Richard J. Murphy Oral History Interview – JFK#1, 5/10/1967
Administrative Information

Creator: Richard J. Murphy
Interviewer: John Stewart
Date of Interview: May 10, 1967
Place of Interview: Washington D.C.
Length: 28 pages

Biographical Note
Richard J. Murphy (1929-2006) was the Director of Platform Hearings for the Democratic National Committee in 1960, the National Coordinator for the Young Voters for Kennedy Johnson Campaign, and the Assistant Postmaster General from 1961 to 1969. This interview focuses on drafting a platform for the 1960 Democratic National Convention, appealing to young voters during the 1960 presidential election, and the Post Office Department during the Kennedy administration, among other topics.

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Richard J. Murphy, recorded interview by John Stewart, May 10, 1967 (page number), John F. Kennedy Library Oral History Program.

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Richard J. Murphy– JFK #1
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Oral History Interview

With

RICHARD MURPHY

May 10, 1967
Washington, D.C.

By John Stewart

For the John F. Kennedy Library

STEWART: Why don't we start by my asking you when you first met John Kennedy or had any contact with members of his staff?

MURPHY: Probably, Mr. Stewart, in 1956, when I first came to the Democratic National Committee as the National Executive Director of the Young Democratic Clubs of America.

STEWART: Did you see him at the convention?

MURPHY: Yes, I saw him at the convention. I had met President Kennedy, or rather then Senator Kennedy, before that time when he was a Senator in arranging for various speaking engagements before Young Democratic groups.

STEWART: Was he extremely in demand even before 1956 as far as Young Democrats were concerned?

MURPHY: He was an attractive person. I think he had a natural built appeal to young people. I would not say that in 1956 he had anywhere near the degree of appeal or popularity that he subsequently had. In fact, probably in 1956, I would say that probably Hubert Humphrey [Hubert H. Humphrey] would out draw him among young people as a favorite at that time and was more identified with young people's causes. But subsequent to the convention in 1956, there was a very noticeable jump in the popularity of Senator Kennedy because he was then visible to a lot more people that he hadn't been visible to before. And then from then on out he became in enormous demand, especially among young people because he did have the characteristics of youth and

attractiveness and what-have-you that appeal to young people an awful lot. He didn't have any problem in relating to young people.

STEWART: What exactly was your role in the period 1956 to 1960? You were….

MURPHY: In January of 1956, I came to the Democratic National Committee from the army as a matter of fact, I had been in the army for two years doing my stint as Executive Secretary of the Young Democratic Division in the Democratic National Committee. Before that time I had been president of the United State National Student Association, 1952 to '53. And we had also started *College News Conference* on ABC [American Broadcasting Company] network starting out of Philadelphia and I had continued to be a panelist on the *College News Conference* show during the time I was in the Army because I was stationed in Aberdeen. I used to come down and do the show on Sunday. I met the national chairman on the show and he asked me when I got out of the army if I would come to the National Committee for the campaign year of 1956. I came ostensibly for the campaign year of 1956, intending to go back and finish my Ph.D. I ended up staying five years.

So from 1956 until 1961, actually I was the National Executive Secretary of the Young Dems and Executive Director of the DY Division of the Committee and then for, except for a very brief period of time in the year 1960 when, starting in January of that year, in conjunction with Jack Redding [John M. Redding], a former Assistant Postmaster General, we conducted the advance platform hearings of the Democratic National Committee in several cities throughout the country. So I took a leave of absence for about eight or nine months to run that.

STEWART: Did you have any contacts with Kennedy people during the '56 campaign that you recall?

MURPHY: Some, not a great deal, not an enormous amount. Ralph Dungan, who worked on Senator Kennedy's staff, who joined him during that period, was an old friend of mine from the National Student Association days. Ralph had been vice president of the NSA before I was president. And so I knew him. And I also had contact with a few members of the staff from time to time in so far as arrangements for Senator Kennedy to appear before a Young Democratic group here or there. But I certainly did not have a great deal of contact with them.

STEWART: What were your attitudes, if any? What did you foresee as the role that the Young Democrats might play in 1960? Did you foresee any changes, say in '58 or '59, as far as the role that the Young Democrats would play in the election of 1960?

MURPHY: Well, Chairman Butler [Paul M. Butler] had been very much oriented toward young people and toward building a strong young people's organization in the Party. He really was the first chairman that ever spent very much time or

money on it. In fact, it was under his leadership that we first had the first permanent Young Democrats Division as a continuing thing, as a part of the national committee. It used to be done in campaign years only. So that actually we had been building with the cooperation and the leadership of Dave Burn, who was then the National DY president, and the president before him, Congressman, now Congressman Neal Smith of Iowa, and then Nelson Lancione who was then president of the Young Democratic Clubs of America from Columbus, Ohio, building strongly in the colleges. We had never had much of a college organization when I came to the committee in 1956. We concentrated a lot of effort on that and had an enormous number of college clubs and organizations going. As I indicated, it was very obvious that there was a strong enthusiasm among young people for John F. Kennedy. This became very evident after 1956. And Senator Kennedy increasingly spoke to a lot of younger people's groups. As a result, it at least became very apparent to me that should Senator Kennedy be on our ticket in 1960 that there would be an enormous factor of young people voting for him and for the Democratic ticket that would count very heavily.

STEWART: Did this whole problem of young neutrality and neutrality of people working with you in the Democratic National Committee become a--when did it become a problem?

MURPHY: Well, it's always a problem because you're being buffeted from all sides and when you're out of power it is an exceptionally difficult task for the people that are on the staff of the national committee to maintain complete neutrality and impartiality and yet that is a requirement. The Chairman, Mr. Butler, was very strict about that in so far as the staff was concerned. He constantly reminded the staff that they had to be absolutely neutral in their attitudes and that they ought to work for the Party as a whole, try to build the basic organization, and without identifying it or aiming out programs toward any one individual. And this is an exceedingly difficult thing to do in politics because people still vote an awful lot for the individual. And when you're out of office, of course, you have no one person you can point that to until you get your candidate.

But it was very clear that we had a number of candidates that were attractive to young people in 1960. The interest in the Democratic Party was picking up among young people and of course really we had a built in advantage because really since the time of Roosevelt [Franklin D. Roosevelt] young people have tended to vote the Democratic ticket. So we always had a good strong base of young people's support. But the problem of neutrality was somewhat difficult. We couldn't take a stand one way or the other, but it worked out very well in the end.

STEWART: Do you recall being approached or consulted in say '58 or '59, by particularly Senator Kennedy at all about that. I did talk once or twice to certain members of the staff that were close to President Kennedy, people that I knew were interested in his campaign, who would ask me about what my feelings were about the kind of reaction that he had among young people. I had similar conversations with people that were close to Senator Humphrey and the other candidates that were involved, so that this was not unusual. But it was very evident, I think, to anybody that John Kennedy had an enormous

following among young people going all the way from jumpers to people that were very serious intellectually about him.

STEWART: Did his lack of a solid liberal image which, of course was a factor among a certain group of people, did you see much evidence of this among college people?

MURPHY: I think initially this was somewhat of a handicap among the more activist young people, especially on the college campuses, the people that tended to be active in Young Democratic politics up to that time. Now among the people that had little or no political sensitivity, this was not a problem. But to people that were the activists in young Democratic politics, well this initially was somewhat of a problem. That's why I think initially Senator Humphrey for example, certainly in '56, was more popular among this group than Senator Kennedy was. And of course, Senator Humphrey has always been an enormous favorite of younger people and especially Young Democratic Clubs of America because he spoke to more such clubs and groups when it was very difficult than perhaps any man we've ever had.

STEWART: In moving on to early 1960, do you recall any sizeable disputes within local Young Democrat groups over which candidate they were going to support or endorse?

MURPHY: Yes. We continually had that problem. We would have to remind the local groups of the national charter of the Young Dems which specifically prohibit any local club from taking a stand in the Democratic primaries. They could take stands as a club. And we would continually have to sort of give them a reminder or a little knuckle rapping here and there in order to try to keep them nonpartisan as far as the clubs were concerned. But a number of Young Democratic leaders individually joined in Senator Kennedy and Senator Humphrey's campaign. Quite a few of them were individually active.

STEWART: But there were no really serious problems as for example, happened with the Young Republicans in 1964?

MURPHY: No. We were very careful about that. President Lancione and subsequently President Schafer [Roy Schafer] of the Young Dems were very careful to maintain a strict neutrality and to ask the other officers to do the same thing so that we never got into the kind of terrible mess that the Young Republicans subsequently got into. And that was fortunate for the Democratic Party and for Senator Kennedy.

