

Women of the Senate Oral History Project

TARA DIJULIO

Deputy Press Secretary and Press Secretary, Senator Wayne Allard, 2007–2008

Press Secretary, Senator Robert Bennett, 2008–2010

Communications Director, Senator Roger Wicker, 2010–2011

Communications Director, Senator Daniel Coats, 2011–2014

**Communications Director, Senator Robert Corker and the Senate Foreign Relations
Committee, 2014–2016**

Oral History Interview

June 8, 2018

Senate Historical Office

Washington, D.C.

**AGREEMENT AND RELEASE
ORAL HISTORY PROJECT
U.S. SENATE HISTORICAL OFFICE**

I, Tara DiJulio, agree to participate in the Women of the Senate Oral History Project and understand that the physical audio recordings and transcripts of my interviews are and will remain the property of the United States Senate.

In entering into this agreement, I understand that all or portions of my oral history may be made available to the public in an online feature on the Senate website, may be made available to researchers and may be quoted from, published, or broadcast in any other medium (consisting of all forms of print or electronic media, including the Internet or other emerging, future technologies that may be developed) that the Senate Historical Office may deem appropriate. I also approve the deposit of the recordings and transcripts at the Library of Congress, the National Archives, and any other institution that the Senate Historical Office may deem appropriate.

In consideration for my inclusion in this project, I understand I am entitled to receive a copy of the transcripts of my interviews. While I hereby relinquish any intellectual property rights or interests I may hold in the content of my interviews, I acknowledge that the Senate has the discretion to decide whether or not to make all or any part of my oral history available to the public.



Tara DiJulio

Dated: 3/8/19

I, Betty K. Koed, accept the interview of Tara DiJulio for inclusion into the Oral History Project of the U.S. Senate Historical Office.



Betty K. Koed, U.S. Senate Historian

Dated: 3/15/2019

Introduction

In 2007 Tara DiJulio joined Colorado senator Wayne Allard's communications staff as deputy press secretary. During the next decade DiJulio worked for several Republican senators and led the communications team for the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Her career on Capitol Hill coincided with dramatic changes in the way that public officials communicate with their constituents back home, including the rapid adoption of social media platforms by members' offices. When her Senate career began, DiJulio was in charge of compiling the daily "clips file," a folder of newspaper clippings that mentioned Senator Allard. When she left her position as a communications director nine years later, DiJulio managed a complex operation that included social media platforms, e-newsletters, and streaming services that provided constituents with instant connectivity to senators' staff. DiJulio describes this technological revolution in communications and what it was like to (often) be the only woman in a room of decision makers.

About the interviewer: Katherine (Kate) Scott is a historian in the Senate Historical Office. A graduate of the University of Washington, she holds a M.A. in history from the University of New Mexico and a Ph.D. in history from Temple University. Scott is the author of *Reining in the State: Civil Society and Congress in the Vietnam and Watergate Eras* (University Press of Kansas, 2013) and other articles and book chapters. She is a member of the Oral History Association and serves on the editorial board of *The Public Historian*.

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KATE SCOTT: Thank you, Tara DiJulio. DiJulio?

TARA DIJULIO: DiJulio [DEE-JOO-LEE-O]. Tara DiJulio.

SCOTT: Tara DiJulio. Thank you for meeting me today. I'm delighted that you're willing to be part of our oral history project: women in the Senate. I thought we'd start today with a very basic question. What kind of female role models did you have growing up? Who were they and what did they teach you?

DIJULIO: Absolutely. You know, you have your personal life role models, my mother, my grandmother, especially were big influences, still are big influences in my life. My grandmother is 96 years old. She worked until she was 90. She always taught us really hard work ethic, the importance of that. And the importance of standing up for yourself. She was not someone who was quiet. She had opinions and she shared them. I've learned a lot from my grandmother. My mom always taught me to chase your dreams, and never apologize for that. That was something that always stuck with me.

In terms of growing up, who were some of my more public facing role models? I, as a kid, I always wanted to be a reporter, a political correspondent. I adored Diane Sawyer. As a young kid, I wrote reports about Diane Sawyer. She was one of my role models, still is today. I had a chance to meet her when I was in the Senate, which was an exciting moment for me. Then as I was growing up and following politics, too, Peggy Noonan was another one that was a role model for me. Her writings I love; I still to this day follow all of her writings and her columns. Those were some of the early ones for me.

SCOTT: What were people's expectations for you when you were a young girl? Did they expect you would become a journalist? Did they think you'd go into politics? Did people encourage you to do whatever you wanted to do?

DIJULIO: I would say that my hometown, my classmates probably thought that I would go into broadcasting and be a reporter or journalist in some area just because that's what I always wanted to do. It did not surprise anyone that I moved from Southern California to Washington,

D.C., to chase a dream of working here. That didn't surprise anyone. So I think that it was something I always wanted to do. They knew I wanted to get into politics and reporting. There wasn't an expectation, per se, when I was younger of what I should do; it was always—you can go after whatever you want. I never felt—and that's really, frankly, the pioneers that came before us, right? I mean I never felt like there was a ceiling for me.

SCOTT: Okay, interesting. Well, then what brought you to Capitol Hill?

DIJULIO: What brought me to Capitol Hill? Well I moved here to D.C. on, it was New Year's Day 2006. I had no job. I had no connections in D.C. I didn't know anyone on the East Coast. My family, while we always followed politics very closely, my family wasn't politically involved. So I just had no connections in any way. It was really hard to break through at first. So I came out here without a job on New Year's Day. I pounded the pavement. I worked at McCormick and Schmick's in Crystal City. I brought a suit with me every day I was waiting tables in case I got a phone call for an interview. I was really frustrated when I first came to D.C. because I would come to the Hill wanting to get a job on the Hill and they would say, "You're overqualified for a staff assistant job." Or they would say, "You're not from the state." Or, "You don't have experience on the Hill." And I'd say, "Well that's why I'm here, I want to get experience." So it was really frustrating at first. I took a job as an executive assistant at a lobbying consulting firm and that was how I started to learn a little bit about the way Washington works and build connections here before I came onto the Hill a year later.

SCOTT: So what did you learn about how Washington works? How important were those connections?

DIJULIO: Well it was really—I mean 2006 was a really different time [than] today. Washington has changed significantly. There are some things that stay the same: the importance of building a network, reaching out across the aisle, making sure that you have contacts with both Republicans and Democrats. That's still true today. The town is very, very different. And I would say one of the things that I learned was, it's a small town. I think that people forget how small it is. One of my mentors, who was here in the Senate, always pressed upon me, treat everyone with respect, which is something you learn as a young kid, right? But in a town of powerful people and people who get close to power, you can sometimes forget that core message. That was something that I always focused on: treat everyone with respect. And it is a small town. They will remember that, and they'll remember if you didn't [treat them with respect]. I think those were some of the initial learnings.

