



EDWARD M. KENNEDY ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

INTERVIEW WITH TERRI HADDAD ROBINSON

August 25, 2009
Washington, D.C.

Interviewer

Janet Heininger

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TRANSCRIPT

INTERVIEW WITH TERRI HADDAD ROBINSON

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Heininger: This is an interview with Terri Robinson on August 25, 2009, in Washington. Let's go back. We talked last time about the early years in which you worked for [Edward M.] Kennedy, but there are some pieces that we didn't talk about, about his coming into the Senate. There was a real bifurcation, it strikes me, in the office, between the women and the men. Many women served in secretarial and administrative positions, and, for the most part, men were doing substantive jobs. You were an anomaly.

Robinson: I had been the secretary to the Governor of Massachusetts, Foster Furcolo, and I had been appointed the Executive Director of the Mass Transportation Commission, which was a lifetime appointment, but my love for politics brought me to Washington. I attended President [John F.] Kennedy's inauguration. I worked for the seat warmer, Senator Ben Smith [II, D-Mass.] Even though I was young—and had not gone to college—while some of my friends and colleagues were in law school or college, like Paul Kirk—I met Paul when he was in law school and his father was appointed a judge—I had a jump on them because I began in politics seven years earlier. I was 18 while some of these men were 23. I was thrust into the same situation in July 1962, but I learned a lot from them all.

I left Ben Smith and transferred to Ted's campaign in November of 1962 and returned with him to the Senate. The Senate back in the 60s had small staffs, between 14 and 16 people. The Senator knew I could type very fast and I had the ability to take shorthand. I also handled the press. Everybody was so loaded up, that the Senator would dictate to me frequently. I was also a political ear for his approaching Massachusetts reelection campaign. I also worked with John Culver, who was the legislative assistant, and we were physically in the same office. Four of us shared one office in those days. I had access to the legislative process, which enabled me to comment on it to the press.

Because his brother [John F. Kennedy] was President and his other brother [Robert F. Kennedy] was Attorney General, our office was constantly sought after by the national media. We had a policy to focus only on Massachusetts and New England. There weren't as many correspondents in Washington at the time. Neither the *Boston Globe* nor the *Boston Herald Traveler* had a Washington bureau. If I wanted to find a reporter, I would call Congressman Tip [Thomas P.] O'Neill's office; one would be sitting in his reception room. But at the time it was very functional. We had a difficult role because the Senator was the younger brother of the President and the youngest member of the Senate. He had been sworn in in November, filling his brother's

unexpired term. The class that entered in 1962 was sworn in in 1963. Senator Kennedy had a few months' seniority on those members of the Senate.

We also had some very important, prominent Senate chairmen at that time. Committees were led by Senators [James Oliver] Eastland, Lister Hill, and [Estes] Kefauver. These were the figures that you would be up against, and there were many members—who were giants—Paul Douglas, [Philip] Hart, [Jacob] Javits. You could not help but feel that this 30-year-old, young Senator, was going to have his hands full, and he did.

It was wonderful to watch him grow. One thing I noted about Senator Kennedy—he had beautiful manners. He would always take time with people. He was polite and, most important, he wrote many personal notes. He loved writing notes. I'm one of those lucky people who have many letters from Ted Kennedy, always a thank you for the smallest gesture. His mother trained him well. I'm sure other people have told you this. He loved to write notes and they were always personal.

Not to exaggerate this, but he had the best sense of humor. At the most opportune moment, he used it. His wit kept us all going. He was grateful; he was kind; and, being a woman in the office, he was very kind and fair to me. Unlike some of the other members of the staff, who had egos that would fill a room, his ego was always in check.

I recall an appointment for someone who was meeting Ted Kennedy. The Senator always ate at his desk. We didn't have long lunch hours; no one did. You'd run down to the cafeteria and get him a sandwich. One day, a union official came in to see him. He was nervous, but unfortunately, he made the mistake of having a drink at lunch. I recall the Senator mentioning what poor taste this was. When the official walked out, he said, "Hmm, martinis at lunch don't go over very well." You might tell him that. He was 30 years old, had a beautiful wife, two children, and made an effort constantly to spend as much time with family. He was home every night to read bedtime stories to his children.

The women in the office—with the exception of one or two—were most in secretarial roles. He was progressive a little earlier than some of the other Senators. When I look back, women in the '70s were given more substantial roles, which was *not* always the case on Capitol Hill in the '60s. When the Senator married a very successful woman, Vicki [Reggie Kennedy], that was a turning point. She was a Washington lawyer, and very intelligent. Vicki opened his eyes to many things, but at in the '60s, most of the women on Capitol Hill did not make large salaries. I was fortunate. Although I was the highest-paid woman in the office, I did feel the jealousy, but only from the men. The Senator had no problem with successful women. He loved his sisters and was proud of them. He was generous with his compliments. He was never insulting, but there was no question that I had to watch my back, because that's the way it was in the '60s. I don't think it's changed that much, either!

Heininger: Given that this was the way the Senate was, that basically men had the power and women were in the supporting roles, were there women in the office who wanted to be doing more and were frustrated because they couldn't, or were they relatively accepting that this was what their place was on the Hill?

Robinson: Yes—at the time, I was so honored to work for President Kennedy’s brother that we were fulfilled in our responsibilities. Everyone loved working there. We were all given many mature assignments at the time; we were involved in so many unique requests. The Vietnam War was expanding; there were civil rights clashes; Washington, D.C., was segregated. There were many major issues that were crossing the White House, the Attorney General’s office, and many fell to Ted Kennedy’s office.

We were getting thousands of letters a day, the most of all members of Congress. At that time we began searching for volunteers to answer the mail. It was a complicated time for a young, freshman Senator. He really did have this additional responsibility. He had to be guarded and careful not to make any mistakes that would reflect on the administration. We did not communicate with the White House very often. We probably thought about it twice before we ever called Kenny O’Donnell, President Kennedy’s Chief of Staff, about an issue. We always felt that we were being screened as to our every move, so we were very guarded.

There were other members of the Senate, I’m sure, who got close to the Senator and tried to help him. He befriended some of those members, some even in the southern delegation, strangely enough. They took him in and helped him, and we were intrigued. He never forgot that. He wanted to learn; he was an avid reader. He also really cared about his staff. He cared about our opinions, and involved us on a daily basis. He did have a friendship with John Culver, the legislative assistant, with whom he went to Harvard. He relied on John. John was going to run for Congress himself, and eventually became a Congressman and Senator from Iowa. There’s this reputation that the Senator had a very good staff. Well, he did. The staff was selected carefully. It included (but not exclusively) Ivy League, intelligent men and women who were great on issues and who fought right alongside him. It included every ethnic group as well!

