

**Stanley E. Weber Oral History Interview –JFK #1, 2/12/1966**  
Administrative Information

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Weber, Stanley E.; Journalist, Oregon Journal. Weber discusses John F. Kennedy's [JFK] presidential campaign and primary in Oregon (1960). He discusses his role in JFK's campaign as the secretary of the Kennedy for President Committee in Oregon, and he touches upon campaign issues such as labor and Catholicism, among other issues.

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Oral History Interview

with

STANLEY E. WEBER

February 12, 1966  
Portland, Oregon

By Charles T. Morrissey

For the John F. Kennedy Library

MORRISSEY: Let's start by my asking you how you viewed the approaching Democratic Convention of 1960, from the vantage point of somewhere in the late 1950's. Was there any one candidate that struck you as potentially the strongest, or most attractive? Also, how did you happen to become involved in John F. Kennedy's campaign?

WEBER: I had no experience in politics, or no active part in politics until late in 1959. I was a newspaper reporter here in Portland for approximately thirteen and a half years prior to 1959. But I first saw Kennedy in person in the summer of 1959, at Seaside, Oregon, where he came to deliver a speech to the Oregon, AL-CIO Convention. I was covering that convention for my newspaper, the Oregon Journal here in Portland. I was very favorably impressed with the appearance that Senator Kennedy, who was then the United States Senator from Massachusetts, made at that convention. It just so happened that about two months later when Congresswoman Edith Green was organizing

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the Kennedy for President Committee in Oregon, she got in touch with me and asked me if I would serve as the executive secretary of that committee.

MORRISSEY: Had you known her previously?

WEBER: Only very slightly. I'd only met her once or twice, but my name had been recommended to her. I wrote a labor column in the *Journal*, and I had written some articles which I believe favorably impressed her, and for that reason, she asked me to come to work on the committee on a full-time paid basis. That's how I got into politics, but of course I was, as I said, very impressed with Senator Kennedy's appearance at Seaside, and I followed his career, I won't say as much as politicians do, but certainly probably more than the average citizen. I felt that he was definitely of presidential calibre and would make a fine president. I was very happy to accept the offer and to work for the Kennedy campaign. Oregon, of course, being one of the key primary states, it was important to have a full-time paid man here, and to get a campaign organization going that early. This was even prior to the time that Senator Kennedy had announced publicly that he was going to run for the presidential nomination.

His speech in Seaside was particularly impressive because at that time the labor issue was very prominent. It was probably the number one political issue in the nation because of the revelations brought up by the McClellan Committee of which Senator Kennedy was a member. There was legislation in Congress which many labor leaders opposed, and on which President Kennedy took a position that was unpopular with some labor officials. I think many of the reasonable and enlightened officials recognized that this was a sound position he took. But when he came to Seaside at the AFL-CIO Convention, I don't believe the atmosphere there was hostile to him, but it certainly was not overly enthusiastic as you might expect ordinarily. It wasn't a warm friendly audience. They were rather dubious about this eastern Senator who had voted in a manner that many of them

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felt was wrong on the labor issue. He launched right into the subject without any hesitation, and gave a sound, reasonable explanation of his position and why it was necessary to vote the way he had. And I think he won a great deal of respect from the delegates.

MORRISSEY: Were the delegates to that convention at that time primarily in support of Hubert Humphrey for the nomination?

WEBER: It would be impossible to say whether the majority of them were or were not in support of anybody. I don't think that most of them had probably made up their minds. But it was true as I recall, that the supporters of Hubert Humphrey were very active at that convention and were known and were organizing.

MORRISSEY: Oregon supporters?

WEBER: Yes, that's what I mean -- local Oregon supporters in the labor movement, as I recall it, were either organizing formally or at least informally in

support of Hubert Humphrey, and of course, Senator Wayne Morse of Oregon, who later became a candidate for the nomination, had his backers too I believe at that time. But there were some Humphrey supporters at that convention -- local people. I recall that even though I wasn't, as I say, in politics, I had telephoned my wife who was in Portland a day or two before and suggested that she come down to the convention to hear Senator Kennedy because I felt it would be an important appearance. And she did come down and brought our children, and they had an opportunity to meet him at the convention following his speech. It was a nice warm sunny day and everybody went outside, out of the meeting hall afterwards, and he circulated in the crowd. And I know my wife speaks of that occasion often now, this being the first time she had ever met Senator Kennedy. And she, too, was very impressed with his speech. As I say, I think a lot of the delegates were too even though, when the speech started, they may have been uncertain about their feelings toward him. But he made such a fine presentation, that I

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think he won lots of support there.

MORRISSEY: Was it a difficult decision for you to resign your newspaper job?

WEBER: No, I was eager to make a change, and I felt that this would be a good opportunity personally. And also I thought it would be an interesting and worthwhile experience. So I did it. My name had been recommended to Mrs. Green by one of my colleagues on the *Journal*, the political editor, Larry Smith, who incidentally became a pretty good, close friend of Senator Kennedy's. Larry Smith, shortly thereafter, became seriously ill and died shortly after President Kennedy's inauguration. Kennedy, when he was still Senator, went to Larry Smith's apartment and visited him when Larry was very ill during the primary campaign. In fact, that was the day of the primary election, and Senator Kennedy was due to leave the airport that morning. But before he left, he went out to Larry Smith's apartment. Hy Raskin [Hyman B. Raskin] and I went with him, and I then drove Senator Kennedy and Hy Raskin to the airport from Larry Smith's apartment.

MORRISSEY: On that ride to the airport did the Senator comment on how he expected the results to be?

WEBER: No, I don't think he did. I remember one of the things on the ride to the airport that concerned him a little bit was the fact that we passed a number of polling places, and there was nobody waiting in line; there was no activity. I mean, all you could see was a sign saying precinct number 127, or whatever it was, and he remarked, "Where were the voters?" He apparently thought there would be a large turnout of voters that early in the morning. But in the state at least, it doesn't work that way. Many of the people vote in the evening or later in the day, and there really isn't too much

activity in the morning. So he thought maybe there was not much interest, and I think that concerned him a little bit, but I did explain

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to him that I thought that wasn't indicative of any lack of interest at all. It was mostly just the pattern of voting procedure.