I also was really surprised at how young the town was, especially when I first came onto the Hill. It was a young place. There were some young staffers. There were also some that have been here for a while that provide great institutional knowledge. But that was surprising to me, seeing a lot of competitive, talented people that were really hungry, too, coming together and working hard every single day.

SCOTT: What was your big break? How did you get the job in Senator [Wayne] Allard's office?

DIJULIO: Getting onto the Hill was a little bit tough at first for me. I didn't have the typical journey. The typical journey for a staffer is usually you're an intern in the office. Usually you're from the home district or the home state. You start as an intern, you work your way up as a staff assistant. Then, if you're going the legislative route, you become a legislative correspondent writing letters to constituents, and you work your way up to a legislative assistant or aide and then perhaps legislative director at some point. On the communications route, which is the route I took, again usually you would start as an intern, and then a press assistant, and then a deputy press secretary and climb up that way. That was not the path I took. I guess one message that I always tell people wanting to come to the Hill is that you don't necessarily have to do it that way. You can still break through in other ways.

When I was working at the consulting firm, we had a lot of clients who were from Utah and Colorado and the western states. I got to know those offices pretty well, and build relationships. But the way that I actually broke through was cold calling my contacts. I went to the University of Washington. I was in a sorority when I was in college, and so I looked up the alumni directory and found which Alpha Gamma Delta members were living in Washington, D.C., and which ones were working on the Hill, and I reached out to them. I met with them for coffee, told them what I was interested in, and it was a woman I met that way who connected me to Emily Christiansen, who was then the press secretary for [the late U.S. Senator] Bob Bennett [of Utah]. And Emily Christiansen, a fantastic woman, a mentor of mine that I'm still in touch with today, she passed my resume around. So I had an advocate on the Hill helping me out. And that's how I got into Senator Allard's office.

SCOTT: As a deputy press secretary. Is that right?

DIJULIO: So I came in as a deputy press secretary, right.

SCOTT: So tell me about that job. What is it? What's the role of a deputy press secretary? Or what was it in 2007?

DIJULIO: It has changed a lot because of social media and the way that the news cycle has changed. In 2007, a deputy press secretary, in Senator Allard's office, we were a very small shop. So we had a deputy press secretary, and a communications director, and then a press intern. Very small. When I went from deputy press secretary to a press secretary—it was only a few months—there wasn't anyone in that role before, so there was room for upward mobility. As a deputy press secretary, I got up really early every day and did what we call the clips. The clips is when you compile all the mentions of the senator in all the news outlets: the local papers in Colorado, the dailies, the weeklies, the national papers. You compile all those every single day into a clips package that you would then give to the senator and the staff. You'd also cover

whatever national issues are hot that day, things going on in the state, any other mentions from the delegation perhaps that you would want the senator to know about. And what's interesting is that at that time, this was hard copy. I would email the clips as an attachment to everyone in the office, but the senator, the chief, the legislative director, the communications director all got thick packets every single morning on their desk of the clips, and they would read the hard copies, every day. Fast forward to when I left the Senate running the Senate Foreign Relations Committee press operation and communications director for Senator Bob Corker, it's the clip system night and day. It's just like, get it out, first of all earlier, because of the news cycle. Instead of clips hitting at, I think they were hitting at 8 a.m. when I was with Senator Allard, now they're hitting an hour earlier, and it was all email based, of course, and the amount of clips changed quite a bit with the number of new publications and online platforms and social media mentions, too. That has changed so much the role of a press assistant or a deputy press secretary. The clips are a huge part of your day, it's not just morning. It's ongoing monitoring of news. So that's one way that that has changed.

The other thing that a deputy press secretary does is staff and help the communications director prepare the senator for interviews, monitoring coverage throughout the day, and we also did a lot of radio news conferences, weekly radio news conferences, that I hope people are still doing. We did some of that when I left, but people were moving a little bit away from it. But those were some of the duties.

SCOTT: What's a radio news conference like? Is it with the folks back home in the state?

DIJULIO: It is. You could do it a couple different ways but you could have it one on one with a radio station back home, or what we would do is we'd call it a pen and pad, where you could invite a bunch of reporters, not just radio, into the recording studio and they can all ask questions of the senator. The senator usually opens up with remarks, then goes to questions. You go around the horn and let them ask questions. It's a press availability opportunity. But we did a separate one for radio stations, too, so they could have a more dedicated interview instead of just journalists firing off questions left and right.

SCOTT: You're not from the state of Colorado. Is there a learning curve for someone like you to learn what are the issues at stake here, meeting local press folks? Did you go back to Colorado and meet people? How does it work?

DIJULIO: Right. I actually worked for five U.S. senators, and I was not from any of those states. For me, that was such an honor and an opportunity to learn more about what Americans are thinking. To learn really what people in Colorado are thinking and Utah versus Tennessee or Mississippi or Indiana. I mean, it was a unique opportunity. The way that you go about doing that when you're not from the state, though, is that you get back to the state. It's incredibly important to spend time there, to not just stay, as we say, inside the beltway here. You

have to understand how a message is being perceived [and] what issues are really top of mind for the constituents back home. Also, build the relationships with the reporters there in the state. I would go back more often when I was communications director than a deputy press secretary. It depends on the member, too. How often is the senator going back to the state? I worked for members who went back very often, so we would do a big recess push whenever Congress was in recess, have a huge communications plan around it to make sure we were maximizing any of the events that the senator was taking [part] in, town hall events, or meeting at businesses, and facilities, and manufacturing plants. Go on those tours, help manage the press with that. And get a glimpse of what was going on back in the state. And that's a huge part of the job, too, not just the votes and the work that happens here. But really keeping a pulse on what the voters, what the American people are thinking back home.

SCOTT: Okay, so when you arrive here in the Senate, you don't have any experience on the Hill. How do you get up to speed? How do you learn? Do you have mentors? Do people take you under their wing? How does it work?

