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RECORDED INTERVIEW

OF

DELYNN HENRY

CONDUCTED BY

MARY ANNE HAMBLEN with KAREN BREWSTER

IN WASHINGTON, D.C.

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SENATOR TED STEVENS PROJECT

Transcribed by:

CAROL A. McCUE, RMR

INTERVIEW OF DELYNN HENRY

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

(Untranscribed discussion regarding the video recording.)

KAREN BREWSTER: This is Karen Brewster, and today is May 23rd, 2011. And Mary Anne Hamblen and I are here interviewing DeLynn Henry in Washington, D.C., her office in Northrop Grumman, and this is for the Senator Ted Stevens history project.

Thank you for visiting with us.

DELYNN HENRY: Thank you.

KAREN BREWSTER: Mary Anne is going to be leading the questions.

MARY ANNE HAMBLEN: All right. So let's start. If you could just give us a short personal bio of your background, your education, jobs you've had, and what position you had with Senator Stevens.

DELYNN HENRY: Okay. My education. I actually grew up in the Marine Corps, so my father was stationed in Washington, D.C. I graduated from high school in Northern Virginia; and rather than going right into college, I

wasn't -- I didn't feel I was ready at that point, I went to the Washington School For Secretaries, which, in the '50s, '60s, and through most of the '70s, it was a very prominent secretarial college. I graduated from there in 1978.

My first job was with the National Rifle Association with their lobbying group. I was then taken, basically, with the lady that I worked for, and she became a Special Assistant at Interior Department, took me with her.

I was there for about a year, then was asked if I would take a position in the Reagan White House. So I worked in the Office of Public Liaison. My boss, who was the Assistant to the President for Public Liaison, became the U.S. Ambassador to Switzerland, took me with her to Switzerland, so I spent two years serving as her secretary in Bern, Switzerland.

Came back to Washington and ended up back in the Office of Public Liaison and at the end of the Reagan Administration. And when the administration switched from Reagan to the first President Bush, I was asked if I would be interested in working for Senator Stevens. His scheduler was an Alaskan and moving back to Alaska to help with his campaign, her name was Kathy Bridenbaugh, and I went in and interviewed with the Senator.

At that point my son was one year old, and I really did not want to go work on the Hill. The hours were terrible,

I had a baby, and I thought, I really just don't want to do this. But my friend said, you have to go meet Senator Stevens. It's, like, "Okay. Well, I'll -- I'll go and meet him but I'm not going to accept the position."

He actually convinced me to come to work for him. He didn't ask me a single question. He had a copy of my resume, and he actually said, "DeLynn, you are overqualified to work for me, but I would be honored to have you on my staff." And I said, "When do I start?" That was in January of 1989, and I spent 22 years with him.

And I had a second child while I was working for him. He was -- he was very family oriented because he had six children, so he worked it out with me right at the very beginning that when I had to leave to take care of my children, I -- there was no hesitation. I could run out the door at 5:00, we had someone who covered my desk in the evening, so he made it so that it was very family friendly for me.

And, you know, in the later years when my boys were older and I didn't have to, you know, run out the door at five o'clock, he was always, like, "Why are you still here" was the -- at six o'clock in the evening. So he was -- he was wonderful.

And there were -- one of my favorite stories is my son who was probably three or four at the time was, you know,

not feeling well, so I took him to work with me, and he -- the Senator was off at some committee meetings or something. So my son was taking a nap in the Senator's office on his couch, and the Senator came back earlier than I expected, and I said, "Oh, let me get -- let me get my son out of your office." He goes, "No, no, no, no, leave him. Leave him."

So the Senator was making phone calls at his desk with my son asleep on his couch and he was whispering so that he wouldn't -- he wouldn't wake up my son, so that was very sweet, actually. This man, he was pretty gruff and, you know, barky a lot of times was whispering on the phone, you know, because a little boy was asleep in his office.

Not many people know that he was really just -- you know, he had -- sort of had a reputation in Washington of being this -- you know, just kind of this mean person, but he really wasn't at all. He liked that reputation. He got a lot done.

MARY ANNE HAMBLEN: Yeah, that's one thing that I wondered, you know, what is the difference between the public Senator Stevens and the private one?

DELYNN HENRY: That is an example. I mean, he was extremely loyal to his staff and to his friends. And, you know, he did have a bit of a temper, but he used it to his advantage. He liked having the reputation of people being a little bit intimidated by him and afraid of him, but

he -- he was actually a very kind man. He -- you know, and he did, he used his temper to his advantage to get what he needed done, so...

MARY ANNE HAMBLEN: A strategist, I guess.

DELYNN HENRY: Yes. Yes.

(Recording paused.)

MARY ANNE HAMBLEN: And so your title was Director of Scheduling?

DELYNN HENRY: Yes.

MARY ANNE HAMBLEN: For your 22 -- well, 22 years there?

