The Honorable Paul E. Kanjorski

U.S. Representative of Pennsylvania (1985–2011)

Oral History Interview
Final Edited Transcript

October 26, 2011

Office of the Historian
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC

"If you have true believers in constitutionalism, if you have true believers in freedom and in democracy, they will innately train their minds to work in such a way that they'll survive the most dangerous of things."

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Abstract

From a young age Paul E. Kanjorski had a keen interest in politics. His passion for political biographies and an admiration for two U.S. Senators who served as congressional Pages—Daniel Webster of Massachusetts and Arthur Vandenberg of Michigan—laid the foundation for a long career in elected office. In this interview Kanjorski explains how he viewed Page service as a critical component of his goal to become a public official. Through a family connection, Kanjorski received a Page appointment under the sponsorship of Representative Edward Bonin of Pennsylvania who served during the 83rd Congress (1953–1955).

Only 15 years old when he arrived at the U.S. Capitol, Kanjorski joined the Page ranks, primarily running errands for Members of Congress. Before the advent of mobile communication, Representatives depended on the timely delivery of messages and materials by House Pages. Kanjorski describes his busy work schedule, his education in the Capitol Page School, the local boarding house where he resided, and racial segregation in Washington, DC, during the 1950s. As a Page he witnessed the violent attack in the House Chamber on March 1, 1954, where four Puerto Rican Nationalists fired shots at House Members to bring attention to their cause of independence from the United States. Kanjorski, along with other Pages including Bill Emerson—a close friend who later served in Congress with Kanjorski—tended to the Representatives wounded during the assault. His eyewitness account details bullets ricocheting off walls and furniture in the House Chamber and Pages carrying injured Members from the Capitol on stretchers to waiting ambulances. Kanjorski also reflects on the effects of the attack on Congress as well as its impact on the Pages.

Thirty years after the shooting, Kanjorski won election to the House in 1984. In 2001 as a U.S. Representative from Pennsylvania he recalls learning of the attacks on September 11th while returning to the Capitol after a meeting at the White House. Kanjorski provides a detailed description of the day that included evacuating his office, accounting for staff, and gathering with Members on the Capitol steps in a moment of national unity. He also reveals how Congress responded to the destruction and crisis caused by the terrorist attack and explains his work on revising catastrophic insurance legislation.

Biography

KANJORSKI, Paul E., a Representative from Pennsylvania; born in Nanticoke, Luzerne County, Pa., April 2, 1937; United States Capitol Page School, Washington, D.C., 1954; attended Wyoming Seminary, Kingston, Pa.; Temple University, Philadelphia, Pa., 1957–1961; Dickinson School of Law, Carlisle, Pa., 1962-1965; United States Army Reserves, 1960–1961; lawyer, private practice; administrative law judge for workmen's compensation, 1971–1980; elected as a Democrat to the Ninety-ninth and to the twelve succeeding Congresses (January 3, 1985–January 3, 2011); unsuccessful candidate for reelection to the One Hundred Twelfth Congress in 2010.

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.

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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 BA in history from Columbia University, where she also played basketball for four years, 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, DC: Government Printing Office, 2006) and *Black Americans in Congress: 1870–2007* (GPO, 2008). Before joining the Office of the Historian, she worked as a high school history teacher and social studies curriculum consultant.

— THE HONORABLE PAUL KANJORSKI —
INTERVIEW

JOHNSON: This is Kathleen Johnson with the Office of the Historian, with the U.S. House of Representatives, and today I'm here with former Representative Paul [E.] Kanjorski, from the state of Pennsylvania. The date is October 26, 2011, and our interview today is taking place in the House Recording Studio, which is in the Rayburn House Office Building. And today we're going to discuss Mr. Kanjorski's Page service, the 1954 shooting in the House Chamber, and also his recollections of September 11, 2011.

So today I was hoping we could start with your time as a Page, and if you could just walk me through how you became a Page and how you first learned about the program.

KANJORSKI: It's really actually very fascinating. Everybody's life is fascinating, but, no, this is because at the time, I had had a failure in my life, of having grave difficulty in reading and transposing letters and words, so I couldn't make out what they were. They now diagnose that problem as dyslexia, but at the time when I was young and in school, they really hadn't clearly identified it. But, as a result, I used to memorize my reading lessons.

My mother was a teacher, and my older sisters were both interested in teaching, and so they relished the idea that they could teach me how to read, or at least work with me with my lessons. And they were rather successful because for about four grades, I fooled everybody into believing that I could actually read when I couldn't.

Well, when I got to fourth grade, it became apparent that I had to read much more than I was able to prepare the night before, so my façade disappeared. As a result, they undertook the course of actually teaching me how to read. It was a little late in life, but they got me involved and actually did break through. In a matter of months, I learned how to read, and then the question was how was I going to catch up with the rest of the students in my class and to grade level. They psychologically did something significant. They decided to encourage me to define what I liked most, and I was sort of an early history buff, and I liked biographies, so I combined the two—historical biographies of politicians—and I actually spent time reading them.

Two of my favorite politicians at the time were Daniel Webster, who was a great Senator from Massachusetts, in the older days, and then Arthur [Hendrick] Vandenberg, who had just completed his Senatorial career and was one of the charter writers of the United Nations Charter. Both of these individuals served as Pages, and I read their lives, and that's where I learned about what it was like to be a Page, and using the matter of deduction, I came to the conclusion that if you were interested in politics and you wanted to get an early start, the best thing to do is get involved in being a Page.

And then fortuitously, in the [Dwight D.] Eisenhower landslide, the brother of my godfather, who was, of course, a good friend of the family, a fellow attorney with my dad, his brother won for Congress, so I prevailed upon him to intercede for me, to see if he could assist me in getting an appointment to the Page School, and he did. So I came down to Washington on Inauguration Day, the Eisenhower Inauguration Day, in 1953.

JOHNSON: What was the name of your sponsor?

KANJORSKI: Edward J[ohn] Bonin from Hazleton, Pennsylvania, and he was a former mayor of Hazleton. Unfortunately, he only succeeded in serving the one term because he had defeated not a long-serving Member, but someone who had been in the Congress for about 12 years and had two interruptions: one before the '52 election but then the '52 election. And then he won in '54—that is the former Congressman. He stayed until actually very close to when I succeeded him. I didn't succeed him directly, but I came within a period of several years. That was Daniel J[ohn] Flood, and he had a famous career down there too and ended up leaving the Congress under less than good conditions.

JOHNSON: What are your recollections of your first day, and if you can't really recall that, your first few weeks as a Page?

KANJORSKI: Well, my first day, you know, I was so charged up, and I was relatively young—I was just 15—that I was boiling over with enthusiasm and just did everything I could. Interestingly enough, I met the best friend I had for life that first day. He was a fellow Page, Bill [Norvell William] Emerson of Missouri, and a fellow Congressman later on, both of us served together. So we developed a friendship of over 40 years until Bill died in the late 90s.

JOHNSON: And how would you describe an average day for a Page in 1953 and 1954?