DIJULIO: Right. When I came to Senator Allard's office, I was 23 years old. Definitely at that time I was the youngest spokesperson in the Senate, which was really intimidating, frankly. I never wanted anyone to know my age. I always wanted them to think I was older. I remember wearing shoulder pads, a suit with shoulder pads, so I wouldn't look like I was 23. I wanted to look older. It was baptism by fire. I mean you go in, it's fast paced. There's not much of an onboarding system the way if you went into work for a company or corporation where you really get a lot of training up front. You have to be quick on your toes, you have to ask a lot of questions. I observed a lot, really taking time to observe the style of the senator, what are his or her priorities, what is important to them, what are the small things that help them throughout their day. Same with the communications director or chief of staff. You really just have to dive in. But I always tried to do—and what some mentors told me to do—I first came in and thought, who are the savviest communications directors on the Hill, meet them for coffee, learn from them, and that was something that I did a lot of, too, as I moved up the ladder, is make sure I was mentoring others. But you've just got to dive in and learn and adjust on the fly. And it's exciting and incredibly fast paced. It only got faster with the change of how news and social media changed everything.

SCOTT: When do you recall social media and the way that it began to change your world in the communications field? Is there an episode? Is there a moment? Is there an event?

DIJULIO: I would say, I do remember 2008 was really a time when—Senator McCain was one of the first. I don't know if he was the first senator to use Twitter. If not the first, he was one of the first. And that was about 2008. I remember being in the Senate Rotunda with a colleague, another communications staffer who was with another senator at the time. We were talking about Twitter. We both said, this is a phase. We were both asking, do we have to get on

Twitter? And get our bosses on Twitter? And yes, the answer was quickly, yes. But I do remember 2008 being this moment where a lot of communications staffers were trying to figure out, do we need to do this? Is it necessary to get our message out? We all were doing Facebook for our bosses but it wasn't in the way that you communicate today. It was posting a few pictures and not a lot of focus on engagement with your audience the way that social media can be used today. Twitter seemed to change everything in the sense of how fast the cycle was going. In a way that really changed for a communications person, too. If there was a story that was wrong, before you would call up the reporter, get it corrected, they would possibly issue a correction, change it online, and you're done. With social media, that story is just spreading like wildfire and you cannot rein that in as quickly. You'll get more retweets now on a story that might have inaccuracies or a quote that is inaccurate or whatever it may be. And not as many retweets on the correction, of course. So that really changed how strategic communications was in the Senate and really finding a way to talk directly to your constituents.

Telephone town halls didn't exist when I first started in the Senate. They became very popular quickly. When I first started in the Senate, there were reporters that required that I faxed them a press release and so I had to fax press releases. Now, I'm not sure if you would ask a press assistant in the Senate to tell you what a fax machine is that they would even know. So just thinking about how we went from faxing press releases, cutting out clips, to everything electronically, everyone communicating through social media, and it's just so much of monitoring not just the news but the pulse of the people back home. It changed everything, it really did. And it also changed how you manage expectations for your senator. Are they getting too focused on the comments they are seeing on social media? Are you making sure that you're keeping the big picture? The speed in which a communications job changed from 2006 or 2007 when I started, to when I exited is just incredible.

SCOTT: Well as a historian, I think back when I go into the archives for a member who worked in the 1960s or '70s, a standard communication tool was the newsletter back to folks in the home state. That typed newsletter, which probably lingered well into the 1980s and maybe longer, I'm not sure. I feel like Facebook was the online translation of the newsletter in the early days, and I'm not sure if that's true in 2007. Do you feel like it served that function then?

DIJULIO: Well, a lot of offices still have a newsletter, an e-newsletter. So they still send one out. I still receive a lot of them from my previous bosses. But the style has changed quite a bit. Brevity is key. We used to write these incredibly long newsletters, and I'm not sure who was reading all the way to the end (laughs), where you would package all of your press releases and highlights of the week and send it out weekly. Now brevity, video, using video content, social media graphics, everything has changed in the way we consume news, and so the offices here in the Senate have had to change, too. There are some that resisted it at first. I think there were some members or even staffers that could have been stuck in the old ways, so making sure that you have staffers that are creative, that are really looking at how things are happening outside of

the Senate, too, and adjusting is important. But the e-newsletters still exist. If you look at news publications, as well, you have not just your printed newspaper, you have Axios that sends out a morning newsletter essentially, short, what you need to know, with really compelling video or graphics incorporated into it. And that's how the offices in the Senate have started to adjust even more so.

SCOTT: Well as someone who is just out of college with a communications degree, did you feel like the Senate was behind the times when you arrived here in 2007? It sounds like the use of fax, for example, is a perfect example of the way things were still a bit archaic. In the press shop, when you first arrived here, did it still feel like things were a little behind the times? The Senate is often resistant to change.

DIJULIO: When I first came in, not so much. But again, when I was coming into the Senate, Facebook was around, but social media really had not taken off. I would say in 2008, which is when it really started to shift, I felt like the Senate for a long time was still behind. It wasn't just setting up a Twitter account for your boss. It was, are you really using it in the most effective way? There are some senators that you see that are incredibly creative and really let their personality show. It's authentic and genuine. There are others that are very much more controlled, the staffer does it—that's a fine way to do it, too. We did it that way. I think the way that we've changed our tactics has really progressed and it took the Senate a lot longer. The House tends to be a little more on the cutting edge with that—younger members is probably part of it. But the House would sometimes be out in front, and then we would catch up in the Senate.

SCOTT: How many women worked as press secretaries or communications directors when you arrived here? Not that you would know the [total] number but, were you often in situations on communications staff where a number of the people in the room would be women?

DIJULIO: At first it was—I'm thinking of every Monday morning the Senate Republicans would get together and the Senate Democrats would have their own meeting as well. When I first came to the Hill, that meeting, I would say—I'm just eyeballing this—was probably 60/40, 60 percent men, 40 percent women. When I left, the women were in control. That room was full of women communicators, which is really exciting to see that transition.

SCOTT: In only 10 years.

DIJULIO: In only 10 years.

SCOTT: That's rapid.

DIJULIO: I think that there's been a lot of change there. You started to see more female chiefs of staff, more female members, more female communications directors. It's not just the female serving as a press assistant role or a deputy. I saw a lot of change in the 10 years.

SCOTT: Now you moved to, who was your next senator? You worked with Senator Bob Bennett after that. You were the press secretary but I think became—

DIJULIO: Well, in Senator Bennett's office, press secretary was the communications director. He still had a little bit of an old school system, almost. Chief of staff used to be called administrative assistant, AA. So press secretary in his office was the communications director, essentially.

SCOTT: Tell me about that role. How is it different from the work you were doing previously?

DIJULIO: What was different about it is that I was now managing a press shop. I might have been the youngest person managing a press shop. I remember my press secretary, or my deputy press secretary, was older than me. I had an intern once who was older than me. That was always a challenge for me, as both a female and being young, when you are editing the work of a policy staffer that is much older than you who has been in the Senate for years. Sometimes that can be a little intimidating at first. Senator Bennett operated in a way that was so inclusive, that I just didn't feel that type of—that pressure was really on myself. It was almost like I was putting that pressure on myself. But he had a female chief of staff; he had top female policy staffers. He himself was a staffer in the Senate. His father was a senator. He was a PR person as well, Senator Bennett. He was one of my early mentors in my career from a communications standpoint and as my boss because he had a brilliant PR mind. I learned a ton from watching him and really having him teach me the ropes along the way.

