# Tina Tate

Radio-TV Gallery, U.S. House of Representatives (1972–1981)
Director, Radio-TV Gallery, U.S. House of Representatives (1981–2007)

## Oral History Interviews
## Final Edited Transcripts

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"Oh, the director has quite a bit more responsibility. All the logistics planning for the events that we do is really up to you to set the tone for it—you arrange which staff is responsible for which part of it. You have to work with the networks on anything that's a major event, like the State of the Union, which is an annual event, and you not only do the State of the Union, but you have to do the Democratic response or the Republican response. And the Statuary Hall setup for the react for Members of Congress. So it's a good two weeks' worth of work, and you're the one who is assigning everyone to their specific task, but you're ultimately responsible for all of it."

Tina Tate, July 12, 2007

Thinking back on her early days in the gallery, Tina Tate recalls, "When we were first there in the '70s, before we renovated, there wasn't even an individual desk for each person . . . it was musical desks. If anybody left, you got up; there were three desks and four people, so you would just have to find a place to sit."
*Image courtesy of Tina Tate*

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## Abstract

Tina Tate's recollections of her 34-year career in the House Radio-TV Gallery provide an invaluable window into the daily routine of a long-standing House institution. Created in 1939, the House Radio Gallery expanded to admit TV broadcasters in 1953. As only the third director in the gallery's history, Tate witnessed major changes during her tenure, notably, rapid technological advancements in media broadcasting and the growing influence of television. Tate's detailed account underscores her role as mediator between the House Leadership, which was determined to maintain the chamber's decorum and rules, and broadcasters demanding access to cover important media events. The topics discussed in these interviews range from the House Radio-TV Gallery's role in the coverage of Joint Sessions to major occurrences, including the 1998 shooting at the Capitol, two impeachments, and the House on September 11, 2001.


## Biography

Ruth (Tina) Tate was born on September 5, 1944, in Atlanta, Georgia, to Clifford Holmes McGaughey, Sr., the owner of a sporting goods store, and Mary Elizabeth Barnes, a homemaker. After earning an A.A. degree from Stephens College in Columbia, Missouri, Tate graduated from Emory College in Atlanta with a B.A. in history. In 1966 she married Danny Clyde Tate, a lawyer; the couple raised one child, Daniel Clyde Tate, Jr. Tina Tate worked at the University of Georgia libraries while her husband was in law school and later took a job as a receptionist in Atlanta with Merrill Lynch, transferring to Washington, D.C., in September 1969, when her husband accepted a position with Georgia Senator Herman Talmadge. After working as an office manager at Cox Broadcasting from 1970 to 1972, Tate joined the House Radio-TV Gallery on July 15, 1972.

The first woman employed in the House Radio-TV Gallery, Tate served as an assistant superintendent for nine years before being promoted to director in October 1981. As director, Tate oversaw the daily operations of the House Radio-TV Gallery, where she facilitated coverage of House proceedings for radio and TV broadcasters. Her duties encompassed standard tasks, such as supervising the daily log of House proceedings for reporters, as well as more-complex responsibilities like coordinating radio and TV coverage of major media events such as Joint Sessions and lying-in-state ceremonies. Tate also participated in national political conventions that spanned nearly two decades, credentialing broadcasters and allocating sky box, standup, and radio positions. Throughout her career, Tate strove to balance the needs of the gallery's radio and TV broadcasters with the rules and traditions of the House.

Tate retired from the House on May 31, 2007. She served as the director of media relations at the Newseum in Washington, D.C., from July 2007 to July 2009. Tate and her husband reside in Washington, D.C.

## 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 House Historian at (202) 226-5525, or via email at history@mail.house.gov.

## Citation Information

When citing this oral history interview, please use the format below:
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## Interviewer Biography

Kathleen Johnson is a senior historical editor 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).

# — TINA TATE —

## INTERVIEW ONE

**JOHNSON:** This is Kathleen Johnson interviewing Tina Tate, the former director of the House Radio-Television Gallery. The date is June 28, 2007, and the interview is taking place in the Legislative Resource Center, Cannon House Office Building. Today, I would like to start off with some biographical information. When and where were you born?

**TATE:** I was born September 5, 1944, in Atlanta, Georgia.

**JOHNSON:** What were the names and occupations of your parents?

**TATE:** My mother was Mary Elizabeth Barnes, and she was a homemaker. She worked one small part of her life, but not very long, where my grandmother worked all of her life. My father was Clifford Holmes McGaughey, Sr., and he had a sporting goods store that was, at that time, the premier independent sporting goods store in the South.

**JOHNSON:** What schools did you attend?

**TATE:** I went to Stephens College in Columbia, Missouri, and got an A.A. It is now a four-year school, but at that time it was only a two-year school. Then, I went to Emory College and got a B.A. History was my major.

**JOHNSON:** Before working for the House of Representatives, what were some of your jobs?

TATE: Actually, I only worked for two places, well, three, before I worked for the House. One, when my husband was in law school, I worked at the University of Georgia libraries, and two, I worked for Merrill Lynch, both in Atlanta and then transferred up here when we came to Washington. I worked for Merrill Lynch here and then I went to work for Cox Broadcasting. That was one of the first independent television bureaus to open in Washington. Many have opened since; many have closed since. Cox is one of the only ones that opened and stayed opened the entire time, and this was in 1970, and I went to work as their office person, receptionist, office manager. I was the only one that wasn't a journalist, and it was a very small bureau, and that's how I got to know what the Hill did because the camera crews and correspondents would work on the Hill, and they would work with the gallery, so that's how I became familiar with the galleries.

JOHNSON: You mentioned you were married. What's the name of your husband, and when did you get married?

TATE: My husband's real name is Danny Clyde Tate. It's not Daniel, it's Danny. It's very Southern. We were married in Atlanta in 1966.

JOHNSON: Your husband worked for Senator [Herman Eugene] Talmadge?

TATE: He did. That's how we got to Washington. He graduated law school and was waiting to pass the bar and wanted to do something, and a friend of his, a gentleman, who later became a Member of Congress, [George] Buddy Darden, suggested to him that he apply to Senator Talmadge because Senator Talmadge was the junior Senator from Georgia at that time, and he would hire young law graduates to work for a couple of years in Washington and

then they would go back and practice law in Georgia. So, that was the original plan.

We came up in September of 1969, with the idea of working for a couple of years. During that time, the senior Senator retired, Senator Richard [Brevard] Russell, [Jr.], of Georgia, and there is a statue of Russell in the Russell Building. He retired, making Talmadge the senior Senator, so there were more opportunities on staff, and Dan stayed longer. And he was getting ready to leave, and [Jimmy] Carter won the White House and the transition office worked out of Talmadge's office, and that's how he got with the Carter Administration. So, by this time it was the '70s, now, all of our working career; I was already on the Hill. All of our working careers were geared toward Washington. I did have one job that was prior to this that was a part-time job. I was a guide at the capitol in Georgia. So, almost all of my life, I worked in capitols, one place or another.

JOHNSON: What do you recall about your first day on the job in the House Radio-TV Gallery?

TATE: I started in July and one of the things . . . we had a wonderful gentleman who was the—then they called them superintendents, so the name changed later on—but the head of the gallery at that time was Bob Menaugh, and he was such a gracious gentleman. He was just a lovely, lovely man, and he had guaranteed me that when they hired me, that even though I was not going to get paid right away, that I would be paid because the payroll for that month was held up due to a Member of Congress, Wayne [Levere] Hays, who was chairman of House Administration, held up the payrolls for all the new hires because he was having a fight with another Congressman from, I believe,

Minneapolis; I think it was—his name starts with F.—I'm blanking out, but he was on the International Relations Committee and was challenging Hays in some way on the International Relations Committee so he held up the whole payroll, everybody that was being assigned, because it affected some of this Member's hires.[1] So, it was six weeks before we got our first paycheck, and he kept saying, "It's going to be fine, you will get paid. We guarantee it will be all right because it has nothing to do with you, and it didn't."

JOHNSON: Were you the first woman to work in the gallery?

TATE: I was the first woman to work in the House Radio-TV Gallery or the print gallery. There was a woman in the periodical gallery. There was a woman who was actually the superintendent there. Shortly after that, she got to be superintendent, I believe, but she wasn't superintendent for very long.

JOHNSON: Were you aware at the time that you were making history?

TATE: I was aware, at the time, that they never had a woman on staff and that they were actually actively looking for someone on staff. There is a gentleman who still works with me who works now for ABC News who was there at the time, Dean Norland. He was on the board because the journalists hire, they actually designate, by the rules of the House, the employees of the galleries, and they were actively looking for a woman. Up until that time, they had believed that a woman couldn't do the job, and at this time, for whatever reason, they decided it would be a good idea to see if that was not incorrect. They actually gave some credence to having a woman. It was a plus, for once, where when I worked at Cox Broadcasting, my boss at the time, the bureau chief there, said there would never be a woman anchor because

nobody would ever believe her, and that was the atmosphere. In the '70s, there were many journalism professional associations that did not allow women even to be members. There were several groups that were (more print than radio and television) established because in order to have a journalism group of women, they had to be all women. Now, most of those are integrated.

JOHNSON: Since there are so few women working on the Hill—were so few women working on the Hill at the time—do you remember having any role models, other women employees or perhaps women Members?

TATE: Cokie Roberts. Cokie Roberts. She's not more than a year older than I am, but she was already working on the Hill and was working for NPR [National Public Radio]. She was not yet working for ABC, and, of course, with her family being so established, she was very comfortable around everybody in the House, and she certainly made my life easier up here.

There were other women of stature in broadcasting fairly early. One was Carol Simpson, who went on to be a weekend anchor for ABC, so we did have some prominent women that were already in the business.

JOHNSON: Was there any kind of support network provided for women employees of the House?

TATE: No, and there was no place to go if you—the sexual harassment and all of that it was a totally different time; it was a totally different atmosphere. The House was a different place; the Senate was a different place; the way Members conducted themselves, the way they were treated—all of that was

so very different at the time. No. There was no way—you took whatever treatment you got or you left. Fortunately for me, I had a boss [Bob Menaugh] that was both a gentleman and a mentor and wanted to be. He was only here for a year; he retired due to health issues, but in that year, you saw the pattern for how he expected his employees to work and how he expected people to be treated, and that was a model of decorum that I wanted to practice.

I was treated very well by the second superintendent [Mike Michaelson]. He didn't stay very long; he was only there for a few years. I had worked with him on the staff, and I had worked with the other people on the staff and was not treated poorly by the staff members at all, and not by any of the correspondents. There were a few lechers, but you could avoid them. I had one person tell me if I was nice to him, he could certainly make my life easier, but I knew he couldn't, and I certainly wasn't going to be any nicer to him. I knew he would also say that to anybody in a skirt. There was a Member of Congress who tried very hard to get me to go out to dinner with him even though he knew I was married, and that was not unusual. He also tried that with every woman he met. There was nothing special about me. And once you realized that if somebody was really that aggressive, they probably were that aggressive universally. I never had anybody make it a point to harass me, individually, without it being something they did for everybody walking, so you sort of don't take it personally when you do that. And being Southern, you have a great deal more patience with that sort of thing.

The atmosphere of the galleries and the professional atmosphere of an office has changed radically. At that time, there was a wonderful gentleman that I

worked with in the office of the Architect [of the Capitol]. He was an old Southern gentleman, and he used the term "honey" when he would talk to you, and that was perfectly normal for me. He would give you a hug and that was perfectly normal. It was not offensive—it was not meant to be; it was just standard operating procedure. We had a young woman come in who was in very serious feminist mode, and she was very offended by it, and she wouldn't deal with him. I explained to her that if she didn't want to deal with him, then she wouldn't get her job done. She had to do some technical work, and his people and he had to facilitate that, and if she didn't have enough sense to understand that this man was not coming on to her in any way, shape, or form, she should get her head straight. It was not him, it was her. He was 30 years older than she was. He was from an era when that was perfectly acceptable and normal. You have to take that into consideration—you did then—because that was a big transition stage.

Now, it's very difficult even to feel comfortable doing any more than shaking someone's hand. I mean, giving somebody a hug is something you don't do. Then, that was just common operating procedure, and everybody was much more flirty, much more casual because there weren't many women, period. You were treated like a woman, and you were treated, not sexually, necessarily, but you were treated differently. And it wasn't necessarily a negative; it wasn't necessarily a positive. You just had to understand what the boundaries were. I did have one Senator chase me around a desk—that made me uncomfortable. Had it been a different time, I would have reported it because it was an inappropriate event, but that did not happen regularly with me. I am not really sure why. I think maybe the fact that we were in the press gallery, the radio-TV gallery, you are more visible and they don't particularly want to call attention.

JOHNSON: Did you form any strong bonds with other women because there were so few of you and you had a chance to, at least informally, talk to them about some of the things that were happening?

TATE: Yes. Tina Gulland, who is now with *Washington Post* Radio, is still a friend. We were puppies when we were first here. We were both in our 20s, and we were both named Tina, and we were both blond. She is still a friend. I just did a shower for her daughter, and her daughter's wedding is in October. We are still close friends and have kept in touch, even though she has been off the Hill for years now. Cokie, I continue to—I don't see her often; she is much more famous and has gone on to do other things—but I feel very comfortable calling her on any sort of event if I need anything.

JOHNSON: Some women staffers that we've talked to, that we interviewed, have referenced the inadequate accommodations for women during the period, such as having to walk a very long way to access a bathroom.

TATE: Well, that's true, and in the Capitol, that was especially true. In fact, we renovated the gallery in 1988, and that's the first time—we did have a men's and women's bathroom—but that was the first time we had a women's bathroom that accommodated more than one person. We have a very small office, a very physically small office, but in the renovation, I made sure that we accommodated more women. It's interesting that, now, you probably have more women working out of there than men.

JOHNSON: Did you find that you faced obstacles in your job? You said you had a supportive superintendent, but because of your gender, did you feel that

there were certain things that you weren't assigned, certain tasks, for example?

TATE: No. Our office was too small. You really couldn't not get assigned to things. The other thing we were doing—and this was not in the '70s but in the '80s—I began working the conventions . . . I did start working the conventions in '76, but we also credentialed all of the independent broadcasters for the conventions, and there are about 5,000 people, and we handle all of their logistics arrangements and all that. You would go into meetings and you would be the only—there would be me and Jane Maxwell, who was with CNN, and 50 white guys. That was normal. The technical meetings were very normal, to be mostly male. You would probably have maybe five percent women. But because I got a position fairly early, in Washington, people do pay attention to your job as much as they do your gender. So, once I got to be the director, and even the deputy director, that gave me a weight and a presence that was somewhat of a protection. I think most of the people that have a harder time are the younger women with less authority. People don't tend to give you a problem if you have a position. They have got something they need from you. You have to deliver something professionally, and if you are in that position, you're not as likely to have a problem. I never had a problem working with the people in the conventions, Democrats or Republicans. They always treated me as an equal. I guess because they did, I presumed myself to be, and if you present yourself that way, most of the time, you are perceived that way.

There was a director on the Senate side who had worked ahead of me on the House staff, and he actually did try to sabotage me. That would be an occasion when I did learn, and part of it was because I was a woman. Part of

it was because he had been on staff 20 years before he got promoted, and I had been on staff six years before I got moved to deputy. And only a few years longer than that and I got to be director, and when I got to be director, at that time I was the only woman director. I went to him because we were going into an event I knew that I was not quite ready, professionally, to take on the job, but I also knew that I couldn't turn it down because it wouldn't be offered again. If they brought in somebody over me, there would not be an opportunity in the future, so I had to go ahead and step up. And I wasn't prepared. I had not done enough on my own to feel comfortable that I knew what I was doing. So, I went to him and explained that I would need all of his help. I was very excited about this job and wanted to do my best, and I would appreciate any assistance he could give me, and I was willing to learn anything that he wanted to teach me. There was a lying in state of the Unknown Soldier, and we were going into a meeting with the Military District of Washington people, and I asked him if he had any folders or any files or anything that could help me with this—we had one lying in state in '72, but I didn't remember much about it, and we didn't have very good files on it. He said, "Oh no," he just wasn't very aware of anything; he didn't know anything about the meeting. When we went into the meeting, I discovered that he knew the gentleman who was in charge. He knew the operations. He knew the expectations. He knew the agenda. And none of that had he bothered to tell me. So, it was a lesson learned, but you only have to learn it once. Once you understand that you can't expect someone else to help you or you know where you can't expect to get help, then you have to be more prepared than anybody else in a meeting, and you learn it, and you go on. That was probably the most brutal lesson I learned, but I learned it early, and it served me well.

A lot of times, what you do professionally, you learn what not to do from seeing an example of what doesn't work. I think I was a good supervisor because I observed supervisors I thought that did not get the best out of their staff. When you would see that, it's easier to say, "Okay, that's not the way I want my office to run." And you can learn from people doing a bad example as much as you can learn from people doing a good example.

JOHNSON: The *Congressional Directory* listed two other women who also were working in the gallery during the 1970s. What were their positions?

TATE: What were their names? Remind me.

JOHNSON: Eloise Poretz and Helen Starr.

TATE: Both of them were on our staff, and both of them were hired by, I believe, Mike Michaelson.

JOHNSON: Was that unusual to have so many women working on a staff that was so small?

TATE: No. Mike was very open to having women. That was not a problem with him, as it wasn't with Mr. Menaugh. Helen wasn't there very long. Eloise was there a good while. In fact, I just talked to her. So, she left for her own reasons, as did Helen. Helen left to go to law school. So, neither one left because of any uncomfortable working situation, and both are still in the area.

JOHNSON: I would like to back up a little bit to discuss some of the day-to-day procedures in the gallery. Can you describe the radio-TV gallery during your first few years—the staff, the physical space allotted, and some of your responsibilities?

TATE: Well, the physical space hasn't changed very much. It's still a very small suite of offices on the third floor of the Capitol. We renovated in 1988, and the mezzanine area accommodates a different arrangement, but it's always been kind of on top of each other. When we were first there in the '70s, before we renovated, there wasn't even an individual desk for each person. There were only four people on the staff at the time and there was a space for—and I have a picture of this, but I didn't bring it; I can do that if you'd like a picture of the original gallery. In fact, I've got two, both of them with me looking really young. The only unique space was the director's—superintendent space at that time—and that had a small area, closed off with glass. Then there were desks, but it was musical desks. If anybody left, you got up; there were three desks and four people, so you would just have to find a place to sit. {laughter} We didn't really have the kind of file-keeping or record-keeping that we do now. Now, you document everything, but you didn't then, and I don't know why we never thought there would be any long-term to this because Congress was still going on.

Everything was done in longhand. This was all pre-computer. So anything you did, you did on paper. We didn't start using computers, really, until the '90s, and that changed things a great deal. I guess it was the '80s because it was during the conventions. But during the '70s, everything was handwritten, even the notes we did in the chamber. It sounds like it's worse than it was. One of our duties was to keep a running log of the chamber,

when the House is in session, and as long as the House was in session, you had someone sitting in the chamber the whole time writing notes. You still do, but now we do it on a computer, which they don't allow in the Senate side. They still have to do theirs handwritten. So most of the day, you wouldn't have everybody in the room at the same time. The other thing we would do would be—we would staff committee hearings, so a lot of the day, you'd be out staffing a committee hearing. It wasn't too often that everybody was physically in the space at the same time.

JOHNSON: You mentioned the daily log and the notes that you took. What was the purpose, and who used these notes?

TATE: The broadcasters used them, and they still do. Now, they are much more sophisticated than they were then. We would time-code them and put the Members of Congress that did meet—which did mean that you really had to recognize every Member of Congress, every time he spoke—and you would do whatever procedure took place, whatever vote took place, and voting was different then. You had tally votes, and you had different methods of voting—teller votes, not tally votes—teller votes and you would have to indicate what the vote was. You would do some debate, but you didn't try to do verbatim. You tried to listen for things that would be—now, we listen for sound bites; then, you didn't have sound recorded so we weren't listening for sound bites—you were listening for substance. Now, you are actually listening for sound—somebody saying that one little thing that's going to make air. We didn't publish the notes then, and we don't publish them now, but they are internal for broadcasters to use, both to get people who have spoken on an issue to find out the exact vote, to find out what procedure was done, to find out where they are in debate; and now, since 1979, when we

got the audio and video in the chamber, to actually get quotes and to get video because they all record it from the House broadcast system now.

JOHNSON: What are a few other examples of the daily activities that you would do in the gallery?

TATE: We handled press conferences. We handled committee hearings. That's a big part of our job, is the committee hearings we would staff. What we would do is work with the committee people to set aside enough room for the press. There is always a section for the press, and what we've done over the years—and it started really in the early '80s—was to put in a fiberoptic system throughout the chamber, and the House put in the cameras for broadcast for the House Floor in '79. But, we had prewired the chamber for Joint Meetings and Joint Sessions for the networks, even before that. We were doing broadcasting, I think—I have got pictures on our walls of what dates the first broadcasts were, but we actually wired the chamber in the '80s, and we began working with a technical group of journalists—it was called the Technical Advisory Subcommittee of the Executive Committee—to wire all of the committee rooms so that they could be carried live. That has taken—we just finished Ways and Means. We are working on Ag [Agriculture] and Homeland Security, and then we'll have almost all major committees hearing rooms wired so that they can go in and cover them live anytime. This is all the first-floor Rayburn rooms, all the major committees in Longworth, along with the major committees in Cannon. That's taken 20 years to do, 25.

JOHNSON: If you had to describe a typical day in the gallery, when you first started to work, how would you do that?

TATE: Well, the pace was much slower because everything was film, and you said you were going to talk about technology later, but technology really has driven changes, both in politics and in television. If it was film, and you only had three competing networks and PBS [Public Broadcasting Service], you only had four groups that were competing for television.

There was a lot more radio; there were independent groups that covered from time to time. There were some foreign groups, but not many. But anything that was going to make air that night would make a specific newscast at 6:00 or 6:30 or 7:00, one of those times, so it had to be shot and sent to where it was going. If it was going to be . . . Cox Broadcasting had a station in California. For that station, any story that had to go had to be on the plane by 11 in the morning in order for it to get processed by that station that night on the West Coast, to be shown at 6:00. So, your timeframe for when something could make a story was much earlier in the day. Even for radio, it was somewhat earlier. You had fewer outlets, and none of them carried very much live. The only committee hearings that were live . . . there were some hearings in the '70s with the crime hearings over in the Cannon Caucus Room.[2] That was a big deal for them to bring in all the equipment to do wiring because that room wasn't wired.

We did the Nixon Judiciary Committee hearings [in 1974], and PBS had to build what looked like a small control room outside the window in order to have that go live, with a production truck [on the street] underneath. So those were very, very elaborate hearings to do, and the only thing that was traditionally live on a regular basis were the State of the Unions, and even that was a two-day setup because of the equipment that had to come in for it and the trucks. You would set aside committee seats. You would get witness

lists. You would get committee testimony. You would stay around to be sure that if anything was shot, they got the shots they needed. We didn't have a lot of pool coverage at the time, so most of it was independent cameras coming in and setting up. Then, you'd be in the chamber during the whole time the House was in session. We stayed until special orders were over. We don't do that anymore because nobody carries that. It's a valuable part of the House, but it is not a part that television carries. That was something we would always do. So your nights could be very late because they could go late on special orders, even after legislative business was over. We worked on Saturdays; we worked a half-day on Saturdays. We would only have one person in on the day, but every Saturday, somebody was in for a half a day. So, the pacing was much slower, with a more concentrated group of people that you knew needed to get access.

What you did have then, that you have not had for a long time, now, is both a producer and a reporter from the major networks. You have a producer and a reporter on the Hill, but not in both the House and the Senate Gallery. Then, you had them both in the House and Senate Gallery. There was a bit of a hierarchy in terms of how a person made their career in the networks. They would start off being a House correspondent, then they would be a Senate correspondent, then they would be a White House correspondent, and if they got really lucky, they would be an anchor. So we knew a lot of the people who got to be in those positions because they had come through the House. Brit Hume had worked in the House before he worked in the Senate, before he went to Fox. Charlie Gibson, who worked in the House—he didn't work in the Senate—but he worked in the House before he went to the White House, before he went to *GMA* [*Good Morning America*]. Cokie Roberts worked for NPR before she worked for ABC, before she went to

network. So there was the hierarchy of people that went through that we really got to know very well. That's not true so much anymore. Most of the people who work out of the House Gallery now are producers, and they may or may not do a little air work, but they are not regular correspondents. Only CNN has a regular correspondent based on our side.

JOHNSON: So those were the typical activities. Do you remember any unusual days or unusual circumstances?

TATE: In the '70s?

JOHNSON: Or into the '80s too.

TATE: Well, there were a lot of unusual ones. I can't even remember the date of this. I think it was '91, but I'm not sure. Not skipping that far ahead . . . One of our most unusual ones was the Million Man March [in 1995]. That was very interesting because I don't know if you know that much about the Million Man March, but when it happened, nobody knew what it was really going to be and neither the House nor Senate were taking very much credit for it and were not having a visible presence. But you had no [male] Senators who were black at the time, and you had black House Members that did not really want to be publically involved, but some of their staffs were, or out of the public, they were involved. So we knew that it was going to be covered; we knew it had the potential for either being very big and bad or very big and good, but it had the potential for being very big. There was so much interest generated by it that you knew it was going to get a lot of television coverage, and nobody would participate in any kind of meeting to find out how to set it up.

Logistics is what we do, and logistics are neutral. {laughter} We don't care whether it's a good thing or bad thing, we cover it and we try to get people in place so that they can cover it. We are not responsible for the story. We went into a meeting with a group that were anti-white, anti-government, and anti-female. Here I am, "Hello, I am here to help you." We had to do a lot of very careful negotiations to get coverage arrangements made with a group that was very reluctant and needed our help but did not want to accept our help. We worked with a couple of excellent House staffers who were behind the scenes making sure that we got what information we needed, and that's where we got most of it. We really were the only office that had any information at all. The guidelines that the [Louis] Farrakhan people put out were ones we had written that got the name of our office just taken off in the arrangements and put on their Web site release because somebody had to do it. You have to tell people when to show up and what credential to use and what entrance to come through. It doesn't matter whether it's going to be good or bad, and it turned out to be an amazing event with an incredible amount of participation and an incredible story. I felt very good that we had forced ourselves in on it in order to make sure that it was handled properly. I thought we did a very good job.

JOHNSON: You mentioned Bob Menaugh a few times, and you referenced Mike Michaelson, but could you talk a little bit more about their leadership and how they directed the gallery?

TATE: Well, Mr. Menaugh had been the original superintendent. The gallery was established in 1939, and he had been the original director. There have only been, now, four. I was the third. He had a wonderful relationship with Members of Congress directly, and this is another change. Directors, then,

dealt directly with chairmen of committees, as well as not only the press secretaries for the committees, but the chief of staffs for the committees because it was a much smaller staff apparatus, and there was much less media coverage. Because he had that comfortable relationship with Members, which I couldn't have at that time because (1) I was female, and (2) I was in my 20s—but you had somebody who had grown up in the House and had been in the House all that time and was very comfortable working with Members, so that was just a very different era.

When Mike came in as director, he changed a lot of things, and he was much more interested in really getting a professional television approach and taught me a lot about how to think about what these people were going to want. He would take me along to meetings, he was a good mentor in that regard, to learn from him what people expected and what they wanted. I did learn a lot about what was going to be the role I would do, and then I took it from there. I think it changed after he left because it changed radically with the onset of satellite trucks, and local television covering like national television did. So you didn't just think about the national groups; you also had to think about the local groups, and you had to think about what they would do on a day-to-day basis. Both Bob Menaugh's demeanor, character, and style and Mike's true interest in the technology and the newsworthiness of things were very good examples for me and very good help to getting me to do my job.

JOHNSON: When you first started your job in the early '70s, there were less than 20 women Members. Did you feel a special connection with them because there weren't many women House employees, as well?

TATE: Yes. I didn't feel a special connection with them because they were all much older. Most of them were—I don't remember all of them, but I remember Shirley [Anita] Chisholm was not a widow—but most of them were widows of Members who had served, as opposed to being elected on their own. They didn't start having Members elected on their own very regularly until into the '80s and really into the '90s. So I did not know any of the female Members well. On Judiciary, what was her name?

JOHNSON: Barbara [Charline] Jordan?

TATE: No. The woman from New York. She was one of the younger women. But there were a few, and of course Barbara Jordan was just astonishing.

JOHNSON: [Elizabeth] Liz Holtzman was on Judiciary.

TATE: Yes, Liz Holtzman. Barbara Jordan was the role model that every human being who wants to be a Member of Congress should follow because of her dignity and how splendid her speech was and what a role model she was in that respect. So they were role models, but not because I knew them personally or had any direct connection with them personally.

Chairmen were much more God-like {laughter} than they are now. I can remember walking with Mike Michaelson, and he was trying to persuade Chairman Jack [Bascom] Brooks from Texas to do something, and the chairman was listening to him and smoking a cigar, and I had a tablet in my hand, and he didn't have a place to drop his ashes so he just flipped them on my tablet because it was the closest, most convenient place. So, it certainly

gave you a position. You knew what your place was in terms of what chairmen were doing.