DELYNN HENRY: Yes. At one point he asked me if I wanted to serve as his office manager, and I -- I turned it down because I really felt that my position as his scheduler and personal assistant, I could serve him better in that position than I could as office manager. And he kind of looked at me, he goes, "But you're turning down a raise to do this." And I honestly felt that that was the right position for me with him.

You know, I -- I don't -- we developed -- actually, I have to say, the first 10 years that I worked for him I said nothing but "yes, sir" to him. I mean, he was an intimidating person. And so once I sort of got past the fact that he -- you know, he was really a very -- he was not this barky, you know, gruff guy, we really

developed a special friendship. And I did -- I felt that my serving as -- in that position really was -- was best for him.

MARY ANNE HAMBLEN: That's something that's really fascinating to me is the staff loyalty. You've mentioned that he was loyal to his staff.

DELYNN HENRY: Yes.

MARY ANNE HAMBLEN: It seems like he does have a lot of staff that -- that followed him and stayed with him.

DELYNN HENRY: Oh, yes, that's true. And plus, we're also -- have always said, we're a part of the Stevens family. And even -- even now, there's hundreds of people who worked for him who still feel a very close connection to --

MARY ANNE HAMBLEN: We sense that, yeah.

DELYNN HENRY: -- to the former staff and to him and to his -- his family.

KAREN BREWSTER: Is that unusual for a Senate office, or is that typical of other senators and staffers in --

DELYNN HENRY: I think it's probably -- it's probably a little unusual. I think that there are probably some offices that would have that same type of relationship with their boss but, you know, we were all extremely close, I think. Yeah. Maybe a little -- a little -- not -- it's

not typical, I think.

MARY ANNE HAMBLEN: So the office culture, you've given us a little bit of what that was like, but what were the dynamics of working with Stevens? Was it an open-door policy, I imagine, with his staff? Or...

DELYNN HENRY: It was an open door policy. The problem was he was so extremely busy, especially as he -- you know, as his seniority grew, his responsibilities grew, you know, when he was chairman of the different committees, and especially the Appropriations Committee, his time was, you know, scheduled in 15-minute increments, basically. He would have his, you know, committee meetings, he would have -- start his day with breakfast, he would go into committee meetings, he would have lunches just about every single day, he had policy lunches on Tuesdays, he had a Thursday lunch group with other senators.

Then we would have to try to fit in the meetings with the constituents, and he would always, always see any Alaskan who asked to see him. And he -- he felt that if an Alaskan was coming all that way to Washington to see him, he would make the time. So we would have to, you know, figure out how to squeeze that into his schedule.

Then he would have receptions and then he would have, you know, a lot of times dinners in the evenings, as well. And he took home with him every single night a

briefcase full of work. So he just -- you know, he did have an open-door policy, but it was -- you know, it was difficult. I mean, many times we would have to walk with him down the hall to his next event to, you know, get questions answered.

MARY ANNE HAMBLEN: Do you think that he was different with his constituents than dignitaries? Did you see him treating people --

DELYNN HENRY: Oh, absolutely. There was no difference. It didn't matter if it was the King of Spain or someone from, you know, Kotzebue or Nome or -- it did not matter.

And he also told us -- you know, when the Senate was in recess, the staff members would come in in jeans and very casual, and the Senator is, like, "No, you're having meetings with our constituents, and show them respect. They may come in in their flannel shirts, but that may be the best attire that they have, so you -- you come in and show respect to our constituents and you meet with them and -- and not be in -- in jeans." So, yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: I'm wondering about constituents who may have come to visit who may have been wanting to talk to the Senator about an issue that they didn't agree on, such as the Arctic Refuge people --

DELYNN HENRY: Sure.

KAREN BREWSTER: -- would come and talk to him from the other side of the table, and how did he handle that?

DELYNN HENRY: It did not matter what your position was. You could be a Republican, you could be a Democrat, you could disagree with whatever it was his -- whatever his position was, but he was always willing to sit down with you and to listen to your side. And if you had -- if you could convince him that you were right, well, then, he would -- you know, you could possibly change his mind. He was very open to that.

And I think that's what made him such an unbelievable senator and why he developed such a close relationship with Senator Inouye because he was very bipartisan. He could sit down with anyone and talk to them and listen. You know, he wouldn't necessarily agree with you, but he would at least listen to what -- what you had to say. So...

MARY ANNE HAMBLEN: Special.

DELYNN HENRY: Yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: Were there any times when there was disagreement and those constituents were asked to leave?

DELYNN HENRY: You know, there were probably a few times, a few times. And he would get into, you know, shouting matches with people. I don't know if -- very rarely would someone be asked to leave. He would express

very strongly his opinion, and he -- you know, that person might not have changed his mind but, you know, that's okay, he got it out, the person expressed their opinion, and then that was it. They agreed to disagree. But he always, always listened to the other side. Yeah.