KANJORSKI: Well, it was quite different than it is now. We certainly didn't have a dormitory. We didn't have the supervision that's there now. You had to grow up fast. You had to come down and take responsibility for every function that a young man has, from doing his laundry, to preparing his lessons without anybody guiding him, to working some long days. Because we used to work until—we went in at about 10:00 in the morning, and then until Congress adjourned, we were there. It was an experience that made you grow

up quickly. We also had to go through a compressed lifestyle of becoming more mature for our age. A 15 year old is not the most mature individual in the world, but pretty soon, when you know that there's nobody within hundreds of miles of where you are and you're going to survive on your own wits and your own astuteness, you get pretty sharp.

JOHNSON: You said that there was no residence hall or dorms. So where did you live when you were a Page?

KANJORSKI: Well, actually, a group of us who became fast friends on the first day that we arrived here because the Pages were arriving on different days, and there were about six or eight of us that arrived roughly in the same timeframe, so we got to be friendly. We talked together, and we decided to live together, and we went out shopping for what you'd call a rooming house. What it was is we would adopt a family, basically, who owned a home, and they were making rooms available, and then we'd take over the entire house. That's basically what we did, and we did that for two years.

JOHNSON: What were some of your typical responsibilities as a Page, for people that really don't know what it is that Pages did, especially in the 1950s?

KANJORSKI: Well, it's a lot different than it is today because of communications, but then, there was a great need for delivery of materials. When a Member of Congress needed a bill, we would go to the document room, get the bill for him, and then deliver it to his office. When he wanted to communicate with his office, you know he didn't have this crazy thing called a cell phone, so he either used the telephones that were in the cloakrooms, and if he couldn't get those—and they were generally filled with people who would be speaking all over the country. It's a limited number of phones. So then if he wanted to send a note

to his office of something, he'd write it, and a Page would come take it and walk it over.

Well, we attended hearings, we attended committee hearings. We served at committees too, not only on the [House] Floor, but I was primarily assigned to the Democratic side, interestingly enough, because it was a Republican administration. That was the 83rd Congress [1953–1955], the last Republican Congress until the [Newton Leroy] Gingrich Revolution came in, in '94. So it was a long gap between that Congress and the '94 election and '95 new 83rd Congress. Basically, the word was, you do anything a Member wants you to do, and you do anything you can, and you just live to the fullest and have a hell of a lot of fun.

JOHNSON: Did you have a favorite assignment as a Page?

KANJORSKI: Well, you know, I was fascinated to be so close in proximity to the various officers of the House, the Senate, the administration, and the Supreme Court. For instance, I debated for the first time in my life in Page School, and I had the distinct honor of having Justice Hugo [Lafayette] Black as my debate judge. You know, to have read about Hugo Black, he was my favorite Justice at the time, and to think that he would sit and help me, or at least decide my debate, was fascinating and enjoyable.

I recall graduation day. We had two speakers that day; Herbert Brownell, the Attorney General of the United States at the time, got hung up in New York, his plane was late coming in, and we drafted someone in the audience to speak until he got there, and it just happened to be that Earl Warren was there. So we drafted Earl Warren, who was, at the time, the Chief Justice of the United States, and he spoke.

But it gave me, as a very young man, as I said, the opportunity to make friendships for life, Cabinet officers. I actually met a gentleman at the time named Harold Stassen, who had run for President several times on the Republican ticket and was a Cabinet officer during the Eisenhower administration, and we formed a friendship for life. Later on, I became a speechwriter for him, I traveled with him, and I became a very personal confidant of his for years.

JOHNSON: Where did you attend school during your Page years?

KANJORSKI: The fourth floor of the Library of Congress was the Page School at that time. It was less involved than it is now, not quite as large, maybe about half the size. I think the senior class—well, they had four classes actually because they had students of all ages in there. But the senior class that I was a part of, I think had 19 students, and I think the junior class may have had a few more. It was a very small, sort of specialized school from the standpoint that everybody who was there had made a very early determination of what they wanted to do or what their pursuits in life would be. Not that they all wanted to be in elective office, but they all had a very deep fascination with public life and political life. I think everybody in my class, with the exception of one, went on to college, I mean it was a very high success rate.

JOHNSON: Do you remember anything specifically about your schedule while you were at school, the classes that you took, or any teachers that stand out in your mind?

KANJORSKI: Sure, I remember a lot of the teachers, and they were very motivated people. Ms. Williams was the English teacher; she was excellent, and she actually prodded me along because I said very early in life I had a problem with verbal expression and memory. So she helped me break it in terms of being able to

write better. I had a great fascination all my life with mathematics, so anyone who was involved or any subject in math I really enjoyed. And then Mr. Hilton was our history and civics teacher, and he sort of helped encourage participation in government. All these people took a great role in trying to stimulate you. And I guess it was exciting from their standpoint, but we didn't know it at the time because it was an exceptional group of people, to be honest with you and not to be an elitist in any way.

What was considered a good time in Page school was spending Saturday night in a debate on taxation or democracy, or some other highly evolved subject, where we literally would debate for hours and thought it was the most fascinating thing to do. Now that I look back on it and I think of what I observe in young people today, we must have been the first generation of geeks.

JOHNSON: Did you spend a lot of time in the Democratic Cloakroom as a Page?

KANJORSKI: Oh yes, because I served on the Democratic side. I first served from the bench, so I served the floor. Then I served at the Speaker's Lobby door, and then I had some special assignments when things occurred in the [House] Chamber, that they needed someone to plug in on some assignment. So I spent probably 90 percent of my time in the immediate confines of the House.

JOHNSON: Not a lot of people have access to the cloakroom, so could you describe some of the things that would typically go on there, while you were a Page, if you can focus on that, in the 1950s.

KANJORSKI: Well, it was actually very interesting because it was culturally significant. It was a time when language was quite different than it is today. If you

remember, 1954 was *Brown v. Board of Education* case, which changed segregation in the United States. So at that time, it was a very white cloakroom. I think there were just one or two Members of Congress that were Black, and they weren't well treated between the Members. As a matter of fact, I think back, of Martin Dies from Texas, who was very flamboyant as a Member of Congress. He was chairman of the Un-American Activities Committee, and I guess he thought he had special forgiveness to do anything. He would sometimes go onto the floor and making a blistering speech, probably using the N-word in its full context and just in its most ugly ability to refer not only to the fellow Members but to 10 percent of the American population. And then, when he would finish his speech, he'd make that famous motion to revise and extend his remarks, so what he said for a half hour or whatever time he spoke, completely disappeared from the *Record*. But those of us that were in the chamber—I was astounded by it, because you have to understand, I came from Pennsylvania, I was a northern boy. I never shared that idea or that experience of separation.

When I came to Washington, I couldn't share a hotel with a Black person. I couldn't go to a restaurant where a Black person lived. There weren't any Blacks in our class. I mean it was really a segregated city, and that was shocking, to me it was shocking. When we crossed the Mason-Dixon Line from Pennsylvania, through into Maryland, to get to Washington, I'll never forget the first—my father had to stop at a gas station to get fueled up. I couldn't understand what the gas station attendant was saying to me, he had such a deep southern accent, and that was really a first impression because, again at that time, people don't realize, but the South was still an extremely—even border states, were extremely isolated in the United States.

