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Administrative Information

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Biographical Note

Bok was an assistant professor from 1958-1961, professor of law from 1961-1968, dean of the Law School from 1968-1971, and president from 1971-1991, of Harvard University. In this interview, he discusses the Kennedy School of Government, the Harvard Institute of Politics, and problems with the original plan to build the John F. Kennedy presidential library in Cambridge, MA, among other issues.

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Derek C. Bok

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Oral History Interview

with

Derek C. Bok

November 19, 2002
Cambridge, Massachusetts

by Vicki Daitch

For the John F. Kennedy Library

DAITCH: It's November 19, 2002, and we're in the Littauer Building at Harvard. And I'll be speaking with Professor Derek Bok today, and my name is Vicki Daitch. So I guess the first question is, actually how did you become involved with the Kennedy family in general?

BOK: Well, I'm not sure I'd ever met any of the Kennedys until I became president of

the university starting in September of 1971. At that time, there was an understanding that the Kennedy Library would be located here on the site that was then occupied by what we called the car barns. It was where various abandoned subway cars were located behind a six-foot stucco wall. And I guess I hadn't been in office terribly long when I had a long talk with someone who later became dean of the law school, called James Vorenberg, who had something to do with a study that had been made of the environmental impact of having the Kennedy Library near Harvard Square.

But the upshot of it, as I recall, was that having read that study, I came to the conclusion that we really needed to look at this again, that people had not given adequate consideration to the problems that would result if the anticipated—I don't know what it was—one, two million additional people who would be drawn to Cambridge because of the library, were added to the already quite impacted space that we had in and around

Harvard Square.

DAITCH: Mmmm hmmm. Traffic, parking. Now this was the Environmental Impact Study?

BOK: I wasn't convinced this would be good for Harvard or for the Kennedy Library.

And I must have talked that over with my new—we were all new—vice president for community affairs, who was a man called Charles U. Daly. Chuck had been an aide in the White House involved with congressional relations for President Kennedy [John F. Kennedy], and eventually, ironically enough, became head of the Kennedy Library.

There was no hint in this of any animus against being associated in this way with the Kennedy Family. Jim Vorenberg was a very loyal Kennedy supporter. I had voted for Kennedy, and Chuck Daly had worked for him and adored him. But we just thought this was not such a good idea. So it fell to me to have lunch, a sandwich, with Ted Kennedy [Edward Moore Kennedy] in his office at some point when I broached these concerns.

The Senator was not happy, I think. I mean he regarded the location of the library in Cambridge as something that was going to occur, and it was what his brother wanted. And for all sorts of understandable reasons, he was upset. We didn't say we weren't going to do it, but we just said, "No one has really studied what the impact of this many additional people will be. And I feel we should do that before we finally break ground and move ahead with this plan." So, you know, the meeting was certainly a little bit chilly. I mean there was no question about that. But he didn't indicate any specific reaction.

But then some period, some weeks, later, I don't know how long it was in retrospect, but at some point I opened the paper and found the library was moving to UMass. I don't recall any warning or discussion.

DAITCH: No further discussion?

BOK: That was just that. And I could only interpret it as the fact that he felt, you know, if Harvard is going to, in his view, disregard previous understandings and put this into question, we're going to take the initiative. We're not going to have them tell us that they can't have the library there. We're going to initiate the decision to put it elsewhere.

So then, largely at the instance of Chuck Daly, we began to see whether we could work out some kind of compromise solution, whereas the exhibit, the museum, would go down to Columbia Point, but the archives would remain here in Cambridge. The thought being that Cambridge would be a better location for the archives; they would be more heavily used, they would be close to a large university, they'd inspire a lot more work. At that point, of course, Columbia Point had not been developed in its current mode, and it seemed like an awfully remote place where fewer scholars would come.

So that was discussed for a while, but, I think, turned down by the Kennedy

Family. So the decision was made to put it there. I think, in retrospect, I can't speak for Senator Kennedy, but I wouldn't be surprised if he agreed with me that it has really worked out for the best. It's a nice location for the library down there. It's beautiful, you know, right on the sea. It's done a lot to anchor the revitalization of Columbia Point. It's a beautiful building. There wasn't much space here anyway, particularly the way the Kennedy School has grown.