STEWART: Were you working during this time on the *Democratic Digest*?

MURPHY: Yes, I also worked on the *Digest*. We used to have the regular monthly page for the Young Dem activities in the *Digest* that we would summarize. So that was one of my duties. I had many duties with the National Committee,

including several duties for the Chairman and for other parts of the committee. My main job was the Young Democrats, but increasingly after 1958, when I was able to bring aboard a college director, Chuck Monat [Charles P. Monat], he could take a lot more of the Young Dem activities, and I devoted a lot more of my activities to the platform and to the senior party trying to do what we could to strengthen that.

STEWART: Let's move on then to the regional platform here, hearings that you were involved in. Do you recall how the idea for holding these came about?

MURPHY: Yes. It really grew out of the ideas of the national committee on Political Organization, which was headed by then State Chairman Neil Staebler of Michigan. And Neil headed a national committee that had been appointed by Chairman Butler to consider the total organization of the Democratic Party, this was following the defeat in 1956, and to see what could be done to build grass root strength, precinct organization strength in the Party among women's groups, young people's groups, labor, neighborhood clubs, discussion groups, what-have-you. And of course, there was always the constant tugging that you have between the programmatic people in the Party. The people that are primarily interested in issues and wish to push issues and ideas and those that are primarily interested in organization. And we had to constantly try to weld these two together.

Growing out of the discussions of this committee and I think this is one of the most productive committees that have ever appeared really on the national political scene in either of the two national committees, one of the ideas was to have sort of a traveling platform. This idea had been used with certain variations in a few various states. Michigan had used it, for example. I think they had used it up in New England somewhere, in Maine, or somewhere else where our Party was showing new life and strength, coming to the fore. And this had been a mechanism for getting people interested in the Party that had never been interested before and especially getting groups interested in the Party that had never been interested: groups that were issue oriented, that wanted to have some particular plank in the platform, what-have-you. And we found that by, the idea was that by holding public hearings in various parts of the country we could get a lot of local publicity and we could generate an awful lot of interest among local organizations in our party and in our platforms.

I think also Chairman Butler was very much intent on trying to highlight the platform as a more important document than it had here, would take very seriously the platform that was adopted by the Party and would try to generally upgrade its importance within the national convention structure. Because we couldn't concentrate on people, therefore we had to concentrate on issues in order to project an image of the party for the 1960 election. This was widely important. So therefore, he asked Jack Redding, who at that time was the treasurer of the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee. Jack had formerly been a high official of the Democratic National Committee in the publicity when President Truman [Harry S. Truman] was in office. He also served as an Assistant Postmaster General for Transportation for several years, and a well respected figure in the Democratic Party among all fractions and groups on the Hill, and down town and what-have-you. And Jack turned out, in my estimation, to be an ideal selection. He accepted the assignment from the

Chairman. The Chairman asked me to take the assignment as his deputy and to start these hearings throughout the country.

We started, I think it was in February, if I'm not correct, in 1960, either January or February, I think it was February, in the city of Philadelphia with the first advance platform hearing and subsequently went on to hold, I think ten such hearings throughout the country, ending up in California just shortly before the national convention got underway in Los Angeles. The first hearing that was held in Philadelphia was on foreign policy. I remember it quite well because my current deputy here in the post office now, Deputy Assistant Postmaster General for Personnel at that time, was head of the CIO [Congress of Industrial Organizations] in Delaware. He came up to testify and was the first witness, Mr. LaPenta [James LaPenta, Jr.] That's where I first met Mr. LaPenta, as a matter of fact, so it turned out to be very fortunate.

These hearings, I think, did meet our expectations. They got a good bit of publicity throughout the country. They generated an enormous amount of interest in the platform by groups that before had only shown up at the national convention and had gone to testify before one of the committees of the national convention and, of course, had been lost in the shuffle because at a convention there's so much going on and so many committees meeting that the platform only gets intermittent attention. So this tended to heighten greatly the interest in the platform and I think the platform adopted in 1960 was one of the very best that was ever written by a Party. And it has been largely, almost completely carried out by both President Kennedy and President Johnson [Lyndon B. Johnson].

STEWART: Do you recall there being any opposition to this whole idea, for example, the fear of being accused of a certain amount of cynicism because of people's traditional attitude toward platforms?

MURPHY: Yes, I think initially it was very hard to overcome and I'm sure among someone people we never did fully overcome the idea that the platform is really just a campaign document that's written purely for public consumption in order to try to help win an election and after an election you throw it away and forget about it. Well, President Kennedy took the platform very seriously after he was elected and I think if you'll compare the programs of his administration, they follow very carefully planks in the platform. And of course, President Johnson took his platform very seriously. He's enacted a high portion of it into law. So I think that the general result has been to heighten interest in platforms generally in both of the parties and to give them much more attention that the conventions heretofore have done.

STEWART: Did you try to sell this whole program on the basis that there would be some substantive contributions made that would eventually wind up in the platform itself?

MURPHY: The way we did it was….

STEWART: And did this happen at all?

MURPHY: Yes. It very definitely did. The way we did it was, we would have prominent Democrats from throughout the country actually conduct these hearings. I would do the staff work on it under Mr. Redding's direction. We would make the initial contacts with the groups; we would choose which groups were to be invited, and then we would also put out public notices asking anyone else to come, but there were some we wanted to be certain would be there and be scheduled, be heard. We heard hundreds of groups throughout the country, people that never appeared before a platform committee on organization, had never appeared before, came to this one. And we would have the hearings conduct by prominent Democrats. I remember that Governor Williams [G. Mennen Williams] I think, was the chairman of the first one that was held in Philadelphia with Governor Dave Lawrence [David L. Lawrence] and Congressman Bill Green [William J Green, Jr.], Mrs. Louchheim [Katie Louchheim], many prominent Democrats. Senator Joe Clark [Joseph S. Clark, Jr.] chaired the one that was held on urban affairs in St. Louis with Mayor Tucker [Raymond R. Tucker]. We held important ones on foreign policy, economic policy in California. I remember we had Professor Seymour Harris [Seymour E. Harris] on that panel. We held hearings on Seattle; we held hearings through out the country where prominent Democrats took place, took part in the hearings.

Then we would have, Bob McAlister was hired for the staff in order to assist me in helping to summarize these hearings. As we got going on the hearings the amount of work became enormous and I had to have somebody work full time on simply summarizing the testimony and trying to extract any important ideas that were presented by any of the organizations or individuals at the hearings that might be good for a platform plank. And consequently, a fairly good size summary was prepared on each hearing in each city, and we concentrated in each city on trying to highlight one subject matter, although we did permit testimony on other subjects. But each one was sort of high-lighted in each city with a particular subject area.

Subsequently, when the chairman appointed Mr. Bowles [Chester B. Bowles] to be the platform chairman because he was the one that had the official authority of the national committee to actually draw up a platform, he appointed Phil Perlman [Philip B. Perlman], former Solicitor General, as co-chairman. They worked very carefully with us in coordinating our hearings, and Mr. Bowles and Mr. Perlman were very anxious to get from us any summaries or important ideas that were presented in the hearings and might be good for the platform. They were then turned over to Mr. Perlman, who was engaged in the advance work of writing the platform. Jim Sundquist [James L. Sundquist] subsequently joined that platform committee as one of the principal writers and they had a lot of material that had been presented through these public hearings.

STEWART: Other than this were, you at all involved in this initial writing that Gwirtzman [Milton S. Gwirtzman], Welsh [William B. Welsh], and I think Abram Chayes and a few other people were….

MURPHY: Abe Chayes is right. I was not involved in the writing of it, no. My job was to conduct the hearings, get the organizations, and run the advance platform. Bob McAlister then summarized all this stuff and turned it over to this

platform writing group that you spoke of--Abe Chayes, Milton, and Bill Welsh and others that were working under the director of Phil Perlman.

STEWART: Again, were there any problems at all on these regional hearings on neutrality as far as any of the candidates were concerned?

MURPHY: No, we really didn't run into that. We kept it completely away from individual candidates. Many of the candidates had observers present at these hearings. I can remember that's I think where I first met Larry O'Brien [Lawrence F. O'Brien], was at one of these hearings in California where he was present during the day that we spent there. But there was no problem that developed in the hearings themselves between the candidates.