Pennsylvania was the richest state in the union per capita at that time, and when we crossed over from Pennsylvania into Maryland, it was like going from wealth to absolute abject poverty. The difference was incredible. It's interesting enough in those 50, 60 years that have passed since that time, you can see the economic advancement of the South, to a large extent probably having something to do with *Brown v. Board of Education*, but no one would ever admit that. The elevation in quality of life have really materially changed and disappeared, to the benefit of Maryland and the South, but they still don't quite fully admit that.

We were probably the last generation of the remnants and the ugliness of segregation in this country. After that and since, the last 20 years, 30 years, it's just been significant. Now I look at my nephews and my daughter and people in their generation and below, and it's like looking at a different society. They truly do live in a different society. It's a magnificent correction.

We didn't have any young ladies—I made the humorous comment to you, which you belatedly responded to, but we didn't have any females in our class, and it wasn't odd. It was really a segregated society even when it comes to gender, in all these things. And now, the success of that, and what it has meant both to the country as a whole and to the various areas of the country, is really significant. I keep telling my friends; they just don't appreciate—and it's an observation that I make, that in that short period of time, when we had desegregation and we made an inclusiveness, it was a little slower than the gender segregation. But you know, we increased the brainpower of the American society with bringing the Black [people] into full capacity, by 10, 15 percent, just suddenly overnight practically, but when you take the gender change that occurred in America, again in the last 30, 40 years, we doubled the brainpower of the American population.

I'm able to remember actually traveling into various countries of the world, for instance Japan, where women were still walking three feet behind men, and very bright, just as they are in this country, but were not allowed to take roles of leadership or leaders in academia or government. And they felt it very badly, but it retarded their society. Today and for the last 10, 20 years, they've been on a tremendous catch-up for bringing women into their society because they can't afford that quality gap and brain gap that they were suffering with American society moving ahead.

So these type of changes aren't like a war would make, and they aren't obvious unless you're sort of an astute observer and able to freeze frames of society and to remember how they were, see what they became. I am now of the age that I can do that. I've been exposed, as the result of being a Page for such a long period of time, in government and public affairs, that I can really see the tremendous impact that has made. Now, young ladies are—when I went to law school, my freshman class only had three young ladies out of 140 or 150 students. And now, when I go back to the law school or I read the journal, it's about 55 to 57 percent of the class is female. That may not be important or thoughtful to you, but believe me, it's shocking when you see that tremendous distinction.

In my home county today, we're holding an election this month, or November, to elect judges to the bench, and there will be more females elected to the bench than males. That's astounding when, probably when I came into the bar, I think in the entire bar, out of 600 people, we were lucky to have one female. So it's a significant change, and that's occurred now in every profession. The slow ones have been the engineering profession, but medicine, law, all these great professions, people have really—particularly the female gender . . . and that's also true about Blacks to a large extent. Who

would ever think that we have a Black President [Barack Obama] and potentially his competitor on the Republican side, God forbid, may also be Black. What a fantastic example of America and what opportunity it affords for people without one shot being fired in political violence. There were riots but amazing, absolutely astounding. There I went off running.

JOHNSON: No, no that's fine. And you think about those changes taking place in a relatively short amount of time, too.

KANJORSKI: Absolutely, a compressed period of time during my lifetime, and I was fortunate enough to be in the position to very clearly and closely observe it.

JOHNSON: With the recent end of the Page program, I just wanted to take a few minutes to ask you a few retrospective questions, since you served as a Page. What do you think will be most missed about the Pages, and what do you think the loss of the Page program, what effect will it have on the institution?

KANJORSKI: Well, you know, I went to a function last night, honoring my classmate and best friend Bill Emerson, who was a Page with me and served in Congress with me for 11 years. The makeup of the room was so interesting because there were so many of his interns, so many of his Pages, so many of the people that he had an impact on, and the Page program was a little part of that impact. And truly speaking, if you look at Bill's life and make that comparison, if he hadn't had the opportunity to be a Page, he would never probably have been a lawyer. He probably never would have come to Congress, and his life would have been entirely different, and his contribution to the country would have been significantly different. So I've seen it in my own personal life, in his personal life, and in the lives of so many people, and as I look back at my career, 26 years in the Congress, I don't have the exact number, but it must be well over a dozen or two young

people that I appointed as Pages, and I run across them every now of then, of course interns on my staff. I've made so many lawyers in the world it's unbelievable, by making these appointments and giving them those opportunities. Now, that's something you have to give me protection when I leave because if the world discovers that I'm responsible for so many more lawyers, that could cause injury to me.

JOHNSON: What do you think were the greatest strengths of the Page program, and then also were there weaknesses that you saw?

KANJORSKI: The greatest strength is that there were so many people that wanted

to be, and there was a pretty good filtering system, that is, you really had to want to be a Page, and you had to understand power even to get the appointment. That was a learning process, having to go through that. I had to read the books about Daniel Webster and Arthur Vandenberg, and work through the machinations of who I would contact, how I would persuade them that I was the right person for the job, and put myself in the right position to get it. Everybody I found, that when you get to Page School, they all have a story like that. It just doesn't happen, they just don't reach out because the only way we can separate it to try and pick those that really want to be a Page, and therefore we get a pretty good idea that they'll accomplish something. And I look back on the ones that I appointed now, and they all stood out in some way, having that extra bit of desire and push, and they've all been successful as a result, later on in their lives.

The disappointments, I think like everything in life, particularly in America, we try and soften blows a little too much, and we always want to protect all these people from every influence. You can't really do it, probably you shouldn't do it. Kids will mature at different rates. I don't remember any real

serious problems when I was a Page, that really put anybody at great personal jeopardy or moral jeopardy. There aren't such things as perfect positions. I would let them have a little more latitude to do things, they grow better that way. You know it's good, we have to plant the seed, we have to fertilize the seed, and we have to water the seed, but we can't grab the seed and hold it until it grows to maturity. It will grow on its own. If it doesn't, maybe it shouldn't.

So I would have less constraint. I think doing away with it just shows how abject, stupid, this present Congress is. It's an expensive program—it's about $5 million to have the entire Page program—but when you look back on history, at the number of people that have started very fruitful careers having been Pages, and where they went to and what they contributed, not in financial things, although there have been very wealthy people. I think Bill Gates was a Page, if I remember.

JOHNSON: He was.

KANJORSKI: Now, did that have an effect on Bill Gates? Well, I'll bet it gave him a little more surety that he could do some of the things like leaving college to develop Microsoft. So you know, Page School may have had an effect on the whole revolution of the—the biggest revolution of the 20th and 21st centuries. And if it took $5 million a year to do that, that is really stupid that we don't continue to do it. So I think, as I said, that is a tremendous example of stupidity, but wisely enough, the Senate hasn't followed, and eventually, when the House changes, we'll go back.

