Myles Garrigan
Page, U.S. House of Representatives (1941–1943)

Oral History Interview
Final Edited Transcript
May 25, 2012

Office of the Historian
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C.

"I was 17. I was a senior in high school. I was president of my class . . . And I had some trepidations about going . . . It would be my first time away from home for any length of time. So I gave some serious thought, but I thought, at the end, it was the thing to do, to go to Washington, and be part of the political scene. [Mayor John Fitzpatrick] came up to me, and two weeks had gone by and he said, 'Do you want to go to Washington?' And I said, 'Yes, I'd love to go.' And I guess about here, people would usually say, 'Boy Garrigan goes to Washington, and the rest is history.'"

Myles Garrigan

May 25, 2012

On May 5, 1941, House Pages joined Members of Congress at the Hotel Lee Sheraton for a banquet.
Image courtesy of Myles Garrigan, provided by the Office of the Historian, U.S. House of Representatives

Myles Garrigan (front row, first from the left) and the Capitol Page School Class of 1941 pose on the East Front of the U.S. Capitol.
Image courtesy of Myles Garrigan, provided by the Office of the Historian, U.S. House of Representatives

In 1941, Myles Garrigan (second from left) graduated from the Capitol Page School. Speaker Sam Rayburn of Texas addressed the class in the Cannon Caucus Room.
Image courtesy of Myles Garrigan, provided by the Office of the Historian, U.S. House of Representatives

Myles Garrigan was the overseer of the House Republican Pages while attending George Washington University.
Image courtesy of Myles Garrigan, provided by the Office of the Historian, U.S. House of Representatives

Myles Garrigan stands on the East Front plaza of the U.S. Capitol during a trip to Washington in April 1986.
Image courtesy of Myles Garrigan, provided by the Office of the Historian, U.S. House of Representatives

A 1941 graduate of the Capitol Page School, Myles Garrigan remains standing at the 2012 Page reunion in Washington, D.C. as attendants sit down when their class year is called, making him the earliest-serving Page present.
Image courtesy of Myles Garrigan, provided by the Office of the Historian, U.S. House of Representatives

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Abstract

In his oral history interview, Myles Garrigan takes us through the halls of the House, the Capitol Page School, and Washington, D.C., as he recollects his time working at the House of Representatives. His description of the ordinary tasks of Pages (running errands) combined with more unusual assignments (buying boxing tickets for a Member) provides an intimate look at the role of Pages in the institution. An eyewitness to a series of historic events, like President Franklin D. Roosevelt's historic "Day of Infamy" speech and Jeannette Rankin's lone vote against World War II, Garrigan also describes a memorable visit to the White House to meet President Roosevelt and First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt. Garrigan's interview demonstrates the importance of the Page program on a personal level and offers a behind-the-scenes glimpse of the U.S. House of Representatives during the Second World War.

Biography

Myles (Scotty) Garrigan was born on September 9, 1923, in New Brunswick, New Jersey, to Mildred and Miles Garrigan. While a senior and president of his class at South River High School in New Jersey, Garrigan received a recommendation from local mayor and high school coach, John Fitzpatrick, to serve as a House Page. Appointed to his new position by New Jersey Representative William Halstead Sutphin, 17-year-old Garrigan reported to Washington for the start of the 77th Congress in January, 1941. During his time as a House Page, Garrigan delivered messages to and from the House Floor and ran errands for Representatives. After graduating from the Capitol Page School in June of 1941, Garrigan remained in Washington, D.C., serving as the Republican Page overseer.

Garrigan balanced his new position with academic responsibilities, attending night school at George Washington University. As Page overseer, he witnessed "electrifying" moments of House history, such as the passage of a declaration of war against Japan after the surprise bombing of Pearl Harbor. His undergraduate studies were interrupted in 1943 when the draft age was lowered to 18 and he enlisted in the U.S. Army Air Forces—the forerunner of the modern U.S. Air Force.

After serving as an aviation cadet until 1945, Garrigan returned to Washington, D.C., where he resumed his studies, graduating from George Washington University in 1948. While pursuing a master's degree at the Elliott School of International Affairs, at George Washington, he came back to the Hill in hopes of getting a job. With the help of Congressman James Auchincloss of New Jersey, he served as an elevator operator for six months before leaving school and becoming an officer for the Central Intelligence Agency. Garrigan later made animated, political TV commercials and worked as an account executive for an industrial film production company. Now retired, Garrigan currently resides in Springfield, Massachusetts.

Editing Practices

In preparing interview transcripts for publication, the editors sought to balance several priorities:

- As a primary rule, the editors aimed for fidelity to the spoken word and the conversational style in accord with generally accepted oral history practices.
- The editors made minor editorial changes to the transcripts in instances where they believed such changes would make interviews more accessible to readers. For instance, excessive false starts and filler words were removed when they did not materially affect the meaning of the ideas expressed by the interviewee.
- In accord with standard oral history practices, interviewees were allowed to review their transcripts, although they were encouraged to avoid making substantial editorial revisions and deletions that would change the conversational style of the transcripts or the ideas expressed therein.
- The editors welcomed additional notes, comments, or written observations that the interviewees wished to insert into the record and noted any substantial changes or redactions to the transcript.
- Copy-editing of the transcripts was based on the standards set forth in *The Chicago Manual of Style*.

The first reference to a Member of Congress (House or Senate) is underlined in the oral history transcript. For more information about individuals who served in the House or Senate, please refer to the online *Biographical Directory of the United States Congress*, http://bioguide.congress.gov and the "People Search" section of the History, Art & Archives website, http://history.house.gov.

For more information about the U.S. House of Representatives oral history program contact the Office of the House Historian at (202) 226-1300, or via email at history@mail.house.gov.