Anyway, my job in the campaign then was executive secretary of the Oregon Committee for President Kennedy. I had thought that probably it would be to a great extent a publicity job because of my background as a newspaper man, but it turned out that publicity was only a small part of it. Organization and general activities connected with running a campaign were major features of it, and running the campaign headquarters.

MORRISSEY: This question asks for an awful lot, but tell me, how does one start to organize for Kennedy?

WEBER: Well, fortunately, Mrs. Green had already started some of the groundwork and had done some of the major things. She had appointed a committee of key people right there in Portland. For example, Dr. Dean Anderson was vice chairman, and then she appointed some key people to become chairman of the various interest groups. For example, we had a labor chairman, and we had a businessman's chairman, and we had people interested in agriculture.

MORRISSEY: Was it difficult to get a labor chairman?

WEBER: No, it wasn't. We had an outstanding labor chairman in my opinion, a man named Gordon Swope who was an official of the retail clerks union and was a very fine person, very intelligent and capable. And we found, as I say, considerable support for Kennedy in the labor movement. There was also considerable opposition from people who were either committed to other candidates or who for one reason or another didn't want to support Senator Kennedy. But we had a number of people who were active in the labor movement who served on our committee. But then Mrs. Green also appointed a chairman in each congressional district. And then we undertook to find a chairman in every county. And part of my job was to try to find chairmen in each county, in those counties where we didn't already have one.

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MORRISSEY: Was it hard?

WEBER: It wasn't really as difficult as I expected. We ran into some difficulties, but I was very happy with the caliber of people we got in all the counties and in the districts. We had what I thought was an impressive list of people. It seemed that President Kennedy attracted to his campaign people of outstanding ability and



intelligence. One of my most difficult jobs was finding a chairman in Lane County. But when I did find one, a man named Ralph Hillier, a young attorney down there, he was a terrific county chairman. I remember when I went down to the Lane County Democratic convention. This was shortly after I had taken this position, late in 1959, and there was a Lane County Democratic convention. I went down there, and there was very little interest for Senator Kennedy. There was some. And those people who were for him were very enthusiastic. But I remember the religious issue cropped up there in discussions with people. People who, as far as I know, were not themselves prejudiced by felt it was a mistake for the Democratic Party to nominate a Catholic. They thought, as one of them told me, "It's going to be 1928 all over again. We'll get beat on the religious issue." But nevertheless, after discussions with several people, the name of this Mr. Hillier, Ralph Hillier, was recommended to me. I met with him, and he finally agreed to take the chairmanship, and he did an outstanding job. And Lane County was, of course, a very important county. It's the county where the city of Eugene is located, and it's one of the most populous counties in the state. But in almost every county, it seems to me, we found somebody who was enthusiastic and a good chairman. And we did have a good organization.

MORRISSEY: Were many of these people new to politics?

WEBER: I think many of them were, yes. There were some who weren't. I don't know what the proportion was of those who were new, but they weren't

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party leaders, generally speaking. They were people who just had an interest in politics. They usually participated in the campaigns. Most of them I think had some experience. They were very enthusiastic. I think Mrs. Green had laid the groundwork by getting good key people in many of the committee positions, and that was very important in the campaign.

MORRISSEY: Were many of the people that she lined up people who previously had been active in her own campaigns?

WEBER: I think many of them were, yes. I think many of them were active in her campaign, but many, of course, weren't because her campaign for Congress was of course confined just to Multnomah County in the third congressional district. But I think many of them had worked with her before.

MORRISSEY: In your travelling around the state did you find much sentiment for Adlai Stevenson?

WEBER: As I recall it, yes, there was some sentiment at that time, but I wouldn't say it was very extensive. There were many people who wanted Adlai

Stevenson to run, but at that stage of the game, during the primary, he indicated no interest at all in running, and I think many of those people then did support Senator Kennedy. As it turned out, the three most prominent candidates were Senator Kennedy, Senator Wayne Morse (the Oregon Senator) and Hubert Humphrey. But then after the West Virginia primary, Hubert Humphrey dropped out. And it boiled down to a campaign between Senator Morse and Senator Kennedy. Lyndon Johnson was on the ballot, Stuart Symington was on the ballot, but they didn't wage any campaign in this state and had no real organization. Senator Morse did have an active organization. The Humphrey organization, as I say, ceased to function after the West Virginia primary, and some of the people did come over and join our campaign. And I suppose some of them supported Senator Morse. But we

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did get some of them. And it boiled down to really a two-man battle between Morse and Kennedy.

MORRISSEY: Before the votes were counted, did you have any doubts that your candidate might not win?

WEBER: As I say, I was a novice to politics, except as an observer. I'd been an observer as a newspaper reporter. But I had no way of knowing how the election was going to come out, and I remember asking Hy Raskin once because Hy Raskin was an experienced politician. I remember once asking him when they were sitting around, he and some others, totaling figures and so on, and I said, "How do you estimate this? I mean what do you go on?" And he said, "Oh, it's just a feeling you get." One day you'd feel great; you'd have a meeting; and Senator Kennedy would appear; and it would be an enthusiastic crowd. He'd make a wonderful impression, and you'd feel great. But then maybe another day something would happen, and you wouldn't feel so enthusiastic. But I did get the feeling late in the campaign, that things were going well. And every place we went, it seemed that the response to Senator Kennedy was very enthusiastic. It was warm. He was attracting good crowds. They were friendly crowds, and from the reports we had, his opponent was not attracting crowds of that magnitude. And for that reason I felt that we were in a strong position and would win. But originally, that is early in the campaign, it looked to me like an uphill fight because Senator Morse was a very popular senator here among Democrats, and he had the backing of some of the party people. And from that standpoint, it looked like the odds were against us. But as the campaign went on, Senator Kennedy's style of campaign and the issues that he discussed and the way he discussed them I think won a tremendous amount of support for him. He conducted an extremely high level campaign. As I say, Morse was his primary opponent, his major opponent in the primary. He never attacked Senator Morse or criticized him. He talked about the issues that he thought were important and the

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reasons why he wanted the support of the people of Oregon, and I think it made a very strong impression on Democratic voters in that primary. And of course, he won the campaign by a substantial margin.