When I look at the Members, look at John [David] Dingell [Jr.], it formed his own career. My daughter was a Page, and it significantly changed her desire not to be in public life, which is probably good, but she later went on

and changed her whole major in college on that experience and finding what she wanted to do. Now she's a very successful little scientist. Not so little anymore.

JOHNSON: I wanted to go back in the past, to 1954, and one of the most violent and memorable events in House history, of course, was the shooting that took place in the House Chamber on March 1, 1954. Can you describe your recollections of what took place that day, since you were an eyewitness?

KANJORSKI: It was really fascinating. It was an odd day too. It was the day that all our fellow students in the Page School were called to take their admissions test to the military academies And we had about, as I said, 19 students in our class, and I think about three or four were interested in gaining an appointment to either West Point or Annapolis or the Air Force Academy. I think the Air Force Academy was around at that time, I'm not certain of that. But anyway, I think it was March 1, 1954. They had gone down to take the exam, so they weren't on the floor. It's interesting, to have served, probably in the last century, to have missed the most historic event that took place ever, and you were there, except you weren't there because you had to take a stupid exam. It's interesting.

JOHNSON: It's ironic.

KANJORSKI: Yes, very ironic. But I was working the [House] Floor that day, off the back bench, and that means going down when a Member would ring for something, getting the request, and them coming back, filling out a slip, so someone else could either go to his office or deliver a message or something.

Prior to getting to Page School and becoming a Page, when I was back home in Pennsylvania, we used to do some shooting in stone quarries, quite

frankly, stupidly, but we would take the guns out there and shoot, and I'd get the experience that you may shoot and hit rock, and it would veer off the rock and flick around and sometimes come right back at you and miss you very closely. So I understood what the report of a weapon would be like when it ricocheted, and that's really the best experience that I could describe what happened because I was in the first seat.

There was a call to be answered on the floor. I got up, and I took about three or four steps, and I heard the shooting begin and then a ricochet occurred very close to me. And the fact is, it hit above my head, on one of the marble columns, and that ricochet shot. That's how I very clearly—although it sounded, because of the large chamber, it sounded like a package of firecrackers were lit and set off. But with the ricochet, in my mind, it identified as a shot, so I hit the floor very quickly. To this day, I say to myself I was very lucky because I could have been one of the victims that were shot, but I wasn't, and it didn't come that near, it was like 10, 12 feet away. But what it did is it allowed me to go through the mental processes of what had happened very quickly.

So once I got up off the floor, when the shooting stopped, and it stopped in a very limited period of time. I think there had been 29 shots or something, and they went off with great rapidity, out of a number of weapons. I got up, checked the floor, and we were in the middle of a roll call vote or a quorum call. Obviously, there was some shouting and 'so and so' was down. Mr. [George Hyde] Fallon from Maryland had been standing in the back of the chamber seats, and he'd been hit in the buttocks. I was aware that there were Members shot, so I got up immediately and went down to check on who was the most serious. I alerted my other fellow Pages that we needed stretchers, and we actually—funny enough, Bill and I, Bill was on the floor too—we

sort of took over, ordering the stretchers and getting people put together. And a group of maybe a half dozen of us really started getting the people put in the stretchers, identifying who they were, and by the time that the ambulances arrived, we were taking them out. Bill and I, I think carried about three Members of the five or six that were wounded, out.

JOHNSON: In all the confusion, was anyone directing what was going on, on

the floor, or is this something just out of instinct, that you started to go to people and see who was injured?

KANJORSKI: To be honest, it was basically instinct. With me, I put it to the fact that I knew exactly what had happened early, so I didn't have to go through by God what happened, you know staggering. A lot of people were just absolutely overwhelmed and shocked, and nothing against them, that's how you normally would be in a situation like that. Luckily, with my prior experience of being stupid enough to have shot in a stone quarry, I knew what was happening, and we put it together. So we moved those folks out, and it was interesting, I have to be honest.

I didn't get the full parameters of what had happened—really, from a historic standpoint or even of that day, the emergency of the nature—until several hours after it had happened. We took the Members out. The last Member we took out, Mr. [Alvin Morell] Bentley, I think from Michigan, Bill and I went to the hospital with him, and it wasn't until we left the hospital and came back, that it really dawned on me what an experience we had gone through, and the historic nature of it really.

JOHNSON: Do you have any memories of Speaker [Joseph William] Martin [Jr.] at that point? In his memoirs, he talked about how he thought it was firecrackers, just like how you said a lot of people were really caught off guard.

KANJORSKI: I didn't know. I didn't read his memoirs. Actually, I do—you know, the other night—this is terrible. Joe Martin is dead, I hope, isn't he?

JOHNSON: Yes.

KANJORSKI: I shouldn't hope, but I assumed because I don't want to embarrass him. I was watching a movie or a television replay of President George W. Bush, when he made some sort of an announcement in Iraq, and they started throwing shoes at him. For a moment, when I caught him doing the ducking that he was doing back there, he sort of looked like Joe Martin. Martin was standing in the Speaker's chair, in front of the chair, didn't have obviously, an idea what in the hell was happening. He was sort of unsure of himself and going from side to side. So it was a glimpse and a moment there that he and George Bush had something in common.

JOHNSON: Did you have a close look, or did you get a close look at any of the shooters that day?

KANJORSKI: No, no. They were up in the lobby, or not the lobby but the seating up one floor above the chamber [gallery], and then they quickly left, and they were captured in the hall and some made it to Union Station, but they disappeared. There wasn't a great emphasis on rounding up the scoundrels. The emphasis really was getting the injured out and providing for them, particularly from our standpoint; we were there with them. And there wasn't the type of retribution that was expressed later on. I had concluded in my own mind it was a horrendous thing that they had done, but I understood

the political nature of what they had done. And not that it forgives them, but it puts a context of understanding.

You know, it was different than what's happening today with radical activity because at least they were shooting at a body that had somewhat the power to do something about what they were disturbed about. It wasn't blowing up a building with 3,000 people who didn't know from nowhere, and it was just an ability to get attention. It was quite different than the terrorism that we experience and see today. That was a very direct—and just a year or two before, they had made the attempt on President [Harry S.] Truman's life, when he stayed at the home downtown, when they were remodeling the White House. So we were aware that there were these fringe areas out there and groups, but I would not have classified it in the same way of terrorism as we have today.

JOHNSON: You spoke about helping to carry Members out on stretchers, and there's a very famous photograph from 1954, and I was hoping that you could, at this point, take a look at that photograph, which you brought in today, and just describe what's going on there and, if you remember, your emotions of what was happening in that moment.

KANJORSKI: Yes. This I think is *LIFE* magazine's picture of the year that year. I guess it's the most famous thing I've participated in, in my lifetime. Damn. Luckily, I never realized that, so I strove on.

Bill Emerson, my best friend, is in front. I'm carrying the stretcher on the one side and I have glasses on, and Bill Goodwin is on the other side; he's another Page. And this is the third Member we took out, and we were on top of the House side of the Capitol, just coming out from the doors, about to carry him down the steps, and the ambulances were in the front of the

building. And then we left the building to go to the hospital. I think in this stretcher was Mr. Bentley of Michigan. We were all much younger then, weren't we?