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Interviewer Biography

Kathleen Johnson is the Manager of Oral History for the Office of the Historian, U.S. House of Representatives. She earned a B.A. in history from Columbia University and holds two master's degrees from North Carolina State University in education and public history. In 2004, she helped to create the House's first oral history program, focusing on collecting the institutional memory of Members and staff. She co-authored two books: *Women in Congress: 1917–2006* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 2006) and *Black Americans in Congress: 1870–2007* (GPO, 2008).

— MYLES GARRIGAN—

INTERVIEW

JOHNSON: This is Kathleen Johnson, and I'm here today interviewing Myles Garrigan, who was a House Page from 1941 to 1943. We're in the House Recording Studio [Rayburn House Office Building], and the date is May 25th, 2012.

So, Mr. Garrigan, to start off today I wanted to thank you for coming.

GARRIGAN: Well, it's a pleasure being here.

JOHNSON: Could you tell me how you first became a Page?

GARRIGAN: Well, I was a senior in high school, South River High School, South River, New Jersey. And I was walking down the corridor one day, and the mayor of our town, John Fitzpatrick, was also the coach of the baseball team and the basketball team. Anyway, he stopped me and showed me a letter that he had received from Congressman William [Halstead] Sutphin. And he gave it to me, and I read it. And it said, in effect, that the House Patronage Committee had awarded him a Page job, and that if Mr. Fitzpatrick would pick a Page and send him to Washington, he would be very happy. So Coach—I called him Coach, he was Coach—he showed me the letter, and he said, "Would you like to go to Washington?" And I thought in my mind, I thought I would love to go. But I told him I needed a little time to think about it. And he said, "Well, I'll give you two weeks. And at the end of that period of time, I'll ask you if you want to go. And you can give me your answer."

JOHNSON: How old were you at the time?

GARRIGAN: I was 17. I was a senior in high school. I was president of my class, by the way. And I had some trepidations about going. I lived with my aunt, and she

would be alone. It would be my first time away from home for any length of time. So, I gave some serious thought, but I thought, at the end, it was the thing to do, to go to Washington, and be part of the political scene. So, that's how I ended . . . he came up to me, and two weeks had gone by and he said, "Do you want to go to Washington?" And I said, "Yes, I'd love to go." And I guess about here, people would usually say, "Boy Garrigan goes to Washington, and the rest is history." {laughter}

JOHNSON: And I wanted to ask you what your memories were of your first day as a Page, or your first few weeks, from what you remember.

GARRIGAN: Well, what I remember about the first day—let me backtrack a little bit. When we went to Washington—if I can tell you this part of it—we stayed at the Continental Hotel that evening. And then, the next day, we met the Congressman. They sent me over to Joe Sinnott's office, to sign wage papers and so forth.[1] And then somebody that was an associate of the Congressman took me to a boarding house, behind the Supreme Court building. And that's where I was going to stay.

And, so, in order to get to your question . . . So, that first day, I set my little alarm clock—this is the first day away from home—and set the alarm clock, I remember it was a drizzly, rainy day. And I had to walk from the boarding house, of course, it wasn't that far then. I came around the Supreme Court building into the Capitol grounds, and walked into the House side of the Capitol, I remember. And of course, the Page School was in the basement of the Capitol. So, I found my way down in the basement of the Capitol, where the Pages had—I don't know how many rooms—two or three rooms. And then there I was. That was the first day.

JOHNSON: Were you homesick at all?

GARRIGAN: Oh, I was terribly homesick. Oh, God, was I homesick. I mean, I refer to it, in hindsight, as I had a serious illness. {laughter} I was homesick. That first week, I survived. But Union Station being as close as it was to the boarding house—what, two or three long blocks—I went down, got on a train, went back to New Jersey. And this was, I think it was a Friday. I stayed over, and came back the Sunday, and back in Washington. But yes, to answer your question, I was terribly homesick. I had a serious case of homesickness, yes.

JOHNSON: As a Page, what did you do? What were your responsibilities?

GARRIGAN: Well, initially, I was a Page. We delivered messages. As you know, on the House Floor, each seat has a button. And if a Congressman wanted a Page to run an errand, he would press that button. And it would be the duty of the Page overseer to assign the next Page up, to cover that seat, where the button was pressed. So, we did errands for Congressmen. We went to the House Document Room to get past bills and current bills. We took messages over to the House Office Buildings. And sometimes the House Office Building would call, and we would go and get, apparently, letters that the Congressmen had written, but would read them to him on the floor, and he would sign them so they could get them in the mail. So, essentially we were messengers, carrying messages.

JOHNSON: So, that was your job. But how would you describe a typical day? What else did you do? You mentioned going to school, so did you got to school every day as well?

GARRIGAN: Every day, we went to school. As I mentioned, it was in the basement of the Capitol. And, by the way, we paid $15 a-month-tuition to go to school. {laughter} We came up on the floor of the House at 10:00. School started, by the way, about 6:30 or quarter of 7:00, early morning classes. Then we would

come up on the floor, and file the *Congressional Record* of the previous day under the seats, go back at about 11:00, for whatever class. And then we'd come back up to the floor for 12:00 noon, when the House convened. So, that, essentially, was the school.

By the way, for me it wasn't class recitations. It wasn't class work—they posted the assignments that you had. And this was something new for me. I was used to classes with friends in high school, the whole bit. And, so, it took some getting used to this kind of school. As a matter of fact, after a lapse of, I don't know, a couple of weeks, I went to speak to the principal, Mr. Ernest Kendall. And I told him, I'm not used to this kind of . . . He said, "Stick with it, Myles. You'll survive." And he encouraged me, and, of course, I did.

JOHNSON: You mentioned that the school was in the basement of the Capitol. Can you describe what it looked like?