That was my first exposure to being a manager. It was tough at first, it really was. I think a lot of it had to do with my age at the time. For me personally just trying to get over that and have the confidence to be okay with [saying], I'm the manager and I can take all this input and then at the end of the day make a recommendation to the senator or to the chief of staff. But he had a culture in that office that was so important to foster that type of inclusiveness and empowering us to do our jobs that I deeply appreciated.

SCOTT: He was a senior member at that point, right?

DIJULIO: He was senior member on the Banking Committee. I joined his office in the spring, in March or April, and the financial crisis happened just a few months after in 2008. So I went from starting out in his office, really trying to figure out how to be a communications director, and then going into incredibly late nights. They were in the Senate Foreign Relations Committee [room] in the Capitol working out the TARP legislation, with [Secretary of the Treasury] Henry Paulson and [Federal Reserve Chair Ben] Bernanke. It was incredibly intense, and I learned an enormous amount from him and from others during that time.

That was a scary moment and that was an important moment in communications as well because there was so much confusion. I mean, we forget that people weren't sure if the economy was going to collapse the next day. It was a really scary moment. The importance of communicating your message to Americans, to the constituents back home, was really critical. Such a complicated issue, really complex, and trying to simplify that was a struggle. That was definitely my first real exposure into crisis communication.

SCOTT: And things were moving so quickly, right?

DIJULIO: So fast.

SCOTT: Everyday there was new information about this bank or that bank.

DIJULIO: And again, if you remember, we weren't consuming news in the same way. So I'm sitting outside the Senate Foreign Relations Committee room because there's tons of press lined up. The members are all in there negotiating a deal, or trying to reach a deal, just a core group. Then you've got—I had my press staff back in the personal office, like glued to a TV because I wasn't able—you didn't just turn on your phone and open Twitter and get all of it coming in. It was having to have people send you an email, and then I would pass a note into the room. It was a little bit slower in that sense. Everything was moving so fast, too. The way we consumed wasn't the way we do today.

SCOTT: Were people on Blackberry's in your office at that point?

DIJULIO: Oh that's a good question. Yes, we were on Blackberry.

SCOTT: And was Senator Bennett on a Blackberry?

DIJULIO: Yes. Although some members still weren't. Yes, that's right.

SCOTT: Out of curiosity, why were they meeting in the Senate Foreign Relations Committee room? Do you remember? Was it an issue of space or convenience?

DIJULIO: I don't know if it was just the space or the formality of the room. I mean the Banking room in Dirksen wouldn't have—I think it was more the space; it has the giant conference table. So I don't really—

SCOTT: Centrally located.

DIJULIO: Centrally located, and maybe easier exits, too, for the administration officials, was probably part of it.

SCOTT: That would have been easier.

Tell me about a day in the life of a communications director, which is essentially the role that you're in for Senator Bennett. I imagine that every day is a little different, but start to finish, tell us what it was like.

DIJULIO: So in Senator Bennett's office or?

SCOTT: Senator Bennett's office, yes.

DIJULIO: So it was getting up really early and reading. I mean consuming as much news as I could in the morning. Making sure that I knew what was going on, any mentions of him, that clips process, too, was really important. I always wanted to go into the office having an understanding of what reporters are going to ask today. It's a little bit harder today because now it changes by the minute. But at that time it was somewhat more manageable. So my goal was to make sure that I knew every day, if I were a reporter today, this is what I'm covering. On the other side of it, too, in the morning is when I would craft, what is our message, then, on these issues, if we weren't already prepared for them. Then we would usually have, depending on the day, there would be an all staff meeting, usually on Mondays, where we would go around and really get a glimpse of what the week looked like, and who's working on what. What groups or constituents are coming in? Are we introducing an amendment or a bill? What votes are going to hit the floor? We'd talk through that. Then we would have a much tighter, we'd call it a "leg" time, a legislative meeting with the LAs and the communications director and Senator Bennett and the chief of staff and the LD where, again, that was a tighter circle with Senator Bennett there, where we would go over and really discuss, how would we recommend voting on this, kind of talk through the pros and cons as well. Get sign off on letters. Get sign off on press releases or op-eds. A lot of meetings early in the week, then it's staffing him throughout the day. It would be, if it was during the financial crisis, I really became a body man. I stood next to him all the time going from meeting to meeting because the press would come in and grab for interviews. As the communications person, you want to know what he's saying and be sure to push that out, too. Or if you need to follow up with a reporter, that would be the time you'd want to hear that. During those crisis moments, I'd follow him to policy lunch, I'd follow him to his hearings. Then it was really following the hearings, pushing out press releases, writing them. There was a structure and a flow to every week, but every day was very, very different depending on the news and what you wanted your office, your boss to push out that week.

SCOTT: What about communication with other communication directors within the caucus?

DIJULIO: Right. Every Monday morning we would meet, the communications staff would meet within the Republican caucus and the Democrats as well. That's where we would discuss the issues coming up that week and ask any questions, or sometimes debate questions, too. Then from there on, it really depends on, are you rolling out a bill with another office? Are you trying to gain support? A lot of times that was a legislative staff task but sometimes I would

do the outreach to the fellow communicators and say, “I heard what your boss said. You should get on this bill.” I would sort of start to work some of those relationships as well. One of my mentors in the Senate, Emily Christiansen, who was in Bob Bennett’s office prior to when I joined, taught me the importance of building a community, of your own kitchen cabinet. So I would reach out to communicators in Democratic offices, communicators around town, not just in the Senate, and really share ideas with them, bounce ideas off of them, get to know them. What are some of the things they’re seeing? What are the new trends? How are you using Twitter or Facebook or any other social media platform? I did that pretty regularly. It was kind of a Friday afternoon, once the senator had taken off to go back to the state, [activity]. That was also important to build those relationships, because when you were negotiating on legislation with another office, if you already had a relationship with that staffer, it really helps. The communications staffers do have influence within the office, too, and a voice. Or should have a voice, I would hope they would. Those relationships were important, and I leaned on that when we worked on tax reform legislation, or housing finance reform legislation, or banking bills, or foreign policy issues.

SCOTT: Why was it important to have connections outside the Senate? Would you hear surprising things? Is that an important perspective to have?