MORRISSEY: Was there a bandwagon feeling for Kennedy after his victory in West Virginia?

WEBER: Well, it certainly helped. I don't know that there ever was any feeling of a real bandwagon here. At least I didn't have that feeling. I guess you could use the old cliché: we were running scared, so to speak. We worked as hard as we could, and of course after the West Virginia primary when Senator Humphrey dropped out, there was this, as I said before, many of the Humphrey people who were active in that campaign did come in and offer their help to us. But I think probably some of them went to Senator Morse.

MORRISSEY: I was wondering if some Oregon voters wanted to vote for the man that appeared at that time after West Virginia to be the most likely winner?

WEBER: Well, I just have no way of knowing really why they voted. As I say, I think it was primarily due to the fine campaign that Senator Kennedy conducted. He made a very impressive appearance. He did campaign very hard here. He campaigned extensively. He got around to many parts of the state, and he recognized the importance of Oregon because this was the last major primary before the Democratic Convention. I know we felt that if he won here over a favorite son like Senator Morse, it would have a great impact on the Democratic Convention, and I think it did.

I remember one incident; this was late in the primary and has to do with the importance with which Senator Kennedy viewed this campaign and the desire he had to get out and really campaign every minute that he was here, to meet people.

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*[No page 9 in original transcript]*

We had scheduled an appearance for him at the Tektronix Manufacturing Plant here on the outskirts of Portland. It's a large electronics corporation, and he had expressed a desire to go to more industrial concerns. He thought that this would be an effective way of campaigning. So I set up this appearance for him at the Tektronix plant in the morning, and it was a very successful appearance there. He went through the plant and met the workers individually. He talked with them, he shook hands. Then they had a rather early lunch hour for a large number of the workers. And they had a big employee cafeteria, and the management very kindly consented to let him appear there and speak. And he did that at the lunch hour, and it went very well. And then on the way back into downtown Portland -- we were scheduled then to go to a restaurant here where Mrs. Green had set up a luncheon meeting for him with some of the campaign workers. But as we approached downtown Portland, he turned and said, "Well what time do we have to be at the restaurant?" And it turned out that we had a few minutes to

spare, and he said, "Well, gee, we're just wasting time driving." And when the car stopped at the corner, he suddenly opened the door and jumped out. He said, "We might as well walk down there." And so we were all very startled. Kenny O'Donnell [Kenneth P. O'Donnell] was in the car, and I was there, and Pierre Salinger and the driver of the car. So all of us jumped out except the driver, and Senator Kennedy said, "Which way's the restaurant?" And I said, "It's down that way." It was almost a mile to the restaurant, but he just walked down the street and shook hands with people, and stopped and talked to them, said, "I'm Senator Kennedy, and I'm running for the nomination for President." It indicated to me that he didn't want to waste a minute. Every minute was devoted to some constructive effort toward the campaign.

MORRISSEY: Did you plan his itineraries?

WEBER: Well, I didn't do it individually. We had what we called a strategy committee of people in the campaign organization. I sat in with

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them and helped. But basically they planned the itineraries. And it was my job then to follow through and make the detailed arrangements. But this, incidentally, was how we got into this Tektronix manufacturing concern. Our strategy committee had put in a minimum number of appearances at industrial plants. They had the feeling that it would be better to schedule appearances at shopping centers, particularly suburban shopping centers where you announce in advance and publicize in advance that Senator Kennedy is going to be at the so and so shopping center at a given time. And we did that for a day or two, and President Kennedy, the night before that we went to Tektronix, said to me, "We've got too many shopping centers here." He said, "I feel we should get in where the workers are. I want to make more appearances at industrial places." So he said, "You schedule some fast." So that meant the next morning, and I did that. I had to work that night late setting up this thing at Tektronix. It wasn't just something you could do by just a telephone call the next morning. You had to contact people and get permission and so on. And then we also scheduled him in on a shipyard. That was very successful. And it was very encouraging because I remember that Gordon Macnab, one of the Associated Press reporters here in Portland, covered that appearance at the Albina Shipyard, and Gordon, the AP man, took a very informal poll among the workers, and he reported that that they were very strongly in favor of President Kennedy. And that was certainly an encouraging sign because if Senator Morse was going to have any support at all, it would seem that it would come from the working class people. We had other reports. As I said, Larry Smith, the political editor of the Journal told me his brother, who was in the longshoremen's union, told him that even in the longshoremen's union there was strong support for Senator Kennedy.

So those things, you add all those up, and that's how I guess you come to a feeling about the campaign.

MORRISSEY: Who was on that strategy committee?

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WEBER: Well, Dr. Anderson was on it. State Senator Walter E. Pearson was on it. Let's see, Edna Scales was on it. Bobbie Berg [Mrs. E.O. Berg] of Salem, I believe, was on it. Sylvia Nemer was on it. Of course, Edith Green, if she were here, but she was back in Congress and wasn't here much of the time. But when she was here, she certainly was on it. And I've forgotten if there were two or three others, probably Betty Schedeen, who was our third congressional district chairman, was on it.

MORRISSEY: It's unusual to my knowledge for a committee to plan itineraries.

WEBER: Well, of course all of this was subject to the approval in Washington of the Kennedy campaign people back there. In other words, we would let them know where he was going, where we had planned to send him and they could veto anything.

MORRISSEY: Were there any problems in coordinating your activities here in Oregon with the national representatives of the Kennedy organization, such as Hy Raskin, Kenny O'Donnell, and some of the other people you've mentioned?

WEBER: Well, I wouldn't say there were any serious problems because Hy Raskin was a terrific man to work with. He was very capable and he was our sort of liaison man with the Washington headquarters. He knew Oregon very well because he had worked out here in 1952 in the Stevenson campaign. And he was well known to Democrats out here. He knew a lot of the press people, and he knew the way this state operated. So we really didn't have any major problems. I dealt by telephone with Steve Smith [Stephen E. Smith] in Washington on a lot of the details. But I also dealt with Hy Raskin, and of course, Edith Green was in Washington herself and in touch with me by telephone when she wasn't here personally. And the problems were not really great. I mean we got along fine. They were a terrific

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group of people to work with. It seemed to me that it was a wonderful organization. So there were no great problems in that regard. Just before the primary election, many of the key people from Washington were out here. Larry O'Brien [Lawrence F. O'Brien], Kenny O'Donnell of course, Pierre Salinger was here every time President Kennedy came here.

