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RECORDED INTERVIEW

OF

WILL ARTHUR

CONDUCTED BY

KAREN BREWSTER with MARY ANNE HAMBLEN

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Part 1 of 3

UAF ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

SENATOR TED STEVENS PROJECT

Transcribed by:

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INTERVIEW OF WILL ARTHUR

(Beginning of recorded interview.)

KAREN BREWSTER: Okay. Today is May 24th, 2011. This is Karen Brewster. We're here with Will Arthur in Washington, D.C., and Mary Anne Hamblen is here with me. And this is for the Stevens oral history project.

Thank you, Will, for coming today.

WILL ARTHUR: Thanks for inviting me.

MARY ANNE HAMBLEN: So let's start with a short personal bio of your background, education, jobs, and how you came to work for Senator Stevens.

WILL ARTHUR: Okay. I grew up in New Jersey and went to college in Virginia down at Virginia Military, VMI, in Lexington, and I graduated there in '90 -- or in '85. I did a year at Fort Benning during my training, and then I went to Fort Richardson, Alaska, and I was there for about five years as an Infantry officer with the old Sixth Division while it was still active.

When I left the Army in '90, I left right after the first Persian Gulf, I stayed in Alaska because I had married -- my wife's an Alaskan and so I stayed up there.

She had worked for -- at that point, I think she

was working for Senator Sturgulewski. And so we -- with the legislative session, she went to Juneau and I tagged along. Once I got there, I took a job with the Legislative Affairs Agency just as a supply clerk. And I think I spent about three years with legislative supply. Sometimes we moved back to Anchorage and then finally we just stayed in Juneau.

My wife was a Sergeant-at-Arms under Senator Halford, and I think in the 18th Legislature, maybe the 19th. And then that was a pretty rough legislature, so afterwards she decided to go to culinary school instead. So she left for New York. And when Senator Pierce became Senate President, I became a Sergeant-at-Arms simply because, one, I knew how the job worked, and they were trying to fix some problems they had had with the pages in the previous session.

And I spent three years as Sergeant-at-Arms, two for Senator Pierce, two sessions for Senator Pierce, and then one session for Senator Miller.

After that, I took a year-around job, because that was a session only, with the Legislative Affairs Agency as a supply officer, so back to the supply room, but I was running the supply room, so it was a little bit better.

I think I spent three years there. And then my wife, she had completed culinary school by that time, she did three years with -- at the Governor's House as the executive managing chef, and then she took a job at -- in

Washington, in Virginia. So we were moving to Virginia and I didn't have a job.

So a few of the people that worked in the State Legislature suggested I contact the congressional delegation, and most of them suggested Senator Stevens, so I put in an application with Senator Stevens. And I interviewed once in Alaska and then twice once we got here.

I never interviewed with Senator Stevens. We just -- it just never worked out and he just went ahead and hired me. I started out as the Executive Assistant to the Chief of Staff, who at that time was Mitch Rose. But I actually worked for the Chief of Staff. The Deputy Chief of Staff was Carol White, and the Legislative Director, I think it was Chris Schabacker at that point.

I spent about a year as the Executive Assistant to the Chief of Staff, but then I slowly got absorbed into being Executive Assistant for the Senator. He basically shanghaied me. He outranked Mitch, so he -- yeah.

That job, it sounds more administrative than it really was. It was more of an aide-de-camp job. I was with the Senator, I made -- you know, I took care of his correspondence, I did driving for him, I did -- you know, traveled around with him a little bit; not as much internationally, or even out of D.C., but around D.C., you know. Made sure his briefcase had everything in it at night,

made sure his briefcase had everything out of it in the morning. Like I said, it was a little bit more of an aide-de-camp type position. I was in that from about 2000 until 2004.

In 2004, the archivist that we had had for five years took a job with National Archives. And we spent two months recruiting for that position, we couldn't find anybody, and finally I asked if I could just move over there. I had worked with her for five years.

KAREN BREWSTER: And her name is?

WILL ARTHUR: Juliette Arai. And I knew how to do the job, I talked to Juliette, she suggested I put in for it. My advantage was that I knew all the people, I was familiar with all the issues, it was just a matter of learning the technical archiving part; whereas Juliette had come in, had never been to Alaska, she has the opposite, she came out of the Maryland archive program so she knew how to archive, but she didn't know the people or the issues. So we worked it out.

And then I was in that position until the office closed in January of 2009. So I basically did the closing and the final archiving. So...

After that -- do you want me to keep going after that? I think after that most of us spent about four or five months unemployed. And then in April I was --

(Pause in recording.)

WILL ARTHUR: Okay. After the office closed, I spent about four months looking for a job on Capital Hill, stayed in contact with most of the archiving community. And then I was contacted by Senator Kennedy's office for two positions. They were looking for somebody to close the Kennedy office, and -- or to prepare the Kennedy collection to be closed. At that point it wasn't particularly well known what his condition was. They didn't want it to be too public, they wanted it relatively quiet.

And then they were considering hiring an archivist for the HELP Committee. About half the committee on the HELP has staff archivists, and were getting more every -- every year, but HELP did not have one prior to that. So I went in there and started in May 2009, and I've been there ever since. Mostly that's closing out Kennedy still, 17 years of Kennedy.

KAREN BREWSTER: What was that committee, the --

WILL ARTHUR: HELP, Health, Education, Labor and Pensions. That's a broad-spectrum committee.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yes.

MARY ANNE HAMBLEN: Sounds like a lot.

So what was it like to work for Senator Stevens?

WILL ARTHUR: I enjoyed working for Senator Stevens. He was -- you know, even by the time I arrived,

he was, you know, already a dominant political figure both in Alaska and in D.C.