And in a certain sense, having the Kennedy School of Government is another monument to the family that is a valuable thing, and there simply was not room for the school and the library. The Kennedy School could never have developed as it has in its present location. So we would have ended up going elsewhere. I don't know where that would have been. But we certainly would have gone elsewhere or else been forced to adopt a model which would be far more limited in scope than the Kennedy School that has emerged.

So my guess is that both of us would say at this point that however we might quarrel about the process by which we got here, that the final result probably was really for the best all around.

DAITCH: Right. That makes sense. When you say that Senator Kennedy told you that it was what his brother had wanted....

BOK: I'm sure he told me that. But that was also just sort of common knowledge. Because his brother had come here while he was president, had looked at various sites, and thought this was a wonderful place to have his library.

DAITCH: I hadn't understood that he had originally looked at, I guess, across the river.

BOK: The business school?

DAITCH: Across the river.

BOK: Oh, on the other side of the river, yes.

DAITCH: Somewhere. But that would have been before you ever became involved.

BOK: Oh, yes, that was while Mr. Pusey [Nathan Marsh Pusey], my predecessor, was in office. All of that had, of course, occurred eight years earlier by the time I came in. But for whatever reason, it was decided that this was the best site practically, for practical purposes. But I had just found that people had not done their homework in trying to figure out what it would really mean to put an attraction of that scope right here.

There were studies done subsequently that really cast significant doubt on whether this would be a suitable location, either for the library.... It wouldn't have been a plus for them to have tremendous traffic jams and difficulty getting in here. There was already

some substantial neighborhood opposition. And I'm used to neighborhood opposition. But there were some very thoughtful people who cared a lot about the Kennedys, but really thought this would be a very, very difficult project for the neighborhood to absorb. And I felt we couldn't just say....

DAITCH: Sorry....

BOK: Yes. We're not going to consider that. I mean we had to admit that the problem hadn't been considered really. And to just stonewall it seemed to me an impossible position to take. So I found myself in a difficult spot where I had to be the bearer of bad tidings. The Senator didn't like it a bit. But just having talked to him a few days ago about another matter, and in many other contacts since, I think all that's behind us. I think he feels things worked out pretty well.

I think he's quite happy with the Kennedy School, which was barely in existence when all this occurred, and has now developed an identity that bears the Kennedy name. It is also an embodiment of what his brother stood for because it was sort of a marriage of the academic world and intellectual world with government. And that's one of the things President Kennedy wanted that the school here really tries to further.

DAITCH: I want to talk about that in a minute. But before we go into that, can you tell me whether.... My understanding is that the Environmental Impact Statement really wasn't prepared until after the passage of the Environmental Protection Act which was, I've forgotten exactly, but maybe '69 or something. Meanwhile they'd already been planning to work with this site for four or five years or more.

BOK: Sure. Mmmm hmmm. Mmmm hmmm.

DAITCH: And I wondered whether the opposition preceded the impact statement, or whether people just really hadn't thought about it until at least the preparation of this kind of an impact statement.

BOK: That I don't remember. I just don't have those facts. But I have the feeling that some kind of study had been made. It wasn't just completely unsubstantiated neighborhood fears. There was some kind of study that made it look like this was going to be a problem. And the question is, what do you do with that study? Just say, sorry, it's a done deal? Or do you take it seriously? And I felt we needed to take it seriously.

DAITCH: Right. Yes. I had thought, too. I had discussed this with a couple of other people. But I wondered if the museum, it's purely speculation, but if the museum itself would have been dwarfed by the academic type. As far as the general public visiting the museum, if it would have been sort of dwarfed by the academic

uses of the library or the archives.

BOK: Could be. You mean just because Harvard was involved somehow, we would have put more emphasis on that. I'm not sure. I mean I think, you know, an awful lot of people visit the Fogg Museum, and I think more people visit the glass flowers than any other part of Harvard University. So it's possible to have a museum coexist with the university without being swallowed up by it.

 But what is certainly true is that the whole site would have been very constrained. It was hard to see this at the time because the Kennedy School hadn't really emerged and, I think it's difficult when you're just dealing with pencil and paper and not reality.... But if you look at the site now and try to imagine a big presidential library with enough ground around it to do it justice so it isn't just some sort of urban building that's jammed in there, and try to figure out how you'd also have a Kennedy School, and the commercial space they needed to make the whole thing work, I think it's pretty obvious now that simply was a non-starter.