STEWART: Moving on to the Convention, as I understand it, one of your jobs out there was to again coordinate who was doing the writing. Do you recall any specific changes being made as a result of the hearings at Los Angeles?

MURPHY: Well, of course, the committee held again a full series of hearings at Los Angeles as they were accustomed to do at each Convention. There was some thought initially that if we had the advance platform hearings it would eliminate the necessity for having to have extended hearings at the Convention itself. That was not true. There was a great demand to hold hearings at the Convention. And many of the groups that had appeared at the advance hearings wanted the exposure of national television and the excitement of a national convention in order to be able to present their ideas at the convention. So we found we had to hear many groups over and over again. But there were also a lot of other groups that preferred to come to the national convention and not come to the advance groups. So that we had to hold another five days of hearings, and they were very extensive. They were covered widely by television there. The committee had a very elaborate setup to hear the testimony, much more so than they had ever had before, and much more prominence I think was given to it by the press in the week before the national convention actually got under way.

So that it's very hard to say how much of the platform is actually written or affected by the testimony itself. Certainly the ideas that people put into these things, we have a general idea of before hand, they submit advance copies. This material was given to the platform writing team. How much of it they actually put in is very, very hard to tell. You can't really separate in your own mind sometimes what is said at a hearing from your own ideas about platform or what you would write. But certainly there was a relationship between the two and every effort was made on our part to see it to that the principal ideals that were highlighted both at Los Angeles and at the advance hearings were given to the people actually writing the platform, the advance drafting committee. Of course, the platform itself actually was finally approved and written, if you will, at least adopted by the platform committee, but there had to be a writing group. Obviously a hundred man committee cannot write the platform.

STEWART: You were also, as I understand, in charge of the security surrounding the writing of the platform and I somewhere came across an incident of someone trying to smuggle a copy of the platform out for the *New York Times.* Do you recall that?

MURPHY: Yes. We had a lot of problems along that line, not just with the *Times,* which is a very enterprising, respected newspaper, but with many other papers as well. Plus we had people working on behalf of various candidates that wanted to get copies of the platform, of course, out for various purposes. We had an elaborate security procedure made up of some devoted people who were determined to stay there day and night in order to protect the copies of the platform and advance drafts and to see to it that the drafting staff was locked up behind closed doors and was interrupted to the minimum degree possible. But this is very difficult to do in a convention situation, especially when the week before the convention all attention is really on the platform committee because that's the major activity going on at that time, aside from credential fights. So that we did have one or two cases of newspapers that tried to get away with it, but I don't think they made it in any case, at least I'm not aware of it.

STEWART: I guess they didn't because the *Times* usually published the full text and this was the first year that they didn't get an advance copy on their weekly deadline.

MURPHY: Yes, our system was probably better than Pinkerton that year.

STEWART: For what purpose were candidates trying to get a copy, an advance copy of the platform?

MURPHY: Well, there was of course, a lot of interest in many of the planks, the civil rights planks, and others that would be quite controversial. And each word, of course, is weighed very carefully that goes into a platform on a touchy area such as that, and each candidate's group obviously wants to know what's going on and wants to know what position should be taken. Many of the delegates on the Committee want to know what kind of guidance should be given. So that everyone's trying to get an advance plank and everybody's trying to get their copy or rather their idea as to what should be the plank inserted into the platform.

STEWART: Yes, I would say that. I certainly don't think it was a Kennedy document, except that then Senator Kennedy was certainly in the mainstream of the Party's thought. And certainly, I think the platform that was written could be, could have served as the foundation for any of the then candidates to run because all the candidates certainly were within the mainstream of Democratic thought about the Party. And I think that they could have all run easily and comfortably on the platform. As a matter of fact, the candidates that we ended up with, President Kennedy and now President Johnson, did run successfully and comfortable on that platform.

STEWART: Did you have any contact with Senator Kennedy or the people on his immediate staff at the convention?

MURPHY: No, I was so busy and taken up, harassed if you will, with the platform committee and the advance hearings and trying to maintain security of the committee and what-have-you, that I really had little time even to see my closest associates in the Young Dems. I didn't see my college director, I think, for the entire convention, until it was almost over. So it was very, very difficult to really see anybody except those that were connected directly with the platform committee.

STEWART: Didn't the Young Democrats hold a meeting in which Mrs. Roosevelt [Eleanor Roosevelt] and Adlai Stevenson [Adlai E. Stevenson]….

MURPHY: Yes, they held a rally. I was not present at that rally because I was working on the platform committee at the time. As I say, I was so involved in the platform that I sort of left all the DY activities at the convention to Chuck Monat, who was handling that thing really on the full time basis, he was doing my job and his job both until after the convention ended. And then, of course, after it ended we came back to Washington and then I resumed my position as Director of the Young Dems activities at the committee. But there was a lot of DY activity. I think we probably had more DY activity at that convention than had ever been evidenced before in any national convention.

STEWART: Moving on then, this transition between the convention and the start of the campaign, what exactly was your function and what were you trying to do?

MURPHY: Yes. Well, needless to say, we were in collapsible condition when the national convention ended and we would have loved to have taken off for a few weeks and recuperated. Of course, that was totally impossible. You had to, in fact we came right from the national convention, right back to the national committee, and started the next day. We had been going pretty strong as the candidates had, of course, for many months before the convention with the advance hearings. We came back to the national committee. There was a great deal of confusion initially as to what was going to be done. You had the existing national committee staff, you had the Kennedy campaign organization, and you had the volunteers that were about to set up, all of which had to be merged into an effective campaign organization. It was a difficult period for a lot of people. And a lot of people didn't know exactly what to do because we had a new chairman that had just been chosen at the national convention, Senator Jackson [Henry M. Jackson]. Bob Kennedy [Robert F. Kennedy], I don't know if he had at that time as of yet been appointed as campaign director, but he shortly would be. And you didn't know exactly who was to do what. So the committee people sort of just continued on doing what they had normally been doing. And then the Kennedy campaign staff came in and under the leadership of Larry O'Brien, who was made director of organization. Bob Kennedy did a superb job, in my estimation, of welding together the various diverse groups that were around. And I will say in my estimation, that if they had not had O'Brien as director of organization, I really think in

view of the closeness of the campaign we subsequently saw that things would not have turned out as they did. I think he was indispensable in pulling this organization together, so many divergent groups. And the leadership that Bob himself evidenced. I think he's one of the best campaign directors that I've ever seen function on a national basis, and I've been through several national campaigns.

STEWART: Were you strictly concerned with the Young Democrats at this time or….

MURPHY: Well, yes. When I came back I reverted back to my Young Dem role. The platform was over and Bob McAlister came back and finished up on any work of actual distribution of the platform things of this sort, letters back to organizations that had testified. We made it a point to write a letter back to every organization that had testified in advance hearings and at Los Angeles, thanking them for their contribution and trying to point out to them in the platform where ideas which they had suggested or ideas which paralleled those which had been put into the platform, in order to try to give them the feeling that their contribution had made a difference and had been important and was appreciated by the Party as it was. So Bob worked on that end of it and I reverted back to my DY role.

I remember I came back and within a very few days after I was there, I was looked over very carefully by Ralph Dungan and Dick Donahue [Richard K. Donahue], who occupied the office next to me at the time, Ken O'Donnell[Kenneth P. O'Donnell] and Larry O'Brien. And Ralph Dungan sort of passed word to me, "Well you're going to be coordinator of young voters' activities, you've got all the young voters' activities." And that's how I guess I was named director of the young voters activities during the campaign.

It was a very informal sort of thing and no one got any big titles. The organization was not, I would say, rigidly structured. I think one of the greatest strengths of the campaign organization that was put together was the fact that people performed a variety of tasks and there were no rigid lines which you had to be confined to. But that if you had a real problem, et cetera, and you had to get it to the top, you could get it there. You could get it to O'Brien, you could get it to Bob. And I subsequently then dealt exclusively with Dick Donahue and Ralph Dungan, and occasionally with Larry because he was so busy, he had so many activities. We would report immediately to Ralph Dungan and Dick Donahue.

Then subsequently, as the campaign organization began to get underway, there was a great moving around of people and we moved several times. One often wondered during the campaign how in the world, looking back, we ever won the campaign when you consider how many times people moved in the campaign organization from one physical location to another as we were constantly expanding. We were constantly adding new buildings and it seemed that the whole operation was being packed and unpacked practically weekly. But we subsequently ended up, after a series of moves, over on 17th Street, directly across the square, in an old house that had been taken over for the purpose of the campaign. And we had the entire second and third floor for Young Dem activity.