And I -- you know, as I said, I was enriched by it, and I think we had a very good office. I think it was a very Alaskan office, even more so than maybe the other Alaskan senators's offices. They tend to be, you know, more suit-wearing and more D.C. type, whereas the Alaska office, or Stevens's office was a little bit more laid back. It was -- a lot more reflected his personality. You know.

MARY ANNE HAMBLEN: So the office culture, then, can you talk --

WILL ARTHUR: The office culture -- as I said, it was pretty laid back. We probably maintained at one any one time 30 people on the staff. Of those, probably 22, 24 were Alaskans. We hired pretty much exclusively within the state.

The others were in positions that we would consider, like, core position, which were schedulers. Let's see, I'm trying to think who was there. DeLynn was a scheduler, Suzanne Palmer did constituent relations, and she had lived in Alaska but was obviously residing here.

Terry Loudenberg (phonetic) and Doris Bennett were doing a lot of filing and correspondence management, so a lot of them were administrative. The archivist was considered a position that you didn't have to be an Alaskan

to really understand the job.

So we kept a lot -- then in the summer, there was a -- he had two intern programs. His college program usually had 10 college students in it. Basic rule for that program was you either had to be an Alaskan going to college anywhere, or somebody from anywhere going to college in Alaska, so one or the other would usually get you through the door. And there were exceptions made to that. Occasionally we got somebody in -- you know, we'd take a West Point cadet or something once in a awhile.

And then he ran a high school program. The college program went from whenever the college kids could get here to whenever they had to leave, so it was a summer long. The high school program usually had 10 to 12 high school students for one month, and we ran two sessions. We ran a June session and a July session. So in any one particular year, we'd have 20 high school kids and 10 college kids.

MARY ANNE HAMBLEN: That seems like a major task for the office to handle that.

WILL ARTHUR: Yeah, it was -- it was a full-time thing, yeah. And then we'd also occasionally have a law student or two. So we had, like, a three-tier program going.

And then during the year -- Stevens had a unique program, he had a paid program. He basically only paid them enough really to pay their housing and eat, it was more -- it

was more like a per diem, but it was an experience. A lot of the programs on the Hill are unpaid internships, so I don't know how they survive. They must be living in, you know, 10 people to a hotel room or something.

And then during the school year we also took in interns, but usually they were for credit. And most for-credit intern programs you cannot pay them. The school doesn't allow you to pay them for conflict of interests and evaluation reasons. So we usually have two or three during the school year. But the summer was the big intern season.

With the full-time staff, we divided issues up. Probably had a half dozen attorneys, or legislative assistants. They are usually attorneys, sometimes they are area experts. And then each of them was assigned a correspondent that handled their same set of issues.

And then when one -- when somebody would leave, if one -- an attorney would leave or a legislative assistant would leave, the other legislative assistants would come in and they'd have like a draft, and they would pick apart, you know, I would like that issue. Yeah, there was a certain amount of issues put on the table, and then they went around the table and sort of picked it apart.

So we didn't always have a stream of people working an issue. Sometimes you'd have issues you liked and issues you didn't like, and when the opportunity came, you discarded

the ones you disliked and traded up.

So we did have people who traded issues a lot. And that, maybe, caused a little bit of disconnection, but we usually tried with the files to make sure that the new person reviewed the old person's files before we closed them down, and then made copies as necessary. We tried to keep them, the old person's files, intact.

So we said, well, go through them, decide what you want, have an intern or your assistant, you know, correspondent make copies that you need so you can continue on. And then we'll do the inventory, keep a copy of the inventory if you need to review it. So try to have redundant systems there.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah, some of the issues are so detailed and so complicated that beginning in the middle of it and then switch, have somebody new come along, that lack of continuity could be problematic.

WILL ARTHUR: Yes. It could. And it was done -- I said it was done on a seniority basis, yeah, so the people who tended to have more legislative experience had more choice on the issues they took.

But I know at one point we had correspondents who were working issues, and they -- one -- based on her parents, one's father was a forestry engineer, one was a mining engineer, one was a fisherman, and one was in the oil

industry. These four correspondents were not handling the issues that they grew up around. And I thought that was kind of ironic. It's, like, wait a minute, your father's a fishermen, yet you don't handle fisheries. No. So with the correspondents it was a little bit different, they didn't always have as much choice. They were answering mail for the most part and assisting, they would attend a meeting if the LA couldn't attend, things like that.

But, you know, it worked out. We had, you know, as Mary Anne can tell you, we kept a lot of paper, and we tried to be able to reference it as much as possible. Now, Senator did have, you know, issues that went on 20, 30 years.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

WILL ARTHUR: ANWR. And I know I had some people that when oil and gas became their issue, we would recall 40 or 50 boxes from the warehouse. You know, each one is a foot and a half of linear paper. And they would go through it looking for different things. And they'd look through the inventory first and look for certain files, and it is difficult. I think it's difficult for anybody on the Hill.

The Senator is the point of continuity. He -- he had a very good historic grasp of things he had gone through and the positions themselves. You know, as the archivist, I know he walked up to me several times and said, "I met with this guy in June of 1973, and find that letter," and he was

usually right within a month, or he maybe had the guy's name spelled wrong, but we could find it. We didn't always find it right away, maybe took a day or two, but he could recall a lot of that material.

And he would do the same to his legislative assistants, if there was an issue he would say, "I spoke I to this guy 10 years ago," and we'd go digging for that memo and we'd find it.

The staff tended to be, at least during my time there, relatively young, compared to the Senator. The Senator was, when I got there, let's see, 76. It was 1920 -- yeah, 76. And the staff, for the most part, was under 35. I was old. Most of the people who were above that were actually usually the core people, and I talked about the scheduler, the filing clerk, the archivists, not Juliette, but we tended to be a little bit older. But then the correspondents tended to come in right out of college, so they were 23, 25. And then legislative assistants tended to come in right out of law school, which put them as, like, 27 to 30.

