

Patricia (Tish) Speed Schwartz

Administrative Assistant, Committee on Science, House of Representatives, 1969–1994
Chief Clerk Administrator, Committee on Science, House of Representatives, 1995–2001
Chief Clerk Administrator, Committee on the Judiciary, House of Representatives, 2001–2007

Oral History Interview Final Edited Transcript

June 22, 2015

Office of the Historian
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“And I got pregnant. And everybody said, ‘Oh, that’s great, going to leave, go home, have a baby, we’ll find somebody to replace you.’ And I went, ‘No, no, wait, wait, wait, wait! No, no, we need both salaries. I need to work, so what is the leave policy?’ They didn’t have one. Okay, so I kind of waited for them, and they dragged their feet a little, and finally I was approached, and they said, ‘Well, what we’ve decided is, we’re going to give you three months off with pay, and then you can come back to work, and your job will be here.’ And that was just the [Science] Committee. I have no idea what other committees did, or Members’ offices, but that’s what they decided to do.”

Patricia (Tish) Speed Schwartz

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Abstract

When Patricia (Tish) Speed Schwartz accepted a position as a secretary for the House Science and Astronautics Committee (later House Science Committee) in 1969, women often worked in typing pools for a professional staff predominantly composed of men. Over time, Schwartz used her determination and willingness to accept new projects and take advantage of growing opportunities for women staff on Capitol Hill. In her interview, Schwartz discusses the evolving role of women staff and Members in Congress, including her increased responsibilities on both the Science and Judiciary committees during her nearly four-decade House career. She also recollects the hiring process for committees, her early mentors, and the influence of the Cold War on the Science Committee in the 1970s and 1980s.

When Schwartz became pregnant a few years after joining the Science Committee, she surprised her colleagues when she opted to return to work after giving birth. Her decision prompted the committee to grant her maternity leave, and over time, Schwartz recalls, the committee formalized a policy as more mothers with young children returned to the workforce. In her oral history, Schwartz describes a mostly welcoming work environment for women, however, early in her career she fought against a practice that kept her salary lower than many of her women colleagues because her husband was employed. Schwartz's interview touches upon the different experiences of women working for Congress during the 1970s and 1980s—drawing a particular contrast between women working for committees and those in Members' offices. It also provides a rare look at how the institution responded to issues affecting women staff.

Biography

Patricia (Tish) Speed Schwartz was born on January 31, 1946, in Abington, Pennsylvania, a suburb of Philadelphia. The middle child of William Goodwin Speed, an electrical engineer and World War II veteran, and Jane Hoskinson, a homemaker and office manager, Tish attended nearby Catholic schools, St. Luke's and Bishop McDevitt High School. Urged by her father to leave the confines of Philadelphia to explore the wider world and apply for a job as a flight attendant, Tish accepted the challenge and worked for Northwest Airlines for two-and-a-half years.

Tish left behind the uncertainty of a career in which female employees who married or were considered too old to work as flight attendants, were dismissed by airlines. She moved to Northern Virginia where she found employment as a security officer for a software firm. In 1969, she visited Pennsylvania Representative Edward Beister's U.S. Capitol office looking for a new job. "I thought if I'm going to live in the Washington, D.C., area, then this is what's happening and this is where everything is," Tish later recollected. Although the office did not have any openings, the administrative assistant, Mary Ellen Ducander, encouraged her husband Charles Ducander, a Science Committee staffer, to interview Tish for a secretarial job. Tish accepted a position with the committee, paving the way for her nearly four-decade career on the Hill.

In 1970, Tish married Stephen Schwartz. The couple welcomed a son, William Norman Schwartz, in 1975. While employed by the House, Tish Schwartz attended Northern Virginia Community School for two years, and earned a secretarial certificate from the Washington School for Secretaries.

Initially hired as a secretary for the Science Committee, Schwartz quickly branched out working as a publications clerk, transcript coordinator, and hearings clerk for several Science subcommittees. In 1976 she joined the newly created minority staff for the Science Committee. Here, she performed an array of administrative tasks in her role as administrative assistant on the Science Committee for Republican Members, Larry Winn of Kansas, Manuel Luján of New Mexico, and Robert Walker of Pennsylvania.