 The only way you could do it is by making everything too small. The library people would have been unhappy. The Kennedy School would have had to move because we couldn't become an adequate school and do justice to this important, huge subject matter that we were supposed to deal with. Let alone the commercial space if we tried to stick it all into one place. That seems obvious now.

 It wasn't so obvious when there wasn't really a Kennedy School to speak of, and no library had been built. The Senator had a lot of things on his mind, and this was kind of a settled thing, in accordance with his brother's wishes. He must have felt that this stupid pipsqueak of a Harvard president came down and somehow threw a can of worms into what he thought was a settled course of action. And so, of course, it was unpleasant. But sometimes unpleasant things lead to constructive results, and I think in this case that is true.

DAITCH: And this site was only what, about five acres or something?

BOK: I don't know how many acres it is, but it's certainly not.... It's pretty big considering. I mean there are not many pieces of open space in Cambridge that could compare with it. But it certainly was pretty tight for all of those uses.

DAITCH: So tell me about.... I'm fascinated with the development of the Kennedy School. I think it's a wonderful concept. Who were the people who were involved in it, and how did it emerge?

BOK: Well, it came about because about six or eight professors at Harvard, who had had extensive experience with government, most of them during the Kennedy years, during the early sixties, came to the conclusion that there was really a better way of preparing people for government service than the traditional

public affairs or public administration schools, which were not very highly regarded. In part, that was because certain methods of government administration had come into vogue, particularly in the Pentagon under Bob McNamara [Robert S. McNamara] and his kind of cost-benefit analysis, and those methods began to spread throughout the government.

One could certainly see the possibility of providing a kind of a basic education in analytic methods and so forth that would be applicable to a wide range of jobs in government. So that you could begin to see how a really challenging academic curriculum could be provided for these very varied public service careers.

I'd been involved with this effort somewhat as a faculty member and Law School dean. Then when I became president, I just took a look around and tried to think while my mind was still fresh, and I wasn't overwhelmed in those months before I took office, I tried to think of what are some really important things that I can do so I don't get just swallowed up by the day-to-day details of the job.

Two things seemed important: one was that the biggest gap to me in higher education was the fact that we did not have a first-rate professional school for the public sector that in any way compared with the schools we have for the great private sector professions of law and business and medicine. So that seemed like a big opportunity. And you had something essential to success in any serious academic endeavor—you had six or eight first-rate professors who really believed that they had a model that would provide a quality of preparation that we had not seen before in this country. There was a convergence of the purpose and the people that you very rarely have in academic life.

DAITCH: So take advantage of that.

BOK: So it didn't take rocket science to say, boy, this should be a major priority in my administration, and so I tried to keep it so throughout the twenty years.

We

had a great deal of difficulty for a while convincing any donors to give to the enterprise. It wasn't hard to convince people intellectually that government was very important and very difficult and very challenging and people needed to be prepared to do it well. But emotionally—and there's always an emotional element to giving substantial sums of money—most of the people we talked to kind of felt, you know, of all the uses that I could make of my money, making government bureaucrats smarter so they can harass me more effectively is not high on my list.

So we didn't get very far for a while. But then when we appointed a very young Graham Allison [Graham T. Allison, Jr.] as dean, and he was a very persistent and effective spokesman for the cause so that we gradually got more and more people excited about the prospect. The Kennedy School became an interesting place where interesting people came and talked about interesting subjects. And that attracted people, including donors. Then they began to get engaged with the school.

We had to help the school a bit with the building of this initial building. But then it became very successful in raising the funds necessary to create the other buildings that you see here today. So it's been a kind of work in progress. We knew a little bit about a

curriculum but not a lot. But over time we've learned and added and improved. Now I think we're doing reasonably well in preparing people for public service.

DAITCH: Who were some of these original people, the core six or eight professors that you originally spoke of?

BOK: Well, I would say the key ones would include a gentleman whose chair I'm sitting in who bequeathed it to me. Not bequeathed because he's not dead yet, but he had to leave Harvard because he married an English baroness, Richard Neustadt [Richard E. Neustadt], who wrote the great book that Kennedy made famous about presidential power. Then there was a man called Tom Schelling [Thomas Crombie Schelling], who still teaches at the University of Maryland, who was an economist who's written very influential things on arms control and other issues.

