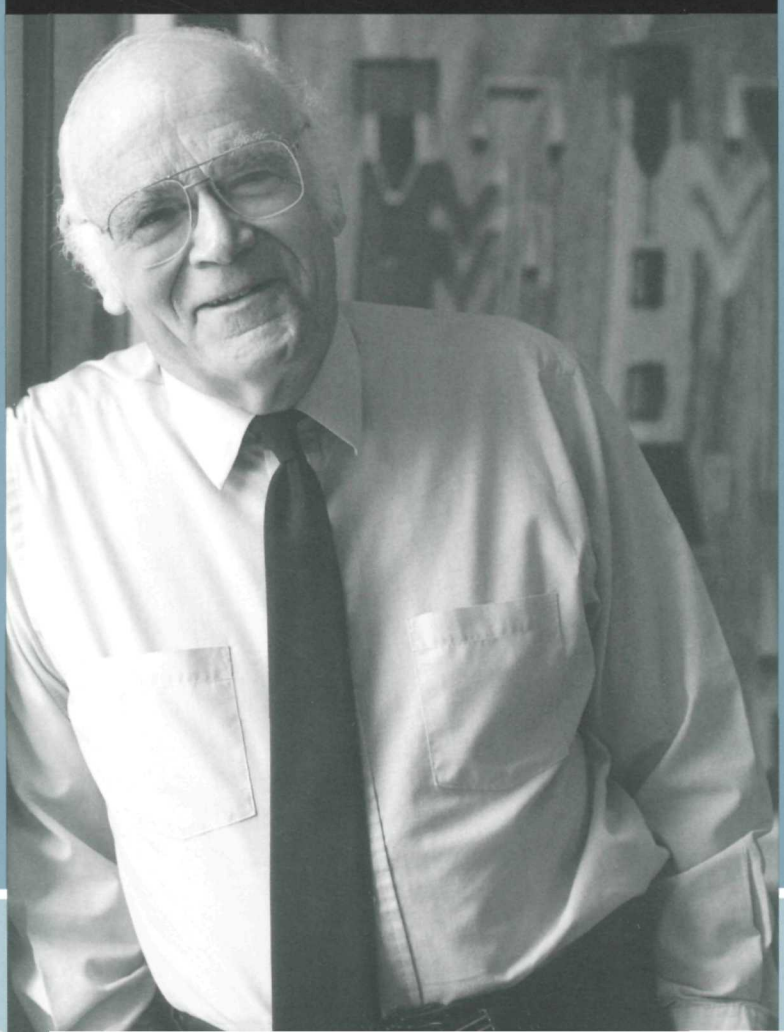
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
National Center for Cutural Resources

ORAL HISTORY

INTERVIEW

with

Roger G. Kennedy



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INTERVIEW

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Roger G. Kennedy

Director | National Park Service | 1993-1997

PART ONE

April 8, 2002 | Washington, D.C.

PART TWO

August 13, 2002 | Santa Fe, New Mexico

PART THREE

June 4, 2003 | Telephone Interview

Conducted By

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National Park Service
Department of the Interior

2005

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW *with* | Roger G. Kennedy

Director, National Park Service
1993-1997

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PREFACE

This interview is part of a broad effort by the National Park Service to collect oral history interviews with its senior leaders, particularly its former directors. These interviews provide means to more fully document the careers and contributions of these individuals and their tenures with the Service.

This three-part interview began in the spring of 2002 with a session during one of Roger Kennedy's visits to Washington, D.C. The second session followed months later at the Kennedy home in Santa Fe, New Mexico. With a few topics not yet addressed, we recorded a third and final interview session by telephone.

As National Park Service director during a pivotal time in its history, Mr. Kennedy offers a unique and significant perspective. During his tenure, he played a key role in shaping and implementing a major reorganization and restructuring of the Service, one with far-reaching impact. Mr. Kennedy speaks candidly and thoughtfully in his interview about the challenges facing the Service in the mid-1990s and about the Service's relationship with Congress, environmental groups, and its partners. His observations about the Park Service's role and mission are particularly insightful.

Roger Kennedy, for whom history remains a passion, recognized the importance of documenting his time with the Service and never lost his enthusiasm for this project. I am very grateful to him for his support, his time, his candor, and his insights. Both Mr. Kennedy and I have reviewed and edited the transcript, and in a few instances have inserted brief text to add clarity. It is our hope that this interview will contribute to the historical record of a significant period in the history of the National Park Service.

I would like to acknowledge the contributions of Mary Anne Greenwood who transcribed the interview tapes, Lise Sajewski who skillfully edited the final transcript, and Kerry Skarda of [B] Creative Group Inc. who designed and produced this publication.

Janet A. McDonnell
National Park Service

"I felt, and feel to this day, that wearing the uniform of the director of the National Park Service evokes a tradition running back to Stephen Mather and to Horace Albright that gives whomever the occupant of the job may be a kind of immediate recognition and authority on the Hill, which is where it counts."

ABOUT THE INTERVIEWEE

Roger G. Kennedy was director of the National Park Service from 1993-1997. Prior to that he served for thirteen years as director of the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of American History. From 1970-1979 he was vice president and financial officer of the Ford Foundation. Mr. Kennedy served six U. S. presidents on a variety of boards and commissions and as special assistant to the U.S. attorney general and the secretaries of Health, Education, and Welfare, and Labor. From 1959-1968 he worked as chairman of the executive committee at the Northwestern National Bank in St. Paul, Minnesota and as vice president of the University of Minnesota.

As a television presenter and producer, he covered the White House for NBC. He appeared on his own NBC radio program and on his own television series on the Discovery Channel. He also made and appeared in a number of documentaries for public broadcasting. He was a founder (and first chairman) of the Guthrie Theater in Minneapolis, Minnesota and a founder of the Library of America.

He has published a large number of articles and books, to include: *Men on the Moving Frontier; Greek Revival America; Architecture, Men, Women and Money; Orders from France; Rediscovering America; Mission: The History and Architecture of Missions in North America; Hidden Cities: The Discovery and Loss of Ancient North American Civilizations; Burr, Hamilton, and Jefferson: A Study in Character; and Mr. Jefferson's Lost Cause: Land, Farmers, Slavery, and the Louisiana Purchase*. He was general editor of the multi-volume series, *The Smithsonian Guide to Historic America*.

PART

ONE

APRIL 8, 2002
WASHINGTON, D.C.

CAREER BACKGROUND

It's April 8, 2002. I'm Janet McDonnell, and I'm here with former director of the National Park Service, Roger Kennedy. And you were in the midst of explaining some of your career background.

...I'm a public administrator. My experience in public life commenced more than fifty years ago in 1948 at a national convention, which I attended with my college roommate. Then I ran for Congress in 1952, won a primary, was defeated in the general election. Went to Washington in '53 with my campaign treasurer, Warren Burger, who became chief justice of the United States after a tenure (in which I carried his briefcase for him) when he was assistant attorney general for the Civil Division in the Eisenhower administration.

I served in the Department of Justice for a couple of years, went to NBC to cover the [Supreme] Court and the White House, wrote for a number of publications, including newspapers, *Law and Contemporary Problems*, and the *New Republic*. I went back into the government to help Mrs. Oveta Culp Hobby, who was secretary of HEW [Department of Health, Education and Welfare], with the delivery systems for the Salk polio vaccine and with explaining what the vaccine was. Back to NBC to do more documentaries. And then back to the Department of Labor to work on migrant farmworkers' working conditions and housing conditions with Secretary of Labor James P. Mitchell.

During the course of the next ten years, I became a banker. [I] wound up as chairman of the executive committee of a bank in St. Paul, Minnesota, but in the meantime worked to create the student loan program as a special assistant to the secretary of education, and a couple of other things during that period. On presidential commissions at one time or another. At the end of the '60s, I went to the Ford Foundation as its—oh, there was an in-between period where I was vice president of the University of Minnesota and the director of its foundation. Went to the Ford Foundation [in 1970] as its chief financial officer, and then also as its vice president for the arts. And then to the Smithsonian Institution as the director of the National Museum, then, of History and Technology, which we changed to the National Museum of American History. Because I was a daily renewable employee of the Smithsonian Institution, I was able to do other things on the side and wrote books, which now total, I think, ten. And I edited the thirteen volumes of the Smithsonian's *Guide to Historic America*. The books were all works of history.

During that period there was a variety of other presidential tasks, one for [President] Jimmy Carter chairing a commission on the future of the National Endowment for the Humanities. And during that period, my wife was working on Park Service matters as a part of the Conservation Fund's operations, saving a variety of Civil War battlefields and other pieces of land. I think there were seventy projects, including additions to parks ranging from Fort Union to Antietam [National Battlefield], aggregating somewhere between fifteen and twenty million dollars from a multitude of private donors.

I retired at the end of nearly fifteen years at the Smithsonian, and a variety of people, including a number of members of Congress and environmental organizations, suggested with some vigor that I would be better, they thought—to run the National Park Service and defend it from the assaults that they anticipated against it—than the other persons being considered. It isn't always the question: "Are you wonderful?" It is usually: "Are you slightly more wonderful than somebody else?" So, at President Clinton's request, and [Secretary of the Interior] Bruce Babbitt's, I took the job as the fourteenth director of the National Park Service in whenever that was, 1993, I guess.

You talked about your wife's work with the Conservation Fund and a little bit about your interest in the national parks. Can you tell me a little bit more about what experiences you'd had with the National Park System and the National Park Service before becoming director?

Virtually none—as a part of the apparatus. I had had some success, I think, in protecting places that otherwise wouldn't have been protected and placing them in the Park System, actually both national and statewide. And I had worked several times in defense of what might be described as park values, both historical and natural, over the preceding thirty years. So I wasn't an unknown factor. I suppose the other qualification, if anybody bothered with such things, was that I had testified before the same committees of the House and the Senate from time to time over the preceding twenty years. So there was a system of acquaintance, which was perhaps useful.

BECOMING DIRECTOR

I'd like to hear a little bit more about how you became director. You mentioned that there were some people interested in seeing you in that position. And I'm wondering at what point you became interested in that position and why? What were you thinking?

Well, since I regard the National Park System as a trusteeship having at once a custodial function and a protection function, and an educational institution with a multitude of campuses, it didn't seem to me to be a very large transition from the teaching in place I was already doing—such as the thirteen books that describe the nation as a historical complex, for the Smithsonian, and having managed to teach in place with real objects at the Smithsonian. A pretty close analogy, it seemed to me.

But that, of course, wasn't what interested the people who were concerned about the impending assaults upon the Park System. Their sense of it was that the National Park Service needed someone to defend it who could write a lead sentence and who was accustomed both to responding to inquiries from the press and other media and to testifying under pressure. Certainly, the traditional defenders of the parks and those who were concerned about their future were not eager for it to be led by someone who had no capacity to capture public attention nor to state the case for the parks with some ease and naturalness, I think.

So we didn't anticipate a tranquil voyage. It was not a party matter. Both people on the Republican side and on the Democratic side shared legitimate apprehension that the Park Service had not been colorfully led for some time and could use a little restatement.

What do you mean by "colorfully led"?

Well, there hadn't been, in my view, enough powerful rhetoric responding to the systematic endeavor on the part of people not persuaded of the importance of public lands nor of other public institutions affirming the American tradition, "traditions" in the plural really. There has been a systematic endeavor on their part over many years to place those institutions, such as the National Park Service, in the hands of people who don't really feel very passionately that there is a public role in education.

Likewise, these folks didn't care very much about upgrading the competency of the people in the parks to do their work so competently that they will be irresistibly persuasive to the American people. It's not a matter of tidy management of a janitorial sort. It's a matter of, it seems to me, believing sufficiently in the function of public bodies to affirm the intentions of the founders and the subsequent generations of Americans who made these places important.

Besides, some directors and even some senior people in the National Park Service were, shall we say, exceedingly mild in their view that this is an evolving country whose hallowed places have accreted over time because the nation itself has accreted experience over time. Our important common experiences didn't stop with the Civil War, nor did they stop with the internment of the Japanese during the Second World War, nor with *Brown v. the Board [of Education]*.[1] Nor have they stopped yet.

Therefore, the places that represent the nucleation of that experience, and in which that experience can best be elucidated, will continue to increase in number. And the people qualified and passionate about their elucidation, and the elucidation of our relationship to the other species with which we co-inhabit the earth, those people need to be able to do it well. And I took it as my mission to try to help them do it as well as they'd like to.

[1] This was the 1954 landmark Supreme Court decision effectively ending legal segregation in the nation's public schools.

What was [Secretary of the Interior] Bruce Babbitt's role in your selection? Was he one of those people looking for the kind of leadership you just described?

I don't know. We had one experience together. He called up, called me up, and we went for a tour of the Museum of American History together, which was fun because I think he felt somewhat reassured. I had a pretty decent relationship with the janitors, and the elevator operators, and the professional staff, not all of them surely, because I tried to get them to work rather hard. But I think he rather liked that and we got along pretty well.