When Republicans took control of the House in 1995 for the first time in four decades, Schwartz was appointed Chief Clerk Administrator for the Science Committee. In her new position, she oversaw the hiring and training of the new majority staff, contributed to the development of policies for committee websites, and spearheaded the modernization and technological renovation of the Science Committee's hearing room.

Schwartz left the Science Committee in 2000, to work as the Chief Clerk Administrator for the House Committee on the Judiciary. During her six years with Judiciary she implemented many of the administrative policies and procedures that she established on the Science Committee. She also took the lead in the archiving the records of the impeachment proceedings against President William J. "Bill" Clinton.

On January 2, 2007, Tish Schwartz retired after 37 years of service in the House.

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) 226-1300, 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 the Manager of Oral History for the Office of the Historian, U.S. House of Representatives. She earned a B.A. in history from Columbia University, where she also played basketball for four years, and holds two master's degrees from North Carolina State University in education and public history. In 2004, she helped to create the House's first oral history program, focusing on collecting the institutional memory of Members and staff. She co-authored two books: *Women in Congress: 1917–2006* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 2006) and *Black Americans in Congress: 1870–2007* (GPO, 2008).

— PATRICIA (TISH) SPEED SCHWARTZ —

A CENTURY OF WOMEN IN CONGRESS

JOHNSON: My name is Kathleen Johnson. I'm with the Office of the Historian, and today I'm with Tish Schwartz. The date is June 22nd, 2015. We're in the House Recording Studio [in the Rayburn House Office Building]. Tish Schwartz was a longtime House staffer with the Science Committee and also the Judiciary Committee. This interview is two parts, partially for a project that we're doing on women's history to recognize the 100th anniversary of the election of Jeannette Rankin, the first woman in Congress, and then also to close out Tish Schwartz's oral history with one final video interview.

So, Tish, thank you so much for coming in today.

SCHWARTZ: My pleasure. It's great to be here.

JOHNSON: To start off with, when you were young, did you have any female role models?

SCHWARTZ: My mom. Actually, she was a working mom. So, I think I had that whole experience where she would go off to work and would come home, and I just thought all moms kind of did that. So, she was my first role model, and I don't think I got another real role model until I started working on Capitol Hill, truly.

JOHNSON: And what were the societal expectations for you as a young woman? What did people think you'd be when you grew up?

SCHWARTZ: Well, actually, I was thinking back about that last night, and when I started on Capitol Hill, it was 1969. So, I had worked prior to that; I was an airline

stewardess, and then I worked for a lobbying firm, and then I worked for a contractor before I came here. Each job was short because I just wasn't getting anything. And when I first started working on the Hill, I thought if I'm going to live in the Washington, D.C., area, then this is what's happening, and this is where everything is. This is where I want to be; I want to be at the heart of what's going on. And that's kind of what brought me here.

JOHNSON: Did you have an early interest in politics as well?

SCHWARTZ: No, I didn't. My expectations when I was getting out of school were—everybody was thinking teacher, nurse, English major. I went directly from high school . . . I started working down in Philadelphia, that's where I was from. And then I started working for the airlines. And it was just a way that my father—I was a homebody—and my father dared me and pretty much told me, "I don't think you could get this job [flight attendant] if you tried." And he put the ad on my breakfast plate, and I went, "Well, yes." So I came home with a round-trip ticket to Minneapolis–St. Paul, and I got the job. And I came home, and he's going, "Oh no, what have I done?" But it was the best thing he did for me. It got me out and really built my self-esteem.

To be 21 and be in charge of something at that age, for a female . . . and when I first started flying, the rules were very different than they are now. You couldn't fly past 32, you couldn't be married. If you got married, you were fired. As soon as you hit the age of 32, you were let go. So, it was just a totally different world then. And I didn't really want to be a nurse—I had tried candy striping—and I knew I didn't have the patience for [being] a teacher. So, I had a good, strong background in stenotyping, so I knew I could get a job, but I just didn't want that. I didn't know what I wanted, like most people at 21.

JOHNSON: When you came to Capitol Hill, what was the hiring process like? What do you recall of that?

SCHWARTZ: Well, I just walked into it. I came up with a résumé and, of course, you go to your Member's office first. So I went to . . . it was Larry [Robert Lawrence] Coughlin was the Member of Congress. But it turned out he wasn't my Congressman, that's how much I didn't know. He was from the adjoining district, but I mean so close. And the woman [Mary Ellen Ducander] who was the AA [administrative assistant] at the time [for Representative Edward George Biester, Jr.] said, "That's okay. Why don't you sit down and talk, and tell me what you want to do." And she met with me. She was wonderful. She met with me for about 40 minutes. They didn't have a job, they didn't know of anything, but they'd keep my résumé.