GARRIGAN: Well, it was in the basement. I don't know how many floors down. They were, sort of, in hindsight, they were probably storage areas at one time. {laughter} Big whole closets, or rooms, but they were adequate. And apparently, the school doctored them up enough to make them look like halfway presentable as classrooms. So, it was primitive school surroundings. But it probably would be like going to a one-room schoolhouse years ago.

JOHNSON: You graduated from the Page School, you said, in 1941?

GARRIGAN: Yes.

JOHNSON: What are your memories of that graduation ceremony?[2]

GARRIGAN: Well, the ceremony was in the old House—in the [Cannon] Caucus Room in the Old House Office Building.[3] And there were eight of us. I have a

picture of the graduating class. And there were eight of us. And I always remembered the Navy Band—not the whole, big band, but four or five musicians played music. And, of course, Speaker [Samuel Taliaferro] Rayburn addressed our class. And it was very, very memorable, would be the word. I remember it, yes.

JOHNSON: You mentioned Speaker Rayburn. What are your memories of the Speaker? Did you ever have a chance to speak with him? What are your thoughts on Speaker Rayburn?

GARRIGAN: I never had a chance to talk to him. I was sponsored by a political, by Democratic Party patronage, and then I was assigned to the Republican side of the House. So, but, to answer your question, no, I never had a chance to speak with Speaker Rayburn.

JOHNSON: Well, since you were on the Republican side, what about Joe [Joseph William] Martin, [Jr.]? Did you have a chance to see Joe Martin?

GARRIGAN: Oh, yes. Yes. I have some pictures, I think I showed you, where we had a Page banquet. And he was there. And I chatted with him. His office was in the Capitol. And I remember riding up in the elevator one day, escorting, oh, a movie star was going to see him. Oh, I can't think of his name now—a Western movie star. {laughter} I took him to Joe Martin's office. He became Speaker after a while. And, yes, I knew him.

JOHNSON: And since you were on the Republican side that would have been for the chief Page at the time—was that Johnny McCabe? Johnny McCabe, the chief Page?

GARRIGAN: John—yes, he was chief Page. He was a little man. He was from Indiana. And, yes, I knew him well. He had a farm out in Virginia. And he invited

everyone out—I remember this—he invited all the Pages out to his farm one weekend, for a little picnic, I guess you'd say, which was very nice. And, yes I knew John McCabe. He was from Indiana. And I think he was a friend of Charlie [Charles Abraham] Halleck, who was the Minority Leader, at that time. I knew John McCabe.

JOHNSON: You became Page overseer. Can you describe what that job was like?

GARRIGAN: Well, when I got there, the Page overseer was Newton Harris, from Montana. He graduated in my graduating class, and I don't know just exactly when, but he apparently decided to go back to Montana, and do other things. I remember it was John McCabe that came up to me, and he said, "Myles, we're going to promote you to overseer of the Republican Pages." So, of course, that was beautiful. I guess I had seniority over the . . . I was older than all the other kids. I was 17. I would be 18 in September. So, I was older, and that was part of the plan. I was an older guy. And I could look after the younger fellows, more or less.

JOHNSON: What other responsibility did you have, as overseer? Anything different than what you had done before?

GARRIGAN: Well, I never had supervised a group of kids before, but that was easy. As I said, the Congressman would press the button, and you'd sign the next Page up, and off he went. You just made sure he came back in a reasonable time {laughter} for wherever he went. So, now, that was different, in a sense, for me to be a supervisor. I wasn't—there were times, I guess, where if I had a—had taken a seminar in management, it would have helped me in some way. {laughter} But that was new for me, at the end of the day.

JOHNSON: Did you have a favorite assignment as a Page? Something that you really liked to do?

GARRIGAN: Did I have a favorite assignment? No, I can't remember one that was a favorite assignment, no, no. They all blended together, and you went and did your thing. And one assignment was as important as the next one. But one incident—to answer your question—I think it was Congressman [George Anthony] Dondero from Michigan came up to me one day. I was older. And apparently he had clearance, or something. He gave—I think it was a hundred dollar bill—he gave me. And I caught a cab, and went down to Uline Arena, which was an arena in Northeast [Washington, D.C.], where I think a boxing match was going to take place. And I went down to get two tickets to this boxing match for him. So, that was a little different assignment. But that was the only one I could think of that I left the Hill.

JOHNSON: Okay. What about the Republican Cloakroom? Did you spend a lot of time in there?

GARRIGAN: Absolutely. Oh, God. I ran out of—well, lunchtime, every Page—at least I did. I ran up a tab in there. They had sandwiches, they had drinks—you know, soft drinks, and so forth. So, I had my lunch in there every day. And they always had Boston cream pie, I remember. I think that Boston—the Massachusetts delegation said that was a must. Anyway, no, I spent a lot of time in the cloakroom.

And as a matter of fact, just a little while ago, today, we went on a tour of the House. And the cloakroom is completely different than what it was then. Now the cloakroom—saying there are—well, there's a TV in there. There's computers all over the place. {laughter} And the battery of phones is still there, but they keep track of it somehow. A lot of new technology. There's some chairs. Years ago, there was always a gang of couches, where a Congressman could lay down and take a nap. {laughter} And there are no

more couches. They mean business now, you know? No sleeping on the job—literally! So, the cloakroom has changed quite a bit.

JOHNSON: Do you remember the people that worked at the lunch counter in the cloakroom? Do you remember the people that worked there?

GARRIGAN: I remember, but for the life of me, I can't think of their names.

JOHNSON: Was it Ben Jones? Ben Jones, and Helen Sewell?

GARRIGAN: Well, wait—oh, wait a minute now. Ben Jones was the man that ran the Republican Cloakroom. Yes, I thought you were referring to the phone people. No, Ben Jones and his daughter—his daughter's name was Helen, I think. And they ran it beautifully. Lovely, lovely man. Ben Jones was a very charismatic guy, and his daughter was equally as charismatic. {laughter} So, yes, oh yes. I respected them a lot. I respected them a lot, yes.