We greatly enlarged our staff, people that were working on DY activities. And then we went to work in putting out the campaign manuals servicing all the college clubs that were then in existence, trying to get all the existing DY organizations to form Kennedy-Johnson organizations, trying to put out as much literature about President Kennedy and

Senator Johnson as we possibly could to get image identification in young people's minds because we had had no image identification up to then officially, and generally trying to convert general interest in the party to interest in the candidates. And this meant a heavy emphasis on setting up volunteer organizations that were primarily interested in the men and not so much the Party. And of course among young people you know, they're very individual conscious. They're oriented toward candidates rather than parties by and large. So this was the biggest part of our operation.

STEWART: At the beginning was there any discussion or any real consideration of precisely what the role of the young voters for Kennedy-Johnson would be? For example, was there any discussion of changes that should be made from say the '56 or '52 campaigns?

MURPHY: Yes, there was. I had quite a few discussions with Dick Donahue and with Ralph Dungan. I had atleast two discussions with Larry O'Brien about where the young voters would fit into the overall campaign and what was desired. We tried to…. I had some discussions with Ken O'Donnell at the time, very brief about it. We tried to fit in our planning that we had been able to do prior to the convention to the O'Brien campaign manual and the O'Brien campaign approach and highlight the things that Larry felt to be important and what had worked successfully for Senator Kennedy in previous campaigns. We then produced, one of my first jobs was to write several campaign manuals, which I did, for the Young Citizens for Kennedy-Johnson, a new book for the Young Dems, a book for the Teen Dems.

And we got teenagers organized because we found there was an enormous interest among teens in Senator Kennedy and we found that while the teens themselves couldn't vote, very often they were influential in getting their parents to vote a certain way. And it's a very interesting subject in and of itself, the influence of teenagers on the voting habits of their parents. But we did have a large teenage organization, and I think very effectively led by Nicky Nodzen, who I selected, who was president of the student body at the Sidwell Friends School and turned out to do a crackerjack job.

We also began to prepare a basic policy statement of Senator Kennedy's addressed to the nation's young voters because we felt that we had to have an authoritative campaign document that we could use that would state where Senator Kennedy stood on the issues of education and the Peace Corps. As a matter of fact, you'll see over there on the wall the document that I think is the first document where Senator Kennedy is ever publicly identified as having proposed a Peace Corps idea. You'll find that I think also the final draft of what finally merged in the compilation of speeches during the campaign that Senator Yarborough's [Ralph Yarborough] committee later put out but as part of the message addressed to the nation's youth voters, which was subsequently published in the *Democratic Digest* and which was distributed to the press, we mentioned the Peace Corps idea as one of a series of things that he would do if he were elected President. And you'll see on that document over there, there's some scratching out and some additions that's Archibald Cox's handwriting in there, and I also entered in the document at the time in an attempt to try to get Senator Kennedy to endorse a Peace Time GI Bill of Rights, but you'll see on there Archie Cox has written through it and said the senator is opposed to the idea. But he didn't change

any of the Peace Corps proposal at all and basically it was the proposal that Senator Humphrey had been proposing. He had Congressmen McGovern [George S. McGovern] for quite a time, which we in the Young Dem group knew had an enormous appeal among young groups because wherever we had talked about it or tried it, or discussed it we found a great deal of reaction to it.

This document incidentally was prepared, I guess I wrote it sometime in August, maybe in July. I guess it was, it was shortly after we came back after the national convention. Yes, it had to be in the end of July or the first part of August. It was designed to be issued at the beginning of National New Voters Month which we had Senator Kennedy proclaim. But by the time it got through all the clearances of the various people it had to be cleared through Dick Donahue, Ralph Dungan, Roger Tubby, and then finally Archie Cox who was the final clearer, it was the end of Nationwide New Voters Month. So we issued this document at the conclusion of Nationwide New Voters Month, the first part of October. But we had an amazing reaction to this. The day after this was issued to the press we began to get all kinds of young people calling up headquarters and saying that they were interested in the Peace Corps idea. And we began to get people coming in off the streets, young people, and become identified with it. We passed this intelligence along to the people on the staff; subsequently, Senator Kennedy made a full blown speech on this, which I think was written by Fred Dutton [Frederick G. Dutton] and I'm not certain about that, out in San Francisco.

STEWART: Delivered in Michigan.

MURPHY: Yes, he made one… Yes, my chronology's a little bit off. Subsequent to this, I think the first actual mention that he made personally, because of course he did not, to my knowledge, actually see this document personally, it was cleared by Archie Cox and then put out in his name as Senator Kennedy's message to the nation's new voters. But the actual first mention I think that Senator Kennedy made of it was at the Student Union Building or at his appearance at the University of Michigan in an Arbor, late at night also. And then it was decided that there would be a full blown speech on this subject which I think he subsequently gave in San Francisco. My chronology might be a little bit off. This is just from the top of my head.

STEWART: I think that's correct. Did you people take any polls to specifically see what types of issues had particular appeal to young people?

MURPHY: No, we had not done any actual polling on it. We, of course, had a pretty good idea of issues that we thought had been successful, had been emphasized by young people's groups, and had been used successfully by well, people like Senator Humphrey that had made a specialty in speaking to young people's groups over a period of time. Senator Humphrey used to have a package of peace proposals for example which the Peace Corps was one idea. He concentrated a lot on education for peace and things of this sort. This used to go over very well. So generally, in talking to young people's groups, we tried to highlight first of all availability of loans in order to start buying a house and get started for a young couple and education proposals because of interest in education, higher education, especially the Peace Corps idea which we knew was a very hot idea and it

became very evident during the campaign. Probably the biggest single issue that emerged in the campaign in terms of voter appeal I think was this. When I say that I mean new issues. We knew that Medicare and others had a lot of voter appeal but among young people, this clearly was the big issue. And then, of course, civil rights. The young people in 1960 were enormously interested in civil rights. We could see this movement growing in the late fifties, '58, '59, '60, especially on college campuses. And then when the first sit-ins began, this obviously was something that had a tremendous emotional hold upon young people and we were very anxious to have Senator Kennedy identify with the cause of civil rights and especially with the student sit-ins at lunch counters in the South. And if you'll look back, you'll find that Senator Kennedy took a good position and an immediate position on these questions which certainly helped, I think, his general image among younger people.

STEWART: Did the then Senator Johnson's presence on the ticket present any problems in this area?

MURPHY: No, I think not at all. As a matter of fact, Senator Johnson made some awfully good speeches during the campaign that had a lot of material in it that was appealing to young people. A good bit of it. And I don't think that all that Senator Johnson's presence on the ticket detracted from any of this interest in the ticket whatsoever. It is true that Senator Kennedy had more of a rapport with young people, emotionally and glandularly, if you will. And in terms of the issues that he had talked about, I think he was more identified clearly with young people than Senator Johnson was. But certainly, I don't think that Senator Johnson's presence deterred from this. As a matter of fact, my own view is, not from a purely young people's point of view, but it's very clear in hindsight now that without Senator Johnson on the ticket, I don't think we would have won in 1960. I think it would have been absolutely impossible.

STEWART: What approach was generally taken to the whole religious problem as far as young people were concerned? Or was this as much of a problem as it was with, of course, just about everyone else?

MURPHY: It was certainly not as much of a problem among young people as it was among older people. By and large younger people just could not care less about this issue. There were some people that found this a problem and we did our best to saturate all young people's groups with President Kennedy's statement to the ministers in Texas and his general approach on the whole church-state question which had evidenced before Los Angeles. And we sent out an awful lot of literature material on that in order to try to play this issue down as much as we possibly could or at least to neutralize it among any young people where it might be a cutting factor.

We made a conscious effort to organize a committee made up of the student leaders of the principal student religious national groups throughout the country: the student Baptist group, the Episcopal group, and we eventually got, and I don't have a piece of paper in front of me, this is just from my memory, but I'm certain this is right, if I had time to go back and actually look at the endorsements we got, we got the endorsement of the president of virtually every national student religious group in the country to serve on the committee for

the election of Kennedy-Johnson. We had an enormous committee and one of the best committees we ever got together. We had virtually every student leader of every known student organization, from the Young Adult Council to the NSA to lord knows what that endorsed the Kennedy-Johnson ticket. It was a very impressive group. We spent many weeks on getting this group together and the President of the Law Students Association and what-have-you. So what we did try to get for the first time are the presidents of student religious organizations of all the student religious organizations: the Baptists, the Methodists, the Catholics, the Episcopalians, and what-have-you.