MORRISSEY: When these people came out, there wasn't any particular subject, or subjects, that they were distressed about in regard to the overall organization?

WEBER: Yes, come to think of it there was one thing -- and I know Hy Raskin can certainly fill you in on the details better than I can on this -- but they felt very strongly that a vigorous telephone campaign to get out the vote just before the primary was essential and desirable. And we didn't feel that way here.

MORRISSEY: Why?

WEBER: Well, as I recall it, the way Hy expressed it, he felt the voters of Oregon were a more sophisticated type of voter, that they didn't make up their minds on the basis of a telephone call, and they didn't need a telephone call to have somebody call the up and tell them to get out and vote. I mean they followed the campaigns closely in the newspapers and on television, over the radio, and that the way to reach them more effectively was with literature, something that would present views and opinions of the candidate. And we concentrated more on distribution of literature. We had some terrific workers here, wonderful volunteer workers who devoted many hours. We put out a publication, that one that I've given you, and other publications. And we hit those door to door, particularly in the metropolitan area of Portland, but in other parts of the state. And we felt that we could concentrate our work more effectively in that kind of an approach where President Kennedy's views would be brought to the people. And, well,

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I don't know, there seemed to be a feeling that a telephone call just wasn't the effective way of doing it. As it turned out, I think Hy Raskin and those of us who felt that way were probably right because we did win the primary by an unprecedented total.

MORRISEY: Did you make extensive use of television?

WEBER: Well, we didn't make as extensive a use as we would have liked. We did use television in the primary, and we thought it was very effective. We had two or three programs. One was a sort of panel discussion in which Senator Kennedy sat around the table with several of our campaign leaders. We had our labor chairman, Gordon Swope; we had somebody representing, as I recall it, business people and other interests. And they asked Senator Kennedy questions about the issues that were important to those special interest groups, and then he discussed the issues. This was one technique we used. The other one was a telephone-in type of question and answer program where President Kennedy simply appeared on the screen and accepted telephone calls from the public. We had a battery of telephone operators there who received these telephone questions. The questions were then presented to Senator Kennedy, and he answered them. This was, we thought, very successful the first time we tried it, but as I recall it, the second time we tried it, it wasn't as successful. And the reason it wasn't was simply that people were asking the same questions over and over. I mean after the first program they had just about exhausted most of the issues. And we found it was so successful, that we said, "Well, let's try it again." And we did, and we found they were asking almost the same questions. So we felt

that, well, we'd just about exhausted that technique, so we didn't try it again. But it was a very effective technique the first time it was tried, and probably the second time. But it was clear that to try to do it again would not be as effective.

MORRISSEY: Were these carried on statewide television?

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WEBER: As I recall it, yes. As far as you could in the state. At that time it was difficult to reach many parts of the state, the remote parts of the state, with direct television. We did, I believe, have a linkup with some of the larger cities down the Willamette Valley: Eugene, Salem, and Medford. But we couldn't reach the far eastern parts of the state.

MORRISSEY: Did you tend to write off certain parts of the state and concentrate on Portland?

WEBER: No, we did not. We tried to get Senator Kennedy around to every section of the state, and we had a campaign organization chairman in every county and in all congressional districts. And one thing that I think I learned, as I say, I was a novice in politics, but it seemed to me that it would be a mistake for any one campaign to concentrate just in the metropolitan area because the impact that a candidate of national stature makes in a small community far outweighs, on a proportional basis, the impact that he will make in town like Portland where people of national stature, whenever they come to Oregon, always come. Of course, it is necessary to campaign in Portland. You don't write off Portland. But on the other hand, you go to a town like Newport on the Oregon coast, a relatively small town. When a man of Senator Kennedy's stature comes to a town like Newport, the entire city is aware of it, and everybody turns out. And the impact is great, very great. And this happened in every small town we went, and I think it's, therefore, important in this state at least to hit these small areas. But of course, you've got to, again quoting Hy Raskin, I remember he said, "You've got to go fishing where the fish are located." And you can't spend a disproportionate amount of time in small areas. We went in those areas where Democratic registration was relatively high. We didn't go in the primary in those areas, I mean not as much, where the Republicans had a big edge in registration. We had a large wall map of the state with all the counties outlined on it; we knew what the Democratic

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registration was in every county; and we selected those counties where the registration was the highest, naturally, to concentrate the campaign. But we did hit all parts of the state, all sections including the far eastern agricultural areas, sparsely populated areas.

MORRISSEY: Was there an effort, either before the primary or before the November

election, to register more Democrats?

WEBER: Oh yes. In the primary, the party itself undertook that. But in the general election in November, we made a big effort to register people. And of course we were then working directly with the party organization. It was a cooperative effort at that time. But we didn't rely entirely on the party organization, we had our own Citizens for Kennedy and Johnson. And we concentrated heavily on that. We had teams of registrars out. We had a very effective volunteer attorney group, lawyers who went out and accompanied the registrars to answer any legal questions that might come up with respect to registering to make sure that it was done properly.

MORRISSEY: Did you expect Oregon to go for Kennedy in the campaign against Nixon [Richard M. Nixon]?

WEBER: Gee, I had great hope for that, but I think deep down in my heart I knew that it was going to go the way it did, that Nixon would win. I think the religious issue was a very strong issue at that time, and Oregon had had a long tradition of voting for Republicans for president except during the depression days when they voted for Franklin D. Roosevelt. And it was just too much to overcome, I think, those factors.

MORRISSEY: Were there any scars left from the primary battle that hurt the overall Democratic campaign in the contest against Nixon?

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WEBER: I don't recall that this was... Well, I'll take that back. Yes, I think there was. I mean I'm not sure that there were scars particularly from that campaign, but there were some problems with Democrats, Democratic leaders from various parts of the state who I don't think were as strongly committed as they might have been. I suppose that the primary had something to do with that. It's hard to say, I mean, what the motives were. We, of course, didn't waste time on that, we were busy on other things.