You asked me about really unusual things that happened in the '70s. One of the things was with Chairman Hays, who had gotten into trouble because of a woman named Elizabeth Ray whom he was paying not for her secretarial services but for her other services. He was being hounded by the press and eventually did leave Congress. There was a press conference arranged that he came into—I was working it—and he was brought in from the back, came to the podium, made his statement, and left. The press all wanted to ask questions, and he wouldn't take questions. We would not do a press conference like that now. One, a Member wouldn't expect it; but two, it wouldn't be granted. The press wouldn't allow it. At that point, the press was much more controlled, even though they were very upset with the way it was run. It was something we did, based on what the Member wanted. Now, you wouldn't do that. Your role is much more to take care of what the press needs because your perception of what you are supposed to be doing is if the press gets the story right, and you've helped them do that, then you've helped the American people understand their government. So to stand up to a Member of Congress because they are making a judgment that is not transparent for information purposes, it's something you have to do now. There is too much media to be able to contain something, like you could contain it then, like a Member could control it then.

JOHNSON: That made me think of an earlier interview with Ben West, the former superintendent of the House Press Gallery. He commented that he often felt like he was in the position of serving two masters. Is that something that you felt, too?

TATE: Yes. It's essential to have both the trust and the assistance of not only the Member, but the chief of staff and whoever is handling the press because you can't operate in somebody's room or in somebody's space without having that kind of trust, and you need the trust of the leadership of the House because there are things you need to do at a leadership level. It's a mutual trust, and it's a mutual goal. There are times when Congressmen get themselves in trouble, and it's not the role of the press, and it's certainly not the role of the galleries to keep them out of trouble. If they land in trouble, it's up to you to try to assist them in the coverage that's going to happen. You are not trying to make the coverage happen; you are just trying to be sure that it happens in as dignified a way as you can get it to happen.

Even though this is jumping forward, [Gary Adrian] Condit was probably one of the bigger examples of how a Member of Congress became a focal point that he did not want—there were lots of others, certainly Hays, but this is the difference. This is a good difference between what happened with Hays in the '70s and with Condit in 2001. The difference there was so incredibly visible because by that time, you had all three cable networks going gavel to gavel with any kind of story, and this story had sex, and it had money, and it had a Member, and it had a young girl; I mean, every part of it was titillating. So it was not what you would do to maybe better the country, but it was going to get a lot of coverage. We sat down with Condit's office; we sat down with the Sergeant at Arms Office and discussed ground rules for how we could do this because it was going to happen. It could be messy and unpleasant and lots of angry phone calls back and forth, or we could set some parameters and be sure that the pictures people were going to need were going to happen. That's what we ended up doing. That story went on until

September 11 [2001]. That was the story of that summer; the story that entire summer was nothing but Condit.

There have been other scandal stories that were much more controlled when television wasn't as obvious. Under Speaker [Thomas Stephen] Foley, you had the bank scandal. One of the things that we couldn't photograph was the bank—that was one of the areas that you were not allowed to take pictures of, and I persuaded them to let us take a picture, not inside the bank, not with the employees, but just of the bank door. Even that they regretted because they said you wouldn't have told the story without the picture. Well, yes, they would have. It was one of those things where the story was spun, and it was being fed and it wasn't being fed by House Gallery employees—it was being fed by Republicans who wanted to get that story out, and they weren't going to give up on getting that story.

So you are going to get the story, and if it's a Page scandal—and we've had several of those since I've been here. The reason the kids wear the little outfits they wear, the reason they are the age they are because of previous Page scandals, some with girls, some with boys, so there is not really much new—it's just different ways of looking at it and different responses to it. People do respond differently, now, to things because there is so much more instant response. It was how long the [House] Bank scandal went on because Members didn't get it, how important that was to the trust of the American people, and it eventually caused . . . and it was an element in the political change of Congress, not the only thing, but an element in it.

JOHNSON: When a scandal like the House Bank or some of the others that you mentioned occurred, did you feel any pressure in the gallery from the leadership to act a certain way?

TATE: Sure. We hear about it about as soon as it happens. One thing lovely about journalists is that they do talk, and if they know something's coming, and they know they are going to have it, unless it's their exclusive, once it gets past being the first time you hear it, you know where it's going, and you know that this is going to be a big deal. Our reporters would let us know this is huge; this is something we are going to get a lot of pressure doing. You go to the leadership, and you go to the authorities, and, in this case, it's usually the Sergeant at Arms is the other office we have to work with; we've always had very, very good relations on our side, which has not happened on the Senate side. We have had very close relations with all of the Sergeants at Arms that I ever worked with. If they couldn't do what I wanted them to do, they always understood what we were asking for and that it was a legitimate request, whether we got it or not. That was something really that's been a valuable connecting link, is how well we worked with the House Sergeant at Arms, throughout the years. We made sure that we kept that kind of personal contact and trust because the police are not there to keep the press from the Members. They don't think it's their role, I don't think it's their role, and if you allow them to think it's their role, you're not serving the American people. So you have to keep reminding them, that's not what you are here for. The press is not going to hurt these people. They may hurt them politically, but they are not going to hurt them physically. As long as they are not going to hurt them physically, you don't need to keep them away from us. So we need to work out specific arrangements that make this work. There are a lot of rules that various Sergeants at Arms would let us

bend one way or another to make it easier to cover because they didn't want the police involved in the coverage of the story. They didn't want to be accused of covering up anything, and they were willing to work with us, not to expose a Member, but to be sure that the Member was treated fairly and that coverage was allowed.

JOHNSON: Did you have instances where the Speaker would call you in directly and ask you to phrase things a certain way?

TATE: No. I have had Speakers' staff do that, but I have not had Speakers do that.

JOHNSON: Did you find that you could work independently, then, for the most part, that you could listen to the opinions of the leadership but then decide if you think this is the best way to pursue a story, then this is what you would do?

TATE: Well, I didn't pursue the stories. It was a matter of trying to—as working for two masters—we also were the buffer. There were times when you could not get what the press wanted, and in that case, you were the person they could yell at from both directions. You were the person who could go in and do the conversations so that it kept leadership and/or Sergeant at Arms folks from having to talk directly to the press and the press having to talk directly to them. When people have to be confrontational because they have to do their position, you get hostility that can be long-lasting. If you've got somebody who can be the go-between, you can keep it softer. That's another thing about being a woman that has actually served me well. You can be a bit softer. You can be perceived as less threatening, and you can be every bit as firm, every bit as dogmatic or insistent, but you can do it in a way that is not as threatening as sometimes a male tends to have to do the testosterone

thing. You can just feel it in the room when you have got one guy who thinks that he has to prove his point, just his point, not get the result, but his point. We always go into these negotiations with this is where we need to get and we'll get there any way we can, but it isn't whether it's my point or your point. You want to educate everybody into coming to your side, and if you can't, then you need to change your side to get there. You need to get the result, and the result is what is more important than whether it's your point or his point. Women tend to be a little better at that.

JOHNSON: So, in addition to being a buffer, in some cases, you are a facilitator.

TATE: Entirely, totally. We had one staffer who used to say, "We don't do anything, we facilitate everything." That's really what we do, is make it easier for people.

JOHNSON: You mentioned the Sergeant at Arms, and when I was looking through some old editions of the *Congressional Directories*, it listed your office and the other House press galleries under the Office of the Doorkeeper.

TATE: Yes.

JOHNSON: Did your office fall under their jurisdiction?

TATE: In fact, the Doorkeeper is, of course, now the CAO [Chief Administrative Officer], for our purposes, but the Doorkeeper's Office was a much different office than the CAO's office is. The Doorkeeper was in charge of everything that went around the chamber, everything connected to the chamber, and anything connected with Members. So things like Joint Meetings, Joint

Sessions—and then they had a lot of ceremonial sessions—anything in the Rotunda or Statuary Hall would have some component of Doorkeeper involvement, and some of the Clerk as well, but more the Doorkeeper than anything else. When the Republicans took over, they were trying to decide where to put us, whether to put us under the Clerk because we have a legislative function, or under the Sergeant at Arms, because we work with them so directly with logistics, or under the new CAO. I think when they decided to put the recording studio with the broadcast under the CAO, then they decided to put the press galleries under the CAO, and I believe that to be how it happened. I don't know that for a fact because I wasn't in on any of the meetings. But the Doorkeeper—before that was a patronage job and a patronage position, and most of the doormen were patronage. We were the only office that was not, so there would be pressure from them to either appoint or not appoint or have interns or whatever. We would get pressure from them.

That was one of the reasons that Cokie Roberts was such an advantage to us because she knew everybody, and she was on my board [Executive Committee of Radio and Television Correspondents] several times and was on my board when I was selected [director of the gallery in 1981]. There were two occasions where we had run-ins about hiring, where the Speaker's Office withheld the hire that we wanted for various reasons, one under a Republican Speaker and one under a Democratic Speaker. In both cases, we ran interference, with our executive committee going directly to the Speaker's staff, and in both cases, the event was reversed. So, we were able to continue hiring as we have hired in the past. That is not true on the Senate side. The Senate side, they have always been under the Sergeant at Arms, and they do not have the rules that we do that sets the gallery under the Speaker for

authority and CAO, but then the Doorkeeper for payroll purposes. So they didn't have that division, and they didn't have that kind of blessing that the House has always given the galleries. It's a very important part of our history and our operation. It gives us much more independence, and since nobody's directly responsible for us, as long as we don't embarrass them, it's pretty much okay with us.

JOHNSON: So even though you were under their jurisdiction technically, the Doorkeeper's Office, there wasn't a lot of interaction that you had.

TATE: There was a lot of interaction because they were our payroll masters. Any kind of raises—when at one point, I wanted to restructure our office, and our Doorkeeper then was Jim Molloy, he said he would not go in for raises for our office, but he wouldn't object if I did. He would let me make the presentation, and if I did the paperwork—I can't actually remember if I made the presentation or not; I know I went to the meeting. I think he actually put it out, but if I worked it, he wouldn't oppose it, but he wouldn't put it up. [Leon Edward] Panetta, I think, was on the Legislative Approps at the time, and that's where you had to take it. We took what we wanted to the Legislative Approps staff and discussed how we wanted it to work, and they voted on it to change our structure, and he didn't oppose it. Raises were things that he had to control. Access to the floor for Joint Meetings and Joint Sessions, he had to control. So, there was a lot of interaction, and we didn't always agree, but we were not ever unpleasant. "Fishbait" Miller was the Doorkeeper when I first came, and I had less to do with him and more to do with the Speaker's staff at that point because the Speaker's staff was so small and so directly in charge of everything. You went to one person, and he took care of it.

The way we got the renovation in 1988—I went to John Mack, who was Speaker [James Claude] Wright, [Jr.]'s, chief of staff, and said—I took him over to see the Senate Gallery, which had just been renovated, and it's so beautiful and so grand and took him back to see our office, and I said, "This is not what we need, we need something else." He said, "Okay," and he told Appropriations to do it. That was how it happened. That was the way things happened then. If the right people said the right thing, and that was another case of Wright—the approval came with John Mack carrying the water for it, and it was like a half million dollars for the renovations at that time. By the time the gallery was opened and the renovation was completed, Wright had gotten into so much trouble that he was no longer Speaker. Wright had written a handwritten note that said, "I hope you invite me to your new gallery," and he never came because by the time it was opened, he was so radioactive, it was too small to have a press conference with him up there. But, that happens.

Keeping very close, direct channels to the Speaker's Office has always been incredibly important for our staff, and we've always done that. The cooperation has been constant, if not complete. There were times when there were things that we would have objections to, but I have never had a Speaker's chief of staff that would not work with us, and that we've been blessed with. There's been a lot more difficulty, I think, on the Senate side with that kind of "Oh, you're not important to us."

JOHNSON: Was your office affected with the change over from the Doorkeeper's Office?

TATE: Absolutely, completely. All of the House offices that were not Members' offices, of course, all of the committee staffs, the ratios changed, so the ratio

for staffing changed. All the Members' offices were in play in terms of how many people they could have, but all of the offices that were support staff were asked to turn in resignations. And our galleries, and I think—I don't know if Ben West mentioned this or not—but I think all the press galleries did it, but I know our office did not. Bill Headline was the bureau chief of CNN at the time, and he was my chairman for the Executive Committee of Correspondents. I told him what was going on and said this would be a precedent, and he said, "Well, we don't want you all to turn in your resignation," and I said, "We don't want to turn in our resignations." He said, "We want the people we got. We hired them and we want them, and that's in the rules of the House." Now, they can change the rules of the House, but they haven't. So I said, "Okay, let's go see Tony Blankley," and we did. Tony Blankley, at that time, was the press secretary to [Newton Leroy] Gingrich. We went in and made the case and he said, "Okay." They didn't want to pick a fight with the press, that was not necessary. Tony has been up to our office a thousand times, and he knew what we did, although he never considered us nonpartisan. He always considered us bipartisan. He didn't see us as Democratic appointees because we were not. We were not hired by the Doorkeeper, and if they insisted, there would have been a fight, and they were turning the place upside down. So this was a fight they didn't need and certainly one they just didn't want.

When [Nancy] Pelosi's office took over, I continued to work with the Pelosi staff as well as [John Dennis] Hastert's staff on issues. Even before the election, I had informal conversations with the Pelosi staff just in case it happened. There would be things we'd need to talk about, as we had done with the Republicans, things that needed to be done, and I had worked with Tony on a lot of issues for Opening Day, what kind of coverage he wanted,

what type of coverage had been allowed before. Our role there in some sort of major change like that is not to say what is going to happen and what isn't going to happen, but to explain to a new office coming in what the precedents were, what areas had been used and why, and what areas hadn't been used and why, and what areas were easy for coverage and what areas were not, and then let them make a decision. I don't make any of the decisions, but you are sort of the background person, and there isn't really another office that does that.

Even when [Speaker] Hastert took over, that was fairly sudden, and we went in and talked to Hastert's staff immediately and said, "This is what happens and this is how we do it, and if you want to do it differently, you can do it differently, but things like State of the Union, how that sets up and who comes for what meetings and who's in charge of making what decisions, we'll walk you through what the precedent has been, and if you want to change it, you can change it, but this is what has been the pattern." We did that with any Speaker that came in, to make sure that they knew—most Speakers don't want radical change that they don't create. So they want to stay within precedent until they are ready to change the precedent. So that's what we do is try to say this is what happened before.

I recall one other—you were talking about other people, people who gave you a lot of grief, men who made your life unpleasant. Many years ago, there was a director of the recording studio—which we have to work with on a very direct basis because we get their floor feed, and they do a lot of work that interconnects with us—this was many, many years ago. This gentleman did not like television, and we have had other officers of the House that did not like television, and they would be more difficult, but in most cases, they

were not duplicitous; he was duplicitous. He would say one thing to me and another thing to the leadership, and you would go into a meeting where you'd already had a conversation, you had already given him a heads-up, and then he would do a back fill and try to make a point without giving you any kind of up-front. Another lesson to learn. You can deal with people who are not duplicitous, but if they are, then you have to work around them, and he happened to be a man. I think part of it was a male-female thing, but it was probably more that he hated television, outside of his own television realm. He wanted to keep control of anything that was television. He didn't want the networks to come in for the State of the Union. Well, that wasn't going to happen. That was not really a fight I needed to worry about because no Speaker is going to challenge the networks on coverage of the State of the Union unless there is some incredible reason to do it. Nobody is going to do that just because a staffer is annoyed that somebody is putting cameras in the room. That is another example that was as much professional as personal animosity that was a difficult person to work for. Most of the people I've worked with, I have been very fortunate. I have had genuinely cooperative experiences with almost all the officers of the House. He was not an Officer of the House, but that was the one exception of somebody who could make my life difficult, and did, and did it on purpose.

JOHNSON: We're going to pause for a moment, if that is all right with you.

END OF PART ONE ~ BEGINNING OF PART TWO

JOHNSON: During the first part of your interview, you mentioned several times the renovation that took place in the gallery. Could you describe that in more detail?

TATE: Well, we had space that was inadequate; the space we have now is still inadequate. We went to all the networks and said—once we had gotten permission to do the renovation, which, as I told you, we got from John Mack and Wright's office. We really needed to come up with a plan that everybody could agree on because you got so many competing interests, so we got all the networks together and came up with a design that we thought would work with the Architect's [of the Capitol] people and showed them what we were doing, and then, we did a survey—and there's a folder, actually, on the renovation if I can find it in my files. This was pre-computer files. We had every organization apply for what type of space they wanted, whether it was a one-person booth, a two-person booth, or a three-person booth; and we came up with a list of criteria for what you would have to do to have a booth. To guarantee that you'd get a booth, you had to have a presence every day in the gallery when the House was in session. To have consideration for a two-person booth, you had to have two people there on a regular basis; for a three-person booth, the same thing. So, the criteria was set. Everybody had to be in on the agreement for the criteria, and then the booths were designed based on who put in for what and how many we could fit. Then, they were assigned on a lottery. So, it was all very collegial.

One of the things that came from that is that there was a producer for NBC—and NBC at the time did not have radio, and a lot of the reason the networks had three-person booths was because they had radio. He decided that he wasn't happy with his own people, so they were in a position where

everybody would agree to them having a three-person booth and he said, "Oh, we don't need it." And I said in front of everybody, "You can have one; everybody agrees that your network can have one, and you are the one that's the spokesman for your network and you are telling me. . ." and I am saying this in front of everybody, "You are telling me that you, NBC, do not want a three-person booth?" He said, "Yes." They have a two-person booth to this day because of it, and the booth is way too small, so they ended up picking up another booth they can use when they have a third person because they can't physically work out of the booth they've got.

That was a long process of getting all of the networks and all of the booth people, the occupants of the booth, and convincing people that they really couldn't meet the criteria, but doing it in a way that was obvious to their peers. If you keep the direct competitors equal in their resources and then let them knock out whether or not they can do better journalism or faster journalism or get more scoops, then everybody's happy because then they are competing professionally. You don't want to make the competition anything like whether or not they are given the same facilities. So we wanted everyone to agree on what facilities they had.

In the same way, when we did the impeachment hearings on [President William Jefferson] Clinton, you had to get everybody to agree on how you did distribution of materials. That was when we were only able to get CD things, you couldn't just put something on the Web. We just weren't quite there. So if you were doing distribution, you had to have systems in place that everybody could agree, "Okay, that's my group of competitors. That's my information. I'm in with that group, and I can agree that I am, and therefore, I will participate and stay fair." Our goal is to be sure that

everybody has the same access to both the logistics and the requests, and the space, and the facilities, and the information on an equal basis so they can go out and do their jobs.

JOHNSON: Was this renovation driven by you and your staff realizing that the space was inadequate, and also the reporters; was it a joint effort?

TATE: Yes. Everybody knew it was inadequate. This was also driven by the fact that we needed to bring fiber into the gallery, so it was obvious that everybody needed to wire their booths, and you couldn't really do that the way it was done. This was a time to bring everything into the booths.

JOHNSON: This was still the same space that you had occupied before on the third floor, number 321?

TATE: It is 321, 322, and 322A.

JOHNSON: So you didn't acquire any new space?

TATE: Oh no, and the Senate did. The Senate got the Senate Document Room, I believe. But no, there was no more space to get. There is no space on the third floor, and it is incredibly important for the journalists to be close to the floor because they need to be close to Members.

You asked me earlier, and we can go back to the relation, but you asked me about role models. There were a couple of other women that were somewhat role models in different places. One was Lorraine [Miller] because she worked for Wright and she had been somebody of prominence and

somebody you could talk to in the Speaker's Office. The other was a woman named Robin Sproul, who was with ABC, who was the bureau chief for their radio and then was the acting bureau chief, and then—I don't know if she was the first woman bureau chief in Washington or not of a major network, but whether or not she was, she has been the one longest serving, and she has been a mentor and somebody I could go to on professional questions and things.

JOHNSON: You mentioned Cokie Roberts several times and it was in reference to the Committee of Radio and Television Correspondents. Can you provide more background on this organization?

TATE: Yes. The Executive Committee of Correspondents is an elected board of journalists of seven people. They are elected every December, but it's a split election, so that you have four elected one year and three elected another so that you always have a continuum. They serve for two years. The person with the most votes becomes the chairman, and the election is all of the accredited journalists—broadcast journalists—to the House and Senate Radio and TV Galleries' vote, so they could have 3,000 votes; they rarely had more than 100. That board sets policy for the galleries, and it also handles accreditation. So if someone comes to petition for membership, they have to meet the criteria. The criteria is on our Web site. Those are their two biggest issues. They also hire, and that's in the rules of the House; that's also on our Web site. But the rules of the House allow the Executive Committee of Correspondents, in several areas, they are mentioned in the House Rules as an entity. Because of that, when there has been a court challenge, the legal counsel for the House will go with me if I get subpoenaed and I was

subpoenaed at one point. They dropped the subpoena before I had to go, but legal counsel talked to me about it.

There was another case, not too long ago, when a subpoena was going to be issued and was not, but in both cases, legal counsel will support me, or the Executive Committee, because they are mentioned as an entity in the House Rules, if they are doing that function. They wouldn't do anything for NBC or a chairman who happens to be working for NBC, but they would support anything they did as the Executive Committee, in terms of credentials requests. They did that with the periodical gallery. They supported the periodical gallery when they were challenged by a group who wanted credentials and were turned down by their executive committee. So I serve that Executive Committee. It's a board that generally—Cokie Roberts happened to be the chairman the year that Mike [Michaelson] left to go to C-SPAN [in 1981]. My job interview was "Do you want this job?" And I said, "Yes." She said, "Okay," and that was my job interview 25 years ago. So she's been a longtime friend and a longtime supporter. She and Linda Wertheimer have been good friends over the years.

The NPR people, because they are up there all the time, have been one of the real staunch people. You have certain groups that have had a presence and that keep people there for a long, long time and those groups always try to have somebody on the board. The networks always try to run a few people and NPR always tries to have somebody on the board. It is important for us—I talk about having good relationships with the leadership, but if I'd gone to Tony Blankley and said, "I don't want to resign and take a chance on you rehiring me," he might have said, "Fine, thank you, I'll see you later." But if I had Bill Headline, who is the bureau chief of CNN sitting right

beside me saying, "We don't want her to resign," that has a whole lot more clout. Those are the people we represent; those are the people we work for, and any power that we carry, it's because of the people standing behind us. We never speak for them in terms of being a spokesman for the Executive Committee; they can speak for themselves. But, in terms of addressing issues for them or access for them, or something like that, if it's not something they want to deal with directly, then it's something we need to deal with. There was a change of House Rules that the Executive Committee felt uncomfortable testifying about because one of the rules of the galleries is that you don't petition Congress, and yet, they supported it, and they wanted it to happen.

There was a rule that said that if you were subpoenaed by a committee, you could elect not to be photographed and recorded for television as a witness. That had been in the rules until the Republicans took over, was still there when the Republicans took over. The other rule that the Republicans changed without any pressure from us—that changed how we operate to some extent—is that they put in the rule that says if the committee hearing is open to the public, it is open to television coverage, and you cannot close it to television coverage. Before that, they could vote to close a committee hearing that was open to the public to television coverage. They would allow print, they would allow radio, but they wouldn't allow television. Or they could vote not to. The Republicans changed that, with no pressure from the Executive Committee, but [Gerald Brooks Hunt] Solomon, the Rules Committee chairman, wanted to change that rule because he wanted somebody to testify that didn't want to testify, and he wanted it to be on television. So he brought it up in the Rules Committee. Our committee [Executive Committee] very much wanted it changed because it's a very hard

rule to deal with because you don't know until that morning whether or not somebody is going to do it, so you've got it all set up and then you have to break it down, and do you break it down in time—and logistically, it's a nightmare.

So I went with Barbara Cochran, who was the chairman of the National Association of Broadcasters, and she made the pitch because she was not a working journalist at that time. She was representing journalists. She had been the bureau chief at CBS. She made the presentation on behalf of the journalists so that the Executive Committee was not lobbying Congress to change a rule because that's something they are not supposed to do.

JOHNSON: Seven people sit on the board, you mentioned. Is there any kind of set ratio as far as a certain amount have to be television journalists or radio journalists?

TATE: No. I don't know if we have that on our Web site or not, but you might check the Web site to see if the criteria for the rules for election are on there. If they're not, they might be on the Senate side. They just changed the rules so that they can serve two consecutive times. They put in a rule that—I can't remember if they actually did it or not—where you couldn't have two people from the same organization run, but that's never been challenged. They have had people change jobs in the broadcast industry from one company to another, so they run as individuals, they do not run as members of a group. But, if NBC is running a candidate, NBC is going to get behind the candidate, but if the candidate changes and goes over to CNN, he stays on the board or she stays on the board. So you run with the support of your group, but you don't necessarily have to stay with that group, as long as you

stay in journalism. If you go out of the field, then you no longer—if you can still be credentialed, you can stay on the board.

JOHNSON: Were there other memorable journalists that were on the committee besides Cokie Roberts?

TATE: Yes, oh, absolutely. Charlie Gibson was on the board when we hired Olga [Ramirez Kornacki], who is now the director. Joe McCaffrey was an old-time WTOP chairman. Dave McConnell has been on the board and has been chairman. He is WTOP. The list of former chairmen is on our Web site, and they are some of the most distinguished journalists. Even Eric Sevareid was a chairman; that was before me. Joe Johns. A lot of correspondents who are or have been on air. Brian Wilson has been chairman twice. Phil Jones was chairman twice. A lot of very prominent journalists have been chairman. Bill Headline, as I mentioned, CNN bureau chief—he's our only bureau chief that's ever been chairman. If you go through it, you will see. Carol Simpson was. Ann Compton was. It's been a very distinguished group.

We have only had one non-network chairman that jumps to mind. Brian [Wilson], the first time, was WTTG, but he was supported by Fox. But there was a woman in the '80s named Carolyn Gorman that the independents decided they wanted to support somebody, and if all the independents got behind somebody, then they can elect someone. There have been several C-SPAN chairmen. Annie Tin, Brian Lockman—there have been several of them.

JOHNSON: What privileges are associated with accreditation and the gallery cards that are given to broadcasters?

TATE: Twenty-four hour access. They have the same access to the building that staff does and more so, in some areas, because some areas they can go that staff can't go.

JOHNSON: For example? Where would that be?

TATE: Well, if there is a press setup, the staff can't go into the press setup. There are places where they have additional credentials to go that staff can't go, but primarily, it's access. The big challenge to that is it's also access to documents, but more than anything it's access to the Capitol. The Capitol is so hard to get in to, now, that if you don't have proper accreditation, you get stopped three times getting to the door. That is one of the things that is just key. Over the years, the accreditation challenges that we've gotten from Members have been, "Well, can't you take their card?" Well, no, they don't take their card. Only the Executive Committee can take their card, and the Executive Committee has never taken a card from anybody that I know of. They have suspended or they have talked to people who have used them incorrectly.

There is one occasion where a woman gave her ID to her husband, and they revoked that because she was using it fraudulently at that point. That's about the only reason they would, and so when an unflattering story or a picture somebody doesn't want comes out, we start getting the calls, "Can't you control this?" "Can't you take their card?" "No, we don't take their card." You have to do something that is illegal or fundamentally improper in the

world of journalism, and exposing a Member or taking a picture that's unflattering or doing a story that they don't like or even a breach of an agreement is not something you would take someone's access to do their job.

JOHNSON: Do journalists have to reapply for accreditation?

TATE: Yes, every year.

JOHNSON: You talked about the Senate Radio-TV Gallery . . .

TATE: They do the accreditation. They have always handled the accreditation on one side because there is no reason for people to go to both sides, and the place you have to get your picture done is on the Senate side, so they have always been the accrediting office; in terms of the paperwork, they are the administrative office that does that. We do the conventions, we do the accreditations for the conventions; they do the accreditation for the day-to-day office.

JOHNSON: What kind of working relationship did you have with the Senate Gallery? Did you work with them closely on a daily basis?

TATE: Oh, yes. They are essentially a mirror image of us, and what we try to avoid doing is having both of us in charge of anything because that's very confusing for people, since what we do is logistics and information. You want it primarily coming out of one office. So, obviously State of the Union has to be our side because it's on our side. The inaugural is handled by Senate Rules Committee, so it's on the Senate side. More because we got interested in it and because Mike [Michaelson] loved doing them, we did the

conventions. Lying in states are the closest thing to a dual thing, and so what we've worked out with lying in states is our office handled Rosa Parks and the officers because, in both cases, they were driven by our Speaker.[3] The Reagan funeral [2004] and the [Gerald Rudolph] Ford, [Jr.], funeral [2007]—the Reagan funeral, it was obvious that our Speaker wanted to be more involved than we originally thought. In fact, Ted Van Der Meid, with the Speaker's Office, wanted our staff involved more than we had initially were expecting to be, so a lot of the plans really had started out on the Senate. And the Senate was supposed to handle that because that was a convention year, and we didn't know it was going to be a convention year, but we knew it was around that time, so we were working on conventions, and they were supposed to be doing it. But the Senate didn't give him the level of support, and it was the first one [convention] we had in such a long time that—and our leadership, if you remember, was in Europe—so by the time the leadership got back, some time had already passed, and they wanted us more involved than we were, just because they wanted to have eyes and ears who had been onsite.