MARY ANNE HAMBLEN: I have one more office question, I think. What was it like as a woman in Stevens's office? I kind of think of the Hill as being sort of male dominated.

DELYNN HENRY: You know, we actually had a number of sort of high-ranking female staffers. We had a couple female chiefs of staff. Sid Ashworth was head of our Defense Subcommittee staff, that's a very high-ranking position. So, you know, if you were qualified for the job, it did not matter if you were a female or male or -- you know, you -- it just did not matter.

KAREN BREWSTER: And were they treated the same by the Senator?

DELYNN HENRY: Oh, yes. He would sometimes kind of roll his eyes thinking, I'm just being surrounded by all these females bossing me around, so he would kind of joke about, you know, but it was -- you know, he was respectful and he would -- he would like to tease about things like that. You know, he was surrounded by a bunch of bossy women; his wife and his daughters and me and, you know.

MARY ANNE HAMBLEN: How would you describe your relationship with Senator Stevens?

DELYNN HENRY: Well, as I mentioned, the first 10 years, you know, I said nothing but "yes, sir" to him because he was -- he really, you -- he never really took "no" for an answer, or you would not go in and say, "No, I can't do that." You figured out how to get it done.

So you know, I've learned such a great deal from him, but my rela -- we developed a very special bond and, you know, some people had said it's sort of like my position with him was sort of like I was his office wife. We got to the point where, you know, I could sort of finish his sentences for him.

We spent -- you know, I sat next to him for 22 years and basically ran his life, so I was very involved with him, not just professionally, but his personal life and helping coordinate his family and his schedule because it was -- you know, everyone was running in so many different circles. I was, you know, just sort of a part of the family, so...

MARY ANNE HAMBLEN: What were the best things about working in the Senator's office?

DELYNN HENRY: Well, when I first started with him, I really thought that I would be there for maybe, you know, two or three years and I would move on to a different position because I -- growing up in the military, you move

every two or three years. And up until that point in my career, I had changed jobs and moved up, basically, every few years. And so I really did not think that I would have a full career with him. I ended up retiring from the Senate when he left the Senate, and it just -- those years just went by so quickly.

You know, it was my -- my job as his scheduler and assistant, basically, it was the same thing that I did for all those years, but the issues always changed, the people always changed. It was very fast moving, so...

MARY ANNE HAMBLEN: What were some of the issues that you remember best while you worked for him?

DELYNN HENRY: You know, with my particular position, I did not really focus on the particular issues that he was working on. I mean, I knew what he was working on, but my job was to put -- I've often described my job as working on a giant jigsaw puzzle because I had to fit all the pieces of his life together and to make it run and to run smoothly.

So I did not focus on the particular issues that he was working on. But after, you know, 22 years, I mean, I was there when the Exxon Valdez incident happened. I was there through major, you know, pieces of legislation, but that was sort of all in the background.

I had to make sure that he got to the Floor on time

to vote. I had to make sure that, you know, he had his briefing materials for, you know, his meetings or his hearings or his speeches, and so that kept me extremely busy. Yes.

KAREN BREWSTER: Well, you just -- I'll jump in here for a second.

You talked about what was the best for working for the Senator, but what were maybe some of the biggest challenges about having a job like that, working in that office?

DELYNN HENRY: Well, the stress level is extremely high. It is very fast paced. My phone would literally ring off the hook. I had an assistant usually who would sit beside me, and if my -- if I were on the phone, she would pick up the line, it would forward to her, because you never knew -- it could be a cabinet member calling him, it could have been the President of the United States calling him. So my phone never went into voicemail.

So it would bounce over to my assistant, but we had four people in the back office, basically, and all four of us would be on the phone at the same time. It was just very, very stressful, actually, at times. So that was sort of the downfall of the office is that -- but, you know, that's just the nature of Capital Hill. And we -- you know, they went into recess periods, and so things would calm down, you could

sort of get caught up and so it sort of balanced out. We had very high periods of stress, and then we'd have the breaks that came, you know, fairly often, so...

MARY ANNE HAMBLEN: Recover.

DELYNN HENRY: Recover and get ready for the next round, yes.

MARY ANNE HAMBLEN: We see Stevens, most of us, as a point man on the issues, but can you describe how effective he was working outside the limelight?

DELYNN HENRY: You know, he never really liked being in the limelight. He was really best behind the scenes and negotiating on the issues. And he didn't want to, you know, be the front page of the paper because he, you know, would have a reception for military families at Christmas because they didn't, you know, have enough money for Christmas presents for their children.

So he did a lot of behind-the-scenes things that, you know, most people probably don't even know. He didn't like being the center of attention. A lot of things he did very privately.

KAREN BREWSTER: Can you give some other examples? You just mentioned that military --

DELYNN HENRY: The military.