And then we usually promoted within, so legislative assistants would move up to become -- well, one of them would move up to become the Legislative Director when that position came open; and then, you know, if the, you know, chain worked properly, when the Chief of Staff left, the

Legislative Director would become the Chief of Staff.

The Deputy Chief of Staff position tended to be more of an office manager. You know, it was more of a -- kind of, they handle everything that was administrative, personnel, and kept all that stuff out of the way of the Chief of Staff, who, although it was their superior, was really more of a legislative director, more of a strategist. You know, the legislative director is more of a tactician, they would be more on the -- you know, the individual for procedures and things like that.

So it kept our staff young. And I think the -- I think, even while I was there, chiefs of staff were, you know, usually under 40. I think there were three during my time. Yeah. Carol White, David Russell, and George Lowe.

MARY ANNE HAMBLEN: Is this typical for a senator's office, or --

WILL ARTHUR: Yeah. In some ways, yes. A lot of the correspondents tend to be younger, even in any office. When I started working at HELP, I was helping out, I was kind of advising on closing Senator Kennedy's office, and I noticed the same syndrome over there. Although he -- Senator Kennedy did have one guy on the staff who had been with him since 1966, and he had his 33 filing cabinets of material. And so -- but that was an extreme rarity.

MARY ANNE HAMBLEN: I think about staff loyalty

and I know in any senator's office there's going to be an amount -- certain amount of people who -- who are so loyal and they stay for years.

WILL ARTHUR: Uh-hum.

MARY ANNE HAMBLEN: Can you talk a little bit about the staff loyalty?

WILL ARTHUR: Senator -- well, Senator Stevens falls in that line. His staff -- he had a very loyal staff and he was very loyal to his staff.

I think one of the things we did sort of avoid is in archiving, the two worst things I find on staff is I deal with an attorney mentality to destroy the records because they tend to not want to leave any tracks. And I don't know why, that's just something that they are professional at. And then zealots. And you had people on staff who think their boss is, you know, a demigod, it's like he can't do any wrong. I don't think we had as many of those as some of the other offices.

We had very few people came over from the campaign. The Stevens campaign was not really a source for staff. And the campaign people tend to be more -- a little bit more solid. I mean, they'll stand on the street corner shaking a sign at 40 below zero. You know, we're loyal to the Senator, but I know we're not going to be screaming and yelling at people.

And I noticed that that was never really a big source of campaign -- of permanent D.C. staff. And I don't know if it was something we actively avoided or not. But I know almost everybody applied through -- you know, through a resume system. It wasn't what you'd call a good-old-boy system where I'm hiring somebody's kid. Everybody -- as far as I know, everybody dropped their resume and it went through a review process. It was usually reviewed first by the Deputy Chief of Staff or Office Manager, and then it went to the Chief of Staff and then it went to the Senator.

Like I said, my case, my interview was done by the Deputy Chief of Staff, Carol White, in Juneau, the first one; and then I came back. And then once I got to D.C. I interviewed again with Carol; and then with Carol and Mitch Rose, the Chief of Staff. And then I was supposed to meet the Senator but we could never work out the timing, and finally the Senator said, "Just hire him."

KAREN BREWSTER: But the Senator saw every --

WILL ARTHUR: He saw my packet and he had had -- you know, he had probably a memo from the Chief of Staff or the Deputy Chief of Staff that said, this is the guy, this is the position we think he'd work good in, and here are the reasons why.

You know, and although, like I said, he never met me, as far as I know he met with all of his attorneys. So

I think that was a little bit more particular. My position didn't necessarily require that, although eventually I probably ended up spending more time with him than a lot of the attorneys, especially if I was driving him places and, you know, following behind him making sure he got his speeches and stuff like that.

MARY ANNE HAMBLEN: So you had sort of a personal relationship with him, as well?

WILL ARTHUR: A little bit. And I think one of the things, one of the advantages that I had with Senator on relationship is he's, I think, two months younger than my mother and a month older than my father. So I viewed him more like my parents.

One of the problems that I saw in the office is some of the younger people viewed him more like a grandfather than a father, sort of a father-type figure, and I think they were more reluctant to sometimes say things to him. You know, because I know there was at least twice I had to go in and tell him that a correspondent had, you know, wrecked his car. It was a fender bender or had gotten a ticket in his car, and I'd go in and he would usually just look at it and he goes, "Well, make sure they pay it," you know, or -- so... But he wasn't, but they were, like, "I can't tell him that." Because he was known for his temper.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

WILL ARTHUR: And part of his temper was, I guess, real, and part of it was showmanship. I mean, he used it effectively.

KAREN BREWSTER: Can you talk about how the temper manifested itself in the office environment? Because we've kind of heard about it/seeing on the Senate Floor, but --

WILL ARTHUR: Right. He would -- he would yell. Sometimes he would yell at people, like -- he would yell at me for something that happened on the Floor. It was like -- it was more like venting. You know, all right. And I'm not going to argue with him because there's really nothing I could do about it. It was just he was just yelling.

If a correspondent -- no, more as an attorney, if an attorney did something he didn't agree with, he would call him in the office and, I mean, he would yell at him, but I think really no more than anybody else. He'd be upset because we made a mistake or something, but it wasn't -- and it wasn't something that lasted long.

As far as I know, like, he didn't ever really fire somebody for messing something up, unless -- unless it was like a big deal, and as far as I know, he didn't fire anybody during my time there. Yeah, but you could be reprimanded, but I think that's about as far as it went.