When the Ford planning began, we stepped forward and said with the Speaker's Office, we would like to do that. Ford was a House Member. We know, as House Members, the House would be more involved. His primary period was here, and we want to take that and be the lead office on that, and they said fine.

Now, when there are gold medal ceremonies or the Holocaust ceremony or other types of ceremonies that take place in the Rotunda, then we trade off. We generally do the Christmas tree lighting because the Speaker lights the Christmas tree. So, it's where the Speaker is more the prominent person or

whether it is a Senate-driven event, there might be an obvious reason for us to take it.

When we did Federal Hall [in New York City in 2002]—that was one that I had to beg to be involved in because that was working, and the Speaker's Office was doing it, and leadership was working on it, and I couldn't get anybody to give me any information for us. I kept saying, "You're going to want television, you're going to want television, and we do television, and if you will let us come to the meetings, we'll help." Then, they finally got us involved in the meetings. So we were the primary office for that. If you see a need, and you step forward, and you can be helpful, people will generally welcome you in to take care of things. So that's why we were more involved in that than the Senate was because we stepped forward to be involved in it.

JOHNSON: So, typically, you've had a good relationship, not a rivalry, with the Senate side.

TATE: No, it has not been a rivalry, with the exception of when I was first director and [name redacted] was director—that was not a rivalry as much as a—I got to be more prepared than anybody going into a meeting with him because I just had to be. Fortunately, he wasn't there all that long. Larry Janezich was the director for most of the time that I was the director, and he was just wonderful to work with. He is very, very smart and had enough problems of his own where he wasn't a problem for me in any way, shape, or form.

The other directors of the other galleries over there [on the Senate side], one of them—the gallery we work with most over there is the press photographer's gallery because they don't have a House Gallery—so we are

very fortunate that we've had very good relations with them. The guy who is now the director on that side [Jeffrey Kent] worked for me at one point, and he's just a terrific guy and very professional and has the same approach to things that we do. So it's, "Let's get the job done, and let's do it right, and let's work together." That's been a good relationship in most cases.

JOHNSON: Did you work closely with the other House press galleries, the print and periodical?

TATE: I would rather talk about that when we are not being recorded.

END OF PART TWO ~ BEGINNING OF PART THREE

JOHNSON: Okay, we're back on tape now.

TATE: Okay. David Holmes was hired the same day I was in 1972, and he too was held up in his payroll. We were friends from the very beginning, and he got to be director very quickly because the woman who was the director over there [Jeanne Ordway] left to go to Saudi Arabia with her husband, who was in the State Department.

JOHNSON: David Holmes was in charge of the periodical reporters?

TATE: The periodical gallery, so he was a director a lot sooner than I was, and he retired about four years ago. In his hiring, he also hired a woman named Ann Jerome Cobb, who had worked with my husband in [Senator]

Talmadge's office. So that office has always been, for a variety of reasons, a very good office to work with. They don't compete with us very much, in very many ways because the periodicals don't have the same immediacy, they're frequently left out of meetings and left out of information. So we could serve them by making sure they knew when things were going on and making sure they knew when meetings were going on because we were always included in meetings. The young man who's the director now, he's somebody that David wanted me to befriend, and I did, and he's been just a real asset to work with, and I've been somewhat of a mentor to him. His name's Rob Zakowski.

JOHNSON: Can you provide an example of a way that you worked together, a specific example?

TATE: Well, on almost—I can actually describe a way we worked together, that I worked with a print person, but not the director. When the [Capitol Police] Officers were shot on that awful Friday in, I think it was 1997.

JOHNSON: [July] 1998.

TATE: The galleries were supposed to be going on a site visit to Los Angeles. Well you know, I knew with [Thomas Dale] DeLay being involved, that this was going to be House driven, and it was clear things were happening.[4] So I was the only director that did not go to LA. The rest of them went, and I stayed here, and we were around all that weekend. The print gallery was open, and there was a guy named Chuck Fuqua who was kind of like the lowest person in the staff, but he just happened to be on staff that day. He was supposed to be there, and there was a meeting called in the police headquarters, where

they were going to set up the coverage on this. I knew about it because the police always call us about stuff. I called him [Fuqua], and I said, "Who's there?" and he said, "I'm it." I said, "Well you've got to come with me. Get somebody to cover your office. You've got to be represented at this." I took him with me because it was critical that we—that people know how this was going to operate, and that it was going to happen. When everybody left to go to LA, it wasn't set that there was going to be a lying in tribute, and that's the kind of thing television has to be in place for. There's just—you can't do that at the last minute. You have to bring in all the equipment ahead of time. You have to get your cameras in place. You know, the print people got back in time to actually be in place to make sure their people were escorted. Well, that's fine, but he was there with me so that he could tell his group what was going to happen and when it was going to happen, so he could do the logistics for them.

There had been other occasions where we were the primary people at the Federal Hall thing, and we were the primary people once again because television is so much more time sensitive. We have to know ahead of time. We have to know before it happens. We have to get everybody in place. Our planning for a lying in state . . . we're probably the first office outside the Speaker's Office who gets called about it because you have to start those trucks rolling and you have to have the plan in place. You can't just wait to give out credentials the day the body gets here. You've got to get those things done. So we've been more—the radio-television group tends to be the ones to find out first about big events that are going to be televised.

Now, the print people could be the first to find out about a hearing that's coming or an informational thing because they deal very closely with

Members, and Members will talk to the print people on background more than they'll talk to radio-television on background because they don't want them there yet. So sometimes we have learned a few things from them, but in most cases logistics, we'll know before they do.

JOHNSON: In cases like you mentioned—the tragedy in 1998 or very unusual circumstances—do you also find that you're getting calls from staff, asking you questions because they know that you're the source of information?

TATE: Sometimes we do. Not too much. We try to discourage that. We try to find some place for them to get answers because quite frankly, we're just a six-person staff, and in an emergency situation, you never have six people. You generally have two that are working the beginning part of something. There isn't enough time to answer everybody else's questions, so we try to be sure we have a way to put out information, to get people to the place where they need to get tickets or places where they can find out things.

JOHNSON: And the staff for your gallery, has it remained the same since you started in the 1970s?

TATE: We had four people then. We went to five people, and now we've got six, and we'll go to seven when we get the Capitol Visitor Center, or we hope we will. We're approved for the seventh one if they're funded.

JOHNSON: Well, there's many, many things that I want to ask you about, but I'm going to leave that for another time.

TATE: Okay.

JOHNSON: Is there anything that you wanted to add to today's session?

TATE: You were talking about the galleries and the renovation. There was one other key part to all that. When Wright was Speaker, there was a Clerk named Ben Guthrie, who left rather suddenly, and for a short period of time, there was a room he had in the basement of the Capitol, right in the center of the building, right near where the carryout is, and there was just this vacuum for like two months, and I went down and asked for that room.[5] Nobody owned it for just that two months, and they gave it to us, and that became the beginning of the hub room, where all the infrastructure of the Capitol comes in, all this electronics comes in. So, sometimes it's sort of you just have to be there when there's a void. That was one of the impetuses for doing the renovation, is that now we had all this infrastructure of electronics coming in to the Capitol, and it needed an expansion.

Since then we've expanded. We had to keep it in mind when we did the [Capitol] Visitor Center because you never want to have television brought offline. Nobody wants to spend as long as we've been without, in the construction, you had to keep that up and running. So it's been protectively built around it, but it's been a key part of just the infrastructure for the electronics that go out of here, and that was one of those things you just sort of, you watch, and then something—just all of a sudden this little moment that you go to. Like going to John Mack, there's a moment, and there was a lot more of that kind of thing, where there were personal associations that you could use. It still goes on, but there's just so many more people involved now. And there's so much more work done that there were fewer people to make decisions, and the decisions could be made at a more direct—without

all the checks and balances that you have to have now on a lot of things. That would have probably taken a year to get approved any other time.

JOHNSON: With almost everyone that we've talked to, space has always been an issue, no matter what time period.

TATE: Oh, yes.

JOHNSON: In the 20th century or 21st century.

TATE: The building didn't get bigger.

JOHNSON: Right. Well, thank you very much for speaking with me today.

TATE: Okay.

## — TINA TATE —

## INTERVIEW TWO

**JOHNSON:** This is Kathleen Johnson, interviewing Tina Tate, former director of the House Radio-Television Gallery. This is the second interview with Tina Tate. The interview is taking place in the Cannon House Office Building, and the date is July 12, 2007. I would like to begin with talking about some of the changes from the 1970s until today.

**TATE:** All right, these were some things that I had thought of after our first discussion that really made a big difference in how the House was covered from the '70s, '80s, and '90s. And one of those was the Speaker's press conferences. The Speaker would have a press conference 15 minutes before the House was in session, every day that the House was in session. So reporters had an opportunity to talk directly to the Speaker—ask him a question on any subject they wanted, whether it was legislation, or visitors to the Congress, or whatever he wanted to, even a political question. So that was something that was a real tool for reporters, to have that kind of access with a Speaker directly, on a face-to-face basis. As staff, we would attend and take notes on it. If a reporter missed the session, he/she could check our notes to see what questions were asked.

That went on until Speaker Gingrich was elected [in 1995]. He began to do his press conferences on camera because he was a very visible figure—and a very telegenic person—and would always have something interesting to say; it would frequently make air. You would begin to get reporters asking baiting questions, in order to make air, or in order to get a point across, rather than to solicit information. They discontinued doing the Speaker's press

conferences on camera, and then they discontinued doing the Speaker's press briefings altogether and began doing Majority Leader briefings, and after that Minority Leader briefings occurred as well.

The Speaker's press conferences really began as early as Carl [Bert] Albert. And it may have been under [John William] McCormack, I don't know. That was before I was here, but it was one of those tools that gave the press an opportunity to face-to-face talk to the Speaker of the House anytime there was legislation. And I thought it was a very integral part of the way they covered.

The other things that were different in the '70s especially, and even in the '80s, were how much information we got from the leadership. Now, you get conference papers that come by e-mail, you get on the Web sites, you get the schedules, you get all of these talking points, all of these legislative details, you get a breakdown of the bill, you get the amendments that are going to be offered. You get those all delivered to you. And those are the kinds of things we track for reporters, but it goes to the reporters as well. You get inundated with information from all different sources, minority and majority.

In the '70s and '80s, you didn't have much other information coming in, so we had a much closer relationship with the Parliamentarian's Office. We spent a good bit of time working with them, and we could always go to the floor when there was a question, a parliamentary question. We still have floor access, but we hardly need it now. Earlier we would actually have to go down to the floor and get copies of amendments that had not been printed until the time they brought them to the floor or check out what was going on with the Parliamentarian or his staff. So we had much more direct

communication with the Parliamentarian's Office. We were expected to have all of the parliamentary procedures down pat. But if there was any kind of a change, or any kind of a schedule arrangement, or any surprises, we would do much more with them directly than we need to now. Now, by the beginning of the day you know if there's going to be a conflict later on, and it's all much more programmed than it was then. It was much more spontaneous, as were the speeches, much more spontaneous.

And one of the other committee changes was in the lighting of the committee rooms. One of the things we had to do was open the committee rooms for crew setup. We had to work up a system of opening the committee rooms two hours ahead of the committee hearing because they had to bring the big television lights in order to do television because the equipment really required that level of lighting. And in the '80s, the committees got very tired of having to take that much time, and if you can imagine how much gear it required. This was not even for a live hearing. This was for any hearing that was going to be televised—the networks were going to televise—they would bring these great big pole lights in. The committees began to light the committee rooms themselves. They asked the networks if they wanted to light them, and they said no. They wanted to continue bringing in the lights because they had people they paid to do that anyway. They didn't want to do installations. So the committees did installations themselves. It didn't reduce the amount of time people would go in to set up. But it reduced a lot of the clutter in the committee rooms, and that was one of the things we had to deal with, was how much extraneous equipment was required, and how it would go in, and where it would go in, and whether it would fit in a committee room. That was one change from the '70s to the '80s. Now, you almost need no additional lighting. Some lighting makes it better because

you don't get the raccoon eyes if you light from underneath, but you can shoot both video and still photography with the technology we've got now, just with the regular light in the room, and the augmented overhead light that the committees have put in helps, but it isn't even necessary anymore.

JOHNSON: You mentioned a close working relationship with the Parliamentarian's Office.

TATE: Yes.

JOHNSON: What are your recollections of the Parliamentarians at the time?

TATE: Well, they're just the best people in the world. Charlie Johnson is one of my oldest friends, and they are wonderful people. They're really the institutionalists of the House. Bill Brown before him; I did not know [Lewis (Lew)] Deschler very well. I was there when he was here, but I didn't know him well. But Bill Brown was just an amazingly good person, and knew the House, and knew the Members, and would guide us in anything that we needed. One call from us, or one visit with us, would save them 20 calls from press people. And it wasn't that they didn't particularly want to talk to press people, it was that that was not their mission. So we tried to be the ones to go to them and get information from them. And they were always so helpful.

One of the more recent times when we were still working with them as directly as we had been in the past was when Vice President [Albert Arnold] Gore, [Jr.], presided over the Electoral College when he was defeated [in 2001]. That was going to be carried live. Now that's another time that we have cameras in the chamber. There are only three times, regularly, that we

bring cameras into the chamber over and above the House Recording Studio cameras, and that is: Joint Meetings, Joint Sessions, and Opening Day. The fourth one is the Electoral College count. That's usually procedural, and the networks may go to a minute of it or use a minute of it on the evening news, but because Gore was presiding over his own loss, and there was going to be a challenge by the Florida delegation, they were going to carry large parts of it. And of course, by this time you also had competing cable networks. So you were going to have a lot of it go to air, and we needed to have it scripted. So we really went through and walked every detail of it with the Parliamentarian's Office to find out not just the procedure, which we knew didn't change very much, but even some of the terms—what the box was called, who would carry it, which people would come in in which order because you're looking at these pictures on television, you want to be able to identify them, and a reporter needs to know what he's describing. There's a lot of ceremony going on that isn't obvious. And so that was what we did. We worked out a script with them so that we knew how to explain exactly what was going on prior to it happening, so the television people could have a running commentary that would track the pictures the audience was seeing. So there have been many events, but that was the most recent, where we worked so directly with them.

JOHNSON: In that case, did you have to start from scratch, or was there any kind of precedent that you could fall back on?

TATE: There was precedent, but this was going to be different. And even in the precedents—the precedents for when we went up to air and how long we were on and that sort of thing—really were for a standard ceremonial count, not for a newsworthy event, where it was going to be described in much more

detail. So we were going to need much more detail than we had any background on.

JOHNSON: Since we're talking about the 1970s, how did the atmosphere and the culture of the radio-TV gallery change from when you first started in the 1970s to when you just recently retired?

TATE: Well, the change can really be tracked by the technology because we talked about the film. When you began to have satellite coverage, and you began to have live coverage out of committee hearings, not just when it was the impeachment of the President or the crime hearings with very visible people. It wasn't once every six months; it began to be once a month, then it began to be once a week, then it began to be daily. As we got the infrastructure in place, you had much more information that you had to find out. I mean, if something is covered, and they're going to do a piece, and they're going to use a little piece of film from it, the reporter will need to know what went on and how it happened and all that. But if you're going to take large segments of it to air, then the reporter needs a different set of information, a different type of information, much more detailed information—statements and agendas—and if there's any changes, who's coming, who's not coming. So those were the kinds of things that changed as the technology changed, just the amount and type of information that was required for them to tell their stories.

JOHNSON: Was there more time to socialize, was it a more laid back atmosphere in the 1970s?

TATE: Oh, much, much.

JOHNSON: Did the staff and reporters have time to get to know each other?

TATE: Oh, yes. There was a lot of down time. One of the other things, reporters would actually (because there was no television until '79), reporters would have to sit in the chamber if there was a very major debate. Once we got audio and video . . . now most reporters do not sit in the chamber unless it is something akin to the impeachment vote on—or the war vote, a vote of that magnitude, or the tax bill that went overnight. For a major political story, they may sit in the chamber to get the atmosphere because that isn't picked up by the in-house television. The [House] Recording Studio does a six-camera switched feed that everybody gets. And that's what they cut, and that's what they use. That's what you see on air. C-SPAN takes it gavel to gavel; they're the only group that does, but any group could. Any group that's credentialed to the radio-TV gallery. So, that is the material they have to use to cut a piece for the news. So they're watching the same thing that their audience will be watching, and then they decide which pictures that are available there for them to use. When they sit in the chamber, then they get the sense of what the rest of the room is. And for more description, more reporting. They used to all sit in the chamber because that was the only way to see what was going on.

And we've had sessions that went, I believe the first year of [Thomas Philip (Tip)] O'Neill, [Jr.]'s, speakership, the ending of that session went three days without a break. And reporters would have to come and go and sit in the chamber to take notes, and we'd have to take notes through the whole thing because you had to have a running log because reporters couldn't be here all three days or through the whole weekend. But you don't get very many reporters sitting in the chamber anymore, unless there's a political

atmosphere where they want to see who's talking to whom in the corners. That occurred when we had the tax bill, when you had the change in votes in the end; this was under [Speaker] Hastert. The drug bill was another bill where you had a political element to it that was going to play out. And you would see it, but you wouldn't see it on camera. So the reporters would come into the chamber then. But you know, before '79, if they wanted to report on it, they had to come into the chamber and sit and take notes themselves.

JOHNSON: Can you describe the average or the typical journalist that would be in your gallery in the 1970s? And then if you could just expand on that on how that might have changed during your career?

TATE: Well, Bob Foster, who's still around, was a typical reporter. He reported for WGN. Joe McCaffrey was a radio reporter. Most of them knew their Members very well because there weren't that many reporters, and there wasn't that layer of staff that you now have. You now have a communications director, and a press secretary, and a deputy press secretary, and this is for leadership, but you didn't have that many staff people, and Members of the House will talk to reporters. They don't need to go through staff all the time. Senators have many more levels of staff you have to go through to get to them, but House Members will talk to reporters almost any time.

But in those days, I mean, they did pal around with them. They knew them—they knew them well. They would go out and have drinks with them. There was a great deal more drinking, there was more socializing, there was more overlooking or ignoring scandals that didn't become just blatant. Once they became blatant, everybody would cover them, but the

Chairman of Ways and Means, Wilbur [Daigh] Mills, when he had an affair with I think a stripper, that got local coverage at first, because they fished him and her, I don't remember which, out of the Tidal Basin. It was a local story before it became a national story. But because he was a national figure, as the chairman of Ways and Means, it became a national story. So there were stories like that, that would not get the kind of coverage—I mean, now it would be 24 hours. There were personal things that were simply not covered that are now considered fair game. That's definitely a change. Reporters did not report on private lives unless they became so public—as in this case it did—that they couldn't ignore it. And the drinking was one of the things, and womanizing was one of the other things, that was ignored a great deal, where now it couldn't be. Well, I mean, obviously you can't be drinking that much if you're going to be on the House Floor talking at two in the morning, you'd better not be slurring your words because it will be picked up on audio, and you will be able to tell it. So, that kind of atmosphere is different.

I think Members, after Watergate, and after [Richard Milhous] Nixon resigned, you had the Watergate Babies come in [in 1975], and that class all ran on clean government and changing the system. And you did begin to see changes, where the chairmanships were not the fiefdoms that they had been before. You began to see younger Members demand more attention and demand more of the power structure. So as the power dissipated from just the chairman, there were more angles for stories to come. So members of the press would need to know more about what was going on in a committee than just to talk to the chairman.

JOHNSON: Just a few of the basics about journalists before we move on. The average age, gender, and educational backgrounds?

TATE: Well, they were almost all men. There were a couple of women working out of the House Gallery: Tina Gulland, and Maria Gwaltney, and Mariah McLaughlin. Those were just a few, and then Cokie [Roberts], of course. But there weren't a great many women covering the Hill, and there weren't many women Members either. There were—the average age—it's hard to remember because I was so young. They all looked old to me because I was in my 20s, I was in my mid 20s. But I would say they were probably 40s; they were mostly 40s. And they would spend a whole lot of time just talking to each other and chatting about what was going on among themselves. There were card games occasionally, but that was more in the print gallery. That was not as much in the radio-TV gallery. Our gallery, physically, wasn't conducive to too much socializing.

JOHNSON: How much did the demographics change? There were more women reporters as time went on. Did the age stay about the same as well?

TATE: Well, generally, the House reporters have always been in their 30s and their 40s. You get some 20-somethings, but the 20-somethings usually are in the very, very small bureaus, and they're just beginning to make their names. You know, they're just beginning reporting, and they'll be at the small bureaus or doing freelance or that sort of thing. But they've always been sort of in the 30-40 group because, as I mentioned in the first one [interview], there has been that hierarchy of the House being sort of the place people start to become national reporters. And that used to be, that was very much so in the '80s and '90s, and much less so now. But most of the reporters now I

think would probably be an average age of about 40. Now, if I were thinking through them right now, they would be probably in their 40s.

JOHNSON: What was the relationship like between the radio and the TV journalists?

TATE: They weren't very different. Radio and television, because a lot of people go back and forth from one to the other—radio's easier to deal with because it doesn't require as much equipment. It doesn't require pictures. We had a couple of radio incidents when the audio was first put in the House Chamber. They did an audio experiment before they brought in television. And there was a time when audio was picked up in the House Chamber from the House Floor. I believe there were two incidents. One was at a Joint Meeting with the President of Liberia, I believe; Tolbert, I think his name was. T-O-L-B-E-R-T, I think. Nelson [Aldrich] Rockefeller was the Vice President, and he was in the chair, talking to the Speaker, and I'm not sure—I think it was [Carl] Albert. And he said, "Do you see how light skinned he is? If he were"—he said a remark that was racial, it had racial overtones. It was picked up in audio, and they used it on the news. After that, they began to have a House employee control—turn on and off the audio—because it was picked up on an open mic; it wasn't intentionally picked up. We've had other open-mic instances that television would get some—but radio would get something and use it, and only if it was really extraordinary would television use it because it would just be audio from the House Floor. That was one incident, and each time they were trying to do something to make sure it didn't happen again.

JOHNSON: Was there any sort of rivalry between the radio and the TV journalists?

TATE: Not particularly. There was between the print—and still is—between print and television. There's this sense that print believes that they are the true journalists, and radio and television are the entertainers. That's how the gallery started, really. Or that's what I'm told, since I wasn't around in '39, that the reason that they were not accepted as members of the press gallery, the print people decided that radio and television people were entertainers and not journalists like they were.

JOHNSON: Can you provide a little background on your promotion to director of the House Radio-TV Gallery? Were you next in line to become the director?

TATE: No, there was a person next in line over me, named—what was his name? He was from South Carolina, and he had been on the staff as long as I had. I had not been on that long—I'd started in '72, and this was '81. And Mike Michaelson was superintendent at that time. And it was superintendent, not director, at that time. He had been offered, and had accepted, a job with C-SPAN. So before, when Mike was made superintendent, [name redacted] was over me, and it became apparent he was not going to get promoted, so I applied for the job of deputy director, which I still think is the best job on the Hill because you are involved in everything and not responsible for any of it. Because they decided I'd done a decent job at that point, and we only had a four-person staff. It wasn't as demanding, not nearly as demanding a job as it is now, they promoted me to deputy director, and [name redacted] did leave, as you would expect if somebody didn't get appointed in the hierarchy, didn't get moved up. When Mike decided to go to C-SPAN, Cokie Roberts was the chairman, and she asked me if I wanted to be the director, and I said, "Yes." She said, "Okay." So that was it. {laughter}

JOHNSON: You mentioned in this interview and in the last interview, about the title of superintendent versus director.

TATE: Yes, Brian Lockman was the chairman of the Executive Committee, and he was with C-SPAN. And he decided that he just hated the term superintendent, and quite frankly, Mike had too because he was from New York—I don't know whether he was from New York, but he had relatives from New York, and they always thought of a superintendent as being a custodian. And his relatives never understood what the superintendent term meant. So Brian Lockman decided he was going to change our titles to "director." And that was one of the things he really, really wanted to do. We didn't care a whole lot, and for the longest time, the print people didn't change their title. But he decided "director" just had a much more modern and much less anachronistic tone to it. So he made that a mission. Since all it required was for the [Committee on] House Administration to change the title, and it didn't require them to give us any more money or change our duties or do anything bad, they said, "Fine. If you want to be called directors, you can be called directors."

JOHNSON: In the previous interview, you talked about some of your responsibilities as a member of the staff. What were some of your major duties as director when you first took over?

TATE: Oh, the director has quite a bit more responsibility. All the logistics planning for the events that we do is really up to you to set the tone for it—you arrange which staff is responsible for which part of it. You have to work with the networks on anything that's a major event, like the State of the Union, which is an annual event, and you not only do the State of the Union, but

you have to do the Democratic response or the Republican response. And the Statuary Hall setup for the react for Members of Congress. So it's a good two weeks' worth of work, and you're the one who is assigning everyone to their specific task, but you're ultimately responsible for all of it. The conventions, we've done the conventions since—I know they were doing them in '72. I did not go in '72. In 1972, I'd just been hired, so I was not taken to the conventions. I was the only staff person who didn't go. And in '72, they were both in Miami, and they were very, very hostile. This was when there was a great deal of difficulty in the country at that time. I didn't get involved in that one.

In '76, I was staff, and in '80 I was staff. And when you're staff at a convention, you go and you hand out credentials, and you have an office time that you have to be in the office, and you have a time when you do the floor. When you're handling credentials for the floor, and that's all you have to do. When you're in charge of it, as I was in '84, you make all the arrangements with the parties for all of the credentials, how many our media gets. We were responsible for the independent radio and television. We did not handle the networks. The parties have always handled the networks directly.

But by '84, the local stations were starting to do live coverage. So you were handling live stand-up positions; live skybox positions; radio, live radio positions; and then in '92 when talk radio came in, you started doing the radio talk shows. So our portion of the conventions was by far the biggest—they say there are 15,000 journalists who come to the conventions. And there are five galleries—well, the four galleries and the networks. So there are five different divisions of press. And 15,000 press people, and we handle

5,000 of the 15,000. So we handle a third of them with six people. We do all the arrangements. We meet with the press to find out what they want. We meet with the party to find out what we can have. We assign the skyboxes; we assign the locations. We put out information about what's available, how much it's going to cost. We negotiate with the parties to be sure that we are providing as much information—we don't handle any of the money. The workspace, all of that is done through our office. And that responsibility is enormous.

How they're going to do this next set of conventions [in 2008] I don't know because they're going to be three days apart. Normally what we do is we go into a city a week ahead, do all of the packaging, get everything ready. The big groups are taken care of while we're there. I mean, there are some groups that come in with 250 people. Some groups come in with one. And quite frankly, some of the groups with one are as much trouble as the groups with the 250.

But by the time I had finished doing 20 years' worth of conventions, I felt very comfortable that I knew not only going into it what responsibilities I had but also how to make the best decisions with groups, even when some of the groups didn't know they didn't understand entirely what was available to them. What you would end up doing is talking them through—what did they want to accomplish? And then when you realized what their mission was, you could match them with the resources that were available.

In most cases, if you kept competitors in the same markets—or competitors in the same styles equal . . . You would never be able to give them everything they wanted, but you could give them what they needed—and they would be

very pleased with the type of coverage they could do. But it was learning each time, the different groups and how they worked and what they needed, and understanding what they needed, so that you could be sure that they had everything they needed, everything that would get the job done for them. And the independents cover a lot heavier than a lot of the networks have lately because they're covering all the delegations, they're covering individual Members. They're covering the parties that go on. It's always a local story, whether it's a national story or not. So that's literally another job on top of your job, and we've done those continuously since the '70s.

JOHNSON: You said that you would go two weeks early onsite.

TATE: Right.

JOHNSON: But even before that . . .

TATE: You'd do site visits, and you do several. It depends on how difficult the site is and if there are any problems with the site, as in Boston they changed the workspace at the last minute. Sometimes they would make changes . . . in Moscone [Convention Center] in '84, in San Francisco, the Democrats were preparing to build—some places they go, there are existing skyboxes and then you build platforms that are for stand-ups. And stand-ups are the reporters standing there with the camera on him, with the background of the convention floor. Skyboxes are usually sets that are built in existing skyboxes in existing arenas. But occasionally they would go to a place that was a convention hall, not an arena. They did that in '84 in San Francisco and in Moscone—Moscone was the hall. And in San Diego. At that point, they have to actually construct skyboxes and stand-up positions. And that gets to

be—can be very expensive.