In 1964, he was clearly moving ahead. Those first few years, he refused to become a national figure. He always wanted to do right by the State of Massachusetts. He went home to Boston almost every weekend. He campaigned constantly, because in 1962 he faced a reelection campaign in 1964. We also started a newsletter, one of the first newsletters published on Capitol Hill.

The day of the Nuclear Test Ban Treaty vote I sat in the Senate gallery. It was so exciting. The vote was very important and was being watched around the world. When we returned to the office, he said, “I want you to get a copy of the photograph of the Chamber.” I asked, “Why?” He said, “I just heard that’s the first time in years that 100 Senators were all seated.” The Senate photographer had taken a picture with a wide-angle lens, and it was so perfect that we used it as the banner for our newsletter. It’s little things like that. He really cared about the history of the Senate right from the beginning, and devoted hours to learning the rules. He was surprised to hear that it was one of the few times all the members were there. *[laughing]* I know; it’s the small things.

Heininger: Well, let’s see, for impeachments, they’re there; occasionally for the really important Supreme Court nominations, they’re all there. That’s about it.

Robinson: And most times they’re not all there. This time they were all seated!

Heininger: Well, no, 99 percent of the time they're not all there, because they have so many—

Robinson: There are committee hearings, or there's an illness.

Heininger: They have so many duties and they're not all present at the same time.

Robinson: This was a very important vote.

Heininger: You said you used this for a newsletter, and this was one of the first newsletters you knew about on the Hill. Sending a newsletter to constituents was not a common thing for other offices to do?

Robinson: No.

Heininger: That's very interesting, because we know, from lots of other interviews, that he's been very innovative in terms of how he has used the press.

Robinson: Yes.

Heininger: Whose idea was it to do a newsletter to constituents?

Robinson: It was his idea, I recall. It was something that seemed logical, because he was running again for reelection. I recall we needed to pay for the postage. I think it required his personal postage at that time.

Heininger: Really?

Robinson: There was a limit on how many pieces of mail you could send out using "frank" mail. We had one automatic typewriter we used to call a "robo machine."

Heininger: The "robo machine," right.

Robinson: Yes, in the basement of the Senate. Just to get it done, I prepared it in the Senate Printing Office and it was so—

Heininger: Very cumbersome.

Robinson: Yes. It was cumbersome and archaic. The newsletter was in blue and white. It was mailed monthly to his constituents. I wrote most of it and edited it. But he always wrote the closing.

Heininger: Were you aware that this was an innovative thing to do?

Robinson: Yes. The Kennedys, in Massachusetts, had done something else unique. I had been the National Committeewoman of the Young Democrats, so I observed the way the Democratic Party worked at the state level. Yet the Kennedys had their own state organization. It was called the "Kennedy Secretaries," and in 351 cities and towns, they had appointed one person loyal to them.

Heininger: It's just mind boggling.

Robinson: It is mind boggling. It began with John Kennedy and it was accepted, sort of the way the Democratic Leadership Council is accepted now by the Democratic National Committee. It was meant to be an arm of the Democratic Party, but it was *his* arm, and President Kennedy passed that on to Ted.

Heininger: Did Bobby use something similar to that, when he ran in New York?

Robinson: I don't know if it was that elaborate. New York is a real machine.

Heininger: True.

Robinson: We didn't have that kind of machine statewide. Boston had the big machine, but exploring the rest of the state, getting the votes in the western part of the state was difficult. The Berkshires were primarily a Republican stronghold, and that's why it worked. Bobby didn't have much time to run and organize in New York. His campaign was over pretty quickly.

Heininger: As I said at the beginning, you had an anomalous position. You came in Massachusetts-based, very young, but coming from professional positions, hired to end up doing press. A woman doing press was unusual, to say the least.

Robinson: Yes. I may have been the first press assistant on the Hill.

Heininger: And you were viewed by him as someone who had the ear of Massachusetts. You were plugged into the Massachusetts political network and yet you were a woman. This couldn't have been a comfortable position in the office for you.

Robinson: That is true. Having worked for Ben Smith, I had kept my apartment in Foggy Bottom. When we came to Washington in November 1962, some of the girls in the office who were secretaries asked, "Where should we live?" I got three of them apartments in my building. I was hardly the ringleader, but I was glad they turned to me about settling in in Washington, where to go, where to shop. I loved to cook. I'm of Lebanese heritage and I would have dinners and invite my friends every week!

Heininger: The den mother.

Robinson: Yes. I felt like the den mother, even though I was the youngest. By this time, I was probably 25 years old and had seven years of experience in Massachusetts politics.

Heininger: Skipping ahead, what made you want to leave, ultimately? Did you feel that there was a ceiling for what you were going to be able to do in that office?

Robinson: Yes. It's complicated. The Senator was reelected in '64. Bobby had become a Senator and I had an opportunity to work in the poverty program. At one point, I was going to work for the Kennedy Foundation, but it didn't work out. In 1966 I became Congressional Relations Officer for the Office of Economic Opportunity, VISTA [Volunteers in Service to America] Program. Ted's brother-in-law Sargent Shriver was Director.

Heininger: This was an unusual trajectory for a woman on the Hill in the '60s. You came in very young, from professional positions; had in essence held a professional position in a Hill office, where women were not in professional positions; and left for another professional position.

Robinson: I was pretty surprised! I was a Schedule C and began as a grade 15.

Heininger: Oh, my God.

Robinson: I didn't ask for it; Civil Service received my résumé.

Heininger: And you were 26? *[laughing]*

Robinson: Yes. I thought, *Gee, I didn't know they did this*. I guess that's how I was ranked by the Civil Service [Commission].

Heininger: Whoa!

Robinson: Then when I left, I was a grade 18; I was ranked with the Civil Service as a Schedule C, and I kept thinking, *This is odd. I guess I've been underpaid all these years and didn't realize it*.

Heininger: Yes.

Robinson: This was a first experience with government work! It was a wonderful experience, being outside of the Senate, because you're in a cocoon on Capitol Hill. I really loved being in government and seeing the big picture. Capitol Hill is very protected and they protect each other. It's a family; it's very close. It's a very nice place to work, because you know that you're taken care of quite nicely. But it was a different role. Most are loyal to each other.

Heininger: The hours are bad.

Robinson: The hours are terrible, but everyone does it because it feels like they're doing something important and relative, and they are. When I was on the Hill, we didn't have the Hart Office Building. I remember when they built the Hart Building and the Rayburn House Building. Dear Lord, 100 Senators and they need three buildings? I kept thinking it was because there was so much mail, but there were so many hearings. And the staff grew.