DIJULIO: Yes, because in the Senate, it is so fast and you start to get a little tunnel vision. You’re focused on the Senate and what’s happening this week, the votes, the political football or ping pong of the moment. You’re trying to really keep the pulse back in the state. But at times, it’s really hard to look back and look holistically at how creative you can be. Or what are some new trends that you should be looking into? Or how to build coalition support, too. Really finding unexpected allies around town so that when you do roll out an initiative or legislation, you’ve already kind of seeded that groundwork, and you’re building that support. I always thought it was really important to not just look within the Senate. And frankly it’s good for future career development and opportunities as well. I always encourage women in the Senate to build those connections downtown and elsewhere so that they have those when they’re ready to leave, too.

SCOTT: So what made you move from Senator Bennett’s office?

DIJULIO: Election loss. It wasn’t by choice, but Senator Bennett, this was 2010, he was the first Tea Party casualty, frankly. I mean it was, it’s interesting when you look back at it now, the wave seems so clear, but at the time, it really wasn’t. It was during a very controversial debate on healthcare, the healthcare reform law under President Obama had just been signed into law. Utah has a very different election system. We found out that he didn’t make it onto the ballot, unfortunately. They have a convention system in Utah. We found out early on in the spring that he wasn’t going to make it. It was really hard. It was a really, really tough moment because he was a mentor of mine for so long. He encouraged all of us to look for opportunities

and we had time to do so. During that time, Senator [Roger F.] Wicker's office called me up. They were in the middle of the Gulf oil spill. And they didn't have anyone in their communications shop at the time. I interviewed with them and again, it was right into a crisis comms [communications] moment, and so really, soon after Senator Bennett's loss, I moved onto Senator Wicker to help out with the Gulf oil spill. They were also planning for the five-year anniversary of Hurricane Katrina. There was just a lot happening in that office, and I was really pleased to help them through that.

SCOTT: So tell me about that transition for you. What was it like? It must have been very hard?

DIJULIO: It was very emotional. I should say in the Senate, you can go off and work on a campaign. There's rules around that and so we follow all of those rules. I went off and worked on Senator Bennett's campaign. I was in Utah, spending time in Utah, sleeping in the basement of a staffer's parents' house, wherever, bouncing from house to house during this campaign. You become so emotionally connected to your candidate. You really believe in the cause and in your candidate. It is a hard, it is a really hard blow when they lose. It was also, it was a tough moment because you see the dedication of not just the member but the staff. And the family members. And everyone else behind the member who have given years of public service to the state of Utah, to the country. It was a hard moment. I was in a fog for a little bit. I was almost a little mechanical because I was trying to figure out how to emotionally get through it because it's tough.

But I was pleased that Senator Wicker gave me the opportunity to come on board there as well. The transition was, this was probably one of my hardest transitions in the sense that I wasn't wanting to leave, but you have to. And different styles. I'm starting to learn—you know, the transition from Senator Allard to Senator Bennett for me was a transition of learning how to be a manager. Now I had been a manager for some time. Now I was really transitioning to different personalities, different styles of the member. How do you become a trusted advisor? A strategic advisor? Someone that they seek counsel from? It takes time to build that relationship, and I had that with Senator Bennett. To start over again, that was hard at first. You've just kind of got to keep at it and be observant and have an open line of communication, too, with the member and to the chief of staff. But that was a tough transition at first for me just because of still feeling that loss of not wanting to leave the person that was my mentor.

SCOTT: Well the Senate is this strange place in that 100 offices operate with their own culture, right?

DIJULIO: They do.

SCOTT: Has that been true in your career? Have you found that each office has operated [with] a different culture?

DIJULIO: Absolutely, absolutely. There are a lot of similarities between offices. Structure is, typically, very similar. But the culture is very different. And part of that is where the staff may be from, right. Is it a western culture? Is it a southern culture? Is it midwestern? There's some of that dynamic. I'm a Southern Californian, and not from any of those regions, well, western. But a member sets the tone, really. And so the style of leadership of the member is really important. Is it a member that is very inclusive and loves collaboration? Is it a member that likes to receive information and is a little more top down perhaps? And I'm not saying one's right or wrong; they're just different styles.

I'll give you an example. Senator Bob Corker, who was the last member I served in the Senate, a businessman. He had started his own company and was a very successful businessman. I remember going into his office on day one in that first week really seeing the difference in how he runs his office. I mean, he runs it like a businessman. And it was an exciting change. I'm not saying that the previous members, that their style wasn't right, but it was an exciting change for me to see just a different style of bringing in a few staffers on an issue, really letting us debate it out. I mean really having the time to debate it out, and he would lob questions and really get us to share the pros, the cons. He liked to kind of see the respectful conflict between staff to see how they would decide on an issue, or how they would recommend it. He would always encourage us to find a way to get to yes, meaning find a way to get so and so on board with this bill. I know you say they won't do it—let's try. That's a very business mentality of testing and experimenting and being willing to fail and take that risk. He took great risks in that sense of, alright you all say this is a stupid idea, or stupid timing to roll out this gas tax bill, which we did have a debate on. Let's see if I can get some people to jump on it. Let's just see, let's give it a shot. That really changed the way I am as a communications person today. Because I really don't look at something now on all the ways that it can't be done, but really looking at all the ways we can try to get it done. He was really the one who instilled in us, throw deep, and it might work. I loved seeing that style. He was very results oriented, too. He wanted to see the data and the stats and I thought that was incredibly smart in the way that he ran his office.

SCOTT: What about, in the position you had with Senator Corker, you also had this different position where it looks like you were managing communications for the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Is that accurate?

DIJULIO: That's right.

SCOTT: What is that like? Tell me how a committee is different from a personal office, if at all?

DIJULIO: That's pretty unique. You can go two different styles or two different approaches here. You can have a communications director for each. For example, I think Senator [Orrin] Hatch has had that for the Finance Committee. Communications director in his personal office and communications director for the Finance Committee. For Senator Corker, he wanted,

when he took over the gavel as chairman and when he was ranking member, he wanted a communications director that would oversee all of it, have that holistic view. It's the only way that I know so I'm biased to that one. But I do think it's smart in the sense that that person, that communications person, can have a big picture of everything that the senator is focused on, working on, a really good line of sight into everything. Then that way you can be a little bit more strategic in the sense of, at least in our office, we felt it was more strategic this way. Then I could say, look, let's hold this bill on housing finance reform because we're about to go big on this issue over here in the Foreign Relations Committee. Or, also asking are we doing too much foreign relations only and do we need to make sure what happened to these domestic issues that we really want to highlight? Let's amplify those and get some more attention on those. You can have a greater line of sight. I loved that role. It was really an exciting opportunity at a very unique time. My third day on the job was when Putin invaded Crimea. And so it was, again, baptism by fire of trying to make sure that I learned everything that I needed to know around that issue. Have all the experts around me so that I understand some of the history of Russia and Crimea and all of that. So it was exciting.

