JACK KEMP
ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

SYMPOSIUM

KEMP CONGRESSIONAL STAFF

September 19, 2011

PANEL 1
KEMP CONGRESSIONAL STAFF
1970-1980

JACK KEMP FOUNDATION
WASHINGTON, DC

James P. Kemp: Hello, I'm Jimmy Kemp, President of the Jack Kemp Foundation, and today it's a pleasure to introduce the Kemp Oral History Congressional Staff Symposium. We've got many of the staffers from Dad's congressional tour of duty from 1971 through 1989, and this is a special time for me because I remember all these folks from my childhood, which I hope doesn't offend them.

We're really pleased to have Sharon Zelaska and [Randal C.] Randy Teague, John [D.] Mueller, and [William J.] Bill Schneider [Jr.] at this morning's panel, and we really are grateful for Mort Kondracke, who's done a great job with Kemp oral history and providing a valuable resource to people who are interested in my father's legacy of leading the supply-side economic movement and rebuilding our country during the Reagan administration. So it's a privilege to introduce Mort and the Kemp Congressional Staff Symposium. Thank you.

Morton Kondracke: This is the first of two staff symposia. We're at the Longworth House Office Building. Today is September 19, 2011, and I am Morton Kondracke. So first what I'd like you to do is introduce yourselves, tell us what your dates of employment at Jack Kemp's office were, what your position was, how you got your job, and what was your first impression of Jack and the place. We'll start with Randy and then go to Bill.

Randal Teague: I'm Randal Teague and I had the pleasure of serving from 1973 to 1979 as Jack's chief of staff, then called administrative assistant and legislative director. I had met Jack in the 1970 campaign, which was his first campaign for Congress. I was involved, as was another person on this panel, in the Buckley for Senate campaign in New York, and the intersection of Youth for Kemp in Buffalo and Youth for Buckley throughout the state brought us together for one time. I think I actually met him then and did not see him again until 1973.

I was in the Executive Office of the President. You will remember the summer of 1973 was a very discombobulated time within that office. Jack called me on the telephone on the recommendation of Senator Buckley's chief of staff, David Jones, and said that he was looking for a new administrative assistant, a person that combined two qualities of experience that were impossible to obtain in any one person. He was desperate to have somebody that really knew public-works issues because of his district on Lake Erie, but he also needed somebody with a background in tax.

It so happened that I had been the Republican Clerk of the House Committee on Public Works where we handled those water projects, and I had a law degree in tax law. I did pull together five or six résumés for him, but I put mine on top. Jack called me and he said, "I need to interview you."

I said, "That's fine. Where should we meet?"

He said, "In the Members Gallery overlooking the House," and I thought this would be an interesting interview because you're not allowed to speak in the Members Gallery of the House. This was on a Tuesday night. He offered me the job, asked me when I was ready to go.

I said, "How about tomorrow morning?"

And he said, "Well, I need at least a week." I started the following Monday and did that through 1979. It was an exciting place to be because, let me guarantee you, you could work sixteen hours a day and not resent it because Jack was working seventeen hours a day.

Kondracke: Bill Schneider.

William Schneider: Thank you, Mort. I also got to know Jack during the 1970 campaign. I was working for then candidate [James L.] Jim Buckley and joined his staff when he became a U.S. senator in January of '71.

Jack was very interested in national security issues, which was the area I specialized, but his committee service didn't overlap with committees that had jurisdiction over national security matters. Nevertheless, during the period between January of '71 and January of '77, when I joined his staff as his appointee on the House Defense Appropriations Committee, I did provide him with briefings and material. He was a voracious reader of almost anything that came up. During that period was one of particularly

intense conservative criticism of the Nixon-Kissinger policy of détente and Jack generally subscribed to it.

Jim Buckley was the beneficiary of many of the same political trends or exploiting the political demography of New York State at the time, where many of the people who would ultimately become Reagan Democrats were moving their affiliation to Republicans, because Republicans like Jim Buckley and Jack Kemp stood for an assertive foreign policy, a strong national defense, a pro-growth economic policy, and low taxes, all of which were increasingly congruent to the electorate at that point.

So when Jim Buckley was defeated for reelection in 1976, losing to subsequently Senator [Daniel Patrick] Moynihan, Jack was appointed to the Subcommittee on Defense Appropriations and contacted me in December of ’76 and asked me to join the staff, which I did in January of ’77, and served there until January of ’81, when I served as Associate Director at the Office of Management and Budget for National Security and International Affairs in the first Reagan administration.

Kondracke: Sharon.

Sharon Zelaska: My name is Sharon Zelaska, and I started working for Jack on June 1, 1977. I got the call from Jack on April 16, 1977 to come for an interview. That date is important because it was the day after income tax

day and he had gotten a letter from his accountant saying that if he didn't do something with his accounts and his finances, that he could be in deep trouble by the next year. So he was out looking for somebody who could take care of his personal affairs and all of the accounts for the House of Representatives. So I started June 1, 1977 and was with him until February of '97. I'm the longest-serving staff member on his staff. I was originally there as a personal assistant, and then, as Randy says, your titles changed depending on what he wanted you to do at the time. So I kept that title until 1988 when we went to HUD.

As Randy said, also, it was a very, very exciting office. He wasn't very well known at the time, other than being a football player—that's how I knew him—but he worked so hard. None of us left the office until he left at the end of the day. He was tireless, and you wanted to give him everything. You wanted to give your all to him because of that.

Kondracke: John.

John Mueller: My name is John Mueller. I worked for Jack from January 1979 through the end of 1988. I had been an editor and reporter for a local daily newspaper in New Jersey, in Morristown, later the *Morris County Daily Record*. I was writing editorials and book reviews. Jude [T.] Wanniski, who played a large role in the supply-side movement, lived in Morristown and

introduced himself to me. He wanted the newspaper to endorse Jeffrey [L.] Bell, who was running for Senate in 1978, and the paper didn't do endorsements at the state [unclear] or higher levels, so I couldn't help him out. He had just written a book called *The Way the World Works*, and my future wife-to-be and I had started a book review column. I reviewed *The Way the World Works* and I was pretty much converted to supply-side.

As a result, I was hired as press secretary to Jeffrey Bell in his Senate campaign. When he lost, I was unemployed on election day, but Jude recommended me to Jack, so I got the call to come down to Washington to interview with Jack in his office. We hit it off right away. Jack was looking for a speechwriter, and that was basically the position I held for the next eight years, though, as Sharon said, you wound up doing almost anything.

For one brief month I was actually the chief of staff. I think Sharon recognized first that I'm just not suited for that role, and so I happily became simply Jack's speechwriter, and later on I backed my way into becoming his economist because I'm not afraid of numbers, having started out as a physics major, so I backed my way into numbers-crunching. I filled various roles, mostly as the economic counsel to the House Republican Conference, of which Jack was chairman from January 1981 through 1987.

Zelaska: Jude should have gotten commissions, because that's how I got to work for Jack also. I knew him at the American Enterprise Institute and he's the one that gave Jack my name to come interview for him.

Kondracke: So, just briefly, what do you think are the major accomplishments of Jack Kemp's during your time there? What would you say you accomplished, and were there any errors do you think? Were there any mistakes or failures?

Teague: That's an extremely good question because it summarizes Jack's service in Congress and then, to some degree, after he left Congress. The greatest achievement was to be a member of Congress, not on the House Committee on Ways and Means that had jurisdiction over tax, but to seize a lot of inchoate ideas within the Republican Party as to how to reduce the tax burdens upon businesses at the beginning and then upon people as individual taxpayers as this moved on.

When we first began in 1973 working on the tax issue, the focus was primarily on credits, deductions, etc. It was also on reducing the burden on business. What Jude Wanniski brought to us, as did Arthur [B.] Laffer, [Robert L.] Bob Bartley, and other people, was a movement from focusing on those burdens to focusing on the burdens of tax rates upon individual taxpayers. So legislatively it moved from a very narrow piece of legislation

focused on investment tax credits, etc., to what ultimately became the Reagan tax cuts during the first Reagan administration, and the achievement of that resting with Jack, that he kept this issue alive amongst many people who felt that reduced tax rates would mean reduced revenues to the government, rather than increased revenues to the government, and he was able to do that into the Reagan campaign and then into the Reagan presidency. What an incredible accomplishment.

Kondracke: Any mistakes, errors?

Teague: Well, I think it took us a while to realize what was needed to build political support. There were members of the House Committee on Ways and Means who were extremely influential within the House, who were quite resentful of Jack, as not being a member of that committee, working so visibly in the public media on tax issues. There were others, and for the shorthand let's call them Eisenhower Republicans, who felt that the responsibility of the Republican Party was to raise taxes to pay for Democratic spending programs, and they had real trouble seeing what the underlying economic principles and so forth were under this.

I think we have to remember that during the off-season when Jack was in the AFL—it became the NFL—he was a special assistant to Governor [Ronald W.] Reagan during those off-seasons, and he really totally brought

to Washington Reagan's views on how to approach economies, California being the largest economy in the United States. And the thing that was so marvelous about Jack was that he had these boxes of press releases, statements, speeches, and so forth from Governor Reagan, and he could reach right into that box fourteen inches back and pull out the speech he was looking for. So he brought these Reagan ideas into the Republican Party almost a decade before Reagan had the control of the Republican Party.