JOHNSON: What was Mr. Emerson doing at that point? Mr. Goodwin, when we interviewed him, I think he said that there were a lot of photographers there, so he was just trying to clear the path.

KANJORSKI: Yes, he was clearing the way. By this time, this is the third stretcher that we brought out, so the place was awash in photographers and reporters. It wasn't any different then than it is now. They sometimes lose their smarts when they get around historical events, rush in a little too strongly. It reminds me of [Bernie] Madoff. Did you ever see that famous television shot of Madoff, where the reporter or the photographer is literally pushing him back, to get a picture of him? I mean, he commits an assault. The guy is a defendant, I understand that, being taken out, but the reporter feels empowered to assault him and nobody ever—I don't think anybody ever did anything about it, but it's really an amazing empowerment that occurs when people are around disaster and historical events.

And that's what really was happening here. We literally had to work down through the crowd to get to the ambulance. Luckily, nobody died.

JOHNSON: What was the overall reaction of the Pages once the shock had worn off, when you were amongst the Pages and just talking and not working? How did people feel about what had happened, because these were high school students. It must have been an incredibly shocking event for you.

KANJORSKI: You would think it was, but, you know, as I recall now, other than among the very close friends that had participated in it, no one really talked much

about it. We didn't consider whether we'd go back to work. It was one day in many days that we experienced. I think in a way, it shows the level of sophistication that high school students had elevated themselves to, having that job. They were able to handle it in stride, didn't particularly think it great. We were all in the throes of preparing to go on to college. We were getting ready to graduate, and we were doing our final things in school for that purpose. Everything was generated in enthusiasm around operating the Congress, and this was a very heavy time of the session, when the appropriations bills were starting to go through and there were only three or four months left because we got out of session early then. There were just maybe three or four months left after this, so we got right back into it. I would say in a matter of a week, it was somewhat forgot about.

JOHNSON: Pages are historically known for having unfettered access in the Capitol.

KANJORSKI: Yes.

JOHNSON: Being able to go places where almost no one else can go.

KANJORSKI: Correct.

JOHNSON: Was that still the case after the shooting in 1954?

KANJORSKI: To a large extent. There were the same cries then to encapsulate the chamber in bulletproof glass, all kinds of things. But luckily, they didn't succeed. The most cogent arguments ever made, and I recall them well because I was one of the anti-protection people. I just felt that if you want to serve in Congress, know that there is an opportunity that you may have a higher risk than other people. If you don't want to take the risk, don't serve. And quite frankly, and I've repeated it a number of times, look, there isn't anybody in Congress or in the United States or living in the White House that isn't replaceable. It's a

magnificence of our system. You are not forced to perform those functions, so you're not forced to put yourself at risk, but you should understand the mathematics of what the risks are and determine whether you want to expose yourself to it and then go forth and do it. What it means is we can remain an open society and should. The day we start protecting and getting fearful, well, at that point, the terrorists win. If they're going to cause us, in some respect, to limit our lives or conditions of what we do, that's exactly what they're about. Luckily, we don't do that.

Every now and then, and since the shooting several years ago, we've materially tightened up the protection, the entrances, et cetera, and I have to say, I'm aware of so many guns that have been picked up at the doors that it astounds me that people would come to the Capitol of the United States carrying a gun. It just goes to be a testament of the stupidity of the American people. I mean you just wouldn't do that, but they do. But, you know, we haven't had that many occurrences. Most of them I would attribute—I've watched them pretty closely now. This was a political event. The other events were questions of sanity. There's going to be some percentage of the society that's somewhat unbalanced.

JOHNSON: You're referring to the shooting in 1998, the police officers?

KANJORSKI: Yes. They just were unbalanced people. It doesn't mean the bullet doesn't hurt as much or do as much damage. It certainly did. I don't know that you can prevent that or should. You don't want to pervert the existence of your system to such an extent. That throws back to your question on Pages. If we're going to keep them so pure that they're not going to get exposed to any societal germs, not worth having the institution because then they will have lost the value of the institution. By virtue of the fact that they are exposed, is

part of the process and it's healthy. Luckily, we don't impress you into service, to be a Page, but I don't imagine there's anybody that hasn't had to convince their parents. I certainly had to. I was 15 years old, and I had to convince my dad and my mother that they should let me go away from home and live by myself at 15. The only ones that had done that up until that point were my two older sisters going off to college, but they went off to college much earlier and, still, that was highly supervised compared to the Page School.

JOHNSON: Did you notice or recall any changes in security that took place right after the shooting? You mentioned some things that Members were talking about, but anything specific that took place?

KANJORSKI: Well, I think certainly there was a discussion that went on for months and months and months, and I think there may have been hearings held on it. And there was a tightness of people, you know that we looked at other people with a little more cause. That was the third occasion, actually, that I recall. Now, not at that time, but when I came to Congress, we'd had the blowout in the Senate [in 1983] that almost took out 40 Senators, just a few years before I got there. And then we had someone who had a package of dynamite, a self-contained bomb that was stopped from setting it off. People were getting much more inventive, quite frankly. The shooting was sort of done more as an expression. They didn't take aim, they just shot in a random nature. If they had taken aim, they would have killed a number of people because, as I said, they got off 29 shots, and it's not hard with a Luger, to kill people at that short distance, if you hit them in the trunk or in the head. They obviously didn't do that.

JOHNSON: Did this event in 1954 have any long-term effect on your life?

KANJORSKI: On my life? Yeah, I guess from the standpoint that I had taken part in history. For some reason, it probably convinced me more than ever that I wanted to have a political life and get involved in those issues in a very big way. But it was not what you call a moment of change for me, no. It was just a happening that occurred. I don't think my life would have been any different if it hadn't occurred. With the six or eight people that were involved in that, we remained and have been friends for life. It was something very close that we shared. So from that standpoint, we had probably stronger friendships that occurred from it but not because there was any fear or anything; we all took it in stride.

END OF PART ONE ~ BEGINNING OF PART TWO

JOHNSON: Would you be able to trace your memories of the morning of September 11, 2001, please?

KANJORSKI: My chief of staff picked me up at my apartment on the Hill because I had a meeting at the White House, at probably 7:30. I remember it well because it was such a beautiful day, and we actually commented together what a magnificent 10. We called it a "10 day" in September. I completed the meeting at the White House rather quickly, so that I think I arrived back at the Hill, oh, I would imagine 20 of nine, something like that, and we were getting ready to park so I could return to the office. I recall throes of people pouring out of the buildings, literally thousands were coming out of the House side complex. I rolled the window down, and I said, "What's happening, what's the matter?" And somebody said, "We've been instructed to get out of here; there's a bomb on a plane," or something to that nature.