JOHNSON: Did you have a favorite room in the Capitol—a favorite place that you liked to go, or someplace that you thought was beautiful?

GARRIGAN: Well, the Pages had a room off the Rotunda. And other people were there. There was a man in charge of it. I never spent any time there. And I don't think most of the Pages did either, for that matter. So, in answer to your question, was there a favorite room. Well, the Statuary Hall, if you want to call it a favorite room, with all those statues, and the demonstration of how somebody speaking here, and the echo would bounce off the ceiling, and they would hear him over here. That was fascinating. And, of course, off Statuary Hall there's a statue of Will Rogers facing the main entrance to the House Floor. And comments always were that he was keeping track of the troops. {laughter} You know, that they were coming and going, whatever. But that was a favorite area of the Capitol. I mean, it wasn't a room, per se, but they

were . . . And speaking of that, in today's tour, down there somewhere is a statue of Jeannette Rankin, who . . . I think I chatted with you about Jeannette Rankin.[4] I mean, if you want to get into that story?

JOHNSON: Definitely, because you were a Page during World War II.

GARRIGAN: World War II. And I was there on December 8th, when FDR [Franklin Delano Roosevelt], of course, came up with his "Day of Infamy" speech. And backtracking a little bit, Kathleen, Sunday, December 7th, I had graduated from Page School, started school at George Washington University. And I joined a fraternity, *Kappa Sigma*. And thinking back now, George Washington didn't have any boy dorms—men's dormitories. And being in Washington, this was a place to live, for me and a lot of other people.

So, what am I saying? I was a member of the fraternity. On December 7th, we were listening to the Redskins/Eagles game on radio. And they broke in and announced Pearl Harbor, and so forth. And a group of us—I can't remember the other guys who were there—but we walked over to the Japanese Embassy. Our fraternity house was at 1803 19th Street, Northwest. And we crossed Connecticut Avenue, and you cross some more streets and you end up at Massachusetts Avenue, where the Japanese Embassy was. And we marched—not marched over there, but we walked over there. And we were walking up and down in front. We were the original protestors. {laughter} I'd like to think—well, I don't know if that's good or bad, but then it was good.

Right next to the Japanese Embassy was a fraternity house. I think it was *Phi Sigma Kappa*. So, we were doing this thing back and forth, and then you always read how the Japanese were scurrying about in their courtyard. And they were. But if we got tired of walking, we would go into the fraternity

house, and rest a while, and chit-chat, and then come . . . Anyway, so that's what December 7th I spent doing.

The following day, I'm up on the Hill for a Joint Session of Congress, where FDR, of course, makes his "Day of Infamy" speech. The place was packed. And I just saw a recent picture of that Joint Session, and it's taken from the House Gallery looking at the Republican side, towards the Page area. And the Pages—and I had forgotten this—the Pages are standing on the benches and the place was packed with people. And then, looking at the pictures, there were people there that, today, probably shouldn't have been there. And there were a lot of women there. It must have been the wives of a lot of the Congressmen, and so forth.

So, the place was packed. It was very dramatic, as you can imagine. I think I mentioned this to you, as the vote came out. Jeannette Rankin, Republican, first woman elected to Congress, and she was from Montana. She came out of the Republican Cloakroom, I remember, and took those two or three steps up to the floor. And I was standing there, and she voted 'no.' I do this bit {motioned a double-take and look of shock}. And the House Members—a lot of them had voted, and it wasn't a crowded House Chamber at that time. And she just voted 'no!' And I go, "Oh, wow!" She runs back into the Republican Cloakroom. I didn't know it then, but she had to be escorted from the cloakroom back to her office. Obviously, she was afraid that somebody might react to her vote, or something.

I could go on about that story, I didn't know it then either, but she also voted against World War I. {laughter} "Are you kidding me?" And, as I understand it, her vote against World War I, she went back to Montana, and was running for the Senate, and she didn't make it. So, she went about her business all those years, in the interim. And here she is, elected to Congress,

to vote against World War II. {laughter} And she was a pacifist, obviously. And I guess you have to give her credit for her resilience, or whatever, staying with what she thought was right. But in that sense, I just noticed on the tour today, as I started. Her statue is down there somewhere. Of course, I took a picture of it. {laughter}

JOHNSON: What was the reaction in the House Chamber, do you remember? Did people make any sort of noise, or say anything when she voted 'no?'

GARRIGAN: I don't remember any specific reaction to it. I don't remember. I must admit, I guess—I don't know why I don't remember, but I don't remember any specific . . . I may have been busy overseeing the Pages. {laughter}

JOHNSON: {laughter} And the Joint Session, where FDR came to speak before Congress, it was very quick. Of course, it had to be, after the surprise attack.

GARRIGAN: Yes.

JOHNSON: Did the Pages do anything to help get ready for that Joint Session? Did you have extra work that day?

GARRIGAN: I didn't personally, just showed up. There was a little more security that Monday, and a few more police around, I noticed. But nothing—I personally, as an overseer of Pages, did nothing different. I'm sure certain security people did something. I mean, the President comes up on a ramp outside the House side, and he was escorted by his son [James Roosevelt], as you know. And, to answer your question, I did nothing.

JOHNSON: Did the Pages help to set up that ramp for him? Is that something that you did? Who set up the ramp on the side of the rostrum?

GARRIGAN: I'm not sure. I guess the maintenance people, probably the superintendent of buildings assigned people to do it.

JOHNSON: What was the atmosphere like, or the mood that day? How would you describe that?

GARRIGAN: Well, this may be a lot of hindsight thrown into this, but it was very dramatic. It was electrifying, and in light of what happened the day before—and in my case, parading up and down in front of the [Japanese] Embassy, and so forth. This would be—what's the word I want? Not the *pièce de résistance,* but the end of all this excitement would be the declaration of the war. So, it was an exciting time. The place was packed, as I mentioned. And that's about it. I can't remember any particular time where applause broke out, or any of that. There are historians that have written since, that have told me what happened. {laughter} You may be one of them, Kathleen, being an historian. But I obviously was busy in what I was up to, whatever I was doing.