Kondracke: So Reagan was his intellectual stimulator?

Teague: I don't know if you'd call it an intellectual stimulator. It was a combination of things. Certainly policy stimulator. I'd call it policy stimulator, but also his sense of moral courage that no matter what you might say about people long ago, the Churchills of the world and so forth that had great moral courage, that Ronald Reagan was a person of the same period of time that had the moral courage to do the right thing, and Jack felt that he could try to help this Republican Party do the right thing.

Kondracke: So what was it about Reagan that he so admired? Were there specific things that he pointed his finger at?

Teague: I think political courage as much as anything else. California, at the time that Reagan became governor there, was not totally but it was predominantly a Democratic state based upon the principles of the Democratic Party. The labor unions were gaining control of the state and things like that. Jack would never attack the labor union because he had been head of a labor union as a professional athlete. But what Jack saw in Reagan was articulation of public policy issues and the moral courage to see them out, the political courage to see them out. I think that's what he was trying to bring to this.

Jack, like anyone, had a day that lived with the past and tried to predict the future, and so Jack came to town wanting to be part of that House Republican establishment, Chowder and Marching and those kinds of things that were the inner club, and yet at the same time he had the courage to be outside of that club structure to be a catalyst for new ideas, and much of the work that he had to do—you said what mistakes did we make. A mistake we made was that we did not perceive early enough that part of the battle to achieve reduced tax rates was not a battle between Republicans and Democrats; it for several years was very much a battle within the Republican Party.

Kondracke: Bill Schneider.

Schneider: I'd like to add just a few points to Randy's observations. I had been doing some work for Governor Reagan after he had retired from California and was pursuing the presidency, and I had contributed to speeches and provided some background briefings. I think that perhaps the most enduring contribution Jack has made, certainly to President Reagan, but perhaps to public policy, has been his success in persuading Reagan that the way to go is a focus on reducing taxes. I think Reagan recognized the ingenuity in the concept because it created a virtuous [sic] circle of stimulating economic development, which produced revenues which allowed you to diminish the share of government that was accounted for by federal activity, and this created the opportunity that subsequently evolved in the Reagan administration where you were able to talk in practical terms about meeting the basic needs of the society, including national defense and the safety net, but reducing the share accounted for by government of the national income. His persuasiveness in persuading President Reagan, then candidate Reagan, to adopt this approach over all of the objections that came from, as Randy suggested, inside the Republican Party was really a testimony and showed how much—

Kondracke: What about in your area, in the defense foreign policy area? What would you say Jack's major accomplishments were?

Schneider: Well, I think it was integrated with his views on taxes. He would have had in the current season, where it's seen that in order to allow the economy to recover, you have to cut national defense, Jack would argue now, as he certainly did then, that what you needed was a pro-growth economic policy that would produce the revenues. He was very sensitive to the threats posed to U.S. interests in the 1970s, just as we have profound threats facing us today, and recognized that those had to be engaged, but he saw the engine of economic growth as being the driver that created the resources for national defense. So I think the ability to bring together the shared interests that, say, national defense has with economic growth was a very compelling set of arguments and found a very persuaded audience in President Reagan and the leading players in his cabinet.

Kondracke: So, any errors? Anything he got wrong?

Schneider: Well, maybe it was an impossible aspiration, but when I served in OMB, I worked for [David A.] Dave Stockman, who during the congressional service they were good friends. Stockman had an encyclopedic knowledge of the federal budget and federal revenues. The idea of converging good policy with detailed knowledge is perhaps utopian, but I think Jack chose not to apply himself to the details and, instead,

focused on the policy. I think in that respect he's much more like Reagan than, say, Stockman or other politicians who focused on the details.

Kondracke: Well, just let me follow up on that. Stockman and Kemp had a big falling-out, basically.

Schneider: Right, yes.

Kondracke: They were close friends in Congress, and then Stockman becomes head of OMB and declares Kemp-Roth to be trickle-down economics and a big fraud, basically. So what happened after that?

Schneider: Well, I think the main issue, as I recall it, was that Stockman was convinced that even though Republicans talked about reducing federal expenditure, in fact, they were not prepared to do so. As a result, he felt that the Kemp-Roth proposition would lead to high budget deficits forever. This proved not to be sustained, as the subsequent recovery showed, but the way in which Stockman promoted this view in his brief period of public exposure as director really separated he and Jack, and that led to a falling-out.

Kondracke: So you were basically the staff organizer, I gather, and you found it in a wreckage when you arrived. And then what happened?

Zelaska: Well, not so much the staff. I mean, they were all doing their thing, but his financial things and his administrative paperwork and things were in disarray. I can remember, after the first month sitting in the middle of his office, on a Saturday afternoon crying my eyes out because I didn't understand why I left my other job. But I followed my own rule, which was always give a new job a year, and I did and, of course, I went on to be twenty years and it was just a great experience.

I do remember one piece of advice that Randy gave me, which was, "There will be days when he'll do something really stupid and you'll wonder why in the world he's doing that, but he will always land on his feet." Do you remember telling me that? And he did. I mean, he just had a remarkable way about him. He was very disorganized himself. He had papers everywhere. You wondered what was in that stack, but he knew what was in that stack, just like the Reagan papers. He could be very disorganized himself, but everything was right up here. He knew exactly what he wanted to do.

Kondracke: What were some of the times when you thought he'd really made a big mistake that he landed on his feet about?

Zelaska: I can't think of anything right offhand. A couple of things that Jude Wanniski was always trying to get him to do didn't always pan out the way the rest of the staff thought they would, but I can't remember if anything—

Kondracke: In how much detail did Jude Wanniski get into running the office?

Zelaska: Jack spoke to him a lot. I mean, they were just on the phone constantly, constantly, and he was always telling people to come in to see him, make this appointment. He wanted him to get ideas from a lot of different people. He was at the Kemp home probably two nights a week for dinner. Jimmy can probably attest to that. He had a lot of influence over Jack.

Kondracke: So, John, clearly tax reform and Kemp-Roth were signal accomplishments during your period, and we discussed those at the Miller Center in detail. So what else would you say were the major accomplishments and, also, were there any mistakes along the way?

Mueller: I just wanted to add to what Sharon said. Jack did have his foibles, but I've always been struck at how he chose the people to work for him as if actually to counteract those weaknesses, that he would hire a Sharon Zelaska to get his finances in order. He had a great relationship with the people that he trusted. When I wrote speeches for him, he would often mark them up, and what I understood, I think, is that he didn't want you to take them literally. What he was saying, "There is something wrong with this passage. Fix it."

I think a lot of other speechwriters came along and took him literally and said, "Take Jack's language," and often that wasn't exactly the right language. But he was always right that there was something wrong with that passage. I just wanted to add that.

He took the big picture, and I think his sense of tactics from the football field translated very well into the Congress, which is a very fluid sensuation. Every member of Congress has to be his own Secretary of State, his own Secretary of Defense, and so you could find yourself doing almost anything. Jack was great at seeing changes on the field, as it were, as they were happening and that's what made him a great—

Zelaska: That's a good analogy.

Schneider: I think that the Reagan Revolution could not have happened without both Jack in the Congress and Reagan at the White House, because I don't think that Jack's skills, because of some of the weaknesses in administration that Sharon mentioned, would have made him as Reaganesque, say, as Reagan was. So I think it was a symbiotic relationship that made it work. Reagan saw what Jack had to offer, but Reagan also had the big picture at the time. He gave a great speech to CPAC [Conservative Political Action Conference of the American Conservative Union] in January of 1977 in which he laid out his whole strategy except for the economic component. That was kind of like a place-keeper, and Jack and his Kemp-Roth and the pro-growth—

Kondracke: Reagan made CPAC—

Mueller: Reagan made the CPAC speech. So he had the whole view of things from defense, social policy, economic policy. He had it all sketched out, but he needed to put Jack's ideas into the economic component.

Kondracke: So we know that Jack gave Reagan supply-side economics as a theme. Do you share Randy's view that Reagan was some sort of an inspiration to Jack?

Mueller: There was a symbiotic relationship between them. I think that [David M.] Dave Smick, who was his A.A. for a while, wrote in an article, I think at the time of Jack's death, that it was an uneasy relationship, actually, between Jack and Reagan. I think that Jack, in some cases, was sort of a burr under Reagan's saddle and pushing him further than he wanted to go.

I think that Reagan remarks in his autobiography and in his diaries that on a couple of occasions—I think on the occasion of one of those budget deals that was supposed to be three dollars of spending cuts for one dollar of tax increase, and Jack was against this proposal, and I think Reagan says in his diary which he puts it in the autobiography that Jack was being unreasonable. Well, as it turned out, Jack was right about the fact that the tax increases would materialize but not the spending cuts. It was not always an easy relationship, but I think it was a fruitful one for both of them.

Kondracke: You were in the Reagan White House and in the Reagan administration, so how was he regarded by the Reaganites?