KAREN BREWSTER: -- party. Other examples of behind-the-scenes things that we might not know that he did?

DELYNN HENRY: You know, I would have to think about some of those. I mean, there were so many different -- different things that he was involved in. I'll -- I'll think about that.

MARY ANNE HAMBLEN: We can come back to that.

DELYNN HENRY: Yeah.

MARY ANNE HAMBLEN: Can you share any anecdotes that best represent the relationship Senator Stevens had with his staff? You've already told us one about your son. I mean, he was asleep.

DELYNN HENRY: Yeah. He -- you know, he would bend over backwards. I think you know Carol White, or may have heard of her, she was his office manager for years and years and years. And she -- he finally had -- well, not finally, a position came open as his Chief of Staff, and he promoted her into the Chief of Staff position. And she had not been in that position for very long when she developed a brain tumor. Well, he pulled out all stops. He called the very best hospital in the country that could help. And he got her into a hospital at Duke University, and she's actually the longest surviving person in history still that had this type of brain tumor. It was actually the same brain tumor that Senator Kennedy had. And Carol now is a nine-year survivor with this tumor.

But he would go above and beyond to -- you know,

behind the scenes, you know, to help -- help the staff, help whoever he could. Constituents. It wasn't just staff. You know, he would do things like that all the -- all the time. Call, you know, the -- the very best in the -- in the country because one of his constituents needed, you know, medical care. He would do that a lot.

MARY ANNE HAMBLEN: What do you think Senator Stevens's major successes were?

DELYNN HENRY: Wow.

MARY ANNE HAMBLEN: And if you can break it down professionally and personally.

DELYNN HENRY: Major successes. Hmm. You know, I don't know, really, to be quite -- he was just involved in so many different things. I can't think of any -- anything right off the top of my head that would be one of his major successes. I mean, he -- his reach across every aspect of the state, the country, you know, the world, actually, you know, is what -- he was Appropriations, it wasn't just Alaskans who were coming in to see him at that point, it was, you know, really, truly heads of state. It was people from all over the world who would come in to talk to him.

There are stories about there was a staff member -- it was the Governor, actually, Governor Parnell, when he was talking about -- was naming Ted Stevens Day, was

talking about as a young professional he had an opportunity to travel to Egypt, and the Egyptians had found out that Governor Parnell, you know, was from Alaska, and the Egyptians said to him, "Wow, you have Senator Stevens, and he's made such a difference for our military."

So it was just, you know, it was -- who knew that the Senator had his hands in helping the Egyptian military, for example. I mean, that's not a minor little thing. So he did --

KAREN BREWSTER: It somehow must have been through his Defense Committee work?

DELYNN HENRY: Defense Committee, yeah. So he did worldwide. But you know, his -- you know, the hospitals that he built, everything that he did for the state and the rural communities is just -- and that was all -- he didn't want the accolades for what he -- what he did. He was -- you know, they named the airport after him in Anchorage. He was very embarrassed by that, he really was.

You know, he kind of joked, he goes, "Well, don't they name things after people, you know, after they are gone?" So he really did not like that big dog-and-pony show that they -- that they did to name the airport after him. He was not real happy about that. But, you know, his friends were going to do it anyway, so...

MARY ANNE HAMBLEN: What do you think his major

disappointments or failures were?

DELYNN HENRY: I don't think that he honestly felt like he really had any failures. I think one of the biggest disappointments was when he lost the election in 2008. He was, I know, extremely disappointed in the communities that he honestly thought would have helped him, that he spent years helping, you know, people, and they -- he felt like they sort of turned their back on him. I think that hurt him, was a huge disappointment.

But by the time the accident occurred, he was actually very happy. He was not -- he did not look back on the election, he did not look back on his life, really. I think that he was moving forward and he was happy in the last year of his life.

KAREN BREWSTER: Even after what happened with the trial? How did that affect him?

DELYNN HENRY: It took a major toll on him. It was extremely difficult, but like he said when he resigned from the Senate, he was not going to look back. And it's true, he really didn't. It took a bit of adjustment getting used to retirement, but once he was sort of used to having his own schedule, being able to set his own schedule, he was extremely happy.

He was able to go to Alaska and fish when he felt like it, he could spend more time with his family and his

grandchildren, and he was -- he was happy in the last, you know, months of his life. He really was. And he did not look back with regret. I mean, he -- he really sort of felt that everything in this world happens for a reason, and you know, he was -- he was content.

MARY ANNE HAMBLEN: In terms of legislation, he's been referred to as a master of the legislative game.

DELYNN HENRY: Yes.

MARY ANNE HAMBLEN: And he had the process and how -- how -- can you talk about that a little bit, your perspective on that.