Working for the Senator, I was quite unique. For example, I had to answer questions constantly about what size dress Jackie [Jacqueline Bouvier] Kennedy wore. The press would ask everything. One day, I got a call from Robert Saudek, an independent film producer who created a television show called *Profiles in Courage*. He needed to speak to Senator Kennedy because he wanted to film the Senate Chamber. The Senator called me in and said, "I want you to work with him, and see if there's some way that we can get permission to use the buildings and the Senate Chamber to film this series." It was an Emmy award-winning series. I took Mr. Saudek to the Architect of the Capitol's office and the Capitol Police. We toured the Capitol and then he was told, "You will never be able to film in the Capitol; it's absolutely not allowed in the Senate

Chamber.” He was very disappointed, but through our efforts, we helped him get the blueprints, and they reproduced the Senate Chamber in Hollywood.

Heininger: Really? Wow.

Robinson: Those are the kinds of little things we’d be involved with that were outside the usual. People were calling us constantly for help. We did a lot of constituent work that was complicated. Everyone turned to Ted. We were getting letters from all over the country, all over the world, asking for help with immigration, jobs, benefits, health care.

That’s the part I want people to remember: he was the Senator of not just Massachusetts. He really had an additional burden. And it was a burden; we had to have more staff than the rest because the mail was a constant avalanche. It’s like what happened now with President [Barack] Obama. Everybody feels that they can again be heard. The Senator actually paid personally for some staff members.

In early 1964 there was the discussion of the formation of the Kennedy Library. The Senator wanted to be involved in helping to raise funds. Barbara Souliotis and Eddie Martin helped and traveled the country with a small exhibit. The Senator asked me to call the White House to obtain some of President Kennedy’s most important personal items and treasures. They would become part of the national touring exhibit. It was the beginning of the John F. Kennedy Library to be built in Boston, Massachusetts. Evelyn Lincoln, JFK’s personal secretary, was my contact.

The Senator specifically wanted to borrow the coconut shell that President Kennedy had used on PT-109 during World War II. I received that, along with some yellow legal pads with the President’s doodles. It also included notes from the last White House Cabinet meetings. These items were included in the touring exhibit.

Heininger: I’m going to skip ahead again, because in going through your history with him, you are also an anomaly in that you were one of the few people who made that transition from being a relatively junior staff member to becoming a close personal friend of his. I’m understanding it a little better now, when I see that you came in as Massachusetts, from professional positions. You had an anomalous professional position within the office at a time when women didn’t do that, and you left for, shall we say, a *very* senior position in government. You never quite fit that model of the—You weren’t just a staffer.

Robinson: Well, being a staffer shouldn’t be an insult.

Heininger: No, but people get categorized usually, by Senators, because they’re hired; they’re employees, and employees tend not to become personal friends. That’s not the nature of the relationship.

Robinson: One thing I did that probably helped in the transition—When I left the Office of Economic Opportunity—I left in February 1970 because I had a young son and I wanted to be home with him more—I then became a real estate agent. I believe that helped in the transition, because it kept me in touch, on a different level, with many of the people I’d met working for Senator Kennedy. I would sell a home to my friends and my colleagues. For example Senator John Culver and his family. I found myself staying in the loop through a different role, and that

role was helpful, because everyone seems to need a real estate agent, and there were only 400 agents in D.C. when I got into the business.

Heininger: I suspect there are more than that now?

Robinson: Thousands, *thousands*. [laughing] At the time, I was the youngest in real estate. It was odd, because most of the women asked, “What are you doing here? You should be home with your child.” I was trying to make a little extra income and I said, “Well, I married a Peace Corps volunteer, and you know where that gets you.” Then I had a second child, in 1970, and most of the people in real estate were in their 40s and 50s. Through that, it kept me reconnected with my political friends, and I did fundraising for the Democratic Party. As a result, I found myself working with people I knew from the Congress and media. Then I opened my own real estate company in 1980 after the failed campaign for President, and even hired some of the people who worked on the Hill and White House.

But working with the Senator and the type of person he was—of all the men in the office, he was the least chauvinistic. I think it’s because of his sisters, because of Eunice [Kennedy Shriver] and Jean [Kennedy Smith].

Heininger: He was used to strong women.

Robinson: He was used to strong women; he liked strong women. I think in a way his marriage failed because his wife was not strong, and that’s really very sad. He tried so hard and Joan herself has said that she felt that she wasn’t like his sisters and didn’t have the Kennedy strength.

Heininger: Let’s talk about the assassination. You were there when John Kennedy was assassinated. What happened in the office and what happened with Ted?

Robinson: We all recall where we were that day. I was in the office, working with Senator Saltonstall’s office on the Cape Cod [National] Seashore legislation. We were preparing an official announcement and I called to set up a lunch with John Jackson, who worked for Senator Saltonstall, R-Massachusetts.

The Senator, as a freshman, had to preside over the Senate. They were not allowed to speak, usually, but they did preside; that was a freshman’s role. I told Jackson that the Senator had to preside in the Chamber around 1:00 and we would have lunch at that time. We went to the Carroll Arms Hotel while the Senator was presiding. Someone put a television on top of the counter. There was Walter Cronkite on screen announcing on CBS [Columbia Broadcasting System] News, that the President had been shot in Dallas.

We were totally shocked and stunned beyond words. John Jackson tried to help me; I could hardly stand up. I realized, at that moment, that this was a turning point in our lives. I could hardly walk to the Senate Building.

John Jackson walked me to my office—and there was a reporter standing there, Bud [Wilfrid C.] Rodgers of the *Boston Globe*. He just looked at me and I looked at him and said, “Buddy, I cannot talk to you.” The door was locked. I knocked and Barbara Souliotis opened the door and let me in. I felt everyone staring at me, thinking I had some news. We did not have a TV in the

office. The only thing I thought to do was to call Eddie Martin. We gathered around the office reception room and I called Eddie Martin, who previously worked for the Senator and was a close friend.

Eddie was the assistant managing editor of the *Boston Herald Traveler* newspaper. We were on the phone together and he asked, “Where’s the Senator?” I said, “He’s presiding. Eddie, what do I do? What happened? What’s going on?” And he said, “I’m watching the wire right now.” Then he said to me, “Dear God—” Merriman Smith’s story must have just come over the UPI [United Press International] wire—and he said, “The President is dead.”

Heininger: No one had told Ted at this point?

Robinson: No.

Heininger: The people on the Senate floor didn’t know anything yet?

Robinson: I don’t think so. It was that instant. I happened to be on the phone when Eddie first saw the wire.

Heininger: Wow.