Schneider: Well, at the front end of the administration that led up to the passage of the Kemp-Roth bill and the budget deal that worked with [Thomas P.] Tip O'Neill [Jr.] was really a decisive inflection point in the Reagan administration, and I think at that stage Jack was seen as a crucial player in being able to get this to work across both houses of the Senate,

getting the President in support of it, because at the time the Republicans controlled the Senate, but not the House. Jack's skills at being able to recruit Democrats for this kind of legislation was decisive in getting it passed.

Once that had happened, of course, the economy was still in a recession and bottomed out, basically, during the '82 congressional elections, and there was increasing tension. That's when you were getting the budget forecasts from OMB that suggested continued budget deficits. They did not use dynamic economic models in OMB, so there wasn't much feedback reported from the growth in the economy. As a consequence, the news was very grim. Director Stockman wanted to take down the defense program and several other initiatives, which led to, actually, a sequence of trimmings that led up to this bigger tax-and-spend transaction that John was referring to earlier. So I think over time, as John suggested, Jack was seen as goading the White House on issues where President Reagan felt that he needed to make a deal.

Kondracke: And from your end, what did they have to say about Jack?

Schneider: In the—

Kondracke: In the White House.

Schneider: In the White House? Well, I think they were increasingly irritated with his dogged pursuit of reductions.

Kondracke: Any specifics of what they said?

Schneider: They were not complimentary.

Kondracke: [laughs] Who in particular?

Schneider: Say, Jim Baker and several of the people, especially those who had been associated with the Bush One election campaign in 1980. There were fault lines that had remained in the Reagan White House between Bush factions, for want of a better term, and Reagan factions, and so some of those who were associated with the former saw Jack as a particularly troublesome figure.

Kondracke: Troublesome is the language they used, or was it more vivid than that?

Schneider: That's the G-rated version of it, yes.

Kondracke: Well, since you have to leave early, let's go to some other administrations. Then we'll get into how the office operated and stuff. But during the Nixon years and during the Ford years, he was also at odds with the administration, largely over foreign policy, right?

Schneider: Right.

Kondracke: So tell us about that and what the byplay was on both sides. It was over, largely, détente and—

Schneider: Yes, it was a time that I had the privilege to have interaction with him, even though I wasn't on his staff. I was working in the Senate at the time, but because Jack's district had a lot of people from Central Europe, especially from Poland, he had a particularly strong sympathy for developments in the Soviet bloc. As a consequence, he read very avidly. In the early seventies, it was the time when particularly [Aleksandr I.] Solzhenitsyn was still in the Soviet Union, very active as an intense critic of the Soviet leadership and the whole process of détente. [George] Robert [A.] Conquest, Richard [E.] Pipes, other academic specialists in the U.S., Henry [M. "Scoop"] Jackson is a senator who had promoted this, had an influence on Jack.

He was very interested in it and so we continued to study the question of how can we respond to détente, what are the alternatives to it. It had its constructive impact. I think to see President Reagan ultimately saying rhetorically to Gorbachev to "Take down this wall" was an illustration of the notion that we should not accept the permanent division of Europe and the U.S. foreign policies that were obliged to respect that division. I think Jack was an important player in the runup to what ultimately became a policy commitment during the Reagan administration not to accept the division of Europe, and, indeed, in areas that I had a small part in when I served in the government, to begin to attack Soviet power and its extremities in Nicaragua and Afghanistan and Africa.

The kind of public diplomacy campaign that President Reagan undertook so successfully matched very well with Jack's interest, as Randy suggested, in the ability to articulate a defense of these kinds of policy initiatives. So during the seventies and the runup to his subsequent service on the Defense Appropriations Committee, where he got a lot of firsthand information when George Mahon was the chairman, who had been the first chairman of the Defense Appropriations Committee when it was established in 1949, was particularly effective at getting good testimony before the committee, and it opened Jack's eyes to a lot of the things that were going on and the consequences for U.S. interests of the way in which détente was being

conducted. So he fused his views on pro-growth with a strong defense policy.

Kondracke: So what did he think about Henry [A.] Kissinger?

Schneider: He was antagonistic towards the policies that he promoted. He felt that they were sustaining Soviet power rather than weakening it, and he believed, as he often heard from his constituents who had family ties to Central Europe, that the Soviet Union had a much looser grip on its satellite states than the détente policy would allow. So I think it persisted. When Kissinger left the scene, he had a lot of different things to say about foreign policy, but Jack then continued to be very interested in the way détente was practiced by the [James "Jimmy" E.] Carter administration. He became a member of the Congressional Review Panel that was set up under the Arms Control Act to monitor the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks, as they were then called. He made a number of trips to Geneva to review the progress of the talks and became a regular critic of the arms control process, which was the main flagship of détente.

Kondracke: During the Carter administration, famously, the defense budget was reduced considerably post Vietnam. So was Jack in favor of increasing defense budgets all the time?

Schneider: Yes. In the defense appropriations process, you could not avoid encountering detail because Chairman [George H.] Mahon would take several weeks to go through a committee markup, and so he got to look intently at all three thousand line items in the R&D appropriation request. But even though he was not a technically inclined person, the drip-feeding of what was being done to taking the capability out of our defense program that had been accelerating during the Carter administration was coupled with his criticism of détente to come up with a view that the U.S. was being undermined, and he fastened quickly onto the Reagan slogan of "Peace through strength." It had a lot of resonance, as I said, in parallel with his views on pro-growth.

Kondracke: Okay. Let's go to how the office was organized. Now, where was it exactly? Where were your offices during the seventies?

Teague: 132 Cannon.

Zelaska: That's where it started.

Kondracke: What did it look like?

Teague: Three offices. One, the member's office, the reception, behind which was the chief of staff and the O.D. and the P.R. person, and then the legislative shop right next to it. It varied a little bit.

But I think we have to pull something together here, because John very well has stated the relationship between Jack's professional football career and his political career, but I think you have to remember it wasn't just football; it was that Jack was the quarterback, and as the quarterback, he expected the other forty-three players on the team to do what they were supposed to do.

Kondracke: You had forty-three staffers?

Teague: No, no, forty-four people on a football team.

Kondracke: Oh, I see.

Teague: So Jack comes back from a trip and he expects that the L.D. has done his work, the L.A.s have done their work, the chief of staff has done his work, the defense appropriations has done their work, because the quarterback can't do it all. What the quarterback has is a playbook in his head, and we all know that a playbook in the head is only as good as the game begins, right? And then what happened over a period of six or seven

years, of course, is that you're changing the playbook as to what you're trying to do in winning this game of getting a new recognition of a tax policy in the country and the enactment of that into statutes.

This image of Jack, which I think is valid, but Jack comes back from being on the road for three or four days and he empties his pockets, he turns over his files and so forth, and he expects people to then pick up all of that—

Kondracke: Turns them over to who?

Teague: Well, it depends. I mean, certainly he would turn a file over, if it was dealing with legislation or a speech or something like that, to one person. Certainly if he's emptying his pockets or his wallet of receipts of expenditures he's had, that would go to the personal assistant. And when Sharon came to the job, I'm sure there had been nothing filed in months, if not since he began in Congress, and I think in respect to the financial issues, it was not any impropriety; it's just that an accountant sitting there was given a box, probably around April 1st, and had to do everything by April 15th or get an extension. So you had receipts of actual expenditures and so forth, but you didn't know who was there and what they were and everything else.

That's where staff becomes very important, and I think what eventually happened in that office is that much of that, certainly with respect to finances and so forth, got itself under control. But a member of Congress, you're expected to be in session on Thursday and Friday. The decision is made Wednesday night you're not, all the scheduling changes and everything else, and so the frenetic nature of what was happening in that office on almost every day is why people had to do their very best to stay on top of things, because not in defense of somebody that may have not done their filing, but you usually do filing during a quiet period, and in the last eighteen months, if there's never been a day that was a quiet period, those kinds of things get sloughed off.

I think the office rotated around not only Jack as the member of Congress because he was the only one that carried that title and it was his office, but around the enormous amount of activity that was being generated. Staying on top of that was very different from most, I will say, most other congressional offices.

Kondracke: Because he had so many balls in the air?

Teague: He had so many balls in the air, and, let's face it, I mean, when a member comes to Congress, they obviously bring their past with them. They might have been in a state legislature, they might have been in the

private sector, they might have been an attorney, but Jack brought the NFL with him into that office. And one of the exciting things about being in that office is from any given day who was going to walk through that door, and if Pete Rozelle just walked through the door, you know, the schedule for the next hour went where you would expect it would have gone. And that was true with a lot of people that he had played with, because Jack, having been head of the union and so forth, he had many contacts that transcended just the team.

So it was that kind of a life, the constituent services that had to be undertaken and, of course, Jack spending much of his weekends and recesses and things like that within his constituency because Jack had a seat that had not been a Republican seat. [Richard D.] Max McCarthy had held that seat, a member of the Democratic Party for a number of years, and so no matter what Jack's pluralities may have been, his majorities may have been, in each election cycle he never took his constituency for granted, he never took his congressional district for granted. So he would spend a lot of time there at the same time that he was in New York and Los Angeles and other places putting these elements of his economic policy together, but Jack was also building friendships with his colleagues in the House by appearing at speeches and dinners and luncheons and so forth for them.

Kondracke: Sounds like a scrambling quarterback.

Teague: That's an excellent way to capture it.