STEWART: Did you have any kind of state or regional structure that you used or was this pretty much of….

MURPHY: Yes. Well, we had…. This was a fascinating study in political organization. No one really has completely done it, although Dan Reed, who was a faculty intern at the Committee at the time and probably Dan Ogden [Daniel M. Ogden, Jr.], subsequently put a lot of this into a book which he wrote. But we had an enormous structure among the young people's groups because we had to merge the existing DY clubs with the college DY's and generally they were two separate groups. The college DY's weren't in the DYCA at that time by in large with the new volunteers for Kennedy-Johnson which we established on every college campus in addition to the DY groups with the Teen Dem groups that were brand new really for the campaign. So that we had a very large campaign organization. And we expanded as we moved over to L Street, we expanded not only to include Chuck Monat, who was the head of college Young Democrats, but we then brought Mike Rauh [B. Michael Rauh] in and Jack Wainright, the fellow that was president of the American Law Student's Association from Oklahoma, Dan, his last name escapes me, Dan Turner, I think it is. Plus, we had…

[BEGIN SIDE II OF TAPE I]

…Nicky Nadzo, who came into work full time on the Teen Dem thing, then we had about four or five people that would come in and volunteer practically every day that weren't full time staff people, plus an enormous amount of volunteers that would come in a couple of days a week and then at night. Our principal activity was really done just when we got the volunteers from DC clubs and what-have-you. So we never went home before midnight or so and we were back at the office about nine or nine-thirty the next morning. So those were long days and that was Saturday and Sunday as well as the regular week days. It was a very exciting period of time.

STEWART: You actually had people who presumably were coordinating things and…

MURPHY: Yes, of course we had state…. We already had the existing statewide organization in virtually every state in the country. We then created a young citizens organization for Kenny-Johnson in practically every state in the union. And a number of these organizations were formed from among the leadership of the Young Dems in other cases we had people that were really Republicans that were identified

as Republicans that were included and, in fact, provided leadership in certain cases. In other cases, there were people that were not identified in politics and these were the people we really tried to get to lead the new organizations, student body presidents, college editors, people that were young labor leaders or things of this sort that would set up the organization. We had several statewide organizations going on. We even had a state grouping of Teen Dem clubs that we set up.

STEWART: What about money? Did you have any problems as far as getting enough funds from…

MURPHY: Terribly, this was an enormous problem. And as a matter of fact, one of the major projects that we had during the campaign we worked on for the end of the campaign because in the final two weeks of the campaign you really can't do anything from national headquarters except the very top people policy-wise. Otherwise, the election as far as our ability to be of influence is over within about two weeks of the actual election itself. So we decided the best thing we could do the people in the headquarters was to take our entire staff and put it out in the field, go out and do what we could to work in the states.

So we organized a series of caravans for Kennedy-Johnson. We had done a similar thing to this in 1956 in conjunction with the woman's division for Stevenson. In 1956, the women's division had the primary responsibility for organizing it and the Young Dems cooperated. This time we took over the primary responsibility of running the caravans with the women's division cooperating. And we had teams of prominent Democratic women, our own staff of Young Dems, and volunteers from the local community that would go out, I think we sent out six, my memory's foggy here, but I think it was about six such caravans that went out from headquarters. They really were station wagons that had been loaned to us by good and devoted Democrats. The one I took out I think was loaned to me by Congressman Moorhead [William S. Moorhead] and his wife. It was a lovely, beautiful new station wagon and we were always worrying about damaging it in some way. But we hooked these station wagons up with loudspeaker equipment which we rented and incidentally, half of which came back wrecked because they had driven the station wagon without making proper allowance for the loudspeakers on top, you know, under tunnels, bridges and other things. Half of them came back smashed. But we outfitted it with the loudspeaker equipment with records of the Kennedy-Johnson campaign songs and we had some great campaign songs during that campaign. We loaded the station wagon as tightly packed as we could load it with all the literature that was left over from national headquarters that we wanted to get out into the field plus a woman, a young Dem, and a volunteer to go along, and started them out to various locations throughout the country, key states that were coordinated with Larry O'Brien and the campaign staff.

Once we had gotten to the state we would then pick up local cars and local women's groups and local young Dems would join in. These caravans would then move from town to town generally in areas that would not be hit by a major campaigner or a major campaign speech, and you know there are thousands of areas in the country that never see a campaigner, never see the candidate during the campaign. Well, we took these caravans in order to generate some interest in the campaign and give out some literature and to have

some hoopla and what-have-you out into these areas. And we didn't know in fact up until the day before the caravans were due to go whether or not we would have enough money to be able to actually put them out on the road. We had gotten the loudspeaker equipment, rented that, gotten the cars from people, outfitted them and what-have-you, but up till twenty-four hours before we were due to go I had to go over and beg and plead with Matt McCloskey [Matthew A. McCloskey] in order to get enough money. And thank god Matt McCloskey saved the day for us and gave us five thousand dollars in order to start off these caravans and get them out on the road.

And we subsequently then spent the last two weeks in different parts of the country. I went to Michigan, campaigned there with Helen Hill Miller and with Governor Williams' [G. Mennen Williams] son and daughter and we sort of operated out of Governor Williams' house. We stayed there over night and then went out during the day and went all through the state of Michigan, which was one of the key states that had been zeroed in on, went to the outlying areas and up into the northern peninsula and what-have-you. And we stayed in a log cabin one night I remember, in a hunters' lodge, and other nights in small hotels along the way off the beaten track. But we think that they generated a lot of interest in the campaign, were helpful.

STEWART: What about materials? Was there ever a problem of getting supplies of materials and getting them out?

MURPHY: One of our principal operations was a squad that I organized among our Young Democrats that would wait until very late at night and would then go to a materials distribution center that was under the very efficient control of Dave Hackett. And by various means we would get literature out of the central headquarters in order to be able to send something out to young people's groups and college groups and others because we simply didn't have the material available. And, of course, we had to be very careful about the money situation. Money was exceptionally tight; the Committee was insisting that all state organizations and local organizations buy literature. A lot of our Young Dems simply didn't have the dough, and we had to have something to send out, so I admit now seven years away from the operation, that we used to have the squads of volunteer DY's, including our top DY officials, that would go over late at night and by various ways and means pilfer some of this material in order to get it mailed out the next morning so we'd have something to work with.

But the shortage of materials was a desperate problem throughout and while we needed the charge in order to cover the expenses because we were in a desperate financial condition, when you're in the midst of a campaign, you're inclined not to worry so much about the expenses. Everything is important, trying to maximize every piece of literature and get it out to the people before Election Day. So we were more interested in that than we were the fiscal condition of the national committee at that time. But even with those tight controls and all, as you know, we ended up with an enormous campaign deficit probably the largest that was ever compiled by any national committee. It took years to pay it off.

STEWART: Did you have any problems at all with far left groups or groups that really yet didn't want to be associated with the campaign? Possibly this whole….

MURPHY: No, I can't really recall right now any major problem. There's always some kind of a problem from a few isolated groups here and there when you're running a national campaign. But we didn't really have any major problem along that line. It seems to me that the great interest in the New Left has been a phenomena of the last several years that was really not a problem in 1960. And our problem in 1960 was really a basic apathy. It was trying to get people interested that weren't interested. Perhaps the problem in certain areas now might be an over degree of interest in certain activities, but certainly not then. We were still recovering from the effects of a silent generation in the McCarthy [Joseph R. McCarthy] period. And our job was to get people interested in politics. Of course, Senator Kennedy served an enormous, in my estimation, national purpose in that regard. He really interested young people that never had a political thought before in their life in politics because they were attracted to him. And they were attracted to the Peace Corps idea, they were attracted to his civil rights idea and what-have-you. So that really, I still credit to President Kennedy a large share of the credit for a greatly heightened increased interest in politics that young people have today compared to say ten or twelve years ago when I first came to the National Committee and the Young Dems.

STEWART: Again, during the whole campaign, most of your contacts were with Dungan and Dick Donahue?

