

very closely; but he did not take the time, didn't have the time to read very many outside sports bulletins and sports publications. So, I made a special project of being well advised as to what was going on in baseball, and pretty soon I found out the teams and the individuals that the Senator had a special interest in; and when I came across some obscure fact or little known fact about a player or a team that the Senator enjoyed, when I had occasion to spend some time with the Senator--those are the kind of facts I would bring up, and the Senator was very interested in and was anxious to discuss at some length. So, most memorable conversations I had with the Senator as a nineteen-year-old student were basically about sports and sports related activities, and that's very understandable, as I said. I was a student--nineteen-years-old, nineteen and twenty--during the two years that I spent as one of the Senator's patronage workers, and he was already an established statesman, so the relationship of student to statesman was much more conducive to a lively discussion of sports than world affairs or politics or Senate business.

Senator was a sports fan of the classic variety, meaning that he chose individuals to follow closely and took a great interest in their careers even though the particular sports figure might have been a fairly obscure one--not particularly well known. He enjoyed following the careers of sports figures from the South. He was a great admirer of [Tyrus Raymond] Ty Cobb, and later in his life and later in Ty Cobb's life, they would get together as often as possible, but the Senator had a--almost revered Ty Cobb, and that attitude of having a special affection for great athletes from the South carried through to his entire sports interest. If there was baseball player from Georgia or the South, you could be sure that the Senator would be taking a special interest in his career and would usually be able to quote fairly specific figures as to his batting average or won-loss percentage; and it always struck me as rather an unfortunate thing that Senator did not have sons of his own with whom he could talk about sports, because when the Senator discussed baseball the--and here qualities of a teacher came out in him. He frequently would tell me why a particular left-handed pitcher for the Senators, the Washington Senators baseball team was not having a good year that year. It was because he had laid off in the winter and didn't have the strength back in his arm, or he enjoyed acting as a teacher in comparing modern baseball players with some player who was popular when he was young. It's a sort of thing a father or grandfather would take great delight in doing with their son or grandson. It often occurred to me that it was unfortunate that the Senator didn't have children of his own with whom he could talk about sports activities because he enjoyed it so much. Now, as I said--

CATES: Excuse me just a moment, Norman. While we're talking about sports, you might mention football. I understand in his later years that the Senator was a big fan of [Francis Asbury] Fran Tarkenton. Would you say that baseball was his chief interest, or how would he view other sports--let me phrase it that way?

UNDERWOOD: He was a--he enjoyed football and was a great football fan. I didn't talk with him about football nearly as much, probably because I didn't know as much about football, but he did become a great fan of Fran Tarkenton's and had an amazing knowledge of Fran Tarkenton's entire athletic career including his career at Athens [Georgia] High School. The Senator could recall the score of the Athens-Valdosta game when Francis Tarkenton was a junior or senior and in which they had won the state championship. He had knowledge of meticulous facts about Tarkenton's career--and I don't believe he was as interested in professional football as he was professional baseball, and I suppose that was because professional football is a late blooming sport and in his younger days when he had more time to be a spectator, football was

just not as prominent and he apparently had not gone to as many football games--but most of my conversations with him and discussions with him during those two years were about baseball, primarily because I knew a lot more about baseball than football, but he did--he was a great football fan, but just never had a chance to attend that many football games primarily because the team that he enjoyed most, the Georgia team, played their games in the South and usually when he was in Washington.

The experience, which in retrospect, I think has had a greater impact on me personally than almost any other in working in Washington was acting as a general office boy in the Senator's office and getting a feel for the style and the manner in which the Senator operated his office. My specific duty in the office was what we called filing of the pinks. The pinks were pink file copies of every piece of every correspondence that went out of the office. All letters that were written, memoranda, or any piece of writing that came out of the office had to be accompanied by a pink file copy, and the pinks were filed in the file cabinets by a fairly sophisticated filing system broken down into subject matter, where the recipient of the letter was located. It was my job to do the filing and to keep the filing system straight. That required, of course, a fairly close scrutiny of most of the mail that went out of the office, and in the period of that two years, I was able to get a feel for the kind of public person Senator Russell was by what he wrote. A public man is basically what he is because of the way he articulates his positions--publically, privately--the kind of letters he writes, the kind of speeches he writes, the kind of memorandum he writes; and as far as the political and public Senator Russell, I learned more about him through filing file copies of his correspondence than in any other way. Two things stand out in my mind about Senator Russell's correspondence in general: one was, is that he was very gifted with language and with powers of expression. He had a tremendous facility with the language and never seemed to be at a loss for words. He had a great capacity for the right expression, for the right sentiment that he was trying to express; and the other general impression that I have is the range and scope of this vocabulary. I was always struck by the fact that most personal conversations I had with the Senator, and I think this was true of most young people and most people from Georgia, he used very simple language, very direct, declarative sentences; but when the occasion called for it, he could write with great precision using unfamiliar words which were descriptive and helpful in expressing precisely what he wanted to express. A good example of the range and scope of his vocabulary was a word that appeared not in a piece of correspondence, but I remember this little vignette very well because of the stir it created in Washington at the time. At the time the Senator was chairman of the Armed Services Committee and was conducting hearings about some phase of military operations, and one of the witnesses of the committee was Under Secretary of Defense. He was being cross-examined rather thoroughly by members of the committee, and the Senator asked the Under Secretary if the position he was expressing was not something of an oxymoron. Of course, that's an unfamiliar word. It's the first time I have ever heard the word; I've never heard it since. The Under Secretary had never heard it; no one on the committee had ever heard it; and the session, the committee session was temporarily adjourned while chief counsel, William Darden, the chief counsel of the Armed Services Committee described to the Under Secretary the question that the Senator was asking and, in effect, substituted a more familiar word for the term oxymoron, which means an apparent contradiction or a seeming paradox.