I don't think that Secretary Babbitt had in mind then the importance of other people who would have their own independent constituency with the public. He certainly thought it was important to have people who had their own independent constituencies in environmental organizations and, to a limited extent, on the Hill. I suspected I was somewhat more of a presence in the public's mind than he would have thought necessary, initially. I don't think he regretted it, but I do think it was rather something that he hadn't necessarily banked on.

But on the other hand, I think those of us who have been around town a little longer than the collection of governors who became cabinet officers in the Clinton administration were far more apprehensive about the political climate then, and about the assaults that we expected on the parks and other things, than the environmental organization chiefs who tended to constitute the rest of the major political appointments in the Babbitt administration. I think they thought it was going to be easier than it turned out to be.

It sounds like you might have felt a strong mandate from President Clinton to provide the kind of vibrant and dynamic leadership that you just described.

I sure did. And thank you for the description. Yes, Bill Clinton had very, very modest interest at the outset in environmental matters specifically. [Vice President] Al Gore had far more systematically developed his interests, but they tended to be global or national and not place based. Both the president and Mrs. Clinton, I think, initially were amused by the degree to which we made those questions publicly visible. I think after the amusement, they began to feel these were interesting subjects that they could attend to themselves. So, Mrs. Clinton commenced, toward the very end of the administration, to get very interested in historic places, which was a new note for her, and the president, of course, became a ferocious advocate of national monuments and the expansion of protected areas.

There wasn't a lot of other progress on environmental matters in the early years of the Clinton administration largely because the newcomers, the previous governors, had not much experience in finding parallel interests with equally ambitious people on the Hill. So the reforms sought on other fronts languished for four or five years, surging back into some level of energy toward the end. Meanwhile, the parks were under assault from the "Contract for America."[2]

What were some of the factors that you weighed in deciding to accept the position? It sounds like you must have weighed your sense that there was a battle ahead.

Sure. Well, I certainly had to weigh the fact that I was sixty-eight years old at that point. I was aware of Director [William] Mott's[3] experience, which it seemed to me to teach the lesson that an older person had better be prepared for the probability that he or she will be kept very busy on the road by people who don't want much change to occur. Older people simply may not have sufficient personal energy to be agents of effective change. Bill Mott was a great man who had a magnificent career. But he came to the job rather late without any Washington experience, which is different from a state experience. I was really apprehensive that I just couldn't carry it physically. A nap in the afternoon is a very good thing for someone who's over sixty-five or seventy. As it turned out, there's a certain energizing that occurs if you're being attacked. And I didn't find it much trouble to respond to that as long as the hearings were in the morning. In the afternoon, it was harder.

I'd like to know what kind of reception you received from the senior careerists in the National Park Service.

Oh, I think initially [with] deep skepticism. It took two or three years, I think, to earn the acceptance of people like Deny Galvin and John Reynolds, let alone the people in the budget office who were unaccustomed to a director who could add and subtract. They were really not used to that. And I was trained as a financial person. I never mastered the budget process, but we got a little closer [to mastering the budget process] and had I had the energy to go on for eight years, I think ultimately it might have been possible to do that. But as it was, it wasn't necessary because the budget office reported to Deny Galvin,

[2] During the 1994 election Rep. Newt Gingrich championed a "Contract with America" that proposed a balanced budget amendment, restrictions on welfare benefits, and term limitations for members of Congress.

[3] William Mott served as director of the National Park Service from 1985-1989.

whatever his job was, and as a consequence of that, he, as the master of that process and an intensely sound public servant, was able to manage all of that, I think, very effectively.

I felt, and feel to this day, that wearing the uniform of the director of the National Park Service evokes a tradition running back to Stephen Mather and to Horace Albright[4] that gives whomever the occupant of the job may be a kind of immediate recognition and authority on the Hill, which is where it counts. Nobody messes with somebody in uniform either offstage or onstage, and they certainly don't in front of the camera. It just doesn't happen, which gave the Park Service, I think, a great deal of protection during its worst days.

I have a very strong impression that many of the troops thought that was an artificial device. They needed a little political education. Some of them, I think, have gotten that education in retrospect. But I rather regret that my successors have not seen the virtue of giving themselves additional authority and efficacy by depersonalizing the job today. It is as important to this country as being the commander of the Marine Corps, and I don't see the commander of the Marine Corps testifying very often on significant matters out of uniform.

Do you have any sense of why many of the others were resistant to [wearing the uniform]?

I think it's an absence of a dramatic sense, a sense that politics is theater to a substantial extent. You have to be able to get past the theatrical impact, imparting a sense of authority and competence in the field. That is, you've got to know what you're saying, but it gives you an initial credibility, which is of very great importance, and recognizability. It was not my ineffable charm that got the thirteen network exposures over the weekend after the Senate first markup called for a one-third cut in the National Park budget. It was that there was somebody [in a uniform] with gray hair, who could enunciate very briefly a set of problems and who looked impressive. Not that it matters a lot anymore, but I think it did its job at the time.

To go back for just a minute—you indicated in your interview down in St. Louis[5] that you were viewed as an outsider.

Sure.

[4] Stephen Mather and Horace Albright were the founders and first two directors of the National Park Service.

[5] In September 2000, during a major National Park Service conference called Discovery 2000 in St. Louis, Missouri, Park Service retiree Boyd Evison conducted interviews with Roger Kennedy and several other former directors.

It sounds like you're confirming that. And I wondered, it's sort of easy to think of the disadvantages of being an outsider, but were there some advantages as well?

Oh, sure. Had we had a more tranquil time, and had we not been required to go through what I regard to be the absurd process of reorganizing the National Park Service's boxes, changing the boxes around at an infinite cost in time and energy, I think the outsider (if the outsider respects the insiders, which certainly I do) is in a much better position to address the calcifications, bad habits, and smugness, than the inside people are, as long as there is genuine respect for both the people who put in their lives doing this kind of work and for the mission.

You indicated that you were initially regarded with some skepticism and I wondered what steps you might have taken to strengthen your credibility within the Service.

I recall that the interviewer in St. Louis was Boyd Evison, whom I certainly sought out immediately, as I sought out other people like John Cook, whom I respected a great deal, [and] knew some of. I sought, I honestly sought their counsel. I was aware that they had thought they would be better qualified for the job than I was and it helps to be able to say that to somebody. You can't do that if you are their junior. You have to do that if you are their peer. But once it's clear that you know that they know, it's possible to get a lot of help, which I think I did.

I don't have any sense of betrayal from any of the leadership of the National Park Service at any time. I have observed the means of betrayal when it occurs, and saw it happen on several occasions before I took the job. But I never had that experience in the Service. I certainly had vehement differences, and I think one or two of the senior leaders didn't understand either the necessity to comply with the administration's (in my view) foolishness about reorganizations.

They didn't see quite why one had to go through that process and resented it and me, accordingly. That's a perfectly understandable thing. Nor do I think some of them understood how bad the attacks on the Service could have gotten. I really do believe that the [Rep. Newt] Gingrich Congress would have pruned a very substantial number of parks out and would have further destroyed both the scientific and historic capability of the Park Service to do its job.

I don't think there's any method except performance. I do not think wandering around from park to park being amiable is very persuasive. And if the system wishes to keep a director from being effective at all, that's what will happen.

Well, you mentioned Director Mott before.

That's a great man who got snookered. Snookering a not great man is no trick at all. But if it hadn't been for Bill Mott's experience, I think I could have been snookered just as easily.

Do you feel like there was an attempt to do that, to keep you on the road as well?

There always is. There always is. It's what every bureaucracy does. The Forest Service did exactly that to Jack Thomas at the same time. And it's what happens. The Army, and the Navy and the Air Force will do that. It's harder for the NEH [National Endowment for the Humanities] to do that or the Soil Conservation Service, but everybody will do that if they can.

Do you recall, in a general sense, some of the advice that some of the careerists you mentioned, Boyd Evison, John Cook, and I assume, Deny Galvin, might have passed on to you?

That was the first one: Don't let yourself get snookered. They saw the white hair, and they thought Bill Mott, and in their kindness they said, well, at least two out of the three said, "Don't let them do that to you." Also, there were a number of other instances in which charming superintendents or chiefs of the Park Police would have gotten things they shouldn't have gotten without a lot of counsel. But I certainly learned and actually have suggested to subsequent directors whom you can trust and whom you can't, but more of the former than the latter. And there are people whom you can trust.

Your previous experience had been so diverse. I wondered if that had helped hone that [skill]?

I've been a consultant to venture capitalists and international bankers, insurance companies, and various other kinds of people. And what that really involves is trying to make judgments about who is likely to tell you the truth or most of it and who isn't. And that is something that comes from experience, I think.

RELATIONSHIP WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

What kind of guidance or direction did you get from Secretary Babbitt?

Very little.

I saw almost nothing of the secretary. I saw him, oh, as a part of the audience when he addressed the senior officers of the department, which happened for a while most mornings. And then that function was turned over to his chiefs of staff.

I regard Bruce Babbitt as an exceedingly intelligent man with a very admirable set of intentions, who lacked the instinct for consultation and partnering. He went beyond an appropriate reluctance to intervene or seek to handle detailed matters of the administration, went beyond that into an absence of empathetic attention to the necessary concerns of people who were his subordinates. I'm not thinking so much myself because I'm a terrible subordinate. But other people are born subordinates and they need nurturing and Bruce doesn't have nurturing in him. Yet he had a very tough job to do, and nurturing could easily have distracted him from it. Who knows? He was a very good secretary—certainly the best since Harold Ickes and Stewart Udall.

The result of that [approach] was that secretarial policy reached us by way of a succession of chiefs of staff and assistant secretaries, who themselves had no sense of what the secretary had in mind and who had a propensity for what I call "fly by" administration, which was an occasional appearance and then a departure again, leaving things to be picked up after them. That was the least pleasant part of the job.

The most pleasant part was working with the Park Service. The least pleasant part was working with the intermediate layers. And I think with respect to Bruce Babbitt, I regret the consequences of his style for him more than I do for myself.

Tell me a little bit more about the challenges that might have presented for you, that style, and how you dealt with that.

Well, I think that, I think there is a profession of public administration exemplified by people like Deny Galvin, John Reynolds, or Karen Wade, the people who really do understand that there is such a profession. And they are good at it. I think that when people are doing their work competently within the set of objectives that reach them in the democratic system by delegation, it's wise to leave them alone. Affirm them in the process [and] be available for

discussion if they want it. If the climate changes or direction changes, there's an immediate obligation to tell them why those changes have occurred and from whom, and what the respectable ways of handling them are, and to be there. I think if you are dealing with those people when assaults come, stand beside them and do not avoid the assault. If you're the boss, you take the heat.

That's true upward as well. And the assistant secretaries whom Bruce appointed were not good at that and were not experienced in the level of consistent support or assumption of consistent personal responsibility that is a part of that process of public administration. They simply had never done it. And they had never done anything else in an essentially military structure.

Sometimes we would be deep in—brucellosis,[6] for example, comes to mind. A piece of journalism I've been reading totally misses the personal part of the Montana Yellowstone [National Park] brucellosis process. The assistant secretary would suddenly appear at a meeting and do something that didn't square very closely with the previous assurances made by his subordinates with better information. And the same thing happened in the Everglades. The same thing emphatically happened with regard to reorganization, which took at least three times as long and was three times as irritating because of the intrusions, the sporadic intrusions from above.

If an assistant secretary wants to take on a project as his or her own and see it through, staff for it properly, and conduct that business, then the National Park Service director ought to step aside and leave it to them. But it doesn't work if it's part in, part out. That's inexperience in part. It's also a characteristic of people who aren't sufficiently confident of their skills to remain within the range of those skills and strike out seeking to be important in other areas. That was irritating. In retrospect, I regret very much that superintendents and Park Service staff people were left, and still are left, in quandaries that could relatively easily have been dealt with a decade ago if there had been a more consistent address to them.

Somebody, early in the Yellowstone bison and AFIS brucellosis problem, relatively early in the tenure of Gov. [Marc] Racicot, I think, could have found a way for the superintendent of Yellowstone, supported by the director of the National Park Service, to reach an agreement. I think that's true. Other historians could disagree on grounds that the governor of Montana is so untrustworthy and so susceptible to dissembling that that [sort of agreement] is impossible. That just wasn't my experience with him. But that's an historic call.

[6] Brucellosis is a disease that can cause infected cattle to abort and adversely affect cattle production and export. At the time, some bison in Yellowstone National Park were infected with brucellosis and cattle ranchers and others feared they might infect domestic livestock outside the park boundaries.

MANAGEMENT STYLE

It sounds like you were describing a style of management that includes delegating authority, empowerment, [and] communication.

Yes, all of those things.

How did you try to implement those things within the Park Service? That's a very general question, I know.