MURPHY: Yes. Dick Donahue was the most immediate supervisor that we had. Whenever we had to have a problem go higher, we could get it there but of course, Dick was in daily contact and hourly contact with Larry O'Brien and Bob. I saw Larry I think twice during that campaign to discuss aspects of the young people's campaign: how it was progressing; what the reaction was that we were getting; where we thought we had to concentrate more energies; what issues, if any, were important among the Young Dems and of course, we discussed the whole Peace Corps thing which had become enormously important during the campaign. I also saw, I think I saw Bob twice during the campaign on various campaign matters and we dealt with Matt McCloskey on the campaign financing for the caravans, but our daily supervision was really through Dick Donahue and Ralph. And frankly, they let me do an awful lot on my own because Ralph knew me and they were pleased I think with the campaign manuals that we turned out for all the young people's organizations. We wrote several of them and got them out by the thousands. And so I think that they gave us a great deal of rein in the campaign, which we appreciated.

STEWART: Did you have anything particular to do on election day?

MURPHY: On election day itself, no. We did fly the night before on the Kennedy plane up to Massachusetts to Boston for the final rally in the Garden.

STEWART: Everyone must have gone there. Everyone I talk to went there.

MURPHY: Well, they took, and this was a wonderful thing, I know the staff will never forget it, it was one of the really great experiences of our life to be, after you've been engaged in the hoopla of the campaign and you just are dog-tired and exhausted and emotionally drained, it was very refreshing for us to be able to close the final evening of the campaign in the Garden. And we had gone up for that. Then we….

STEWART: You didn't make that whole swing through Connecticut?

MURPHY: No, we just went, the committee staff and our staff, the Young Dems, went only for the final rally in the Garden. And then we came back from there, flew back from there. And during election day we had no specific assigned duties except to try to answer any phone calls that came from headquarters and of course cast our own ballots and then go to the Mayflower Hotel that evening.

STEWART: Okay, moving along….

MURPHY: To begin the long, wait.

STEWART: Unless there's anything else about the campaign that you think we haven't covered….

MURPHY: No, I think, of course a lot of it is a little bit hazy right now, and I'm sure a lot more would occur to me if I went through some of the old digests and other things, but I think these were the highlights.

STEWART: How did you close up shop there and how did you come to wind up in the Post Office?

MURPHY: Well, that's still somewhat of a mystery to me. Maybe others can shed a greater light on it. It took quite awhile to actually wind up affairs, as you can imagine. Things were in great disarray. And we had moved so many times it was difficult to know exactly where our materials were. The first thing that I can remember doing the following week was that I went with Milt Gwirtzman and we collapsed on the beach in the Virgin Islands. It was the first vacation I had had in five years. And I remember going down in the airplane. We lost one engine on the plane just past the midway point, and that was a wonderful experience which also calmed our nerves. And we got to the Virgin Islands. I can remember we also went out sailing and a terrible storm came up one day and we bobbed around out in a sailboat for about four and half hours. I thought that was the end also.

But that was our vacation, we spent two weeks down there and then came back and we began the clean up process and the thank you notes. And we tried to write thank you notes to everybody that had anything to do with the campaign and to express a thanks on behalf of Senator Kennedy and Senator Johnson for their efforts. Then of course we immediately had upon us the Inauguration. So part of our people were given over to doing something about trying to clean up the Committee and our part of it, and the rest of us went

to the Inauguration immediately because we decided that we would have for the first time an important series of functions put on by the young people, the Young Dems, as part of the Inauguration. So, we began that long process of working from nine until twelve, etcetera.

In so far as coming to the Post Office itself is concerned, I can recall Ralph Dungan asking me a few days after the election when we finally had determined that Senator Kennedy had won the election, what I was interested in doing and what I wanted to do in the government. And I think, I can recall saying to Ralph that I really wasn't interested in coming into government, that I wanted nothing out of the campaigning. I certainly wasn't engaged in the campaign to get something out of it because I had been in previous campaigns in the committee when they were out of power. My intention was to remain with the Committee for the remainder of that academic year and then to go back and get my Ph.D and take up where I had left off in 1956, which meant college teaching. And Ralph said, I can remember Ralph looking at me funny and saying, "What! You want to stay here at the Committee? Don't you want to go into the government?" "No, I don't want to." He said, "Okay." And so I didn't hear anything more about that. And I just paid no more attention to it and went through the Inauguration, finally collapsed.

We had a very good Inauguration and a very good series of events of young people's participation in the Inauguration and we had the largest group I think we had ever brought to Washington for it. After that was over, I then went back to the Committee to start getting the organization going now of the Young Dem again and regrouping where we had left off. And within a few days, I received a telephone call from I guess it was Dick Donahue at the White House staff, to go over and see the Postmaster General, Mr. Day [J. Edward Day]. I'd never met Mr. Day and when I got there Mr. Day was tied up in a meeting at the time and I was taken to see Mr. Brawley [H.W. Brawley]. I knew Bill slightly, I had met him on the Hill and knew him from the Hill before. And, of course, Bill had worked in previous national campaigns. So we sat around chatting in Bill's office for awhile and finally Bill said, "Well, I guess you know why you're here." And I said, "No, I have no idea why I'm here. I was just told to come over and see Mr. Day. I suspect it's about a speaking tour he's going to make on behalf of the Committee or something." He said, "What? My god, you don't know why you're here? The President's going to nominate you as Assistant Postmaster General tomorrow morning," at which I nearly collapsed because I had: one, no interest in coming to the Post Office; two absolutely no knowledge of the Post Office at all; three, certainly no experience in personnel work. And at that moment I can remember Mr. Day coming through the door from his office into Bill's office and so we then sat down and chatted with Ed for awhile and Ed asked me if I had ever had any experience in dealing with labor organizations. I said no I hadn't, except working with them in a political context of the national committee and COPE [Committee on Political Education] and what-have-you. And he then asked me if I had had any personnel experience. I said, "No." And he asked me something more about my background in student days and other. He then said, "Well, I think you're going to do very well." I don't think I could have said anything in that interview which would have impressed him with my qualifications to be Assistant PMG for Personnel. But it turned out to be, I must say for me very fortunate, an extremely enjoyable association not only with Mr. Day and subsequent PMG's but the entire experience here has just been very, very enjoyable.

STEWART: Let me throw something in here….

MURPHY: And evidently this must have happened as I, just to complete the answer, as I can put it together this must have happened on the basis of a recommendation of Larry O'Brien and Dick Donahue and Ralph Dungan; as far as I can figure it out, they were the people that knew me. And I think the idea must have originated with Ralph or Dick and been approved by Larry, who was then at the White House staff because I subsequently heard that there was a person that was about to be appointed as Assistant Postmaster General, a very fine career man, but that the National Association of Letter Carriers and Bill Doherty [William C. Doherty] in particular had found out about this, gotten wind of it, and had objected very vigorously to his appointment on the grounds that he had had some identification with the preceding administration because he was a career man and what-have-you. And they wanted somebody else handling a bureau that they felt was absolutely vital to them and their interests. I think the feeling on the part of the people that were advising the President at the time on appointments, etcetera, was that they could not have anybody directly from the ranks of the postal unions because we have so many postal unions and to choose only a person from one rank, you'd probably get the enmity of the others. So they wanted somebody that was not from the Post Office but somebody that was simpatico, if you will, with general liberal philosophy on organized labor that could get along with the unions in the Post Office which are, as you know, among the most powerful lobbying organizations in Washington and that at the same time would not identify with anyone of them. And I think that my name must have come up in that connection, although certainly I never asked to come to the Post Office, never dreamed that I would ever come to the Post Office.

STEWART: Very interesting. As I say, just let me throw in one little question, you may not know anything about it, but this is that big episode about the appointment of Congressman Dawson [William L. Dawson] as Postmaster General. Do you know anything about that?

MURPHY: I really don't know anything about this. This happened, of course, if indeed it did happen the way we have heard about it, would have happened before I came to the Post Office and certainly I had no direct dealing with it at all. It is true here that, you know, the post office employs over a hundred thousand Negroes and it is vitally important that we have a progressive policy on civil rights in this Department and equal employment opportunity so that I'm sure a lot of attention was given to assuring that the people that were put into control had a good point of view on this issue. The President himself did announce evidentially that he had offered the position to Congressman Dawson, who had turned it down, but I was not part of the negotiations.

STEWART: Had your predecessor left by the time you were appointed or….