DELYNN HENRY: Well, you know, he was a master because he could talk to anyone. You know, he would -- he really could reach across the aisle to work out the compromises. And, you know, from what I've seen, and you know, I'm not -- even though I was in the middle of the legislative process for all of those years, I'm really -- you know, it's very -- it is very complicated. And I couldn't focus on -- on that. I really couldn't.

But he knew how to negotiate with -- with people, and he developed friendships with, you know, members from across the aisle so that he could actually get things accomplished. So I think that was his biggest success, and you know, why he was a master at legislation because he -- he knew how to work with people to get things done.

MARY ANNE HAMBLEN: Let's talk a little bit about press relations. I know that's really important for a congressperson. How would you describe Stevens's relationship with the press, or maybe particular individual reporters over the years?

DELYNN HENRY: You know, he -- I said earlier, he didn't really like the limelight. So he, you know -- his relationship with the press.

I think that he had a fine relationship with them. It all -- it would really sort of all depend on who his press secretary was, really, to be quite honest, because they would have to develop a relationship with the press and then get the Senator to agree to, you know, sit down and talk to them about certain issues. So it really, I guess, would depend on -- on who the press secretary was at the time, which was part of it.

But he would have regular meetings with the Alaska press that were stationed in Washington, and he would sit down with them and go over the issues, so he tried to have an open relationship with them. I think sometimes he felt like he was not treated very fairly by the press, maybe, but I think anybody who has to deal with the press probably feels like that at some point, but...

MARY ANNE HAMBLEN: Yeah. Can you think of any of the issues that he felt he wasn't treated fairly on?

DELYNN HENRY: Hmm. Well, you know, the press that was coming out around the trial that he didn't feel -- I don't think that he was treated particularly fairly on, but I'm -- I'm really not the expert in all of that.

MARY ANNE HAMBLEN: What about the different presidents that he served under? What was his relationship like or was he particularly close with anyone -- any particular ones, or were there others that he didn't necessarily get along with?

DELYNN HENRY: You know, he greatly admired the Office of the President, so it did not matter. He respected the Office of the President. It did not really matter who the President was; he may not have agreed with him, they might not have been his party, but he respected the office, so he would work with the President.

You know, he had good relationships in all of the years that I was with him with all of the presidents who were in office. And that was all part -- you know, as his seniority grew, he would be called into more and more meetings in the White House, and so it didn't really matter who the president was, it was all part of, you know, getting his job done.

MARY ANNE HAMBLEN: How do you remember Senator Stevens?

DELYNN HENRY: Oh. We -- I'm going to get choked

up here.

KAREN BREWSTER: Do you want me to pause it?

DELYNN HENRY: Yeah.

(Recording paused.)

DELYNN HENRY: Say that again for me.

MARY ANNE HAMBLEN: How do you remember Senator Stevens?

DELYNN HENRY: Oh, goodness. I mean, we -- we really did develop a special relationship. And when -- when he left the Senate, he did ask me to go with him and help him with his -- you know, the next stage of his life and help him set up his consulting business. And we had a -- a very close friendship.

And really, at the end, I was sort of -- you know, he -- he actually called me the boss, you know, because I would boss him around. I would -- you know, I would say, "Okay. You've got to" -- you know, if he were running late for a meeting I would have to come in and say, "Okay. Come on, you've got to -- you've got to go." And he would always blame me, he'd say, "That's the boss, she's telling me I had to go."

And it didn't matter who was in there with him. It could be the joint chiefs or it could be a cabinet member, you know, part of my job was to keep him on schedule, so he would, you know, roll his eyes, "The boss is telling me I

have to go."

We had a very close relationship, I think. Very -- you know, he was sort of like -- like a father to me. You know, my -- my children felt really close to him because they grew up being part of his office. And, you know, I just had very fond memories of him.

MARY ANNE HAMBLEN: And, of course, there's a public legacy that Stevens left and historians will remember, but do you think -- what do you think will be important that we remember of his private legacy outside of -- of public?

DELYNN HENRY: His private legacy.

MARY ANNE HAMBLEN: Maybe that only the people close to him would know about.

DELYNN HENRY: You know, he was just such a kind person. And loyal to -- you know, he still had -- his -- some of his best friends were people that he had met in high school and college. I mean, he was just such a loyal person that he would, you know, maintain these relationships over the whole span of his life. I mean, he was just -- just a very warm and caring person, and that didn't always come across, you know, in his -- as his public person.

MARY ANNE HAMBLEN: Are there any particular anecdotes, stories, or anything that you would like to tell

about Stevens?

DELYNN HENRY: Oh, goodness. He had a wonderful sense of humor. I don't think people really realized that either, but he would -- he had a belly laugh that when something really struck him as funny, he would just burst out laughing, and it would just make you laugh because it was just -- you know, just sort of contagious.

And he was -- he loved to have fun and just, you know, sort of -- you know, not really play tricks, but he had just had a wonderful sense of humor that I'm not sure that people really realized that about him either, but you know, he's -- you know, he enjoyed a good laugh and a joke and, you know. Yeah.

