happen.

And it must have been a difficult time, but I'm glad Catherine came along. And they are not the same personalties, you know. But I think that was a success. If they were the same, you know, they would be wounded over the whole thing, but this way she pepped him up, I think.

And when Lilly came along, that clinched

everything. He used to walk into the Senate dining room, proud papa with Lilly on his shoulder, showing off. I used to go after Ted, cut that showing off because, you know, I couldn't do that with my son.

And the other one, he overcame that, losing to Dole. The thing that I -- but I think he learned something that we all knew existed, and yet we didn't think it would happen to us. Sometimes a word given may not be a good one. He had the votes and he knows how to count them. And that's what hurt him. But all of us have gone through this. And so he was strong enough to get out of it. And after awhile, he became old buddies with Bob Dole. So...

CHARLES FEDULLO: When -- as a Whip, as Minority -- Minority and then Majority Whip, he learned how to count votes. He thought he had the votes before that election started.

SENATOR DAN INOUYE: I didn't ask him and say, "How many votes you got," but knowing him, I just assumed, and correctly so, that he counted heads.

CHARLES FEDULLO: Talk about the Senator's accomplishments, in your mind. ANSCA'S one, military's another, but what are the others?

SENATOR DAN INOUYE: I think the nation can be grateful for what he's done to build up the military in the Pacific. And he and I worked together trying to convince

our colleagues and our government, and I think we have succeeded, that the threat is now in the Asian Pacific area. And so certain things are classified, but a lot of activity out that way. Much more than the Atlantic.

PAUL MCCARTHY: It's amazing to think the contribution that --

SENATOR DAN INOUYE: And secondly, what he did for the Natives there, well, I know that he almost single handedly, but you see, he knew how to work with people like Magnuson. And Magnuson was not a Republican, he was a Democrat.

CHARLES FEDULLO: Senator -- I'm sorry, go ahead.

SENATOR DAN INOUYE: And Stevens's laws, as such, fishing laws.

CHARLES FEDULLO: Fishing.

SENATOR DAN INOUYE: What I think he did for the fishing trade, I think, in Alaska, he can take credit for that. He can take credit for what the Alaskans are now fighting, trouble with success.

CHARLES FEDULLO: He seemed to have an ability to cross party lines that all -- not all politicians have. What do you attribute that to? He worked very closely with you, with Senator Byrd, with Magnuson, with Scoop Jackson.

SENATOR DAN INOUYE: Well, he always thought, as some of us do, that there are certain things that are much

more important than partisanship. Yes, partisanship has a role to play, but in certain areas, I would hate to see our military become partisan. Because that would be the first step towards some sort of military dictatorship. Military leaders, I think it's better to work with the Republicans or work with the Democrats, and start using their influence, it could be devastating. But he, whether it's a Democratic or Republican administration, his belief in maintaining a strong defense never faltered. So...

CHARLES FEDULLO: Do you have any -- any anecdotes that you could tell about Senator Stevens that talk about your personal/professional relationship with him and your thoughts of him? He called you a brother, your -- you two clearly are close friends. What are some stories you can tell us that -- that we can put in the archives that people will listen to 20 years from now?

SENATOR DAN INOUYE: I know. He knows, I know.

CHARLES FEDULLO: How about you talk a little bit about -- you've talk a little bit --

SENATOR DAN INOUYE: Nothing criminal or --

CHARLES FEDULLO: No, no, no, no, just things that -- that not everybody in the world would know about. Talk to me about legacy. How would you like to see him remembered? You've talked a little bit about it, but how would you like to see Senator Stevens remembered?

SENATOR DAN INOUYE: That he highly respects. And Alaska is a better place today than it was in 1958.

CHARLES FEDULLO: One of the areas, if you talk to historians about what senators are supposed to do, you read that senators become what the citizens of their state believe they should be. Illinois has a history of foreign policy. Western young states have a history of appropriators. It seems as though Senator Stevens and, to a certain extent, you, as young states, basically developed the state's view of what a senator should be.

What -- how would you describe the Senator's role as an appropriator to do the things you talked about? And -- and does the public perception sometimes unfairly taint people who do what the citizenry asks as pork-barrel politicians?

SENATOR DAN INOUYE: Well, I disagree with it. That's all. Number one, we spend more time on earmarks today, on debating earmarks, even if it's less than 1 percent of the total budget. I prefer to call it congressional initiative because, you know, I firmly believe that the Constitution is very clear, that we in the Congress play an important role in providing the funds to run this government and this country, we always speak of ourselves as the ones who have the power of the purse.

And I think we both agree that people of Alaska and

the people of Hawaii did not vote for us because we were grand, classic rubber stamps. If we felt that what the government was doing was wrong, it made no difference whether he was Democrat or Republican.

And, well, if it weren't for congressional initiative, do you think the Natives in Alaska would have been helped and be there today in the condition? No way. If it weren't for add-ons, which is just earmark, the military would be second class in the Pacific. If it weren't for add-ons, the educational system in Alaska would be what Hawaii would have been if we didn't have any add-ons. And if it weren't for add-ons and earmarks, we'd still be outside the Lower 48. We're now part of the 50. And we want to be that way. He should be remembered as a very positive, kind man. He deserves it.

CHARLES FEDULLO: Is there anything you'd like to add, Senator?

SENATOR DAN INOUYE: Hmm?

CHARLES FEDULLO: Is there anything you'd like to add?

SENATOR DAN INOUYE: I said too much.

(End of Part 1 of 1, end of recorded interview.)