Robinson: I turned and told the staff standing around the desk and everyone burst into tears. I went back to my office and just stared at the wall. I frankly didn’t even know who to call or what to do. It was as though the world had stopped. I thought, *Will the phones ring? Maybe they won’t.* There was a little commotion in the office. Someone, obviously, and I don’t recall who it was, went over to the Senate floor. I heard, eventually, that the Senator tried to make calls from the Senate Chamber and the phones were jammed. He came to the office for a moment and those phones were jammed, then he went to his house in Georgetown. Then I believe military drove him to the White House.

Nobody had cell phones in those days. We didn’t have sophisticated communications, and our phones, of course, started lighting up. Then came the largest challenge. Very quickly we realized we would be central. The White House staff at that time was small; it was probably less than 40 people. It’s amazing, isn’t it?

Heininger: Amazing.

Robinson: Our staff was about 15 or 16 and a few of us worked the next three days with the White House, putting together the funeral for the President. During that time, my role was to try to arrange for the people who were the closest personal friends of President Kennedy in Massachusetts to come down for the funeral. Tickets were, of course, at a premium. People were calling us, begging to get into St. Matthew’s Cathedral. The Senator was at home; he did not come into the office during this time. I was taking direction from the White House. General [Chester V.] Clifton [Jr.], and some from Pierre Salinger’s office. General Clifton was the Army’s military attaché. He gave me our marching orders. I knew the press staffs of Pierre Salinger and of Mrs. Jacqueline Kennedy, so we coordinated our efforts. They did most of the work, of course, and the military played a major role.

We were the office of Senator Ted Kennedy, and we were trying to satisfy President Kennedy's personal friends. The Senator thought if we couldn't get enough tickets for the funeral, that—at the time, he was living in Georgetown, on 28th Street—it would be nice if we at least rent some televisions and install them in his large living room. Anyone turned away from St. Matthew's Cathedral could at least have a breakfast at his home and watch the funeral on television. I made these arrangements.

The day of the funeral, everyone was somber. I remember Mrs. Joan Kennedy getting ready to leave. The Senator was already at the White House waiting to accompany Mrs. Jacqueline Kennedy. Joan Kennedy's sister came in from Texas. She didn't have a warm coat. I recall giving her my coat and she said, "Are you going to come with us?" I could have, but I didn't. I thought it was more important that she attend. I wouldn't have had a coat, anyway; it was a bitter cold day.

Heininger: It *was* a cold day.

Robinson: And it's okay. It was very meaningful to be with those friends who loved the President, and who probably knew him years longer than I did, and longer than many other people in Washington. They were his dear friends. They were the people who got him elected. They were the people who shared loyalty to Ted, who helped us, and we've always stayed close. Many of them have passed on, but they really appreciated feeling that sense, that they were at least close enough on that day.

After the funeral, there wasn't much to do except read newspapers and magazines. I went to the office early the next morning, and I must admit I was shocked. The Senator came walking in and said to me, "I want all the papers." "Oh, of course," I said. I thought I couldn't believe it. He said, "Get me *Paris Match Magazine*; they have the best picture." I couldn't even bring myself to look at it, and I thought, *God love him, he really wants to see and learn everything he could about what happened to his brother.* I believe Bobby remained at his home.

It was sad and a very memorable time. The next day the Senator asked, "What will we do with the flood of mail?" He came into my office and said, "Terri, I want you to handle the sympathy mail." I said, "Of course, Senator." We received approximately four thousand letters. I read them, sorted them, and responded. We had a lovely card we prepared. We didn't have enough staff so I called Georgetown University and asked for the president of the Young Democrats. I said, "You must have some young students who would like to volunteer." The whole country was offering to help in any way they could, and they sent over six girls. They became *our* girls; I loved those girls. We stayed in touch! They volunteered; they helped with the mail; and they went on to become professionals, two lawyers, and two of them worked on Capitol Hill. That moment was a turning point for them also.

The mail was a great experience, just to read the letters. He requested the most touching letters from the average person. People wrote from all over the world, but then, of course, there were many of his personal friends, President Kennedy's friends. They turned to Bobby and Ted immediately, I'm sure, and Jackie, wanting to express their sorrow. A telegram came in—I remember it said, "I'm grieved, Marlene."

Heininger: As in Dietrich?

Robinson: Yes. Marlene Dietrich. It came from Paris. I remember that distinctly, thinking, *This is amazing*. He would personally sign the ones that he knew. He didn't want to miss all their friends. He wrote many personal notes as well.

We were given several hundred prayer cards from the funeral, and we enclosed some of those. The card had President Kennedy's photograph on it and a religious prayer on the back. I kept those in my office and only on a special occasion, when somebody very close would visit the Senator, he gave them a prayer card. There were many moments when the Senator was comforting people who intended to comfort him. They were so grief stricken that they often couldn't control their sorrow. Grant Stockdale came in to see him—He had been the U.S. Ambassador to Ireland—and he was sobbing. He eventually committed suicide, I believe.

The Senator later called me in. Jackie Kennedy had too much mail, he teased, "Gee, we got all *our* mail answered." Just as an aside, he wanted to change the mood and said, "This is great. Look at it; it's done! Now, Jackie's office hasn't been able to finish all *their* mail, could you go over to help?" I went to the White House, and they asked me to help organize their mail. I was doing five jobs at this time, exhausted.

The President was lying in state in the Rotunda of the Capitol. During the arrangements I was working in the office, but I had not had a chance to pay my respect to the President. There were lines for half a mile down Pennsylvania Avenue; people were waiting for hours, around the clock. I went over to the Rotunda at 3 AM and a Capitol policeman recognized me. He realized at this hour I did not want to stand in a long line, and he kindly pulled the rope back for me to proceed. He suddenly halted me.

I looked up and there passing in front of me was Jackie Kennedy. She had walked into the Rotunda, in the middle of the night, obviously the wife who could not bear the loss of her husband. She knelt down and prayed at the flag-draped casket. She was in black; it was very dark in the Rotunda; everyone was silent. *Am I really seeing this?* She stood up and as she walked away she was helped by a Secret Service agent. As she passed in front of me she dropped her rosary beads.