We went to Moscone. The way it was designed, there were large struts that held the building up. And the skyboxes were designed in them. And there was obstruction in some of them. So they decided—the [Democratic] Party decided—at first they would do different costs for different booths, and this was after they'd already been assigned at a certain price. So we got all the groups together and had them complain because you are kind of the one focus for them. You can generate a meeting and then come up with a strategy that would take care of everybody's problem. In this case, it was unacceptable to have assigned people with an expectation that their cost would be X, and then say "Okay, but the people who got this, it's now going to be three times X, and the people who got that will be half X." That was just not acceptable. So there have been times when we've had to help the groups as a focal point, to raise a question or raise a problem to the parties that was addressed by the parties. And in our case, we always deal not with the political people at the parties, but with the media and logistics people, who are just some of the best people in the world. They are wonderful, and their goal is to make this as easy to cover, and as inexpensive to cover as is possible. So we worked very closely with them, and occasionally there would be something that we would mutually agree needed to be done, but only the broadcasters themselves could do it. And we would be somewhat of the cheerleader to get that together, and the coordinator to help them get the message that they needed to get to the party, to get something corrected.

In New York, I forget which New York convention, but it was a Democratic [National] Convention, and [David] Dinkins was mayor. The networks just went ballistic over the fact that they had been given workspace across the

street, as were the independent broadcasters. And that was fine, everybody was happy about that. And then they realized that they were going to have to cable over the street. And that was fine. And then the cost of cabling over the street was going to cost more than—it was going to be like double what anybody had budgeted. And so the networks went to the mayor and said, "This is not going to fly." And they needed for me to represent the independent broadcasters, who were all their affiliates and their stations. So, you know, I got in on that meeting. So there were times when I would represent them as a group, or times when I would be the staff for that group, to get them together on things that needed to be changed for their benefit.

But that's years of experience and years of knowing the convention people. But we go in a week ahead and package all of the credentials. In the Republican case, there are different levels of credentials, but the Republicans also do them by days. So you not only have—I think I figured out at one point, we handled 50,000 different tickets because even though they were packaged, they were packaged by days and different groupings. And a certain pass would get you to a certain area. But if you had reporters who had workspace in one building, a stand-up in one area, a skybox in another, or were working with someone who did, then you would have to manage all of those tickets. And the way we would do it is to provide the bigger groups—go back to '84—'84 was the turning point.

Prior to '84 for the conventions, the locals were all doing film. Nobody was doing live at the local level. And we were not handling the networks. So you would have everyone standing in line for an opportunity to go on the floor. And since they were not going live, it didn't really matter when they went to the floor. Starting in '84, that changed. We assigned the specific locations

with specific passes for people to go live. And these were for the independent broadcasters as well. Groups like CBS Newspath and ABC News One would bring large groups of their affiliate stations. The owned and operated stations would come as groups. They would handle their facilities as groups. So you would give them the passes themselves to handle in their group. You wouldn't try to manage ABC-owned and -operated stations, getting their reporters to their locations and to the floor, because there was no way you could coordinate all of those times. So you would give the credentials that that group would need to their manager, and their manager then would handle the floor passes.

So gradually less and less of the floor passes went from us directly to the reporter for a station. It tended to be the smaller groups who would go through the floor pass line because they were the people that didn't have a specific place they had to be to report from, like a skybox, like a seat that was assigned to them. They would just be going onto the floor to get a report, a live report maybe, but probably not live, to get some tape to talk to a Member, to get some color, and then come off the floor. So it didn't make a big, big difference what time of day they went. If they did have a specific speech they needed to do, we would work with them to be sure that if they stayed out of the line for two hours then, when their mayor of Philadelphia spoke, we'd have them on the floor then. And there were times that we would even do things to assist the different groups—the bigger groups, too, if there was a specific night that they needed something more for their group than they needed all week, then we would try to make sure that we arranged that. But it was just a lot of coordination, a lot of facilitating, and a lot of just knowing the people very, very carefully because, during the convention itself, you're troubleshooting, and you're handling just the floor passes for the

smaller groups. And in the convention coming up, there are three days in between. So I don't know how they're going to do it, but I don't have to know. I can watch it on TV this year. {laughter}

JOHNSON: Logistically speaking, this must have been a huge project.

TATE: Oh, it is.

JOHNSON: Did you have the opportunity to hire extra temporary staff?

TATE: No. We would occasionally—we would pick up people at the convention, and we would take the Senate staff with us, and they would help manage the actual event because you are—you're staffing an office, you're doing the credentialing, and then you're staffing the convention, and the convention can go two sessions, so you've got to have people in one facility and people in another facility. Now with cell phones and BlackBerries and all that, you can handle it a lot easier than you could when you physically had to have a place for them to be open because, obviously, if somebody hasn't picked up their credential, you need to have a place outside of the area that's manned, so they can get their credential to get into the area. So you would have to staff two different offices. We would use the Senate Radio-TV Gallery staff; they would go with us for the convention itself and would come in a week ahead.

There were also site visits and planning visits and things like that that go on the month before. And trying, getting a system, the computer system—we didn't even use computers—in the notes Mike [Michaelson] handed me from the '80 convention were legal sheets, handwritten legal sheets. In '84, in the '80s, we began using computers. They were very rudimentary, and that was

both a good thing and a bad thing, as the computer's coming in, as the event got more sophisticated, the computers got more sophisticated. But you were constantly having to learn what else could we do, what else did we need to know, how much do we need to know. And now, there's just like I was saying, in the information that is now being put out by so many different offices on legislation and details of legislation, is things we had to learn and find out on our own before. But there was so much less of it. That's the same thing with the conventions. The conventions, there's so much more required, and it's so much more immediate information, so many more groups that need to know what's going on that the electronics are driving what the party wants to know, and what lists you have to have, and it's gotten much more technological and much less one-on-one, which was really where my skills were.

JOHNSON: Did you handle any of the Internet news organizations?

TATE: Yes. Philadelphia, much more so even than LA, but that was the year that the Internet groups came in, and that was before they crashed. That was the year that everybody was saying, "Well, you know, what is the Internet going to be?" And my board wanted me to open to them if they could meet the criteria that other newsgroups met, in that their primary goal was to provide news and information. And we do use a slightly different criteria for conventions than we do for accreditation on the Hill. The conventions are parties, and the parties want people there that will cover them in a positive way, and that's fine because it is not access to the House. These people are putting on this event, they want these people there, so we have a much more lax way of—like we do not credential radio talk shows on the Capitol. Their format doesn't work for anything up here, and they also are not really

considered news gathering. News comes out of them occasionally, but they're not really news gathering. They're more, just conversational. So they're not credentialed on the Hill. They are credentialed at the conventions because it would've meant from one radio station, you would have the talk show person, the engineer, and the news person, and they'd have to go different places to get their credentials if we didn't take them. And that was a big decision made in the '90s. Did we take them? Did we not? They're not really news in our definition, on a day-to-day basis, but in fact, for practical purposes, it's the same engineers doing two setups—a table goes one place, a table goes another. He's got to get both places; it didn't make any sense logistically to separate it. We did take them.

When we got to the Internet in 2000, we didn't know how many groups we'd have, we didn't know how big they were going to be. But we opened up. If they wanted to apply for skyboxes and stand-ups, and could manage the costs and could prove to us that they had stations that they'd be using or that they had a product out there, and if I had a question, my Executive Committee always—any question about accreditation they would review. And if there were groups that were too advocacy, or not news, or really not appropriate for our gallery, then they would make the final decision on it. But you would go on the Web site and you'd see, do they have a news quotient? But there were a lot of groups that we did credential, including one that had a skybox. A couple had a skybox. I think AOL had a skybox because they had news at that time. Many of them no longer are in business though. That whole Internet bubble crash took down a lot of these sites. And now the primary Internet groups are related to some news organization. There are a few free-standing ones, but there are not as many. And most of the free-standing ones that were not related to an existing news deliverer have

ceased to exist. There are a few, but very few that are just free-standing that have all news content.

JOHNSON: According to the House Radio-TV Gallery Web site, the first Internet news organization accredited to the gallery, and you said those were stricter guidelines, was in 1994. Do you remember this, and was there any reluctance to accept an Internet organization?

TATE: Do you remember the name; do you have the name of it?

JOHNSON: It was just listed as the first Internet news organization. Or if not the first, do you remember, in general, was there any reluctance?

TATE: Actually, no. Our group—our Executive Committee—has always felt that if you do audio and video, and it's news, then we want you. Because, well, you don't want your competitors out there seeking another place to go. We didn't want them to end up asking for another gallery like the radio-TV had to ask for a gallery from when print wouldn't let them in. We wanted them, if they were doing audio and video, to be a part of our gallery because they would be competing with our reporters for access and for space. So if they were going to be going by the same rules we were because they were going to carry the same equipment—if it's audio and video, you've got to have cameras of some sort, you've got to have recording devices of some sort. So you want those people to be playing by the same rules we are. And what we're dealing with now is the fact that the equipment is getting much smaller, and the definition of a journalist is changing.

Is a citizen-journalist with a camcorder? You know, my cell phone takes

pictures. My digital still camera that I have from my grandchildren takes video. I have video pictures of my frogs. When I was on a trip, a friend of ours had a video camera that he took pictures of the Beijing Opera, in performance, with no extra lights, and could plug it into the television and play it back, and it was usable. You've seen pictures from cell phones of the bombings in London. Now, at what point do you decide is that a journalist or not? That's something my board is much more concerned with than Internet sites that have news on them. Internet sites with news on them are a slam dunk. But are these other individuals who are providing news content, are they journalists? Or is a citizen-journalist, by definition, a citizen or a journalist? That's something they're struggling with right now. But just accepting Internet—Internet news providers—no, that was never a problem. They just had to have audio and video. And a lot of them didn't in the beginning. Most of them start with print and then add a quotient. One of the things we wouldn't do is "on spec." You couldn't tell us you were going to have something up on the third of October. You needed to have it up before you get credentialed.

JOHNSON: You mentioned the use of computers for the conventions. What about computers for the gallery? Do you remember about what time you had use of them?

TATE: It was probably in the '80s, I guess, because I know we had them for the conventions. And one of the things I'm proudest of, and partly from working with our Parliamentarian friends, is that when we began using—when we began using computers on a regular basis to do most of our work in the galleries, we asked if we could put a computer in the chamber, to take notes. And this was very early on. There were no computers on the floor at

the time, or if there were, there were very few. They were just at leadership desks. But we felt like we could do a much better job of keeping notes if we had computers and didn't have to take longhand and then go back in and type it up. That seemed like an incredible waste of time. The computers were quiet, and we were far enough up. The Parliamentarian said, "Yeah, there's no reason why you can't do that." They did not give permission for reporters to bring computers in, but reporters really hadn't asked to do that.

On the Senate side, they've never been able to get that permission. They still do longhand notes and go in and type them up. Now, the Senate doesn't work like we do, but our log is now time-coded and color-coded, so that a Member—you hit a set of keystrokes, and you get the Member, his name (and it's in color), and his state, and whether he's a Republican or Democrat. So it's a visual log, as well as a written log. So you can easily see—and the time code is in it because for radio and television, you need to go to the tape, and you can do that from the time code we have. We don't publish it because it's not for outside consumption. It's simply for the reporters. But it's the same log that we've always done, just in a much more sophisticated and much more technically ideal way, and it has the blocs of votes. So if you're looking for a specific vote, you can go back to that vote very quickly. Now there are ways, there are Web sites that have not only the log, but they have audio and video that if we miss anything—if for any reason our computer crashes or something like that, we can do—we can go back to the recap and get it for a reporter in case he was not able to see it, and something that wasn't news when it happened, but became news because of something after that. So there are now ways to even go back and recoup it. When we first started doing it, ours was the only list like that. We were the first ones to put computers in the chamber. And that was with, you know, just because

the Parliamentarian trusted us not to be doing anything we shouldn't be doing. It was just another way of doing it.

We also added a television in the chamber. There was one year when the House had so many freshmen, the House changed so dramatically, and I can't even remember what year it was, but there were 94 new Members, almost as many new House Members as there was in the entire Senate. It was a quarter of the House turned over that year. And trying to learn every one of those Members before they spoke, so that you could get their names up when they stood up to speak, we were so concerned that we weren't going to do a good job with that that we persuaded them to let us put a TV in there with audio muted, and we keep it on the House broadcast system because they put the names of the Member who's speaking up. So it's another tool so we don't miss anything. Unfortunately, what it does is make us lazy. We don't learn the Members' faces as quickly as we used to because we know we've got this crutch.

JOHNSON: Something to fall back on?

TATE: Yes.

JOHNSON: What about the Web site that your gallery has? Do you remember about what time you created your first Web site and what kind of information was included on it?

TATE: Very little. It was, I think right now, I think we've got the best Web site of—I don't know if you've looked at the other galleries, but I think ours is by far the most sophisticated. And I think it provides an enormous amount of

information about the gallery, about the history of the gallery, and about what's going on on the floor, and what's going on the schedule, and logistics information for specific events, and links to things that we know our reporters are interested in that we're not handling directly—like the officers, in May they do that memorial out on the House, on the West Front, and we don't deal with it directly, but the police do, so we link to the police for their logistics information.[6]

We reworked our site about two years ago. And we really went through, worked with the House. The CAO's office has been very good about supporting all of the equipment we needed. And we have had cutting-edge equipment as long as I've been here. They've been very supportive of giving us the best and the first of anything that we needed. And they worked with us on the Web site, and they worked with us on the first Web site we had for the conventions that allowed people to apply online. That was the first one we did online was not last convention, it was the convention before—so it would have been 2000, not 2004.

JOHNSON: Did journalists at the time have any input on what was included on the Web page? Was some of this prompted by what they were asking for?

TATE: I think the way it looks now, we did get them to look over what, you know, we did ask if they had anything else they wanted on there, and we tried to include anything they suggested. But it was mainly brainstorming with the staff, I would say. Eighty percent of it was staff driven, and 20 percent of it was reporter driven. We have had to make some adjustments so that the House and Senate information was as similar as possible, and there was this complete—you could go to one place and get all the information of a

schedule. You wouldn't have to go to the House and get the House, and go to the Senate and get the Senate. You could get all of the stuff, all of the schedule on one. And, of course, the Executive Committee information is universal to both. I would have to ask Andy Elias or Bev Braun.[7] I guess the first Web site would've been when Bev was here, so we've had a Web site of some sort probably since the mid '90s, but I would have to get a date for you.

JOHNSON: You mentioned just a few minutes ago the House Recording Studio. Can you provide an example of how your two offices might have worked together?

TATE: We worked together very closely on a lot of issues. The House Recording Studio—most people believe that C-SPAN has the cameras in the chamber. I think everybody at C-SPAN, my office, and about six other people in the world know that that's not true. Including Members that think that. But the House Recording Studio has the six-camera switched feed of the House Chamber every day, through special orders. They provide that to all accredited members of the gallery. Any accredited member of the gallery can use any portion of that for news purposes. Most of them use it for spot news stories, just little snippets of it. Sound bites is what they call them, from the floor, of a particular story, a particular event.

The other—I've mentioned that there are times that we were traditionally allowed to bring additional cameras into the chamber: Opening Day, State of the Union, Joint Meetings, and Joint Sessions. And, of course, the State of the Union is a Joint Session, and the Electoral College. Those are the days. There used to be a lot of ceremonial events that we would bring cameras in for as well, too. We've never had any Speaker challenge if we wanted to bring them in on those days. Sometimes we don't bring cameras in on those days.

We always do for State of the Union. And now we're up to nine cameras, and two feeds from the House Recording Studio, three manned cameras on the floor. A couple of—no—three manned cameras on the floor, because we have the jib camera now. And two robotic cameras—and one, two, three, four cameras, manned cameras up in the chambers. And we also get a couple of camera feeds from the recording studio for our Joint Sessions.

When the President speaks, the presumption is everybody in the country will want to know what's going on. Half of them don't watch, but if they do, it's a great show. And that's part of the selling point. If you don't make it an interesting visual experience, people who are watching television are going to switch to something else. It's important for people to know what their President is saying. He's talking to them, whether he's talking to the Members in the room in a Joint Session is incidental. It is important for people to know what he's communicating. He's using that room and that forum to communicate to the American people. And it's up to us to make it as good a television show as we can.

Fortunately, the last Speaker [Hastert] had a gentleman, Ted Van Der Meid—who was his legal counsel—was in charge of the chamber. And CNN came in with the idea of this jib camera in the back of the chamber, and I didn't think we'd ever have a prayer of getting it, but you've got to give it a try. And David Bohrman—who I have worked with at prior conventions—he had run one of the Internet groups that had done a convention's skybox in 2000. So I had known him from then. He's now the bureau chief for CNN, and he wanted to do something that had some pizzazz to it, that had a better look to it, and would really give you a feel that you were in the room. So he came up with the idea of this jib camera, which is a

huge piece of equipment. I can give you pictures of this. But he wanted to see it—it gives you the look like you have in a sporting event, where it goes up the aisle. But it has this great huge arm. And it takes up space, and that's precious on the House Floor. Because it made good television, and they were able to demonstrate it and show they were able to put it in a place that did not take up more than two or three seats. The seats were not for people that couldn't be moved. This is on the floor, and the operation of it didn't interfere with any of the security operations—we checked it out with all the Officers of the House to be sure it didn't create a problem we were not aware of. They let CNN try it. And it looked good, they liked it, and we used it again last year.

Each time we tried something, we would have to get permission from the Speaker's Office, and from the Officers of the House that this would be a trial, and if it worked, we'd go on with it. If it didn't work, we wouldn't. And each one of these additional cameras was added because we started off with four cameras in the chamber, and now we're at nine and counting. I don't know that there are any more places we can put cameras in there because it's not that big when you get it all wired.

JOHNSON: For a big event like the State of the Union, where are the journalists assigned seats? Where are they in the gallery?

TATE: Well, they're in the same section in the gallery. You know, the print gallery has a large section of seats, about 100 seats. And on either side, the periodical gallery has about 13 seats, and we have about 13 seats. But for a State of the Union, most of ours are taken up with live gear, whether it's live television gear for the pool, the network pool, or whether it's live radio from

the room, there's always been live radio broadcasts from a State of the Union. And these reporters have seats with headsets and microphones. And this last year, we had the first live television audio from the room. We were not allowed to put a camera on any of the TV reporters, but we had TV reporters doing the same thing that radio reporters were doing, which was introducing the President, speaking over applause, and exiting the President. They're not allowed to have newscasts, they're not allowed to do any promotions or anything like that, but they are commenting from the room. And the TV people came to me—Mike Viqueira with NBC—and said if anything were to happen, radio would be in there describing it, TV would not. And we want to try to have TV. So we opened it up to TV, with the approval of the Speaker, and with the approval of the Officers of the House.

JOHNSON: Is this—the State of the Union specifically—is this a joint operation with the other press galleries or does radio-TV really take the lead?

TATE: Radio-TV takes the lead. The print people have to give credentials out for their seats, and they have to mark seats, and they have to get their people down to the Statuary Hall. We do everything else.

JOHNSON: How has this event changed during your tenure?

TATE: Oh, the first people that we had in Statuary Hall were from ABC, and I think that was in the mid '80s. And they had one position. We'd have files on the dates of these. We had one, one year, then we went up to about five groups that were in there. At one point, we had 30 cameras in there. We realized that didn't work—the [Capitol] Police didn't think it worked, we didn't think it worked. So we limited it now. I think there are either 21 or 22. I

have one person who does nothing but that. And they're stationary positions. There's network lighting brought in. The Architect [of the Capitol] assists us with extra power. The setup requires the Sergeant at Arms to close down Statuary Hall from about 1:00 on so that we can do the setup. Each group has to be in and swept by a specific time. There has to be a coordination of who is in which group. If we've got more groups than can fit into the assigned number of positions, then we have to marry the groups. What one of my staff people who's done it most recently—he's done it several years in a row—is Jay Rupert, he talks to each group about what they're doing, and what timeframe, and could they work with someone else, and how many groups are there, how many interviews are they expecting to do, so that there will be groups that if they're not going live, but somebody else is, they use one camera, and both of them use the same area. So that has become the react position for all of the Congress, House and Senate, after the speech. Sometimes they leave before the President finishes speaking to get to the live shot. It's going to make the 10:00 p.m. or 11:00 p.m. news all throughout the country.

So it's an important way for not just leadership. Leadership's always going to be listened to, but it's an important way for lesser-known Members of Congress to reach their audience, immediately, about what they think about—regardless of who the President is, what his speech was about, and what it means to his constituents. So you know, anything that we're doing that makes Congress more understandable to the people, I think, is what our mission is all about.

And that is about a two-week setup because you have to give—you have to be sure people have the right credentials, and that they have the right timeframe,

and you have to talk to the press secretaries, and the press secretaries have to have—the map is the most essential thing—a map of Statuary Hall that tells each group, each Member of Congress where the groups they're going to be interviewed by, where they're located. And the press secretaries can't wait to get that. We publish it, and we put it out.

JOHNSON: Your office designs it?

TATE: Our office designs it. Our office creates it. We do signs. One year, we had—each time—we come up with something new. One year, we went down there, and people had started putting signs up. There was a CBS eye on one of the statues. And we said, "Oh, no, no, no, we're not doing this. We are not advertising. {laughter} We are allowing you to use this very special room [Statuary Hall]." So we went and made standard signs. We wouldn't let them use their own signs so that there would not be any kind of advertising there. I think we got them done by one of the graphics offices, either House or Senate; they're just standard ABC, CBS, whatever. So people know where they're going. We also have locations in the balconies of the Cannon Building and in Russell. The Senate does the Russell ones.

JOHNSON: Well, based on the example you just provided, was it difficult to find a balance between meeting the needs of the journalists and the news organizations and then also trying to make sure there was a semblance of order and decorum in Statuary Hall?

TATE: Well, we do describe it as "organized chaos." And you know, whether or not it stays there is something because it is very congested for a short period of time. It's very well organized, but it's very congested for a short period of

time. Yes, there is a balance that you have to find. And at times, it's gone back and forth. We try very hard to work with the [Capitol] Police to be sure that we have kept proper aisles so that people who do not want to be stopped can continue to move, and people who do want to do interviews can be interviewed. So it's trying to satisfy both of those needs, both very important needs. Whether they'll keep it in Statuary Hall once the [Capitol] Visitor Center is finished, whether they'll move it into an area in the Visitor Center, I don't know. That's something that we're prepared to do, but not suggesting that they do. We did wire the Visitor Center quite thoroughly to be sure that if they were to move it into the Great Hall or someplace else, we would—we'd be prepared to do that.

JOHNSON: Well, I know we're running out of time.

TATE: Yes, got to get to the dentist.

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

TATE: Not today.

JOHNSON: Okay, great. Thank you.

## — TINA TATE —

## INTERVIEW THREE

**JOHNSON:** This is Kathleen Johnson, interviewing Tina Tate, former director of the House Radio-TV Gallery. The date is July 1, 2008, and the interview is taking place in Tina Tate's office at the Newseum in Washington, D.C.

In your previous two interviews, you talked a lot about the preparation for State of the Union addresses. But one point that I wanted to follow up with was the media event that takes place in Statuary Hall afterwards. Did this always take place in Statuary Hall, from the time that you started working for the press gallery?

**TATE:** No. We started doing that in the '80s, and I started in the press galleries in the '70s. And the first group that wanted to do a react there was ABC, and then we had about four groups, and then it grew. Each year, there would be more groups that would realize that this was a good thing, and that it worked, and that it was successful. Originally, it was mostly the networks, and then the independent groups came in. At one point—and I don't remember what year—we tried to max out, to see how many positions we could put in, and I think we got up to over 30 positions and realized that, physically, the room can't accommodate that many. So we worked it out with the police to set a finite number of locations where television cameras could be set, and we developed how much territory each camera got, and the fact that cameras couldn't walk around, because that tended to be too chaotic.

Just for explanation, Statuary Hall connects between the gallery and the [Capitol] Rotunda, but it's a bottleneck for Members to try to get across the building. And if Senators are coming out and trying to get across through to the other side of the building and it's too crowded, you can't move people through, and the [Capitol] Police were very concerned about life safety issues, so we had to work with them to be sure that we could keep people moving, that there was a size of the stanchioned-off area for a corridor, and yet open access to the press. Those were issues we had to work together on to come up with solutions. How many chairs we put in, whether we put monitors in, electricity. We already had original wiring in there. We had to expand the wiring for other groups. And now there's an entire panel that can really take care of almost any group that has live capability in the city, with priority being given to those who have live capability that they've paid for. If you've got a company that is not using their live capability, they can certainly allow another company to. BBC [British Broadcasting Corporation] doesn't belong as a member of the consortium of broadcasters, but BBC covers that particular event. So they work with someone who's not using their lines that day. It's a two-week coordination, but with the congressional committees and congressional staffs and police, and with the broadcast organizations, to be sure that the assignments are both fair and are the best use of the very small amount of space.

Now, at one point, before Speaker Pelosi, under Speaker Hastert, there was some conversation about the possibility of moving that reaction spot—because it's so small—to the Capitol Visitor Center. Whether that will happen or not, I don't know, but that was a discussion topic years ago, about that might be something they would want to do. If you saw the State of Union this year—which I did, for the first time, watch it on television

{laughter}—you saw the President [George W. Bush] leaving the building to a room that was almost empty by the time he left because they were doing shots of him shaking hands, walking up the center aisle, and Members had actually left the room to go to their react spots, because you're now hitting the 11:00 p.m. East Coast time, and these people are going to be live at 11:00 in the nightly news, responding to the President. I mean, it's an opportunity you can't resist. And it does really play to the rank-and-file Member, rather than the leadership, because the leadership tends to have more unique opportunities for individual interviews. You won't see the Speaker there, as much as you will see rank-and-file Members from the particular areas where they have television organizations here in the city. So it really gives the Members—the rank-and-file Members—an opportunity to voice their opinion on what they thought about the President.

JOHNSON: So from what you recall, then, this was driven by the press and not the Members?

TATE: It started with the press idea, asking for it. And then it, as all things, it was symbiotic after that. {laughter}

JOHNSON: And the choice of Statuary Hall, do you remember how that came about?

TATE: Location. It's always location. In terms of news coverage, you want the immediacy of speaking to a Member as soon as he has seen whatever you want him to react to. And that was the only place physically big enough to do it, and it isn't physically big enough to do it. {laughter}

JOHNSON: Can you describe the role that you and your office played in the Opening Day of a new Congress?

TATE: Well, we've been through two . . . well, we do opening days . . . there are opening days, and then there's the change of Congress. Opening days, there are activities around the freshman class coming in. There are all sorts of stories of the youngest Member, the oldest Member, the new chairmen. So there is a traditional set of stories that will be done. We get many requests for day-in-the-life-of stories. That's a traditional storyline that you get either the week before—*Mr. Smith Goes to Washington*, that sort of thing—and you'll get unique groups covering because you had the first Buddhist one year, or you have the first mother. So you will have different firsts that will be a news story. You will sometimes get one news story that becomes bigger, as an example when we had the first Muslim and whether he was going to be sworn in on a Muslim bible [Quran]. So there are stories that will go beyond just their locality, but then you get some that are strictly unique to the locality that particular organization wants to cover, their particular Member, because of something just special about him that year.

So there is a pattern on Opening Day. Of course, you accept the rules of the House that day, so there are frequently stories around that. Sometimes it's routine; sometimes the rules changes are actual fundamental changes in how Congress will work. So occasionally that will be a big story. Sometimes it's not. If it's a day that is not a big change day, then you go immediately into the organization process. The first several months of a new Congress is organizational, on the House side. So they become less newsworthy. Then you're regrouping, and getting to know all the new Members, and doing things like that.

Then when you have a change of Congress—then it's a huge change. We've only had two changes while I was there: when the Republicans took over in '94 and when the Democrats took over this last Congress [110th Congress]. In '94, when the Republicans took over, that was one of the two most covered days we ever had. Most coverage was on the House side because you had a Republican Speaker for the first time in 40 years, and the Republicans who came in wanted to change everything. Fundamental changes in process, and in procedure, and in operations. So there was a great deal of coverage by national outlets. The *Today Show* used the Rayburn Room. ABC used the Rules Committee room. And sometimes the changes . . . what we would think would be a minor change became pretty important because when the *Today Show* used the Rayburn Room, they had to clear it out in time for us to do the first live press conference by Speaker Gingrich. And that meant you had to take everything that they used out and reset it for a pool coverage in a room that had been hung with lights, and had been set up totally for a different purpose, in a very short period of time. But more importantly, when ABC was going out of the Rules Committee and they were doing *Good Morning America*, I got a call about 5:00 in the morning: "We can't get in." When the changeover happened, they changed the locks, and nobody bothered to mention that. {laughter} And nobody knew who had the keys. Well, we know all the Architect [of the Capitol]'s folks, so we found somebody on the Architect's staff who could go unlock the door. Because they [ABC] had permission both from the old Rules Committee and the new Rules Committee, but nobody had the key. {laughter} So it can be something as small as that that could be catastrophic. If you need to be on air at 6:45, you need to have your people in place at 3:00 in the morning.