Yes, sure. It seemed to me that there were people inside the Park Service who understood the desirability of that, and who summoned their energies and hopefulness against the inevitable attrition of hopefulness that occurs in the life of a large organization. I can think of a half a dozen like that who were willing to work hard and conscientiously on the process of reorganization, though thinking as I did that its initial impulse was artificial. Once in it, they gave it an immense amount of personal caring and commitment on the grounds that they wanted to increase both competency and responsibility.

And I think a number of those people—I know a number of those people—feel betrayed by the degree to which that resurgence was not carried forward systematically in the way in which the post-reorganized Service functioned. And that's a bad thing. If you try that sort of thing and find that the leadership doesn't really mean to follow through, you feel pretty bruised and you are likely to revert to your previous lethargy.

RELATIONSHIP WITH CONGRESS

I'd certainly like to spend more time on reorganization in just a minute. Is there anything that surprised you about the job when you took it? Is there anything that you really felt unprepared for?

Oh, sure, an infinite number of specific questions and problems place by place. I did not anticipate the ferocity of antigovernment feeling. I didn't understand the success of the Reagan assault upon what I regard to be democratic government, the process whereby we govern ourselves through a governmental entity. I was surprised by how far the attack got.

I did not take account of the coalescence of antigovernment feeling and disaffection on the part of people on the Left in the 1970s as it was skillfully repackaged by people on the Right in the 1980s. It probably should have been more obvious to many of us. The impulses of the civil rights movement and the Vietnam War—in which many of us were on the antiwar, pro-rights end of the spectrum—were captured in the corporate interest by

people who really were capable of channeling disaffection against government to serve as ways of sweeping away countervailing force against corporate interest. That was a surprise. It's still not fully understood that that's what happened.

So that by the time that the Gingrich Congress hit, the most astonishing antipatriotic impulses—that is the impulses arrayed against the American system—were presented from the Right in ways that I certainly had not anticipated. I rejoiced in the opportunity to contend against them, because that's a fight that I think is a good fight to be in. But I didn't understand, I think, the combination of impulses that were there. Nor did I really anticipate the tepid, lazy, and cowardly responses of large bodies of environmentalists and liberals.

Could you be a little more specific about how that antigovernment sentiment you just described manifested itself, particularly in regard to the Park Service?

Oh, sure. Well, the impulse to prune back the budgets and get rid of the newer parks, that was all code for: "Let's stop paying attention to blacks, Hispanics, women." These were the people for whom the newer parks provided places in which their portions of the American story could be told. Those budget-cutting, "new park"–eliminating impulses were directed against the capaciousness of the sense of what the American past is. They were coupled with, and are coupled with, a desire by corporate interests and other economically exploitive interests to do what they will with the same pieces of property and cut back their own taxes. Taxes are necessary to support parks. So there is a kind of selfishness and a kind of narrowness, which find their expression in budget hearings. That's what comes out of it.

And antigovernment feeling is convenient for people who would like to mine or graze a national park. It is as convenient to talk a language of "overextension"—the current expression is, I gather, "mission creep"—as it was for people who wanted uncontested corporate power in the 1950s to use the threat of communism as a device to achieve the same consequence.

If, as Deep Throat urged Bernstein and Woodward,[7] you "follow the money," it isn't very hard to find out who wants what. And in the attacks on the National Park System, it was on one side ideological, but I think less ideological than economic. People wanted taxes reduced. They didn't want to pay for these things they didn't see any value in. And it extended its ultimate reach to desires to stop paying for the rehabilitation of Independence Hall and sell off—it seems astounding but it's true—to sell off the monuments on the [National] Mall, including the Washington Monument. I recall a lady congressman saying, "What's the price of the Washington Monument?"

[7] Reference to Carl Bernstein and Bob Woodward, reporters with *The Washington Post* who helped uncover the Watergate scandal.

That I hadn't heard.

Oh, yes. It was really, I thought it was wonderful because it did rather illuminate the extent to which they would go.

Do you want to be a little more specific about where this was coming from? Are you talking about Republican Right?

Yes.

And if that's true, then were the pressures coming from the Left that you mentioned as well?

Well, the pressures from the Left were often followed by a disappearance on the part of the Left at crucial moments. We experienced that in the '50s with regard to Joe McCarthy.[8] The Socialist Left and the liberal Left were not very helpful in contending against the extreme Right. The middle, largely the Republican middle, was responsible for turning back Joe McCarthy, not the Left or even the partway Left. In the case of the assault on the National Park System in the '90s, the environmental Left was so intent upon derogating the bureaucracy or the government that they took virtually no part in the defense of the National Park System.

At one conspicuous moment, which I recall with some poignancy, even the president of the National Parks Conservation Association uttered in public testimony derogatory words for the National Park Service people. That was a mistake on his part. Fortunately, his board perceived it as a mistake, with a little assistance from us, and canned him. We got more help from the moderate Republicans like Sherry Boehlert and Amo Houghton than we did from, in many crucial occasions, from some Democrats who, I'm sorry say, failed to understand the circumstances. Always making exception for the sainted chairman, Sydney R. Yates, who was the paladin of the period.

Were there any other members in Congress who were particularly supportive of Park Service issues?

Sid Yates and [Rep. David E.] Dave Skaggs understood. I really do believe that but for the late Sidney R. Yates a whole range of important American institutions, ranging from the Smithsonian to the National Endowment to the Park Service, would have been shredded during the early part of the '90s.

[8] Reference to Joseph R. McCarthy, U.S. senator from Wisconsin, who in the 1950s used his position as chair of the Committee on Government Operations to launch a highly publicized investigation to document Communists in government.

Yates was the chair of the House subcommittee on Interior-related agencies?

Yes, with assistance from Dave Skaggs. Occasional assistance from George Miller, but sporadically so. And in the Senate, always Dale Bumpers, only occasionally [Sen. Robert C.] Bob Byrd, who I think was not a help much of the time. And other people like [Sen. Robert F.] Bob Bennett of Utah, a very conservative Republican on park matters. Bennett was pretty good and highly intelligent on matters relating to concessions reform, perpetual concession reform.

I think it's fair to say that there was a much smaller proportion of Republicans in those Congresses who were helpful than Democrats. But without that small proportion, we would have been much, much worse off.

What about on the other end? Which members were particularly challenging to deal with?

Most of them are gone. [Rep.] Helen Chenoweth. I can't remember Mrs. [Linda] Smith's first name, from Washington, though she came around toward the end and began understanding what she was doing. I think [Rep. James V.] Jim Hansen has an honest disaffection from federal employees and the federal government. Hansen is, I believe, an honest man who is wrong. There were certainly others in the Class of 1992 who I don't think were honest in the sense that what they professed was only casually believed and sporadically represented in their votes. None of them were sufficiently distinguished so that one needs to worry much about them historically. Nobody is going to remember them. They've come and gone.

Well, maybe another way to look at it then is to ask what legislative achievements you are proudest of, or that you would want to, are most pleased about?

It's very hard to remember the early '90s except as defensive rather than offensive. There's certainly, the Bumpers-Bennett concessions reform process is a more useful piece of legislation than it is generally credited for being. The additions of additional parks, or the affirmation of those additions, seemed to be modest triumphs.

I suppose, given what you said earlier, maybe especially the ones that reflected a more diverse experience of American history.

Sure. Yes, we said everybody is a part of this. And the newer parks are places in which we are going to be able to commence, places that are going to be a part of a scheme of places in which we can discuss subjects that include everybody. I think that we laid the basis for some useful legislation that we'll get around to in a more sympathetic congressional climate. I don't think it will come as a big surprise when there's more legislation dealing with biological diversity as well as historical diversity in parks, and a greater role for parks as participants in regionwide or watershed-wide educational endeavor.

I think those things will happen as we get more accustomed to the notion that our species has a particular kind of history, but that history is profoundly affected by the experience of other species. I never thought there was any distinction between natural and cultural resources anyway. And we'll get around to that, I think, legislatively one of these days.

I hope we'll talk more about that, too, later.

Sure.

I would just like to continue talking about Congress. I was wondering what lessons you learned in dealing with Congress?

Oh, I think the most important lesson is that you have to get to know those people as people just as early as possible. If you have been working in a field at all and have an acquaintance to begin with, it's helpful. But the first order of business, it seems to me, is to strike up a capacity to call somebody up or show up in their office, get rid of the staff, and have a direct discussion about what's possible and what isn't possible from the point of view of the congressperson himself.

There was [Rep.] Linda Smith [of Washington]. I remember having lunch at a diner in her district. I tried whenever I could to get to Republican congressional districts and meet in a friendly way with those representatives and I think that worked just fine. I actively campaigned for Boehlert in his district, though there was a Democrat against him—truly that Democrat had no chance anyway, but the right wing Republicans did. It was a gesture that I know was appreciated at the time. I simply stated the truth as to the utility that distinguished

Republican had had for the National Park System. Didn't have to do anything beyond telling the truth.

I don't think there are any generic lessons. I think it's extremely difficult for a director of the Park Service who is not taken to be a peer of a senator to deal with a senator. Some senators don't treat anybody as their peer and have difficulty with that. One senator in particular is a man who has become so arrogant and so infatuated with his own rather special role that nobody would be able, I think, to achieve that relationship. But most United States senators are aware that they have limitations on their wisdom. And almost all congressmen do. It seems to me it's very helpful for the director of the National Park Service, if it's possible, to be perceived in that way when testimony comes.

I think the other thing that's important is the attempt to find out, as anybody does who works in Washington very long, where the pressure points are. Just as if you were a lobbyist, you need to know. You are a lobbyist in fact, needing to know who the important people are to the important congressmen. Mr. Hansen takes quite seriously what the president of the Mormon Church thinks and I was at some pains to be on good terms with President [Gordon B.] Hinckley. It's true of suburban Republican congresspeople that they want to be on good terms with the economic leaders of those states and regions, and I certainly worked fairly hard at that.

It's harder if you're not going to be taken to be a peer. And under those circumstances, pretty much the best you can do is to be available to regional directors as they go about that same process on a much more local or regional basis. I don't have any general advice. Circumstances are different in one place or another. But I think that it is important to recognize that it was easier for me because the Clinton administration, taken as a whole, not the president himself to begin with, but taken as a whole, took the National Park System and Service seriously, thought it to be an important part of the American fabric.

That's very different from reaching a conclusion—as I think the [George W.] Bush administration has—that the National Park System shouldn't be verbally attacked. That's quite a different matter. I think we demonstrated that it's not politically wise to attack the Service and the System—but that's not the same thing as affirming its importance. And there isn't any question that Bruce Babbitt, for all of my differences with his style, understood that the National Park System is in the public mind the fundamental building block of public land policy. So that was very, very helpful.

Which leads me to the next question. How important was your relationship with Congress to your effectiveness as director of the Park Service?

On the negative side, if we hadn't been under attack from the Congress, we would have spent a great deal more time on competence building and improving personnel within the Park Service itself. So the emphasis would have been, I think, different. Congress would have been crucial in any case, but in a slightly different way. In a Congress that takes the American legacy more seriously, the training and increased competence of people who are charged with that legacy in the Forest Service and the Park Service and the BLM [Bureau of Land Management] will have a larger emphasis. But when you really don't believe in that, you're not going to do anything about it.

STANDARDS AND CRITERIA FOR PARKS

Could you discuss a little bit more the National Park System Reform Act of 1995? You sort of touched on that.

It was really a waste of time. The notion that the director of the National Park Service needs to be qualified under a set of artificial criteria is baloney. I qualified. I was told by Congress that I qualified on all bases and I didn't need to worry about it. I was affirmed in that sense. So my feelings about it aren't personal. But this is a silly waste of time. The objective is to find in the country somebody who can do the job best, whether they have worked for the Park Service or worked for some other state park system or a concessionaire, which I assume would qualify. If you had run a hotel in Yellowstone National Park, you'd qualify, whereas if you had been, let us say, the president of a major corporation with a deep environmental interest, you wouldn't, which is pretty dumb. That was sort of the last gasp, I think, of an effort to put a bit in the teeth of the Park Service, I suppose. It's silly.

Well, what else did the legislation provide and what would its effect have been?

I can't even remember.

Some of it had to do with criteria for adding parks to the system.

Yes, that also seems to me trivial and overreaching toward an unknown and unknowable future.

A standard of national significance.

Words are of such limited utility. They imply that there, of course, they imply there are existing parks that don't qualify. And upon probing, one finds that the parks that don't qualify are all the recent parks, and those that are not major tourist attractions (therefore revenue producing). But there are some places, such as Chaco Canyon [National Historic Park], that are unlikely to be revenue producing but do qualify. They are world monuments in the eyes of the rest of the population of the globe. Does Mesa Verde [National Park] qualify? I'm not at all sure that *Brown v. the Board of Education* [National Historic Site] will qualify as a tourist attraction—ever. That doesn't make it less important. Certainly Manzanar [National Historic Site] won't pay for itself. Those are places that we need to pay attention to. Sand Creek [Massacre National Historic Site] won't be a major national tourist attraction. We will not get a lot of revenue out of the parking lot there. But it belongs.

Have you seen any erosion in the standards for units added to the National Park System?