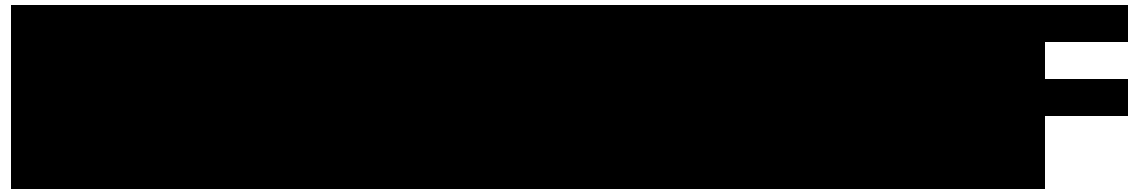
I picked them up, and tried to extend them. She was swept away by an agent. I've put them away. There were so many times that I thought, *Is this the appropriate time to return them?* I was going to give them to Mrs. Kennedy. Then I was going to give them to her son John, and as I reflected and looked at the calendar it was never the correct moment. I do think now is probably the time. I had put them away for years, and I thought, *I hope I can find them. I will give them to the Senator.*

Getting back to the mail at the White House, there were thousands of letters. Then Arthur Watson, the chairman of the board of IBM [International Business Machines], came in to the meeting and said, "Ladies, I'm Mr. Watson from IBM. We have a computer we are going to use to help you answer this mail." What is that?

Heininger: Wow.

Robinson: And that's the first time we'd ever heard the word "computer." It was taken out of our hands. They organized it; they helped—they solved it.

When Christmas came, the Senator wanted to buy gifts for the family and asked me if I would purchase leather manuscript books—he gave each sister one.



These were some of the strifes and things that people didn't realize he was dealing with. His wife, Joan, was really having a hard time and it complicated his life. He tried very hard to help her, but she had a problem with alcohol and it was getting much more serious. She had several miscarriages during this time, so his personal life was a struggle as well, and the assassination, I'm sure, did not help her regain her strength.

I feel he taught me the lesson of my life. When you are in the presence of a man like him—Even though we were young, we came to know him and witness how he handled his problems, how he handled other people's problems. I am not alone when I say Ted Kennedy is probably the strongest man I have ever known, and the rest of the world is finding it out now during his fight against brain cancer.

Heininger: Were you the only person in the office designated to deal with Joan?

Robinson: She had a personal secretary in the house. It was a girl who lived across the hall from me. She confided in me at the end of the day. It was a hidden problem. We were innocent staffers, truthfully We thought maybe Joan was tired or maybe she didn't feel well or maybe it was a miscarriage or maybe she's pregnant and had to stay in bed, but she had a lot of difficulty getting out of bed. She was a kind woman, and a talented pianist.

The Senator had to wear both hats, constantly going to the school meetings and sports events. Everyone in the city who had children at these schools has repeated stories. Whether it was at Beauvoir, Potomac School, any of the schools, Senator Kennedy never missed a parent's meeting, or a sports event. He was always there and he was a wonderful father to his children. He loved children. He remains close to his children and grandchildren. He also read to public school students once a week.

Heininger: Did they have a nanny to take care of the kids?

Robinson: Yes, there was a nanny. That's what we couldn't quite understand. Joan had a cook, a cleaning lady, and a nanny.

Heininger: And an assistant.

Robinson: And an assistant. He gave her what he thought she needed. There have been many things written about Senator Kennedy, but the one thing people should know is that he made a

great effort. I remember once he went to Russia and came back with a beautiful sable coat for his wife. He always thought of her and tried very hard.

Heininger: How long was it before you realized that alcohol was the problem?

Robinson: It was probably at the 1964 convention in Atlantic City. He was in the hospital with a broken back following the plane crash. I had to comb her hair because she didn't look presentable. She had a lovely way about her, an innocence. At this point, she was in her early 30s. She had worked very hard on the reelection campaign, to help him get reelected. She did a very good job, but she also was shy, and I think that compounded things.

Heininger: Campaigning is hardly something that comes naturally to most people.

Robinson: No, and she was trying to be a mother as well, but it was. . . .

Heininger: And she had a husband in the hospital.

Robinson: Yes. She had many things going against her. It wasn't the usual opportunity for someone to go into recovery. That was not considered at the time.

Heininger: People didn't do that then.

Robinson: No, they didn't. I recall her mother died of alcoholism.

Heininger: Were there other people in the office who were dealing with her as well as you?

Robinson: Yes, occasionally John Culver and Milt Gwirtzman. Milt would write speeches for her. But Joan was quiet and private; she didn't come to the office very often.

Heininger: He trusted you to deal with her.

Robinson: Me, his personal secretary, and a couple of others. Her role was not as amplified as it is today for other wives. She kept a low profile. She loved her music. She narrated *Peter and the Wolf* with the Boston Pops; she loved doing that.

Heininger: It was a very difficult position she was in. The kind of attention, the scrutiny he was under—

Robinson: Everything.

Heininger: She was so young.

Robinson: Fashion conscious. She was in the shadow of Jackie and Ethel [Kennedy Skakel]. Ted and Joan were also building a house. They decided to move from Georgetown and purchased land in McLean, Virginia.

Heininger: On the stress indicator, those things go to the top of the list.

Robinson: Yes. So many things happened in just a very short period: two elections, the assassination, and the plane crash, all between 1962 and 1964.

Heininger: Let's talk about the plane crash. Where were you when it happened?

Robinson: Yes. The reason the Senator had to stay in Washington that day was the civil rights bill vote.

Heininger: A huge vote.

Robinson: The biggest that year! It was also the same day he had to be re-nominated for the Senate. He was scheduled at the Springfield state convention in Massachusetts—

Heininger: A huge event for him.

Robinson: So our office arranged for a private plane. I'm not sure, but Eddie Moss, who was an unpaid aide and friend, may have arranged for a private plane from Massachusetts. The pilot and Moss flew down on a five- or six-seater plane; I think it was a Cessna. Eddie Moss sat in the copilot seat. He wanted to see his buddy and his good friend, the Senator, because they were going to go to the state convention together. Moss was a part-time political aide to him and was like a brother to him. Moss flew down the night before and Eddie Moss invited me to see Marlene Dietrich.

Heininger: Was she in town?

Robinson: She was performing at the Shoreham Hotel.

Heininger: Oh my, that must have been a treat.

Robinson: It was, so we went: Eddie; Charlie Tretter, the assistant to the chief of staff; and his wife, Anna; and me. We were all friends from the '62 campaign. It was a fun night, but I was tired. Moss wanted to talk. The Tretters and I lived in the same building, so we spoke until 2:00 in the morning. I said, "This is too late. Come on now. We have a big day tomorrow, with the civil rights vote and all," but Eddie Moss was in this wonderful mood and we talked, of course, about the person we all loved the most, the Senator. Moss went on and on about his friendship and how great Ted Kennedy was, and how much he loved him. We all agreed, until we couldn't stay awake one more minute.