Now, as for his temper on the Floor, probably that -- you know, any guy who dresses and would go out of

his way to put on the Hulk tie or the Tasmanian Devil tie, that's showmanship. And I think a lot of that stems from his background as a trial attorney. It's how you play to the audience and the jury; and in the Senate, the jury is the other senators because their vote decides which way a bill goes.

And he sort of created a persona. You know, some things did upset him. I think he was very frustrated with the ANWR debate, you know, and I think anyone would be after 25, 30 years, but, yeah, I think in the end, the focus was to try to get the bill through.

You know, and there were times when, you know, things were perceived by other senators as, you know, threatening, or -- you know. But, you know, it wasn't like a physical threat, it was, like, you know, I'll campaign against you or something like that. And in some ways, so what? You know, you can campaign against me, either -- either way. It's a two-way street.

But I don't think they were -- I think a lot of it was -- I mean, I think there was some honest frustration, but I think -- and, you know, he was very much supporting his bill; but whether he was outright angry, there were times when he was and there were times when he wasn't, and he -- you know, it usually didn't carry over for more than a couple hours. It wasn't like they put him in a bad mood and he'd

be there for a week. No.

I think we said something about in his office in some of the pre questions that I sent, you know, I don't think it really manifested itself that much in the office.

A lot of times if somebody messed up, they would more likely be reprimanded through the chain of command. Like first you'd get yelled at by the Deputy Chief of Staff or the Legislative Director, and then the second time you'd go to the Chief of Staff, and then the third time you'd go to the Senator, but I think that was very rare.

MARY ANNE HAMBLEN: Did he have an open-door policy?

WILL ARTHUR: The Senator had an open-door policy, the chiefs of staff did not. And the Senator would say at staff meetings, "My door's always open," and then he would leave the staff meeting and the Chief of Staff would usually say, "But first you have to see me."

So, you know, I think he fully had -- and I didn't have a problem. You know, after a couple years in the office, I didn't have a problem going in to see him. I think some of the younger staffers may have been more intimidated, go in to the Chief of Staff or through the chain of command, so I think I had established more of a relationship with him.

And I know other people who had been there a long time could pretty much walk in. Some of the others would,

some of the others wouldn't. You know, I think it really was where your position was in the chain of command.

And, you know, there were times if you wanted to talk to him, the easiest thing to do was to walk with him somewhere because he was always heading somewhere. And so if he was going to the Capitol, if you're willing to walk with him, if you could walk and talk at the same time, you're good to go.

Or if you -- you know, I'd -- I would take him to the airport sometimes, and I know legislative assistants would just ride to the airport just to talk to him because you had him alone in the car for 40 minutes.

On the other hand, he usually had a large briefcase with him. He went home every night with a briefcase, and there's probably a stack about 6 inches deep, and every morning he came in and he had read everything in there. So I don't know what he did, I don't know when he did that, but he would come in in the morning, and one of my duties as Executive Assistant, and the guy who succeeded me in that job was to be the first one in the briefcase. No one was supposed to go in there. Like, if you needed a memo, you had to go to the Executive Assistant to get it, and he would dig through the briefcase and he would make a copy of it and give you a copy.

Memos would come back and he would put, like, a

routing slip, he would write on it, this goes to, you know, Bob, Sue, Dan, and Paul; and then instead of routing it linear, we would make four copies and one copy would go to each of those people. So it was more of a dynamic distribution.

But the briefcase would come in, in the morning, and you'd go through it. He would have his handwritten notes in there that didn't have envelopes, we had to figure out who they were going to. But then it would -- after it would go through the Executive Assistant, it would go to the Chief of Staff next and he would go through it and see if there was anything that pertained. And he might add routes or people to see it, and then it would come back to the Executive Assistant, and that's when you'd make all your copies and do your distributions to include keeping your copy for the central memo file. And so that's how we were capturing everything out of his outbox. That's why you have several hundred boxes that are --

MARY ANNE HAMBLEN: Boxes, yeah.

WILL ARTHUR: Well, you have several hundred boxes that are more central memo file and that's what it is. It was a chronological outbox, then we broke it down by issue. So...

MARY ANNE HAMBLEN: Did you see your role -- when your role changed from the assistant to archivist, did that

change your perspective?

WILL ARTHUR: A little bit. Because I had been working with the archivist to make sure that she got all of these documents, I understood the importance of keeping all the documents. When I took the position as archivist, but then I also inherited his -- his speech collection, his photograph collection, so I got the backlog. So that became a little bit more difficult to manage because I was doing a lot.

So literally the first week I was there, I think I read the inventory just so I could see. And it didn't make any sense, but then a week later he would ask me for something, and I'd say, "I've seen that," and then I could go back and try to find it.

We made very good use of our archive. And there were boxes going back every week. They would deliver it on Fridays and pick up on Fridays. You had to have your order in on Wednesday. So we would do -- then there were occasions when we'd need it right away, and -- excuse me for a second, please.

(Recording paused.)

WILL ARTHUR: Now there were occasions when he needed something right away, at that point you would send a courier to Suitland to get it. And Suitland's probably 10 miles, in Maryland, that's where NARA's large warehouse

is. And that's where the 4,000 boxes were, minus the thousand that we had in the office.

So if -- my perspective when I got there, probably not, probably because I probably had a better respect for history, and my undergraduate degree's in history. I think that helped a little bit. So I had known pretty much the whole time I was there that we were collecting things.

Now, getting that across to other people was one of the harder things. I mean, you'd have to go to the staff and say we need your files to be in order. And he had sort of an open filing policy. You know, you'll run into that in the archives.

The way our policy for filing, or office for records management policy was written is you could maintain whatever filing system you want as long as you could explain it to me on a 3-by-5 card.