JOHNSON: You mentioned that there was a little more security on that day?

GARRIGAN: Yes, it seemed to me there was.

JOHNSON: Did that stay for a while, after the war?

GARRIGAN: I wasn't conscious of it. I wasn't conscious of it at all. After that day, things seemed to be normal, if you want to call it normal, during those times. I mean, you showed up for work. You did your job. But there weren't any security checks and screenings. No, there wasn't any of that.

JOHNSON: And did the Pages talk a lot about what had happened, and talk a lot about war? Was that a big topic of conversation for them?

GARRIGAN: No. No they didn't. First of all, the average age of a Page then was 12 or 13, 14 or something. I was the oldest. I was 17. No, there wasn't any conversation amongst the Pages, when I was present, about the war and the serious . . . There were some, as you probably know, back there they had what they called the Little Congress [Club] that would meet—I don't know how often—once a week, or maybe once every two weeks.[5] There were a couple phone people, phone Pages that answered—Sam Espy was one that comes to mind, who was very active in the Little Congress, the meetings and stuff. He would discuss it with older people on his age level. I remember him having a conversation and me being a part of it. But no, the general Page population didn't discuss it at all.

JOHNSON: Did you find that you were any busier? Or were things pretty much status quo for your job?

GARRIGAN: Well, if we came busier, I wasn't conscious of it. There were a lot of bills that were coming up, Lend-Lease, and all that other business. That we got busier in the sense that Congress got busier, I don't know. I couldn't say, I couldn't measure the difference between our Page activity. It didn't mean we were making, sending, delivering more messages, for instance. Or going to offices more, or doing this, that . . . It wasn't an obvious increase in the labor statistics {laughter}. So, no, no.

JOHNSON: You mentioned, when we spoke on the phone, about a Page banquet. I believe it was in 1941?

GARRIGAN: Page banquet.

JOHNSON: Can you describe what you remember from that day?

GARRIGAN: Yes, Page banquet—I think that was held in '41, at the Jefferson Lee Hotel on K Street, where the Pages and their sponsors—Congressmen—met for a banquet.[6] I have some pictures of it, and I gave you a copy of the pictures. And the thing I remember about it was that, one, it was like we played a trivia game, the Pages against I think it was, five Congressmen, five Pages. And questions—it was trivia. And there were speeches. Joe Martin was there, I remember. [Carey] Estes Kefauver, [Lucius] Mendel Rivers, John [David] Dingell—Jack [John David] Dingell's, [Jr.] father—and, of course, Jack was there, as his son. He was a Page then. And we had a Page hostess, by the way. Her name was Alice Tuohy (T-U-O-H-Y), and she was there, made some remarks. So, it was a wonderful night, now that I think about it. A banquet, yes, it was nice.

JOHNSON: Was that something that was an annual event for the Pages?

GARRIGAN: Not to my knowledge. It wasn't held after that. And prior to that, I'm not sure if it was held before that.

JOHNSON: They did have some before. I wasn't sure if it followed after the '41—if that was one of the last ones?

GARRIGAN: Yes, there wasn't one in '42 that I'm aware of and subsequent ones.

JOHNSON: And you mentioned the hostess. What was her job? The hostess, was it Miss Tuohy?

GARRIGAN: Who now? I'm sorry?

JOHNSON: The hostess—the Page hostess—what was her job?

GARRIGAN: Hostess. Good question. I don't know what she did. {laughter} She had this job title, Page hostess. I'm not sure. Every now and then, the Pages—we'd

get invitations to girls' schools, for some social function, and maybe a dance or something. But not the younger ones, but the older, we got invitations I remember. I don't know whether she was responsible for some of that social activity, to keep the Pages busy, or whatever. And, no, I'm not sure, I couldn't define her job. I couldn't write her résumé, to answer your question.

JOHNSON: You also said you made a trip to the White House. What do you remember about that day?

GARRIGAN: Oh, that is one of my fond memories—going to the White House. Eleanor—listen to me—"Eleanor," my pal. {laughter} No. Mrs. Roosevelt invited us—the Pages—to the White House. And, of course, we all went. I went down, and I don't know how many others were there. A gang of us were there. And we sat at round tables, I think about eight to a table, or so (Senate Pages and House Pages). And the menu was chicken, mashed potatoes, and peas. "Why do I remember that?" That was standard Washington fare. Anyway, what the dessert was, I can't remember what the . . . But anyway, she came to each table and chatted with the group.

After lunch, she got up and announced that we were going up to meet the President. "Wow!" In hindsight, "Wow!" So, we all got up and filed out. And the White House—and I assume it's still there—they have an elevator. And I happened to ride up in the elevator with Mrs. Roosevelt. And it only held about three or four people. And it deposited us outside the President's office. And the door was slightly ajar, I remember. And I was standing right next to Mrs. Roosevelt. And she pushed it in gently, so she could get her head in. And she said, "Franklin, I have some boys here to see you." And it's like she—I can hear her saying it like it was yesterday. "Franklin . . ." And then he replies, "Show them in, Eleanor." Here we are, on first-name terms with Eleanor and Franklin. {laughter} That's why I kiddingly call Mrs. Roosevelt,

Eleanor, maybe. And that connection—I'll jump ahead a little—well, let me finish that part of it.