I was driving down D Street I think, and at the highpoint of the hill, looking down, I looked over and I saw tremendous smoke in the air over the Pentagon, and that's precisely when the Pentagon was hit. Then it became evident. We had heard about the two planes hitting New York. Seeing the Pentagon was smoking, there wasn't any question in my mind that we were now under some sort of an engagement that wasn't friendly. So we spent no more than a half minute or minute to decide what we had to do. Of course our office was starting to—kids got into the office probably after 8:00, some time after, so I knew we'd have staff at the office. We'd have to make a decision what to do, where to relocate to, or whatever we were going to do. So we decided to get right into the office, and we came in and parked in Rayburn, went up to the office, turned on the television, and watched everything that was happening in New York, what was happening downtown, listening to all the rumors about the State Department being under attack, the White House evacuating, all the things that went on.

But in the meantime, we actually had to spend a few minutes concocting the worst-case scenario and the likely needs of what had to be done. We were ordered to evacuate the building and the offices. I think shortly before that, when I got there, I was told by my staff that they had ordered everyone out of the buildings. I hesitated and stayed until I could gather everybody in my office, to make sure they were accountable, where they'd be and make sure they got out. We made a decision that we would relocate the office in one of two places: either in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, the state capitol, or in Wilks-Barre, my home district. And then I wanted to make sure that we would combine the Washington staff with the regular staff because a lot of work would have to be done. I wanted to make sure everybody was taken care of, who was responsible for whom.

At that point, we became aware of the town filling up with a tremendous traffic jam and anticipating getting out. But we probably closed out at maybe 10:00, quarter of 10:00, something like that, and made the decision to get on the 295 and get up to the beltway around Baltimore and then get up to Harrisburg. Well, we did that, but it took us a lot longer to get out. I remember it was so crowded. I think it took us about an hour and half to literally get out of the Capitol Hill area and get on the road. I ran across some Members, and, one of them, I remember him blowing his horn on the side of the road: Harold Ford [Jr.]. He rolled down his window, and he said—and I was a senior Member or at least a longer Member—he said, "Where are we supposed to go?" Because the interesting thing—and let me make that point. We didn't know what it was, but I was curious. I knew the President was on his way to hide in some mountain in Nebraska, and they announced that on television. They also announced that the precautions were taken to remove the leadership of the House and the Senate. And it struck me how foolish that was. I held back from using the word stupid there. I used foolish. But the reality is they had stripped the two branches of government of their leadership because, quite frankly, everybody, the Members, were asking, "What the hell, do you know what are we supposed to do? Has anybody told you what to do?" Well, nobody told anybody what to do, honestly, and here we discover that the people who are supposed to make that decision have been hustled away by the Secret Service, and they're gone; you're not going to see them. So we were basically elected by ourselves, by actions of the Secret Service, to be our own leaders, which there's nothing wrong with that because it is a peer Congress, but it was foolish. I could say stupid again, but it was foolish. We were leaderless and it was all done.

Now I happened to be a lawyer by trade, so I always think of the ramifications of that, and the ramifications were our systems are breaking down. The very people that are supposed to assume these positions which subject them to even more risk are hustled off to be protected when their decision making is most needed, and it's not there. And that's both the President—he was gone. I think we had the Secretary of State or something, or the Vice President, assumed control of the government, stupidly, at the time, and here, I think, it was the Secretary to the Assistant of a Floor Leader who ran the—somebody. I'm saying it was so stupid, how far the leadership had removed itself. That was very telling, actually, to things I did later that day because when we got out as far as the beltway, and it was around noon, I determined everybody was hungry. I hadn't eaten all day, nobody else had, I assumed, so we said let's grab a restaurant and use it as a thinking table.

But in the meantime, I always followed the principle that elected officials should, at the time of emergency or conflict, show that they are not shaken up. So I immediately called home to the radio stations and television stations and my local staff up there, to assure them that I was in a safe position, that I had thought through the problem, I'd made decisions on what we were going to do. But primarily to try and reduce their fears that the country was coming apart.

JOHNSON: And you didn't have any trouble communicating with staff back in Pennsylvania because of course that day there was a lot of difficulty.

KANJORSKI: Couldn't do it until we were significantly out of town. The cell phones were just completely locked up in Washington. But as we moved out toward the Baltimore area, we caught a free line; we were able to communicate with them. And it was very good because that gave us the time to rethink, and by

that time, we grabbed a sandwich or something, and I was convinced that leaving town was not the best thing to do. I thought the government should show its willingness to serve, and that it was important for some of us to get back to Washington as fast as possible, and we made the determination that at least I would.

And I think a lot of the same Members—and the only communication we could have as to really what was happening was the Capitol Police convened some special sessions in their headquarters around 1:30, 2:00, and were able to brief us as to what was happening. That gave us a sense of what was happening, and that's where we all sort of commonly decided—I don't know if it was anyone's particular idea, but that we should show that the government was reassembled, and that if we came together around 6:00, it would show the American people that in spite of the tragedy that happened, they hadn't lost their government. I thought it was very instrumental that we do that, quite frankly, and it was rather spontaneous. I mean, it wasn't some PR person deciding to do something because it would make a great press release, and nothing was planned. That song, ["God Bless America"] that was just spontaneous as hell. I think the message was probably of the highest quality that we could have sent out if we had hired the best PR people in the world to put it together. And we did it, we did it successfully.

I think it was responded to as well as we could have imagined, by the American people, and if you relate that experience to the '54 shooting, sort of the same thing happened in my mind—that people who were charged with responsibility had done the same thing. And, incidentally, at that point, I got back to George Bush, the President. He made the decision to return to Washington, and thank God that he did. That's why we have Vice Presidents, and that's why we—and the Speaker of the House is the third in

succession to the presidency constitutionally, but we can elect a Speaker real fast, and we can elect a Vice President real fast. If there were going to be any threat that was there, it would have been that the entire city be destroyed, and then all of us would have been going. So it was so stupid to—

I think, you know, putting myself—since that time, I've thought it through. If somebody tried to pick me up by the arms and take me out, they would have had to be as big as some of those guys appear to be because I wouldn't go easily. They have no right to make a political decision of that proportion, and they just misused and abused their power. It should be anticipated that that is not what we want to do in the future. We want a President, and we want a Speaker of the House, we want a Majority Leader in the Senate that are there and ready to go. And that someone is there with the ability to take them down in a matter of a limited time, they will be replaced, and we're going to keep replacing them until we stay intact.

I mean you'd be shocked if you were to think of a combat situation when a direct attack is made on you, you're in combat, and all your officers run. That's what it was equivalent to, the officers ran in the face of challenge. That's the worst form of leadership you could have. So we did those foolish things there. And it was a concession by elected officials, that these appointed people, who were appointed for security purposes, could make these stringent decisions that impacted on what leadership could be exercised by these elected officials. That's wrong. And it's good we went through that experience, and the best thing is I don't think you would ever get anyone to leave today as so many did then, or thought about it, because they saw the terrible representation that made to the people. What was it? They had a term for it? In an undisclosed area—the leader of your country is in an undisclosed area. Oh great, that's what we want to hear.

JOHNSON: You mentioned that there was no emergency evacuation plan, like the plans that are now in place. But for your own office, did you have any sort of contingency plans, not for something to this extent but what do you do in case of emergency? Was anything like that in place?