And it turned out that her husband [Charles Ducander] was the staff director for the House Science Committee. So, I must have impressed her, because I got a call the next day from him saying they would like me to come in and interview for that. Then I got that job, and it was like, that was it. It was almost too easy, if you know what I mean, like, "Do I really want to do this?" Well, once I started working on the committee, I was just so excited to be here, to be on Capitol Hill.

JOHNSON: What jobs at that point—so this is in 1969, you said, so the late '60s and early '70s—what jobs did women typically have on the Science Committee?

SCHWARTZ: They were clerical, all clerical support. When I first started, everybody was on a Mr. and Miss or Mrs. basis. In other words, I was Miss Speed; that was my maiden name. And it was Mr. Ducander and Mr. Goulden, and very, very proper. And the women were sitting in a clerical pool in the front of the office. And all of the men had their offices in the back, and you literally

would get a phone call, “Come on back, I want to give dictation.” So you’d go back, take dictation, come back, type it up in three sets: the pink, the blue, the yellow. And then that’s pretty much what you did. It was a little typing pool. It was a little bit of a change from the job I had before, where I was a security officer for a software firm, but only in name because I just happened to be the only one there. And I had gotten a security clearance, but this was just an opportunity to get my foot in the door and see what I wanted to do. And so I was very excited, very excited.

JOHNSON: Did you have any mentors at the time?

SCHWARTZ: When I first started on the Hill on the committee, there wasn’t a lot of turnover. So, the women that were on the committee, and I’d say there were about . . . at the time there were seven women, and they were all clerical support. And I was the youngest. The closest one in age to me was 36. So, I was like, the kid. And there was a lady named Carol who was kind of a . . . she was the one that would kind of steer me in the right direction. “Don’t pay any attention to him, he’s always been a . . . and do this, and if you need help with that . . .”

The one thing I did learn at that point was women were very, in that typing pool, they were very supportive of each other. You’d get behind in what you were doing, we’d spread the work out; we’d all get it done. The idea was to get the job done. I loved that idea. I always liked working like a team, and it appealed to me. And not until much later did I actually get an assignment—when the committee started evolving, and they started moving off into subcommittee offices, separate and apart from the full committee—did I actually even start going more.

JOHNSON: Was there any specific advice that you received at that time that stands out in your mind?

SCHWARTZ: The one thing that—and I almost knew this [instinctively]—but it was, “Don’t wait to be told what to do. You’re smart enough, you know what needs to get done. Step up and do it or ask, ‘Is there something I can do?’ Don’t just sit and wait.” There’s so much to do, and there’s so few people to do it, and people don’t like asking people to help them with something. But if you come up to them: “Hey, I’ve got time on my hands, what can I do for you?” “Can you Xerox these? Can you do this?” And that was probably the simplest and best advice I got because people get to know you. And you were more of a support person. You would help them with whatever, and being the new kid on the block, that’s what I wanted to do.

JOHNSON: Did you find that the Science Committee was welcoming to you as a young woman? Was the environment welcoming, or did you feel marginalized at all because of your gender?

SCHWARTZ: No, I did not. It’s what I anticipated. At that time, typing pools were common. I had gone to . . . when I stopped flying, I had gone down to Washington, D.C., to brush up on my typing and clerical skills—the Washington School for Secretaries, I think it was at the time. And I knew if I was going to . . . that’s what I needed to have to get a job. So, that’s what I did. I never felt marginalized at all when I first started here. Everybody was very polite, very kind, and there were definitely the guys, and there were definitely the women. And as time went on, it became more apparent that the guys got most of the bennies, like the restroom inside the committee, while we had to go out in the hall, down the hall, around the corner. And you find yourself going, “Why?” You didn’t question it at the time. Age does wonders. {laughter}

JOHNSON: Do you think there are particular positions in the House that were easier for women to attain, even outside the Science Committee, and any that might have been more difficult, based on gender?