So, after meeting the President, we were there maybe 15 or 20 minutes, and he explained some of the memorabilia on his desk. And after that was over, she announced that we were going down to the theater in the White House, and see a movie, which turned out to be *Keeper of the Flame*, with Spencer Tracy and Katharine Hepburn—freedom of the press, and so forth. So, we watched the movie, and we left about 4:00 in the afternoon, I remember. And I remember leaving—it was a beautiful Washington spring day. That sticks with me. I think that whole White House experience—leaving it—I remember what the day was like. Ordinarily, I wouldn't remember leaving, whatever. But that day, I remember.

And that connection, years later, as I mentioned, I went to night school with . . . But after the war, I went back to night school. Diana Roosevelt was a student. She was from Michigan. Her brother Hall—not her brother, her father was Hall Roosevelt, who was Eleanor's brother. And Diana was one of the nicest persons. We were friends at GW [George Washington University] And she married a man named Agar Jaicks—I'm telling you this, nothing connected with the Pages—and they lived in San Francisco. We got together with—my wife and I—with them, out there. And I always remembered that Diana was nice—she passed away in the late '90s sometime. So, the Roosevelt family, it ties in with the White House visit.

JOHNSON: I wanted to go back to a name that you mentioned early in the interview—Joe Sinnott, the Doorkeeper.

GARRIGAN: Joe Sinnott. Yes.

JOHNSON: Right. Do you have any memories of him?

GARRIGAN: No. He was—in a sense—he wasn't an elderly man, then. He was management of the House. And he had a certain authority about him, which I guess he should have. So, other than that, I went to see him. And I signed some papers, which turned out to be, I guess, the pay statement. But a specific memory, other than that I think he, I don't know when he exactly left, but Ralph Roberts replaced him.[7]

JOHNSON: And what about the boarding house that you lived in? What was that like?

GARRIGAN: Oh, my God! Oh, you're asking me key questions, Kathleen. As I may have mentioned earlier, I was taken over to the boarding house. And it's, quote, "survival time," unquote, at the boarding house. It wasn't a dorm situation, with all your people, your age. I was living with everybody. I didn't know everybody, but I was there with everybody. I don't know—I forget the lady's name, but she was a southern lady. And we had breakfast and dinner there. And she always—for dinner, she always seemed to have collard greens or hominy grits. {laughter} And I'm from New Jersey! Whoa! I lived, literally, on southern biscuits and apple butter, I think they called it. If I didn't like what the . . .

But jokingly, I was there long enough to develop a boarding house reach. {laughter} That boarding house experience—and in my mind, as I got to know other Pages, four or five of us moved into another boarding house, opposite the Senate Office Building. But the new Senate Office Building is where this house was.[8] Anyway, we lived there for a while. And, as I mentioned, I went to GW nights, and I joined a fraternity, and I moved into the fraternity house when I got out of high school.

JOHNSON: You also mentioned John Dingell, so I certainly wanted to ask about him. He was a Page the same time you were a Page?

GARRIGAN: He was a Page. Yes, he was a taller kid. Jack was not a tough kid to manage, but he had his own—I shouldn't say he was a smart aleck kid, but maybe because his father was a Congressman . . . But that was my take. Other people may say something different. I was his boss, and other than that, nothing. His entire life has been on Capitol Hill. Other than that, I don't know what to tell you about Jack Dingell.

JOHNSON: Another Page that we interviewed from around when you were a Page was Joe Bartlett. Were you friends with him? Did you know him?

GARRIGAN: Who now?

JOHNSON: Joe Bartlett.

GARRIGAN: Joe Bartlett. Yes he came—I forget exactly when he came. He was from West Virginia. He was a gregarious guy, a friendly guy. He chatted with people. He was a friendly person. He'd reach out to you. And I didn't follow his career, but he was there long enough. I guess he became . . .

JOHNSON: He was the reading clerk.[9]

GARRIGAN: Yes. So, he made a career of being on the Hill. I think he joined the Marines, or something. And he was in the Reserves, and so forth. Other than that, as a Page, our relationship was . . . now that I think back on it, I'm out of high school now. I'm in college. I'm living in a fraternity house. Here again, that may be "survival time" too. {laughter} Instead of a boarding house, a fraternity house. I'm going to compare the two! So, I didn't have too much social interplay with the younger people.

JOHNSON: You mentioned that you played basketball while you were a Page.

GARRIGAN: Yes.

JOHNSON: What was that like?

GARRIGAN: Well, it saved me, in a sense, going back when I had a serious case of homesickness. I went home, and came back, and got into things. I started to play on the basketball team and we'd practice in the House Gym. (I don't know if you have one anymore, in one of these buildings.) Congressman Gerald [Wayne] Landis of Indiana was our coach. And we played in a league that played down at the YMCA. To this day, when I visit Washington now, I call them—two friends of mine—the husband Bob Tull played on the YMCA team, while I was playing on the Page team. So, that kept things going, and as I said, fraternity life was kicking in.

They dropped the draft age to 18. I forget exactly what dates and all that. So, in '43—I'm going on a little ahead here—but in '43, I got a "Dear Myles" letter. I forget, "You're now—come join us," or whatever. And so, I ended up going into the service right from the House Floor. And the service is another story.

JOHNSON: Were there other Pages, or other people that worked in the cloakroom, that also were drafted, or that enlisted, that you remember?

GARRIGAN: I don't remember, Kathleen. I don't remember. I remember Sam Espy was a phone guy. Joe Harper was on the front door—doorkeeper. There were some guys on the Democratic side—Tommy Owen, Frank Belote, Cotton Kitchings, that were all at that Page banquet I mentioned. So, that's about it. I knew some people in the House Document Room: a man by the name of Cliff Kelly, who was from my congressional district in New Jersey.