KANJORSKI: Not really. I've always been of the opinion that if you've got a reasonable mind, you're going to respond to chaos and emergencies in a reasonable manner, and that you can't anticipate a plan. These people that revert to written plans or thought a plan, I've never seen them really carried out too well, and they get too stringent and limiting. You've got to be fluid. If you're in the role of leadership, you've thought about it long enough to be fluid. You should have. I've given thought as to what happened if we had a nuclear attack on the city, what happens if we had a catastrophe of incredible

proportions in the country. Not that this wasn't a large catastrophe, but it wasn't the worst that could happen. Yellowstone could go up, and we could have a limited period of time for the country to exist. So these are the things that we have to weigh.

But it's amazing, we usually make some good decisions, if you think about how we were able to ground more than 5,000 planes in flight within a matter of hours, and those were individual decisions made by appointed authority to do that, and most of them were very good and very correct decisions. They didn't have to go into, "Well, where is plan G?" That's nonsense. You don't want to encourage people to have their egos flash. You want people who are stable, who are ready to respond in emergencies, and have their own self-confidence to do so.

JOHNSON: The House was back in session the very next day on September 12th.

KANJORSKI: Yes.

JOHNSON: What are your memories of that day and specifically the atmosphere in the chamber, what Members were thinking about, what they were saying, and just the overall atmosphere?

KANJORSKI: I don't remember that day. That wasn't for me, remarkable. I think the most remarkable thing that next day was the gawking of all the Members, in anticipating what would have happened if the plane that supposedly was intended for the Capitol had come in, what would it have done, what would be the damage. People sort of looking up, recognizing that the roof of the chamber would have been taken off and hundreds of people would have died. To me it wasn't a great deal different than going back to '54. An extraordinary thing had happened, but it was taken in stride and everybody was back in shape. It created a relaxed atmosphere, if you will. Now we had to do certain things on the emergency. We had to use safe rooms.

BRIEF INTERRUPTION

JOHNSON: Would you be able to describe the atmosphere in the chamber the next day, when Members returned on September 12th?

KANJORSKI: Well, I should say, and I missed that, we've had a lot of ugliness up here over the years, and that was starting to become an ugly period. Not nearly as ugly as it is today, but we started to see among ourselves much more commonality, if you will. Again, Bill [Emerson] was no longer alive then. I used to always go over and sit with him, or he'd come over and sit with me

and we, as a Republican and Democrat, we would sort of act bipartisan. That was getting far less common, but there was much more bipartisanship. I won't even call it bipartisanship, more nonpartisanship. People did realize we had a great challenge, and it was our job, to a large extent, to put some policy together to accomplish it, and we started to do it, and we started to think that way. That was very rewarding. As a matter of fact, I remember being terribly optimistic that we were going to be able to use that disaster as a time to really take out the ugliness that existed between the two parties and the political climate up here on the Hill and with the administration. Unfortunately, it didn't last that long, but we tried.

JOHNSON: You were talking about—before we were interrupted, and it was a really good description—something that most people wouldn't know about because it's not written down anywhere, about what Members were doing the day after the attacks, of what they were doing when they came into the Capitol. Could you just pick up on that again, please?

KANJORSKI: Well, I mentioned that they were gawking around to anticipate what would have happened if Flight 93 had made it through from Pennsylvania because it was sort of conceded that it was aiming for the Capitol, that the White House was not its target. So we were all being amateur architects and figuring out what the destruction would be and what the injury would be in the building itself, and recognizing just again, how close we'd come. And we evacuated a couple times in the following period of time. Every time there was some plane that went off course, they'd sound the alarm to get us out. We'd go down a couple blocks from the Capitol and stand around. It sort of looked stupid, but we did it, and, of course, nothing ever happened after that.

It was particularly instrumental in my life because I had catastrophe insurance, and we had to get to work very quickly. I'm putting together a plan and program for how we take care of compensation in New York. We started, and, in that regard, we were limited. We couldn't use regular committee rooms, so we had safe rooms in the Capitol that, at points, Secretary [Paul H.] O'Neill would join us, and we'd strategize how we were going to—he was Secretary of the Treasury at the time—how we were going to work out the compensation programs for what we were going to cover. And that was all new. We had never really done it before—very enlightening incidentally.

It goes to show you how you become aware of things after an emergency: you see holes and vacuums that you never recognized before. I was chairman of the [Sub]committee on Capital Markets, Insurance and Government-Sponsored Enterprises on Financial Services. I think I may have been ranking member at the time, but it doesn't really matter. But what we didn't have, we had no national institutional memory of insurance. So when we thought out those things, insurance was handled at the state level, so we missed a lot of things as to what we'd want to provide in remunerative legislation if we had had the institutional memory up here. It took us that occurrence, and then a number of years after that, to start thinking in terms that there should be a federal institution that has knowledge of that. We called for people in the federal government to tell us what's the impact on insurance in the country; what kind of medical insurance is necessary, what kind of life insurance, what would be the impact. We had nobody at the federal level doing anything about it. Now we utilized some of the national state commissioners for that, but as a result though, piecemeal legislation grew out of that occasion.

I created the Office of Insurance at the federal level, so now we have a repository of insurance information and data that the federal government will be able to call upon. Now it's just the beginning of getting into the area of insurance from the federal government, but it's the first time we've ever had that type of office, and it grew out of exactly that emergency because we missed big coverage of life insurance. We never anticipated—there was a firm that was wiped out that was catastrophic to the insurer because all their key people that had millions of dollars of coverage were killed all on one occasion, and it really shook the capacity.

I don't remember the name of the company, but some of them responded very well. One company that really impressed me, and I've paid them homage on many occasion, Chubb Insurance. They did not raise any of their legal defenses to paying out policies. They committed, I think, a couple billion dollars in their obligation, and that caused the insurance companies to follow that lead. So good things happened out of it, good things from the standpoint people acted responsibly, realized the effect that they had on the rest of society and on their industry and on the country as a whole by what they did. It was sort of reassuring in a way that, damn, the system does work, and it works magnificently. And, of course, that gives me a great deal of pride because I've lived so much a part of that system, ever since I was a Page. Even though I wasn't here for the first 25 years after I finished Page School, I lived here in terms of I was constantly a student of what was happening in government, what people were doing. I was politically active as to affecting the leaders and the impact it had. And then when I had the opportunity to run, I of course participated in an absolute first-person way, and all of that was very rewarding.

So quite frankly, I would go back and say that from the inception of going to Page School, what a hell of an effect it's had on me and made my life so much more enjoyable. More than that, I can't imagine what my life would have been like if I hadn't had that experience. And that's another reason we should keep the Page School.

JOHNSON: That's a good follow-up there. I just had a few wrap-up questions that I wanted to ask you.

KANJORSKI: Sure.

JOHNSON: One of them about September 11th. If there is one visual memory that's strongest in your mind, what do you think that would be from that day? And specifically, for you here at the Capitol, what one thing really, no matter how much time passes, will stick with you?