MARY ANNE HAMBLEN: Is there anything else you would like to add to anything?

DELYNN HENRY: There's just, you know, so many stories, it's just impossible over all the years spent with him to think about them all. I mean, it's just -- just amazing. He's missed. Yep.

MARY ANNE HAMBLEN: Thank you so much, DeLynn. This has been wonderful.

KAREN BREWSTER: I just have a couple, sort of follow-up questions.

DELYNN HENRY: Sure.

KAREN BREWSTER: You know, back to the -- the

question about his temper.

DELYNN HENRY: Yes.

KAREN BREWSTER: That, you know, we've seen it on the Senate Floor and how he would use it.

DELYNN HENRY: Yes.

KAREN BREWSTER: But, you know, in the office environment, how did that temper come out, and how did it affect you as staff to have to deal with that?

DELYNN HENRY: You know, I'd have to say he did have a temper. There's no question about that. I mean, you did see it on the Floor, you could hear him screaming in the office, but it was never directed at someone personally, which makes a huge difference.

He would be mad about an issue. So he would be screaming about whatever it was that upset him that he didn't like, but it was never directed at you personally. And so once he sort of blew up and got it out of his system, then he would be, like, "Oh, okay. Well, that's done, it's out of my system," and you know.

And sometimes, you know, if he would blow up in the office, he would scream about an issue, he would come and apologize. You know, he'd say, "Oh, you know, I didn't" -- but I -- I think people who really knew him knew that it wasn't personal, it was the issue that upset him. And I think that makes a big difference.

I know of some senators who would scream at their staff and embarrass them, but it was never -- it was never like that with him. But he would -- he could use his temper and it -- it worked. You don't -- you know, it's intimidating.

KAREN BREWSTER: So were others -- you mentioned being intimidated, and you got over that with him --

DELYNN HENRY: Yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: -- because of the role you played as his scheduler.

DELYNN HENRY: Right.

KAREN BREWSTER: But with other staff people, were they scared of him?

DELYNN HENRY: I would say probably, yes. Or, you know, just very respectful, you know. And not that -- you know, I think people really tried very hard not to make him angry or go in to tell him something that, you know, he wouldn't like to hear, but you have to as a staff person. That's just what you -- you know, that's just a key part of it.

KAREN BREWSTER: Were there times when it was better to tell him something than other times?

DELYNN HENRY: Well, you know what, I learned pretty early on that if you made a mistake, with him you really had to go in and fess up. And, you know, I remember

times when I -- I'd make a mistake, and I'd have to go in and tell him, and I would be just petrified that I had to go in and tell him that, you know, I messed up. And he would say, "Okay. You know, we all make mistakes." And then that was it.

So you just had to go in and, like, suck it up. But he always handled, like, the major things like that that, you know, gave me heart failure that I had to go in to tell him, you know, something that I felt was, like, huge, he handled it very -- very calmly. You know. So...

KAREN BREWSTER: I wonder if there was an issue that a staff person had to go talk to him about, would they -- would you have a sense, oh, wait, no, not a good time to go talk to him about this, so I would --

DELYNN HENRY: Yeah. You know what, that was the value, I think, of me being with him so many years is that I knew his moods, you know, and I could sort of warn people. You might want to wait a little while before you go in and talk to him.

And so that was part of my -- I was sort of the gatekeeper, and I -- you know, I tried to protect the staff, as well. I mean, there's no sense in sending someone into the lion's den when I knew if they waited, you know, half an hour or whatever, you know, that the situation would be different. So you know, I would try to do that, too, sort

of protect the -- the staff from getting their heads chopped off or, you know, no -- you know, because the timing wasn't right. So...

KAREN BREWSTER: And was the timing, as you say, it was -- it was based on an issue when he was so hot about and then --

DELYNN HENRY: Well, right. Or he could have been focusing on, you know, something else that was coming up.

And you know, he had an amazing mind. I mean, to think of all of the things that he was involved with, he could switch from one issue to the next. You know, you go from Title IX to the defense appropri -- the defense budget to -- you know, it's just -- and to whatever a constituent comes in to bring him.

So on every single day he was dealing with all of these different issues, and he just seemed to, you know, be able to keep it all together. I mean, he had an unbelievable memory on how -- I mean, I could never figure out how he could keep everything straight. I mean, it was amazing. It really was.

And the energy level that he had, you know, up until, you know, his 80s, he would -- literally could outrun all of us. Just amazing. He did spend -- I mean, he was very conscious of his health and what he ate and how he took care of himself. And he was -- he was always on the cutting

edge of everything. Technology and the latest diet or if red wine is -- you know, it was amazing. He just kept up with all of that stuff.