So if you want to do your stuff chronologically or by issue, whatever suited your work style, but you had to have a system, and not only for the archive for continuity of operations, which really came into play after 9/11 when we started saying, "Well, if the building gets hit by an airplane and half of your people are dead and I need to find your files, what's the system?" Because there were people using all kinds of systems, you know, the animal, vegetable, mineral. I don't know. And that was how we did it, so you

can do whatever you want as long as you can explain it.

Now, certain things were centralized. Central memo file was done by issue and then thereafter chronologically and then by year group. And then the speeches were done chronologically. You know, just certain things are natural. The scheduler's files were chronological, they are naturally chronological, but then each individual staff LA could do them different ways.

And it got a little odd, but that's why when we -- when a staffer left, we tried to keep theirs intact because the next guy might use a different system, but he could cherry pick what he wanted, could not take any originals, he could only take copies, and migrate the copies to -- to create his own base file. So I think teaching the other staff to archive was probably the most difficult part.

We have a good support network in the Senate for archiving. Now, I think at any one time only seven or eight senators have archivists on their personal staff. Tradition is that they go three terms before they hire one. So they go 18 years before somebody says, hey, I can't find anything. And then it becomes a crisis. They are always backlogged. I mean --

KAREN BREWSTER: It sounds like your system was fairly systematic. Is that typical of the other Senate offices or not?

WILL ARTHUR: For the ones who have archivists?

KAREN BREWSTER: Yes.

WILL ARTHUR: For the 92 who don't have archivists, I don't know how they do it. They can attend classes, they can take ~~monies~~ advice from us.

Since I closed Stevens, and that was the largest office to close at one time, I think I've consulted with about a dozen closing offices, and I'm just starting to talk to people from this -- I've already got a dozen lined up to retire this year.

Now, I only consult with them. I can tell them what we did and give them advice; I don't work for them so I don't pack their boxes.

KAREN BREWSTER: And now you know that the Senate Historian's Office provides some kind of standards for the offices to follow.

WILL ARTHUR: There's a -- there's a book, a policy handbook. Whether you follow the policy is really up to your office. If they were -- if you're doing your filing properly, they only have active files in the office; and then inactive files they would send, they would inventory within a session form and send them to Suitland at the Federal Records Center.

Unfortunately, the Senate provides courtesy storage in the attic. So a lot of offices just take their

inactive files, box them up, put them in the attic without inventory, without proper documentation. And pretty soon you've got a thousand boxes in the attic, you don't know what's what.

There's an office right now with a retiring senator who is changing her attic storage space just so they can reorganize it because you walk in and it's solid.

There's another senator who literally is, you open the door, it's like a cage, like the size of a hotel room, and you open the door and then the boxes start about 6 inches, 7 inches in, and it's solid wall to wall, floor to ceiling, front to back. How they find anything, I have no idea.

KAREN BREWSTER: Well, even once you find it, how do you get to that box that's at the bottom of the pile?

WILL ARTHUR: Exactly. They have no access.

And we actually did a class last year where I led a tour of the attic and probably had 50 people. And everybody volunteered. It was sort of make fun of your storage space day. And at that point I didn't have an attic storage space, but Senator Stevens had three. He's only supposed to have one, but over time, senior senators collect extra spaces. They borrow them temporally and never give them back. Senator Stevens isn't the only one that did it, Senator Kennedy did it, Senator Byrd did it, you know, all of the guys who were senior have multiple cages.

In Stevens's case, we were able to at one point divide it into office supplies in one cage, memorabilia in one cage and that filled a cage, and then records in one cage. So we actually had a pretty good system. Some of the other offices are just boxes.

If you have a chance I'll take you to the attic and you can see it.

MARY ANNE HAMBLEN: Did your view of the Senator change over the years, personal view?

WILL ARTHUR: Not really. I mean, I -- I had had some exposure to Senator Stevens at the State Legislature because I -- you know, as a Sergeant-at-Arms, whenever he came to give his speech every year, I had front-row seat, I got to introduce him every year when I was Sergeant. And then I would sit down, like, 5 feet from him, that's where my seat was.

So I had seen how he -- not only his speech, which you know his speech is pre-prepared, but more important is how he interacted with the state legislators on questions.

And, I mean, there was a couple times when he had -- you know, there was a couple times there where his temper flared up a little bit. I think it was one year over subsistence where he told the state, he had told them over and over again, "You have to fix something about subsistence. And I'm not going to talk about it in my speech, it's not

my issue, you don't want the Federal Government taking over subsistence, you want to fix it first."

Then one of the state legislators stood up and asked him a subsistence question, it's just -- and he sort of said, he said, "I'm not going to talk about that, I don't want to hear any more questions about that, sit down." And it was like... But he had warned them that he didn't want to talk about that. So I had seen sort of how he interacted a little bit.

KAREN BREWSTER: So when you first started, were you intimidated by him or -- like some of the younger staff you were talking about, or were you --

WILL ARTHUR: Not particularly because I think something in my background, I had worked with the state senators, I had worked on a brigade staff, you know, I worked for two colonels in the Army, and you just read them the same way. It was, you know, I -- I'm more familiar with their rank structure because even when you go back to my college, I went to a military college. So I've always been sort of in a situation where there's been a rank structure and a hierarchy. And he's a senator. You know. I'm not -- unless I'm absolutely sure I'm correct, I'm not going to debate him. That, and he's a professional debater. You know, why would I do that?

So as I said, over the years but, you know, he was

very supportive of his archive. And that was honestly one of the big threats I could use against a staffer who didn't want to file correctly was, well, I can go talk to -- I'll tell the Senator you don't want to do it that way.