There was a wonderful statistician called Fred Mosteller [C. Frederick Mosteller]. There was a decision-theorist called Howard Raiffa. All these people had full professorships in other parts of the university. But they came together because of this common interest in preparing people for public service. Then there was John Dunlop [John Thomas Dunlop], who'd been secretary of labor under Ford [Gerald R. Ford]. He had very extensive Washington experience. He was very interested in the project. These professors formed sort of the nucleus of the group.

I remember going to the first faculty meeting back in 1971 at the beginning of the year. They were passing out the committee assignments, and I couldn't help noticing, you know, you look at the appointments committee, the curriculum committee, the admissions committee, that everybody was on all the committees—the only thing that changed was the chair—because they didn't have enough senior people to go around.

At that time they were just located up in the other Littauer building where the economics and the political science departments are. Most of them were in the economics and political science departments, and they had no special place to teach. So one of the things that I felt very strongly, and that's why I really looked to this site as a wonderful place for them to be, was that until they had a separate building and separate identity, they were just going to be under the shadow of their departments, and that the school would turn into a kind of institute of applied social science instead of a real professional school for government.

Later on, most of these professors got cold feet at the thought of actually leaving their departments and coming down to a separate place. So I remember I had a series of small dinners and fed them fine wine and good food, and talked them into agreeing that we really had to do this. I mean, we couldn't stand on our own two feet until we had a separate identity.

So they agreed finally, and they moved down here. Then they were very happy to be here, the school took off and everybody now looks at it as a great thing. But at the time it was pretty precarious. I mean we couldn't raise money. We didn't have any separate identity. We didn't have any separate building. So obviously trying to recognize that it might not be possible to fit it onto this site with the library was a kind of weird idea

because what was there to fit? I mean it required a real active imagination to think that....

DAITCH: Right. You need ten offices maybe and a classroom.

BOK: Yes. I mean Senator Kennedy certainly didn't see a whole lot there to appreciate. Although, in later years he's come to think well of the enterprise.

DAITCH: Was that one of your arguments to him, that, look, if you want the Kennedy School to grow and actually become something useful and impressive, then we need more....

BOK: I don't think we had time to get into an extended discussion. I think I started by saying I was concerned about the environmental impact, the impact of that many new people coming to Harvard Square given the amount of congestion that we had already. I didn't think he wanted to get into a long discussion. It was apparent, I mean, as soon as he had the feeling I was questioning that decision, boom! The lights went off.

DAITCH: That must have been quite a blow, though. Because they'd been working on this for years. I don't remember what all the little things were that were the hold-up. I'm sure just all those trains and things, to figure out the logistics of getting rid of them, and where do you put them, and all of these things probably. But they were so vested in it.

BOK: Well, there wasn't much institutional memory here. Harvard at that time was an enormously under-administered place. So I didn't know any of the past history; nobody had told me any of that. I knew there was a sort of general understanding it would be here; therefore I had to talk to the Senator, and express my misgivings to him, and try to reason this out together. But even to this day, I'm not aware of how much preliminary work the family and the university had done on it.

DAITCH: I talked to Ted Musho [Theodore Musho] the other day who was one of the architects involved in it. The site was chosen in '64 or '65.

BOK: Yes.

DAITCH: They had been doing a considerable amount of work in drawing up various schemes for all those years. You know, five years in historical terms is not that much. But that kind of emotional investment and everything, it must have blind-sided the family.

BOK: Oh, yes. I'm sure probably if I replayed it today, I would recognize that

there was some better way of doing it. I was barely forty years old, had just turned forty-one. And I certainly had no experience administering a place as large as Harvard before. So I just went and told him the way it was, you know, and I'm sure there were much more diplomatic ways. But I knew so little about the history that I didn't know much had been invested in this. So I'm sure I was monumentally unprepared for this difficult journey that I was embarked on. But anyway, that's what happened, and here we are.

DAITCH: Yes. Had you known how much was invested in it, it still doesn't change the potential environmental impact that you're looking at.

BOK: Yes. I still think it would've been an impossible notion. We would have paid a heavy price in the end. I'm sure it might have been handled more diplomatically. Of course, I didn't go down blustering or anything. I was very diffident about the whole thing. But I'm sure some better way could have been devised even though I'm not at all hesitant about the final decision.

DAITCH: Anybody who tries to drive here has to agree.