Well, I'm perfectly prepared to leave it to the judgment of future generations of what's important and what isn't. However, I feel very strongly that the Congress over at least two decades has failed in its trusteeship for the Smithsonian Institution and for the National Park System. Instead it has desired to transfer wealth from the maintenance of the places in our national heritage to the pocketbooks of the affluent. That tendency, which has been true not just lately but has been consistently true, is antipatriotic. Patriotism does not argue for further diminishing taxes. It's an argument for raising taxes to take care of the places that we need to care for. That's true both for the Smithsonian and for the Park System for the same reasons. No ground given on that.

POLITICAL SUPPORT AND VALUES

You also touched on this briefly earlier, but I'd like to hear a bit more discussion of the infamous budget battle midway through Clinton's first administration and your efforts to fight the budget cuts and what kind of support you might have had in that fight.

It was an interesting experience. I remember very, very acutely the markers put in the ground at the most intense portion for that, both in the Senate and in the House. And I remember being appalled at the absence of "whole page" ads in the papers, taken out

perhaps by the Sierra Club, the Wilderness Society. That didn't happen. The places from which the environmentally interested members of the administration had come did not rally around in any effective way, as they aren't rallying very effectively today.

Why do you think that was the case?

I don't think they had any affirmative experience. They were not accustomed to affirming something, such as an existing institution like the National Park System. Their experience had been largely negative, getting in the way of something dreadful. They finally got around to thinking that the budget battle was something dreadful, but very, very late in the game and not very effectively. Litigation against a predatory act is a very different thing than affirming a positive value. That's the first thing.

The second thing is that environmentalism still lacks a human face. We still are more eloquent in defense of silvery minnows and spotted owls than we are the defense of people against pain and death, which arise, it happens, from many of the same causes that give injury to other species. The fight has been wrongly fought. And the Park System is a human institution. It acts in custody of the interest of some other species, but its primary function, in my view, is that in parks you can both learn about and talk about values that transcend park boundaries. None of that was in place as an orthodoxy in 1992.

The religious people, who have every reason to believe in a seamless creation, were not present at the outset but are now present to a much larger degree. Wilderness as a geographic Sabbath was not a notion that fundamentalist Christians embraced in 1991. I think more of them do today. I know more of them do today. I think we could now build an entirely different constituency. Some of it has been recently aroused.

I spoke earlier of my respectful relationship with President Hinckley of the Church of the Latter-day Saints. President Hinckley and I have no differences whatever with respect to environmental matters, but it had not occurred—and did not occur until the very last two years, I think, with the Babbitt administration—that one should evoke any larger values than those of secular humanism in defending the parks. Then Bruce [Babbitt] spoke from his own convictions.

So my sense of this was that we managed to draw forth from the American people, pretty much unmediated or propitiated by any large intervening groups, what their fundamental convictions were, both with regard to nature and creation. Mr. [Thomas] Jefferson's line about if "one link in the chain is broken, the entire chain will collapse," is the foundation of the Endangered Species Act. If enough Americans believe that, or can be

reminded of it, we can create an effective set of defenses for the fundamental values upon which the System is built.

Furthermore, I think the patriotic values of the historic parks are there and just need a little exposition and a little less embarrassment on the part of some Park Service people, who are not as willing as I think they ought to be to draw upon the explicit traditions that they are there to take care of. That's a consequence, I think, of the secularism of the 1950s, '60s, and '70s, which we're sort of getting over.

If those environmental groups, which you thought you might receive greater support from, did not have something to affirm, as you put it, why is that? Had the Park Service not articulated those values or its mission well enough to those groups?

It hadn't. It's pretty hard to identify other articulated values of many Park Service directors since Stephen Mather and Horace Albright. Even the great George Hartzog[9] was reluctant, I think, to wrap himself in the very much larger virtues, though he did a better job of it, I think, than anybody in between. It has embarrassed professional managers to tack their convictions on the cathedral door. I don't think it should.

Still, [at the National Park Service conference] in St. Louis, Deny Galvin, who isn't a showboating person, managed to get the Park Service to the point where it was at least ready to hear those affirmations. In a way Deny was largely responsible for loosening up the Park Service. So, at St. Louis it [the National Park Service] was willing to act as if it had some conviction. If you sort of lined up the people who did all of the work for that gathering, they are not people who themselves would let themselves go in that way, but collectively they did and should do it again every ten years, or five, or periodically.

This sense of a need to better articulate the broader values of the parks and the mission of the Park Service, is that part of how you envisioned your role as director?

Yes.

How you defined your role?

Yes, absolutely. Sure.

[9] George Hartzog served as director of the National Park Service from 1964-1972.

Maybe you should just talk about that for a few minutes, and it might be a good stopping point for today.

Sure. Well, it seems to me that the evangelical function is not credible unless it is coupled to a very intense interest in the actual working lives of people where they work. Just being a spokesperson is insufficient, for the spokesperson can float like a balloon whose mooring has been cut. You have to be interested in what actually happens to people as they do or don't get promoted, as they are or are not provided with health insurance. Getting seasonal [employees] some decent insurance coverage, I would regard to be as important in my set of achievements as it was to defend against the Gingrich Congress. If you're indifferent, really, to the gritty process of trying to get some medical protection for those who work in the Park Service, you're not going to be very credible if you affirm the role of the System.

There is an evangelical function because the System is not a custodial one. If all it were was merely a set of places taken out of development for the purpose of maintaining them as pathetic residues of a vanished America, there wouldn't be an evangelical function. You could give the place over to a bunch of janitors. As it is, however, it's not that. These are places that contain messages for the rest of the country. And those messages are what need to be enunciated in them and about them. The function of a director is to make it more likely that that [enunciation] will happen than that it won't.

And I am well aware that by the time people get to be superintendent, they are in many cases likely to be fairly squeezed and dried. But I think there are enough of them who are still alive and energetic and committed so that they can do that job, too. It's not a system that helps you much. If you have been just doing your job as a custodian every day, then you're going to need a little inspiriting. Indeed, you may be derisive of the process of being inspirited until you get to be inspirited.

Until you start to feel it.

Yes, sure, it's hard to do.

Okay. Just one final question that will close out the legislative part. How much of your time as director did you actually spend struggling with Congress?

More than half. In large periods of it, 80 percent of the time.

And how did that affect some of your other responsibilities?

It certainly diminished the amount of time and energy that could be spent on inserting marginally better people in key places, although we did a little of that, substituting them for those who were there. The process of developing a real professional advancement process, we only got partway into. Encouraging people to be better, and to feel better about themselves, is the work that I would have spent more time on had I had more time.

> *"These are places that contain messages for the rest of the country. And those messages are what need to be enunciated in them and about them. The function of a director is to make it more likely that that [enunciation] will happen than that it won't."*

PART

TWO

AUGUST 13, 2002
SANTA FE, NEW MEXICO

PROFESSIONALIZING THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

It's August 13, 2002, and this is a continuation of my interview with Roger Kennedy, here in Santa Fe. At our last session you described coming to the position of director of the Park Service, and maybe to start, if you would describe how you organized your staff, initially, your immediate staff.

Yes. Because I'm a professional manager, I've always felt it's a good idea in taking a new job to compose what I call a "prejudice paper" before you start. It is grounded in almost complete ignorance about what the organization is and what the talent is, and who's there. It's meant to get down on paper what you think you know so that you can remember that once you begin and are assaulted by all of the information that comes at you and all of the lobbying and the charming that goes on with the staff that you inherit.

Anybody who takes on the National Park Service can take it on as the consummation of a great career, as a kind of a payoff. If that's how you feel, you are then going to occupy the role and enjoy being eminent. It sounds like a nice place to be. People keep addressing you, including President Clinton, who said to me on my last day, "Boy, you had the best job in the government."

And there is the misconception that one wanders around going to pleasant places. If that is what you expect, that is exactly what the system will have you do. The system will play to you to go to exciting places and make speeches and be treated nicely, if it really wants to destroy your capability of leading it. That's the way it works. It does in any organization, but the Park Service has the beguiling seduction of the places that you can go to. You're treated so nicely that you can spend all of your time thinking you're being terribly useful and not do a damn thing.

But, instead, you can decide that you've got a brief time in the job and that you're going to try to make a positive difference. That's true with many jobs, whether you're at a filling station or waiting tables or whether you're running the National Park Service. What are you going to do with it?

I remember asking a former director, who will go nameless, what he wanted to do in the job to which he'd just been appointed. This was probably five years or so, maybe ten, before I took the job. Somebody introduced us at a cocktail party and I said to him, "Gee, that's wonderful. What are you going to do with it?" And he looked as if I hit him across the face with a wet fish. The notion that he was going to do anything with it, that there was a set of things that needed to be achieved, was not at all the way he looked at it.

Well, I thought, the things I knew were first of all that there were deep tensions, as there always are, between the field and the Washington office. I had heard all kinds of unhappy things about the Washington office's function. It was true that the rangers, meaning anybody out in the field, had a certain measure of public approval, but the bureaucracy, as distinguished from the rangers, was perceived by everybody, particularly post the '70s, and the '80s, as part of the government, which we all know is bad.

The Park Service, therefore, it seemed to me, needed immediately a number of things. First of all, it needed to know that its leader accepted the responsibility in a way that a general or colonel given an assignment in combat accepts the responsibility for the troops and is going to accept both the burdens and the pleasures of the job. That is why I wore the uniform. The second thing was it needed to be affirmed in its patriotic role, in its role in American society, and that was the second reason to wear the uniform. Uniforms are about duty.

Uniforms are affirmation of a function. The response was extremely interesting, psychologically. Those who liked it tended to be people with some sense of history and some sense themselves of an exalted function. And those who thought it was ludicrous, particularly people in the press, were precisely those people who have no sense of patriotic duty at all. They have a profoundly sardonic sense of how people live in public life.

So I thought, just with respect to the Service itself, that it needed to be affirmed as much as possible. I made some mistakes—distinctly made some mistakes—along that line. For example, I sent out a memo about how the Service would present itself better if it wrote more clearly and if it didn't present itself ludicrously on public occasion. That was a bad idea because it provided more opportunity for jokes than it did corrective action. I still think that there is a style manual and a mode-of-behavior style manual that the Park Service needs badly or it will continue to present itself badly. That was a mistake, but it was part of a sense that this was an organization that has a proud function and ought to look like it.

You're talking about increasing the level of professionalism in a way?

Yes, absolutely, and self-esteem. I noted that those bullying members of Congress, in the Senate I think particularly of Bob Byrd and Ted Stevens really hated the idea of the Park Service beginning to appear as if they were the military in uniform. Park Service leaders are much less easily beaten up when they're in uniform than when they're not. And the congresspeople who liked beating up on people who serve in government didn't like it at all. They lost a weapon when the people wore a uniform. I certainly hope that subsequent directors and Park Service people who have occasion to testify will use the symbolic qualities of the uniform that way.

My own sense of it was that the Service was good at serving the inward-looking protective instincts of the environmental movement of the '30s, '40s, and '50s. That is, it was going to take care of the merchandise, so to speak. But that it was not serving well the necessity to build constituents who would care about the Service, who would know what it was doing, and what its places were good for except as zoos. It was good at zookeeping, not good at explaining how the zoos informed the rest of the continent.

So my sense of it was, gee, I have to find people in this outfit who really like to teach and who liked the idea of improving the relationship between the parks, the places in the parks, natural and cultural, and the people at large. So I wanted to open it up and I wanted at the same time to educate, for the education function to be understood to be an inward education as well as an outward education. The latter, which has calamitously become the emphasis when it talks about education, is patronizing and unacceptable. It says, "We know things that you don't know, aren't you lucky we're going to tell you," when it needs to say, "We need to learn some things, too, along with you and thank you for coming and helping us to learn."

SHAPING THE SENIOR STAFF

So there's that relationship between partnership and education that we'll get to in a minute. This concern about raising the level of professionalization within the Service, did that spill over into how you shaped your immediate staff, the people you selected to be around you? I understand that you were the first director to have a chief of staff. Is that correct?

The deputy director. The deputy director ought to be a chief of operations. He or she ought to be deeply experienced in the place and have his or her own credibility inside that place. That's what deputies do. And until I found Deny Galvin and John Reynolds, I didn't have people who had their own credibility and their own competence, and who were perfectly capable of doing the job that I was doing. I don't believe in chiefs of staff as gatekeepers at all.

Deputy directors have a function. They run the place, they do the synthesis, and they enable the director to direct, but they don't stand between the director and the rest of the staff. I'm sure I was the first director not to go to staff meetings in which people did their ambassadorial representations of what wonderful work they do, which is both boring to everybody else and unproductive because there's no action consequence. Staff meetings, if there are action consequences, are different. If you're going to report back on something you agreed you were going to do so other people can do something, that's fine. But mere reporting is simply silly.

Well, you sent me a piece that you wrote about John Reynolds on the occasion of his retirement, and I guess it would be interesting for me to hear you talk for just a minute about both John Reynolds and Deny Galvin and their roles in your administration.