So those are the kinds of things that you can't anticipate. Even to the point when we did the press conference for Gingrich, we realized that the glass cover on the table in there was getting a bounce from the lights. So we ended up getting a felt cover for it. So there are little things like that you don't know until you do it. That was one of the reasons I, honestly, in November, when the Democrats took over the House for this next turnover, I really wanted to be in place because I thought that our office could be a very useful office for kind of advising, but more saying, "This is what happened. You can choose to do this or not do this, but this is what happened when we did it before." There's not a lot of . . . when you have a change like that, there's not a lot of offices that can do that that play a traditional institutional role.

In this case, because Speaker Pelosi did not change the Officers of the House as immediately as the Republicans did, she had more key people in place. But even then, there were thoughts and ideas and changes of process that affected the press, that I could work with the Speaker's Office, and that's one of the first things we did was sit down and talk about, "These are the things that we have done in the past. Do you want to do them this way? Do you want to change them? They're the Speaker's prerogatives, and you can choose to do what you want or what you don't."

JOHNSON: Can you provide an example of the advice that you offered?

TATE: When we had television coverage in the House Chamber that day, one of the things that we did was to bring up the House lights. The House lights are very hot, so you bring them down as part of the day, but you're still recording. And that was something we worked out with the Parliamentarian that had happened over the years, but it's the Speaker's responsibility, then,

to let Members know that even though the lights are down . . . which is a visual cue that you're still on camera. But when the lights are down, to think that you're not on camera would be something easy to assume, but you don't want any Member to presume that he's not on camera. So you want the cloakroom and the Clerk's Office to kind of remind everybody that even with the lights off, they're on camera. There are some things like that we suggested.

One of the things we asked for that we had done with the Republicans was to use the Statuary Hall for a react position, as we do after State of the Union, and Speaker Pelosi decided not to. We had many, many requests for programs that wanted to do live programming, and that would have made it easier for us, easier for the broadcast groups. For their own purposes, they chose not to do that, but that was their choice. We could make the argument for how we had done it before, why we had done it before—and how it would help the press to do that—then they could make the decision that that was not the way they wanted to do it. And once they make the decision, then we make it work. It's not a matter of telling them what to do, it's giving them choices of what we know worked before.

JOHNSON: Okay. And making recommendations . . .

TATE: And making recommendations for what we think would be . . . We're making recommendations for what would be good for the press, and then it's up to them to decide what would be good for the Speaker's Office. And we work with the Speaker's Office as an institution. And it doesn't matter whether it's a Republican or a Democratic Speaker. That's a political choice that we don't have any say in. {laughter}

JOHNSON: You mentioned a few minutes ago that this—the Republicans taking over in '95—was one of the two most covered events. What was the first?

TATE: Oh, it was the first . . . it was that one and impeachment—those were the two—the days we voted on the impeachment on the House Floor [in 1998].

JOHNSON: Well, since that topic has been brought up, can you describe . . . because you were here for two impeachments.

TATE: Whether we needed them or not, yes. Every 25 years, we get one. {laughter}

JOHNSON: What are your recollections of the first one, in 1974?

TATE: The first one, I was a junior staffer, and really was not terribly involved in the arrangements, but I did know what was going on. In that case, there were only four broadcast entities that were of a major size and shape, and that was the three broadcast networks [ABC, CBS, NBC] and PBS. PBS was carrying it live. C-SPAN didn't exist. None of the cable networks existed. And the way they did their extra coverage was to build what amounted to . . . it looked like a small apartment on scaffolding outside the window, so they could put a camera facing back into a studio-sized camera with an operator over the shoulder of the chairman. They had scaffolding in the room where all the cameras were and the place that they set up for reaction there was in the Rayburn horseshoe entrance, and half of that was cordoned off for both press conferences and interviews. Now, all of this was filmed. You didn't have any live coverage, except the coverage—live coverage—going out of the committee room itself, live to air. And I think there was one live radio group in the room. So you had specific positions for people to sit, and then you

had the cameras for the live coverage, nothing right outside the room, and then this other area in Rayburn. The logistics of it worked.

When we knew this [1998 impeachment] was percolating, and that it was a possibility, we began thinking about what groups would do, and we had conversations in the office. The day that the Starr Report was delivered to the Hill, I happened to be in Philadelphia on a convention site visit. We were walking through the convention center and looked up to see CNN with a crawl going across it that the Starr Report was on its way to the Hill, and every one of the gallery directors broke and ran for the railroad station. {laughter} This was when cell phones . . . We really weren't as cell phone-oriented and BlackBerry-oriented as we are now. So we got on the first trains back [to Washington, D.C.] because we knew it was going to be huge.

From that point on, unlike my day-to-day office operation with the Capitol . . . What we would do, if there was a big story, we'd kind of talk with our reporters asking how the correspondents were going to cover it, and what they wanted, and what they needed, and we'd sort of brainstorm with them, with them giving us where they'd like to have cameras, and where they could do their work and get their stories. In this case, we knew it was going to just be a tsunami, and there was not going to be a stopping point, and they were not going to be able to sit down and advise us. So as staff, we met together and talked about: What do we need to have in place? How can we possibly take this and make it work for everybody? Because it's coming, and it's going to be huge. And we worked with the Judiciary Committee staff. I made assignments that had two people kind of uniquely set to do just that. We had the good fortune of the fact that the House was not in session for a good bit of it, and that helped because then the rest of the staff could support what

was going on. But I had two primary people who did nothing but impeachment for those months—from September through December. And I mean they were physically there all the time, and one of them was Olga Kornacki, who is now the director.

C-SPAN was the one that was communally agreed to by the networks to do the day-to-day coverage, but now that you're into the '90s, you've got the cable news networks who are going to be on all the time and are going to be on before and after. So you're not talking about four groups that are not doing live. You're talking about live, continuous coverage before and after the event, and you've got to have a place to do that. You couldn't do that in the Rayburn horseshoe. We had some electronics there, but you couldn't set up that kind of activity there. It physically wasn't big enough to accommodate everything. So we were able to get the House and the Speaker's Office to agree to let us use the Rayburn foyer. So we set the Rayburn foyer up for press conferences and for workspace, alternate workspace. We had tables, chairs. People put in telephone lines and computers and everything else. Then we used the balconies of the Rayburn building for unique live shots, and we had drawings to see who would get in each position. We would put two or three groups in together, if they needed to, if they could work together. You couldn't do that now because you've got security issues you didn't have then. This was pre-[September 11] 2001, so you could have people going in and out of the building and just have police at the bottom of the steps. Because you can enter the building from the ground—from the street—by coming up those steps, they would just put a barrier across there, and a policeman would check it occasionally, but you couldn't do that now because the building is secure, and you have to have a

policeman at that door, and people would have to be screened going, every time they went in and out.

So we physically set up that for the impeachment, but there were other elements. At one point there was a videotape of the President [Clinton] testifying that had not been seen, and it was going to be aired live. And they needed a distribution point for it, and it was going to be part of the *Congressional Record*. How do you distribute that, when nobody has seen it? How we were going to get the tape to the media, with both the Judiciary Committee people and the people in the [House] Recording Studio, because they were going to get this tape in a format. We had to have a pool arrangement to distribute it. We had one pool group that was going to get it to everyone, and we were going to use our distribution point in the Rayburn building. It was orchestrated to the point that they wanted a camera to follow the tape as it was being brought to be put into the machine.

So we had to do things like find out from the—I know the woman thought I was an idiot—but we had to find out what the lawyer that was delivering the tape was wearing, so we could identify her properly with a camera on. {laughter} I mean, it was that much detail, and the lawyer was saying, "Why do you care what I'm wearing?" "Because they're going to put your name up there, and we want it to be correct name, and you're going to be on live television, and you are going to care down the line that this is right." All she was worried about was the job she was doing that day, and we were trying to be sure that we weren't interfering with that, but these details that are important for television are also important for the [*Congressional*] *Record* and for the way the public perceives what's going on. So that was one of those

oddnesses: that you're trying to convince people of something that does not seem to be important, but that ultimately could be.

And we were very lucky that we were working with one of the groups that I completely trust and am comfortable working with the Fox group that was the pool for that—so knowing that what we got from the recording studio would be protected until it was time for it to go live to air. My biggest fear that weekend was that we'd see something on *Meet the Press* because it was going to happen on Monday. If that happened, and it happened prior to and was unconnected to our delivery, that wouldn't be my problem. But if it happened because of something we neglected to do to secure this tape for the House, that would have been pretty terrible. Because you've given your word that this is all going to be done in a fair and proper way, so that everybody gets the same opportunity to see it at the same time. That's what I cared about. A good news organization is always trying to get the advantage, and to get the story first, and to get it out first. So that's their goal, but that's not my goal. {laughter} And making sure that I didn't prevent them from doing what they wanted to do, but not under my auspices.

The other thing they did for that, that was never done any other time, was we were just getting to the point at that time, technically, where you could do CDs, and the volumes of printed material was overwhelming, and distributing the CDs was technically a big problem, both for us and for the print people. But the oddest thing we had to do was the tapes, the audio tapes. There were audio tapes, and there were . . . Oh, cases. Quite a number of them. There were like 24 or 30—I don't remember it, exactly, how many. But there were a number of these audio cassettes, and they were the interviews with Linda. What was her name? The woman. I can see her.

JOHNSON: Linda Tripp.

TATE: Linda Tripp! And I believe Monica Lewinsky was on it as well. Now, these had all been transcribed, so there was no news value in the tapes themselves. What the news value was in hearing these voices actually say these things and hearing her [Monica Lewinsky's] voice. So out of these multiple—there were like two dozen tapes—we were able to get a master set to the recording studio and then had them reproduce various sets of these. Then we had to go through and mark them because to go to air, they wanted these particular snippets.

So we worked with the press people who had seen, read all the transcripts to say, "Okay, now where is it in the tape that you need this?" Because they couldn't . . . No one would let them sit down and listen to it. So we got which tapes we needed to isolate. We went in and packaged each one of these, so everybody got a whole set, but they got, packaged separately, the one that we knew they wanted to put on air. And then delivering them to the press as a group, you had to decide who . . . Not everybody got them in the initial distribution because there were just too many to try to distribute, and you know how big my office was. You had to decide who was in the A group and who was in the B group. You couldn't do the first group and the second group. I think we ended up doing it by color, so it wouldn't be A, B, or C, or first, second, and third, because nobody wants to be in the third tier. {laughter} So you had to diplomatically decide. Then they wanted pictures of us distributing them. "Do you want to do pictures?" "Oh, okay, fine." So one of the groups figured out how to—once he got his copy—to go ahead and put it in his equipment in that room and get it live to air from the room. Others took it back to their studios. That was up to them. Once we gave it

to them, how they got it on air was up to them. But the distribution method was really something that was . . . It never happened before or since, but it was actually very much like the way we package things at the conventions. You work with the groups to find out what they need, and separate the essentials, and package them separately with everything else they're going to need to complement that. Those kind of logistics things were specific to that event.

JOHNSON: Were you able to make these decisions independently in your office, or did you have to check back with the Speaker's Office because this was such an important occasion?

TATE: We didn't have to make logistics decisions with the Speaker's Office. We had to get their permission to do things like have specific spaces. When it came to the Speaker's Office, that's when it moved into the Capitol, beyond just giving us the space. Once they gave us the space, they let us manage it. But when it came to the Capitol, then everything had to be with the Speaker's Office because the Speaker controls the House side of the Capitol. When there would be testimony or Members going from the House side over to the Senate side—as there were frequently—we had a stakeout location in that small Will Rogers Corridor, so that we could get pictures. You needed fresh pictures each day of these people, and we worked with the Speaker's Office to be sure that we offered a picture that was not going to compromise what was going on.

And there was one case when we had . . . One of the lawyers was in a wheelchair, and they drove up to the outside, and every other day, we'd had pictures of people coming out and going through the building, so you'd just

get a snapshot of them walking that day, and then you'd talk over about "this was what was happening on the case that day." Well, the lawyer's office very much did not want pictures—he had to be lifted out of the car, and that didn't show anything. It had nothing to do with the story. It embarrassed him and was awkward looking and was uncomfortable, but it had nothing to do with the story. It didn't tell anything that they needed to see. The public wasn't ill served by not seeing that. So we arranged just to have that picture done after he got into the building. So there were little things like that that they would make recommendations to or say, "You can't do this." And we would say, "Okay. We need the picture of him moving. Can we get the picture when he gets here?" And they would say, "Okay. We don't mind you having the picture, we just . . ." This wasn't a necessary component.

When it went to the floor of the House—and it was standing room only in the Speaker's Lobby that day—we had every correspondent from anybody was there, and we . . . . {laughter} If you remember Speaker Gingrich had stepped down, and he was not standing for re-election as Speaker. So you really didn't have an authority that was in charge. And you had [Robert Linlithgow] Livingston, [Jr.], in place to be nominated for Speaker for the next year. We'd been thinking we had everything orchestrated and taken care of. We'd been following the stories, and there were stories going on about Livingston that had appeared in the paper that compromised his ability to serve, and we knew those stories were out there. We had watched the coverage at conference meetings, so we'd seen the press coverage, and we knew the press stories. But we're not on the inner circle, and we're not talking to these people directly about what's going on. We don't go to the conferences. We're not allowed to do that. We're not that level of staff.

That morning, we were . . . One of the small things that we'd arranged to do because . . . the House Chamber offers the House Floor feed to all members of the Radio Television Association. The only one that takes it gavel to gavel is C-SPAN, but any of them could. Well, those two days of debate on the House Floor, the networks were taking large chunks live to air, which they do in committee hearings, but they don't take the House Floor very often. And if you're looking at someone else's direction, they would not let us bring cameras in there. We did ask for that. That was one of the things we did ask for, and they said no. We couldn't do that.

JOHNSON: And this was the Speaker's Office that you asked?

TATE: The Speaker's Office, yes. As we do for Opening Day and for State of the Union. We weren't surprised they turned us down, but they did turn us down. One of the things that they needed was a relief shot to go in and out because they are putting on television pictures they're not controlling, and they need to be able to go to a shot that they can see, always, and go to that when they're going in and out of things. So you don't have your audience looking at one thing and being told something else, and you can't make it make sense to them. So we were able to get an isolated shot that the recording studio offered that could be fed live to any group that wanted to take it. So the big networks who were taking big chunks of this live—and were going to be going in and out of the feed—had one set shot they could always put up to give them relief before they went out. So that was a technical thing that the Speaker's Office let us do that is just a pure television event.

But that morning Cokie Roberts came through the office, and Livingston is speaking, and I'm not paying attention because we've got other things. We know the vote's coming, there's so much more coming that day.

JOHNSON: Right. And this is December—late December—'98.

TATE: This is December. Late December. Yes. And she [Cokie Roberts] says, "He's going to resign." And I'm trying to process this, and I know she knows what she's talking about, and I can't go on the PA system and tell people, but I knew they were doing the same thing I was, kind of . . . This was going on, but they weren't paying absolute attention to this because so many other things were going on. So I went on the PA system and said, "You may want to listen to this; you may want to listen to Livingston," or something like that. I didn't say, "Cokie Roberts said he's going to resign," because that's certainly not something she intended for me to say. She said it just so we wouldn't be caught by surprise. And sure enough, as everybody kind of, "Oh, okay." So they turned it up, and he says he's not going to stand for re-election. Well, that set off {laughter} another set of things because now you don't have a Speaker. You don't have anyone in place to stand for Speaker in January. This is the last time the House is going to meet before January. Somebody has to be in charge! So you know the Republican Conference has to meet. You can't get anybody to say squat to anybody. I mean, staff is going nuts. They're running around. Everybody is trying to negotiate what they're going to do, what's happening.

So we called the pool and said, "Let's put a camera down at the place they normally meet and pray to God that they meet there," because if we don't, if they go someplace else, we're dead in the water. But you want to be where

they're going to meet because they're going to nominate a new Speaker, and they're going to do it today because they have to. And nobody was really thinking about that. They were thinking about the vote coming up. But they were going to think about it, and they were going to need it. So we pulled one of many pool cameras that we had assigned in different areas, and put it at the HC-5 [in the Capitol building], which we guessed and hoped would be the place they would meet, and they did. So we had a live camera feed going out of there when they met, and the notice was literally as soon as they could get Members together, they had them down there. Nothing was normal. Everything was off the charts. And it was just one of those things: you knew process; this has to happen. The House has to continue. They have to have a Speaker. They have to somebody stand for Speaker. They have to have a nominee. And that has to be done today because there isn't another day to do it. So it was this kind of trying to think ahead for what people were going to need, and get it in place as best you could, so that when it came time to tell the story, you could do it. I mean, the story was going to go . . . You were going to have the story happen. You've got all the news people there. But whether they could do it in a way that their audience could see it and understand it was what we were trying to do. And that, I think, was probably the best work we ever did, was the three months of the impeachment.

JOHNSON: This would certainly be an extreme example, but is this a part of your job, where you have to be able to anticipate events?

TATE: Oh, yes. That is the prime example of where anticipating problems and getting logistics in place ahead of time serves everybody. I mean, you've seen gaggles of press doing things, and that's going to happen. If you could

anticipate what's going to happen and get a system in place where the press can get their story and yet it's not chaos, then you've really done something that's valuable. Because they'll get the story, and if they get it in a chaotic fashion, that's fine. But if you can avoid the chaos and have the story come out with it done in a way that makes it really understandable to the American people, then I think you've done them a service.

JOHNSON: And in this case, you didn't have any inside information. This was your best guess on where the event was going to take place, where it was going to unfold?

TATE: Oh, yes. Yes, this was my prayer. {laughter} It wasn't a guess, it was a prayer! They generally did meet there, but they did meet in Longworth occasionally, and for whatever reason, the room . . . We didn't know. And we do have live capability there because when those HC rooms were built, that was one of the things we did. We went to the Speaker's Office and said, "You're going to use these rooms, and they're going to be used for events. What you're going to use them for, you don't know, we don't know. But we need to wire up areas down there." And that was one of the things we did early on. So that had been wired for quite some time.

JOHNSON: In an earlier interview that I conducted with Ben West, the former director of the [House] Daily Press Gallery, he mentioned that for the impeachment hearings in 1974—about President [Richard] Nixon—that he had advised Chairman [Peter Wallace] Rodino, [Jr.], at the time, that it would be better to use the Cannon Caucus Room because it was going to be such a huge press event. In 1998, did you make any recommendations like that to Chairman [Henry John] Hyde?

TATE: If we'd used RFK [Stadium], it probably would have been better. {laughter} We did talk about that, whether or not it would . . . moving it to the Cannon Caucus Room. We talked with the Judiciary staff, whether moving it from the Cannon Caucus Room would be better—to the Cannon Caucus Room would be better—but it is not wired, and now you're talking about live coverage for everybody. We did have the balconies of Cannon wired, but you also didn't have any support space in the Cannon building for a press conference area or for workspace. So we talked about it, whether . . .The largest of the committee rooms is the Ways and Means Committee room, but there—once again—is no place for . . . Well, you could use the Agriculture [Committee] balcony, but that would tie off the Agriculture room. So we did talk over various other choices and made the recommendation that the Judiciary Committee, with the use of the Rayburn horseshoe and the Rayburn—not horseshoe—the Rayburn foyer and the balconies were a better solution to all the problems of trying to do coverage there, in this case. Now, that's one of the things. There's hope that the areas in the Capitol Visitor Center may be able to solve a future event of this size and shape, but—whether it will or not, who knows—but we talked over opportunities, and our recommendation was that that would be the better place.

JOHNSON: The Capitol Visitor Center has come up a couple of times in your interviews. What level of involvement did you have during the construction phase as the former director of the gallery?

TATE: We had, early on, a good bit of involvement in the locating of fiber optics. We had two different areas—actually, three different areas where we were directly involved. We worked closely early on with a technical advisory subcommittee of our broadcasters to identify, with the Speaker's Office, areas

in the building that would be used for likely events, as we did for the HC-5 rooms. Whenever there's something being built, if you put the electronics in the walls, you are so much better off, because you're going to want coverage, and you don't want to trash up the place dragging cables all over the place. So you're trying to anticipate what 10 years from now is going to be coverage. So you go into it with the idea that "okay, any place you think you might have a meeting where Members will meet on something significant, tell us, and we will go in and put some kind of electronics in there." We can always expand them. We can always choose not to fill out the boxes. But if we get the pathways in, in the walls, you can run the cable, and you can do the breakout boxes, so that you can get this in place. So we worked very closely early on for places inside the building. Also in conjunction with that were the exteriors because, if you remember, it was a huge hole for quite a while, and we had had positions outside for live television that were at the elm tree and triangle. Elm tree actually was where it was, and not at the triangle. Elm tree was right across from the House steps, and that was a live television drop that we had done, and there was one on the Senate side called the "swamp site." And the only other live box was under the stonecutter's room, under the center steps.[8]

So any time you had coverage, like an inaugural, where the former President leaves, going out the West Front—the East Front. He comes in the West Front and leaves going out the East Front. Or a lying in state, where the body comes in up the East Front steps. Those events require support outside, and we had several meetings early on about where we should put additional live positions, so that you're not . . . What we had to do—every time there was one of these events earlier—was drag cables all the way across the parking lot to locations for these events. So I suggested that we

investigate putting the electronics not only back where it was when they covered back up the hole, but in these additional places by the fountains and in areas that were closer and where you could do this coverage.

Traditionally, these are ceremonial events, and you want them to be dignified, and you don't want the electronics to get in the way, and you want it to be as turnkey as you can make it, so the ceremony itself can be the focus, not the stuff of television. {laughter} We kept having meetings on it, and then nobody funded it. And we kept having meetings, and then it would fall out of the budget. I jumped up and down about it about as many times as I could, and I finally said, "You've simply got to do this. It doesn't matter where you get the money from! You've got to do this." And there is a certain budget that our people can put into it, but for an infrastructure like this, we really can't pay for this. This really has to be something the Congress pays for. Eventually—and it took several years of it falling in and out of the budget for it to get to be a line-item issue. It finally did get in and it will be my legacy to the Congress that they will not have cables drug all over the place as we had to do for the Rosa Parks lying in state because the thing wasn't finished. Even for the [President] Ford one [lying-in-state ceremony] and for the State of the Union that CNN did when the Capitol Visitor Center crater was there, the guys had to drape cable from this location around the House side on 20 feet up on a ledge in the ice to get it to the truck! I wanted that not to happen after I left! {laughter} And as far as I know, it's still in the . . . It was done, and the breakout boxes are there. And when we have a . . . We've got other Presidents to die, and when they do, {laughter} it will be a dignified ceremony, and I'll be proud.

The third section was . . . You've seen our offices, and how small our studio is, and it's woefully inadequate for the amount of coverage that the House gets. Even under [Speaker] Hastert—was considered undignified for a Speaker to come up there. Just, it is not a good place for him to be responding.

JOHNSON: For people that haven't seen that space, can you describe what it looks like and the approximate size?

TATE: Well, it was redone in 1988, and the office we're sitting in now is about . . . What? Twenty by 40 [feet]? It's probably . . . The studio itself is not more than 30 by 60, and you can seat at most 30 people. And you can put cameras on three different levels there, but the cameramen literally have to duck by the third level because they're looking down. And there's only one entrance. It's a life safety issue. There's only one entrance. If you get as many people as sometimes are in there for a major event, you literally are against all safety requirements because you have no other exit from the space, and you've got all this electronics in a place that hasn't been redone since 1988. It doesn't meet any requirements for the handicapped because it's not in an open office—it's considered a private space—we were able to work out with the Architect [of the Capitol] a ramp that doesn't meet the handicapped requirements for public spaces, but is adequate to get the handicapped Member [James Langevin] that we currently have to the podium. But it's just a woefully inadequate space. The workspace, once again, is not adequate for the reporters that work out of there. The spaces are far too small and very cramped. We do have two exits, and the only bathroom in the place is on the upper level. So if you're in a wheelchair, you simply cannot go to the bathroom in this space. It definitely needs to be done. Knowing that that

was going to happen—that that had to happen at some point—I went to the Speaker's Office and asked if in the House space, couldn't we consider doing a proper studio that would be the size and shape of the Senate studio, with all the electronics in it, and then possibly go ahead and build out some other space. So we were able to convince the House that this would be good for us and good for the Speaker's Office. So there will be three new studio spaces—at least when I left!

JOHNSON: When you say House space, you mean for the Capitol Visitor Center?

TATE: The House space.

JOHNSON: Okay. But for the [Capitol] Visitor Center?

TATE: For the Capitol Visitor Center. This was going to be the only new space that's going to be built that would be anywhere near contiguous to the Capitol, and where our office is off the third floor, this is not—the House space is literally not any further than that. It's one level down, or two levels down, instead of a level up, but it's pretty close to where Members go, and it's not going to be inconvenient for Members to come there from the House Floor. There's no other space that's ever going to be built in my lifetime that would be close enough for a press conference for major events in the Capitol. This was going to be it. So if we didn't get space in it, we were never going to have a place where we could work. And the Speaker's Office agreed. So we did a large studio that's state of the art, complete with all the handicapped requirements, and everything you could possibly need in a green room for the Members, and a really good facility. It was both for the press and for the

Members because it's a space that needs to happen. It needs to be there. We had a very good electronics space for all the gear that goes with it.

We also put in two other studios because what happens so often is that you have a studio event, and then the other side—whatever the other side is, whether it's a Democrat/Republican response, or a pro-environment, anti-environment, or whatever, you have another side—and generally those press conferences happen outside, which is fine on a day like today. It isn't fine when a foot of snow, or sleet, or a snowstorm, or a thunderstorm, or something like that. You have no other dedicated space where a Member can hold a press conference. Now, they can book a room, but if it's an event that comes up that day, they can't find a room to have it. So we decided to build two studios: one, the big studio, which would be used for regular press conferences by whomever wanted it. And then a small studio, so if you wanted to have an alternative view in the same general area, the members of the press would just have to walk down the hall. We put in a little workspace, thinking this would not be a place where everybody would work. They would stay in their proximity, in the offices in the Capitol. They all wanted to stay in their offices in the Capitol. They didn't want a full studio space down there. But we also built a small studio that would be for one-on-one interviews, which nowadays, they are frequently booked back to back for Members who are talking on any of the networks in a one-on-one space. So that studio was part of it.

Then we put in space that has been under a lot of scrutiny for the crews, a locker space. The crews carry gear on rollers with hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of equipment that they can't leave anyplace. And as the unions have gotten less strong, and the equipment has gotten more sophisticated,

you've got fewer people handling it. So they don't have somebody who can drive and go park, and you can let off a guy with the gear he needs. This locker space was for members of the broadcast groups to bring in their gear, get it through security once, and have it in a place where they're already in a secured space. So they could go from the House to the Senate to any of the office buildings and have their gear in a locked area. Many other groups have looked at that space, since it didn't look to them like it was of any value, and have tried to get it. As far as I know, it's still there for this purpose, but some of the other space has been moved around because nobody wanted the House space when it was initially offered. Nobody. Everybody said, "We don't want to move out of the Capitol." Okay. {laughter} So I was the only one who put up my hand, so I did get the lion's share of space for our office because the Speaker's Office had nobody else who was interested, and they saw the value in a proper studio space, and they let us develop it the way we wanted to, and that's how it came about.

JOHNSON: Can you talk a little bit more about Member press conferences? First in your studio—the studio space that you would have. How is that arranged?

TATE: Members are invited to do press conferences, with the exception of leadership. The Speaker and the Majority and Minority Leader can ask for the studio space, and if it is not booked for anyone else, they get it automatically, and in that order. So it's a hierarchy thing. But below that, every Member has to be invited by the press. Now, that's not true in the other galleries. The print gallery, I think, they let the Members just come up, but then there's no gear involved.

In our case, it's for two different reasons: one, the space is so small that you would have Members who just wanted to talk—without having people who wanted to talk to them, booking it—and there's so little space, you really can't do that. And it's the only place you can go live as easily as you can. So we needed to have the press control that because that's the only place they have. Members can do things in their offices; they can do things in their committee rooms; they can do things in other rooms throughout the building. Every other square inch is controlled by either the Speaker or an individual Member or a committee. This was the only place where reporters had the ability to get who they wanted to when they wanted to. So that rule is in the rules that we go by. And, occasionally, that presents a problem, because you have some Members who do not understand why that exists like it is. But it's partly for Members' protection, too, because if you have Members come up, and there's nobody to cover them, they've wasted their time and wasted their effort. So it may not be something their staff person wants to tell them—that their Member is not wanted—but it's something that needs to be clear, so this way, if a Member is invited up, you know he's going to get covered. And we actually have groups, broadcast groups, that will—they cover niche Members of Congress, so you'll have some Members of Congress in certain categories who will always get covered because they have broadcast groups that have that as their focus. So you're going to get more use of the studios for those reasons than you would for a broad national look. But then the media's fracturing anyway, so you're getting more and more niche groups covering, so that may not be, necessarily, a bad thing.

JOHNSON: In what other areas on the House side can Members be interviewed on camera?