BOK: I shudder at the thought. And there were various problems that hadn't been thought through involving access roads and things like that. No matter how much work had gone into it, I don't think people had really come to terms with that problem. I think people were so overwhelmed by the feeling, you know, that a great president had died, and this was his monument. I mean people had not really analyzed it like they would a normal project because there was this overpowering sense of what the Kennedys, and particularly President Kennedy, had wanted. So people didn't question it.

Even the city fathers in Cambridge were upset. Mayor Vellucci [Alfred Vellucci] and people like that didn't live around Harvard Square. They felt that a great monument to the importance of their city had been plucked away because of the ineptness of Harvard University. But, again, time heals a lot. I never heard any more about it a couple of years later. Even at the time, you know, the new progressive wing in the city saw it immediately, but the older more ethnic wing of Cambridge politics just saw this as a great affront to the city that Harvard, in its arrogance, felt there just wasn't room for the Kennedy Library.... I can understand where they were coming from. So it was not a great way to start my presidential career.

DAITCH: No. It must have been horrible. I'm struck by the.... You know, when you talk about the more progressive wing of the community, I'm struck by the thought that Kennedy would have probably been the first person to say, "Yeah, you're right," because he was very pragmatic.

BOK: Yes, he was. No, I think he would've appreciated it. But, alas, he was not

there to help us when we needed him.

DAITCH: Right. Getting back to the Kennedy School, I suppose I expected when I asked you who were some of the core professors, I can't help but.... I expected to hear, you know, Sam Beer [Samuel Hutchison Beer], Kenneth Galbraith [John Kenneth Galbraith], Arthur Schlesinger [Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr.], people like that, kind of the old guard. Where were they?

BOK: They weren't really involved in this. I think they may have said some things about it. Ken's a very close friend. I have a vague recollection that he was always favorably disposed toward the idea. But they were certainly not involved in the planning or the teaching. I don't think any of them ever participated. I don't think they wanted to. I mean it was not that they were excluded in any sense, but this was not their thing.

I think Ken Galbraith has always been very helpful. I mean he's come to a lot of events. I think from the very beginning he was always there to give a good word and provide some encouragement. So it wasn't that he was on the outside or had misgivings about it. But it wasn't his thing. He approved of it, but he wasn't dying to teach in a professional school for government. He had his niche pretty well secured in the Economics Department.

And of course he didn't remain an active professor very long. He had this very strong feeling that older people shouldn't block opportunities for younger people. At that time we were in pretty hard times economically in higher education, Harvard along with everyone else. The stock market was in a slump from which it didn't recover until the early eighties. And so forth. So he felt he should retire at the first possible moment.

Although he's been here, of course, as an active member of the Harvard community ever since, I think one reason why he didn't get more involved in the Kennedy School is he was nearing the end of his active teaching career anyway. So it wasn't a very logical thing for him to do. Schlesinger, of course, didn't come back after the Kennedy Administration. Sam Beer's an Arts and Sciences professor, I mean pure and simple. Once again I never heard him say a critical word about the Kennedy School. It just wasn't his thing. He belonged in the faculty of Arts and Sciences, and that's where he stayed.

It was mostly the people that had actually been down in Washington, working in the Treasury Department, in the Defense Department, in the White House, that felt, you know, that we really need to do a better job of preparing people for the kinds of responsibilities they'd had down there. They saw this as a long-term project. It wasn't something you'd be likely to undertake when you were nearing retirement. They were going to dedicate a major portion of their lives for a decade or two to building this enterprise. Because nothing like this happens quickly.

DAITCH: Right. So somehow the notion that institution-building is a younger man's game.

BOK: Yes. That's right. It's not something you do at the end of your career.

DAITCH: Right. Of course those guys aren't at the end of their careers. They're still going.

BOK: I know, I know. But at the end of their teaching career, at least. They're on to other things now.

DAITCH: Right. Oh, my gosh. You were talking about the financial situation in the seventies which, of course, was not a pretty picture. I wonder if that had, you know.... Obviously the environmental impact was the biggest constraining factor in your mind when you came into the presidency. But I guess money may have played a role in how they decided to go.

BOK: No. I think money entered into another problem, which was a bit of a bone of contention between the Kennedy Family and Harvard, but not this, and that was the Institute of Politics. The Kennedy family had taken responsibility for raising the sum of ten million dollars to create an Institute of Politics, which was designed to provide a bridge between academia and government, with a particular emphasis on undergraduates, [toward] which Kennedy, because he was a graduate of the College, felt a special affinity. So there was this feeling that we should create this institute.