Or, you know, yeah, the Senator -- or if you were in a situation, and I think I taught Juliette this when she was the archivist, she would get in situations where the attorneys would say, "It's my legal opinion that we don't -- you know, we don't do that." And she would always interject, "It's my opinion as a professional archivist, to secure your legacy, you want to keep that." And he would always say -- when she said that she always won. It's, like, oh, it's part of the collection.

So that was one of the best tools we had, you know, he was a big defender. That's -- to be successful on the Hill as an archivist you have to have either the Senator or a high-ranking member of the staff behind you, so you have to basically own a big dog and be willing to threaten people with it. And so I never really had a problem, you know, he was always really supportive of the collection.

Sometimes you'd have to be careful what you gave him, if -- like if he made a request for a photograph, you know, if you started giving him a bunch of photographs, he'd start going through them and I guess he would sort of be reminiscing. It's like, "I remember these," and he would

sort of get sidetracked. Or old speeches, if he ran across an old speech, you'd try to give him the one he wants and not too many others because then it creates its own new arguments or new requests. You don't want to launch too many new requests over an old request.

Now, we also kept files of anything that he requested as -- and I think my predecessor started that. I don't know if it was to basically justify your own existence or -- you know, because if somebody would say, I need a map from 1968, and you'd find the map, and then you'd give them a copy and then you'd keep a copy in your files as, you know, a 2002 archive request. Or somebody wanted a memo. Because a lot of times the same things tended to come up again, especially with staff turnover.

I know there was one map on highways in Alaska from 1960 -- the late '60s. Prior to all the land settlements, we were -- basically had all these highways ~~leading~~ out of Anchorage, that was the plan for highways, but then once all the land settlements and parks and everything was decided and Native lands, none of those highways could be built because they all crossed private land or park land. So they would occasionally request that map.

But it always seemed whenever a new staffer took over transportation issues for Alaska, the Senator would say, "Well, go look at the map from 1968," and we'd have to

break out the old map. So that one tended to come up over and over again, probably about every three years.

Staff turnover, since I'm going -- that's sort of back, staff turnover for a correspondent was less than two years. Probably two and a half years. Most of them would leave not really for cause or anything, most of them would leave to go to graduate school.

Senator was a big supporter of going to graduate school, going to law school. So whenever somebody said, I'm leaving to go to grad school, you know, we never said, could you stay? It's, like, no. He was always, like, "No, if they want to go to school, let them go."

In some cases they came back. We had people who left as correspondents, went to law school, came back as attorneys. I know George Lowe is in that category. He started out, actually, I think, at the front desk as a reception, and then he went to correspondence. I think he held every position. He has a set of business cards for every position he held in the office, and it's -- it's a framed set of, like, eight business cards. He went off to law school, came back.

Kate Williams who was, I think, our last Legislative Director started out as a correspondent, went off to law school and came back. That was pretty common.

Now, the attorneys, that was more of like an up and

out thing, up or out, you know. If you didn't get promoted after three or four years, they tended to move on to another position, sometimes another office at a higher position. Sometimes out in the administration, sometimes, you know, to be a lobbyist. Not -- not as much in the lobby, I don't think. I mean, that was sort of the turnover of personnel.

KAREN BREWSTER: And that's pretty typical of Senate offices?

WILL ARTHUR: In the lower ranks, yes. I think in the higher ranks, I think other offices tend to keep people like chiefs of staff longer. They tend to be a little bit older. As I said, we had a young -- a relatively young staff.

MARY ANNE HAMBLEN: As a Senator, what did you think Stevens's greatest strength was?

WILL ARTHUR: You're asking me as a senator?

MARY ANNE HAMBLEN: As Stevens as a Senator.

WILL ARTHUR: Oh, Stevens as a Senator. You said as a senator, I was going to say...

Well, obviously, the Senator was pretty good at appropriations. And I think part of that was his philosophy is that the federal presence is so large in Alaska. I don't know if they own -- you know, by various estimates the Federal Government owns, like, 60 percent of the state or 40 percent of the state. They own a pretty good chunk of

the state.

Plus, I think it goes back to some of the Statehood compact issues with revenue sharing, things like that, that, you know, maybe the state didn't get exactly what they were promised when they became a state. So if you become a state, we'll give you this. And it gives a few -- especially the old-timers, you know, the state didn't get what they want, it's a breach of contract.

And Governor Hickel, that was a big part of his -- you know, a breach of contract, should be able to ~~seek~~ succeed a ~~remedy about~~ I don't know about that, but -- and some others, too.

But his, I think, individual accomplishments Senator's the proudest of, Fisheries Act, you know, the Magnuson-Stevens Act, which obviously has his name. Title IX, he was always talking about it, you know, being proud of supporting Title IX. The -- you know, some of the lands issues and, you know, the Native land settlements, the Federal lands, you know, those -- you know, and those were fairly early in his career. Those were in the early '70s.

You know, and the largest ones he never gave up on. I mean, I don't even know when his ANWR debate started, but I know we had hundreds of files on that. And, you know, we viewed it all different ways.

That was -- I don't know if we've ever -- in that case, I sometimes question whether we exhausted all the

resources that were available because I'm not sure we ever looked at some of the holdings at your archive of Senator Gravel's files, which I also suggested at one point that maybe the next person that's in Fairbanks stop by and dig through those. I mean --

MARY ANNE HAMBLEN: What would you expect to find?

WILL ARTHUR: Well, I know Senator was constantly looking for a copy or somebody to acknowledge that he'd been made a promise by Senator Scoop Jackson and Senator Tsongas that when they established ANWR that the -- the one area would still be open.

And, you know, it was like -- I wouldn't say it was the basis of it, but he said it was a promise that these two senators had made to him. And unfortunately, both those senators are now deceased, were deceased 20 years before Stevens.