Kondracke: John, what was the office organization like? How did it function?

Mueller: Well, you asked where we were. When I arrived, we were at 2235 Rayburn and we later moved to 2252.

Kondracke: So he goes from Cannon to two offices in Rayburn.

Zelaska: Three offices in Rayburn. We kept trying to get a bigger office and we would go into the pool and pick a number and see if we could get a bigger office. We ended up in 2252. I wasn't with him at Cannon, but then we went to 2244 Rayburn, then 2235, and then 2252.

Kondracke: But in each case, the staff is sort of cheek by jowl, is it?

Zelaska: Yes, it was still mapped out.

Mueller: I think we had three and sometimes four of us in the middle office in 2235. It was Lou Rotterman, who was the press secretary, in one corner;

I think Bill was in another corner; I was on the other side of the door from him; and I think, Sharon, you might have been in there for a while, though you were usually out in front.

Zelaska: I didn't get there until 2252.

Mueller: Yes, so there wasn't much room, but it was a great relationship among his staff. I mean, the fact that we still keep up, most of the staffers in this room meet for parties years after the fact and are each godparents to each other's kids. It was just a great relationship, I think, among the staff. It was the tone that Jack set, really. I've heard it said that an effective leader has a lot of open channels for communication but a single line of authority. I'd say that Jack had a lot of open channels for communication, but not a single line of authority, and I think it was the camaraderie of the staff that really kept things together.

Kondracke: How did you know what to do?

Zelaska: Well, we communicated with each other because we knew that sometimes Jack would give one person a job secretly and then he'd go and give somebody else the same job, so we learned eventually—

Kondracke: Was that to create creative tension or was it—

Zelaska: No, no, it wasn't a malevolent thing he did. He just wanted everybody to do the best they could, I guess, but we learned after a while to start talking to each other. Instead of being secretive about it, we would talk to each other about it and we'd find out that we were doing double duty, and then we'd just work together. It was a great staff. I can't say it more strongly that we were a great staff. Everybody loved each other. We worked hard together and we didn't pit each other against each other. We wanted to do the job for him. That was our main goal.

Kondracke: Because you liked him so much?

Zelaska: We liked him. Oh, he could be so irritating sometimes. He could be so irritating, but the thing about Jack, he never, ever held a grudge. He could yell and scream at you one minute, and the next minute, "Honey, can you go get me a cup of coffee?" Well, he didn't call me honey, but he would say—

Mueller: Or he'd make it up to you.

Zelaska: He would make it up to you some way. He might not say, "I'm sorry," but he would show that he wasn't upset at you or anything. But he never held a grudge, not against the staff and not against anybody else either, and I'm sure that was, again, part of the football thing. They were opponents on the field, but they were friends.

Kondracke: So what was irritating about him?

Zelaska: He never liked to make a decision about anything. I was the one that had the job of getting him to make decisions on all of the speaking engagements, and as years went on, speaking engagement requests just went on and on and on. He wanted to be the one to make the decision, but he didn't want to take the time to make the decision, so I would spend hours and hours organizing this pile of invitations to get him to sit down, and I would be there until nine, ten o'clock at night trying to get him to make decisions, and then he'd lose interest in it.

So I eventually got to the point where I'd get so upset that he wouldn't spend any time with me that I'd say, "Okay, if you don't give me an answer right now, this is how I'm going to handle it," and then suddenly I'd get an answer out of him about something, and that's the way we had to work it sometimes. He wasn't trying to be nasty or anything. He just had so many things going on in his mind, he didn't want to have to deal with what was

little to him. But these were people who were waiting for months for answers on whether he was going to come their district for a breakfast or a lunch or whatever. And as, again, years went on, it wasn't just his district; it was nationally.

Kondracke: So what's it like being the chief of staff for somebody like this?

Teague: Well, actually, not all that difficult. I would go back to my football analogy, though, about Jack's supposed inability to make decisions, because I think what a quarterback does is he releases that ball to whomever the receiver is, based on a hundredth-of-a-second decision as to who's open, and so you don't make decisions in advance. You do make decisions at the last moment. Memory is necessary, as Sharon has pointed out, because Jack would make a commitment to a colleague on the floor that he was going to Spartanburg, South Carolina, to speak at a breakfast for this member and then not tell Sharon, and Sharon gets a phone call and, of course, you can imagine what it is from there.

I think much of what a chief of staff has to do is to stay in as much communication with everyone in those three offices, including the member. And the role of the personal assistant is critical, because if the door has been shut and the door has been shut for an hour, you need to know whether Jude is in there with him or Art's in there with him, or whatever the

circumstances might be. You need to look at his travel schedule to see where there were opportunities for additional meetings or for input from these people. Intelligence-gathering at its required best had to be part of the job so that you knew where he was on any particular issue in terms of the inputs to him, in terms of where he wanted those inputs to go into the legislative process or those inputs go into constituent services in terms of an issue back in Buffalo, etc., etc.

Kondracke: So did you know what everybody on the staff was doing?

Teague: Nobody ever knows that, but I think that you're going to succeed if you're in the 90 percent range and you're going to totally fail if you're much less than that, and so I think that's true. I mean, the President of the United States doesn't know what his own cabinet members are doing and, in many cases, that's a very good thing for them. But I think Jack did stay on top of whatever he felt were his priorities. Decisions are pyramids, and so when it came to that top 10 percent of the pyramid which constituted 90 percent of the decisions, that's where he was. He wasn't anywhere else on that pyramid.

Zelaska: But back to John's point earlier, he put people in jobs that he knew were going to take care of it.

Mueller: Yes, he surrounded himself with detail people.

Zelaska: Right. His philosophy was about details. He would look to see if you handled some little tiny thing, because he figured if you're taking care of that little tiny thing, then you've got the big things taken care of too.

Schneider: He was on two subcommittees, on Appropriations, Defense, and Foreign Operations, and he would depend on me to tee up issues. Either there was some particular witness that was particularly important for him to hear, or during the markup season that there were particular things of interest to him that he had to be sure he was going to be there. Working with Sharon and Randy, we often got matters of high public policy interest to converge with his schedule in such a way that he could act on them. But as Sharon suggested, he liked to delegate responsibility for tasks that people in whom he had confidence and then depend on them to tee things up for him in such a way that he could act on them.

Kondracke: When he's first in Congress, he's on Education and Labor and was on the Select Subcommittee on Education. How long did he stay there and what did he do while he was—

Teague: Actually, I don't remember the length of time that he was there before the committee changes occurred, but I think Education and Labor he made work for him in a very important way. He had colleges and universities within his district. He obviously had his own views of education and the role of government in education, and so that was staffed out and so forth.

Kondracke: Which were? Which were? I mean, was he in favor of federal aid to education and so on?

Teague: I think Jack felt that the best education was local, and I think he strongly advocated that position and felt that the federal government's slow movement into education was going to have the inevitable end of being total control of education in the country, which, of course, pretty much manifested itself during the George W. Bush administration. But he gave a lot of time and effort to that.

The labor issues were important to him, not just the education issues, and, of course, not an easy position to have for a Republican because that committee, under the Democrats, with the exception of a few years, since the end of the Second World War had been dominated by organized labor. Now, organized labor was very important to Jack and so he had to figure out within his constituency how he was going to meld these, but there's no

doubt that Jack felt that where he wanted to go—and Bill Schneider has mentioned this in terms of not going on Ways and Means, because if you go on Ways and Means, you're captured by the process of Ways and Means. He could do what he wished to do in terms of tax policy, tax legislation, and so forth by being out of the committee more easily than he could by being in the committee.

Kondracke: So he never sought to be on Ways and Means?

Teague: If he did, I did not see it.

Kondracke: Okay, but he must have sought to get onto Budget and Appropriations, right?

Teague: Yes.

Kondracke: So how did that happen?

Teague: I think Bill would be better to answer that.

Schneider: Appropriations was particularly difficult for someone who had served less than five terms. With Appropriations, that was your only

committee because of the distribution of work on the subcommittees. A member was just too busy. So it was a testimony to how well he was respected by his colleagues in the Congress, especially the leadership, to put him on the Appropriations Committee, which is—

Kondracke: When did he go on Appropriations?

Schneider: In January of ’77, but he knew he was going to go on it in December of ‘76, which is when we had a discussion about serving there. So he clearly had gone there and he did seek service on the subcommittees that were unambiguously functions of the federal government, Defense and Foreign Operations, which didn’t produce any conflict, let’s say, or dissonance with his views on domestic policy. Of course, he had responsibility for the whole of government with the Appropriations Committee, but his detail service was on those two subcommittees.

Kondracke: Well, he was on Budget, too, wasn’t he, at one point? It seems—

Schneider: It may have been later, not when I served.

Kondracke: So, John, did you get specific assignments from him? Was that the way things worked in the office, or how did you know what to do? How did he lead?

Mueller: Well, because he was always speaking and I was writing speeches, and so there was constant back and forth as to how we would articulate his views, that's really—we'll probably get into this this afternoon at the eighties session when he ran for President. That's also how his views on policy were hammered out. He had several speechwriters at that point, and what he actually thought about a certain issue was hammered out by the speechwriters trying to wrestle back and forth.