The next day was complicated. Bill Evans, chief of staff, had a birthday, so we got a cake for him. We were celebrating in the office. I still remember everyone enjoying themselves after 5:00. We were waiting for the Civil Rights vote. The Senator asked me if I wanted to go to the floor of the Senate. You could only take one staffer, and he asked me. I was *thrilled*. The vote—I'm trying to recall the time—was at 6:00 or 7:00 at night. We walked over to the floor of the Senate and the galleries were packed. It was so emotional. Fired up speakers—Javits, [Everett] Dirksen, Phil Hart. It was probably one of the most powerful moments I remember in the Senate. Then the roll call began. We thought they had the votes—we weren't sure—and they did. The bill passed. On that high, we returned to the office.

He looked at me, asking, “I wonder if you should go with me up to Springfield, to the state convention.” I just thought, *No. Eddie Martin will take care of the press.* Eddie was going to meet him at the state convention—He took a leave of absence from the *Boston Herald Traveler*—Eddie would be there to handle it. I went back to the office. There was one empty seat on the plane, and I said to Charlie Tretter, “Do you want to go? Why don’t you go?” Charlie hated to fly, was afraid of flying, and always took the train back to Boston. He declined. And that was really the right decision.

Senator Birch Bayh and his wife [Marvella], Eddie Moss, the pilot [Edward Zimny], and the Senator got on the plane at Washington-National and were on their way. It must have been after 8:00 PM. The fog was rolling into Springfield, Massachusetts. The altimeter, they discovered, possibly could have been off. The plane crashed in an apple orchard. Eddie Moss was killed; the pilot was killed; the Senator was seriously injured; Birch Bayh and his wife were injured. I heard later that had there *not* been a drought in Massachusetts they could have had a fire on the plane, but that the gasoline somehow seeped into the ground. Senator Bayh pulled him from the plane. The Senator, when they found him, had a faint pulse. He was that close to death, but they revived him. He was in shock. They transported him to a hospital nearby, where he stayed a few days. Senator Birch Bayh and his wife were released within a week.

The Senator was severely hurt, with a broken back, ribs, and other injuries. When he stabilized they transferred him to the New England Baptist Hospital in Boston. He stayed there for months, through the November election. That entire duration, no complaints. This man was lying between two boards, called a Stryker frame, which was the only hope for a cure. He would be flipped every few hours, and had a 50/50 chance, if that, of walking again.

The convention, of course, was distraught. Congressman Eddie Boland accepted the Senator’s nomination and sort of did it impulsively. The Senator could have just remained a patient in the hospital and asked for the sympathy vote. But the voters really made him earn it again. During this time, I forgot to mention, his father was recovering from a stroke, and he was very concerned about his progress. Trying to help his father recover from the stroke had taken a toll on the family. It was interesting that when he left the hospital, he went to Florida to join his father during his rehabilitation.

Joan worked very hard to substitute. Our leader was on his back; he was hurt, and we all worked together very tightly, to make this election a success. His brother Bobby was running in New York. Much of the limelight was focused on him.

Heininger: He was running for Senator this year. Wow, I had forgotten that.

Robinson: I left in ’65, but I remember thinking, when you asked why I left, it was because Bobby was going to be the new Senator from New York.

Heininger: I don’t think he ran in ’64.

Robinson: Bobby was elected November 1964. He used to tease Ted about his percentages.

Heininger: Two elections in two years is a lot for *any* office to deal with.

Robinson: Yes.

Heininger: But a Presidential assassination and a plane crash on top of it?

Robinson: I know.

Heininger: That's a bit much.

Robinson: All I could think of was, *Is there really a Kennedy curse?* People actually started wondering. That's what I mean about his strength, what he has endured. So many people today don't even know about this plane crash.

Heininger: How did the office deal with him when he was in the hospital?

Robinson: Eddie Martin was there at the hospital most of the time; he took a leave of absence from the paper. I would go out there only occasionally. He had visitors. President Lyndon Johnson came to the hospital. That was an interesting time, because Air Force One came in late at night and Baptist Hospital was, at that time, in a rather poor neighborhood of Roxbury. It was a great hospital. The visit was about half an hour.

Heininger: Was this a rehab hospital?

Robinson: Partly. They do surgery and rehab there, but it was well known for orthopedics. He didn't like the food. We would call up Locke-Ober's Restaurant, one of the best restaurants, and have some food delivered. That cheered him up. He stayed very much involved in the campaign, and made some tapes. But we missed him and I can imagine he must have been thinking, *Is it worth it?* He had lost his brother; he was on his back. We wanted him to know, every day, that *he* really was worth it! We needed him. Ted Kennedy is a very religious person. He had a lot of faith, and that helped him through this difficult period.

There was a photograph taken of him and his brother President Kennedy. It was the only time they were ever on a public platform together. It was a fundraiser and Senator Kennedy was the chairman of a New England Salute Dinner for the President held in an armory in Boston, \$100 a ticket. I will never forget it. It was a sellout crowd. I don't know how many thousands attended, but it was to raise money for the Democratic National Committee. The President attended and the Senator was the emcee and it was *fabulous*. This was in 1963. Their picture was on the front page of the *Boston Globe*; he asked me to get a copy for him, and I did. He said, "Send it over to the White House and get it autographed for me." I sent it to Evelyn Lincoln, President Kennedy's personal secretary, with a quick note, which we used to do. It said, "Evelyn, would you please have this signed and returned to me? Terri Haddad," my name at the time.

Well, the picture came back signed to *me*, from John Kennedy. He was about to lose it. He saw it and said, "What? Hey, what!?" I said, "Oh, my God, Senator. I'm sorry. This is a mistake." He just looked at me and said, "Do you think you could get *me* one of these, please?" I had the black-and-white version, but I wanted to please him. I wanted to be excused for this blunder, so I called General Clifton at the White House. Cecil Stoughton was the White House photographer, who worked under him, I said, "Cecil, you were there at this function while you were traveling with the President. I'll bet you have a great photograph of this. Do you have one?" He said,

“Yes, I took one at the same time.” I went over and went through his photographs. I said, “This is it! This is the one.” It was magnificent and it was in color.

Heininger: Even better.

Robinson: Even better. I had it autographed by the President and framed it in driftwood. He was so thrilled. The President wrote on the bottom of it, “*From one coattail rider to another, with hope, Jack Kennedy.*” He loved it. He put it next to his desk. The reason I thought of it again was that during the time he was at the New England Baptist Hospital, he asked me to send the photograph to the hospital. He kept that in his room, along with many family pictures, but that one particular photograph was next to him.

They didn’t have many days together in Washington, and that’s why. Every day was precious, and the President would try to include the Senator and Joan. “Why don’t you come over to the White House? Carol Channing is going to play the piano in the living quarters. She’s coming over to see me and Jackie.” They had a lot of fun! There were lots of laughs.