The strength of both of those guys is their complete commitment to patriotic service and their absolute unwillingness to accept baloney offered to them by long-term proprietors. I got rid of some people in Washington, who were perfectly competent to do their work, but who were not able to go beyond explaining to the director why what they were already doing was just fine and didn't need any changes. The only defect of having a master of the system, like Deny or John, who are very different personality types, is that, because they've been in the system a long time, they have a set of people they've learned to trust and people they don't trust. Among the people they trust tend to be people who perform services consistently well, but who acquire the habit of maintaining existing systems without examining them. Or, worse, have the habit of not trusting anybody else to understand why they're doing things, so they don't express the full intention and the full result.

That's true in the financial affairs of the National Park Service. They are not candidly expressed. And though I'm a trained financial person, I failed to pull out of the financial reporting system of the National Park Service the kind of information that the public really needs in order to support the Park System adequately. There is a legitimate sense that it isn't all being candidly stated. The needs are being fuzzed with the desires, and the desires and the needs are being fuzzed with what there is already. The difficulty of having people, who've been around a long time is that they accumulate deference to competent people below them and are unlikely to see the defects in them.

John and Deny both, between the two of them and sort of in sequence, made it possible for the Service to continue to do its work. And they gave me extremely good and disinterested advice about people and they had earned the confidence of staff people on the Hill that I didn't know because they were on the Interior side of those committees, whereas I dealt with those committees at the chairman or congressional level.

STRATEGIC PLANNING

Sure. Well, shortly after becoming director you launched a strategic planning effort. And I'm wondering why you thought that was necessary? What did you hope to accomplish with that effort?

Not a lot. I wanted to hear what people said they thought they were doing. And one way to do that is to get people to fill in the boxes and say this is what we want to do, here's what we think we're doing. People like Deny operate that way very, very well. Deny Galvin is the kind of guy who really likes to check a compass every morning and see how we're doing against the compass, a very, very useful personality type. And it forces people to say what they're doing so that they may actually—by having said it—do it.

It's Heisenberg.[10] It isn't that you develop a brand new strategic plan, but it does mean that people in their increments articulate what their objectives are. You could check them to see if you like them or not, but the best thing is that they may actually be more likely to do what they say they're trying to do.

But it was partly information gathering, too, though.

Partly information gathering and partly a close look within the individual, himself or herself, so that that person having said what they're trying to do would do it.

Make them think about it, too, I guess.

Yes.

As I understand, you enlisted John Cook to spearhead this study.

I enlisted John Cook, because I knew he had the power base, and understood the system, and was well disposed toward me. And I thought here's a way to get John to tell the "John Cook club" that we're going to pay attention to them respectfully, and that John, and people like John, who came from a different role in American society than I had were going to be really important, taken seriously, which I did.

Do you recall what directions or guidance you gave John?

No, I don't think so. I think knowing John, I thought it was a good idea to stand back and see.

To let him go.

Yes, because I knew that if I did that he would tell me where he was going. And if he had instead been instructed by somebody, he had no reason to think would know enough to instruct him, he wouldn't.

[10] Reference to Werner Heisenberg, a 20th-century German atomic physicist.

Well, ultimately, how useful and effective do you think that the efforts of that working group were?

I think painting a fence was a good idea. You have to give people an opportunity to renew themselves, to revere their sense of what they're doing and why they want to do it. Whatever the ritual is that achieves that outcome, it's a good idea. In retrospect, while I thought the reorganization process, reinventing government, was a lot of baloney at the time, it really wasn't because it did occasion people confronting each other and discussing what their objectives were and then trying to achieve them better. That's a good thing.

The working, the efforts of the working group, it doesn't sound like they provided you with any new, startling information or changed the way you viewed your job or the Park Service or anything like that.

Oh, no, no.

Well, discuss some of your efforts to adopt modern business approaches to make the Park Service more successful.

No, I didn't talk that way, did I? Did I talk about modern business methods? I hope not. Those are code words for the market mechanisms' operating fully.

No, they're my words.

No, that's okay. The closest I can get to that is the sense that the concessionaires needed to know that they had somebody at the Park Service who had also added and subtracted and who understood what their motivations were and respected those motivations. I didn't think they were a bunch of vulgarians or exploiters. It never would have been a good idea to communicate to one other set of citizens, who tried to lead decent lives, that they are a bunch of skunks.

So I made real efforts to go to the concessionaires' gatherings, to talk with them seriously, to receive them seriously. They found that apparently very surprising, which surprised me. And when I left, I was amazed at the sense [of appreciation from] a number of sets of people like them and some of their friends, who had been treated respectfully simply because I think gentlemen and ladies treat each other respectfully anyway. So what's new? But that apparently was new.

Vice President Gore's National Performance Review favored privatizing certain government functions and that's something that the Park Service is still grappling with today. And I wondered if you ever considered privatizing any functions during your tenure?

I knew and know too much about private business, which is where I suppose I was experienced and a lot of directors haven't been. I had no exalted opinion about the way that business operates. Business executives in large corporations operate within a system of protections, and affirmations. They are coddled in insulation from their own errors that would be intolerable in public life. They are outrageously overcompensated, and they're outrageously spoiled. So I don't think it's a wonderful thing to privatize, in that sense, anything.

Furthermore, I think it's crucial in a democratic society to have competent people doing the public's business. That means I would like to have professionals recognized as professionals, who learn skills and subject matter and who are good at them, whether that's biology or history or maintenance or sewage construction. In the Service, in concession management, I want people who are good at what they do. And they're not going to get good at what they do if they are flushed out every 15 minutes and some private-side concessionaire shows up who has a different set of objectives, a different set of training, and a different body of knowledge. So I am opposed to promiscuous privatizing.

I am for professionalizing employees. The public's employees are professional people. If they fail to take advantage of the opportunities to be good at their profession, they should get canned. But it's not the same thing as turning it over to a succession, a rolling barrage of private citizens. We have a little experience with that kind of thing with airport safety inspectors. We also had a lot of experience with privatizing public services in transportation and other areas where the consequences were predictably disastrous.

Business principles are principles devoted to producing a profit for the shareholders. That's not what the purpose of the National Park Service is.

To what extent did the findings of the Vail Agenda[11] and the Science in the Parks [report] become a foundation for change in your administration?

I think the Vail Agenda was a very, very useful exercise, and still is, because it represented a kind of fresh consideration of mission that generally happens only after revolutions. And it's time for another one. If the St. Louis conference, the recent one, had been carried on in the opening years of an administration that took governing seriously and took democracy seriously, it would have been another opportunity to do a Vail. But you have to believe in the capacity of democratic government to govern for the Vail Agenda to work.

[11] Refers to a report summarizing the findings and recommendations growing out of a major Park Service meeting in Vail, Colorado, in 1991.

REORGANIZATION

What events or circumstances prompted the major reorganization of the Park Service during your tenure?

Orders from the secretary of the interior who was ordered to do so by the president of the United States. We had to go through the exercise and I found, rather to my surprise, that very able people in the Park Service really wanted to find better ways to organize it.

There were some people like Jack Moorehead, who hated it, who didn't think that any good would become of it. Some thought we should fake our way through it and do nothing. But we did not fake. We listened and we tried to do things better. To this day when I run into people that I did not think thought highly of me being made director, that's one of the things they are good enough to say that they remember with the greatest pleasure. And their disappointments, as they express them to me now (and they have no reason to be nice to me), are that the reorganization process and the distribution of power, and the cooperative mode that we sought haven't been sustained subsequently. It was imposed upon us, but once into it the question always is what are you going to do with your circumstances? Can you take whatever it is that fits you and make something good out of it? And I think there are a lot of ideas there that are going to come back into use when the Park Service is in the hands of people who really will think it their job to alter it for the better.

So the directions to do this came from . . .

Generally, it was really quite simple. We were told we were going to lose a bunch of bodies. I've forgotten what the percentage was, 10 percent or 15, there's always some percentage. And that we should come with a plan. Tom Collier, the secretary's chief of staff, made it clear to me partway in that if we really took it seriously and really came up with a persuasive plan, that we really wouldn't lose slots. And that the bodies that would be lost would be lost by somebody else.

So the Department of the Interior actually, because of that transaction with brother Collier, got transfers, very substantial transfers of personnel folks from the BLM, and the Fish and Wildlife Service, and other places.

I hadn't heard that.

Oh, yes.

So beyond the direction to go and do this and reorganize and come up with a plan, beyond those directions it sounds like you felt like you had a lot of authority to shape that plan.

I did, until [Assistant Secretary of Interior] George Frampton appeared and sporadically intruded into the process, set up some of his own little committees, which we had to cope with.

Did he set the timetable for reorganization?

George had no persistent interest in the management of any of the entities that he presided over. So, sporadically he would dart in, spend 20 minutes or an hour, half an hour, and say, "Well, then I'm going to set the deadline so that you have to achieve some results." But for all intents and purposes, the deadlines were set by the desire first of all to provide enough time for people to think about things, and secondly, to come up with the recommendations that were useful, and would also seem useful to the secretary's office, not to George Frampton. The secretary would decide whether or not we lost a lot of bodies.

So it was, "Okay, we've got to do this. If we've got to do it, let's do it right" kind of thing?

I'd been through this three times before. I did it at the Ford Foundation, when I had to recommend cutting the Ford Foundation staff back. I did it at the Museum of American History. There's always a choice between leaves and branches. You shave off every other little stem left on the branch and you knock the leaves off, or you cut the branch off. The easy way is to just shrink everything a little. If you have to get a 10 percent cut, you shrink everything by 10 percent, which is the lazy man's way of doing it. We didn't do that.

Well, would you talk a little bit more about what some of the major tenets were, what sort of parameters, in your own mind, you touched on a couple of things here, but a little more about what you thought you could accomplish. And obviously one of your parameters or one of your tenets, I'll use that term, was to continue to increase the level of professionalization. And another tenet [was] to lose as few bodies as possible. What were some of the other things?

To increase the power of those people who I thought would enable the Park Service to be more resilient and to help the Park Service survive as an entity in a very much changed world. And those were the people who did not see the parks as zoos or as isolates, but as parts of regions and communities. That's a special set of skills. Those are the skills of a Brian O'Neill. They are not the skills of somebody who wishes to preside over an isolated little place where nobody comes or where nobody learns.

With respect to professionalization, I think that has two components. One, let's help people get better. That's the meaning that I have been trying to emphasize. But the other part of it is let's treat people as being as good as they are, which is why I was prepared to stand on the road in front of the governor of Arizona when he proposed to reopen Grand Canyon National Park with state cops. I would have laid my body physically in the way of any truck from the state of Arizona that sought to enter that park. And I got into wonderful trouble with the Congress for saying we would not diminish the professional standing of people who are trained to manage parks, state or national, by replacing them with cops or tour guides. These are the two pieces of it.

Now, they have to deserve the respect, which is the other piece. People in the Park Service don't like that piece as much. But they are related to each other. So it's professionalization and relationship to others. I feel and kept on saying that resource protection begins with visitor services and work outside the park. You can't protect the place if nobody cares about your protecting it. And in order to get people to care about your protecting it, you really have to go and participate in the larger community. That's what you ought to do anyway because the function of the parks is to teach the population how to live in nature and with history. That's what the parks are for, not to be primitive isolates or funeral monuments.

I guess those are the primary tenets. I believe in the Park System as a functioning part of society that has a redemptive role in that society. I believe in the Service as a group of professionals.

And also I suppose along with that, that fundamental premise of delegating more authority down to the park level where that interaction with the public would be the greatest?

Yes, it is politically useful to talk about returning power to the people on the ground. That's a cheap and easy thing to say. It's true, but it happens also to be popular. But the interaction is more intense on the ground than it is in a regional office. Yet the problem for the Park Service is the absence of an affirming direction.

That couldn't have been an easy pill for the Washington office to swallow.

No, it was not.

I mean these careerists letting go of some of the authority.

Yes, I do think that, as I think about the replacements that I forced. I think about Dwight [Pitcaithley] in history, Mike Soukup in science.[12] Those are fields I thought I knew something about. But I really do believe that in every case we just didn't replace somebody and leave a negative message. I think I worked really hard to wrap my arm around the people who took those jobs, be with them, support them, celebrate them, let them know how important they were, so that whatever, though the Washington office may have been a little smaller, it was not going to be weaker.

What were some of your major concerns as you started to implement reorganization? Obviously, as we just discussed, the opposition of the careerists is one of them, I suppose.

There were several, I think, others. [Pause]

I was just thinking about, from my point of view, I think the Service left to its own devices was a relatively easy body of people to lead into a reconsideration. The meetings of superintendents and the meetings of people in offices occurred with great, with remarkable goodwill, and remarkable hope and seriousness. The hardest part was the distraction and harassment that came from inexperienced people between my level and the secretary's level, who had no experience of running anything, who didn't know the subject matter to be addressed, and [who] would plunge in and out of it in ways that were just profoundly exhausting. That's the hard part.