And he really -- for a man who was, you know, in his 70s and 80s, he was -- he always had the latest BlackBerry. He was the first one in the Senate to have BlackBerries, or the computers and the -- it was amazing. He was always cutting edge.

And I'm not sure that people really knew that about him, either, that he was -- you know, he was always a couple of steps ahead, and he had such -- such a big picture of not just Alaska, but of the world and of the country that he could -- you know -- we -- he had a very large staff, and all of us tried to keep up with him, and he would hound -- he would come up with these ideas and our job was to make them happen, you know.

Like I said earlier, he did not really take "no" for an answer. You figured out how to get it done. And, I mean, occasionally, it could not get done, but then you'd have to go back and explain to him why, and that he would ask more questions and maybe direct it into a different way so that it actually could get done. I mean, he was -- you know, he was an amazing person.

KAREN BREWSTER: So how many people were on staff on average? I'm sure it varied.

DELYNN HENRY: It did vary. We had, you know, 25 to 35 on his personal staff, and then depending on which committee he was on, the Appropriations Committee had, you know, probably a hundred staff people. And Governmental Affairs and Commerce, they all had large staff. So, you know, he could have easily a hundred people.

KAREN BREWSTER: Now, are those committee staff physically located in your office or they were in their own office?

DELYNN HENRY: They were in their own offices. We had -- and in the entire time I was there, we were in the Heart Senate Office building. And actually, he threatened to move a couple of times. You know, but -- as you go up in seniority, you're offered -- when offices become open, you're offered, you know, a larger space, or whatever. And we'd say, "Oh, please, don't -- don't make us move the office."

We had, you know, a 12 foot -- two. We had actually two 12-foot totems in our office, and just the thought of moving those things, you know, not to mention all of the paper that we had, so we'd beg him, "Please, don't -- don't move us."

But the -- the personal staff was always in the Hart office, and the committee staff were in different places, depending. But he also had a capitol office that

he would use and the President Pro Tem office was also in the capitol when he had that position. So he -- you know, he had quite a bit of real estate, actually.

KAREN BREWSTER: You were mentioning about technology and he was up on the latest. Isn't the -- wasn't he the one who said the Internet was a series of tubes?

DELYNN HENRY: Yes, but you know, speaking of press and things getting blown out of proportion, that angered him because that's -- they really did blow that out of proportion for what he meant. But, you know what, when you really think about it, the Internet is a series of tubes and, you know, how the information...

So, you know, he -- he was not real happy about that, but he just kind of said, "Well, you know, whatever." But that -- that did get blown out of proportion.

And he really did know what he was talking about, probably more than whoever started teasing him about, you know, the Internet being a series of tubes. I mean, I think he -- it was such a complicated issue that that was probably the easiest way for him to describe it, and it just kind of blew up. So yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: The other thing, we were talking about the stress of the job as a staff person. His job as a senator, as you say, he was so busy.

DELYNN HENRY: Yes.

KAREN BREWSTER: That must have been incredibly stressful. Do you know how he handled that?

DELYNN HENRY: He actually worked out quite a bit. He played tennis up until, you know, his 80s; and he would go to the gym and he would swim and he would exercise, and I think that was a great stress reliever for him. And he was a voracious reader, and I think that sort of helped him with his stress level and -- but probably the exercise that he -- he did probably -- I would think helped him a great deal.

But he was able to, you know, switch from, you know, one thing to another, so I'm sure that he would just switch it off and move on to something else. You never really -- I never had the sense that he was really stressed out about issues. You know, he never -- it really never came across that way, other than just being really busy.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

DELYNN HENRY: You know, he didn't seem to be stressed about it like -- like I would be stressed about all the paper on my desk, he -- he -- I never really felt that about him. So...

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah, because you'd think after -- a Senator for 40 years would be very stressful and that not anybody could continue in that career for so long.

DELYNN HENRY: But you know, he knew how to

delegate, and he trusted his staff. So the staff, you know, knew what they were supposed to do and they would have to report to him. So, you know, he delegated a great deal of the work out to the people that he had working for him. So I think that helped a great deal.

I mean, that's part of being a good leader, I guess, you know, is -- but he read every single letter that was written in our staff, and he would sign the majority of them or, you know, if it was a sort of a form letter type letter, he would approve that letter personally before it went out. So he had a hand in -- in all of that.

And -- and he demanded that anyone who wrote a letter to him receive a response. Some of our staff were probably better, you know, than others. We had, you know, a correspondence manager who would keep track of that, and all of our correspondence, but the Senator wanted every sending single piece of paper that came into our office responded to. And if a senator or a constituent wrote him a letter, he demanded that we send -- we send a response.

MARY ANNE HAMBLEN: I've seen some of the mail-in collection; I can't imagine the amount of how much mail came in.