So he was always going -- you know, his debate was, you know, "These promises were made to the State of Alaska and they were made personally to me." And, you know, I think we were constantly looking for something that might have backed that up.

And I don't know if we exhausted looking at other archives of other senators, and we should have, really, if somebody had the time, found every other member of the Senate and looked at their archive on that issue for that time frame

and see if anybody else even mentioned it.

But I know he was pretty upset at one point when a former staffer for Senator Jackson -- and this was in probably 2001, 2002 -- gave a statement that said, "Well, yeah, basically, we lied to Stevens." And he was pretty mad about that because he was, like, "Well, they tried to make a fool out of me."

But, you know, because you couldn't find it in writing anywhere, and you know, you had that one guy who said, yeah, we lied to him, yeah, because he was always supported -- you know, he was a friend of Senator Jackson's and he supported the Scoop Jackson Foundation and things like that, and then to have this guy who was a senior staffer come in and say, well, you know, they lied to him, I think he was kind of hurt by that.

Yeah, there was a few times I think things that were said to him hurt. And probably because I saw him personally in the office, he has this brusque outer, you know, Tasmanian Devil, Hulk persona, but there were some times when people said things that actually hurt his feelings.

And I don't think he ever really let that be known, like, more publicly, but you know, I think in the office, he's, like -- you know, I won't say he's breaking out in tears and everything, but there were things that were said that were, yeah, you could sort of tell it's like people made a

promise, especially if somebody made a promise to him and then didn't keep it.

He trusted a lot of people. You know. And I think he took people for the world -- for their -- on their word. He was an old school, that's the way it worked.

And, you know, I mean, talking about the Senator's relationships, as I said, he was a friend of Senator Jackson's, when I first arrived, the most senior six or seven senators was Stevens and Inouye, who were, you know, obviously well-known good friends. Senator Kennedy, Senator Byrd, Senator Hollings, Senator Thurmond, they were all good friends, even though they weren't all from the same party.

And they came into the Senate -- and I look at it sort of -- I look at Watergate as sort of the watershed, is that the senators who arrived before Watergate, the old-timers were all friends. They didn't agree politically, and they would debate on the Floor, but they would go home at night or they would go have dinner afterward.

The newer senators are sort of angry and they hold grudges and, I mean, I -- I don't understand how they ever get anything done. You know, I think Senator Stevens took a more long term, and much like Senator Byrd, he would piecemeal appropriations.

You know, in Senator Byrd's case, I know he was

getting funding for five miles of highway, then next year he would get funding for five miles of highway, you know, and over 40 years, he built himself a pretty good highway. You know, it's more of a patience.

And you look at it as you're here for six years. If you get 20 percent of what you want every year, in six years you pretty much get what you want. But you don't come into it saying I want 100 percent of what I want right now and I will not compromise.

The old-timers understood compromise, they understood how to debate and how to compromise. A lot of the newer senators seem like they have a position, they are unyielding, and they dig in. And, you know, they expect the other guy to compromise, but they are not willing to compromise, and it's like it's a give-and-take system.

So I think, you know, as the older senators left and the newer senators came in, I think he found that a little bit frustrating, that the newer ones were -- I wouldn't want to say they are less statesmanlike, but less into the compromise and debate of the -- of the long-term process.

You know, the instant gratification thing I think tends to -- for me, in my opinion, tends to be more of a House of Representatives thing because the House members are here for two years, they're constantly running for re-election, you constantly had to bring something home.

MARY ANNE HAMBLEN: So they don't stay long term.

WILL ARTHUR: They -- yeah, they don't. The senators, they are here for six years, they are an overlapping, you know, because the terms overlap where, you know, only a third of them have to run for reelection, you have more of a continuous flow of the process. You know, some topics and issues do tend to stay around for years and years and years. So, yeah, I think that was more the system he had come up with, you know, and he was an old school type of senator.

MARY ANNE HAMBLEN: And he's known as a master of the legislative game.

WILL ARTHUR: Right. And that's part of the game. You're on the Floor and you give it your all, and then afterwards the guy that you were just yelling and at screaming at, you have to go to lunch or whatever, and then you come back and yell at each other again.

It's where you -- you know, it's not saying you don't fully believe in your issue, it's just saying that, one, you understand that this is a debate process, it is in some ways, a lot of decisions have already been made and you're just showing your position, but it's also you're not going to get everything you want.

There's more factors involved than even just the majority, minority. You also have to -- to get a bill

through, it's also got to survive the House, it's also got to survive the President. You know, it's a complex system. So I think he was better at working on a long-term process.

MARY ANNE HAMBLEN: The difference between Senator Stevens's public persona and private persona, how much of a difference was there? What did you see behind the scenes that might be different?

WILL ARTHUR: I think he was a lot -- like I said, I think his -- his public persona as a, you know, strict, stern debater, I know -- I don't know which, was it roll call or the Hill, I think they voted him, like, the angriest senator or something like that. It's like -- but he's not really like that. I mean, if you looked at some of his Floor debates, particularly the ones on issues that he was -- firmly supported, it's not like he went home and acted like that. I mean, he didn't act like that in the office, maybe not even in the same day. He was more of a normal person.

You know, I had once where I had to -- I had a proposal for the Senator, and it got stuck at the Chief of Staff. And the Chief of Staff at that point didn't believe the Senator would like the proposal. And his answer was, "Well, we're not going to show that to him because we don't want to make him upset."