MORRISSEY: Back during the primary campaign did you have any trouble with Protestant ministers around the state sounding off about the "danger" of a Catholic candidate for President?

WEBER: I don't recall any Protestant ministers, but that issue was present, although strangely enough it didn't seem to me that it was as potent an issue in the primary as it later developed in the general election. In the general election it was an issue. It was brought right out into the open by the rather notorious letter that was sent out by, as I recall it, the Scottish Rite Shrine leader here in Oregon. But in the primary I don't believe that any Protestant ministers ever spoke out that way, at least not to my



knowledge. And as I say, it didn't seem to be as potent an issue in the primary. I'm not sure why that was, but it just didn't happen. In fact, as you know, we won the primary and lost the general election. It seemed to become much more prevalent in the general election. We ran into it, and we did start conducting some telephone surveys in the general election, calling people up, selected people, and we found that many of them were raising that question. And I don't think it's so much a question of outright burning prejudice against Catholics. It was a feeling, well, why take a chance on getting a Catholic when this issue was being talked about. So they felt, well, why should we take a chance on a Catholic if it's going to lead to, you know influence from the Vatican. So that seemed to be the reaction.

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MORRISSEY: Where did the volunteers come from?

WEBER: Volunteers seemed to come from every walk of life, from all over. In the primary we had a wonderful volunteer organization. They just came in and offered their services. prior to the time I got involved in the campaign, Mrs. Green and those working with her had already lined up, as I say, a number of volunteers. But wherever we went, we attempted to get names of people. Then we had mailings, and we'd send them and tell them we needed volunteer workers, and they came in and offered their services. There were many professional secretaries and stenographers who worked as volunteer typists. We had college and high school students who came in and did all kinds of chores that needed to be done. We had people who volunteered the use of their automobiles, and we had lots of people who came in and helped with the mailing campaign that we had. It's hard to say where they came from, they just came from every walk of life, all kinds of professional people and business people, working people, and housewives. In the primary we had only two paid people in the campaign here locally, myself and Margaret Ann Scaife who worked with me in the office. All the rest were volunteers. We had, of course, a campaign headquarters downtown and that was fully manned all the time with volunteer people, mostly housewives, during the day and at night. Then we set up volunteer headquarter organizations in key cities around the state: Eugene, Medford, Salem, Pendleton, I believe. Those were little store front headquarters that were opened up and manned by volunteers in those areas. There were a lot of women who worked effectively and wholeheartedly in the campaign. But there were a lot of men who worked, came down nights, worked weekends. So it was a wide variety of people that did.

MORRISSEY: Did the Kennedy women come to Oregon and set up their famous tea parties?

WEBER: Jacqueline Kennedy was here early in the campaign, although this was prior to Senator Kennedy's formal announcement, which I believe came very

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early in 1960, that he was going to run. I remember Jacqueline Kennedy was with him in October 1959 when he appeared here, but as far as I know she didn't set up any tea parties. Pat Lawford, his sister, was here on one occasion in 1960. No, there were no tea parties of any kind by the Kennedy women. She [Patricia Lawford] was with him and traveled in the airplane with him on one trip to Corvallis and Albany. I believe there was a reception for Pat Lawford at one place given by the local women, but not one that she gave. And I don't believe Jacqueline Kennedy was here except for that visit in late 1959. However, there were many local women who did give parties and receptions and so on.

MORRISSEY: As a former newspaperman, could you comment on how the Oregon newspapers treated Kennedy's candidacy?

WEBER: Well, in the primary I think they treated him very well. And, for that matter, in the general election I think our papers here were very fair. We had some good editorial support. In the primary, I recall we used one editorial from the *Eugene Register Guard* that we had reprinted and distributed. We printed it just on a flat piece of paper, a flier, so to speak, which we included in some of our distribution of literature because it was very favorable. And with respect to the newspaper reporters, I don't recall any of them who weren't fair. I don't mean they were pro-Kennedy either. They were just fair. And we got widespread coverage. I mean there was a tremendous amount of interest here in the primary campaign. We were very pleased with the coverage we got. It was very helpful, I mean helpful in the sense that it was extensive and fair.

MORRISSEY: Was the situation different in November?

WEBER: Well, in November the press I think was overwhelmingly supporting Nixon, as far as editorial policy went. But again we had no complaints

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about the news coverage. The editorial policy we didn't agree with, but we can't complain about it as being unfair or unreasonable. It was simply a matter of difference of opinion. But the news coverage was good. We always got fair and extensive coverage.

MORRISSEY: On the occasions that you were with John Kennedy when he was campaigning here in the state, do you have any particular recollections of any incidents or anecdotes?

WEBER: Well, I told you about the one where he got out of the car and started walking down the street. That was one that comes to mind. He liked to do that kind of thing. I remember in the suburb of Milwaukie, Oregon -- it's a small town just outside the city limits of Portland -- he got out on the street there. He loved to get out and walk down the street and go into the drugstore and the clothing store and just

shake hands with the proprietor or whoever happened to be there, talk briefly and go on. I saw him once get angry at one of his campaign workers. This was a motion picture man who was up from Hollywood doing some motion picture work. He was taking some pictures that were to be used later in the general election if he got the nomination. We were riding in an automobile, and this motion picture man informed Senator Kennedy that he had made arrangements for and had recorded a new campaign song for Senator Kennedy and had hired a musical group to make this recording. Senator Kennedy became very angry at this. He wanted to know how much it cost, and when he was informed of the cost, which was several thousand dollars, he said, "This is terrible. That's way too much money." He said, "We have to be careful with the amount of money we spend in this campaign." And he really got angry at this man for doing it, for spending that much money on a campaign song. He said, "We've already got a campaign song." As a matter of fact, I think we had two already, "High Hopes" and one other at that stage, and he said there was no need for another campaign song. And it was really the only time I saw him get angry during the times that

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I was with him. Generally speaking, he was very pleasant. It was all business in the sense that there wasn't much time for jocular and clowning around. In fact, there wasn't any time for that. But that was the only time I saw him because unhappy with one of his workers.