Kondracke: Okay, some of his ideas, I take it, were speech-driven, so he would get the speechwriter in and other people and discuss the thing?

Mueller: Right, or he would ask, essentially, for a memo on my thoughts on something. If Jude had sent something, I would usually get the letter with something, "John, what do you think?" So that meant that I had to give him my ideas, and often you'd find yourself having to have a take on the history of economics or something like that. I had, like, a six-foot shelf of books always from the Library of Congress because there was just a wide range of

what he was interested in. But it was mostly through speechwriting and through memos that he was asking for.

Zelaska: Congressional Research Service was always on speed dial. I would like to mention that during this time period we didn't even have correcting Selectric typewriters. We had manual typewriters; we had regular electric typewriters, but no correcting Selectrics. We had no computers; we had no email; we had no cell phones. We did everything. We had mimeograph machines. It was hard. It was a lot harder back in those days to do what we did, because nowadays, of course, they have all this technology, and we still managed to get it all done. I mean, we hand-typed letters back to our constituents for casework and things like that. Everything was done by hand.

Kondracke: Let me get something straight, Randy. Go through the chiefs of staff in order. Before you, who was his first chief of staff?

Teague: James Cromwell, and he came from the 1970 campaign structure, and then there was a transition period that I'm not sure of what the length was, but Cromwell was, in fact, leaving the position. Harry [W.] Clark was sort of de facto during this brief transition period.

Kondracke: How long was Harry Clark there?

Teague: I do not know. He was there when I arrived in September of ’73 through John [D.] Ehrlichman’s recommendation from the White House through a network of Christian Scientists involved in the Nixon administration.

Kondracke: Harry Clark was a John Ehrlichman recommendee?

Teague: Yes, and so he was there for a while. I came, as I say, in September of ’73 with this double title of administrative assistant and legislative director. And then I left in February of ’79 and—

Zelaska: That’s when [David M.] Dave Smick—

Randy: That’s right.

Zelaska: Well, John was in there for a little while.

Randy: John was there. We had some overlap. I’m not sure how long it was, but there was an overlap period, and David Smick became the next chief of staff and then [J.] David Hoppe after that.

Kondracke: Were there different styles to the various chiefs of staff?

Zelaska: [unclear].

Kondracke: Yes, you were probably the—or either one of you.

Zelaska: It was just Randy and then Dave Smick and then Dave Hoppe.

Kondracke: So were there—

Zelaska: Well, none of them bothered me. [laughter]

Teague: But she was the critical source of information for anyone who was chief of staff, because she knew in greater detail where Jack was, what he was doing, what decisions needed to be made, whether they were scheduling or whatever. So I'll be very blunt about this. The chief of staff had to stay so much in contact with Sharon during her period and others during their times there because that really was the source of information, even down to, "I need to get in touch with him. Where is he?", but more in the sense of structuring meetings so that we could go in and go through a speech, or go in and go through some other decision.

There were minor decisions by the tens of thousands, of course, but major decisions as well. Should he speak at the National Convention in 1976 in Kansas City? If he does speak, what is the opportunity created by that? What should he say?

I would say one thing about an efficiency aspect of Jack that's very important, and I don't know whether this was more motivated by getting the word out or motivated by him trying to help the staff in doing that. But if we did a significant speech, let's say, what Jack would do would be to make it clear to us, "Try to use this in every format that you can." Have a colleague put it in the *Congressional Record* so his colleagues see what he's saying. Have the press guys see if he can do this as an Op-Ed in *The Wall Street Journal* or *The New York Times*. See if the press guy can get it into specialty magazines that might have an interest in it. Take the work product and see if you can do five, six, seven, whatever the number might be, variations [unclear] of it and so forth to get the message out in as many ways as possible so that you weren't having to do seven or eight speeches. You could do one speech and do variations on theme to get the word out on that and to get his name out. I mean, it did have the political interest as well.

Kondracke: So what would you say were the toughest decisions that Jack Kemp had to make while he was—

Teague: Whether to run for higher office, without any question. Whether to run for governor of New York when a vacancy was being created, whether to run for senator from New York when a vacancy was being created.

Kondracke: So how did that unfold?

Teague: Well, it would unfold with a massive amount of consternation. I mean, what are the pros? What are the cons? And there would be an enormous amount of time and effort given to that. Jack believed at the core of his being in the Reagan eleventh commandment that "Thou shall not speak ill of any other Republican," and that had a heavy influence on this. When he was asked by constituents, by donors and so forth, to run against Jacob [K.] Javits in the Republican primary when Javits was seeking an additional term, Jack was, first of all, motivated by not speaking ill of another Republican, and, obviously, if you're going to run against him in the primary, you've got to do that.

Kondracke: This is 1980?

Teague: And then the decision was whether to run. Should I run? I think Jack—it's important, and I don't mean to denigrate anything in saying this, and Jack and I had a fascinating conversation, just the two of us, one night

in his office and it was really a lengthy conversation, that professional sports and politics have shared dimensions. A politician is always testing whether what he says is resonating by the applause of the crowd, by the feedback. A professional athlete gets immediate response by the roar of the crowd on Sunday afternoon or the boos of the crowd on a Sunday afternoon. And not to denigrate professional sports or politics and public service, but they were both somehow under an umbrella of entertainment from the standpoint of the person watching the process.

So Jack was reluctant to run against another Republican, and obviously he did not run against Javits, and [Alfonse M.] Al D'Amato did run against Javits and won the seat and remained in the Senate for two or three terms; I don't remember how long. But I don't think Jack ever walked around having regrets that he did not do that. I mean, you stay where you are and you continue to do what you do.

Kondracke: Did he do polling and stuff like that to make those decisions?

Teague: Well, of course you're always doing pollings, but I don't think Jack paid that much attention to polls. I mean, Jack was not a person who was concerned about polls. Jack was more concerned about what he was hearing. If I run against Javits, to use that example, where are people on the State Executive Committee of the Republican Party? Where are my

Republican colleagues in the House going to be on this? Where are the donors going to be? Jack, from upstate New York, would have a disadvantage running against anybody from downstate New York. So he would assess all of those things. If *The New York Times* had done a poll, Jack would have read the poll, but he wouldn't have paid much attention to it because polls reflect what happened yesterday and last night, not what's going to happen tomorrow and tomorrow night.

Kondracke: How in touch was he with the political establishment in New York? I mean you get the impression, for example, in his presidential campaign you had a lot of those New York Republicans going for [George H.W.] Bush. So did he neglect some of the powers in the New York delegation?

Teague: I would not characterize it as neglect, but it is for sure that Jack was never an insider on that process. You remember at the Miller Center I brought, for one of the props, a cartoon from one of the New York paid newspapers, a political cartoon of Nelson Rockefeller sitting at his desk with a shocked expression on his face, as this balloon went up behind him saying "Kemp for V.P." But Jack was an outsider to that process, and yet I did not know this until maybe three years ago, that Rockefeller had really made it clear that he wanted Jack elected in 1970. A friend of many of us in this

room who died last Thursday, [James M.] Jim Cannon [III], was sent by Nelson up to Jack's campaign in Buffalo to make sure that Jack had enough money in that campaign to do the advertising and so forth to get him over the top. That was a story that I did not know until about three years ago when Jim and I had lunch one day.

Kondracke: How much money did he get from Rockefeller?

Teague: You know, it's very interesting because Cannon was sent up there to make sure Jack had the money, and he went up there, he attended a meeting with fourteen, I think was the number, of persons that Jack had assembled from the community to make sure that they could borrow the money needed in the last days of the campaign, and they did not need any money from the Rockefeller operation, but it was there as a guarantor of sorts had it been needed. So at least at that period, here's the governor of New York State, not of Jack's political persuasion necessarily, saying, "I want this guy elected. I want this additional Republican in Congress."

When it came to the state chairman of the Republican Party and things like that, there were communications that went on, but Jack was never an insider to that process, and I think that when he considered running for governor or running for the United States Senate, that it would be running as an outsider. The natural disadvantages of that were, (1) you were an

outsider; (2), you didn't have the networking inside the party that you would have had if you'd been an insider; (3), that you were from upstate New York; and, (4), that certainly you were more conservative in your world view than the majority of the people inside of that club in New York State.

Zelaska: I'm sorry [Lawrence W.] Larry Casey isn't here, because back to, again, Jack hiring people to do certain things, Larry Casey was hired to kind of keep—he did, obviously, legislative things, too, but he was there also because of the New York connection and he kind of kept his fingers on the pulse of what was going on out there to give Jack advice.

Kondracke: So did Jack ever agonize over decisions like opposing an administration on policy, like, for example, Ford, on either defense policy or economic policy?

Mueller: I think he differed between people and policy. He was very policy oriented and I don't think he had any qualms about opposing even Reagan on a policy if he thought it was wrong. Where he did have qualms was on opposing Reagan for President when Jude Wanniski and Art Laffer had a scheme to get Jack to run for President in 1980. We spoke about that at the Miller Center when we spoke on April 18th about the tax plans.