The Senator would be so kind to us. He’d say, “Hey, the *Caroline* is going up to Boston. Do you want to go?” The *Caroline* was the Kennedy family plane. Oh, my gosh, we would drop everything, no suitcase, just jump on the plane and go home, because flying then wasn’t that affordable. One time, we flew up because Robert Kennedy was going to go to the Harvard-Yale game. We flew to Boston and saw our families; he went to the game. We then met at the airport and jumped back on the plane and returned.

Another time we went to Rome, New York, for a wedding. They were generous to us. They were kind. They were fun, and I remember distinctly on a flight once we couldn’t stop laughing. Somehow we were able to get “radio contact,” as they called it in those days, on the plane, and there was a comic imitating John Kennedy. This humorist, who became very famous. I’m trying to remember his name. Vaughn Meader, was it?

Heininger: Vaughn Meader, yes. He did a whole album on him.

Robinson: Yes.

Heininger: Imitating him.

Robinson: Imitating President Kennedy. It was the first time any of us had ever heard it. I looked at the Senator and I thought, *Oh, dear, he’s going to be so upset.* He couldn’t stop laughing.

Heininger: Right. I can imagine he would laugh at that.

Robinson: Yes, he couldn’t stop laughing. That’s what I mean; we just had a lot of fun.

Heininger: From what you could see, what was his relationship with Jack and what was his relationship with Bobby?

Robinson: Jack, as I understood it from reading history, and I could see it, treated him like the baby brother he loved. Ted was the youngest and Jack treated him like a kid brother, but Ted was big physically, tall.

Heininger: Bigger than Jack.

Robinson: Yes. He was about six-one, almost six-two, as we used to say, but probably six feet one and three-quarter inches tall, and in his prime was about 190 or 200 pounds. Bobby wasn't as tall, and there was a little bit of envy. Ted wasn't thinking about politics; he was just a happy-go-lucky younger brother with a great sense of humor, very close with his sisters, his brother, and the tragedy hadn't quite touched him at that point. Jack and Bobby were very close and because of the difference in age, Ted wasn't always, I'm sure, included in everything.

Heininger: He was quite a bit younger than Jack was.

Robinson: Yes. In the Senate, I felt that Bobby was tough on him. I told you that story about when he was Attorney General and the Senator wanted to give a speech on civil rights. But Bobby had to be the substitute older brother; Bobby had his role. It was right; someone had to be the older brother. His father was sick, his brother was gone, only Bobby was left at that point.

In reflecting, he learned a lot from Bobby. Ted was very good to Bobby's children. He was *amazing*, and to this day everyone in that family knows what he did for them and loves him and respects him. He did the same thing for Caroline [Kennedy Schlossberg]. Ted Kennedy was the steel in that family. I don't think at the time we realized how important his role was, but as the years went on—we now recognize this. "He's too much man for any man," you know? He's a very powerful person, a very strong person, a man of deep faith, and he tried to do the right thing.

I know he's made his mistakes. He was a lonesome man during his divorce and before his remarriage, and that was probably the lowest point of his life, personally, having to carry the burden and not having somebody, at the end of the day, who supported him and gave him the love he deserved.

Heininger: Did you know any of the women that he saw during those years after the divorce?

Robinson: Yes. I was married, and my husband and I would travel to some of the same locations where he would vacation. We saw him in Aspen. He would come to our New Year's Eve party with his children. It wasn't unusual for the Senator and his children and my family to socialize in Aspen, occasionally on Nantucket Island or on the Cape.

There was never anyone he was serious about, except one woman: Suzana Maus. He met her in Switzerland. The summer of 1988 I was vacationing on Nantucket. He called and said, "There's somebody I'd like you to meet," and flew over with a very beautiful woman. She was a Czech refugee who ended up in Geneva with her family. After the tanks rolled into Prague, the family had to escape. She made a life for herself there. They walked in and we sort of laughed. I said, "Would you like to be a citizen?" I could see the Senator was taken with her; he had only been divorced maybe a year or so at that time.

It was my first encounter watching him socialize with another woman. I noticed, in some ways, he felt uncomfortable. He didn't go out in public often those early years. The Senator would go home to his family and have dinner there, or go to functions. You wouldn't find him going to public restaurants. It was an uncommon moment for the Senator to have a date.

We invited him to join us for dinner with Judge [Edmund] Reggie and his wife [Doris Reggie]. Yes. His daughter eventually married the Senator. I said, "Why don't you come with us?" We all went to a restaurant. He's so well known. We're having dinner; he's divorced; he's with an attractive woman; and then everyone begins to watch him. It was just unnatural and I felt bad for him. They were respectful—Nantucket's a small island—but at that moment I realized this was awkward.

He continued to date her; she lived most of the year in Geneva. She was a lovely woman; she spoke seven languages. There came a moment where he had to decide whether to go further in the relationship. She was not an American, and it was complicated. Also, his son Patrick [Kennedy] was struggling with stability and was having asthmatic problems. He had just finished worrying about his other son [Edward M. Kennedy, Jr.], who lost a leg to cancer. I think he felt an obligation to the family first, and had so much on his plate, being Senator and trying to be the surrogate father for Jackie's and for Ethel's children. He hardly had any time for a personal relationship.

I recall once when Suzana came to Washington he asked me, "Take her to Mount Vernon, could you?" He had no time. When we arrived she said, "What is this? Isn't it beautiful." I said, "Suzana, this is Mount Vernon; this is our Versailles." *[laughing]*

Suzana had a young son at the time. The Senator took us all to see Neil Diamond. I could see that he cared for her son. He cares deeply about children. He had great responsibilities. I've heard this from other women that he's dated, that he is kind to them. Anyone he ever dated always had a kind word to say about the relationship.

Heininger: But he was really in love with her?

Robinson: At the time, I believe so. But then he met Vicki. And I believe he's very deeply in love with Vicki and very grateful to her for all she's done. Vicki was the correct choice and the perfect wife for Ted Kennedy. She gave him much that he needed. She gave him friendship, and loyalty. She helped him greatly in his work; she understood politics. She loves him, and she also contributes a great deal. She is more than a wife to him; she is a real partner. He always tells everyone he is happy.

I remember how awkward he was. I went to the engagement party Eunice Shriver had at her home in Potomac, and he was almost embarrassed. Eunice wanted to celebrate and he was having a lot of fun, but then came the moment when Eunice and Sarge [Robert Sargent Shriver] would speak. They grabbed the microphone, and he was really quite shy about his marriage. He doesn't reveal his feelings and now he was engaged to be married. He was a little clumsy, you know? *[laughing]* He wasn't sure what to say.

Heininger: Well, he was not the most articulate person, as you said.

Robinson: Exactly.

Heininger: His speech patterns can be—

Robinson: They can be.

Heininger: Truncated.