SCHWARTZ: Capitol Hill is a very political environment. And most of the people that come here, like me, and like people that want to start from the bottom up, can get in the door with that clerical experience, that office experience. It's not clerical [experience] now, it's office experience. You know how to write a letter, you know how to process the paper, you do what you're told, you get it done, so forth. Everybody else that came that was working on the Hill were attorneys, or people that specialized in energy, or they had a niche; they had something to offer to the committee they were working for or to the Member they were working for. And in a Member's office, there'd be a specific press person, or it might be . . . usually a Member would bring his close core from his home state. And then they would expand from there.

But the one thing I did notice on the Hill was that there were far more women in powerful positions in Members' offices, where they would be the AA instead of a guy because they could get things done. They were organized. They were trying to do legislative issues, they weren't seeking a spotlight. They were doing a job that needed to get done. And I noticed that, I picked up on that, because the first woman that I met with was the AA in Mr. Biester's office. And you could tell that she had . . . they were coming to her asking her to do this and this, and everybody was . . . So, you kind of knew she was the point person in that office.

JOHNSON: But that didn't necessarily translate to committees—that was more in the Member offices?

SCHWARTZ: No, it didn't. There was no AA position [on the Science Committee]. There was a chief clerk position, and that was held by a man. And the chief clerk was fundamentally just that: They clerked the hearings, they set up the process and procedures, and they made everything happen as far as the legislative process within the committee. That's what they did, and that was a man at the time, also. All the attorneys were men, all of the advisors back in '69. In fact, the [Science] Committee was very young then. They were telling me that they used to work out of a motel across the bridge [to Virginia] until they could get office space in the Rayburn Building.

JOHNSON: Was there any kind of support network in place for young women staffers new to the Hill?

SCHWARTZ: Inside the committee, there was that small group of women. There was the Congressional Staff Club, which I became involved in at the time because it gave me an idea of what's outside the walls. The thing is, you get compartmentalized in a committee, and maybe in a Member's office—the Member office, not as much as the committee, because all the Members belonged to the committee, and you were there to serve the Members. If you're in a Member's office, you're reaching out to other Members and to the various committees that that Member is on, so you actually have a broader horizon. I didn't know much existed outside of the committee . . . for like, my first year there. It was lucky I could find my way back to my office, that kind of thing.

JOHNSON: You had talked about—in your [earlier] audio interviews with me—about having maternity leave and how this hadn't happened before on the committee. Can you talk a little bit about that?

SCHWARTZ:

Sure. At that point, I was working for the . . . we didn't have a minority staff. When I first started working for the committee, the committee was just the committee. There was no real minority staff, majority staff. There was one Republican counsel—that was the differentiation they had then. And move forward—fast-forward to 1974—and I was pregnant, and I had my son in 1975, and at that point I was now working. I had identified my politics. I didn't think I had to before, but then I did. And became part of the minority Republican staff, of which there were at that time six people. Back being clerical support again I worked on a subcommittee, but I felt really at home.

And I got pregnant. And everybody said, “Oh, that's great, going to leave, go home, have a baby, we'll find somebody to replace you.” And I went, “No, no, wait, wait, wait, wait! No, no, we need both salaries. I need to work, so what is the leave policy?” They didn't have one. Okay, so I kind of waited for them, and they dragged their feet a little, and finally I was approached, and they said, “Well, what we've decided is, we're going to give you three months off with pay, and then you can come back to work, and your job will be here.” And that was just the [Science] Committee. I have no idea what other committees did, or Members' offices, but that's what they decided to do.

And I caught a lot of heat from the women because I was coming back to work, which I thought was interesting. Most of the women that were there who had children—they were grown and in high school—and that's probably why they were older, and they expected me to be home with my baby. The men were much more understanding than the women were. It got like, you could feel it: “You should be home with your baby.” “Well, I'm going to be home with my baby, but I don't want to, I have to work.” And I did [stay at home], and came back to work, and it worked out fine. But I was kind of taken aback by the women. Your big supporters are now saying,

“This is what you should do, and this is what you shouldn’t do.” And “This is what . . .” It was kind of an interesting time.

I blazed right through it, didn’t want to go back to work—anybody that has a child knows that. You don’t want to, you get back to work and you’re constantly pulled back and forth. But it worked out great. My son grew up great, and I think they realized, “Oh, she’s going to start a trend.”