Oh I do remember one incident when we drove back from Corvallis and Albany. We had gone down to Corvallis and Albany, that's about seventy or eighty miles south of Portland, he made an appearance at a reception in Corvallis and then went about eight or ten miles over to Albany for a speech at a dinner. It was a situation where his airplane was down there, but it would be just about as fast to drive back, or maybe faster to drive the seventy-five miles to Portland on a freeway with no stops. So Gordon Swope, our labor chairman, drove the car. I sat in the front seat with him, and Pierre Salinger sat in the front seat, his press secretary. Then in the back seat Pat Lawford was with Senator Kennedy. She sat in the back seat and she had a friend with her. I've forgotten her name, but she was from the Los Angeles area. She was a friend of Mrs. Lawford who was traveling here with Mrs. Lawford. Senator Kennedy did a lot of joking and just relaxing. It was about the only time that he really did relax from the rigors of campaigning, and just had a chance to really talk with his sister while leisurely driving.

MORRISSEY: On any of these occasions do you recall that he speculated about his prospects?

WEBER: I don't recall any speculation. He was always interested in gathering information. He didn't speculate to me. He was always eager to find out how things were going. And mostly when we were driving in cars -- that's why I brought that incident up about the drive back from Albany and Corvallis -- when we were driving in cars, he was always planning and finding out something, finding out what's going to happen next, and making plans, directing Pierre to be contacting someone in

Chicago or New York or Los Angeles or some place. And answering queries and finding out what was happening. But this was

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the one exception on this drive when he wasn't. But I never heard him speculate. He was always trying to find out information about what was happening. Presumably he was speculating himself, but he didn't, so far as I know, tell others what he was thinking.

MORRISSEY: Maybe speculation's the wrong word. What I had in mind is perhaps an assessment or summary of how he felt things stood.

WEBER: He just didn't make any. As far as I know, Senator Kennedy didn't make any assessments to me during the primary on what his chances were. I have no doubt he must have assessed that with some of the other people.

MORRISSEY: How much of your campaign finances were raised within the state?

WEBER: I don't recall exactly. But in the primary, as I do recall it, I think a large share of it came from outside the state, from the national organization. It's pretty difficult to raise financing for a primary campaign in this state. The general election is something else. But in the primary there just aren't very many contributors. And so I think the majority of the funds came from the national headquarters.

MORRISSEY: One reason why Kennedy did not get the vice presidential nomination at the 1956 Convention was that many delegates from farm areas were dubious of his voting record on agricultural issues. I was wondering if that popped up in Oregon during the primary?

WEBER: It didn't seem to be a burning issue in the primary. We had a farm chairman -- I know we did in the general election at least. I don't recall that this was any great issue. Of course, he did go into the eastern part of the state, which is primarily an

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agricultural grazing area, and he talked about, I think, the farm issue. But I don't recall that there was any great issue over that here.

MORRISSEY: I should broaden that question to include issues of reclamation, conservation, resource management, that sort of thing.

WEBER: Those things didn't seem to be of major importance in the primary. The major issue that Senator Kennedy raised in the primary was the

significance of this primary nationally, and of course, labor, as I said earlier, was an issue. But the significance of the primary.... We campaigned -- I mean Senator Kennedy I don't think used these words, but others did in his behalf, "Don't waste your vote, vote for a man who is a serious candidate." In fact, one of our slogans, we had some posters put out that we put on the backs of buses, the city buses here in Portland, paid advertising: "Make your vote count." That was one of our big campaign themes, urging Democrats in the primary to vote for a man that was potentially a presidential candidate of a serious stature. And agriculture, as I recall it, wasn't a burning issue at all; neither was conservation nor reclamation, nor resource planning and management.

MORRISSEY: You say that labor was an issue, and yet I get the impression that a lot of laboring people were working for Kennedy.

WEBER: Yes, it was an issue because of President Kennedy's participation on the McClellan Committee. And I think it was an issue with a lot of labor officials. But I still have the feeling that a lot of -- now don't misunderstand me, all the labor officials were not opposed. We had a strong labor organization composed of officials of labor unions and others. They recognized that Senator Kennedy had a sound position even though some other labor officials, I think, felt that it was the wrong

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position. Everyone knows the Teamsters, of course, particularly were opposed; that is, the officials again. But I have a feeling that even among the Teamsters Union that many of the working members undoubtedly voted for President Kennedy, or Senator Kennedy at that time. And I think this was true in many of the unions, as I say. In those little informal polls, you might say, among the longshoremen and among the shipyard workers, and certainly among the plants that he visited, industrial plants, he got a warm reception from the workers. This Tektronix plant, these were working people. We went to the woolen mills. Pendleton Woolen Mills on the outskirts of Portland. It's almost entirely women workers in a woolen mill. And they were very enthusiastic and warm in their support of him. So it was an issue among the labor officials. And of course, Senator Morse had a position that was directly opposed to Senator Kennedy's in the labor legislation that was prominent at that time. He was making it an issue. So it was an issue, but the laboring people, I'm pretty sure -- the way the vote went I think would bear that out -- felt that Senator Kennedy had made a reasonable and sound explanation of his position on the labor legislation that was so very prominent nationally at that time.

MORRISSEY: For this interview program for the Kennedy Library what labor officials of Oregon would you recommend that we talk to?

WEBER: Well, Gordon Swope who was the campaign labor chairman, plus George Brown who was the state political chairman for the A.F.L.-C.I.O., James

Marr who is now retired but at that time was the executive secretary of the Oregon AFL-CIO, Roy Hill of the painters union here who was active in our campaign. If I understand your question correctly, if you're trying to get a completely balance viewpoint, you may want to talk to some of the Teamster officials.

MORRISSEY: You mentioned these informal polls that you took...

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WEBER: Well, I shouldn't say we took them. As I say, Gordon Macnab from AP took that one, and Larry Smith's brother took the one from the longshoremen.

MORRISSEY: Was there any formal polling in which polling organizations were hired?

WEBER: Frankly, I don't know. I believe that there was by the Kennedy Campaign Committee nationally. And of course, I think others in the campaign can tell you about that.

MORRISSEY: On this piece of stationery for the Kennedy for President Committee, could you run down some of the names on the letterhead and comment on how they came into the Organization, and what they did?