MURPHY: Yes. My predecessor…. Actually, this bureau had been created under General Summerfield [Arthur E. Summerfield] in 1953. Before that time, there had not been a Bureau of Personnel. And a presidential appointee

subject to some confirmation was made the head of it. The first man to occupy that job was Mr. Gene Lyons [Eugene J. Lyons] who occupied it for about seven years and in the year just before 1960, went to the White House as the principal personnel advisor to the President, President Eisenhower [Dwight D. Eisenhower]. He was succeeded by Mr. Barr, Frank Barr, who served I think only a year, a little bit less than a year, but he had vacated the office by the time that I arrived here. So that the office was actually vacant for about a month, I think. I think I was appointed sometime in February of 1961 and then actually confirmed in March of 1961.

STEWART: Could you briefly describe the process that you personally went through to: one, make some assessment of the programs that you were going to be in charge of, and two, get yourself personally oriented to the whole situation?

MURPHY: Yes. It was a very interesting experience and I had to have a very quick education on personnel matters and on the Post Office, a very intensive one. One of the very first things I did the first couple of weeks I was in office was, because of my total lack of any experience in the postal service, I decided I would have to very quickly find out what's actually done in the Post Office. And the best way to start out as far as I was concerned was to go down to the lowest echelons and work up. So I made it a point to go out on a route with a letter carrier one day. I went down to the office at five o'clock in the morning, went out with—I even remember his name, carrier Humbert Ventura, I think was his name—and we went walking on his route from Friendship Heights out here in the northern part of Washington. And then I spent some time riding on a railway Post Office car with a clerk; I spent some time working in the office with a clerk. I went to New York City on the midnight shift and went through and watched the mail handlers perform their job. I spent some time with a small postmaster; I went out on a rural route with a rural carrier up near Aberdeen, Maryland where I had spent some time in the Army.

And as a matter of fact, a lot of the newspapers and TV stations were interested in this. I remember the very first day—and I didn't do this at all as a publicity stunt, it happened that they found out I was doing it and asked to come along—and I can remember when we started on the route out here in Friendship Heights one day, my lord, we had a big entourage of TV cameras and everything else following along behind, including dogs, as I was carrying the sack around delivering mail. And then, of course, I can remember also that as a result of that, at one point the photographers wanted pictures in a certain fashion. So they had me take the bag and put it over my right shoulder for a point of view of pictures and this picture was carried all over the country and appeared in several magazines. And I subsequently got an awful lot of letters from irate letter carriers saying, "You phony, you didn't really carry that bag because anyone know that you wouldn't have carried it on your right shoulder, it would have been on your left shoulder." But I actually did, but it was only for purposes of pictures taking we had transferred it. But it was interesting.

But then I spent an awful lot of time in calling upon each union president and all the officers here. This was the first time incidentally that had ever been done by any official of the Department where we went over and met the union officials in their own headquarters and spent time with officers and executive boards, discussing the post office and their views about personnel matters. It was also the first time, I'm told, in history that any postal official

had ever gone out and walked with a letter carrier and done these other things with rank and file people. I think it helped to create an area of identification and to try to symbolize what we wanted to symbolize to these employees, that there was a new day in the post office in terms of personnel relations that subsequently would be manifested and that we wanted to make every effort possible to try to cooperate with the employees to try to have real participation by the employees in the managerial process of this Department, which as you know as well at that time had about five hundred and fifty thousand employees. And now there are over seven hundred thousand employees, about twenty-five percent of all the employees in the federal government.

And I made the rounds of all the unions. That took several days to do because we had at that time fourteen national employee organizations that we dealt with in the postal service. I also talked to many members of Congress who were interested in and expert on the postal service about their views about what needed to be done in the way of personnel legislation. I found out and I had to read an enormous number of briefing books here that my very capable career staff prepared and I found out what a wonderful staff they are. They're really among the top experts in this area in the government and devoted people. I found out that in a way fortunately, in other ways not so fortunately, personnel administration in the Department was in its infancy in terms of our labor relations, our equal employment opportunity policies and others. We were in my estimation, thirty years behind the times. In many other areas very substantial accomplishments had been made in my judgment by the preceding administration. I don't mean to run down their accomplishments at all, but there were simply enormous areas where improvement could be made. As a result, we were able to establish in the very first week a new policy of what Mr. Day called the "Open Door Policy" in dealing with our employee organizations, which subsequently really grew into a very extensive program of union recognition based on Executive Order 10988. But many of the things that the subsequent Kennedy Executive Order, which was a milestone in this area, one of the really major accomplishments in my estimation of the Kennedy Administration--several of the things which they advocated we had put into practice here during 1961 as part of our consultative management open door process, which was a very drastic change in terms of what our unions were accustomed to and their dealings with the Department.

We also attempted to take a brand new tack on issues of pay, which are government wide in significance, and worked closely with Mr. Macy [John W. Macy, Jr.] and with the White House staff and Budget Bureau on developing the comparability concept and testifying actually on behalf of it. And that marked a brand new departure in the federal government. That was the first time that a president had actually proposed comparability as a method of pay setting for all federal employees. So we were able to start a vigorous program of equal employment opportunity here. I can remember the, I think it was the third week I was in office, I was invited to go over to Baltimore, my old home town, and to appear at a postal event there. And when I got over there I found out that the postal supervisor organization which was headed incidentally by a very close friend of my family was a segregated organization that did not admit Negro members. I gave them exactly ten days in order to drop their bar and admit Negro members or else face revocation of their charter. And they did so. This word got around among our employee organizations and within a few weeks thereafter we gave a similar notice to our employee organizations that they would either cease and desist in terms of segregated local or would face loss of recognition. And

several of them on the basis of the word having gotten around about what happened in Baltimore had already taken voluntary action to eliminate their dual locals so that by the time President Kennedy came out with an order on this subsequently much of this activity had already been under way in the Department here. But that was a very drastic change too because we had segregated employee organizations right up to 1961.

STEWART: Could you talk a little bit about your relationship with the White House with any members of the staff over there?

MURPHY: Yes.

STEWART: Whom primarily did you deal with and on what kinds of things?

MURPHY: The Post Office Department of course I think fell into the same problem that it has always fallen into in almost every administration and that is lack of what the officials in the Department felt to be enough attention at a high enough level. I've often heard Larry O'Brien since coming to the Post Office here say that when he was at the White House in a key spot on the staff of the President that there was always a problem in trying to find enough time to deal with the Post Office Department's problems. It wasn't that the staff felt them to be unimportant or wanted to downgrade them in any way, it was simply a question of priority of business. There were so many pressing issues that had to receive immediate consideration that the Post Office sort of came down the line. And it was always that you meant to get to the problem, but you couldn't actually get to it until a few more days. And as a result the amount of attention that was shown to the Post Office personally by the President, I think was much less than might have been desired on the part of Mr. Day and some of the staff and by the President himself. So that we dealt largely with certain people that were appointed to sort of have principal liaison with our agency and in my own case the way Kenneth O'Donnell and Dick Donahue seemed to be the two principal people although there were other people at the White House from time to time that we would have to deal with. For example, because my own Bureau is concerned with personnel and we play a large role in all testimony on the Hill on pay questions and all personnel matters that come up, we dealt with other people on the staff as well, including Mike Feldman [Myer Feldman], Lee White and others that had responsibility for substantive programs in these areas. And then Lee White, of course, also served on the Goldberg [Arthur J. Goldberg] task force to draw up Executive Order 10988 that Mr. Day was a member of and I was an alternate member of. So we dealt with him on that issue a lot. On day to day Post Office operations, Dick Donahue was the principal contact at the White House level. On other occasions we met with Ted Sorensen [Theodore C. Sorensen] when the rate bill and pay bills were up for discussion and decision. But the principal one was Dick.

STEWART: What about the whole process of appointing postmasters? What kind of arrangement did you have at the beginning and how, if at all, did

this arrangement change?

MURPHY: This is handled actually by the Executive Assistant to the Postmaster General and the Bureau of Operations which has the Postmasters Division in it and rural carriers division in it for appointment process purposes and after they're initially appointed, then they become part of our general responsibility for personnel actions. But the initial appointment is done under a congressional advisor civil service system. And as a result the Postmaster General, in conjunction with the White House and sometimes on instructions from the White House, will determine who is to be the congressional advisor. I would not be in that process. The personnel shop is kept out of it pretty much because that is a political process and we try to keep our relations here as much as we can with the Civil Service Commission because practically all of our employees in the postal service are under civil service except for a very handful, maybe fifty that are Schedule C's or presidential appointees. And as a result, the political process to the extent that it enters the appointment process of people is centralized in the Executive Assistant to the PMG and the actual getting on board of postmasters and rural carriers is vested in the Bureau of Operations.

STEWART: Could you categorize the types of things that you normally would talk to, for example, Donahue about?