So, they actually started putting in rules and regulations. Initially I think the three months was very, very generous, and I didn’t expect that. But that was very generous, so, I took advantage of it. And after that, I think for the first five years after that, they were very generous, and then a lot of women started coming back, so they made it . . . they got a little more formalized with the amount of time you served on the committee before you [were eligible for paid leave if you] got pregnant, and the Family and Medical Leave [Act] wasn’t in place yet, so we transitioned all the way through that. But it was good. And I was very glad that I was still working. My son was very proud of me.

JOHNSON: I bet. What role do you think that women played in the operation of the Science Committee, and just keeping things running smoothly?

SCHWARTZ: Once the committee developed and separated into subcommittees—they had subcommittees, but everybody was contained in one big office—they branched off, and they put the two energy subcommittees down on this level, in the basement. Then they had an annex where they had other subcommittees. The full committee occupied the main suite upstairs. And what happened then . . . you developed into your own little offices. So, you had the core person, who was the clerical support person, or the secretary, who fast-forwarded into the staff assistant, which is the appropriate term

now. And they pretty much held the reins together with the process internally: the paper flow, the setup for the hearings, the processing of transcripts after the hearings, the contacting witnesses, the keeping files organized, that kind of thing. So, they were a little microcosm of the big full committee. And the full committee would hand down directions. We had a chief clerk at the time, who did the archiving, and at the end of every year—and made sure you were keeping the right records and would walk around and do all this. But it was all background.

Meanwhile, the men in their positions of legislative authority were doing most of the grunt work for the legislative process and adding their expertise in fields like aeronautics, and space, and energy, and solar [power], and wind. And they would bring those people in but, again, they were compartmentalized because they had a special subset that they were representing. They were doing energy research and development, this is what they're focusing on. They're hoping I knew how to get the letter to whoever it was going to and make the necessary copies and that kind of . . . They did their thing, and they handed it off to me and just assumed it would get done.

JOHNSON: In that background role that you just described, did you have any interaction with the Members that were on the committee?

SCHWARTZ: Some of the Members actually made themselves visible. They would come through the subcommittees. On the most part, they came through only to the full committees. Now, we had a couple of chairmen on different subcommittees . . . I'm trying to think back. The most actively involved with the subcommittee staff was a woman: Marilyn [Laird] Lloyd. She was Energy and Development—she was from Tennessee—she had the first female staff director on the subcommittee. And she would get people together and have little picnics or parties, just for everybody to get to know each other outside

of the Hill, either at the staff director's house . . . and that way we could get to know people on a different level. And that, I thought, was a super idea because the full committee didn't do that. The only thing they really did was a Christmas party every year. They had a big Christmas party, and everybody got to go and got involved in that. But for the most part, there was not a whole lot of interaction unless you hit it off with someone and became friends with someone. The subcommittees became pretty tight-knit, and because she did that, other Members did that. So, all the subcommittees kind of were doing the same thing, and then it was up to the full committee to incorporate them.

JOHNSON: One of the questions I wanted to ask you about were your recollections of some of the women Members. Since you brought up Marilyn Lloyd, what did you remember about her?

SCHWARTZ: She was very quiet, but very dramatic. In other words, she had . . . when she spoke, she didn't speak lightly, she spoke of things that she knew. She was concerned about her home state. She was concerned about the issues in her area, and then, being on the committee, the general issues of energy as it affected the country. She was very well respected by the male Members; they didn't take shots [at her] or potshots or anything. And it was a good thing to see.

Connie [Constance A.] Morella came after that, Mrs. Morella did. But Mrs. Lloyd was the first female Member that I remember visibly around. And she was here for quite a while, and was—I assume, I don't know—was very powerful within the Democratic policy structure of the Hill. And she just had that way about her; people sought her out. She was very pro-woman but didn't want to identify as being a women's libber. She was just . . . she kind of, "If I walk the walk and talk the talk, you can, too." And that's by

example. She didn't preach at people, if that makes sense. She just operated by example.

JOHNSON: Were there any other women Members that stand out in your mind, especially from the '70s, from that decade?