SCOTT: Do the committees have their own unique cultures?

DIJULIO: They do, they do. Sometimes that's a hard culture to merge into one, I will say. So the personal office and the committee, sometimes there's competition. Sometimes it's competition for the senator's attention, right? It's a little bit, I'm a mom now and sometimes I view it as trying to get the parent's attention on what you want. What was great about Senator Corker's office is that he set the tone for the culture. He really brought that together. He worked very hard at doing that. I think it only works if the member is all in on that model. For other members, the separate model, of having the committee and the personal office very separate, is a model that works fantastic for them. But there are some growing pains of trying to pull it all together. On a committee you have professional staffers. And that's their title on their business card, "professional staffer." Some of them have been in the Senate for a long time and are very committed to the issues and the areas of expertise that they handle. Then when you have someone, a legislative aide or a communications director, coming down from the personal office and saying, "Yeah but in Tennessee, that's not going to work," you know, there can be a little bit of debate or dissention there. But I saw it as healthy. I thought the diversity of input was great.

SCOTT: Tell me about the role of a communications director in the sense that you may be the spokesperson for the member. In the Senate, many staffers really aren't supposed to go on the record. Your job is to be discreet, and to support. But that's not true always for a communications director, right? So tell me about that.

DIJULIO: I will say, when I first came to the Senate for Senator Allard, on day one, they gave me an issue to write a press release. And I remember leaving the quote part blank because I thought that the senator would provide a quote. And they said, no you write it. And I thought,

you want me to write his quote? I remember at the time, and it seems silly now, but I remember at the time thinking, this is crazy, you're going to have a 23 year old write his quote? Why can't I ask him for his quote? I didn't realize that that was just the way it worked. They can't write every single quote. They don't have the time. The communications person is supposed to get to a point where they're in a member's head and can really speak for them and draft their quotes. The senator signs off on his quotes, so it's still his or her words. But I remember thinking that was crazy, of having a 20-something year old write the quote, write his or her words, right?

Fast forward to your question on being a spokesperson, you're right. In most offices the communications officer and potentially a press secretary are the spokespersons for the office, and sometimes a chief of staff will do it as well. But then you really don't want anyone else doing it. There's, again, different styles and approaches. There are some communications professionals that go on the record all the time for their boss. That's completely fine, that's kind of their style. For me personally, I saw it as a strategic decision of when I would comment, versus when the senator would comment. And 90 percent, if not more than 90 percent of the time, I want it to be from the senator. It needs to be his words. It's more important for me to see his name, not my name. I want the constituents to see his name, not my name. There are moments, though, when you want to separate that a little bit and whether it's responding to an attack, and you don't want to elevate it to the senator. Then I would be the one that would respond to the attack. Or maybe it's just not an issue that needs to rise to having a quote from the senator. But even giving that framework, too, on the big issues as well, you're still as the communications director guiding and advising on the key points on what he or she should say, what you think they should say. There's still that component, too, of being the spokesperson. There's still a little bit more of a behind the scenes role, too.

SCOTT: I feel like it could take a while to get in someone's head, where you would feel comfortable speaking on their behalf. Is that—?

DIJULIO: Yes, yes, yes, absolutely. Whenever I would start in a new office, it takes a while to learn their voice. To learn which words they love or hate. Senator Bennett was a stickler for grammar. He was an English and grammar expert. He would cringe if somebody ended a sentence in a preposition. So whenever that happened in a staff meeting, I would cringe thinking that he's cringing on this, too. He would always tell me, you're the keeper of my words. It was a lot of pressure, but he wanted me to know that everything I said, I was a representative for him. I was serving as his voice. I'm the keeper of his words. That was really powerful and it stuck with me. I didn't take that lightly. Preparation is so, so key. I would watch videos and speeches that the member gave to kind of get a feel for their style, their cadence, their word choice. I did a lot of studying. And not just their speeches, but their on-camera interviews and how I can guide and advise them on that as well. I still remember to this day the different word choices that they use. You could hand me something and not tell me which member it is and I would say that is Bob Bennett, that is Senator Dan Coats, that is Bob Corker; Bob Corker always says candid, or

candidly. But you're right, it does take time and they know that, too. Even early on, when I would try to coach up a press person, a new press person in the office, and they would look at all the edits and get a little uncomfortable with how much red ink is on the paper, I would tell them it takes time, like you should expect that you're going to get edits until it just becomes, it's almost like it becomes your own voice. Sometimes it's hard to find your own voice if you've been with them for too long.

SCOTT: I'm sure that's true. Now were you also speech writing?

DIJULIO: Yes.

SCOTT: For all of the members?

DIJULIO: Well, they all had different styles. Senator Bennett was a great orator and he liked to have it written out but would never use it. He liked to just kind of digest it, think through it, take down his notes, we would talk it out loud, almost like a dress rehearsal, and then he'd go to the floor or wherever and deliver this beautiful speech. I had it easy with Senator Bennett (laughs). I remember, skipping over to Senator Dan Coats, who was after Senator Wicker, Senator Dan Coats was returning to the Senate. He won in 2010. He had retired from the Senate, gone into the private sector, was ambassador to Germany, and then came back and ran again in 2010. I came on right at that time to help him start up his shop. And I'll never forget, he had to write what's called the maiden speech. This is the first speech that a senator gives on the Senate floor. There's a lot of pressure for this speech. I'm not sure why, because I don't know how many people are actually watching the maiden speech. There's a lot of pressure. It sets your agenda for what you'd like your term in office to be. For his, we called it the return speech, because he had already given a maiden speech. I'll never forget he said to me that Mike Gerson, who is a columnist for the *Washington Post* and a brilliant writer, Mike Gerson was his previous speech writer. My heart just kind of sank. I had this pit in my stomach, and I thought, here I have years under my belt now. I feel like a confident communications professional in the Senate, and I was so intimidated writing that speech because I was thinking, I am trying to fill the shoes of the great Mike Gerson. We worked on that speech for a long time. For Senator Coats, I did a lot of speech writing. That became a big part of my job as communications director, was speech writing. He'd like to have it all written out in an outline form and had his own style. At first I thought, oh gosh, this is hard to do the other aspects of the job, if you're speech writing all day. It was a great way to really get to know him quickly, develop a trusted relationship with him, get to know his voice. That was actually the way that I got to build a good relationship with him fairly quickly, and become a better advisor that way. But I was terrified writing that speech.

SCOTT: (laughs) I can imagine, that's a lot of pressure.