DELYNN HENRY: Well, a lot of mail came in. And then, when the Internet and e-mail became so, you know, accessible and everyone had computers, it just probably, you

know, tripled the amount of messages that came into the office, and we were supposed to respond to those, as well. So it was -- you know, it was not easy.

KAREN BREWSTER: You know, as Alaskans, everybody credits Senator Stevens with bringing so much to Alaska in terms of infrastructure and projects, money, and things like that, but I don't know that Alaskans have an understanding of his impact on a national level, and you've mentioned the world level.

Is there anything you can say and what that impact might have been nationally that he was involved with that seemed so significant?

DELYNN HENRY: Wow. Well, you know, the first thing that comes to mind is Title IX, which is, you know, the Amateur Sports Act. I mean, that had a huge impact on us nationally, you know, women in sports. And that was a major issue that he was involved in on a national level that has, you know, really changed the country.

You know, so that's just -- I mean, there were a lot of things like that that he had his hands in. Fisheries issues which, you know, does affect Alaska and, you know, some of the communications issues, you know, because he was on the Commerce Committee; the defense issues was major, you know, in -- for the country, and not just Alaska.

And he also felt Alaska was just a very key

strategic place in the country for the military, so he was a huge supporter of the military and making sure that Alaska being so strategic was -- had, you know, everything that we needed to -- for the protection of the entire country. You know. So he was -- yeah, I mean, he just had his -- his hands in just many, many issues.

KAREN BREWSTER: I find it interesting that he was so involved in Title IX. Do you know what motivated that?

DELYNN HENRY: The story is that his daughter Beth Stevens was a very good baseball player as a girl, a young girl. And when she got to high school, she was not allowed to play high school baseball. So it -- that was the start, basically, of Title IX and women playing sports was because his daughter, you know, could not play in the upper levels of Little League and in high school sports. So that was the start of it.

KAREN BREWSTER: So did he write -- he initially wrote the Title IX legislation?

DELYNN HENRY: He did, yes.

KAREN BREWSTER: And he was the one that sponsored it?

DELYNN HENRY: And the Amateur Sports Act, yes. Uh-hum.

KAREN BREWSTER: And, of course, the issue that we all know him very well for is the Arctic Wildlife Refuge.

Do you know why he was so passionate about getting that opened for oil development?

DELYNN HENRY: Well, he just felt that why -- why are we spending all of this money overseas when we have the resources in our own country? He -- you know, it just didn't make any sense to him that, you know, we were sending all of our money overseas. And with the, you know, instability in the Middle East, you know, you can't -- you couldn't -- who knew what would happen with our energy supply. So I think that was the -- the key thing.

KAREN BREWSTER: I know he worked very hard on that.

DELYNN HENRY: He did. For years and years and years. Yeah. Yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: Do you feel like he had any regrets or disappointments about not accomplishing that before he retired?

DELYNN HENRY: Well, you know what, even when he retired, it was very, very behind the scenes, but he had not given up on the issues that meant a lot to him. He was still working on some of the issues that meant something to him, the energy issue. He was still trying to figure out how to get the gas line going. And he -- he was not finished, but he was in a different capacity.

So I think that, you know, he would have just kept

on until he -- he was -- still had his hands in. He wasn't completely retired. I don't know if anyone really knew that.

And you know, his hours were a little less, you know, not, you know, 7:00 to 8:00, you know, every day, it was, you know, more like 9:00 to 5:00, you know, which was nice. And he could fish when he wanted to, but it was -- he was still involved in -- in some of the things that meant a lot to him.

KAREN BREWSTER: Now, Pebble Mine is one of those issues, correct, that he was interested in?

DELYNN HENRY: Yeah. Yeah. I mean, he was following -- he was following the issues, yeah. So...

KAREN BREWSTER: Did he ever talk to you about why he chose to be a senator and why he continued to be a senator, like what he enjoyed about it? Did he ever talk about that?

DELYNN HENRY: Well, he honestly did feel that he could make a difference. I don't really think that I've heard the story of why he became a senator. He was involved with Statehood when he was back here working in the Interior Department, and I don't think that I heard how he really got involved in the politics and, you know --

KAREN BREWSTER: Did he talk about why he liked being in politics?

DELYNN HENRY: Well, he really did feel like he

could make a difference. He didn't really talk about it that much, but you knew, I mean, that he felt that he could make a difference, and that was how he dedicated his life. So...

And, you know, in the later years, he continued to be a senator because he felt he hadn't finished, you know, some of his key issues that he -- he really wanted to see completed. So...

KAREN BREWSTER: And then just for you personally, what has it meant to you to have worked for him and build that relationship with him?

DELYNN HENRY: You know, it was an honor to work for him. He was a -- he was an extremely unique person, and it really -- the integrity that he had and the work ethics and, you know, all that he did to try to make this world a better place, it was -- it was an honor to work with him. It was. Every single day.

KAREN BREWSTER: That's a good place to stop. Do you have more questions?

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