TATE: Well, it was at the elm tree and triangle. Now, the elm tree only had electronics. So when we did a press conference outside—and there's an area off the Cannon building that we moved when the construction was going on. That's where we moved it, over to the Cannon terrace. So the Cannon terrace is one opportunity. It's not as pretty a view, but it's one place where can do outside press conferences while the construction was going on. I don't know where they are in that, whether they've moved the elm tree back or not. And I believe the elm tree died, so I think they had to take it down. {laughter} But when you'd have a press conference at the triangle, you would have to drag your cables across because that didn't have a box with the electronics underground. So that was another thing we tried to get in, and I don't know if that actually did stay in the plan. That was under negotiation when I left. That was a problem.

JOHNSON: We need to pause for a moment.

END OF PART ONE ~ BEGINNING OF PART TWO

JOHNSON: One area I was hoping that you could talk a little bit more about was the staff: the staff that was under you when you were the director. Did they typically have backgrounds in journalism?

TATE: The one thing we didn't try to do, originally, was hire journalists. There is a hierarchy, and there is a mindset about being a journalist. And people think that they want to change and do something else, but unless they're really sure, supporting journalists does not put you in the same level, either in status—if you want to call it that—or in the minds of the people they came from, working with. So you're either a journalist or you're not. And I never

have been, and I didn't want to hire people who would decide, "Oh, I'm disappointed. It's not my byline. It's not my picture. It's not my words out there. It's somebody else's, and all I'm doing is assisting them." But that's a huge "all I'm doing," and as far as I'm concerned, it's a very important part, is the assistance that you do to make these people's jobs easier, and especially now with how much they try to do and cover a story, if you can get them the tools to do it, they can do the story better.

So I've always thought it was a very honorable job, but I wanted to be sure, as I hired people, that I didn't get people who would be dissatisfied that they were not doing the job, any more than you would if you had staff who wanted to be a Member. You've got to support something and be happy that that's what you're doing. So we have people who have a combination of skills. People who have either worked with the press, or have been press but have decided that that isn't what they want, and you're pretty convinced that they are sure. One of my fairly recent hires, she had come from a news background. Several of them had come from news backgrounds, but you knew as you were interviewing 25 people that this one actually really did want a change and didn't want to continue being a newsperson. And that is a consideration you have to have.

The qualities you need: you look for people who understand the importance of the government and are clear about where to go to get information. You're never going to find anybody who knows everything about the way the House works. I didn't know everything about how the House works when I left. But people who are curious about the House, and who care about it, and who think that it's . . . If you're working there at midnight on a Saturday night because the State of the Union is coming up, or . . . Ford happened to

die the day after Christmas. You've got to have people who think that's a valuable role to play. It can't be somebody who's looking at the clock. So those were criteria. We wanted somebody to know some news and some House. If we could get that combination, we felt like that would be what we would go for. And they were not entry-level jobs. We managed to get the job up to a level where you could get people who were not right out of school. It took a while to do that. It took several classifications to do that, but we did get to that point.

JOHNSON: Was there ever any tension with the broadcasters because they thought that you should have a strict background in journalism to understand what their needs were?

TATE: No, because they all love to tell you what they need. {laughter} All of them want to teach you how much they know. And that's great. I mean, if you think that's fun, then you can learn an awful lot. I mean, everything I learned about . . . I have no technical background at all, but what I do know, I know from Peter Doherty with ABC and Tom Seem with CBS and Larry Gaetano with NBC because they were just so generous with their information and with explaining things to me. There's a lot of it I'll never understand, but if I know the right questions to ask, I know when we have a role to play. I mean, I would sit through the Technical Advisory Subcommittee meetings. There'd be 50 technicians and me, and when they'd get to the point where they'd stop talking the technical Swahili that they did, they would say, "And we need permission to do X," and then I'd put up my hand, "Okay, I can take care of that." {laughter} You need to be there. You know, things like the original . . . When you have television feeds

going out of the building, you have to build an infrastructure to get them out of the building.

We had begun wiring the building in the '80s, and we had a small space underneath the center steps of the Capitol, near the carryout, that was called the hub room. And most of the electronics came into there, and then went out the Senate side. And at one point, the Clerk of the House, Ben Guthrie was the Clerk, and he was going to leave. He was leaving. And there was a vacuum. And there was a little space connected to that that didn't belong to anybody. And I knew we were going to need more space, and I managed to get that. I think Wright was the Speaker then. Went down and we talked to everybody who could possibly need it, and nobody needed it right that minute, and we got our names on it before anybody realized that it was gone. And that expanded to the second section of the hub room. It's as simple as that. You've got to know enough to know when to pounce {laughter} because if you don't . . . you'll never know . . . I don't want to be a technician.

But understanding enough about the technical side of things makes you know if you put the cameras here, they're going to move because it's not a good shot. If you put them over there, they can't get power, they're going to move. So if you know what they're doing, then you can get the setup so that everybody comes together, and it works. When Tom DeLay was having difficulty with the press, he would purposefully pick rooms to have press conferences with, and he would go ahead and have the press conference, but he would do it in a place where he knew we couldn't get live coverage out of it. And we would say, "Don't do it there; go here because we'd like to carry

it live." And he'd say, "We're going to do it there." Okay. {laughter} He controls the room, and he can do that.

JOHNSON: So back to that point of you can offer recommendations, but they don't have to be followed.

TATE: Right.

JOHNSON: Back to your staff, how exactly does the hiring process work?

TATE: I was director so long that they . . . and my committee changed. I'd have a different chairman every year, and a different complexion of committee every year. And in the beginning, I would have more involvement with the committee, with more involvement over who I was going to hire. Now, on the House side, the rules are very different than on the Senate side. On the House side, there is a rule that says the Executive Committee designates the employees. And that has traditionally—by the Speaker's Office—been presumed to allow us to choose our employees, and my Executive Committee always gave me very far reign. I would get applications in when we had a vacancy, and then I would interview only the most qualified people, and the ones out of that group I would take before the committee. I never had a committee reverse me on a decision I was going to make. I occasionally had some who wanted a friend to be considered, and we would always consider them. But if they were not appropriate, I never had somebody forced on me.

And the Speaker's Office has always stayed out of the hiring, with two exceptions. Under [Speaker] O'Neill, I had promoted someone and the Doorkeeper's Office decided to put a hold on that promotion because they

wanted consideration for whether or not this person should be promoted. The Speaker's Office decided . . . I talked to some of the staff, and I had my chairman go with me to talk to the staff, saying, "We don't—we, the Executive Committee, does not—we would like our members to choose these people, and unless you want to fight with us, please leave this alone." And the Doorkeeper was told by the Speaker's staff, "Don't mess with it. This isn't a fight we want."

We did have a condition where I asked for, in the impeachment hearings, with . . . no, it wasn't impeachment. It was the beginning of the Republican Congress [104th Congress]. It was so busy. It was literally 24/7, and they were trying to change everything. They were doing meetings constantly. They were talking about changing the way television was covered. They even talked about whether or not they were going to have groups come in and cover the House Chamber separately. I mean, there was so much energy and ideas going on that we were running—and so much television coverage going on—we just couldn't cover everything.

I asked them for a temporary staff position, and they gave me somebody who on paper looked great. She had worked in administration jobs but with press. And the fact that it was Republican—it didn't really matter, because we are nonpartisan. We work for the Speaker. Doesn't matter who the Speaker is. It was a couple months in. She was going to be there something like six months, and it was a couple months in before we realized that she really was an operative and had a very strong opinion about the way the press covered, and was not nonpartisan, and was not bipartisan, but was very aggressively acting against the media and didn't like the media. Well, it was a bad fit. And on paper, she looked fine. The Speaker's Office did not require

us to take her. I asked for a position. They offered us several candidates. She was the one I selected. So it was not that they had forced her on me, but when we realized that she was a very bad fit for our particular operation—because we work for other Members, too. Other Members are up there all the time. You can't have a member of the staff who's disrespectful of Republican Members, or Democratic Members, or their staffs at any point, at any time. We had a vacancy come up about that time, and the Speaker's Office wanted us to look carefully at keeping her because she was somebody they liked. And we wanted to hire someone who was on the Senate side, and they turned down our first recommendation. So we said, "Okay, we'll keep looking. But we're not taking her." And we did another round of interviews. And by the time we got over everybody's nose being bent out of shape about it, she had left—willingly—and we put in the same person we wanted to hire to begin with, and he was approved. It was one of those things where everybody was kind of in a snit, but not enough to force us to take somebody. We have hired people with Republican backgrounds and with Democratic backgrounds, but not with directed, aggressive backgrounds.

JOHNSON: You talked about some of the qualities for a good staffer for the [House] Radio-TV Gallery. What are some of the qualities that would make an effective director, in your opinion?

TATE: Oh! Flexibility. Anticipation. And listening. And just basically liking what you're doing. Liking the people that you're working with and thinking that's important. I think that's contagious. I think if you are running an office and you're the first one out the door, you're complaining about long hours, or you don't think what you're doing is important, that that filters down. I don't think you can build that up. I think you can't just say it, that, "Okay,

you've got to stay late." I think because you've got to have a willingness to work as hard as anybody in your office. And that sets an example. I think you lead by example a lot more than you lead by anything else. And I've had bad bosses. I've had a couple of bad bosses, and one terrific guy who was not a good boss. But I learned what not to be from several examples of people who were not good bosses and good administrators. I've never had any kind of training in it, but it's fairly obvious as pretty much the golden rule.

JOHNSON: You've talked about working closely with Members' staff, specifically the press secretaries and the communication directors.

TATE: Right.

JOHNSON: What kind of dealings did you have with them?

TATE: Well, and in the Speaker's case that was not always true. Occasionally there would be somebody else in the Speaker's Office that we would work more directly with, depending on the Speaker, because in some cases, the Speaker's press secretary really was the press spokesman and was not the administrative, institutional person. So there were—especially under Hastert's rule—there was a press secretary named John Feehery, who was a terrific press secretary, and he dealt with the Members. And if we had a press question, a substance question about what the Speaker was doing or that sort of thing, we would go to John. But if there was something connected with the chamber—which for broadcast coverage, frequently was—or with the building that came under the chief of staff, Ted Van Der Meid. He may have been chief counsel. He may not have been chief of staff.[9] I never paid much attention to titles because it didn't matter. I've always felt like you figure out who's who, not

by what the card says, but by who shows up and who delivers. And Ted was the one who made the decisions about anything that changed in the chamber or in the House side of the Capitol, not John. So when I went to do the Capitol Visitor Center, he was in charge of that. I worked with him on that, not with John. And when it came to any kind of coverage for the lying in states, that was Ted, not John. And when we did the Federal Hall event, that was Ted.[10] So occasionally, it was not the press secretary. Most of the time it was because most of the time that was just the way the office was structured. But you'd find the person who was dealing with the area that you needed permission in.

JOHNSON: Did you have press secretaries and/or communication directors for Members calling your office asking for advice? For example, "There's a journalist or a broadcaster that wants to interview the Member, so do you know anything about this person?"

TATE: Very rarely. I mean, the House Members and their press secretaries were very savvy. Occasionally, when we had a scandal, where you had a Member who didn't get national press, then you might get some inquiries about how best to handle a national story, but they frequently don't listen. That's where we can really be helpful because we do understand how the national press works. And groups . . . press secretaries . . . what was his name? The one who was . . . it starts with a C. The one who was in trouble, from California. I can see his face right in front of me. It was the August before we had 9/11.

JOHNSON: Oh, [Gary] Condit.

TATE: Condit. His staff we worked with to some extent, to try to help him get through how difficult that was. But then I think that was Member-driven. I think the Member didn't want too much assistance and got bad press because of it.

JOHNSON: Was there any kind of movement to organize the press secretaries or the communication directors from your office, just to troubleshoot?

TATE: No. About the only thing we would do with them as a group—we would do orientations if they wanted to. If they wanted to, we would try to speak to them. For a State of the Union, we would always go down and talk to them about how that was going to work, and how to get their Member there, and give them the guidelines, and give them the maps for where their Members would be stationed and where the groups would be stationed. So there wasn't a lot of that that we really needed to do. They do their own press secretary things. The good press secretaries hang out in the office and come chat up the members both of the staff and of the members of the press. We worked a lot more directly with leadership press secretaries and committee press secretaries. And the press secretaries themselves worked more directly with the members of the press.

If I were still in the job, and I was leaving the job, I was recommending—particularly to the younger staff members—that you ought to get to know all these press secretaries. In my case, {laughter} because I think a Member had to stay there for a while before I had to get to know them, and their press secretary had to get them on the radar before I was going to deal with them, not because I'm so important, but just because they weren't going to come through the gallery. They weren't going to be on camera that much. So

that's something they should be doing, that the staff should be getting as many contacts all along the way that they possibly can. You don't understand it until you turn around and realize "Oh! The people I knew 25 years ago are now doing something that's really useful to me now, and they're still my friends." If they were your friends then and they're your friends now, that just makes life easier. You can't teach that. You can try to encourage people to do that. But I think it's really important for the staff to do that, and I didn't do as much of it as I should have. I was very fortunate because people that I knew way back when came back around and ended up being in the right place at the right time for business purposes. But that's something that I would continue to encourage—if I were still there—the staff to do, is to get to know every press secretary you possibly can, but even more to get to know the Members. The House Members are not exclusive at all. Senators, on the other hand, tend to be somewhat closeted away from staff. But House Members come without staff a lot, and House Members will sit and chat with anybody, if they want to. There are ones that won't, but on the whole, they're very accessible, not only to the press, but staff shouldn't hesitate to get to know Members as well.

JOHNSON: I realize that we have a little time left. Just one quick question to end.

TATE: Okay.

JOHNSON: Can you roughly assign the percentages of time that you worked with the leadership as one, the press, and then rank-and-file staff, like we just mentioned (press secretaries and communication directors)?

TATE: Me as director?

JOHNSON: Yes.

TATE: I would say probably . . . and you're saying leadership, press secretaries, and press? I would say 50 percent of what I did was with press. Probably 25 percent was with leadership. And the other 25 percent would be not only with press secretaries, but with press secretaries of committees and other leadership offices, like the Clerk's Office, or the Parliamentarian's Office, or that.

JOHNSON: Great. Thank you very much.

TATE: You're very welcome!

## — TINA TATE —

## INTERVIEW FOUR

**JOHNSON:** This is Kathleen Johnson interviewing Tina Tate, the former director of the House Radio-TV Gallery. This is the fourth interview. The date is August 28th, 2008, and the interview is taking place in Tina Tate's Newseum office in Washington, D.C. Today I'd like to start with a few follow-up questions based on your previous interviews. You briefly talked about the [President] Nixon impeachment in the last interview, and I realize this was at the beginning of your career, but do you recall if you had any specific responsibilities with these proceedings?

**TATE:** Not very much. Primarily Mike Michaelson, who was our acting director at the time, because our director had left, and Mike, I don't think, had been made director yet. But there wasn't a big role for me. I had literally started the year before. So I had been in the job less than—well, about a year and months, that's all. So I was the bottom person in the office. I would go over from time to time at his instruction and either observe or assist in some way, but a very minor role.

**JOHNSON:** You commented in an earlier interview that you used to be permitted to bring in cameras to the Capitol for special events and for ceremonial events. Can you provide an example of one of these events?

**TATE:** You mean in the House Chamber?

**JOHNSON:** Yes, exactly.

TATE: Yes, Flag Day. They used to do a big ceremony on the [House] Floor on Flag Day [June 14], and we would bring cameras in. And sometimes there would be interest in covering it. And there was a Member from Oklahoma who used that [footage] in a campaign, I believe, and they discontinued that. The House discontinued having that ceremony and discontinued allowing people to cover it, because it was used in a political campaign. He did get defeated, too. I don't remember his name.

JOHNSON: You seemed to indicate that it became less common for you to be able to bring cameras into the House Chamber.

TATE: Well, they stopped doing a lot of the ceremonies. But when they did big ceremonial things in the chamber—there were some tributes that we did, some Joint Meetings. But there were other events that they had. Now they do them other places. They don't do them in the chamber. And we can still cover them. But they do a lot of them in Statuary Hall. The big things in the [Capitol] Rotunda require an act of Congress. So those are much more controlled and much more seldom. That's usually the Holocaust ceremony and lying in states and at that level. You don't have too many other ones. But there are a good many now in Statuary Hall.

JOHNSON: In the previous interview, you spoke about the change in party control in 1995. How would you characterize the reforms made by the Republicans during this period and how did it affect your day-to-day proceedings in your office?

TATE: Well, there was a lot more speculation about whether or not to privatize the House Floor coverage at that time. There were even meetings with the

leadership and Members about whether they wanted to leave the control of the cameras in the House and have the House continue to operate a recording-studio version of a feed, or whether we open it up to cameras coming in. C-SPAN did make the case to bring cameras in, as did the networks. C-SPAN wanted to bring cameras in for gavel-to-gavel coverage. They have renewed that request, I think, with every new Speaker. I don't know if they do it every Congress. But certainly with every new Speaker because I know they did with Speaker Pelosi, some version of a request to bring cameras into the chamber. The networks did not want to come in for gavel-to-gavel coverage. They wanted to come in and cover on a spot basis, whenever they wanted to. And there were serious discussions that went on. I was not privy to the decision-making. I was in on some of the meetings that were held and some of the conversations with the bureau chiefs and staff and Members. I don't know why they didn't make the decision to open it up. But my guess is the one thing that the House Recording Studio provides that no outside organization, including C-SPAN, would provide is a legislative record of the House on video. And that's one of its functions.

The other function is to provide that record to any accredited member of the gallery. I think actually that that was an appropriate function to continue under the House Recording Studio. Whether augmenting that by bringing additional cameras in—even C-SPAN cameras are not under the control of the House, so you have given away the ability to have the archive of the House under its own control. C-SPAN's mission has always been to do an unedited, complete record of the House. But that's their mission. That's not their requirement. They can change their mission. They're an outside organization. A lot of people are confused about this. They don't put the House broadcast and the Senate broadcast on because there's any agreement

or arrangement or contract with the House and Senate to do that. They do that because that's the mission of their organization. If they chose to change it, they're an outside, private, nonprofit organization, they could change it. And then the House would have no historical record of its own proceedings. So I think having the House Recording Studio was something they really needed to keep, and if anybody asked me, I said, "If you want to add something to it that's fine, but you want to keep a House entity recording the House proceedings just like you have House transcripts."

You've been into the chamber. There isn't a lot of room to put additional camera coverage. And to cover the room thoroughly, completely, because of the size of it, you would need multiple camera positions in there. So that I'm sure is one of the considerations, was the logistics. But logistics can be surmounted. Certainly the cameras are getting smaller and smaller. I don't know if at any point they will reconsider that. Like I said, I know that C-SPAN did do another letter at the beginning of Speaker Pelosi's term to ask for coverage.

The other group, which I'm not responsible for and don't really speak for, but the still photographers frequently request in writing for the ability to cover because that's one group that is not allowed in the chamber except on ceremonial events. Even though we are not allowed to take other cameras in, our own cameras with our editorial decision of what shot to use, we are given a feed that can be used for covering for radio and television. Of course, the audio is the audio. So there is no specific or clear reason to have a separate audio system because you're getting the full audio stream of anybody who is speaking and any noise or disturbance that goes on. So that would be a redundancy. It isn't something that would improve what you saw as a viewer

or what you heard as a listener. Additional cameras would change. If you've watched the State of the Union coverage with the nine cameras that the networks use versus the floor feed of day-to-day coverage, it would change. But you wouldn't get that kind of coverage on a regular basis. You'd only get it when there was a major news event. So I don't know whether they'll reconsider that for the still photographers who do not get . . . {telephone ringing}

JOHNSON: That's okay. You can keep talking. It's fine.

TATE: Okay. That's the one group that doesn't get any coverage on a day-to-day basis available.

JOHNSON: So would you say that your office then in 1995, with the changeover in parties, that there wasn't a major impact on your day-to-day functions in your office?

TATE: Well, there would have been if that had changed. And there were lots of discussions about other things that were going on. One thing that did change, but not in the immediate future, it changed about six months in. The House Rules, as you know, are adopted at the beginning of each session. There were major changes in procedure. Any time you change procedure that changes how we have to explain things to the floor. We have to know what changes affect the procedure and how that'll affect a vote so we can explain it to the news people. There was a change out of the Rules Committee later, not in the initial few days, that changed an archaic rule. There was a committee rule that said if you—I think it's Rule 11, but they've changed the numbering on the system, so I'm not sure it's still Rule 11, but it

was at the time—if you were a witness who had been subpoenaed to speak at a committee, you could decline having television coverage or still coverage. And this had been in place for years and years and had very rarely been invoked, but when it was it meant that the committee was still open, and you would have reporters in the room, you would have recordings going on, but you would not be able to take pictures and you couldn't do audio-and-video recording and still pictures. But the print people would still be in the room doing stories. So the committee was essentially semi-opened, and the event went on, and it was very odd.

Sometimes they'd bring in screens, and there would be all sorts of little oddnesses they would do. And it was infrequent, but it would be maybe once every three or four years. There would be an incident where the witness—because it was a hostile witness usually—would invoke it. And if it's invoked then we can cover everything up to that person, and then not that person, and then everything after that person.

We didn't actually petition to have it changed. There was a witness that was going to invoke it that the Republicans wanted to have on camera in the hearing. So they sort of inspired the change and encouraged the media to come in and testify about it. Well, in our rules, media can't lobby, so no member of our Executive Committee, no member of our Radio and Television Correspondents' Association, can testify to change anything in Congress. What is her name? Barbara Cochran, who was the—executive director, I think, was her title—of the National Association of Broadcasters, the NAB, came in and testified on behalf of broadcasters around the—she was either—no, she was not NAB. She was RTNDA, Radio Television News Directors Association. She testified for the change, and since the

Members wanted the change, they did, they changed it. And we didn't really start that. We supported it. I staffed for her to talk before the Rules Committee and that was changed, but that was not in the immediate future.

And really it makes all the sense in the world because it was an archaic rule long before people had—now you got cell phones, and what are you going to do? You're going to have somebody in the audience take the picture. So there really isn't a control mechanism that would have worked. What they did was make it essentially if the committee is open, the committee is open. If the committee votes to go into executive session, then everything goes out. And that was a fair and appropriate response, and we certainly supported it. But there were some other procedural things that affected our coverage. Nothing that affected our day-to-day operations. The fact that we kept our jobs was probably the fundamentally best part of it. {laughter}

JOHNSON: You mentioned just a minute ago about cell phones and people being able to take pictures with cell phones, which has led me to a question I wanted to ask you about. With the smaller recording equipment like cell phones, camcorders, and the increasing technology, what challenge does this create for the House and the gallery in trying to control what pictures are actually taken?

TATE: Well, that fight started big time about four years ago. Brian Wilson was my chairman [of the Executive Committee of Correspondents], and he was championing—there is a camcorder version that the producers are starting to use, and because everybody's getting leaner and meaner and there's so much conversion going on in the newsroom, camcorders were being issued to producers in case the cameras didn't get there at the time that an event

needed to take place. They use them a lot for stakeouts and things like that in case the camera doesn't get there before the principal does. They are usable on air, but they're not preferable, so you would not use them if it wasn't just exactly what you needed because the quality is not the same as a regular camera. So they're a news-gathering tool that augments the really sophisticated cameras. And it was on the Senate side that he was battling with the Senate Rules about where you could be with cameras and where you could be with this type of camera.

There was a lot of reluctance from the other galleries—the still gallery didn't have a lot of reluctance with this. It was the print and periodical galleries that were very reluctant to go with our gallery to petition for more use of this type of camera because I think, shortsightedly, that they felt like they had more access where cameras weren't, and they got better sound bites or more candid interviews where cameras were not, and they did not want to introduce another level of camera. Why I say it was shortsighted is because now almost all newspapers are issuing their newspaper people with camcorders, because they've all got Web sites. And they're all using their Web sites. So I suspect in the next few years almost every reporter of any kind will carry more than a pad and pencil. They'll carry a camera as well. And I see the entire industry as converging. There's so much more news seen and watched on your computer and through the Web that that is going to drive more and more audio and video coverage to the Web. It's increasing by the minute. And they just won't be able to avoid it. So eventually everybody will carry equipment. And our position was you had the same rules—we wanted the same rules enforced for equipment, have the rules go directly for equipment. It happened to be a Senate fight because there's a location on the Senate side called the Ohio Clock, where they would allow one camera. But

if anybody was moving anywhere else in the corridor they could still talk to the Members but they couldn't get them on camera. So they had to take them to that stakeout position.

On the House side there has not been a real push to change any of that. And I had similar discussions with my leadership and with the Sergeant at Arms' Office on our side about the fact that this was coming and they need to be aware that there is a pressure to use this kind of equipment, and that the equipment is what the rules should go by, not by which gallery you're credentialed to. If you're a print reporter and you're carrying this gear, the rules of carrying cameras should apply to you. And in theory anyway, the other galleries agreed with that, but they weren't interested in pushing the envelope for increased access of those cameras.

JOHNSON: Was there any concern in your office or with the House leadership that if a rule like this was passed that you might lose control of access?

TATE: Oh, yes, I'm sure. But unless you're going to exclude Members and Members' staff from using cell phones, you either have to keep cell phones off the floor, or you're going to have coverage. The equipment is ubiquitous now. You really have to make rules that make sense. Here at the Newseum we have rules about not taking photographs. And then we've got little signs up, and we wink at it unless somebody comes in and sets up a tripod and puts up lights. And we would not go challenge them because almost any piece of equipment you carry can take a picture too.

I was at the Dalai Lama ceremony after I retired [in 2007], and you could barely see the Dalai Lama for everybody's hands. Literally, the whole sea of

guests sitting in their seats had their hands up with their cell phones taking his picture as he was speaking in the Rotunda of the Capitol. Now are you going to tell every member of the public they can't bring one in? Every staff member, every Member's wife or husband that they cannot take a cell phone into a ceremony? I don't know. It's a little hard to police. And I can tell you for sure that the Capitol Police do not want to be in charge of policing pictures.

JOHNSON: Staying with the topic of technology, do you remember the first live television broadcast of the House in March of 1979?

TATE: Oh, yes, I was there. It wasn't very exciting. There was no ceremony. That was just the day we began. Certainly I have had many conversations over the years with Charlie Johnson, the Parliamentarian of the House, about how much that has changed the way business is conducted in the House. And, in his opinion, not favorably. In my opinion it has changed a great deal, but life has changed, what can you do? You have to understand that changes in technology will change how things are perceived, how things are provided. Is it better to have the House business conducted like it is now with television or the way it was without television? Before we had television cameras in there the speeches in the House generally were more spontaneous; you had better speakers a lot of times. But you also had the business actually being conducted in the entire room. Once television got introduced less and less of the business was conducted in public. The procedures went ahead in public. The posturing went ahead in public. But not the real business.

The sunshine laws about having every meeting held in public, every vote held in public, does get the procedure on record, and I think that's fundamentally

very important because you need to understand what your government is doing. It needs to be a transparent government. That's what we are all about down here. That's what is really the basis of a democracy, that it is a transparency. But then the business gets conducted behind closed doors no matter what because the agreements, the conversations, the personalities drive the real business. So whether it's in public without cameras or behind closed doors because there are cameras in the public areas, it's still going to happen without—you're not going to hear the private conversations that make the legislation and the legislative process move forward. You just won't. You never will. You'll never know the interactions of a Cabinet exchange with a President unless you get the archived recordings after the fact. That's just not going to happen. We get it after the fact, so your history is going to be more accurate. But you'll find out then some things you thought were true are not, and some things you thought weren't true are. So there's no way to make it—it was not reasonable to continue to have the House and Senate off camera. The cameras do change how Congress does its work, how Congress does its deliberations, and how Congress is perceived. The Members who are good on television come off being better Members than Members who are not. And that's not necessarily true. Some of our most productive workhorse Members are not particularly photogenic.

What has made it less of a change now than it was in '79 when it first happened, in '79 you didn't have a lot of Members who had run television campaigns. Now every Member has to run a television campaign. So every Member is used to television. So it would have changed gradually anyway. Every Member is used to having television cameras. Now they have to worry about the cameras on YouTube even when they're not televised events. George Allen is a perfect example of having cameras where he didn't expect it

and didn't authorize it and went off record, and it became a news story without his approval.

So the technology is all pushing in that direction. So as Members understand that every time they're in public in any way—and sometimes when they're not—they will be on camera, then they get more and more natural on camera, and what they're doing they know has to be something they're willing to see on camera. So the change was coming with or without the Members. If it didn't come in '79, by now it would have to be there because it would make no sense at all to have it behind closed doors, at least the public part of it.

JOHNSON: How do you think the televised proceedings changed the reporting of Congress?