[12] Dwight Pitcaithley became chief historian for the National Park Service under Mr. Kennedy and Mike Soukup was the Associate Director for Natural Resources, Stewardship & Science.

That's quite a comment about the resilience of Park Service personnel, wouldn't you say?

Oh, yes. Once again, I think that in the Park Service in general there's a remarkable degree of adaptiveness once it understands that there's a serious need to adapt.

Well, there are a couple documents, just a couple of your comments about the buyout program and references to losing positions. And I certainly got the sense that was a painful aspect of reorganization for you.

It was.

But I wondered what you think the impact of that buyout program was on the Park Service and on its expertise and institution?

It's the most stupid of personnel devices. It always encourages good people to leave and bad people to stay. It's a private enterprise device in which corporate bureaucracies really aren't nearly as sensitive as public bureaucracies are to the importance of having competent people doing things. It's a pernicious carryover.

Well, I'm certainly not going to ask you about details of the reorganization plan.

Good, because I can't remember.

I can find those in the documents that are left.

The way to get that quickly is to talk to Bill Paleck, or John [Reynolds], or Karen [Wade], who really believed in the process and saw to it that it was an honest process.

That would be Karen Wade?

Yes, who was probably disappointed in subsequent outcomes. But I was very struck that one veteran called me the other day. He just thought that was the most exciting period of his life. Interesting.

But the one thing that you can provide that no one else can is your evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of the reorganization. Strengths and weaknesses in its conception, the strengths and weaknesses in its implementation, and then the final results. Just sort of wrapping it all together.

Well, all reorganizations of large organizations are grounded in prejudices and preconceptions and seldom grounded in truth. For instance, "fat and unproductive regional offices." That's a misconception. Regional offices weren't fat and they weren't unproductive. And [another misconception is] essentially the Washington office being aloof from the way it works out on the field, because actually one finds most people in the Washington office have spent some time on the field. They have a pretty good idea what it's like out there.

However, if you're going to be running something, you have to start with an assessment among the realities of what those prejudices are, the emotional and political realities. Among the political realities is the sense on the part of all ignorant people that all regional offices in any organization are inefficient and overloaded. It's just part of the mythos. So one says to oneself, okay, we'd better find ways of maintaining competence in the field that is usable to the field, reasonably efficiently, and at the same time cut down the ostensible size of the regional offices.

It had not occurred to me until the believing superintendents said "We really think we can share competencies. We really think we can." I was very doubtful about that. But apparently it actually does work in some, not all, some places. And by putting the cluster offices in—that was not my idea. The cluster business was the superintendents' idea, both superintendents of little parks and superintendents of the big winners, of the big parks. But if they really thought that they could share competencies and that there would be enough, that that [concept] could work, by a kind of social compact among the parks, that's a wonderful way of appeasing those who want to see the numbers go down artificially in some regional offices without losing the presence of people who can do the important work.

Their expertise.

Sure. So I suppose the second misperception frequently is that you are going to get good work for the public out of rangers whether or not those rangers who are already down in the place are guided by some biologists, and some fire people, and some historians, and some archaeologists. But, there aren't enough of those to go around. Not every park gets one, so

there has to be a little sharing. And the only question is do you share from Denver, or do you share from Santa Fe, or do you share from Patagonia? Those are the only questions.

As you can tell, I did not have any exalted ambitions for the reorganization plan. I was trying to do what was necessary to get some marginal or incremental benefit out of each one of those steps, and if possible and much more important, to let people emerge through that process. Reorganization can encourage good people to emerge from that system and discourage bad people. Some would get out because they didn't like it. I wanted to pry out of the System people who were resistant to any kind of change. They would identify themselves, so to speak. I also wished to encourage people who had good ideas. It all comes down to people anyway.

I neglected to ask, but when you selected the final plan and before you implemented it, did you have any resistance from the Interior department to that plan?

Oh, sure.

Did they not like the plan that the Park Service presented?

George [Frampton] didn't understand it. [Chief of Staff] Tom Collier understood it enough. I don't think Bruce Babbitt paid any attention one way or the other. But the folks at OMB [Office of Management and Budget], some of them with whom I had worked very carefully, did get it. And Elaine Kamark, who I recall as being [Vice President Al] Gore's person for this stuff, I think she understood it pretty well, yes. But the Department of the Interior, the layers between the bureaus and the secretary, were largely filled by environmentalists who had never run anything and lacked much respect for institutional organizational life.

The Democratic Party includes enthusiastic, decent, and publicly interested people, but they are often inexperienced in administration. The Republicans have fewer people justifying those benign adjectives, but they've got a lot of experience. They know a lot about running corporate bureaucracies. It'd be nice to have a little of both.

So it sounds like you had a certain education role yourself, educating them about why this plan was important and the value it could bring to the National Park Service.

Education in limbo seldom works, but what did work was that I had my own constituency on the Hill and in the press. So, if at the end of the day, the bad guys in the Congress didn't like it, I was not a pushover.

Looking at the Park Service today, what do you think the long-term impacts of the reorganization have been? Granted, from the historical perspective, it's still fairly soon, but. . .

I think the subregions will probably continue to have some kind of vitality in them. Karen Wade has, I think, a good sense of the political realities of operating in the West, where many affinities are entrenched and state lines bounded. Many people in the West think within their state lines, though they're so totally artificial. They have no bearing, no grounding in nature at all. So she has combined a desire to move functions downward and a recognition of the setting by having her state offices, which are going to do a lot of things that cluster offices could do.

Yet the people who have taken those groupings seriously have found them useful. I still think the Delta Initiative was a good initiative.

What's the Delta Initiative?

Well, that was just getting all parks that happen to be around the lower Mississippi Valley, to pay attention to their commonalities historically, archaeologically, and to work with the state and local governments to affirm those very undervalued assets. That's a good idea. And the same thing is true to some extent in New England. But it is patently so in the Sonora Desert, for example, or the California Desert. Those are groups. They have very many similarities. I think it works pretty well.

Are there some drawbacks to such a decentralized structure?

Sure, that you can't get really good people to go live in the boonies.

That's something I haven't thought of.

Yes, some couples find it easier if they're living in a metropolitan area where two people can get work. So it's harder to get people to go to remote places and live there, particularly if they are living with somebody else. These are the realities of life.

I was just wondering if you think another potential drawback of the decentralized structure might be the ability to shift resources within the agency?

Yes, it is, sure. Each one of them gets an entitlement. That's a big difficulty. Yes, that's true. Less resilient.

What effect do you think that the time and effort spent on reorganization had on the substantive work of the Park Service during your tenure?

That's a hard one. Opportunity lost cost.

Is there any way to measure that?

Well, yes. I certainly resented it at the time. I didn't think that we had the energy, nor could I get the attention to things that I thought were vastly more important. On the other hand, it's probably true that if a director has in mind effecting change, that it's terribly important that that director have personal experience on a common purpose with as many able people as possible. So even if in a sense all you're doing is digging ditches and filling them up again, in the course of that you may achieve some degree of greater intimacy than would be the case if you were operating wholly within an undisturbed set of conventions. Let's assume that it could be nothing but digging ditches and filling them back up again, which I don't think it was. It was more than that. But if that were all it was, it still let me find some true believers in competency building and in the boundary perforation process.

And energizing?

I think so. Why should somebody pay attention to you if they've never met you? And meeting groups, when you're working with somebody, that's a lot different than taking a park tour in a jeep.

I guess it's that you are moving forward rather than reacting to things?

It's just that you're actually doing something together. Somebody is not just pitching somebody else. In the relationship between passive directors and the field, it's the field pitching the passive director, at least to keep the passive director from doing anything. And that's a pernicious thing.

One of the things that struck me is that you made it [reorganization] an inclusive process. I noticed the number of, for lack of a better term, progress reports, status reports, [that] you put on the director's bulletin board, that you really made a strong effort to communicate what was going on directly with the employees.

Yes, I certainly did and do. I thought it was crucial to overcome some of the skepticism and the irritation that people would feel, going through this process again. At least there was sharing information.

PARTNERSHIPS

Obviously, developing partnerships was an important emphasis in your tenure, and I'm wondering if maybe, just to start this section, if you would define "partnership" for me. You spoke very eloquently at one point about that partnership should not be patronizing. That, it's not -- we're here working to give you something or to help you. If you would just define it for me.

Sure. It seems to me there are two essentials in the Park Service's effective address to its potential partners. One is a full awareness of the imperatives guiding the behavior of those partners. You have to know enough about city government, or county government, or planning, or the Forest Service's incentive system, or Indian tribes, or you have to know enough about why somebody joins a friends group or a board of trustees or any other board that's not paid. You have to know those things in order to be able to assist the partners to fulfill their necessities or objectives. You also have to know that if you're going to avoid being snookered.

And the Park Service's occasional smugness and patronizing sense that it knows best cripples the capacity of people who fall into that trap either to satisfy the legitimate aspirations of their potential partners, or to resist the illegitimate aspirations if cleverly presented.

So partnering is not just being nice. Partnering is going to the effort, the intellectual exertion, and the discipline of learning something about the other person. That's true of any relationship, but it is essential for an embattled agency that doesn't have good relationships with many of its neighbors. And the reason the relationships aren't very good in many places is because the Park Service hasn't worked hard enough to know, in the course of training long enough, to know what the imperatives of those neighbors are.

Ordinarily, the word "partner" means two things in the Park Service. Concessionaires, who are indeed partners in many good things, do a lot of work, but their imperatives are not those of the Park Service employees. They are not. If you don't know anything about what the corporate structure of a company is or who owns it or what its promotion systems are, you can't deal respectively with the people who work for it. And you better take coffee with the local city manager or the local supplier or the river runner.

I guess it goes back to what you said earlier, about making an effort to spend time with the concessionaires.

Sure. Otherwise they will put the arm on you. They'll mobilize support in the adversarial way and they'll beat you. You can beat them or at least cooperate with them. I used to walk into [Rep.] Jim Hansen's office with a concessionaire, or with [Sen.] Bob Bennett's staff. It was very effective. It worked just fine. And it was genuine. I've been in business.

What were some of the steps you took, besides spending time with the concessionaires, that you took to promote partnerships and with whom?

I tried, as I generally do, to find out who was real—to find the people like Greg Moore, who runs the Golden Gate [National Recreation Area] Friends group. He's a real partner. He's as smart as any park superintendent and just as patriotic. He was very, very helpful in sorting out among other friends groups who was good at what and who wasn't. And when you find that people are, as some of them currently are, at odds with park superintendents,...that's because the ambitions of the friends group leader (which may be just the recognition part, appearing in the paper) are not being met or cheerfully accommodated.

If you haven't lived in a small town, or small city, or a big city, or in government or public affairs long enough to know why people do things when they aren't paid to do them, you can't very well operate in that context. So that kind of operating is what I mean by effective partnering.

Well, describe your relationship with the National Parks Conservation Association [NPCA], the Sierra Club, the Wilderness Society, and other environmental groups.

When I took the job, Paul Pritchard was the president of the NPCA. And Alan Rubin was the president of the National Park Foundation. I don't think there was a National Park System Advisory Board. If there was, I can't remember it.[13]

Whoever they were, it was a bunch of contributors to the [Ronald] Reagan campaign. So I remember clearly with respect to the advisory board that I thought it was wise for it simply to never meet until those people got bored and went somewhere else. And then I filled it up with people like John Hope Franklin and other people with something like the distinction of the original advisory board decades back.

[13] Mr. Kennedy might be referring to a different board here.

People with academic credentials?

Or business credentials that were really good—and not just a dumping ground. With respect to the [National] Park Foundation, it was clearly in need of new leadership. And I got a bunch of friends of mine, whom I'd been in business with, David Rockefeller, Lionel Pincus, Mort Myerson, and a variety of other folks, to sign up. Some knew that it was going to cost them 100,000 bucks a shot, probably. We got a new president out of that, with Mort Myerson doing the most of the hard work. But it was not easy or pleasant. And the outcome wasn't absolutely triumphant.

As for NPCA, Paul Pritchard is somebody with whom I had an acquaintance for fifteen or twenty years. I did not have any plan to get him replaced. But at one juncture when things were really tough with the Gingrich Congress, really, really tight, he let himself testify in a way that betrayed the Service, and betrayed the System, and attempted to please and placate the extreme right wing. And I wrote a letter to every member of his board protesting that and stating that this was unacceptable behavior. It wasn't that they did so just to please me, but some of them had joined up already, anticipating the need to replace him. So three of those relevant organizations, yes, I did take an active role in trying to improve.

Which of those groups was the most helpful and supportive in advancing NPS objectives and goals?

Well, Tom Kiernan has made the National Parks Conservation Association into a helpful outfit, subsequent to the departure of Paul Pritchard. And I think they're a real factor, a really beneficial factor. I think even though the National Park Foundation is a great deal bigger than it was earlier, it has a way to go with respect to making it more genuinely helpful. It's getting there. And the National Park [System] Advisory Board has turned out to be an absolutely glorious body of citizens with Deny Galvin and Loran Fraser helping it along. I'm really, really proud of having first dumped it out and then having started it up again. So those are good. The Wilderness Society and the Sierra Club were little use to us in crisis.