WEBER: Yes. Well, of course, Edith Green was the chairman. She was the congresswoman from Portland, and she had the opportunity to observe Senator Kennedy closely in Washington, and she headed our statewide campaign here. Dr. Anderson, the vice chairman, was a faculty member of Portland State College, and he was the acting chairman when Mr.s Green was not present here in the state. She spent most of her time back in Washington. Lorentz Brown, the finance chairman, is a business-man here in Portland. He's a building contractor. He has been active in Democratic politics for a long time, and he helped raise money and to handle the financial side of the campaign. Mrs. E.O. Berg [Bobbie Berg] of Salem was our chairman in that county, Marion County in which Salem is located, and she was very active in that area.

MORRISSEY: Had she been active previously in party affairs?

WEBER: I think she had, in the Stevenson campaign I believe of 1952 or '56. Bob Boyer, Robert A. Boyer, in Medford was our district chairman in

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the southwestern Oregon district. Jim Burns [James O. Burns] of Condon, Oregon, over in the eastern Oregon, was in charge of that district over there. That's primarily an agricultural, grazing, stock-raising area. Joe Ceglar of Portland was a labor official. He

was a business agent or executive for one of the carpenters unions here in Portland, and he was on our labor committee and one of several fine labor officials who did support us in the primary. Gladys Everett of Portland. She is a lawyer here in town, and she was very active in our speakers bureau that we set up. We set up a speakers bureau of people who volunteered to go around and give talks at luncheon groups and meetings of various kinds. Whenever a call came in for a speaker, we could call on that group. As a matter of fact, as I recall, she may have been chairman of the speakers bureau in the Kennedy campaign. Katherine Frane of Portland is a school teacher, and I remember she helped organize a very successful appearance that Senator Kennedy made at the University of Portland. The University of Portland was the place we selected, but it wasn't a meeting that was confined just to University student groups. It was held in the large hall that they had there, the gymnasium, as I recall it. And it could hold several thousand spectators, and it was a community wide function in that area, and Miss Frane was chairman of that appearance. She did a very fine job.

MORRISSEY: Pardon my ignorance, but is that a Catholic school?

WEBER: Yes, University of Portland is a Catholic school.

MORRISSEY: Was there any discussion about Kennedy appearing at a Catholic school?

WEBER: Yes, there was. Since you mentioned that, there was discussion and some apprehension on the part of our committee members about that. I remember that we had a request that we had a request for Senator Kennedy to appear at some Catholic meetings, and frankly I think we tended to

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avoid them. But on the other hand, we felt that it would be a mistake to say we're not going to become associated in any manner with any Catholic organization. And we finally concluded that this was a logical place to hold a big public meeting in the north part of Portland. It was a convenient place because it was a big meeting hall, and as I say, it wasn't confined to the university students anyway, and we went ahead and scheduled it out there. It is a Catholic school. The president of the University and Edith Green were both on the platform, and participated in the introduction of President Kennedy. As a matter of fact, we drove out there, I was in the car with President Kennedy, and he asked me about this very place. "Isn't this a Catholic university?" And I said, "Yes." And he said, "Well, was this wise?" And I said, "We had come to the conclusion that it is wise." That the committee had thought this over very seriously, and we felt that it was the thing to do. Well, we just concluded that it would be wise, and we held it there, and it was very successful. And again this was in the primary, and I don't think that the Catholic issue was as prevalent in the primary as it later became. I really don't know why, but it wasn't. I don't know whether it was because people had the feeling that this was only a primary and not a general election

and, therefore, it wasn't the real thing or not. I don't know. But it just didn't seem to be as important an issue as it later became.

Well, to go on down the list; Dan Fraser of Portland who's on this list was a member of the carpenters union, a working man, but he had been an active Democratic campaign worker for many years, and he was one of those who worked very hard as a volunteer. Henry Hansen, North Bend, I believe he was in a longshoremen's union down there, and yet he worked in our campaign. Roy Hill of Portland, an official of the painters union. Ralph Hillier of Eugene, an attorney in Lane County who was our Lane County Campaign Chairman. I mentioned him earlier in my discussion, and he did a very fine job down there of organizing Lane County and of arranging the public appearances that Senator Kennedy made in Eugene and other parts of Lane County area. Harry Hogan of the Dalles.

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Harry Hogan was an attorney in the Dalles, and he was chairman in Wasco County. The major industry there, I believe, is agriculture. Harry did a wonderful job over there. Mary Jackson of Portland is another union official. She was in the waitresses union, secretary of the waitresses union. Mary Kelly of Medford had been active in Democratic politics and, I believe, in the Stevenson campaign, and she was the chairman of that county, Jackson County where Medford is located. Ed Murphy of Roseburg was our chairman in Douglas County. He was a lawyer in Roseburg. And of course, Sylvia Nemer of Portland, maybe you'll be interviewing her, but she was very active in the campaign. She's been active in Democratic politics for a long time and took a very important part in the campaign. Walter Pearson, from Portland, was very helpful in the campaign. He was a Shriner, and when this Catholic issue came up later in the general election because of the activities of one of the officials of a local Scottish Rite Shrine organization, Senator Pearson helped to retaliate to that. And he later joined with Mr. Bruun as the finance chairman in the campaign. Frank Potter of Portland is a young attorney who helped organize the young Democratic groups that worked in the primary and was chairman of one of the Young Democratic meetings that we had where Senator Kennedy spoke. It was a breakfast we had, I believe on a Sunday morning. Frank Potter is no longer in Portland. Francis Reagan, another Portland lawyer, was very effective. He was our veteran's chairman. He's a Reserve Officer in the Navy. As it turned out, in the general election I think he and another man were co-chairmen of the Veteran's organization for Kennedy and Johnson. But in the primary, he headed the veteran's group, spoke at veterans meetings on behalf of Senator Kennedy. And he and his wife, Mrs. Raegan, were two of our most devoted campaign workers who gave many hours down at the campaign headquarters working and doing every kind of chore that had to be done. Roy Renoud, a former labor official who had become a personnel man in one of the local industrial corporations here helped with labor people. He's still close to them. Victor Rosenfeld of Portland was active in financing and raising money. He's a businessman here in town. Mrs. Edna Scales of Sandy, Oregon -- Sandy's

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a small town, about thirty miles from Portland -- and she's a close friend of Mrs. Green, and had been active in Mrs. Green's campaign and she worked very hard. She was a chairman in her county and worked very hard in the campaign. Betty Schedeen of Gresham was our chairman for this congressional district; that is, the third congressional district in which Portland is located. She was very prominent in the campaign.