TATE: That actually has been fairly dramatic—the reporting of Congress—because you didn't have televised hearings, you needed to be there. So a member of the press needed to sit in the chamber and listen to the speeches. Now we kept a running log, and we would alert people when major things were happening. But you had much more—in the early days, in the '70s and '80s, you had a House producer and a House reporter for every major network. And they were assigned to the House. You had other outlets that had someone who covered the House all the time. Newspapers had people who covered the House or the Senate or both all the time. Now there are very few reporters—broadcast reporters—on the House side. CNN still keeps a reporter. MSNBC has a reporter. But it's mostly producers. That doesn't sound like it's a big deal, but it is. Because if you're trying to get one of the 22 minutes of a newscast on a national network, you have to sell a story

because you've got such a vital story. So for the national networks—the broadcast networks, not the cable networks—for the broadcast networks, you don't get the chance to get on air unless you've got a reporter who's going to be on air who is invested in getting that story on air and convincing his editors here—the desk in Washington, the desks in New York—that this is worth the 80 seconds it may get on the evening news or the morning shows.

So for the broadcast networks, which still have the major—even though their audience is shrinking, you're still talking millions of people—they don't really cover the House and Senate except for very small snippets, very big events or changes. Now they certainly did a lot of coverage with Speaker Pelosi and the change of Congress and that sort of thing [in the 110th Congress]. But on a day-to-day basis, you will not see it.

The cable networks on the other hand do large blocks of it. So you get a large block of cable coverage of interesting parts of Congress. So it's increased in some areas and decreased in other areas. The cable networks have a lot of time to fill, and a good debate on Congress might make air if it comes when they don't have a competing program they're putting on. So in some ways you've expanded the coverage because of cable, where you've decreased it and really gotten less and less in the broadcasts. And you can tell it in the network radio. Network radio has shrunk so much that ABC and CBS are about the only major networks that report anymore. And they have House and Senate correspondents, but those same correspondents can be sent to do other things as well. You don't have nearly as—WTOP, I think, is the only local station that has a correspondent who's unique to Congress, and that's Dave McConnell. So it has changed emphasis. So in some areas it's expanded coverage, and in others it has shrunk.

JOHNSON: How did it change your job in the House Radio-TV Gallery?

TATE: Well, the big change was when you got live television. I mean live, 24-hour news coverage. The big change was when you—CNN did a lot of coverage and was competing with the networks, but not directly. They had 24 hours, and you would have to make arrangements not just for the networks to be there, but that you've got this other group. Things that the networks wouldn't have covered CNN would. So that extended it a little. Where the big change came was when MSNBC and Fox came online. So now CNN had competition for 24 hours. So it wasn't just more stories. Now all those stories, in order to be compelling, had to go live. And that's the big change for us. It's one thing to set up a stakeout; it's another thing to set up a live stakeout, and that expanded. Now we'd been gradually increasing the number of places in the building where live capability was possible. That has been a progression. We thought, in terms of any construction, we've got to be sure that we've got live coverage, even though we didn't know how much room we were going to have. We went ahead and wired anyplace that they opened up the walls. We did that for the HC rooms [in the Capitol], and it really served us well because if you had not had that wiring in place, you can always go back into it, but you tear up the building, and it costs five times as much. But wiring the HC rooms down there so that we could always have a live stakeout for the conferences or caucuses was major.

Now since the three of them actually are competing, any time we go in to negotiate with the Speaker's Office, we have to negotiate not only what they're doing but how we can carry it live. And that just is more effort and more work. In some cases we have very savvy Speaker staffs about logistics. In some we don't. So you're the eyes and ears for both sides. You do want to

make the case for why live coverage is necessary. You do want to make the case for why the expense of it or the urgency of it. Sometimes the Members and even leadership think because they're on camera so much and live capability is everywhere in the building that they will forget that you have to get crews in order to get live coverage, and they will decide they want to come up and make a statement and do it spontaneously. Well, live television isn't spontaneous. {laughter} We have to get the crew there. Everything else can be ready, but you've got to get the crew there, and there are not as many crews as there used to be. So we've had some events that did not go off exactly as planned because they said, "Oh, we'll be there in 15 minutes." Well, okay, fine, then you're going to be talking to me. You won't be talking to a camera. It's not here. {laughter} So that's something you have to work with and say, "Oh, yeah, I know it's great, and we do want to cover it, but please give us time to get the crews." Even from the Senate side. If they're on the Senate side, we've got to get them over to the House side and get them plugged in.

JOHNSON: Would you characterize then the competing cable networks as one of the biggest changes that you witnessed?

TATE: Yes, absolutely. For our office it was one of the fundamental changes in terms of how we have to operate and what concerns we have to have.

JOHNSON: Keeping with technology, how has the gallery and House Leadership handled the new electronic media of blogging, both audio, and in your case I would think more relevant, video blogging?

TATE: Well, our gallery (the Executive Committee of Correspondents), when it really wasn't blogging so much as the Web generally, when the Web began to have a lot of news coverage and news started going to the Web and then you had the bubble of Web sites, we had to figure out how to deal with that. And our gallery wanted to embrace new technology. We didn't have positions; it isn't a press gallery on the Hill because the print people didn't let the radio and television people join their gallery. We didn't want to have an exclusion of any new gallery. We didn't want a new gallery created. Anybody who carried audio and video equipment we wanted to embrace. So when the Web started having unique Web news outlets, they would apply to the other galleries because initially most of them started out as print. Their criteria are different, and some of them require subscribers and some of these did not meet the specific criteria they had. As long as they had audio and video and were news, we took them. And even at the conventions in 2000, we had news groups that were Web-based only that had skyboxes. Then, of course, you had the Web—the bubble burst. And most of those companies went out of business. And now largely it's the Web sites of major news organizations, with some exceptions. You've got some that are freestanding, and you are increasing that freestanding. So the blogging part of it we were just beginning to deal with. One of the criteria that we have is that you've got audio and/or video. And most bloggers are not doing as much of that. Although there is more and more.

Here at the Newseum we had a gentleman—his name, I think it's Robert Scoble—came through on a tour with a device about the size of my hand and interviewed my executive director—no, it was my vice president—on a walking tour of the building going live to air to the Web as he was walking. My staff person next door could see it while we were walking in the building.

Now the quality is really terrible right this minute, but that kind of thing is coming.

We didn't have bloggers applying to the [House] Radio-TV Gallery when I was there. They were applying to the other galleries because they were still at that stage. You're talking over a year ago. They were still print. You're getting more bloggers now who do carry equipment. One of the things at the conventions this year [2008]—they had bloggers embedded in the convention delegations. At the 2004 convention, we did not have bloggers applying. Whether they did this year or not I don't know. They didn't apply to us. They applied to the other galleries. If they didn't get credentialed by the other galleries, the party would credential them, if they were favorable, because the party can make a decision to allow anybody else it wants in.

The blogging community tends to be at least for right now more Democratic, where the talk shows tend to be more Republican in their politics. So you get more support for some of the talk shows from Republican—like under Republican Speakers—occasionally they would have days when the talk shows would be invited in to do interviews with Members. They would find rooms for them and make arrangements for them and that didn't go through our gallery because they're not credentialed to the gallery. So we didn't really work with them. Where we worked with them at the conventions, we didn't work with them at the Capitol.

The Democrats would tend to do more with the blogging community. And I think you will have more and more of that because there is more. There's

so much blogging activity going on at the Democratic Convention and that community is a force it wasn't four years ago. It wasn't when I was there.

JOHNSON: Did you have to contend at all with the rising interest with the entertainment industry in trying to gain access to the Capitol like some of the cable networks (Comedy Central) trying to send their mock reporters to get interviews?

TATE: The parties didn't want to have to make a decision of who are news and who are not. At the conventions, Comedy Central would apply, and we would not credential them because we don't credential any organizations that aren't news. But we would send them to the party to get any other credentials they want, and if they wanted to buy in to a—we use skyboxes, and you see them as the convention coverage is going on, and we would assign skyboxes for the independent broadcasters. If an independent broadcaster got a skybox and was using it for his purposes, for his business legitimately, for three quarters of the time, and wanted to rent it to Comedy Central for the other part of the time, I didn't care. It was good resources going for a purpose that the party wanted. The party wanted them in there. I watch *The Daily Show* all the time. So it wasn't us trying to exclude them. We couldn't credential them directly. We could credential the group that would house their logistics, and they could figure out how to get them on and around.

Now for the Capitol—the only time we've had them ask for something directly—there was an occasion when Comedy Central asked for a direct feed of the State of the Union. We could not give that to them. But they have arrangements with the networks who put in a feed that is a subscriber feed. So I sent them directly to the networks. The network lawyers can figure out

whether they want to provide it. The House feed we can't provide to them because they do not qualify. The House feed can only be provided to accredited members of the gallery, which they are not, or to organizations that the Speaker specifically wishes to now. And that generally is an educational group or a group like VOA [Voice of America] that's State Department, therefore they can't be credentialed to the—they couldn't at the time; they couldn't be credentialed. So the Speaker can always make that decision, but he would have to be pretty broad about it if he gave it to Comedy Central. It would be something odd. But the networks don't have to be pure. And certainly they provide—they are clients in other ways. They get other feeds from these networks. So however it was resolved, I think the networks eventually figured it out. And Comedy Central as far as I know, I see clips from there, so I'm sure they get them.

JOHNSON: And if they wanted to interview Members they would just go through the Member's office?

TATE: They'd go directly to the Member. Well, you've seen *The Colbert Report*. We never worked with that, and yet you saw them in House Members' offices.

JOHNSON: The "Better Know Your District" series.

TATE: Yes, the "Better Know Your District." And that's something that Members either participated in because they chose to or didn't because they chose to. We didn't work it at all. They didn't contact our office at all because they couldn't be credentialed through us. So they didn't have the option to go to a stakeout or to cover a committee hearing or anything like that. But that

wasn't what they were doing. So it didn't matter. It was just Member to Member.

JOHNSON: Do you remember when you or the members of your office received BlackBerries?

TATE: I remember struggling with learning mine at the Federal Hall in 2002. So we had them before 2002, September of 2002. But if we had not had them in 2002, we really would have been out of luck, because in 2002—of course you had 2001—2001 was the 9/11. When Congress did the Federal Hall celebration, it was really to show the unity of the Congress with New York in New York's recovery from 2001. And that whole area was bombed out. You didn't have a lot of cell service. We were doing a function in an event space very close to the 9/11 hole, which was a huge hole still. There was no work space; there was no office space. Federal Hall is a National Park Service-run facility. So any communication we had had to be BlackBerry and cell, and the cell service still wasn't back. So that's when I got proficient with my BlackBerry by necessity. {laughter} A lot of the equipment we've had to learn, it's been because we've had to learn it. Not because I would have chosen to do it. We got the first computer in the chamber. Have we talked about that?

JOHNSON: I believe so.

TATE: But it's been by necessity. You need to use the tools that are out there. And every time you get a new tool—the groups that have been very aggressive about using the new communications tools have been the leadership press secretaries and the leadership press offices. They have done a lot of the

pushing of how we communicate. Now you can get e-mail alerts from a number of sources, not just news sources.

But we had started at the Hill an e-mail alert of what was going on on the floor to our gallery members. And you could choose to be on one of either list—the list for editorial people and the list for logistics people. The list for logistics people was primarily when things were changing, when things were set up, times, that sort of thing. And the editorial were all sorts of things about changes on the House Floor, what was going on. We didn't try to do commentary on it but to give you an alert—"Okay, this is where we are on the votes, you've got nine votes coming up." Because people would want to go find a Member during that period. So we started that I think about—oh, it was after we hired Kim [Oates]—so it would have been around 2004.

So the amount of information that we're pushing out of the office increased as the technology increased because there were fewer reporters, fewer producers doing the legwork, and they still needed the information. So staff began to do more of that type of information that we were pushing out. And this was not editorial content. It was meetings, changes in schedule, vote procedures, voting blocs, timing, that sort of thing. So that's been a new service that we started when I was still there, and I'm presuming they're still continuing to do it.

We were one of the first groups to do that. Now you're getting a lot of the press secretary groups are sending out e-mails. I don't know how the press keeps up with all the e-mails they get because there is just so much you can sign up for. Just because I'm interested I signed up for one of the—*National Journal*'s convention alert. And I get half a dozen of those a day just from

one organization. *National Journal* does them. *CongressDaily* does them. I'm sure *Roll Call*, *Politico*, all of those that cover the Hill probably do them. Any of them who have Web sites would have alerts that you can get. It seems like everybody's pocket would be going all the time. There is an overload level.

JOHNSON: You brought up a topic that I wanted to ask you about today, September 11th. First off, what are your personal recollections? And then we'll get on to how it affected the gallery and the House.

TATE: My personal recollections. I was running a little late that morning. I'd had a button crisis. I had a button come off of a blouse I wanted to wear and had to stop and sew the button on. So I was running a little late. And I was thinking this was a real annoyance, a real bummer this morning. I drove in and I parked underneath the Rayburn [Building], so I came around the [United States] Botanic Garden, so I don't see the Capitol dome coming in that way. And it was a beautiful September day. I had NPR on, and I was pulling into the garage. NPR was on live about the first plane. So I knew something had happened and was thinking something terrible happened. By the time I got into the office, we were all watching TV and this was right at the 9:00 hour. And the second plane went in. And then we knew that there was something more. It was fairly soon. It was still in New York. It was a disaster. And we watch disasters all the time. We've got three televisions on at least in the building, and I have a television on my desk in the office. So we always have the televisions on different stations, and you see a lot of mayhem and a lot of disasters. So you knew this was a major catastrophe. You knew it was in New York. So you were watching, and you were stunned, but you weren't nervous because it was in New York. Then when

the reports started coming in, Ted Barrett called me with a cell phone. He had gone outside. He was a reporter; he was a producer for CNN. He said, "Y'all might want to get out of the building because there's another plane." And I'm not processing. This is beyond what I'm—information that I'm not quite taking in what the meaning is.

I'm back in my office, and you see the crawl about the—you see footage of the people running out of the White House, and you're getting the reports that there's been a crash. And I turn around and look out my window, and I can see what I thought was the State Department, but it was the Pentagon, and I can see the smoke. And at that point I'm just stopped in my tracks because now it's directly affecting us. Now we're involved. And before that we had not been.

You still are not quite sure what to do next but you know there's a next. You know it affects you and you know it affects everybody around you. We were in session that day, and we had done morning business, and they'd gone out of morning business, and we were supposed to come back in at 10:00. And because I'm a creature of habit, and I'm used to procedural things taking place—and a logistics person thinks like that—I figured they will tell us what's happening at 10:00. The House came back in. But the chamber didn't have a picture up because they came back in before 10:00 to gavel the House out of session. Andy Elias, my staff person, was in the chamber, and he saw the Speaker [Hastert] being taken out almost with his feet not touching the ground by two security guards, and he called in to say, "They've taken the Speaker out of the chamber. We got to get out of here." I don't know that he said that, but he knew that there was—we were in danger. A police officer came by and said to—I don't even remember whether it was a

police officer or not. I just remember at that point that we realized that we were under attack, that we in Washington were under attack, that I picked up the phone that does our PA [public address] system and I just said, "We're evacuating now. The Capitol is evacuating now." Right now if you're in the Capitol now you know you've got the annunciators; you've got all kinds of ways to notify people. We had none of that then. Now we do a lot of that on BlackBerry. If there's some sort of alert like that, that goes out through the Capitol Police. There was none of that. None of that for anybody because we never perceived that we would need it.

JOHNSON: So there was no formal evacuation that you knew of.

TATE: We'd never done a formal evacuation plan. They got leadership out of there immediately. And as they did we cleared the building by making the announcement. And I made the announcement. I went upstairs to be sure that everybody upstairs—our upstairs area has very small booths that you can close your doors so you don't hear the PA system—and I made sure that everyone up there heard the announcement and was out, and I was the last person out.

When we got outside it was still a milling around because you still weren't sure what to do next. We didn't have any plan. Porter [J.] Goss stopped at the elm tree to do a press conference. He was the chairman of the Intelligence Committee. And some of our people were standing around, and then the police said, "There are more planes in the air. We're moving everybody out of here." But we had actually stopped, and we were trying to think what can we do to be useful at this point—what coverage can we help with, where can we go if we can't be in our offices that would make sense.

You're still working, but you're working under—what is our role now, that's one of the questions that you're trying to answer.

We'd had a little bit of that the day the officers were shot trying to figure out in the beginning what our role was. So we'd had a little inkling of what we needed to be doing when something like that happened. We're not producers. We're office staff for the Congress of the United States. So our role should be to assist people in covering the Congress. We don't have the role to put our lives on the line. Newspeople do that. [Public] officers do that. That's not what we either can do or should be asked to do. But you do want to see what else can we do to make this day productive. And quite honestly I think it's something like a funeral, as long as you have stuff to do it isn't quite as real.

So all my staff scattered. We had one staff person who lived on—she's not there any longer, but she lived on C Street. And I went to my son's—I went to try to find my son's office and he had an office on Pennsylvania Avenue. And I reached him by phone, and he said he'd left the office, that they'd closed the office. He told me, of course, to go home. I said, "Fine, well, I'm not going home." One, I couldn't get my car out if I wanted to. But, two, I didn't know where else to go. So I went to her house, and there was a note there. The other staff people had gone to her house knowing too that that would be a place to go and left a note that they had gone to Fox. And 400 North Capitol Street is where many of our news organizations are. Well, I've got my cell phone, which, of course, isn't working, and I can't find out what's going on. So I don't know what else is coming. So I went to the Fox bureau and found the other members of my staff who had not gone home because they were close by and stayed there most of the afternoon watching

and just checking to see if there was another congressional role. You couldn't leave anyway. You couldn't get to your car. You couldn't get out of town. And at least you could watch what was going on. I was not there when the—it was days later before I saw the pictures of the collapse of the buildings.

They started having press conferences from the police headquarters, and my staff went back up more to listen than to assist. We would have assisted if there'd been anything we could do, but there really wasn't a lot. The media was vamping and figuring out how to get their equipment to places with or without permission. It was a "we'll get forgiveness; we're not going to get permission."

Late that afternoon they decided to let us back into the building to get our cars and go home. And as we walked up to the building, you could see shoes that people had run out of. And it was really chilling because you started from the very outer perimeter with nobody around except people in uniform and the few little staff who'd managed to get back. So I went, got my car, drove home, and then I got a call that Members of Congress were going to reassemble on the House steps at, I believe, 7:00 that evening. And that really was more coordinated through the Speaker's Office than through our office. But that meant live coverage. I felt like—and one of my staff people had actually been able to get an e-mail out to people—Gail Davis. She lives on the Hill. So I turned around and came back and I was outside with them. Like I said, the newspeople function under that kind of stress magnificently. That's what all of their training is about. So they'd pretty much gotten everything wired up, and we were just there more to assist if they needed any assistance. And the Members assembled on the center steps [of the Capitol], and then somebody started singing.

Whenever I talk about why television is important and why it's important to allow the press to cover events, I use that as an example, because that day shook us so thoroughly to our very foundation about the safety and integrity of this country. And having those Members on camera, in a picture that night on the House steps said to the world, "We're in business. We're still here." And I think that's important. I think it's why I think what I do is important. When it's a silly picture of a silly something, it could be that picture, it could be that calming reassurance to your nation that your government is in place. And we're coming up on the anniversary. Would you like to go to another subject?

JOHNSON: In the following days, what role did your office play in facilitating the press coverage of the House's response to the attacks?

TATE: Well, the following days it was routine business in terms of just knowing that once we could get back in the building and getting past the few days when you were—I think once it didn't go past the first day, there was only one day of attack—and you began to learn what other measures we were going to take, what kind of meetings we were going to have, what kind of reaction we were going to have. You knew you had to get financial aid to New York. You knew you had to support whatever presidential thing. And of course we had an immediate State of the Union.[11] You figured that was coming. You figured the President [George W. Bush] would address the nation. And he did an immediate address that day. We were prepared. It didn't come as a surprise when we found out that he was going to address the nation.

It came as a surprise that he was going to do it the day he was going to do it only because I had gone down to talk to the Speaker's Office. Every time

there was a rumor about him coming to the Hill, I would get calls from the networks, and I would go talk to the Speaker's Office. I would be told "no, no, it's not happening today." Okay. And I had just been down there and just came back, and I was talking to my staff and saying "they just assured me that it won't be right away." {laughter} And there's a crawl on MSNBC. Yep, he was. It says "and the President." Because they'd gotten it from the White House. The staff person I'd talked to was certainly at a high enough level to answer if he'd known. But he didn't know. But they'd gotten it from the White House that they'd set a date. Oh, okay, well, so of course immediately you start going into action. You have to get the network up there.

Normally when you do a State of the Union, you have two weeks' notice. We'd done other second addresses. That's not the only time we've done a second speech. They're not called the State of the Union the second time because they're only the State of the Union the first time, but an address to the nation. So we just went into "address to the nation" mode and talked to the pool and found out who we were going to work with and started the logistics proceedings on that.

One of the things that was changed is that you didn't have [interviews in] Statuary Hall. The police did not want us to use Statuary Hall as they do for State of the Union. They did not want to have the President and all of Congress with a bottleneck like that so soon. They were just not comfortable with it. So we had to move the react positions. We argued about the immediacy and the access and all that, but since this was unprecedented they could say "this is unprecedented, and we aren't going to have you there."

So we had to move that whole operation over to the Cannon balconies and the Russell balconies. So that was another planning stage. But when you've got a plan and you've got a function, you can keep moving forward. It's when you don't have a pattern and you don't have an expectation of what's next. Now since then, all the things we've done that were related to emergencies, real or perceived, you've already gone through a day when you shattered the illusion that you were safe, so you don't have to ever be shattered again—you already know you're not safe. So the fact that there are other things coming that make you less safe on some days than others doesn't surprise you anymore. It was 9/11; it shattered the illusion that we were safe, and now, if anything, anybody living in Washington is very aware that they're not on any given day safe. I guess everybody in New York feels the same way as well.

JOHNSON: When were you actually allowed to go back into the building to do work, to start getting back to your day-to-day function?

TATE: I think it was about two days later. The House side got back in sooner. We were fairly quick. The Congress was very, very anxious to get back to work. They did not want to look like they were scared or that they were not on the job. And if Members are there, staff has to be there. So it was Member-driven to get back into the building. And we, of course, on the House side didn't have the anthrax scare that they did on the Senate side. We had a little of it, but it wasn't nearly as much. It was much more serious on the Senate side.

JOHNSON: I wanted to ask you about that topic. But just finishing up with 9/11, how do you think 9/11 actually changed your gallery, both formally and

informally? What changes? Security? And just even the overall atmosphere like you said of the illusion of safety being shattered?

TATE: Well, one of the things we had serious discussions about after that was what our role is and how much should we do—how much can we do—at what level of danger do we need to put our people? We are not prepared to be first responders. We are not prepared to go on air. What can we do, and what does the Congress expect of us? So we've had those discussions internally and have identified areas where we do have responsibilities and areas where we don't. The realities. And certainly one of the realities, we had a staff person who lived very close on the Hill; logically, his wife worked on the Hill as well. She would have been told to go home. He would go home to a place he could get to. Would you expect him to come back? No. Logically you wouldn't. He needs to be with his wife. I could not have gotten home easily anyway. So I'm there. I had other people on the Hill who couldn't get home. So they might as well find someplace that they'd be as safe as they could be and be able to provide some sort of service. Since then there has been extensive emergency planning, both by the Congress and by the broadcast media, about how to cover anything that would happen. Now that we got the idea that something could happen. So there is a lot more. All of that now has a form and a function and a plan.

And I'm very glad that I'm not going to be the one to have to implement it. {laughter} Because planning for that level of emergency . . . I'm very good at logistics planning and that's one of my strong points. But when you're planning for logistics related to that level of a disaster to a building I care that much about and an institution I care that much about, you would be in meetings that would be discussing how we would do this, and all of a sudden

you'd realize what the scenario would have to be if this was implemented. And it gets depressing. That was one of the things I was finding very depressing. They gave us several pieces of equipment after that to communicate, several levels of communications equipment. None of which I can operate very easily. {laughter} So I think I was more terrified that if something happened I wouldn't be able to make a phone call than almost anything else because I'm technically challenged on a good day. And if you get flustered, equipment that—unless you've used it a lot—can bite you. So I was terrified that something would happen, and I would be unable to make the communications connections I needed to make. But now there are people in place that will be able to. And there are plans in place for emergencies.

JOHNSON: I'm going to pause for a minute so I can change CDs.

END OF PART ONE ~ BEGINNING OF PART TWO

JOHNSON: We're back on tape, and we were talking about 9/11. I wanted to ask you if the increased security that came about after the event. Did that hinder the work of your office in any way?

TATE: Yes. Any kind of increased security restricts access. And then you have the atmosphere where the police really felt like they had to be more aggressive with the press because they had to have more control over the situation. And if the press were interfering with that, then it was a problem. So we had several encounters with police. Individual reporters, individual camera crews in incidences. There were one or two that were false alarm-type things. I think there was one over at the Ford Building. I believe it was at the Ford

Building—where they thought there was a shooter, and there wasn't—where police restricted an area from journalists but not other people. So we had to follow up with leadership and have additional meetings, not congressional leadership, but Sergeant at Arms leadership and Capitol Police leadership. The leadership was always responsive. Our position was if you were not impeding the investigation or the event and you were not—anyplace that you were allowing people, you need to be allowing the press. We shouldn't be restricted from any area that wasn't totally restricted. The police, to their credit, do believe that in principle. The leadership does believe that and they do put out that word. But it does take filtering down to the individual police officer; it sometimes can be difficult getting it to the rank-and-file who are the ones that the press people are going to run into. The broadcast people particularly, because they've got gear, are a real target. And there were not many, many instances, but there were a few. They were in direct result of people who—now, your security people really do think they have to secure you, and they really do. But having that fine line of securing and information are two different things.

You and I were talking between this. The information is so important. For news media to be excluded from an area only makes it more worrisome to the public. 9/11, the reason it was so terrifying is that we didn't know. The thing that was so chilling to me when I was walking around trying to find where to go was that I didn't know what was going on. And even when you got to a place where there was news coverage, and it was wall-to-wall news coverage, they didn't know. We're not used to that in the United States. Our news people know ahead of time and have it scripted, and we live in a scripted world. Or we had up until then. And that day wasn't scripted. So

everybody was just going on instinct. And not knowing is the most terrifying thing. And what journalists when they do it right is find out.

That's why I have to say that 9/11, as horrible and horrendous as it was, I thought the news media in the United States rose to the occasion in a way they haven't in my lifetime and made me very proud for the years that I worked with them. Because those days they really were out there with the sole intent of providing information to the public and the public was desperate to know. They did it in an honorable fashion. So that was, I think, as proud as I've ever been to be associated with the news and the newsmakers that I have been over the years. That's the ultimate service that they can provide to the public, and they did it.

JOHNSON: A lot of what we've discussed in these past sessions has been focused on the institution. How do you think this day changed the institution? How did it change the House?

TATE: Well, it changed the House. In fact, the House had the same shattering of faith that everything would always be normal. And I think they realized that they needed to have very serious continuity plans. It took them a while to get them. But the continuity plans have now gone into place. We don't live in a place where you're liable to have a hurricane or some other sort of natural disaster, so you hadn't thought about the fact that you could have that level of catastrophe. The World Trade Center was such an incredibly big building—to have it just disintegrate in less than a few hours made them realize that they needed to have the institution movable. The information and history of the institution had to be movable; you couldn't count on the Capitol building—of course the Capitol building was burned once before

[during the War of 1812]. And we weren't likely to see that happen. But you had to be prepared to have a succession of people in case your leadership that you normally had were not in place. And I think they've done that. And it was not easy. It was not easy at all. You have a government set up one way. And if it doesn't exist that way, how then do you operate until it can exist that way again was a scenario nobody wanted to ever consider. But they were forced to and they did.

JOHNSON: This, of course, is recent history. But did you notice any more subtle changes as time passed?

TATE: Well, the level of equipment, the level of checking. I no longer carry a press pass, so I was up at the Capitol for an event, and they start asking you where you're going and what you're doing from the time you arrive literally on New Jersey Avenue walking across the driveway. You get asked a couple of times. You get searched going in, or anything you're taking in gets looked at. But before that what had happened—I guess after the ricin thing we began to see guys with hazmat and biohazard things and dogs. And the level of security went up quantum in terms of what you saw, especially after the anthrax. And, honestly, for somebody who's not been in a lot of that level of that kind of security—I'm in secure situations where they keep VIPs safe from public. {laughter} I'm not in secure places where they're trying to keep people alive as opposed to dead. And to see that level of equipment is a little intimidating. It got a little wearing. And I understand the necessity of it. But walking through the basement of the Capitol to the carryout to get a tuna sandwich, and you're going by guys with hazmat outfits on—it's a gut check that's not very pleasant.

JOHNSON: You had mentioned that anthrax was something that had affected the Senate more than the House. Did it have any impact on your office though? Did you have to evacuate at any point?

TATE: We did not because the only anthrax that was found on the House side was found in two Members' offices in Longworth. And those offices and that area were quarantined. But we did not. Now one thing that—there was another change that was really institutionalized. The CAO, the Chief Administrative Officer, of the House, his function is to—and I hope you interview him at some point because he was—he's not in Washington anymore; he's out in Colorado. But the gentleman who was in charge then was Jay Eagen. One of the things he was tasked to do with the anthrax was to be able to move the offices and have people function in another space and do that in a timely fashion—like today. {laughter} And do that in a way that Members could continue operating, or whatever office was affected could continue operating, and in a cost-effective way, which of course is nearly impossible. But we were into some of that planning—where we would go and what we would do if we couldn't work in the Capitol. But we didn't have to do that. The Senate—there were some Senate offices that did, and a couple of House offices that did. But we were always open.