And I laughed at the Chief of Staff. I'm, like,

"You've got to be kidding me." I said, "You've got to look at his life. He's in his 80s." You know, I believe his mother died when he was very young, he went to live with his aunt. I think his father -- well, I know his father was blind at some point during the Senator's teenage years, I believe. You know, he, you know, worked as a lifeguard, he fought in World War II, he got through law school, he raised six kids, he's been here for 40 years, his first wife died in a plane crash, you're telling me he got through all that and I'm going to upset him with a memo about a proposal? That was the proposal about the intern program. It was kind of like, you know, he's not that angry as some of you think. And that's why I said I think some people sometimes thought of him more like a curmudgeonly grandfather, and I don't think he was really that way. I think -- I think you just had to really understand his perspective on it.

You know I had an advantage that, you know, both my parents were World War II veterans, so I understood a lot of what they grew up in and, you know, my family in some ways was very similar to the Senator's, you know, where there's, you know, multiple children.

And I know the Senator would talk about when he first moved here he lived out, I think, in Lake Manassas and he would commute, and that's when -- when Ann was alive, and she would read a book during the commute, like, every day.

It was, like, "I would drive, she would read a book."

And I think at one point he basically shared housing with, I think -- I'm thinking it was a member of his staff. Marco Bigdalbury (phonetic), who, you know, had worked on Senator's staff for a few years. And, you know, they lived together, and he was -- he was more, I think, down to earth than a lot of the senators. I think he was more Alaskan than a lot of the senators. I mean, I think a lot of these guys, you couldn't drop them in Alaska and they would stick out like a sore thumb.

I know Senator had that problem when he first got a security detail as President Pro Tem, the first time his security detail went to Alaska, you know, they are walking down the street and everyone's, like, who are the cops? You know, they were undercover but they are wearing suits. And so you can't walk down the street in Anchorage with three guys who are wearing suits.

KAREN BREWSTER: Then they're suspicious.

WILL ARTHUR: Yeah, so it took them like a month or two, or a couple trips to Alaska, and then pretty soon they were dressing like everybody else. And it's, like, yeah, it's Alaska, you don't even have to hide the gun. Everyone will just think you're a normal guy carrying a gun down the street.

So, I mean, he was pretty down to earth. I mean,

with his security detail I know he -- he was very nice to them. They came over from Senator Byrd's office when the President Pro Tem shifted. And we gave them -- we set them up with a desk and a computer, and they sat, like, right in front of the Senator's office, the first cube outside of his office. But they -- that, sort of, to them was unusual because Senator Byrd made them stand in the hallway. They go, "What do you mean we get a desk?" This is your desk and this is your computer. So they set up their scheduling on the computer, they -- they were really happy. They loved travelling with him.

So, yeah, as far as I know they weren't supposed to go fishing when he was on the fishing trips in Western Alaska, they were supposed to be on guard all the time, but my guess is they probably did some fishing. Yeah. You know, he just wasn't the type of guy that was going to have these guys standing around, you know, in a salmon stream in Western Alaska looking for assassins.

KAREN BREWSTER: They were looking for bears at that point.

WILL ARTHUR: Right. And it was just -- this is how he was. He was -- he wasn't as, I think, stiff and curmudgeonly and as angry as some people think he was. He was just a normal guy. I mean, he was very -- as I said, I think he was more emotional than he let on to the public.

And he cared about his legislation. You know, he obviously didn't like losing a vote, but, you know, I think he was just, you know, more human than people tend to think he is.

KAREN BREWSTER: Well, you mentioned things that things that he was hurt by, his feelings were hurt. Do you have other examples of that that you could think of?

WILL ARTHUR: Well, I think, yeah, there was one case I remember where somebody had accused him of not being supportive of people with disabilities. And I know in his family, like I said, his father had gone blind, I think, when the Senator was in his teens, I think, or maybe a little bit younger.

And I also believe he had a learning-disabled cousin that he grew up with, you know, when he moved to California to live with his aunt. And I think, you know, somebody made that accusation to him on the Floor that he was, you know, a cold, uncaring Republican that hated people with disabilities. And he -- I think, one, it hurt his feelings, but he shot back pretty fast on that one. And, you know, I mean, it's something he was very -- you know, it was a part of his personal life that, you know, he didn't always share with people, but when somebody attacks it, he was going to be very supportive of it. You know, just things like that.

I know he'd -- you know, he was always very

supportive of the military, you know, either from his own experience or -- and, you know, he loved to go visit troops. You know, so when he would do Co-Dels, I think if you do a congressional delegation, somewhere, wherever he went, he would try to visit, you know, American soldiers or American sailors wherever he could find them. And some places, you know, if he was going to China with a delegation, obviously he wasn't going to see too many American troops in China, but maybe he would go through Korea, you know, or -- yeah, he made several trips to the Middle East to visit troops there.

He was pretty close to the NATO commander, and I can't think of his name now, had been the commander on Elmendorf for a while. And then he went on to be Deputy -- Deputy Chief of Staff of the Joint Chiefs, and then he went on to be NATO Commander, and I can never -- General Ralston. He was very close to General Ralston. And so he would go to Europe, he always made a point to visit General Ralston in Belgium.

I think he had an honest -- you know, he honestly cared about the troops, you know, in good times and bad, you know. Sometimes, you know, support of the troops is in, sometimes it's out. I think he's always been supporting the military.

He was always supportive of, like I said, Title IX

and women's issues. I think that part of that is, you know, he had three daughters, you know, that, you know, he wanted included in everything.

And -- and then he was always supportive of, like I said, the younger staffers who wanted to go off to school. He was always saying, "Go to school, go to school, go to school." And so if they said, "Well, I'm going to go to school," it was, like, "All right, he's going to go to school."

you know, we're not going to hold a grudge against you, but it's the best reason you could give.

And so I think those were things he -- you know, he was very supportive of his friends and, you know, both in the Senate and outside the Senate.

One of the first places when I was driving for him is I had to take him to a memorial service for -- I can't remember his name.

(End of Part 1 of 3 of recorded interview.)