It was a busy time, with what was going on in the world, and so forth, even down to the Page level, I think. You asked me earlier if the work of the Pages increased. I couldn't measure it then. And I still can't measure it. But I think,

in my case, being in college at that time, I began to take note of all these things. As a matter of fact, I was working with all of these Congressmen. Then, when I was drafted, I started to think, "I'm leaving this gang." So, in my travels around, I would go into offices and ask for their autographed picture. I got well, we haven't gotten into it yet, but we sort of shaped up the Congress. I think in '42, when she was [elected]—Clare Boothe Luce—glamour woman goes to Washington. And the Republicans—she was on the Republican—and the Republican ears shot out like this. And her colleague was Winifred [Claire] Stanley—the Congresswoman-at-large from New York. They sort of added a little spice to the . . . So, why am I talking about that now? I forget what you, what are we . . . ?

JOHNSON: Well, one thing I wanted to ask you, since you're talking about Members, is about your sponsor [Sutphin]. What you remember about him?

GARRIGAN: I don't remember too much about him, actually. We had very little contact. I think the two years that I was a Page he was defeated. I came in '41. In the '42 election, he was out. A man by the name of James C. [Coats] Auchincloss—a Republican—took his spot in Congress, from the Third Congressional District of New Jersey. He was from Rumson, New Jersey. He was the mayor of Rumson, at one time. So, here, I figure I'm going back home shortly.

But Ralph Roberts was the Doorkeeper then. And I chatted with him. He said, "Myles, just stay where you are. Do your thing." So, I stayed on for a whole year later. Nobody said, "Myles, your Congressman is no longer here. You go with him. You weren't elected." {laughter} So, I stayed. I became closer friends, actually, with Auchincloss, than I was with my patron Congressman. He and I got along. When I went into the service, we corresponded. And I've got to tell you a political story, if you want to hear it?

JOHNSON: Sure.

GARRIGAN: This is after the war. I had finished, I got a degree from GW, and I was going to work on a master's. I went back up on the Hill, figured I'd get a doorkeeper's job, so I could work on a master's. And I went to Congressman Ed [Edward Joseph] Hart's office, in New Jersey. He was a key Democrat from New Jersey. I came to Washington because of Democratic patronage. And I was going to be loyal. So, I went to him, and he said, "Myles, you need a letter from your Democratic Congressman from your district, you need a letter from your county guy, and an endorsement from your local . . ." I got all of this. The statewide guy, by the way, is David Wilentz. He prosecuted Hauptmann, Bruno Hauptmann, in the Lindbergh murder case. So, I got a letter from him. I got three letters. They went to Hart. I never faced Hart eyeball-to-eyeball, but his administrative assistant. And, of course, I got the answer that prevails. He said, "Myles, we've got boys from . . ." I'm not from his district, by the way. He said, "Myles, we've got boys from our district that want to come to Washington. And we've got to consider them." So, anyway, I didn't get through that after all that.

So, I said, "Well, I'll go to see Congressman Auchincloss." And he was glad to see me. We chit-chatted. He was a cousin of Hugh Auchincloss, who had married Jackie Bouvier's mother. When Auchincloss first came to Washington, he stayed out at Merrywood, their estate in Virginia. And, by the way, I think he was responsible for the Capitol Hill Club being formed, the Republican club. Okay, so I'm chatting with Auchincloss. "I need a job. I'm working on my master's. Can you help me?" Kathleen, he picks up the phone, calls the superintendent of buildings of the House. I'm running an elevator that afternoon. In my mind, at this age level . . . I'm sure in Republican-dominated areas, maybe they had the same precinct-to-precinct

mentality and patronage, and so forth. But in thinking back, Auchincloss, he didn't want to know how I voted on . . . he picked up the phone, and I was running an elevator that afternoon.

JOHNSON: How long did you work in that job for?

GARRIGAN: Pardon me?

JOHNSON: How long were you an elevator operator for?

GARRIGAN: Let's see. Forty . . . Oh, there's stories there, Kathleen. Don't get me going on those. How long? Not too long. I applied for a government job, and somewhere along the line there, Kathleen, I decided, "I've been going to school all my life." I remember thinking, "Why, I'm tired of going to classes. Now is the time to get out in the world." {laughter} So, I gave up the master's thing. By that time, my application for a government job came through, and I got a job with the government. How long I ran an elevator, I don't know: six months, something like that, I think.

JOHNSON: What was that job like? Running the elevator?

GARRIGAN: Well it was in the building where—of course, the Rayburn Building wasn't here. It was in what they had—an old and new building. It was in the new building [Longworth House Office Building] back in the corner. And very few people . . . {laughter} It was an ideal job, if you were going to college. You could study your academics, and so forth. There were busy times, but on weekends, for instance, if you saw two people you were . . .

JOHNSON: I just had one more question I wanted to ask you.

GARRIGAN: Okay.

JOHNSON: What impact do you think being a Page had on your life?

GARRIGAN: It was positive, certainly positive. Knowing that I was exposed to people that made major decisions, and so forth, and part of that scene, more or less. And part of the World War II drama, and all that. It affected my life. When I came out of the service, by the way, I decided I was going to major in foreign affairs. I was going to save the world, solve all the world problems. So, it had a real positive, even to this day, it has a positive effect. Here I am, in Washington, enjoying Washington again. Meeting, and talking, and chatting with you, and seeing all these people. And it turns out, I think I'm the oldest guy at this [Page] reunion. "Are you kidding me?" And so, absolutely a positive effect. Back home, people that know me know that I was in Washington, and as I mentioned earlier, my 15 minutes of fame, since I made that TV commercial. It works on my résumé—absolutely positive effect, absolutely. {laughter}

JOHNSON: What is it like coming back here, after all these years, when you served as a Page and an elevator operator?

GARRIGAN: Well, this trip down—I'm up there in the 80s, now. And I'm discovering at different age plateaus, a whole new lifestyle kicks in. And this trip down, I decided to come by train. I could have flown, but the hotel where the reunion is, the Liaison, is right around the corner from the railroad station [Union Station]. So, I took the train down. Long trip. I couldn't get here fast enough. But I took it because I live in Massachusetts now, and I wanted to take a train. I wanted to go through New Jersey, because I had many train trips from New Jersey to Washington, back and forth. I wanted to see the—and then the train was going so fast, I didn't see anything. So, what am I saying? It was an exhausting trip. I was glad to get here. And that's about it.