JOHNSON: We're sticking with the topic of tragedy here, but I did want to ask you about what you remembered about the '98 shootings of the two Capitol Police officers.

TATE: We had a press conference going on that day. We had some Members in the chamber. And when we started seeing the crawls that there'd been a shooting at the Capitol—because we didn't hear it. That happened on the East Front

center steps, and our office was on the West Front, the southwest corner of the building, third floor. So we didn't hear anything.

A lot of things that have happened we can actually look out our window. If it's West Front, we can see it from our window. There have been certain other things that we've been able to actually look out and watch. But in this case, we couldn't. So we saw the crawls coming across one of the TVs, and we didn't know what to do. That was the precursor in my mind. And in that case, I really was kind of stunned. But stunned in a way that wasn't positive. It was like it wasn't happening; it wasn't real; this couldn't happen. So there wasn't anything in my thought pattern that said something like this could happen—that you could have a shooting, that someone would die at the Capitol. You knew because we deal so closely with the Sergeant at Arms' Office. You knew there were threats all the time. I never thought that people weren't threatening to come into the Capitol and hurt people, but you didn't have the reality of it. I'm sure the Sergeant at Arms does and did then, but we really didn't.

So when the police officers came by to tell us to stay in place, and he told us we couldn't leave the room, people before that—Olga [Ramirez Kornacki] wanted to know should they go and find out what was going on. And I said, "Yeah, okay." Because you didn't know it was a real threat. Maybe you should. She got out of the room before the police came by to lock us down and was down in the building. I didn't alert the people in the press conference because I'm reading it as a crawl on the TV; I couldn't confirm anything. We were trying to reach the Sergeant at Arms' Office. Of course you couldn't, and we weren't getting any alerts at that point because you weren't really working off any kind of electronics then in that year.

So I really kind of froze on that. It didn't seem like it was really happening. And Olga went down and couldn't get very close, so she couldn't get us very much information. She did have a cell phone, but we got most of our information there from reporters. One group—*Nightline*—was shooting something at the House steps totally unconnected when it occurred. So they had some footage that nobody else had because they were out there. But there was a live shot going on from one—I think it was from one of the locals—and we could see them going live from the elm tree talking about what they could see going on. So that was where we got most of our information. We didn't see it in place, and it was a Friday afternoon. And there was supposed to be a site visit to LA for the conventions that was going to take place that weekend. And I was supposed to go, and I canceled because I knew once this occurred—and the officers died—that there was clearly going to be some sort of response, and it could be immediate, and it could be dramatic. We didn't know what. So I kept in touch with leadership offices and all the other directors went out to this site visit, but I just wasn't comfortable.

JOHNSON: When you say directors, the directors of the other press galleries?

TATE: The galleries, press galleries. But you just knew. It had happened. The shooting of Gibson was in Tom DeLay's office. Tom DeLay was Majority Leader of the House.[12] He was personally defended in this. His staff was protected by the death of this officer. And you just knew there was going to be something significant, and then they began to have meetings about what. We began to find out there were plans to do a lying in tribute. It's not a lying in state because it's not an official. And we went into overtime because we knew that this would affect everything that we had to get things in place.

I called to find out who the pool was if we did something like this. Fox was going to do it. Because there is a different mechanism for how the pool is formed for an event that you expect. All you have to do is set the date, then they tell you who it's going to be. Well, this is outside that category. They do have a mechanism for this kind of thing, something that comes up that needs a pool approach and isn't in the normal scheme of things.

And they were going to do it so quickly I knew we wouldn't have time to bring in the trucks that we normally do for State of the Union because we have more planning time for that. So I went down to the Speaker's Office and asked them if we could use—there's a conference room right off the Rotunda. I went in and got that arranged. I went to all the meetings with the police. Olga was with me. I made sure that the other galleries were at least informed. We did up sheets of what was happening, and mainly we just went into lying-in-state mode for this event because we knew it had to be the same process. What the differences were? We had to peel out what would not be the same as the lying in state so that we just excluded that, and what would be allowed and not allowed, and how the coverage was going to take place.

One of the things, the Senate—it's not fair to say they weren't as committed—but it's important to understand how very much affected the House Leadership was by this. So we knew it was ours to operate. And the Sergeant at Arms could not have been better working with us and the leadership working with us. There was almost nothing that we couldn't get if we needed it. And the pool was in place. They were functioning. They were getting ready for the service. The service was coming.

I was told by the pool that there's an overhead shot that we'd love to get of the casket. It's a really beautiful shot. I think I've got a picture of it, of what it looks like when we've got the casket in the Rotunda. Part of the whole reason for doing an event in the Rotunda is the grandeur of the room. It gives dignity and the importance to the event. And this shot establishes that. It's a shot you can't get from anyplace else. So he said, "We were told we can't do that by the Senate Sergeant at Arms." I said, "Well, I don't work for the Senate Sergeant at Arms." {laughter} So I'm going to go at least ask again. And I went down to talk to our Sergeant at Arms about it. And the Deputy Sergeant at Arms was Jim Varey, and Bill Livingood was the Sergeant at Arms.

I made my case for why that camera shot was so incredibly important and shouldn't be denied and made a huge difference in the reason for it. And these officers deserved the very most beautiful funeral we could give them. They reversed the Senate Sergeant at Arms, who later said something to me about it. He'd just said no because it was easier to say no. I don't think he'd really thought it through. But I was very proud of my guys on my side to stick up for the House. And they had to take my word for what was a good thing. We didn't get it actually. It was too late to put it all the way up at the top, but we did get a shot from the upper area that did give a really beautiful shot. I was very proud of that.

JOHNSON: You said that there was some sort of guidelines that you had to follow for an event that wasn't anticipated. How did this come about? Because this was an unexpected event. So you said that you would have to find out what pool was going to—

TATE: Yes. Well, we know that there are things that happen that are huge. You know that you can't have anything but a pool in the Rotunda; you can't have open coverage. The level of coverage for that is too much for any one group to do. So they always do it as a pool. You couldn't duplicate cameras in 42 different locations in there, so you couldn't bring in all the trucks it would require for them to do mixed feeds. Whenever you have one camera doing a live shot, you just have to have it plugged into a transmission point, but if you have multiple cameras you need to have switching gear that switches one camera to another. That gear—it would fill the room you're sitting in. This is a what, 10 x 20 room? It would fill a room this size. And then you've got to have the personnel; you've got to feed them. Those things happen when you have something that requires a switched camera feed. So a switched camera feed is something you're going to have to have with a Rotunda ceremony, and you know that. And in knowing that, the networks and C-SPAN are the only ones that can provide it.

Now when the Rosa Parks funeral happened [in 2005]—and that was another one that happened very quickly. The Detroit stations called their ABC bureau and said, "We're hearing there's going to be a lying in tribute for Rosa Parks." And once again I went down to the Speaker's Office and they said, "No, no, there's not." {laughter} And in fact the fact that that had come from Detroit—if somebody's telling a reporter in Detroit, they're hearing it from somewhere. You don't make that up. So when I went back to ABC, I said, "Look, they're telling me we're not. But they're telling me we're not right this minute. If I were you I'd get ready for this just in case." This is one of the guys I work with all the time. I said, "Who'd be my pool if we did that?" He said, "Well, I'll get you the pool assignment."

And that one they went out of rotation on, and a network didn't do the pool but C-SPAN did. But C-SPAN was the one that everybody agreed would. So there has to be an agreement at a level that I'm not involved in the decision. I just have to tell them this is happening, give me a name, you make your decision of who's going to do it, and I'll take care of it from there. And in the case of the officers [1998 shooting of the two Capitol Police Officers], I called them and said, "This is happening, get together, tell me who's coming, and I'll take it from there." And the same way with the Rosa Parks thing because you know what the logistics take, and you know the response time that it takes to get that in place. It really is 48 hours. And that's about how much time we had.

JOHNSON: In the case you just mentioned with Rosa Parks, and you went to the leadership, and they said, "No, this isn't going to happen." Did that happen to you frequently, and then do you think that they actually knew it was going to happen?

TATE: No. I think they knew conversations were going on, and they thought they had been able to make it not happen. In the case of the President [George W. Bush], I just think the guy hadn't gotten the word yet. It wasn't a matter of him not telling me. It was that we all knew that the President was going to come for that second speech after 9/11—that was just a matter of when. And even though he was telling me we weren't going to that day, he just hadn't heard. For Rosa Parks, I think those decisions were being made, and I was asking someone who would know but didn't know yet. But what they did do for me—and the reason I went back to the pool and didn't say "oh, no, it's never going to happen," I said, "Something's going on because I can't

get them to say definitely not." And when I said, "Can you tell me for sure it's not going to happen?" I wouldn't get that. That's a big difference.

JOHNSON: So this is based on your experience and your insight.

TATE: Yes, and reading people. If somebody in the House is telling you something that's definitely not going to happen, you know it's already—it's either been considered and turned down or it isn't being considered. But when I say, "Have there been conversations? Is it possible?" and you don't get a "no," it's out there. If it's out there, you've got to be ready for it to happen. If it doesn't happen, fine. There were occasions when—I can't remember anything this big that rumors started that something didn't come up. I have to think about that if there were. But, anyway, in both of these cases it was you count on your intuition in some ways and just working with the people you work with and knowing them as well as you do as to the fact that they're not being definitive. And they're leaving windows open; they're leaving windows open so you'll ask again. That's why they do it—because they're not ready, they can't tell you. If they tell you, they know it's public and I understand that. They can trust me not to say something and they know that. But it's also better for them not to have given it out until their leadership is ready to give it out.

JOHNSON: A difficult position. How did your office help facilitate the press coverage of the federal government shutdown in 1995?

TATE: Oh, 1995, God, let me see.

JOHNSON: It was the fall and the winter of '95. And one of the things that made me think about it was the recent Republican protest on the House Floor and also with the Democrats starting this in '95.

TATE: Well, we kept working. We weren't shut down. I can remember just looking at the television thinking everybody's closed but we're not closed. {laughter} You still had Members around. You still had Members doing press conferences. And if Members are doing press conferences, it doesn't matter whether the building is closed or the institution is closed, as long as there's press coverage we're still there. So it was amusing as much as anything else because you're hearing people talk about it being shut down. "Well, we're not shut down. We're government workers, and we're here." I think you're supposed to be sending people out. But essential workers are always on, and even though we're not essential in other categories, in some times and places, like news coverage, we are essential.

There was a press conference . . . This wasn't related to that, but when the—I can see him—the Cuban boy that was brought to the United States whose mother died bringing him and his father wanted him back . . . Elian [Gonzalez]. But you remember the story. This was during a recess, during a break, and there was a hearing with the grandmothers that some of the Members were calling, and the grandmothers were going to be there. This was the first time they'd been on camera and we were going to cover it. We had a snowstorm and the staff called and said, "Should I come in?" And I said, "No, we got to have somebody there, but I have an SUV." {laughter} So there are times when you come to work because you know there's news coverage where you wouldn't come to work if you didn't. And that was one.

There were meetings on State of the Union during one of those back-to-back snowstorms we had. Unfortunately, States of the Union [addresses] are always January or February. And we have snow in January and February. We had one of the two-foot snows. I had to walk out and hitchhike to get in because we had the State of the Union meeting that day, and you can't say, "I can't come in." Because all the networks' folks can get there because they've got four-wheel drives, and they've got people who'll get them there. So I went and literally hitchhiked a ride to the Capitol, which was closed down as the city was closed down. And we had our meeting for the State of the Union because I knew the police would be there; I knew the networks would be there. And could they have done the meeting without me? Sure. But you show up when you're supposed to show up. After that I got an SUV that's four-wheel drive.

JOHNSON: Back to the shutdown—I was curious if you remember the Democratic rally that took place when the Republicans decided to adjourn at one point during the debate. It was a short rally. Some of the newspaper articles said it was a couple hours. But the microphones had been shut off and there were no cameras allowed. It was an unusual event. So do you remember this, or do you remember the press asking you questions about it?

TATE: I remember a little bit about it, but I don't remember it well. I think there was the fact that you've had Members—Republican Members—on the House Floor recently doing something similar. But I just don't remember that period that well.

JOHNSON: How did your office contend with the rising wave of partisanship going into the '80s and then into the 1990s?

TATE: Well, I tried to make absolutely clear to them both in example and in conversation that at no point were we partisan. I did have conversations with Tony Blankley about that term, that we were nonpartisan—he was the Speaker's press secretary for [Newt] Gingrich—and his theory was that there are no such things as nonpartisans. There are people who can be bipartisan, but there are no nonpartisans. But we really like to think of ourselves as totally neutral. I think the hardest thing is just keeping personal conversations from showing partisanship because you get Members that you truly know are hypocritical about what they're saying.

When you had the changeover, it was the first time I think my junior staff—and I found it amusing this next time, the second time, and do find it somewhat amusing—but the first time they had not been in a position to hear almost the same words coming out of Democratic mouths as you heard from Republican mouths for all those years. And they were stunned. You literally could have changed the scripts and just not changed the people. Complaints about "oh, you're not going by the rules, you're denying—the majority is stamping on the minority's rights." And all of those just swapped. It just became amusing. But you can't say that because Members of Congress are sincerely representing their constituency. If they have to be a little—if that's the argument that represents their constituency today, that's what they have to give. If it wasn't the argument when they were in the majority, okay. So it was just funny to see that it changes completely. It always surprised me that there wasn't more consideration on Members' and staff's part that you wouldn't always be in charge. I think people do forget that. It had been 40 years for the first one.

Going into the second one, I think there was a little more tolerance of the fact that we may not always be in charge with the Democrats taking over, that they may not always be in charge. One of the things they did do in the Capitol Visitor Center when they went to divide up what space leadership would use in the Capitol Visitor Center—there was a room that was bigger and a room that was smaller that they were designing for conference space. And they perceptively did not have one really big one and one really little one because they were in charge then. They are very close to the same size. And they didn't have to do that. They were leadership, and they could have done it any way they wanted to. That diagram could have had a really big room and a really small one, and in some years it would have. But they didn't, and I thought that was very good. But most of the time it's amusing to see people who think things will never change, and yet change is around them all the time. All the time. It's the only constant up there that there's change.

JOHNSON: Did the partisanship directly affect your office at all? Did you ever feel like you were put in the middle of a situation?

TATE: Oh, yes. We occasionally were. And it was more with staff than with Members. We did have a couple of occasions where Members perceived there was some partisanship. We booked Members into the triangle and the elm tree. Not the elm tree because that was where the one-on-ones went, but we'd book people into the triangle. And there was one Member who was concerned that his press conference had been dropped because we weren't favorable to his side. And after that we started keeping a record because it was a total error on our part as far as entering it into the system. It had nothing to do with anything partisan. But because the subject was very touchy he presumed it to be aimed at his—that we didn't want his subject to

be out. Somebody didn't enter it right, or they erased it inadvertently. So we made absolutely sure after that that we had a redundancy and a way to track how information came to us.

I think there was one occasion where we had been told that a Member was not going to do something and then the Member did, so we didn't have press there. Why had we kept the press away? So now we just started documenting where we got information from so you could go back and say "This Member told us—this staff member told us this. If you're telling us it's changed, let's go back and talk to this staff person." We just got more careful about documenting where our information came from. We would not put out anything that we didn't have the source for it so that it went back to the source and that's appropriate because we're a conduit. We're not sources. So with that we just had to be much more vigilant about it than we did before.

But I think to our credit the fact that we have people on staff who have worked for leadership of both speaks volumes for how our office does operate. And the first time it changed—most of the offices on the Hill, when the Republicans took over, most of the support staff, not Members' offices, but the support staff, were Democratic partisans who had been selected. And there was no reason for them to have any faith in our nonpartisanship. There was no reason for them to presume anything other than we'd been pleasant to them coming up there. I didn't feel offended that they wanted proof that we were nonpartisan. But we, like the Parliamentarian's Office and other offices, I think we demonstrated that we really were institutional.

JOHNSON: Speaking of institutional, it's a good segue. I wanted to ask if you coordinated or helped coordinate press coverage of any institutional events. One that I was thinking of was the annual Congressional Baseball Game.

TATE: No, we don't. That really is done by—I think *Roll Call* sponsors it. But that's outside of things. We've not generally done things that were not on the Hill. That's the area. We were asked at one time to do—there were inquiries about whether we should do some of the retreats, which I think the Sergeant at Arms supports because there is television coverage of that. There were discussions about whether that would be a good place for us. They really decided that because they were not at the Capitol and congressional—they were Members of Congress doing things, but they were not the institution of the Congress—that Sergeant at Arms and staff, leadership staff or whatever staff was involved whether it was conference or caucus, were better suited to take care of it. The exceptions were when we were in Philadelphia for the bicentennial celebration and the Federal Hall.

We talked a little bit about the Federal Hall, but that was one of the times that I was a real nag about getting involved because we knew there were meetings going on, we knew this was going to happen, and nobody had any press involvement. We were not included in any of the meetings. And people kept asking me how are we going to cover it, what's going to happen? "Yes, I don't know." So I kept going to the different leadership offices and saying "You need to have us there. Let me be helpful. Let me just come and sit and listen. I don't want to tell you anything, just let me know what's happening because you're going to have press coverage of this. You're going to want it and you're going to want it to work." I must have said that to half a dozen different people. And I kept complaining to the minority—there

was a woman who worked for the minority at the time; I think [Richard Andrew] Gephardt was the Minority Leader at the time—and I kept complaining to her. "You're going to be sorry if we're not there. {laughter} It'll go on without us, but it won't be pretty." And finally she said something to the Speaker's Office. You really better have the radio-TV gallery represented because even if you don't want—the problem there was that they wanted to keep it a very small number of people dealing with the details of it. Because it was House and Senate, even though they were both Republican at the time, it was the institutions of the House and Senate that were having difficulties as to how exactly this was going to be done. They didn't want any press involved in that, and they didn't want a number of—generally if you have one of the directors, you need all of them. And there are seven of us. So they didn't want seven other people who didn't have but a small role in what they were doing in on all these meetings. I understood that, but they needed me. So I said it about a half a dozen times to as many people as would listen, and finally they started inviting me to the meetings. They didn't invite anybody else.

So I knew what we were going to need and then when they started doing walk-throughs they included the other galleries. I said, "You really need to have the other galleries represented because they're going to have to deal with their constituencies." I did keep the still guys involved. But my stuff starts so much sooner. You can't tell people we're going to do live coverage of an event in New York City in Federal Hall, which is a state park—a National Park Service facility and has no particular ability to do this—on Thursday. You need to have that, and you're going to take the Members of Congress down to the World Trade Center, and you're going to cover it. We need to have logistics in place for this.

So that was me just being a nag, and they probably would have gotten the galleries involved, but it would have been much, much more difficult if I hadn't been in on the early planning in terms of how it would look on television. You're doing this because you want them to see it on television. You can't put anybody in the—and you're going to have 12 people watching it in the room. The only reason to do this is to have people outside the room see what you're doing. So they agreed. And they were very responsive once they got us in there about—and I don't want to plan their event. I just want to be able to be the conduit to get the coverage for the event the way they want it, the way they want to put on their event. So that was one of those times when nagging counts. It does work. {laughter}

JOHNSON: Were you involved in the press coverage for the 1987 event that you talked about? The commemorative event in Philadelphia? What was that like?[13]

TATE: There was a lot of local coverage there. That was before you had the massive levels of live coverage. We had a lot of local live coverage. But that's satellite trucks. That's the same sort of stuff we do with conventions, and that went off very well. But that was more like a convention coverage than like a Joint Session coverage or a Joint Meeting coverage. And the Joint Meeting/Joint Session coverage is more what the Federal Hall coverage was. So yes, we were involved in that, and there were ceremonies in different locations.

JOHNSON: What are some of the difficulties that arise when you're talking about Congress on a "road trip," when you're going to New York City or you're going to Philadelphia?

TATE: Yeah, well, we've done two road trips. I've done two impeachments, two road trips, and two changes of Congress. So it was time to leave. {laughter} Well, you don't have office space. You've got to be able to connect with people in communications. We actually did one other thing too that was off campus—that was the gold medal ceremony for Cardinal O'Connor [in New York City in 2001]. And Olga worked that event because that was not the entire Congress. It was a smaller presence for us. So she and I went up, talked about it, learned what was going on. We got together with the networks in New York and how they were going to cover it and how it was going to be provided. So we had information on it, and she worked it because it didn't really need but one other person. Now we had a number of people that went up for the Federal Hall because that had a lot of components. And even though the entire Congress wasn't there, it was representative of the entire Congress. They had not only the event in Federal Hall, but they had a sponsored luncheon event, and they had the event down at the 9/11—the World Trade Center—hole, and they had bleachers in front for press conference, and a walk up the street. All of that had to be coordinated. We needed people to be in multiple places. And there were some credential requirements that we had to fulfill there.

Fortunately the same Sergeant at Arms people go and the same leadership people go, and they're pros at—the Sergeant at Arms and the CAO support staff that—I don't know if it's CAO or not. But the way they support Congress doing anything, the CODELs [congressional delegations] and all that, they have that pretty much by the book. Real pros at it.

JOHNSON: For special events like Federal Hall, and we'll just focus on Federal Hall, do you try to somehow document what it is that your office did so for future people that are working in the gallery that they'll have this to fall back on?

TATE: Yeah. We have tried to do that. I don't know how good they are. But certainly since we've gotten computers we try to do—and I tell my staff always to give me an after-action report so that we put together what worked, what didn't work. And that could be guidelines for something similar.

Certainly we did copious notes about [President Ronald W.] Reagan. We knew there'd be similarities and then differences with [President] Ford. So after Ford we tried to do what the differences and the similarities were. I think it's just incredibly important. If you go into these things cold, you're really up the creek. And it's a waste of resources. If you're going to put that much energy into putting something together, document it after the fact so that you can be like me. You don't have a very good memory. You could have been there, but if you don't have a document of what it is—there are a lot of things I would realize, "Oh!" We even do that for the conventions. One of the things I did for the conventions between 2000 and 2004 was to keep just a log of when things happened so you have a timeframe to go back to and look at: "Okay, this was the first meeting we had here. So about that time if you're not hearing from anybody you want to place a call." So that sort of thing I think is one of the best things you can do for an office, is to do an after-action report.

JOHNSON: Is this a practice that you started really when computers came into play?

TATE: More when computers—it was a little hard to do if you're doing it on [paper] pads—but a lot of stuff we had was just on pads. And we didn't get computers until—we were one of the first offices. And we do have a lot of documents even then that we did, but now they're in formats you have to convert because it's changed since then. So we have some things that if you didn't have them in hard copy they'd be pretty hard to pull back up. But I did try to keep—I didn't do it as much as I should have. But the more we did it, the more I realized the need for it and the practicality.

One of the things you clearly were able to do, when I went down to talk to the current Speaker's [Pelosi] administrative person about the chamber, I could take the notes I took when I went to talk to Tony Blankley about the questions we approached on Opening Day for a new Speaker. And I think he found that very useful. Then he could make the decision what he wanted to do. But I did keep those. And that's the kind of thing I think you really serve people well. I think other offices are beginning to do that a whole lot more. But you didn't have that in the House as you know. You didn't have that kind of transfer of information. Especially if you changed parties.

JOHNSON: One topic that I wanted to ask you about before we move on to just a few retrospective questions was about the Gridiron and the National Press Clubs. Was there any formal relationship between your office—

TATE: No, that's really a print thing. I've never been to Gridiron. And the National Press Club—I think they gave me an annual membership, and I never went. The National Press Club is more print. And I think the print gallery does help them with their elections. They go down—they used to—

whether they still do or not I don't know. But we've never been directly involved with them.

JOHNSON: What would you consider to be the highlights of your more-than-three-decade career in the House if you had to pick one or two?

TATE: One or two? Well, the 20 years of conventions were an amazing experience. The Reagan funeral and the Ford funeral and not just because they were recent. But the lying in states are always such—and I really felt like the privilege of being able to do the tribute to the officers and knowing that my work made that better for two men who gave their lives for staff and Members. That was something that made me very proud, and it was a long hard week of work. And it, I thought, was some of the best work I ever did.

The work we did around the impeachment—the second impeachment, the [President] Clinton impeachment. Of course, I say impeachment. They were impeachment hearings. Of course, Nixon was not impeached, so I will go on the record to say that I do know that. But the work we did around the Judiciary Committee impeachments and those two days in December when we did have the impeachment vote—I think was some of the best work we did. I think everything that I learned I put into play, and I was very satisfied with our performance and with my staff's performance and with my own involvement. I think I served the House well.

Over a long term my contribution to the Capitol Visitor Center, I think that will be something I'm very, very proud of. The work I did through the years with the Technical Advisory Subcommittee to wire the House so that it is easy for live coverage to take place in multiple locations. That was a very

coordinated effort. I certainly can't take credit for that on my own. It is something that I was guided and encouraged and urged to do, but also did keep doing it. And from the '80s until the opening of the Capitol Visitor Center, that entire complex of live coverage continuity throughout the building has increased to make the building very—make it very possible to have live coverage in almost any place you're going to have a public meeting. So those would be the things I'm proudest of.

JOHNSON: Based on what you've learned and what you've accomplished, if you were to offer advice to someone that was coming on board the [House] Radio-TV Gallery staff, what would that be?

TATE: Just remember every day that you are privileged to be where you are. That building and both the press corps that you serve there are the best in the business. And the Members of Congress and their staffs are the best at what they do. It's a privilege to be there every day that you go there. You are watching history be made.

I'm now in a place [Newseum] where I go back and see some of these newsreels and things that were important to the country during my lifetime I've been there. I can see places, I can see events that I know where I was standing when those things happened. Or I had some small effect on it, or I had some small association with it. And if you get the fact that you are part of what this democracy is all about and you've got a role to play to assist it, that's very important. That's great stuff.

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

TATE: I can't think of anything. I will have to say I've had the best two jobs in Washington. One job led to the other. I do feel that being the director of the Radio-Television Gallery of the House of Representatives was the best place I could possibly have been and I wouldn't have traded a minute of it.

JOHNSON: All right. I guess we're finished. Thank you so much.

## NOTES

[1] Donald MacKay Fraser of Minnesota served on the Foreign Affairs Committee (later named International Relations) from the 88th through the 95th Congress (1963–1979).
[2]Reference to a series of televised hearings during the summer of 1972 led by the House Select Committee on Crime concerning the influence of organized crime on sports.
[3] In 1998, to recognize the two Capitol Police officers who died in the line of duty—Jacob Chestnut and John Gibson—Congress granted use of the Capitol Rotunda for their remains to "lie in honor." Rosa Parks, a leading civil rights activist, is the third private citizen to lie in honor in the Rotunda (2005).
[4] As part of then-Majority Whip Tom DeLay's security detail, Detective John Gibson lost his life protecting DeLay's staff when he and the assailant exchanged gunfire by the Majority Whip's suite of offices in the Capitol.
[5] Ben Guthrie served as Clerk of the House during the 98th and 99th Congresses (1983–1987) under Speaker Tip O'Neill.
[6] Reference to the Annual National Peace Officers' Memorial Service held on the West Front of the Capitol.
[7] Reference to House Radio-TV Gallery staff.
[8] Tina Tate subsequently provided additional details about the three exterior House locations for transmission and broadcasts: the elm tree; the triangle, and the stonecutter's room. "The elm tree was literally an elm tree that was located across the plaza from the House steps where the wall curves to make the graceful borders of the grounds . . . When it became desirable for the networks to have a dedicated spot to do live broadcasts, we were allowed to cable underground to the area and to put breakout boxes behind the wall so the individual groups could have spots for their reporter to do a piece with the House steps and the Capitol dome as a backdrop. . . . The triangle is the triangular piece of land just past the guard station coming in from New Jersey catty-cornered from the House steps with a view of the Capitol dome. . . . The stonecutter's room was the location of live lines used originally by the three networks and later CNN and Fox for transmission of major pooled event, such as the State of the Union, the inaugural, and lying-in-state ceremonies. It was in place when I became superintendent [1981]. The lines were in boxes in a room under the center steps of the Capitol that was really used by the AOC for their stonecutter operations."
[9] Scott Palmer served as Speaker Hastert's chief of staff and Ted Van Der Meid was his general counsel.
[10] On September 6, 2002, the House participated in a commemorative Joint Meeting of Congress in Federal Hall in New York City. The session remembered the victims and events of the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks.
[11] President George W. Bush addressed a Joint Session of Congress in the aftermath of the attacks on September 20, 2001. He made a State of the Union address a few months later on January 29, 2002.
[12] Representative Tom DeLay was the Republican Whip at the time of the shooting in 1998.
[13] The 100th Congress (1987–1989) assembled in Philadelphia to celebrate the bicentennial on July 16, 1987.

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