MURPHY: Well, it could be anything from what position we're going to take on a pay bill to the attitude of a postal employee union on some matter to a political issue; the political effects that taking such and such a stand will have insofar as the letter carriers of the clerks are concerned or what-have-you; occasionally about personnel matters that would come up, some member of Congress would be interested in having somebody appointed to a particular position or initially of course we were flooded with requests to do something about the promotions. Every democratic congressman had people descending on him from the preceding administration and said they were obviously eminently qualified but that somehow the preceding administration, they had all been held back for one reason or another and now that the Democrats were in power they should all of course be promoted and moved forward. Well, obviously this was impossible and most of theses stories were not true to begin with, but everybody had a story and it has been traditional for years in the postal service for people to try to secure advancement via the political route without regard to qualifications, merit, or anything else.

As a result, one of the principal headaches that we had initially was what in the world to do about the promotion system. And undoubtedly there had been an awful lot of political manipulation before under all the administrations, not just the preceding one, the preceding Democratic ones. It had been tradition in the postal service. So after a huddle with the Postmaster General and discussing this matter with Mr. Brawley and the other officials in the Department, we determined something simply had to be done about the promotion system. And Mr. Day instructed to develop a merit promotion plan for the Department because we decided that we were going to be able to answer these inquires from members of Congress and political leaders throughout the country. All of them were calling in to get people promoted, we had to have some type of system.

So I developed, in conjunction with the employee unions and after extensive consultation with them, the first merit promotion system based on written tests, scores achieved on the tests, so man-point credits for an evaluation on each employee given by two immediate supervisors which when put together would give a man a number, a score. And then a register would be established based on these scores and the top nine people on these registers would be preferred to a promotion advisory board made up of senior supervisors who would then interview them and recommend three to the postmaster for each vacancy. This applied to all level seven first line supervisory promotions throughout the postal service, but, well initially in the major offices throughout the country. It later was extended several years later by Dr. Gronouski [John A. Gronouski] to include about two thousand post offices throughout the country. But this was the beginning and the very first time that there ever was any merit promotion system for supervisory personnel in the Post Office Department and that covered at that level about eighty percent of all promotions made in the post office.

This brought on an enormous adverse reaction from many political leaders, Democratic leaders, and many members of Congress who obviously were under the gun from their constituents and all the special leaders that had descended on them. And while they themselves may have no interest personally, they were compelled to express some interest to us and some of them got pretty violent about it. The major problem I really had the first year in office here was in trying to explain, especially to many political friends of mine that I had known through the years in the Democratic National Committee and Party, why we just couldn't promote people helter-skelter based solely on their political affiliation that we had to have some concern for the postal service and the efficiency of the operation and really getting good supervisory people. So we took an enormous gamble in installing this plan and as I look back upon it now, I think it was done probably with a minimum degree of consultation with the White House. It was done largely on orders from Mr. Day and, I think, Mr. Brawley subsequently notified the White House of what we were doing along this line. I later heard Mr. Day say that when he went to discuss this matter with President Kennedy, he was supported by the President all the way. I do know that several political leaders, who I think should remain nameless, and several prominent Democratic congressmen attempted to secure my removal from office in the very first few months that I was in office because of the installation of the merit promotion system in the Department. This was resisted and fortunately not carried out by President Kennedy, his staff at the White House, and the Postmaster General. But there was enormous political heat that was generated as a result. But now it's accepted in the Department and in fact it was vastly extended by Dr. Gronouski and General O'Brien has given it unequivocal support and extension. It now has become a negotiated promotion agreement with our employee unions written into a national contract. There recently has been a congressional investigation as to how we can extend it even further. And so, something that was very revolutionary at that time has now become very accepted. And that was an accomplishment of the Kennedy Administration and the President supported it.

STEWART: Let me ask you a few questions about the task force that produced the Executive Order on employee management and cooperation in the federal government. How much of a role did you have in the drafting of this Executive Order?

MURPHY: Mr. Day was one of the five or six members of the task force. Let's see if I can recall. Mr. Goldberg, Secretary Goldberg was the Chairman and we had Secretary of Defense Mr. McNamara [Robert S. McNamara], Secretary, I mean Mr. Day, Lee White from the White House staff who represented Ted Sorenson, Ted Sorenson really was the principal member, and John Macy from the Civil Service Commission. I may have left out one other, I can't recall. But anyway, I was Mr. Day's alternate on the task force. Mr. Day attended, I think, all the meetings and I attended every meeting of the task force that were held. Lee White [Lee C. White] used to attend for Ted Sorensen and Carlisle Runge [Carlisle P. Runge] attended for Secretary McNamara, otherwise all the principals attended the meetings. Oh, Dave Bell [David E. Bell] was also a member of the task force, Bureau of Budget. And he was represented by Bill Carey [William D. Carey]. I guess he was his representative on the task force.

This task force met for the better part of about six or seven months I guess and held public hearings in which we heard many, many groups that were interested in the subject of employee management relations in the federal service. The report itself was very largely put together and written by Pat Moynihan [Daniel P. Moynihan] who was sort of the executive secretary for it and was serving I think as Secretary Goldberg's chief assistant at the time. An awful lot of it of course reflected the personal views of Secretary Goldberg in his vast experience in the trade union movement, plus his experience in the public sector. Contributions were made by all the members, Mr. Macy and Mr. Day, others made considerable contributions. But I think it would be fair to say that the principal actual writing and drafting, the essential ideas and all were Secretary Goldberg's and Pat Moynihan's work. Also an awful lot of the input on the staff level was put into it by Ida Klaus, from New York, who served as a consultant to the task force and who was brought in by Secretary Goldberg and who gave us a lot of the experience that she had had in New York City as an official of the Board of Education, dealing with the teachers' unions and others. We got a lot of ideas from public hearings that were held, where some of the officials that had been prominent in President Eisenhower's Administration in this area testified as well as the union leaders and citizens, the National Civil Service League and others.

The task force produced a report that I don't think was changed in any respect to my knowledge by President Kennedy. And the Executive Order was issued substantially in the form that it had been written by the task force, almost unchanged. It was in my estimation clearly one of the really historic documents in the federal service, the most historic undoubtedly that's ever occurred in employment management relations. It brought about a very fundamental change in dealing with unions throughout the federal government but particularly in the Post Office because we're ninety percent unionized. And it has been in the Department that we have perhaps given it the greatest effect and carried it out to the greatest extent. It's meant a tremendous readjustment on the part of many of our postmasters throughout the country and our management officials as well as our union leaders who still have a hard time adjusting to some of the requirements of the Order. But in my estimation it brought about a change that could not have occurred if the legislative roof alone had been relied upon. For years there had been in the congress bills introduced in every session, the so called Rhodes Bill which would give official recognition to employee organizations in the federal government and this bill never got anywhere at all in the Congress. It had been

introduced for years and years. As a result, President Kennedy was able by Executive Order to put into effect not only virtually all the major provisions that had been in the Rhodes Bill, but considerably beyond the Rhodes Bill, and to fashion a document which took into consideration the peculiarities that exist in the federal service in regard to union relations and the differences that exist compared to private industry and accommodated those interests and produce a document which has now been copied in many, many ways by municipalities and state governments throughout the country. And, I'm sure, will be extended by President Johnson. I wouldn't be surprised if we didn't have another task force appointed very soon which would go even beyond this.

STEWART: I've heard it said that one of the chief defects of the Executive Order was that there was no provision for resolution of impasses that came about. Do you recall this being a point of discussion or dispute among the task force people?

MURPHY: Yes, extensive discussion was given to this and it was felt by I think practically all the members. There were very few points in which there was really tremendous divergence of opinion among the task force, contrary to public opinion. Actually, when the document was finished I think the remarkable thing about it was that there was such a high degree of agreement among the people that were on the task force. But this point was discussed and I think it was the feeling of the task force that union recognition was such a new thing in the government and the unions generally were so weak in the federal government that to try to impose upon agencies, which had had no regulation in this regard at all, to impose upon them a system for the settling of outstanding differences or impasses between the agency and the unions would put an impossible handicap upon the program at its very inception that we were going to have a hard enough problem already in trying to convince agency heads and the career civil service that run the agencies to accept this radical new way of dealing with employee organizations and that we should not encumber it at that time by any further compulsions, if you will, to accept things which they didn't want to accept. The whole philosophy behind it was to try to, first of all, encourage, create the climate where unions could grow and could prosper and, secondly, create the kind of a….