Now, in the early years, although the institute was in existence, we used, with the knowledge of the Kennedy family, a portion of the income from the ten million dollars to finance the Kennedy School. I think Jackie [Jacqueline Bouvier Kennedy] in particular felt that we weren't really doing justice to the Institute of Politics, which she saw as kind of a special thing for her husband. She was, I think, on the visiting committee for the Institute. And, of course, you know, it's always very compelling when you listen to undergraduates talk about what they're doing and what they could do if there were more money.

So I think there was a feeling of unfulfilled promise, which I think was quite legitimate. I think we had not worked at it as hard. And there was a real constraint of money. I mean we felt it was important to try to keep the Kennedy School going and to keep the institute going, but there really wasn't enough money to do both. So both enterprises were being under-financed.

And so I remember being asked to come to lunch with the Senator and Jackie at her apartment the first fall, again in 1971, in New York. And we had a very lovely lunch in that beautiful apartment overlooking Central Park. I don't think I'd ever been in such wonderful circumstances in New York City. We had a very nice lunch, and then they talked to me about their frustrations over the Institute of Politics.

I think we really did something about that. One problem was it hadn't had a real full-time director. We appointed someone as a full-time director, and that certainly helped to build it up. Then, of course, as the finances improved, as we began to raise

[-11-]

money for the Kennedy School, we didn't need to borrow income from the ten million dollar

endowment.

So it was over a period of years that two things happened. The Institute of Politics flourished. We had a succession of good full-time directors. And the Kennedy School flourished too without having to rely on the Institute's endowment. It became a real support for the Institute instead of a drain on its funds. So eventually both Jackie and Ted were very pleased about what had happened. But the early financial difficulties, on top of the Kennedy Library problem, did not provide a great beginning to our relationship, there's no doubt about that.

Still, perhaps it was helpful in the sense that along with my independent, intellectual reasons for wanting to do whatever I could to help the Kennedy School to develop, I also felt that I really needed to prove to the Kennedy Family that Harvard had not written them off. By now, we really have created something which is an Institute of Politics that Kennedy would have really liked, and a Kennedy School which is much more than he ever dreamed would happen, an enduring monument. It's the only professional school at Harvard that bears the name of an individual, which came about because of the extraordinary circumstances of his death. So it's a unique way of honoring an individual at Harvard.

But I wanted to make sure that they saw that Harvard cared greatly about government and cared about the intellectual contributions that could be made to government. I thought let's create a school that really embodies all of that. We'll make the family proud.

Eventually, toward the end of my administration, we changed leadership and brought in a new dean. Ted called me and said that he'd like to meet the new dean. So we had a very nice dinner at my home. First it was John [John F. Kennedy, Jr.] who was to come, and then Caroline [Caroline Bouvier Kennedy] wanted to come, and then Joe [Joseph P. Kennedy III] wanted to come. So they all came. And we had a really good dinner, a very lively conversation, active conversation about whether we were doing this. Were we emphasizing that? How about ethics in government? There was no disagreement. There was just a good discussion about what is needed the most in preparing people for these difficult public jobs.

I remember being particularly struck because each of the four Kennedys wrote me a separate handwritten note afterwards, thanking me for the dinner. So it was a really nice occasion. To me it sort of typified the fact that I think they felt proud of the Kennedy School, identified with it. So I thought, well, maybe this sort of symbolizes that we've all come out in the right place in the end.

DAITCH: Absolutely. Now that would have been what? Late seventies?

BOK: No, that dinner would have been in the eighties. Would have been somewhere around '87, '88, some time in there.

DAITCH: So we're talking, I mean, the development of the school and all that.

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BOK: Well, it was slow and steady. But by that time, you know, we'd gotten most of the buildings up, and the park was in place, and the Charles Hotel, and, you know, the whole thing had come together. It was flourishing in a way that was

not true for the first ten years.

DAITCH: Right. And it takes time to do these things.

BOK: Sure.

DAITCH: I'm getting the impression that while the family was very interested, that beyond the initial conception and decisions about where the site would be and things like that, that they've been sort of hands off.