BUILDING CONSTITUENCIES

You mentioned in our previous session that you didn't feel like you got the support from the environmental groups that you expected.

Perhaps my views on wilderness were rather startling to some of those people, too theological, I guess. But I provided some language and some opportunities for them to expand their constituencies to other people that they hadn't thought of before. Those new folks were welcomed by some of the founding types like Dave Brower [of the Sierra Club] or Gaylord Nelson or John Adams of the NDC. But I think generally speaking, it has been just in the last couple of months actually that the Sierra Club has become sufficiently aware that it has dug itself into some holes that it needs help out of.

Which relationship among those agencies was the most challenging? It sounds like maybe the Paul Pritchard situation?

Yes, though some of the others who should have been helpful put the knife in the back too often. Interposed between me and the secretary, there was a representative from every environmental organization, a special assistant or an assistant, or something, so I didn't really have to worry about that. That was really Bruce's problem.

Just to wind up this section, I'd be interested [in hearing] a little more specifically how you went about constituency building?

Oh, I really made a very big effort to go for what I thought to be the detachable elements of conservative coalition that won in 1992. I went to see President Hinckley in Salt Lake City of

the Mormon Church and spent some time with him and with Mormon editors. Certainly there were a lot of speeches to people who are creationists, as I suppose I am too, in the sense that I believe that a respect for a created universe carries with it a sense that you don't throw pieces of it away very lightly. I think that is a useful common thought between conservationists and theologically right wing people.

In the first two years, before the Gingrich Congress, the most difficult relationships were with the self-assured liberals. Some—the George Millers of this world, and even Bruce Vento—had such a profound disregard for professionals in the government that it was hard for them to understand that the government is the expression of democracy. They were post–New Dealers who had come to regard our government in the '60s and '70s as the enemy. That point of view was not helpful.

But generally speaking, though, my mission was to go forth and develop among people, who didn't already feel committed to the Park Service and the System, enthusiasms for what it could do. Among my natural affinities or constituents were the American Historical Association and the state and local history people—all of these people who are running historic houses, preservation groups, the National Trust (of which I was a trustee and to which I always made the whatever the preservation conference speech while I was director and useful to them). Each of those constituencies had its internal needs. Each has got to try to raise and sustain a membership so that it can support the lives of the people who [live] their lives getting paid by the membership.

And so I tried to rally the preservation types. Hillary Clinton discovered partway through her tenure that there were American treasures in specific places and certainly thought that it was a good thing to go protect them and preserve them.

The Vanishing Treasures Program.[14]

Vanishing Treasures. Yes. I thought that was grand and wise.

Was the concept of Heritage Partnership, was that program, that concept, your initiative?

Yes. It's real. It's real because the Park System, while it doesn't include a lot of old houses worth protecting, such as Mount Vernon or Monticello, or a whole lot of stuff that the Audubon Society and the Nature Conservancy are protecting, it's a good bell cow for preservation. And preservation is, I think, a good container for the maintenance of traditional values, benign traditional values, and for that reason that constituency was essentially an affirmation of these values.

[14] The Vanishing Treasures Program was designed to address a backlog of damage and destruction to prehistoric and historic resources in the parks and the impending loss of preservation specialists.

How did that emphasis on partnership and constituency-building filter down throughout the organization?

Well, because we were under siege it was easier to get people to pay attention to their neighbors than it would have been if we weren't. So that's the first truth. Even the most bullying of park managers had to adjust their behavior. And they were encouraged to adjust their behavior and endorsed for doing so and given prizes and celebrated for it at Freeman Tilden meetings and all of those tiny devices. I think the cultural types thought it was a nice thing to have a cultural type as director. They weren't doing everything just perfectly the way they were doing it. They needed to do what they would naturally do anyway, but weren't encouraged to do, which is really to make the effort to say, "We are part of the same team you're a part of with everything we're dealing with."

And the other thing you talked about was responding to the changing demographics.

Yes.

I suppose that outreach as well that sort of reaching out to a different kind of new constituency.

Yes, absolutely. Let's go back to the previous note. The conditions of the siege made it easier to effect change. Crisis. The second condition was the commitment on the part of the Clinton administration to advancing women and minorities. Not just to find a few passive and acquiescent women and representatives of minorities, but really to do it. True, for some of us it was a little irritating to deal with a bunch of kids who had suddenly discovered the virtues of advancing women and minorities but had absolutely no experience with doing it when it was hard to do. I found it very irritating because I've changed the color mix and gender mix in two previous organizations when it was really hard work and there was plenty of resistance. Nonetheless, it was certainly easier to do it in the Clinton administration than it would have been in the Eisenhower administration.

I suppose one has to conquer one's irritability under those circumstances when some 28-year-old tells you you're not really trying hard enough, when the 28-year-old wasn't around when it was really hard. And some of the rest of us were. It's different. None of those kids got shot at for doing the hard thing then. But 20 years later they were so pious. I thought that Bob Stanton,[15] and I still think, was a good pick. Slight differences of style from mine, but the symbolic consequence will probably last for a long time, because Bob Stanton is a

[15] As director of the National Park Service from 1997-2001, Robert Stanton actively promoted cultural diversity.

competent man and a serious man about the task at hand. So the notion that a black person could be both of those things has a benign consequence. And Bob's personal determination to stay with grinding it through was a very good thing.

Well, I can't believe that he enjoyed being director. And I can't believe it was a fulfilling experience for him. But you can certainly tell him for me that I don't have any doubt at all that history is going to be happy he was picked.

EDUCATION

Yes, different circumstances. Well, rather than start into education this might just be a good place to. . .

The education bit is really quite simple, as shown in Dwight [Pitcaithley's] anthology of the Park Service's relationship to education since 1925. True, without his history, some of us wouldn't know the Park Service was that interested in education before. But I'm glad it was and I'm certainly glad it never was "mission creep." From my point of view, until the advanced studies program becomes a really settled part of the Park Service's life and it's funded the way the military funds professional improvement on the part of officers, we won't have really done a good education job.

The internal part of that [education]?

Yes, absolutely. I'm just delighted that the St. Louis conference embraced, as one of three planks, something that had seemed to be a fresh idea when I came, which was that we were in the education business. I regard it as a triumph—but of course it was John Reynolds, Deny Galvin, and others who made it happen. Nonetheless, I don't think it goes more than half way.

What do you think the appropriate goal of the Park Service is in education?

Oh, it's just a part of the "seamless web." It's a seamless web with other educational institutions from kindergarten right through graduate school, part of the processes by which we educate the public. It's one of the very few things on which Thomas Jefferson and I agree. You can't separate out pieces of it. And even the most introverted members of the Park Service are now somewhat clearer that they aren't a bunch of zookeepers. Their job is not protecting the "vignettes of a primitive past." The Washington Monument is not about "a primitive past." It's about a role in a culture that has continuity. Very conservative.

Well, just to look at some of your specific initiatives in that area—increased use of the World Wide Web was one of them, as I understand.

Oh, definitely. The electronic insurrection. I think one of the things that I am proudest of is the sense that those folks did it themselves when I stood up and got out of the way. When they needed help, I helped them for sure.

I guess another aspect of it might have been your emphasis on improving the content of Park Service publications, the kind of information that we put out and the history that we interpreted.

Sure, because you guys do your work well. I didn't fuss with you. There isn't a time of the day the Park Service people aren't doing something pretty well, so you get out of their way. On the other hand, pieces of the Service needed tinkering, but within certain principles. Number one, principle number one, don't fuss with people who are already doing their work pretty well. Affirm them and say thank you, but don't go near them. Just let them do it. You never saw me. That's because you guys were doing just fine. Ed Bearss[16] was just fine because he really didn't want to run anything, but did what he did better than anybody in the world.

The second principle is—don't waste your time trying to change the behavior of people you can't fire and who aren't going to change their behavior whatever you do to them. Pieces of the cultural apparatus are like that. You can't fire them, they don't do anything terrible, but they're just not malleable whatever you do. They keep on doing whatever they do not badly, so don't fuss with it.

[16] Edwin Bearss was Chief Historian of the National Park Service until 1995.

Were you concerned about the quality of what was being interpreted in the parks?

Oh, yes. Oh, gosh, the whole archaeological enterprise. There weren't many in archaeology who had a sense that there was a function of engaging the public seriously about wonders of the American past. On the other hand, we put Frank McManamon in place because he understands that. That's what you do.

So what were you actually able to achieve in the area of education during your tenure?

Just getting it restarted. I feel that I got the ocean liner turned around and going in the right direction. And there are now going to be countless people who will take credit for what happens as a result over the next decade. There would have been no St. Louis. There would have been no Deny Galvin in the job of making it happen. There would have been no John Reynolds in his job. He would have been fired by [Assistant Secretary of the Interior, Policy, Management, and Budget] Bonnie Cohen a long time ago. There would have been no changes, putting people who are true believers in place. Thanks to Deny, one of the Service's proudest moments was John Hope Franklin's threat to resign if the current administration snookered the advisory board's report on education. The advisory board, as reorganized, became part of the ongoing set of determinants of the life of the Service.

What do you mean by that?

Somebody had to see to it that the advisory board report[17] reached the light of day. And that wouldn't have happened had the board itself not been re-formed to begin with. And we increased the amount of vitality on the part of the people in the Service who left to their own devices might have been more passive.

What are the Park Service's responsibilities in terms of educating the public—and our colleagues and partners—about resource protection? Is that a special category of education?

Sure. Over the next ten years, we are going to have to work very hard at the deployment of places to impart to the public a sense of continuing humane values, including the value of a respectful relationship between humans and other species. The use of place as a teaching tool withers into mere antiquarianism or sentimentalism about charismatic megafauna if it isn't the carrier for key humane values.

[17] Reference to the National Park System Advisory Board report *Rethinking the National Parks in the 21st Century*, published in 2001.

PART THREE

JUNE 4, 2003
TELEPHONE INTERVIEW

With the last session we were winding up with education, and I didn't want to leave that [topic] completely and go on in case there was something more that you might want to add about your initiatives in that area. And also given what you said and what I've read about your tenure, I got the sense that education was a pretty high priority. Would [you] want to evaluate the kind of priorities that you placed on initiatives in that area?

It has seemed to me that the Park Service has a tradition of caring for the physical places and for expressing very well what is present in those places. But it had its struggle to sustain its role in archaeology, in history, and in science. It has had a struggle because over the years several administrations have derogated all Park Service functions beyond tourism and all services beyond providing a kind of pleasant relief from urban life.

It has seemed to me that instead the Park Service has a redemptive role for American society. Parks are more than places of refuge to which you go. They are places in which you go to learn, to be revived, to gather once more—at Independence Hall or at Yosemite—your sense of what it is to be an American in America and all of the subtleties that involves. A full national park experience requires a real emphasis upon education. I suppose my fourteen years as director of the National Museum of American History, and before that as the person responsible for the Arts and the Humanities at the Ford Foundation, gave me a particular intensity in that view.

HISTORY AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

That is a great segue to the next area that I'd like to discuss, and that is history and historic preservation. And I know that history was, and continues to be, a particular interest of yours. How does the attention that the Service gives to history, historic sites, and historic preservation compare to the attention it devotes to natural resources or recreation, things like that? How would you compare the two?

There's a kind of perceived wisdom that there is a split between history and nature. People think that "cultural" and "natural" parks are also split East-West. Neither is true. There are as many people in the West as in the East who are intensely interested in our common experience, reaching back thousands of years. And there are, I think, as many people in the

Park Service whose personal interests extend toward history and archaeology as into the natural sciences.

But it's also true that it's safer to focus on plants than to focus on humans; plants, so far as we know, don't have the problems of motivation. They don't have guilt. They don't have pride. And they don't involve us by extension in any of those intense feelings. So a fair number of people would just as soon that we "keep it to the facts, ma'am." And "the facts, ma'am," as the television show *Dragnet* used to emphasize, "the facts, ma'am" often squeeze out the realities. You can't do history if all you're doing is a succession or a sequence of indisputable events. History is composed of events and invites inquiry into the reasons people do things. That's why it was necessary, particularly in my time, to reaffirm the place that Civil War battlefields have in the history of American slavery and in the history of subsequent struggles truly to provide a free society. For anybody who is interested in history, there are links between Antietam and Gettysburg and *Brown v. the Board of Education.*

So when you're dealing with the cultural sites that's just more complex. Is that partly what you're saying?

Yes, considerably so. And history isn't as safe as nature. It isn't as safe. It requires you to take some risks of understanding, including self-understanding. That's always harder.

You know in the fairly recent advisory board report that we talked about earlier, the board really emphasizes the need for preserving cultural resources because of their educational value, as opposed to their inherent value. And I would ask you, is education the primary purpose of historic preservation? It sounds like you're saying there's more involved with that.