Robinson: Right, right. But he's a father and grandfather and he's very caring. He's wonderful to his family. You can't ask for more than that from one man. What more could we ask from Ted Kennedy?

Heininger: You've also had a relationship with Patrick, haven't you?

Robinson: Yes. I haven't seen Patrick lately, but I did watch him grow up. When he was elected to Congress he called me. He needed a place to live. We went out and found something. I thought it was so telling that he found a rental on Capitol Hill the first day. He was ready to work. He wanted to live on the Senate side of the Capitol, and not the House side, because he wanted to be near his dad. He thought, *That would be good. Maybe I could see him more.* The following day we went to buy furniture and I thought, *I cannot believe young Patrick did this, moved to another state and did it—and tried to do it on his own. And just like Ted Kennedy did in 1962, didn't want the family's help.* The family name was enough and on that basis, he got himself elected to Congress. Sure, it helped.

Heininger: And he's had a *very* tough life.

Robinson: He has. Patrick has had the toughest life of the three children. Kara [Kennedy Allen] is recently divorced. Teddy has been very successful in his business. He got a law degree as well as a master's in environmental studies at Yale. He married a lovely woman; they have two children. His wife taught psychiatry at Yale University. That probably was a great help to him. Patrick is still struggling.

Heininger: There's clearly a genetic component there. He's been very open about it. It's been impressive watching him talk about it—

Robinson: Yes.

Heininger: And take it out of the closet. He's also fought legislatively, too, which is very impressive.

Robinson: Yes. He had terrible asthma, very severe. When you have a child who can't breathe at night. . . . The Senator used to stay with and call him every day to be sure he was okay. He's a grown man, but as a child and adult he had very serious difficulties.

When they married, Vicki Kennedy relied also on Ted to help her raise her two children as well. He's a busy man; I don't know how he does it.

I know people say he has a great staff, and still knows what everybody's doing; he's hands on. You can't screw up with Ted Kennedy. You have to know your job, and sometime he'll know it better than you do.

Heininger: He's also been very close to his nieces and nephews. Has he had a special relationship with Caroline in particular?

Robinson: Yes. She is very involved with the Kennedy Library. I was invited to the opening of the Kennedy Library. That was such a beautiful, remarkable day in Boston. The Kennedy family, of course, Jackie, John Jr., and Caroline, was very involved with it from the beginning. Now Caroline is the standard-bearer. Yes, they're very close, very close. Recently, there was a tribute to Ted Kennedy at the Kennedy Center in Washington, and Caroline Kennedy was just lovely. She came out on the stage—the Senator is in failing health now, and was in the box with President Obama and his wife [Michelle Robinson Obama]. It was a beautiful moment. Caroline came out and paid her tribute, and presented the [John F. Kennedy] Profile in Courage Award to her uncle Ted Kennedy. I think President Obama has now given him the [Presidential] Medal of Freedom.

Heininger: Was he as close to John as he was to Caroline?

Robinson: Yes, very. John, being a man, felt he didn't *need* Teddy. Teddy was always there for him. Yes. Of course there were times, don't forget, when Jackie was married to [Aristotle] Onassis and they were living in Greece. He didn't have the ability to help during those years, on a daily basis, but yes, he was very helpful.

You know, the Kennedy Compound is a very natural way for families to grow and summer together. They could afford to have homes together in Hyannis Port, Massachusetts. That's what's kept them all so close. It's just a wonderful time in the summer. They have their privacy as well—but they're all close to each other in this particular part of Hyannis Port. It's a very lovely part of Cape Cod. They've all grown up and there are children and grandchildren and great-grandchildren. It's just beautiful.

Heininger: Well, as Hillary Clinton said, "It takes a village to raise a child."

Robinson: It does, and that's why he always was able to stay close to the family. That's why they all feel very close to each other, because even now, while he's suffering from this illness, they all can come to see him. He doesn't feel alone. It's a real home for them, it really is, and it's very important to all of them to be there. They have their church there; they sail together. It's a very healthy environment, to be in Hyannis Port.

Heininger: Was he as close to Bobby's kids?

Robinson: Very, and to Joe [Joseph Patrick Kennedy II]. When Joe was in Congress, he helped him, I'm sure. He lived very close physically to Ethel's house in McLean, Virginia.

Heininger: Very close.

Robinson: He would go over there almost every day. I think that affected Joan too. *Gee, what about us?* Ethel had ten children then.

Heininger: Eleven. She was pregnant with her eleventh.

Robinson: Rory [Kennedy].

Heininger: Rory, yes.

Robinson: Yes, and they've all grown up to contribute to society. That's one thing I respected about the Kennedy family, whether they were in public office or not: they spent their time helping others.

Heininger: Was he also close to the Shriver kids?

Robinson: Oh, yes, but Eunice was such a strong mother and Sarge was such a great father, so close, yes, but they weren't as needy. They had great parents who were very involved with them, and she lived a little further away. Eunice and Sarge Shriver, for many years, many years—

Heininger: They were off the Potomac, weren't they?

Robinson: They were in Timberlawn. They rented an estate, 100 acres or something, in Timberlawn; that's why they enjoyed it so much. They also rented the Rockefeller estate in D.C. They eventually built their home together, in Potomac. That home was just recently sold.

Eunice was his stalwart; she was amazing. During all the things that happened to him—the personal situations; the divorce; the trial in Palm Beach, Florida, regarding his nephew—Eunice stood by him. He's also very close with Jean. Of course his sister Pat [Patricia Kennedy Lawford] had passed on, and he recently lost Eunice. That was a heartbreak, because Eunice was one of the greatest women of the past 100 years. Compassionate, smart, caring, devoted to her family, her religion, and of course Special Olympics. She was really a success. She was such a nice person. She gave us a dinner once, when I had some friends visiting, about eight years ago. We went to her house in Hyannis with the Senator. She had a flair for entertaining.

Heininger: She was quite an entertainer, yes.

Robinson: She was lovely. She wore a beautiful [Giorgio] Armani suit. She was the wife of the Ambassador to France, and I thought, *Eunice has a lot of class. She's not a snob; she's just a lovely person, caring and loves to know what's going on all the time.* She was very good to her brother.

Heininger: A bit of a matchmaker, too.

Robinson: Yes.

Heininger: I've heard she liked bringing people together and telling them who they should be marrying.

Robinson: Yes, and I won't go there because—*[laughing]* Yes, that's true. That is true. She had a good eye.

Heininger: It takes a good eye to figure out who is going to work together.

Robinson: She was lovely, but they were very close and this is a very tough time for him now.

Heininger: This has been terrific, Terri. Thank you very much.

Robinson: It brings back many emotions. Thank you.

Heininger: I'm sure it does.