W. SCOTT McGEARY
Senate Page, 1969-1973

Oral History Interview
February 27, 2013

Senate Historical Office
Washington, D.C.

Deed of Gift

I, William S. McGeary, do hereby give to the Senate Historical Office the recordings and transcripts of my interview on February 27, 2013.

I authorize the Senate Historical Office to use the recordings and transcripts in such a manner as may best serve the educational and historical objectives of their oral history program. I also approve the deposit of the transcripts at the Library of Congress, the National Archives, the Senate Library, and any other institution which the Senate Historical Office may deem appropriate.

In making this gift, I voluntarily convey ownership of the recordings and transcripts to the public domain.

_____
William S. McGeary

_____
Date

Accepted on behalf of the Senate Historical Office by:

_____
Donald A. Ritchie

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Date

Table of Contents

Preface..... i

Interview 1

Index 31

Preface

The uniformed pages who sit on the steps around the presiding officer's chair represent an old tradition in the United States Senate. Since Henry Clay and Daniel Webster appointed nine-year-old Grafton Hanson as the first page, pages have served in and about the Senate chamber, running errands, carrying messages, sorting papers, filling ink wells and snuffboxes, and doing whatever other tasks were assigned them. Truly children of the Senate, the 19th- and early 20th-century pages had full run of the Capitol, racing through its corridors, climbing its dome, and even bathing in the marble tubs in its basement. Prior to the mid-1980s, Senate pages arranged for their own housing. After that, the Senate provided supervised housing for their pages. By the mid-20th century, the Senate and House pages were receiving formal instruction in a special school operated by the District of Columbia Public Schools in the Library of Congress Jefferson Building. In 1995 the Senate Page School became an independent school and moved to the newly built Daniel Webster Senate Page Residence.

Following their Senate service, some pages remained on the Senate staff in higher capacities, and a few were eventually elected to Congress. But for most, their terms as pages were simply unforgettable experiences of their youthful years. "It's having a chance to watch day by day that counts," said one former page. Lyndon Johnson once observed that pages had "a chance to see government without glamour--to learn that ideals alone don't make programs; that dreams do not automatically become reality."

Scott McGeary did not anticipate that his request for an autographed photo of Senator Daniel Inouye (D-HI) would lead to a four-year assignment as a Senate page. From 1969 to 1973, McGeary came to know the Senate and Capitol grounds like few other teenagers, working for Republican and Democratic sponsors and attending page school. McGeary recounts his duties as a page, changes in Senate leadership during his tenure, and heated debates on the Senate floor over Supreme Court nominations and Vietnam War policy. His page experience sparked a lifelong love for public service and a career in public affairs and government relations.

About the interviewer: Katherine (Kate) Scott is a historian in the Senate Historical Office. A graduate of the University of Washington, she received 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). She lives in Rockville, Maryland, with her husband and two children.