Oh, yes. What distinguishes museum work and park work from literary or university work is that in museum or park work, you teach with real things and in real places. It's an enormously important distinction. Therefore, preservation of those teaching instruments, means of learning, becomes crucial to the peculiar vitality of teaching in the Park Service and of education in the Park Service as it does in museums, of course. So unless you have the objects and the places, unless they're sufficiently accessible as teaching tools, you can't teach very well.

And I know it might be difficult to recall the specifics after so much time, but you mentioned the Civil War battlefields, and I wondered what some of your other priorities and objectives in the area of cultural resource preservation might have been?

Oh, sure. The whole struggle to reawaken the real Philadelphia in front of Independence Hall, the desire to be sure that the blitzing of central Philadelphia opposite the Hall and outward did not produce permanently the loss of the teaching capabilities of that area, that is just one thing that occurs to me. I felt very, very strongly that visitor centers are really teaching centers. In these places we emphasize that there was a real place around the visitor. In Philadelphia, for example, much of the polyglot urban center in front of Independence [Hall] had been asphalted over in the 1940s and '50s to the immense loss of the American heritage, but much else of that wonderful city is still there.

I felt equally strongly that the recovery and discussion of the Native American heritage of Yosemite was of enormous importance and that we really make a point of teaching about their presence in the parks. To me one of the big thrills of my period was the discovery of and the thawing out of a basket at very, very high elevations in the North Cascades. It let us make it clear that American Indians have been all around this continent, that there weren't any uninhabited places, very few, even way up high. I don't have any difficulty remembering a lot of it.

The Upper Mississippi Valley Project needed considerable extra emphasis upon its teaching mission and not just its tourism. It's about canoes, of course, but it's also about learning, lots of it.

What kind of support did you have for these initiatives? Did you feel, either from Congress, within the Service, or within the department, a great deal of support in these areas?

The leadership of the Department of the Interior was initially more concerned with natural resource protection against depredation from mining and excessive unbridled grazing. I certainly found support in the Park Service once the professionals recovered from the shock of having a director who was really interested in the little tiny details of how people were learning things, and who was doing the teaching, and in how actively they were doing it or whether they were just having a pleasant early retirement.

I made a whole lot of personnel shifts on purpose, a new chief historian, a new chief archaeologist, and varieties of shifts in the primary people as assistant directors, not in any case because the person occupying wasn't just fine, but because it seemed to me it needed to be revitalized. And fresh folks would take a fresh view.

Inside the Service it's been just simply magnificent for me, particular subsequently, to watch the degree to which the senior professionals, I think of Deny Galvin and John Reynolds particularly, but lots of other people who have pressed onward. I just came from working with John on a project at Fort Baker in California. None of those folks need any stimulus. They're plenty stimulated. They may have needed encouraging, and in some ways the lion was there. It just needed to be given a roar.

Yes, it sounds like to some extent you tried to shape, to make some changes within the organization that would promote that support for your vision in that area of cultural resource preservation.

Yes, it's always necessary to shift people around some, in some cases replace some people, just to make it clear that what is desired is something more, something fresh, something that's reconsidered, and something a little more urgent.

SCIENCE AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Right. We'll move on into the next area. Is the same true in the science and natural resource area?

Oh yes.

Were you doing the same thing?

Emphatically so. The Park Service did not benefit from the consolidation of scientific talent into the National Biological Service,[18] for reasons extraneous to that administrative decision on the part of the secretary. It was just that to everybody's surprise, I suppose, the Congress shifted in the midst of that. And instead of that becoming an affirmative way of deploying a lot of scientists to deal with really significant work, it set those people up to be rather exposed to the vagaries of budget-cutting, as we are seeing at the moment. That left the Park Service, of course, with fewer people to do the work. And under those circumstances, yes, we had to assert vigorously, with Mike Soukup's wonderful current and continuing leadership, the

[18] In 1993 Secretary Babbitt established the National Biological Survey (later Service) to consolidate scientists and support staff from the National Park Service, Bureau of Land Management, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

necessity of partnering with other institutions to make a science program that had lots of tendrils reaching into academic institutions. Actually to make it even better than it was to begin with, I think, because now it's part of a national system of education and science, which really worked.

Was the move of the scientists to the National Biological Service something you supported initially?

No, it wasn't.

Okay. Is there. . .

It happened.

I was going to ask if there's anything more you wanted to say about how [the transfer] came about?

It was underway by the time I got there. And I understand its motivation. It just ran into a set of unpleasant political realities.

Okay. You mentioned the fact that it left the Service with fewer scientists. What were some of the other challenges that you faced in the area of natural resources, whether it was increasing the level of professionalization of natural resource managers or improving the monitoring of natural resources? Are there some other things?

It is not often understood that one of the first principles of sound natural resource management is to leave some people in place over very long periods of time, perhaps even decades. It often requires a thorough understanding of a place to do what is needed there. I think of wonderful examples of long-term occupants like Craig Allen at Bandelier National Monument and John Varley at Yellowstone National Park. These are people who really know their places and the science is better as a consequence. That objective is certainly not met by privatizing and forcing those kinds of people out and taking some short-termers in as contract employees who report to a corporation somewhere, know nothing of the place, and are likely to be very bad science managers, which is the current administration's plan. It's a terrible, terrible mistake. In our period we, I think, did recognize the importance of longevity in some places.

I think that the attacks on the parks in general that were most visible were the attacks on the relatively recent, predominantly historical parks which were described as having represented a "thinning of the blood," as the expression was. That expression really expressed apprehension about an extension of the role of the Park Service's history teaching to include places that memorialize events subsequent to, let's say, 1865. It was deployed by secondary users—not by its originator—to disparage parks such as the Arizona Memorial, the school at which *Brown v. Board of Education* came into our jurisprudence, and Manzanar National Historic Site.

Those were attacked by the Gingrich Congress, both for ideological reasons and for budgetary reasons. Those efforts at that time were defeated. Had they been successful, and had the parks been reduced in number, we would certainly have lost all those teaching about the history of the twentieth century. So, those threats had to be fought off at the same time that we were attempting to revitalize what those parks were doing.

I believe that "thinning of the blood" phrase or terminology was closely associated with former director [James M.] Ridenour[19] and it sounds like you take a different view of that?

Yes. We take quite a different view of the twentieth century.

Okay. We were talking about some of the newer units. I just wanted to quickly ask if any of the new units that came into the system during your tenure, which included, as I understand, Mojave National Preserve, New Orleans Jazz National Historical Park, Cane River [Creole National Historical Park], the Oklahoma City National Memorial, if any of those stand out and why?

I think the Mojave, probably. That was awfully hard work getting it as right as possible. It seems to me very, very doubtful that that [approval] could have been achieved in this decade rather than that decade. It will protect from desecration an immense amount of open land that's in the path of rapid development, and I'm very glad we did it at that time.

The others it seems to me are much more straightforward, much easier, and could have been done pretty much anytime. I think actually I feel prouder of the protective role of what we had and the enlivening role of what was done in what we had than any of those additions.

[19] James M. Ridenour served as director of the National Park Service from 1989-1993.

MISSION AND GROWTH

That's an interesting point. Well, just to get to some concluding remarks. As you know, there are people who contend that there is an inherent conflict between the Service's mission of preserving resources and providing for public enjoyment. And I wondered if you saw an inherent conflict there?

Not at all. Not at all. Never have. I believe that the first base of resource protection lies in a loyal and persuaded public outside the parks. You can't protect the parks if the public doesn't care. The public won't care unless the public has an intensified reason to care. That intensified reason comes from being there.

There is a management problem of how you handle the people who are becoming the constituents for the parks when they're in the parks. Of course, there's a management problem. That management problem is what you have a professional service for. Handling it appropriately is why you don't privatize that delicate balance. It's why you don't make those who strike the necessary balance trail by trail, area by area, you don't privatize those people and have them responsible to a corporate bottom line as distinguished from the long-term interest of the American people.

So the tension that often gets associated with "loving the parks to death" has always struck me as an absurd and dangerous assumption. We need to love them into continued life. We hire a service of professionals devoted to the parks and to the national interest to strike the necessary balances.

You just talked about the need to build public support outside the parks. How successful has the Park Service been in fostering the public trust, and what more should it be doing to foster that trust?

I used to say in every speech, I guess, that support for the parks is a mile wide and half an inch deep. Everybody says they love the parks when they don't love the Service. They don't understand as much as they must that the Service is necessary to the System. That necessity to deepen that commitment, that willingness to pay, that willingness to work, that willingness to care, that necessity to deepen that commitment is the work of anybody in the Park Service who encounters everybody that's not in the Park Service, wherever they are.

And that's also a job that continuously has to be done by real friends of the parks. That's why the National Parks Conservation Association, and the National Park Foundation, and each of the friends groups and conservancies is of crucial importance. Each of them is crucial, because each of them talks to a peculiar segment of the American public. It's a continuing job to assert the patriotic importance of these places, cultural and natural.

CLOSING REMARKS

In what areas either during your tenure, or even currently, did or do you see the Park Service falling short of reaching its full potential? It's a very broad question, I know.

Oh, I think the Park Service is doing wonderfully well. I am struck by the degree to which the Service itself, the professional service, is rising up to defend itself as a group of professionals and how former directors, and superintendents, and regional directors are rising up to speak out in defense of the Service and the System. That's the healthiest thing that's happened in my lifetime. This is a rising up of committed people to celebrate and pronounce their commitment to the System and the Service because the System and the Service serve our nation. This is a patriotic uprising. It's wonderful and healthy.

Comparing it to the attacks during your tenure from the Gingrich Congress, does this feel different?

Yes.

Is this playing out differently?

Oh, yes. I think that there was such a surprise to the Service. While it had been unpleasant in some previous administrations which intruded at the top and forced directors out and that sort of thing, there had not been an assault upon the parks, and certainly not upon the Service as a set of professionals, really not.

The threat now is at once more subtle and more pervasive. We fought off the attack of the Gingrich Congress on the System. Now that the attack is on the Service, I have been enormously emboldened and encouraged by the degree to which my colleagues go to bat to defend the Service the moment they step out the door into retirement. They seem to be ready to sign the petitions printed in newspapers urging defense of the System and the Service. It's wonderful.

It's a positive sign. Just to get some final perspective here, what do you believe was your greatest accomplishment or most significant accomplishment as director and why?

Defending the Service and the System and enlivening what the System and the Service delivered to the public, thereby increasing and deepening the constituency for them.

And the flip side of that, what was your greatest frustration, your greatest challenge?

Oh, the amount of time wasted on defending the parks rather than improving them. The amount of time wasted, I think, in a great deal of relatively unnecessary reorganizational stuff, made harder by the lack of administrative experience on the part of some of the people I had to contend with, who were forcing that to occur in a burdensome and inefficient way.

But I don't much regret it. I rather enjoyed the fight. I enjoy the fight now because I believe in it, and therefore the defending part fades in my recollection as anything really onerous. I don't think I could have continued to do the job in my late 70s and early 80s as I tried to do it in my late 60s, because it takes a certain amount of energy to do a couple of hearings a day and then a couple of television broadcasts. But I loved being director of the National Park Service, and I love helping the Park Service as an ex- director.

It sounds like because much of your time was spent dealing with Congress, that there were some specific things that you were not able to accomplish. Is that correct?

Yes.

Are there any of those that you want to highlight at this time?

No, I don't think so.

Nearly everything I wanted to do became a part of the ongoing mission, particularly in education. And I feel that what happened subsequently very much fulfills what I had in mind.

Well, what would you like to say about your departure as director? And I preface this all by saying that when you were interviewed at Discovery 2000 you indicated very firmly that a director should be

willing to resign over certain issues. And I thought that was such a powerful statement that I wanted to see if I could get you to talk a little bit about how your tenure came to a close.

Oh, my tenure came to a close because I recognized I was getting older and that I really couldn't give it the kind of intense application that I think a good director does. I certainly was not forced out. I certainly didn't resign on principle. I simply faded away. And in order to make that tangibly or symbolically a little clearer, I didn't want a "going away" thing. That's what you do for a guy like George Hartzog, who goes out to make a point. I didn't go out to make a point. I went out because it was time.

I've very, very proud of my friendship, my continuing friendship, with folks in the Service and with two, or three, or four, or maybe more than that, people that I worked with in the Department of the Interior and the White House. I feel one of the sweetest things about my 70s is the way in which people in the Service and people whom I dealt with in the White House and in the department receive me now. I really feel affirmed in what we tried to do together.

I'd be very interested to hear you talk about what you see as the appropriate role for the Park Service in the broader society. And I know that you've touched on that here and there in our earlier sessions, but just as a closing observation.

Sure. The Park Service are custodians, expositors internally and redeemers outside. Their job is to help the larger society be better because of what happens to people when they visit the parks and what happens when people from the parks visit outside. That's its role.

And how would you measure "success" for the Park Service?

The same way one measures success in life. Did you make a modest, marginal, positive effect while you were around? That's it. ■

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