DIJULIO: Then we had to try to get floor time, and it kept getting delayed.

SCOTT: Tell me about the role of a communications director in terms of working with leadership, for example. How often are you in communication with the leader's office for things like that?

DIJULIO: Sure. I mean it depends on the issue. Senator Bennett had a seat at the leadership table, he was an advisor to Senator [Mitch] McConnell, Leader McConnell. We were much more closely aligned to leadership on a day-to-day basis in that sense. For Senator Coats, or Senator Corker, it was really issue-related. Foreign policy, you want to really bring in leadership on a lot of those issues. If we were going out to work on the Iran nuclear deal—Corker had legislation that was trying to give Congress a role in that process, which was a really big deal—we would work closely with leadership on that. Really the role there for the communications person is making sure that you're disseminating that information to the rest of the caucus; that they have the messaging, the talking points, you're answering their questions as well, you're helping to educate them on the legislation you're rolling out and building support. It might be requesting a press availability or an opportunity to talk at a caucus event, or maybe you want the member to present at policy lunch. Moments like that is when you would really work closely with leadership. But especially when you need floor time.

SCOTT: Technology changed a lot while you were here, in the nearly 10 years you were here in the Senate. Tell me about that. Looking back, what are the major changes that you see and how did that shape the way that you did your job?

DIJULIO: Yes, it changed. I think back to being on Blackberry versus an iPhone. Just doing the switch from Blackberry to iPhone was a big deal for a Senate office. It seems so crazy now, but people were very reluctant to switch. And I was one of those people.

SCOTT: Why so?

DIJULIO: We liked the keyboard on the Blackberry. We just weren't sure about the iPhone (laughs). Again, it's so funny to think about it now, but Senate offices were addicted to the Blackberry. It was really hard to pry that from our hands, until finally the Senate had to say, from a cybersecurity and tech standpoint, we're no longer supporting the Blackberry. You've got to move on. That was a big switch.

I would say another thing, we talked a lot about speed, news consumption speed. That's the biggest difference over time, was the different platforms. You went from, when I first started, you sent a press release, you would put it on Facebook, you would put it on your website, you would line up interviews. And you tried to get it picked up in papers. That was really it. That was the core. And when you are posting on the website, you had to type in the html code. You can't just post. You had to—I had post it notes all over my desk with the different html code so I knew how to bold a headline. Now everything is just more user friendly in that sense. But now, if you're rolling out a piece of legislation, let's say, you are doing a press release, the traditional

press release stays. It's going immediately up on your website; it's going on Twitter; it's going on Facebook. You might Snapchat your boss on the way to the floor before he's introducing or dropping the legislation. You're doing a media availability with reporters. You might be live streaming it now, maybe you're doing Facebook Live. Are you doing a telephone town hall? Are you adding in a Facebook town hall component? There are so many different ways now. Are you doing a video in the Senate recording studio? Are you pushing that out? How are you hitting radio? Are you in cycle? But then there's other platforms that they can hit to amplify your message. It is so much more robust. Then, throughout it all you're retweeting other people who are endorsing it. The *Wall Street Journal* did an editorial, how are you pushing that out now? I mean, it's just the speed is incredible. And all of that happens instantaneously.

And it got harder to cut through the noise, too. There's so many ways to get your news. How do you cut through the noise and make sure your message is heard? That was hard, too, that became more of a challenge. But you also had a way to speak directly to your constituents, instead of having it go through a newspaper or a reporter. That was a really important change, too. And I still value so much the role of a journalist and reporter and making sure that it's in your local paper as well. But speaking directly to your audience is a very big difference in the almost 10 years that I was in the Senate. And then on an internal point that I would make, when senators started to have iPads, that was a change for an office, completely. All of a sudden, they are reading all their clips on an iPad, they're downloading the apps for Twitter or Facebook or Instagram. They're looking at the comments now. So there's a little bit more pressure on a communications office and a Senate staffer to manage that a little bit more. They became more involved. They had an opportunity to become more involved because they are now seeing it all on their iPad or on their iPhone.

SCOTT: Are there drawbacks to that?

DIJULIO: Sure.

SCOTT: I don't know when you would ever sleep. What's the downtime for a communications director in a 24/7 news cycle?

DIJULIO: That's the difference. It became 24/7. You're never off the clock when you're in communications in the Senate now. And that's hard. It's also an adrenaline rush. I would be emailing reporters, 10:00, 11:00 at night. If you have breaking news in the middle of the night, especially foreign policy issues, before, you could wait to roll out the statement the next day. Now, you better have your statement up on Twitter. I mean it is, it's 24/7.

SCOTT: That's hard.

DIJULIO: And it's 24/7 on the members, too, now. So that's changed.

SCOTT: So tell me, are there drawbacks to this modern social media era?

DIJULIO: Absolutely.

SCOTT: What would they be?

DIJULIO: Some of the drawbacks: misinformation. I know we hear a lot about fake news—I'm hesitant to use that word—misinformation that is sent around through social media. Everyone is a blogger now. Everyone is a journalist now, right? You post something and you share it with your network and then it gets picked up and it's shared again. Maybe it reaches a radio host and it's shared on air and it's spreading. I mean, it just spreads so quickly, and that's hard. Also there's so many important issues that are happening that get missed because there's too much focus on some of the daily churn that we're missing some of the really important stories. I think that's unfortunate. I do see that as a drawback of social media. I also think it doesn't necessarily allow people to go deep enough. We are all looking, just reading headlines, reading a Tweet, moving onto the next one. The statistics around how many times a person shares something or retweets or likes without ever even reading what it actually is, is pretty incredible. That worries me in the sense of social media. But there's so many benefits to it. Connectivity is so important, the global connectivity, especially, and being able to speak directly to your audience in a way that you were never able to do before. And that's exciting. There's so many positive sides to it. I just think the challenge is really on us as Americans to make sure we are diversifying our news and the way that we get our news. That's important. It's really important.

SCOTT: One of the other changes in the institution in the last 25 or so years is that there are many, many more women here than there were 25 years ago.

DIJULIO: And more running, which is exciting.

SCOTT: More running, more being elected, more serving on Senate staff and committee staff, at all levels. From your perspective, as someone who was often the only woman in the room of decision makers, does it matter? Why do you think that's an important development?

DIJULIO: Absolutely. It absolutely matters and the reason why is the diversity of input. And I don't mean that as just a gender issue. Diversity of input from different backgrounds, different races, ethnicity. It's so important to have not just one viewpoint in a room. And it's been so exciting to me to see how many women are now in the Senate at all levels because I do think that we bring a different set of viewpoints. We've really started to make it clear, too, Republicans and Democrats, that some of these issues that are "women's issues," no, the economy is a woman's issue. I feel like that's known now. It used to be that women's issues were X, Y, and Z. And now it's, no, women care about the family budget, they care about jobs,

they care about the economy. They care about health care. It's broader than that. I think having that diversity of input here in the Senate now is really what has helped in that respect.