BOK: Not so much with the Institute of Politics. I mean the family's always been involved in the visiting committee to the Institute of Politics, and they've always come up, and they've always had a lot to do with who's on that visiting committee. I don't mean they pick them. But I mean they're interested in who belongs, and they have suggestions and so forth. So that's always been a kind of special place for them. Certainly Senator Kennedy has spoken here many times. He's been involved here in various ways. But he hasn't, you're quite right, he hasn't tried to, in any sense, throw his weight around or be an active participant in the school's visiting committee.

But the Institute of Politics had some special meaning for the Senator, partly because he did raise the money which he didn't for the rest of the school. But I think, again, he raised the money because he felt this was the sort of concept that was at the core of what his brother stood for—the whole marriage of the city of intellect and the city of action and policy and government.

And, of course, I think the Senator also liked it because he's also a graduate of the college. He'd come and talk to these young kids, and they're so able and talented and energetic, and they're talking about their internships in Congress and things that they're doing to get involved. He must have felt that this is really interesting: the best and the brightest young people wanting to take an active interest in government. And that's really what President Kennedy was all about. So after that initial lunch in New York, I never had any complaints from any of the Kennedys about the Institute of Politics from that day forward.

DAITCH: Now, what's the relationship between.... The Institute is undergraduate, the Kennedy School is a professional graduate school.

BOK: That's right.

DAITCH: Is there any formal link between them? I mean obviously you're bound to

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have traffic.

BOK: Well, there's a link in the sense they're located here, and they bring in interesting people. There's the Institute of Politics fellows who teach non-credit seminars, which is sort of, you know, it's sort of a part of our teaching

function in the Kennedy School. And, of course, there are all these events in the forum in which the Institute of Politics students are very much a part. Since we're all basically involved in the same interests and in the same building, there's just a lot of overlap and intermixing. But there are also a series of the Institute's own programs, and there's a kind of internal self-government by the undergraduates themselves. So there's a distinct identity within the larger School of Government.

DAITCH: It strikes me as a little bit of a... I don't know if it's unique but it's certainly an optimal situation for undergrads in that kind of course of study to be sort of right next door to graduate students and right next door to professors and visiting scholars and all of that, just deeply involved in it; you know, walking the same halls, attending some of the same lectures.

BOK: Yes, I think that's true. Also I know it was true in the class that I taught here in the Kennedy School for a number of years, and I'm sure it's true for other professors here, that undergraduates can, if the courses are not over-subscribed or too advanced, they can enroll in courses here. I always had two or three or four undergraduates in my course, and I would say almost all of them were active in the Institute of Politics.

So there is that kind of benefit, that you have a whole array of courses and things that you can tap into as part of your undergraduate experience. So, yes. And certainly the kinds of speakers you can attract, the kinds of Institute of Politics fellows who come I'm sure is partly influenced by the fact that it is part of a larger graduate school.

You get someone like the current head of the Institute of Politics, Dan Glickman [Daniel R. Glickman], who was a long-time member of Congress and then Secretary of Agriculture; he's not going to come and head up an institute of politics, I would think, if it was sort of a free-standing thing off there without being part of this larger enterprise, which gives him a kind of interesting community in which to live and work.

I remember Alan Simpson [Alan Kooi Simpson], for example, came as an Institute of Politics fellow, and found, to his great surprise, that he just adored the kind of atmosphere here and all that was going on. So he then applied and was selected to be head of the Institute of Politics and served for his term. That was the last thing he ever thought he would do. He came here as a real sort of skeptic from the great Big Sky country, never having been in Cambridge. But found that dealing with these kids and living here and so forth was very stimulating. So we've been very fortunate. I think the Kennedy School does contribute a lot to making that happen.

DAITCH: Absolutely. The level of intellectual pursuit just has to be really remarkably

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high. So much higher than the average undergraduate program, I would think.

BOK: Yes, yes. I think being able to take these non-credit seminars with really

interesting people who've held public office, who've done really interesting things, I think is.... Certainly I didn't have anything like that when I went to college.

DAITCH: No, me neither.

BOK: It's totally, totally outside my experience.

DAITCH: Right, right.

BOK: So there's a lot of good synergy between the two.

DAITCH: Sure. Yes. The word "fun" comes to mind.

BOK: Yes, yes. Exactly.

DAITCH: Well, thank you very much. I won't....

BOK: Not at all. I hope I've given you....

[END OF INTERVIEW]

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