SCHWARTZ: Well, we had spoken earlier [in a previous interview] about Barbara [Charline] Jordan. Now, Barbara Jordan was on the House Judiciary Committee. I did not know her, but when I heard her speak . . . there was a woman that had a presence about her, and she could quiet a room. And I just remember when we were doing the Watergate—I think it was the Watergate hearings that she was involved in—and it was political, it got very political everywhere up here. She maintained a certain level of calm. You didn't identify her . . . she was a Democrat, but you didn't identify her with *the* Democratic Party or *the* Republican Party. She was part of this committee, who was upholding the Constitution, and she was going to make sure it was done correctly. And she was just . . . I thought she had a lot more presence than any of the men that were involved in the process because when she spoke, it became very quiet. She didn't, again, didn't speak lightly, and when she did, it was profound. It was like, "Whoa, she's good." She could have gone and done anything—that was my impression of her.

But, again, I was kind of cloistered in the committee, and unless a Member became a Ranking Member in a subcommittee or the chairman of a subcommittee, I didn't really get to see them, nor did I get to interact with them. They had a buffer: their staff, our staff, and then me. So, I was kind of like back behind our staff. And occasionally I would break free and actually get to talk to the staff in the Member's office, and that comes with the confidence and the support team you have. After a while, they said, "Okay, you can take that and run with it" and that kind of thing, but it took a while

to build that. But I did notice—and the one thing I did notice—was the women that had the power were in Members’ offices, and they were AAs.

And I developed a mentor with a Ranking Member, Congressman Larry [Edward Lawrence] Winn [Jr.] from Kansas. He was the Ranking Member on the Republican staff, and his administrative assistant at the time was Nan Elder. And she was a former flight attendant too, and so we kind of bonded, and she really took me under her wing. She was the one who would make sure that I had things correct for the Ranking Member when he went to committee: “He doesn’t like to be called this, he likes to be called that. Put this in there, get this out, three spaces this way. You need to do this for him, you need to do that for him.” And it just became seamless, so I became like another arm, and we developed a great rapport.

And Mr. Winn was a wonderful man. He would come down and sit in the office—our office was a lounge for the full committee room, as well as the minority office. He would come and sit, and he’d be on his phone, but you could tell he was watching. He was just watching us, say, “How are we doing this?” Because when they’re in a Member’s office, they have a whole different routine. The committee’s just a different entity, and you take on a different . . . the constituent role is really the Members’ [role]—that’s our constituency, the Members—where the Member’s office, their constituency were the voters back home, if that makes sense. So, it was kind of interesting to watch him watch us. And he would always make a couple of comments, but then he’d amble on out, and other Members tended to do that because we had a couch there. They would tend to hide from their staff: “I’m busy, I’m at committee,” and just, he’s sitting there on the phone, talking to whomever. They got a little place that they could hide. But it was good—it

was a good relationship—and that’s when I started to get to see the Members as people, not just Congressmen and Congresswomen. And it was good.

JOHNSON: For women Members, and also women staff, what do you think that they brought to the institution that was different from men?

SCHWARTZ: Women looked at things a little differently. And I’m just relating to myself: I look at things being organized and functioning correctly, and if something’s not going right, you figure out what it is and how to fix it. And that’s kind of what I had found that I seemed to be very good at. I could anticipate where something was going, and I could jump on it. Or I could say, for instance, like, we were talking about leave policy, we need to do something about that. So, I’d be like the nudge in the side of my boss, who was the staff director, and I’d say, “We really need to do something. I know you’re busy, but . . .” And I know then, what he would do is, he’d turn to me and say, “Why don’t you take a shot at it? Why don’t you pull something together, and I’ll look it over.” Oh, an entrée, right? So, you kind of ran with it. And the more you did, the more you were expected to do. And it felt good, it felt really good. So, I was in that role, but I was also in the minority, there were so few of us, that we got involved in somewhat of a legislative process, too, not drafting bills, but researching them and tracking them through the House and the Senate and feeding that information back to our staff.

And when the House changed hands—I know I’m skipping forward here—but when the House changed hands, and we became the Republican Congress, and the Democrats were in the minority, I had to make a choice because I could either flow into legislative, because I had enough knowledge of that, or I could stick with the administrative. I stuck with the administrative because I knew that like the back of my hand. I didn’t want to compete with an attorney. I didn’t want to compete with somebody who had

a Ph.D. in engineering. I wasn't that person, so that's the way I went, but the environment to grow was very strong. You could only grow so far, so fast, as a woman if you didn't have that Ph.D. or that law degree behind you. Especially on a committee, you were kind of relegated to be clerical support.