KANJORSKI: Honestly, I have to say that spontaneous singing, the way it broke out. I think less than half the Members were there on the steps, probably a third, and it lent itself—we had a need to say or do something, and it wasn't an occasion for a special speech or something, and even if it were, no one had the time to prepare it. It would have been nice if somebody could have given Lincoln's second inaugural, but they hadn't prepared to do it. Nobody had the import that was there, but the body of the House and the Senate, and there were just a few Members of the Senate there, but coming together and singing and it happening as spontaneously as it did. I don't think there were many of us who didn't have tears in our eyes.

JOHNSON: You are one of the few people that were an eyewitness to the shooting in 1954 in the House Chamber and then also were present as a Member on

September 11, 2011. So how, in your mind, do those events compare? And then, also, how would they compare in their effect on the institution?

KANJORSKI: September 11th, that was an attack on the United States, so that really did risk the existence of the government. It drove me to realize how tenuous and how for granted we take the existence of the government. As a matter of fact, that's continued even to today. I think last night I was making the point—this is the first time in my life that I am contemplating that occasion and then the economic catastrophe of the last decade. This is the first time in my life I've ever thought about the Republic itself being in jeopardy and the Constitution itself being in jeopardy. So I've become much more acutely aware that it's important for those of us that believe in the Constitution and believe in the Republic, that we analyze that and go to the protection of the Republic because it could disappear almost instantaneously.

And that's where I get into that thinking, where were our leaders? Why did they abandon their office? They didn't abandon their office. Why did they allow their protectors or their security to cause them to abandon their office? That's a very vicious thing to happen and allow to happen if you think about it. It reminds me: we've gone through the economic catastrophe of 2008, and there's a great constitutional crisis that occurred at that time, and nobody pays any attention to it. It's funny, you ought to write an article about it or think about doing a presentation.

There's an argument that occurred between Secretary [Hank] Paulson and Chairman [Ben] Bernanke of the Federal Reserve, as to what to do in the rescue plan and how to structure it. And it was early, the conclusion, and pretty close to rightly so, that they couldn't get the rescue plan passed through Congress. It was politically untenable to think of getting a majority

Congress to pass that—particularly, I think it was fairly close to an election period of time. So Paulson's people—and Paulson came up with the idea that Bernanke, that under a particular provision of a law on the Federal Reserve, that the Federal Reserve could issue money and provide the trillion dollars necessary to run the rescue. And the fight that actually went between the two parties were to the effect that yes, they could do that, they had the legal authority and capacity—not authority. They had the legal capacity to do it, but if they did, they would vitiate the Constitution to such an extent that they would destroy the government of the United States for long-term purposes because you wouldn't need the Congress anymore. The only real power of the Congress is to appropriate money, and that's why it's so jealously held onto. But if the Federal Reserve could make long[-term] ramifications and decisions of appropriating or authorizing the expenditure of money, Congress could go home, we don't really need it, and eventually would.

I've always been searching for the seventh chapter of *Profiles in Courage*, and I think I finally found it, it's Ben Bernanke.[1] Sometime in the future, somebody should say, if it hadn't been for old Ben, we would have brought the damn House down, not intending to, not knowing we would, but in fact destroyed the Constitution and the Congress of the United States, the makeup of the government of the United States. To his credit he said, "Absolutely not! We're going to the Congress." And we lost it the first time. I don't know if you remember, and we were damned to put out. But that was quite a constitutional crisis that was there. But again, the right decision was made by the people that had the appointed authority to do it. So we're very lucky, and we live on that.

And that goes back to the point that I try and make and have tried to make with you. The great decisions that have been made by this government over a period of 225 years have been spontaneous, unanticipated, and glorious decisions. Very seldom have the people charged with that decision called the wrong shot. Oh, there have been some, but none to the extent that they destroyed the Constitution or destroyed our society. And so that's why I'm a great believer and don't try to put a plan G, forget that. If you have true believers in constitutionalism, if you have true believers in freedom and in democracy, they will innately train their minds to work in such a way that they'll survive the most dangerous of things.

I haven't any doubt, a committed attack of nuclear power on the United States that was devastating could occur, and yet I think we would survive it as the United States of America because it's almost in our genetic makeup now. We are truly democrats, and we are truly constitutional in our makeup. And if you let us alone but don't think that the Pentagon has some plan over there, or the State Department, it's right in our DNA.

JOHNSON: I just wanted to follow up, because our oral histories are always focused on the institutional history. And just the comparison of '54 and 9/11, and the effect that those two events had on the institution, since you were an eyewitness to both events, what do you think that was? How did they compare or contrast?

KANJORSKI: Well, we got over '54 without much devastation to the Congress as an institution. We didn't go on any witch hunts. We survived it. I think we allowed 9/11 to get out of kilter. Actually, we went to war and one of the wars had no justification as it turned out, and probably most people knew that, that were making the decisions at the time. It's been an acceptance of

now, this idea, never let a good disaster be unused. That's potentially dangerous for the country and dangerous for the psychology of the country.

9/11 has impacted on the country and on the whole world, and no one can really anticipate what the long-term ramifications will be. But you know, I have this innate optimistic Pollyanna view that we will survive come hell or high water. We've had a lot of good people try and take us down, and I don't think it's going to be that easy. We'll survive.

JOHNSON: Was there anything else that you wanted to add today?

KANJORSKI: I guess I would add these two cents. We've spent a little time here together now. I'm sort of representative of being a product of a free system of a great constitutional government and of opportunity being made available to average people. In my life, in my experiences over the last 50 years, have been brought together by this action of being a Page, having a Congress that exists, and participating in these many ways. I don't look at myself as the only example, but again with my friend Bill Emerson, we're two examples that wouldn't have happened, wouldn't have had the impacts on our lives personally, but that's far less important. We wouldn't have had the opportunity to serve, and we wouldn't have had whatever contribution we made individually to this system. It's a wonderful system, and I hope that, in some way, I'm evidence to the fact, and that Bill is evidence to the fact, that we don't want to let this disappear.

We want to have the Daniel Websters of the world. If we hadn't had him as a Page, we probably wouldn't have had him as a Senator. And guys like Arthur Vandenberg and so many that I could name beyond that. Although we add my name and Bill's name to the latter end of that list, we had the benefit of being there and gaining this experience and exposure only because these

giants came before us. And it wasn't just handed down by these giants. They got it because, institutionally, America gave birth to these great institutions that have survived so long and have impacted so many people in so many positive ways. And before we give any of them up or limit them in some way, particularly through fear or expediency, I hope all of us, as citizens, take a moment of stepping back and recognize they're damn important, and they can offer great things to all of us. The little kid today that we take in and make a Page out of, or give them the experiences, can end up being not only the next President of the United States, but being a multi-billionaire or being a great scientist, doing all kinds of wonderful works that otherwise wouldn't have happened. So I'm proud to be a little part of that big tradition.

JOHNSON: Great. Well, thank you for sharing your memories with me today. I enjoyed it.

KANJORSKI: Thank you, Kathleen.

NOTES

[1] Reference to the 1956 book by John Fitzgerald Kennedy featuring brief biographies of politicians whom he believed demonstrated courage by following their convictions.