They thought they had Jack to agree to meet with Reagan. He was going to run against Reagan but would throw his support afterwards if he didn't succeed. But at the dinner when this was supposed to happen, Jack just said, "Mr. Reagan, I would never run against you." He was—I think I used the phrase when we spoke about it that time—Jack was a cautious risktaker. He had nothing to prove. He had a previous career. He was a success as a football player and so he really had nothing to prove personally. I think he was really caught up mostly in the ideas that he was promoting than in personal ambition. He was ambitious in a certain sense, but not really ambitious for himself, if that makes sense.

Kondracke: Why was he neutral in the 1976 presidential race between Reagan and [Gerald R.] Ford [Jr.] when so much of his previous career he'd been an admirer of Reagan?

Teague: Well, I think the bottom line is that Jack had a large segment of the Kemp crowd on one side and a large segment of the Kemp crowd on the other side. I mean, you have to remember that Jack—and Chowder and Marching would be a good example—had been one of the members in that club, which included Ford and [Melvin R.] Mel Laird and people like that for which he had strong attachments and relationships. Then he had others who were there with Reagan, and I think it was a lose either way, in the

sense that if you chose A, B was not going to be at all satisfied and would actually perhaps weaken you with those people, and the vice versa of that. So some people saw it as indecision.

I think Jack felt like, "Either one of these people are going to do what they do and I will work with them if they get elected," etc. I think that was the motivation. John may have or Sharon may have other views on that, but I felt Jack believed there was no necessity. There were more negatives to making that decision than there were the benefits of him trying to reach both of those camps with the message of these economic policies and tax changes that were necessary. He'd be burning bridges.

Kondracke: How did he go about making that decision and how much did they lean on him to join them, their campaigns?

Teague: I think there was a lot of leaning on him, but probably less than he had thought that there was going to be. Gosh, once the outcome of the convention was what it was, then he was the loyal player from there. I think, interestingly enough, in '76 Jack achieved what had been a political objective of not burning bridges, and then, of course, after Ford lost that race and Carter became President, Carter was obviously such a target for Jack in terms of economic policies and so forth, that what might have been a high-level attention had Ford won that race—but it all worked out. I mean,

this is the amazing thing about Jack Kemp in his careers, how things really work out, because from all of that ’76 period, you had a Democrat winning. So Ford was no longer there to be the President that you would have to interact with, and Reagan became eventually the odds-on as to who was going to be the next nominee, and so Jack was able to essentially ignore the one and create a lot of focus on the other. He was at the right time at the right place to be able to do that, not because he controlled the situation, but rather he was able to operate in the situation which emerged.

Kondracke: Was it an agonizing process to decide to stay neutral or was it an easy decision for him?

Teague: I don’t think it was an easy decision, but I don’t think it was an agonizing decision either.

Kondracke: So the only agonizing decisions that you can remember were over whether to jump and challenge Javits. That was the hardest decision?

Teague: Yes, I think so.

Kondracke: So did he operate largely by instinct and gut and philosophy and stuff in making decisions? Did he sort of know where he would come down without doing a lot of soul-searching?

Teague: Do you want to respond to that?

Zelaska: He would listen to a lot of people, but I'll tell you, Jude Wanniski had a lot of influence on him back in those days.

Kondracke: So we know that Jude is the one who persuades him to do lowering rates.

Teague: Yes.

Kondracke: And Jude tried to get him to be Reagan's vice presidential candidate by running against him. What were some of Jude's other projects with him and how did they interact? Jude Wanniski is a person whose name keeps coming up all the time, so tell us about Jude Wanniski and his relationship with Jack Kemp.

Mueller: Well, that would take a whole session in itself. [laughter] He certainly did have a lot of influence on Jack. He had a great deal to do with

the formulation of supply-side ideas, which came not only from Art Laffer, but also from Robert Mundell, two excellent economists. Mundell, of course, went on to get the Nobel Prize in economics. They also blew hot and cold over time. I think they were much closer in the early years that we're talking about than later on, I think. It was mostly from Jude's side. He would excommunicate almost everyone at one point or another for an infraction against supply-side. It was not just big things, but the small things. I remember he gave some impassioned speeches on the floor of the House when the Prime Minister of Italy, Aldo Moro, was kidnapped. Jude Wanniski thought that this was the margin of civilization to get Aldo Moro freed, and so Jack would give speeches on freeing Aldo Moro, who, unfortunately, I think he was finally found dead. But Jude did have a great deal of influence on him and could get Jack to share that enthusiasm.

Kondracke: And so what happened to the relationship later?

Mueller: I think that neither of them was overdiscreet, I would say, but I think that Jude was much more indiscreet and that's what made him a liability, I think, to the Reagan administration.

Kondracke: What—

Mueller: He would give interviews to the *Village Voice* or something, which often became embarrassing either to Jack or to the Reagan administration when Jack was trying to get Reagan to run on Jack's ideas. So that was a part of it. Jude was always trying to push the envelope even further than Jack wanted to, and I think that created a lot of tensions. He had his own idiosyncrasies, I think.

Kondracke: Was there a point where Jude was sort of read out of the inner circle?

Mueller: I don't think that Jack ever read anyone out. It was mostly that Jude sort of excommunicated himself by excommunicating the rest of the world.

Zelaska: No, but there was a point where Jack wouldn't take his phone calls.

Kondracke: Oh, really?

Zelaska: This was when we were at Empower America.

Mueller: So that was after the—

Zelaska: It was after, yes, but there was a point where he just really didn't communicate with him very much at all. And then toward the end, right before Jude passed away, they weren't speaking at all.

Teague: But I do think you have to give Jude Wanniski a great deal of credit—

Zelaska: Oh, absolutely.

Teague: —for what he brought to Jack, because he not only brought to Jack the ideas that were necessary to make what originally had been—John, you would probably remember the timing of this far better than would I, but the investment incentives and all of this long-worded to eventually five or six reiterations later, the Jobs Creation Act, the focus on rates, the focus on the individual taxpayer, so as to reach more voters, to be quite frank, but also to accomplish the intended economic objectives.

He also brought to Jack the editorial pages of *The Wall Street Journal*. What Jack had been doing prior to then would occasionally get some kind of a national press pickup, but once Jack was in harmony, shall we say, through Jude primarily, but not exclusively, with what *The Wall Street Journal* could do for publicizing what Jack was doing in terms of his

economic policies, the legislation, and so forth, it moved Jack to a different stage in terms of his visibility not only with the readers of the *Journal*, but including within the readers of the *Journal* the Republicans around the country who were important to making decisions about leadership. It had a substantial pickup with his colleagues in the House, his Republican colleagues because these people reading the *Journal*, their LDs or their LAs or their chiefs of staff are reading the *Journal*, and so it really did elevate Jack.

I came onboard, as I've indicated several times here, in late '73. Jude really starts becoming visible within Jack's life in '75, the transition into '76, and Jude's first really great moment in all of this, I think, was the opportunity through Jack speaking to the Republican National Convention in Kansas City a summary of these views in a way that was designed—

Kondracke: This is the '76 speech?

Teague: Right, that was designed to energize the Republican Party.

Kondracke: Apparently, this is a major moment, this speech. Were you involved in—

Mueller: I was not.

Teague: Well, it was a major opportunity. It did not turn out to be a major moment, because great effort was taken and we were making revisions in this—

Kondracke: Tell us about the effort.

Teague: Well, the efforts were to put together *the* defining speech for Jack Kemp within the Republican Party at that period. I mean, you had the whole nation watching, you had part of the world watching, you certainly had Republican partisans watching, and so forth, and we kept working on this—

Kondracke: His job at the convention was to introduce somebody, right?

Teague: Well, that was part of the job, but internally the job was seen as the opportunity to speak and deliver a great speech that might catapult him into greater prominence within the party, and so great effort was undertaken. We were still working on this speech in Jack's suite at the convention, and Jack—

?: Who drafted the speech?

Teague: Jude more than anybody else. I mean, it was a product of the committee, but Jack, obviously, at the top of that pyramid, Jude having tremendous influence on the text of the speech. I was involved less so than Jude for sure. I will acknowledge that. But what happened was, is that, you know, a national convention in those days, very different coverage from what you have now. In those days, in-depth coverage, and in-depth coverage means that you're not only covering what's happening on the floor of the convention, but you're interviewing people and so forth.

On the whole, Jack's speech never appeared to the American people because they were cutaways, to use that phrase. They would simply go and interview somebody else, some analysis and so forth, and Jack's speech was not seen by, heard by nearly the audience in the country that we thought it would have been heard by. It was by the people, the producers that make the decisions, the directors and so forth on "Are we going to cover this speech or not?" was pretty much uniformly, "We're not covering the speech." So, therefore, it didn't get four-network coverage—this is pre-cable days and so forth—the way that we had hoped that it was. It still had impact because—

Kondracke: What was the impact?

Teague: Well, I think the impact was, one, this speaks very well of Jack that he was given the opportunity, because you don't give somebody an opportunity like this unless inside of the power structure within the party there's a sense that Jack Kemp is a real comer and that he inspires people, because, let's face it, Jack was highly inspirational as a speaker when he delivered his message on this. So I think that worked well for him. Obviously, we took the text of that speech, and in the context of the comments I made a few moments ago, we were able to utilize that as a new marker as to how to deliver the message, etc. So I think it worked well for—

Kondracke: This was not a Kemp-Roth speech yet, though, right?