MORRISSEY: Had she been active previously?

WEBER: Oh yes, she's been active and worked with Mrs. Green, a close personal friend of Mrs. Green's, and she was very effective in the campaign. Monroe Sweetland from Milwaukee was a small-town newspaper publisher. Monroe was one of those who was in the campaign in the very early days. He'd been active in Democratic politics a long time in Oregon. And he took a prominent part in the campaign. Gordon Swope of Portland was chairman of our labor committee. He was an official, a business agent, of the retail clerks union here, and he did a fine job of lining up support for Senator Kennedy among laboring people and of arranging a big labor breakfast. He did a fine job at that, acting as master of ceremonies, and made the arrangements for it. Dan Thiel, another state senator from Astoria, a businessman in Astoria. He was very effective in the northwestern coastal region of the state in organizing support. John Wilson of Portland, another labor official who was active in the labor campaign. Anton A. Wolleck of Portland, there's another labor official who was active. So you see we did have quite a large number of labor people, and they were very fine people, very fine campaign workers. Nick Zumas, the last name on this particular list, was a young lawyer who worked with Frank Potter among the Young Democrats here in town. They also did a lot of the routine chores that you have to do in a campaign headquarters. I mean, Zumas, I remember, did a very effective job of making transportation arrangements. Whenever we had any type of appearance when President Kennedy was here, just arranging all the automobiles and so on was a job that he took over and did very effectively and systematically.

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MORRISSEY: Was it Francis Reagan you mentioned who worked with veterans groups?

WEBER: Yes.

MORRISSEY: Was Kennedy's war record publicized effectively?

WEBER: Yes, it was. And in the brochure that I've given you that's over there on the table, I think we brought that out in there. I think that a very effective campaign aid was his war record.

MORRISSEY: Putting modesty aside, do you think a lot of these labor people came into the organization because you had reported on labor issues for so many years?

WEBER: No, I don't. I don't think it had anything to do with it. I think that these... I think in this state, we are very fortunate in the quality, caliber of labor people that we have. The labor unions of this state had elected leaders that are by and large very capable and intelligent people. I think they recognized in Senator Kennedy a man of tremendous ability and potentially, and a man who would be of great benefit to the labor movement. I think that's why they came in, and even in the face of a primary where Senator Morse who was campaigning right on that labor question and did have the support of some other very prominent labor officials, nevertheless, many of them recognized that here was a man that they could and would and wanted to support. And while it was very helpful to me as a labor reporter because I was personally acquainted with all these labor people, I don't think that was a factor at all, not at all. In fact, many of them had already been all lined up before I got into the campaign, some of them. I think it may have helped me. It helped a little. I mean I could go in with Gordon Swope, for example, to a labor meeting, and there was no problem in establishing initial rapport or anything. I knew them all. And we would

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set up a labor committee meeting, and I'd be there, and it was helpful for that reason. It was fortunate. I don't think it really was a big factor.

MORRISSEY: Senator Morse had been defeated by Senator Kennedy in the Maryland primary just before the Oregon primary. Did that hurt his campaign out here?

WEBER: Well, I think it certainly had some dampening effect on it. It's impossible for me to measure it in any way, but...

MORRISSEY: Did the Kennedy people emphasize this?

WEBER: No, we didn't emphasize it. The thing sort of spoke for itself. I mean, as I think I brought out, my impression of the campaign, was not an anti-Morse campaign at all. We didn't campaign against Senator Morse in any way, not at all, not by any of our people and particularly not by Senator Kennedy himself. Our campaign was not an anti-Morse campaign, it was a pro-Kennedy campaign, and we emphasized those things about Senator Kennedy.... And so, no, we didn't try to capitalize it at all.

MORRISSEY: When the Kennedy Administration came into office was there any possibility of yourself going to Washington.

WEBER: Well, there may have been. I had no desire to go to Washington. I took a job here. There was a federal position open here, and I was appointed to

that position.

MORRISSEY: May I ask what that was?

WEBER: Yes, I am the Regional Information Officer for the Department of the Interior.

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MORRISSEY: I didn't know that.

WEBER: Yes, following the campaign, I expressed an interest in it to Mrs. Green, and subsequently I was appointed to that position.

MORRISSEY: Is that your current position?

WEBER: That's my current position, yes.

MORRISSEY: Well, I didn't realize we were both bureaucrats all the time. [Laughter]

WEBER: Yes, well, when Stewart Udall became Secretary of the Interior, why, obviously somebody recommended to him that he appoint me to this position, and I later received a telephone call and was told that I would be appointed to that position. So that's what I'm doing now. As it happens I'm also a lawyer, strangely enough, newspaperman and a lawyer. I did attend law school and passed the bar exam. So when this job terminates, I suspect I'll be going into the practice of law rather than newspaper work.

MORRISSEY: A many faceted career. I've run out of questions. Do you think I've missed anything?

WEBER: Gosh, if you have, I can't think of it right now. I can only say this, in addition, that this was a very fortunate thing for me to be associated with the Kennedy campaign. First of all, it was a new experience. I was a complete novice, and I know that Hy Raskin must have been driven to the point of distraction at times dealing with me because he was used to dealing with people who had much more experience in politics, and I was so naive about some things in politics. But more than that, more than the interesting experience for me, just being in a political campaign, was the opportunity to associate with Senator Kennedy at very close range and be in very close

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touch with him during those periods when he was out here and to have the opportunity to recognize at the first hand that this was a man of tremendous ability, and of leadership quality

that we needed. So I'm very grateful for the opportunity to have been in this position. It's something that I'll, you know, always remember and cherish. So other than that, I don't know of anything more.

MORRISSEY: Thank you very much. I have enjoyed this; I hope you have.

WEBER: Yes, I have.

[END OF INTERVIEW]

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