JOHNSON: Was there anything else that you wanted to add today, that we haven't talked about?

GARRIGAN: Well, I met my wife at GW [Mary Miller]. She was from Massachusetts. It was a good experience at GW, by the way—and a lot of stories there. You know, Lisner Auditorium, while I was at GW . . . the National Theater downtown refused to book the Broadway shows, because they didn't allow colored people to attend the National. So, the Broadway shows would come in to Lisner Auditorium. I don't know how I got into this, but I had the hat-check concession, Kathleen. {laughter} Every night, the place was packed. There were 1,502 seats in Lisner Auditorium. The place was packed. Ingrid Bergman was there with *Joan of Lorraine*. Other big shows, but that was a major one. Every night I had a gang of change in my pocket. And I met my wife. And every night, a gang of us would go over to K Street—a place called Parchay's—and have some beer. And then my wife . . . well, a college friend of mine, Dottie Pittenger, who was a daughter of a Congressman, [William Alvin] Pittenger, from Minnesota. She said, "Scotty." (My nickname is Scotty.) She said, "Scotty, are you coming with us tonight?" I said, "No, I don't have a date." She said—well, there's a gang of new freshmen there that were ushers, usherettes. And she said, "Well, pick one of the new freshmen." And I said, "Well, how about the one with the horn-rimmed glasses?" And here, again, {laughter}—I mumbled, "The one with the horn-rimmed glasses."

JOHNSON: And that's how it all began.

GARRIGAN: That was it. So, yes, there's a lot of that, I would add to that story, and just generally meeting a lot of interesting people. A fraternity brother of mine, Kathleen—talking about history—was Hal Moore. I lived with him for a while. I remember the day he got his appointment to West Point. He was

from Bardstown, Kentucky, went to West Point, graduated. He was, I think, a captain, and fought the first major battle in Vietnam—la Drang [in 1965], I think it was called. He got a field promotion. And a movie—he wrote a book about it—W*e Were Soldiers Once . . . and Young*, with Joe Galloway, co-author. And they made a movie out of it, called *We Were Soldiers*. Mel Gibson played Hal Moore. {laughter} So, we correspond a little bit now. Not as often—Christmas cards, and stuff. And I digress a little bit, Mel Gibson, Kathleen—they shot a movie—oh, I shouldn't go into all this. This has nothing to do with Pages. They shot a movie up in Western Mass., in Northampton, Mass. Well, you're from Massachusetts—Northampton—*Edge of Darkness*, with Mel Gibson. "And my wife, was she living there? No, she wasn't living there." But my daughter got on my case. See, I had been an extra, Kathleen, in the movie *The Court-Martial of Billy Mitchell*, which was shot in Washington, on the Capitol. The ending scene in *The Court-Martial of Billy Mitchell*—it's Gary Cooper coming down the House-side steps. And there's a guy behind him, three-piece suit, from the 1920s, with a cap on. You wouldn't know it, but that's me. {laughter}

JOHNSON: {laughter} Was this while you were a Page?

GARRIGAN: No, not while I was a Page.

JOHNSON: This was afterwards?

GARRIGAN: Fifteen years later. But I got into that because my wife said—she was after me to—my daughter . . . talking about Hal Moore and *Edge of Darkness* and Mel Gibson and all that stuff. "But why did I get into that? Good question. I don't know." But, there's a lot of other stories here.

JOHNSON: Okay. Well, I think we covered everything that I wanted to ask you about being a Page.

GARRIGAN: Yes.

JOHNSON: And being here in D.C. And thank you.

GARRIGAN: And edit out the . . .

JOHNSON: We definitely can. We can. But thank you for coming in today. It was great talking with you.

GARRIGAN: Kathleen, it's a pleasure. It's wonderful that you invited me. I'm honored to be here, actually. And I really want to thank you for those two wonderful books you sent, if I can ever pick them up.

JOHNSON: {laughter} They are heavy, I know.

GARRIGAN: I can't pick them up, so I can read them. {laughter} You don't have any other books, do you?

JOHNSON: Not that heavy. No.

GARRIGAN: Thank you, Kathleen.

JOHNSON: You're welcome.

GARRIGAN: Thank you.

NOTES

[1]Joe Sinnott served as the Doorkeeper of the House from 1911 to 1919 and from 1931 until his death on January 27, 1943.
[2] According to the 1942 Capitol Page Yearbook, 1941 marked the first official graduation ceremony for the Capitol Page School.
[3] After the Longworth House Office Building opened in 1933, Cannon, the first House office building, became known as the "Old House Office Building."
[4] Located in the Capitol Visitor Center, Jeannette Rankin's statue is one of two from Montana included in the National Statuary Hall Collection.
[5] Established in 1919, the Little Congress Club initially began as a low-key, social organization for congressional staff. Under the leadership of Lyndon B. Johnson (who served as a congressional secretary before winning a seat in the House), the Little Congress grew in stature becoming an influential political group before disbanding during World War II.
[6] The program for the 1941 Page banquet lists the Hotel Lee Sheraton as the location for the event.
[7] Ralph Roberts succeeded Joe Sinnott as Doorkeeper of the House, serving from February 5, 1943, through the 79th Congress (1945–1947). Roberts also served as Clerk of the House from 1949 to 1967.
[8] When the Dirksen Senate Office Building opened in 1958, it was known as the "New Senate Office Building."
[9] Joe Bartlett served in a variety of positions during his long House career, including House Page (1941–1944); chief Page (1945–1953); House Reading Clerk (1953–1971); and Clerk to the Minority (1971–1979).

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