Teague: But it was not nearly the coverage that we thought it was going to be and we were disappointed by that.

Kondracke: Well, but it was a nomination speech, right? Who was he nominating? Do you remember?

Teague: I do not. I have to be honest. I do not.

Kondracke: Okay. So would you say that he had an organized mind, a messy mind, a frenetic mind?

Teague: Among those three choices you've just given me, I would say it was frenetically organized.

Zelaska: I would say that too.

Teague: I mean, he was a sponge, in a positive sense of that word, his brain was, of absorbing these inputs. But Jack was a man in a hurry, to use that hackneyed expression, and without any particular knowledge as to where this hurriedness was going to go, but, you know, that's the reason he would work these fourteen-, sixteen-, seventeen-hour days, and endlessly. I mean, other than a tennis match or something like that, he'd be here four days a week and then he would be on the road the next three days.

Kondracke: What time did he come in in the morning?

Zelaska: He would come in about nine-thirty. He usually had breakfast with the kids.

Teague: Yes, very important to him.

Zelaska: The family was very important. Then I'd get a call about seven o'clock from [Jeffrey A.] Jeff [Kemp]. He had a rule that nobody was allowed to go out until the family sat down for dinner, so I'd get this frantic call. Jeff wanted to go out on a date or something like that. "Can you get him home a little early tonight?" That kind of thing.

Kondracke: So he was always home for dinner?

Zelaska: They'd eat late sometimes, but yes.

Kondracke: Oh, I see. So in other words, the family had to wait till the end of his day to eat. [laughs]

Teague: And it was amazing to me how many of his children's sport functions and so forth he was able to get to.

Zelaska: Oh, yes, he always [unclear].

Teague: He would disappear, whether it was a football, or a this or that or the other, and then an hour and a half later or whatever, he would be back in the office and pick up where he left off. He had such a sense of that. I

had four children and so eventually I came to understand the importance of that, but four children is much greater than two children, I will tell you. It's not just two more; it's exponential rather than arithmetic, and yet he just consistently was there for his kids.

Zelaska: Yes, we always had to work the schedule around football games. It got very difficult sometimes to fit everything in.

Kondracke: So normally committee hearings are ten o'clock in the morning or something like that. Was he the kind of committee member who actually sat through hearings?

Zelaska: He did a lot of delegation on that. If it was a markup or something like that, he would go, but pretty much he'd let the staff member handle it and then they'd call him if he really needed to get there.

Kondracke: Well, he becomes ranking later on Foreign Ops, but according to Bill Schneider, he sort of did read line by line. Did he take his committee jobs seriously in detail, in other words, know the content of all the legislation and stuff like that, or did he get briefed?

Mueller: I think, as Sharon said, he would delegate it to the staff member who was assigned to that committee and the briefing would be as long as Jack would allow, really. He was an impatient guy, and so didn't spend a lot of time on—it was usually on the fly, when you were headed down to a vote or down to the committee room.

Zelaska: Yes, you had to walk with him a lot.

Mueller: Right.

Teague: But as the Appropriations bill was taking shape, he knew the critical issues within that bill for what he was going to spend his time on.

Zelaska: He was a quick study, a very quick study.

Teague: Because he didn't want to embarrass himself or anyone else by not being on top of something, and so if there was something that really needed to come out of this bill, and of course, in the minority, you have limited input, but at the same time, he would be on top of those things.

Kondracke: Now, there's a quote from Edward J.] Ed Rollins referring to the '88 campaign, but I just wonder whether it applies to what your experience

was. It was that he was impossible to discipline and he simply wouldn't listen, he had a quarterback mentality and the quarterback thinks that he knows how to call the big plays, and he didn't listen to anybody else.

Teague: I don't think that's fair. I understand where Ed Rollins is trying to go, because what Ed Rollins should be saying there is Ed gave him advice and Jack did not necessarily follow it. But Jack—and I said this a few moments ago—was a sponge when it came to absorbing. Jack was always listening. He was a very good listener, but the listening that he did in respect to me or anyone else was absorbed in terms of that issue, in terms of what he had heard from everybody else. Jack often being accused of undisciplined, that may be also a difference as to where Jack thought he should spend his time and where a manager wanted to spend his time, but it is true in that campaign that we had issues with keeping him on track.

When he ran for Vice President of the United States in the '96 campaign, not all of those issues had been resolved, and there has been fairly significant criticism among people who have written in the '96 campaign as to Jack being disengaged from some part of that campaign. The great vice presidential debate against [Albert A.] Al Gore [Jr.] in St. Petersburg, Florida, where Jack's performance was not a good performance, but it was not a good performance because Jack was not disciplined; it was

not a good performance because the Dole people had tied both hands behind Jack's back.

Kondracke: In what way?

Zelaska: Wouldn't let any of his people around him. They just cut him off. I mean, John wasn't allowed there, Dave wasn't allowed there. Even Jude. Nobody let his brain trust in there with him.

Teague: I would phrase that a somewhat different way. Jack was expected to be the vice presidential representative, to say it in a different term, mouthpiece for the Dole campaign, because, after all, Dole was the one running for President. But the unfortunate consequence was that they tried to make Jack something he was not, and so it took the Jack Kemp enthusiasm behind a podium out of it. It made him look very stiff. He was limited substantially as to what he could say in respect to tax policies. He was not allowed to do the Kemp presentation on tax policy. And, of course, trying to figure out how to be where Bob Dole was on any particular issue, and I say this in kindness to Bob Dole, but a man that has served decades in the Senate, run for President a number of times, etc., very difficult to figure out where he was on any particular issue.

St. Petersburg was an amazing experience for me. I grew up in St. Petersburg. I made the decision not to stay with the staff at the Benoit Hotel. I stayed at my mother's house.

Kondracke: What happened in St. Petersburg? That wasn't where—

Teague: That was the debate.

Kondracke: Oh, oh, I see, yes.

Teague: That was the place of the debate. So we all got together at the hotel after and Jack came in. We had a debrief about this. It was not particularly long because the flight the next morning was unbelievably early, and by this time it was one, one-thirty in the morning. So I felt, "This is great. I can go back to my mother's house, sneak through the front door, get a good night's sleep," etc.

I opened the door. The house was completely dark. I started to go very quietly across the living room floor. My mother says, out of the darkness, "He didn't do too well, did he?" And I felt, "Well, that may summarize what the nation's papers are going to be saying in a couple of hours," and it did. But Jack was not able to be Jack Kemp, and I think that

had the greatest effect upon confining him as to what he was supposed to do in that hour or hour and a half. I forget how long the debate was.

Zelaska: We often used to say, "Let Kemp be Kemp."

Mueller: I wasn't with him in '96, but I think in that particular debate his role was to attack Gore, basically, and Jack was not good on the attack. He was just too nice. He would not go after anyone, be the attack dog that a vice presidential candidate has to be.

Kondracke: So who were his minders during the campaign? Was this just for the debate that he was isolated from his own people, or throughout the campaign?

Teague: Well, my comments were focused on the debate itself because that was a defining moment, because, let's face it, a vice presidential candidate in a presidential campaign has enormous difficult getting any visibility. So the vice presidential debate that year was limited to one debate, and so this was *the* opportunity and it was an opportunity that certainly didn't achieve the objectives that we would have wanted for him.

Kondracke: Were you there for the debate prep?

Teague: Part of it, but I have to tell you, Jack spent most of the day not in preparation for that debate. I mean, you have to assume, let's face it, this man had been a member of Congress, he'd been a member of the cabinet of a President of the United States, he had been involved in public policy issues through Empower America, and so forth, and so what kind of prep do you need? You know everything Al Gore has said in his entire life. You know what you believe on these issues and you're confined on what you believe in these issues to trying to harmonize it with what the presidential candidate believes in these issues. I think also there was some concern that if he spent the whole day in prep, the actual debate would be anticlimactic, which is not something that you would want to happen. I think Jack spent a great deal of his day playing tennis that day.

Zelaska: I think he did too.

Mueller: Earlier occasions, I think Jack did rise to the occasion. In his 1980 convention speech, for example, he really did focus on that. He had to focus on practicing with the teleprompter and just making sure he had the lines down. That was a speech that was very effectively done and he really did apply himself in that case. I think his big occasions, like a convention speech, I think he tended to—

Zelaska: And ’84 also.

Mueller: Eighty-four.

Zelaska: In Dallas.

Kondracke: Now, going into the 1980 campaign, he must have decided fairly early that he was going to support Reagan. It was Reagan, Bush, and—

Teague: I appreciate you asking me that question, but by the time we got to the 1980 campaign, I was practicing law in Boston, Massachusetts, and was not involved in the ’80 campaign. I was not, so you’re going to have to get an answer from somebody else.

Kondracke: Art Laffer and Wanniski, as John refers to, tried to engineer a scheme whereby Jack would run against Reagan and then be chosen veep.

Zelaska: I don’t remember all that. I was—

Mueller: Yes, we spoke about that a little bit at the—

Kondracke: But was he disappointed that he didn't enter into the veep race, I mean that Reagan chose Bush?

Mueller: If he was, I don't think he ever expressed it. He was kind of fatalistic, I think, about his own personal ambitions. I think he had often commented about having been cut, booed by a hundred thousand people. He took it all philosophically. If he wasn't picked, he just didn't win that game and he would go on to the next one.