JOHNSON: Did you see that changing over time?

SCHWARTZ: I did, because what would happen . . . the Hill became a very popular place to be and to be from. If you worked on the Hill, you had an insider's knowledge of how it worked. So, you were marketable off the Hill. And what I saw—the change—people coming to interview had degrees, but they had no experience, actual work experience, at all (right from college). And they're trying to understand how an office works. And when you come up here—anyone that knows Capitol Hill—you're pretty much your own generator. You draft your legislation, you type it up—you don't have secretaries to do it for you now. You file it, you make copies of it, you give it to . . . you have to process the whole thing. And they didn't quite understand that, especially attorneys didn't understand that. They would come looking for a job, and they would get pushed over to the administrative side because they had no work experience. So, they would, "Oh, great. So, I have a law degree, and I can't get a . . ." They would have to start as clerical support and then prove themselves.

And it worked, because they would start working on a subcommittee, working on an energy issue—there might have been a legal matter—they could do all the legal research. The next thing you know, you could see the twinkle in the staff director's eyes: "Oh, we can move this [person] into . . ." A lot of people transcended from the clerical support into a professional support staff position after about two years because they had the law degree. Now they had the experience, so it worked that way.

And what I noticed changed—the amount of applicants that were coming in increased, but there were more men looking for entry-level clerical support positions, and that was very unique. Well, now the women were being challenged. So, it was kind of a unique scenario. Men, especially, when they were right out of college, and they're going to conquer the world, and it would be a big comeuppance: "Well, do you know how to type?" "I did law papers at school." "Okay. Do you know how to file? Do you know how to draft letters? Do you know how to answer phones?" "I can learn." "Okay, then you can start here. You're going to be a secretary working for the other secretary who's on this committee, on this subcommittee, and you'll provide support for her and the subcommittee. You just follow her lead." And next thing you know, we had staff assistants who were guys all over the place, and then it got to be, "Well, wait a minute, we have all guys now, we have to . . ." It was an interesting scenario because they knew that was the way to get on the Hill, especially right from college.

JOHNSON: When do you think that change started? Was that in the 1980s, do you think?

SCHWARTZ: That was about right. It was great because then the guys had a better insight into what the women had been doing all along. But it also challenged the women to stretch their wings. They could stay put and do whatever, or they could say, "I can do what he's doing; I have the same background, I have the same degree. I can do this." But you have to work for it. You have to actually get involved in the issue and go outside of yourself and do a lot more research and it . . . The opportunities, I saw them in the '80s. You could really see the change taking place in women, knowing that they didn't have to be stuck in a clerical support job, that it was part of the job, and the professional staff had as much clerical duties as they did because they were, computers were

[coming] in then. The transition from typewriters to fax machines, it was a dramatic change in just the way this place ran. And to see it, when you look back on it, you see how it just kind of evolved. And the women now had even to struggle to fight for their clerical support positions—that was pretty much a given back in the '60s and early '70s. And now that the guys were coming in, guys related to guys better in a lot of cases. So, they would pick out a guy and become a mentor to this particular staff assistant, and he would rise through the process. But women saw that and would challenge that and rise right to it. It's a matter of who does what and who's willing to pay their dues to get where they want to go.

The biggest and hardest problem that I remember—and I was kind of dumbfounded—after I came back to work in the late '70s, I was a working mom, so it wasn't as important for me to have a good salary. The mindset was because I had a husband who had a good salary, and he could take care of us, mine was just a little extra. That just burned me. And it kept me below a certain area. This was when we were in the minority staff. The Democratic majority staff dictated the salaries of the minority Republican staff, what their ceilings were and what they could make. They couldn't make any more than any of their peers on the other side, and in most cases, made less.

So I became the AA on the Republican side, but I had to make \$5,000 a year less than my counterpart on the Democratic side, and that's the way it was. And I would beat my head against the wall because I know she had a lot to do, but I was juggling a smaller group and a lot more. I didn't have subcommittees taking up the slack. We were up to 25 people now. So, it was larger than most subcommittees, and it just really annoyed me. And I remember going to my boss, asking him. He said, "Well, I'll go ask again," and then he asked again. And finally I just said, "I'm going to go in and ask."