SCOTT: Can you think of an instance where a woman's perspective was particularly useful in a debate or a discussion?

DIJULIO: Oh gosh. So often there were times when there was a big debate going on, especially if it was an issue that my boss was offering an amendment or lead sponsor of a bill, I would often try to go onto the Senate floor—you can as a staffer go onto the Senate floor—and I would do that any time the senator gave a speech, I would try to go over with him and sit on the floor. I think what I started to really observe, you get to watch the members on the floor, and I'm not sharing any of their private conversations or anything, but what I started to see a lot of, is the women bridging the gap and negotiating, too, and finding common ground. It's not that it wasn't happening before, men do that every day, too. But having women—Mikulski, Senator [Barbara] Mikulski would always try to find the common ground. She was from the opposite party as mine, but I always deeply respected her for the way that she fought hard for what she believed in and she would also reach across the aisle and try to get it done. You see Susan Collins, Senator Collins, do that quite a bit. Senator Kelly Ayotte is very strong in that sense. I would see these developments happening on the floor, and I think their influence really made a difference, I do. I know I'm not giving you one specific moment; I'm trying to think of one that comes to mind.

SCOTT: The other thing about that is that those women have bipartisan groups. They get together for these dinners and that clearly fosters relationships that help them in their endeavors.

Were you also part of professional staff groups that were bipartisan and sort of gender based? Were there women communication director groups you were a part of?

DIJULIO: Yes. Ad hoc, there was a, there still is a professional group called the U.S. Senate Press Secretaries Association. It is Republicans and Democrats, all levels in a communications office. I was really passionate about this group; it was a great way for me coming onto the Hill to meet members from different offices, Democratic communications staffers and build a core network. I served on the board for several years and served as the president in 2012 of that organization. It was a fantastic way to not just develop relationships here in the Senate but with the media as well. We would do events here in DC. We would do an annual conference every year in January—at the time it was in January, I think they've moved it—up in New York City for two days and we'd move around to the different networks, the papers, and learn and meet people up there. That was just a fantastic way to build community. And through that organization is how I met a group of women, both sides of the aisle, that I would regularly pull together, meet for coffee, and it's something I still do now that I'm in the private sector. I pull women together for a small breakfast event or just a getting together for coffee, and we talk about the issues we're facing, how we handle challenges, how we handle issues as managers, and there's been a lot of changes that we talk about and how you grow as a

professional and as a woman, balancing that with becoming a mom, too. It was really the Senate Press Secretaries Association that helped me grow that network.

SCOTT: Why did you leave the Senate?

DIJULIO: I knew it was time. It was a really hard decision. When I was with Senator Dan Coats for a few years, and I absolutely loved that experience working for Senator Coats, I had said at that time that would be the last office that I would serve in, and that I needed to go get private sector experience. For me, I always wanted to serve my country. As cliché as that sounds, coming to the Hill and serving in the Senate was my way of doing public service. But I also knew it was so important for me to understand the private sector, to understand how business works, how policy affects or doesn't affect business, too—the impact that it has on jobs every single day. So, I wanted to go get private sector experience. I thought it was so important for me to have a complete view of—worldview—of both government and private. I always told my boss that. I had started to look for a job when I was with Senator Coats toward the end of my time with him. It just didn't feel right yet, and then Senator Corker's office called me up. His communications director called me up and said that she would be leaving. She was a dear friend who I had met through the Senate Press Secretaries Association in my time on the Hill. I said no, I'm not interested. I'm really going to leave the Hill this time, I'm really going to do it. They joked that I Dick Cheney'd myself because I told them I would get them really good candidates, and I did send candidates, and then all of a sudden I became really interested in the role. I had never worked specifically on a committee. I had done work with committees on Intel[ligence] and Rules Committee through my previous bosses, and Appropriations, but never had a direct committee role. I really was fascinated by the foreign policy space. Senator Coats, being a former ambassador, thought it was incredibly important to have that worldview, too. He was very supportive. It was really hard telling him that I was going to leave. I truly loved that job. I was just excited to, I felt like I wasn't ready to go at the time because I felt like there was still more to learn. I knew that.

When I did take the Corker job, I told him that I could only commit to two years because I have to go get private sector experience. He understood as a businessman and encourages that. I did stick to that timeline. It just got, for me, it was just a gut feeling. It wasn't that—someone once told me that you'll know when it's time to leave when you don't notice the [Capitol] dome when you drive home from work. It was never that for me. I loved—I mean I get emotional about it—I loved going to work here, I really did. The amount of exciting opportunities here on the Hill, the amount of collaboration with Democrats and Republicans that the public doesn't see every day is really incredible. The amount of work, whether you're working on behalf of a veteran every day or helping to get someone their purple heart or their benefits, that stuff happens every single day here, and it doesn't get covered in all of the papers. I loved the work we did here. It just for me felt like it was time to move on because I had learned it all. I just felt like I had played at the NFL and just was ready to go be challenged elsewhere. That's why I

decided to leave. I had an opportunity to go to a corporate job with General Electric and took that, and it's been everything that I—the skills that I've transferred, the networks, the community, the lessons that I've learned here have been invaluable. The best job I ever had was really my time in the Senate because it's so unique.

SCOTT: Do you think of it fondly? It sounds like you do.

DIJULIO: Yeah, I do. I didn't expect to feel so emotional about it. Yeah, I do. There were some really hard days, too. There were a lot of times I really struggled with how could I grow a family and be in the Senate with this 24/7 churn? And people do it every day. I didn't have a kid until after I left the Senate, that might have been why, I'm not sure. But it was hard for me personally to try to balance a family here. It really was. I think that the Senate, because of the women that are here now—I mean, we have a sitting U.S. senator who had a baby while she was in office. It's just incredible. You see chiefs and LDs that have their families and grow their families here. It's completely do-able. And I'm amazed by these women. And the Senate has become much more family friendly. It really has. I've seen the strides that offices have made with maternity leave, with more flexible work environments, making sure you can spend time with your family. It really has grown a lot. That is a tribute to the women who have pushed that, I really do. And I know I kind of got off topic there for you.

SCOTT: I think that's perfect. That's probably a great place for us to end. Tara, thank you so much.

DIJULIO: Yeah, no problem, I hope it was helpful.

SCOTT: It's been a fun interview. Thank you.

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