Teague: Some of what has been published about the decision process within the Reagan camp during that period was that [Franklyn C.] Lyn Nofziger, who was the chief political advisor to Reagan in the campaign, did not support Jack as the candidate for that post, presumably because perhaps he felt that the party needed to be reunited and you needed to take somebody from the other wing of the party, of which George Bush was not the only choice, but certainly an obvious choice. But some of what has been published, at least, about the decision-making process indicated that Nofziger was negative on it, and without Nofziger signing off on it, Reagan was reluctant to choose anyone else.

Mueller: I think part of unification was the deciding factor in that. Reagan wanted to win and so he wanted to bring together the two wings of the party.

Teague: Which you needed, because he was running against an incumbent President, which is very different from running for an open seat. He needed that party.

Kondracke: Let's finish up talking about Buffalo and his relationship to the district. Presumably in the first few terms he was up there a lot, and then as time went on, he wasn't there as much.

?: Right.

Zelaska: Yes, toward the late seventies he probably maybe went once a month up there.

Kondracke: But in the beginning?

Teague: It would have been more frequent. There was no question about that.

Zelaska: Every weekend.

Teague: Jack had a very good office up there headed by a person that had their own visibility within the community because of their own professional sports background.

Kondracke: [Edward J. A.] Ed Rutkowski, yes.

Teague: Ed Rutkowski. Ed could easily step in for Jack and give a speech or an appearance, or receive an award or give an award and so forth. Jack was very much buttressed, I think, within his district by doing that. I think it's true with many members of Congress that once you go through several reelection campaigns, you change the nature of how it is that you're interacting with the district. Jack had the advantage of having a district that was roughly an hour away by plane, substantially different from representing some other part of the country, and he used that to his advantage.

He also—I think this is very interesting because I think this is unusual for a member of Congress. I was his chief of staff for right at six years, and I went to Buffalo, I think, only twice during that entire period. Both of those times that I went there were for election nights, so you want to be there for the celebration and so forth. Jack did not rely upon his Washington staff to do the kind of interaction with the district that required them to be there.

We did all kinds of interaction with the district legislatively, constituent services and so forth, but he didn't expect you to get on the plane and be in Buffalo.

Kondracke: He did have major projects that he was trying to [unclear].

Zelaska: Yes, and he did take very good care of that. Again, talking about the late seventies, the more Jack became well known nationally, I think his constituents cut him a little slack because they became so proud of what he was doing and the fact that he became so popular that they weren't as strict about having—they weren't upset when he couldn't make it up there.

Mueller: He was pretty focused on constituent service in terms of answering mail and—

Zelaska: Oh, yes.

Mueller: —bird-dogging requests that they had.

Kondracke: How many caseworkers did you have in the office?

Zelaska: We had two in Washington and one in Buffalo.

Kondracke: And were they primarily answering mail or were they doing projects?

Zelaska: Well, if somebody didn't get their Social Security benefits, they were on the phone trying to find out where that was. I mean, whatever the constituent needed, they were right on top of it.

Kondracke: The needs of Buffalo seemed to make him not quite conservative in the spending sense or in the government intervention sense. I mean, he did go for transit money and he went for UDAG grants [Dept. of Housing and Urban Development Urban Development Action Grants] and [Environmental Protection Agency] EPA appropriations and stuff like that. He was a big-government conservative, in a sense.

Teague: But I think about everyone was doing that during those periods. I mean, the confrontation that you have now on the budget issues was there in a macro sense but never in a micro sense during those years.

Kondracke: A couple of last questions. First, what did he read every day? Besides talking to his colleagues, where did he get his information?

Zelaska: Well, he got every newspaper in the world.

Teague: He did.

Zelaska: Every newspaper arrived on our door.

Kondracke: So *The Buffalo Evening News*, the other Buffalo paper, *The Washington Post*, *New York Times*—

Teague: *New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, and so forth. I mean, at least five papers he would spend time with.

Zelaska: And he carried this manila envelope along with him every day, and everything that everybody handed him through the day went into that envelope. [laughs] He would just put everything in there. Whether he read it or not, I don't know, but then it would just pile up on his desk.

Teague: But a voracious reader. I mean books—

Zelaska: Oh, yes, he—

Mueller: [unclear] books, and always had two or three going at one time.

Zelaska: We had never enough bookshelves to handle all of his books.

Kondracke: But his books were economics, history?

Mueller: Oh, everything.

Zelaska: History, economics, everything.

Mueller: The classics.

Kondracke: Did he have certain favorite books?

Teague: Well, I wouldn't say necessarily favorite books, but he certainly had his—

Kondracke: Anything that he said, "You've got to read this"?

Teague: He certainly had his favorite authors in the sense that anything from history to classical economics to whatever. I mean, there's no question. I mean, he did what, in my opinion, very few members of Congress really do and that's he would often go back to primary source. I

mean, he would be carrying around the great classics, and as John says, when you got a book from him, the marginal comments and so forth, the cross-references in the book, the underlines in the index or the table of contents, and so forth, it was just all there.

Kondracke: Any specifics on this?

Mueller: You mean on which books?

Kondracke: Yes, the books that you got from Jack that stand out in your memory.

Mueller. No. I think that he wrote a monograph which described some influences. They were sort of the conservative greats.

Kondracke: [unclear] that.

Mueller: He mentioned some of the [Ludwig von] Mises—

Teague: [Friedrich] Hayek.

Mueller: —and at the time of the 1976 Bicentennial, he became interested, I think, just judging by the books that he had, in the founding. He was always a big fan of Lincoln. Anything having to do with Abraham Lincoln he became increasingly enamored with.

Kondracke: So what was his attitude toward the House as an institution? I mean, he clearly decided not to go for the Senate. He did run for President, but was he a man of the House, would you say? Was he an institutionalist?

Teague: Oh, I'm not sure of the answer on that. I mean, he was certainly a man of the House because it was the only place he served, but not a man of the House in a Churchillian sense of being willing to be there sixty-two years or something. It had been an important platform for him. He had chosen to do something else and, therefore, after a relatively short period as a member of Congress, he moved on. But certainly his colleagues from the House remained part of, many of them did, his inner circle throughout his life, no question about it.

Kondracke: So his inner circle is who?

Zelaska: Well, at the time it was [C.] Trent Lott and [Newton L.] Newt Gingrich and [Daniel R.] Dan Coats—

Teague: John [H.] Rousselot.

Zelaska: John Rousselot.

Teague: It's interesting because Jack had a fairly good number from California and that reflected, obviously, being born and raised in California and so forth, but he knew the California delegation very well and I think that was politically a benefit to him. But you had a number of rising—[William E.] Bill Brock. I mean people that were already out of the House in some cases, right? They had gone to the Senate, and then many of these colleagues of his in the House had gone to the Senate from the period that he had served, and governor. But Jack really did maintain good relations with these people and with some cases it had to be hard won. There was no question about that.

Kondracke: So who were "the Amigos" and what did they do together?

Zelaska: I wasn't privileged to go to the meetings. [laughs] I don't know what they did, but it was Trent and Dan Coats, Newt Gingrich, and there's one other one that I can't think of .

Kondracke: [Cornelius H. M.] Connie Mack [III]?

Zelaska: Connie Mack, yes, that's it. We called them "the Amigos" because they would want to get together. We'd call the secretaries. We didn't have email to make these appointments and everything. I'd have to call all the secretaries. Jack liked to eat Mexican food, so I named them "the Amigos." I said, "Let's get 'the Amigos' together," and I'd call all the secretaries.

Kondracke: This is how often? How often did they—

Zelaska: Oh, gosh, once very two weeks or so, maybe. I'm not really sure. Whenever there was some crisis, they needed to get together and talk quietly.

Kondracke: Was there an "Amigo" chief of staff?

Zelaska: Nobody was allowed to go into those meetings. [laughter]

Teague: No, it was closed door, I will guarantee that.

Kondracke: So did you get feedback? Do you know what they—

Zelaska: Well, this was really started after Randy's time.

Teague: Oh, yes, I was already gone.

Zelaska: This was in the eighties.

Kondracke: Okay. Okay, we're just about done. How do you think Jack Kemp should be remembered in history?

Teague: I think he should be remembered as somebody that had a substantial influence on the Republican Party, and, by that, had a substantial influence on the nation. I think it is still there. You look today, the very day that we're sitting at this table, and the Republican Party and its adherents in Congress and elsewhere, "we don't raise taxes." We know that for many people in politics, especially in the other party—I'm going to say this partisanly—tax revenue is a form of eating, and so you have to starve them, and you starve them by not giving them more tax revenue, because no matter what they say about wanting new tax revenue to balance the budget, the minute that you start moving toward balancing the budget, they'll be spending crazy again.

Zelaska: I don't know that I can elaborate on that, other than he's a great family man and he loved his country.

Mueller: I think he's probably, in recent history, the person who did not become President who's had the biggest impact on policy, on economic policy certainly.

Zelaska: We'll still talking about it.

Kondracke: Thank you all very much for doing this.

Teague: Our pleasure.

Mueller: Thank you.

[End of interview]