“Well, you really shouldn’t do that, that’s not your job to do that.” I said, “This is my job.” And I went in, and the staff director at the time was a guy who was a former astronaut, and he pretty much looked me right in the eye, and he said, “You’re married, right?” And I said, “Yes.” “Your husband has a salary, you don’t need to worry about it. You make enough.” And I walked out. I was, like, “I can’t believe this.” “So, if I was divorced or single, that’d be different?” “Oh, yes.” Okay, I just went back into my little world, muttering to myself, telling my husband, muttering when I would go home. And he’d go, “Oh, God, do I have to listen to this again?”

But when the committee changed, when the Republicans took over, and we switched [to the majority], I made that an issue: that if I’m an AA, and I’m going to be the AA of the House Science Committee, I want to make what other AAs on the other committees are making, regardless of their gender. And when we have staff that come up through the committee, regardless of whether they’re married, I don’t want to hear that again. It shouldn’t have a bearing. It would be like saying to a guy, “Well, your wife works, right? Well, what do you need more money for? You combine the two [salaries], you’re doing pretty well.” I didn’t get any pushback from—at the time it was Bob [Robert Smith] Walker, and my boss was Dave Clement, who was the staff director, and Bob Walker was the Ranking Member at the time. And they had their hands full just with the transition from the Members’ standpoint, and I had my hands full just with the internal structure of the committee because there was nothing left behind, nothing. And you had to start all over from scratch. It was not an amicable changing of the guards.

JOHNSON: And this, of course, was years later. This is 1995 that you’re talking about.

SCHWARTZ: Yes. As I said, you can see the development, though, women actually, I believe, had a lot more opportunities on the Hill to succeed if they chose to. I

really do. Now, on the reverse side of that coin, I noticed that in Members' offices, they [women] were stifled because they didn't have the same avenue to grow to. They could be a press person. Maybe they could be an LA, a legislative assistant. But in most cases, they [Members' offices] would hire somebody who already knew the issue, not usually somebody from the committee, or not somebody from the Member's office. They would actually seek out someone from the committee. So, at that point, you were having staff assistants who were acting as LAs being hired by Members' offices to be an LA because they knew the committee. So, it was a total role reversal; where the Members' offices used to be the growth channel, now the committees were.

JOHNSON: Earlier, you talked about how a few women took you under their wing when you first started out. As you became the experienced staffer, did you do that for any other women?

SCHWARTZ: I did. And I did it for everybody across the board. Anyone that came through the office, it made so much of an impact on me that I felt I needed . . . I just needed, and I wanted to do that. I did it for the guys that I would interview and the women I would interview.

And I remember one woman came—she had graduated from college, she had a background in biology, and she had come to the committee—and she was ready to take any job. “I need any job, I need Hill experience. I need any job,” [she said], and Mary Anne Bach was her name. And I said, “Mary Anne, you’ve got too much going on here to take a clerical support position, you really do. You really know your issue.” And I said, “If I were you, I would take that and go to a Member’s office and say, ‘I know this background issue. I can learn how to interact with the committee, but I know this issue.’” And that’s exactly what she did, and that’s exactly what

happened. And that happened for three other women who came through. You could see that they had it, but they didn't know. There was an employment office, but there was no guidance to it, if that made sense. There was no real advertising of openings on the Hill. It was word of mouth, and that's how you got jobs: You just knew somebody, who knew somebody, who was looking for somebody.

And I really enjoyed that part of the job. I really enjoyed trying to get the right person to fit in the right job. That only happened a couple of times with staff going to Members' offices. Everybody else was working here and came on as clerical support. But I can truly say when they left the committee, after five or seven years, they would go to the National Science Foundation, they would go to NASA, they would do anything because they had the background that they wanted. They actually immersed themselves in it by choice. But it gave them an avenue.

You have all this information at your fingertips, and you can see people who just sit there, type what was handed to them, and sit back and wait for the next thing that was handed to them. Or, I've got some downtime, I'm really interested in that bill, [I'll] do a little research. Nobody told you to do it, but you want to find out what's going on, and now you've got some information for your boss. It's very proactive. And that's how I describe Capitol Hill: You need to be proactive if you're going to make it. You can status quo, but this is . . . you're not guaranteed a job on Capitol Hill. There is no guarantee; you can be let go like that—"Thank you, it's been great. You're out of here. I've got somebody else coming in"—which is a good thing, because it makes you better at what you do. I really believe that. So, I stayed.