CATES: Would you mind spelling that word?

UNDERWOOD: It does not appear in most dictionaries. I had this dictionary to see if it--this is a *Webster's New World Dictionary*--to see if it's here, but I remember that we had a considerable difficulty in finding a dictionary that--

CATES: And did you give a--

UNDERWOOD: --that covered it.

CATES: --did you just give the definition, I do not recall, before I asked you the question?

UNDERWOOD: Yeah, the word basically means an apparent contradiction or a seeming paradox. That's a layman's definition of it that may not be technically accurate, but that's basically what the Senator had in mind; and I never heard the Senator use the word again or I've never heard anybody use it again; but I point that out as an illustration of the range of his vocabulary, and where he got the word and how it happened to be in his mind, I don't know.

CATES: Were there other such occasions that you could--that you know anything about that you could recall?

UNDERWOOD: Well, I don't remember any other specific occasion when pure words of this kind were used but I do remember many occasions when the Senator simply overpowered his opposition with words. It's well known that the Senator was a great power in the Senate and that he was respected and revered by his colleagues, but I saw firsthand so many illustrations of the practical application of the Senator's power on the Senate floor and there's no question in my mind that one of the sources of his strength as a senator was the quickness of his mind, the ability which he had to articulate a thought quickly and powerfully.

I remember a debate that was being held involving an appropriation of a hundred million dollars to the United Nations in order to give the United Nations some operating capital. It was being opposed by--this bill to appropriate a hundred million dollars was being opposed by Senator Russell on the grounds that a number of smaller countries had not kept up their dues or their payments to the United Nations. They were in arrears, and the Senator's position was that unless there was some motivation for these countries to pay what they were supposed to pay into the United Nations operating fund--they didn't call it an operating fund; it had a more technical name, but that's basically what it was--the Senator's position was that if they--if there were not any motivation for these nations to make their periodic payments then the United Nations could not be a very viable, functioning entity, and he opposed this appropriation of a hundred million dollars. And I remember, on the Senate floor some senator got up and made a speech, the thrust of which was that a hundred million dollars was not very much money in the national--not much money in terms of the national treasury and would have a negligible impact on the budget; and his argument was generally that this was not much money and it was worth it for us to spend this money with the United Nations with the hope that it would be used for a good purpose, that the United Nations would be able to continue functioning. And Senator Russell sat and listened to this argument, this speech and suddenly sprang to his feet and proceeded to deliver something of a lecture on the value of a dollar and he was using simple language that day saying [that] to him a hundred million dollars was a lot of money; but it was a very dramatic moment because all the members of the Senate stopped and listened, and it was apparent that they were in awe of the

ability of Senator Russell to take this speech which had been carefully written and prepared by the other senator and literally take it apart with his extemporaneous remarks. The Senator's--I don't recall what the final disposition of the bill was, but that was one example of where the Senator used his ability to speak extemporaneously, to use strong, simple words when he needed to and complex unfamiliar words when he needed to, to make his point; and I think, there's no question that a part of his strength as a senator was based upon his facility with language, his quick mind, and his ability to put his opponents in an off balanced position with his language, and he did that so very often on the Senate floor.

The Senator's correspondence and his writings had a touch of the South--and a touch of Biblical upbringing in them, I think. The Senator would often use such expressions as "under the canopy of heaven."

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He would get up on the Senate floor and say, "I don't believe you'll find a man under the canopy of heaven who would support that position." There were--the Senator had a good background in the classics, and he often used expressions from--Latin expressions that he had learned in grammar school, I think. He often talked about having studied Latin and regretted that it had become the dead language and was not taught in schools anymore. He knew a considerable amount of Latin and often used Latin expressions when it was helpful. Getting back to the Senator's correspondence, one thing that always struck me was the care and the precision with which he wanted his correspondence handled. He seemed to have a compulsion that his letters had to be right when they went out of the office. He would have been very embarrassed and ashamed, I believe, if a letter went out that had a grammatical error or was not well written. As you can imagine, a great many letters are of a rather routine nature: A constituent writes to the senator asking about a social security claim, and the senator's staff will make an inquiry into the social security office and advise the constituent of the status of his social security claim. Those kind of letters are certainly routine, and it was my observation that most members of the Senate treated them as routine and let secretaries and staff members handle that correspondence almost entirely, even to the point of signing the letters with the senator's name either manually or mechanically. It was Senator Russell's policy to view personally every piece of mail that went out of his office, even routine letters; and the practice was that these letters frequently were rather standard and were written by secretaries, and the Senator looked at them before they went out of the office, personally signed them. The Senator used the practice--if a letter contained an expression which he didn't like or language he did not approve of or if for some reason the tone of the letter didn't suit him--and I'm speaking of a letter that would have been dictated by a staff member or written by a secretary for the Senator's signature--if such a letter was written, the Senator would take a red pencil and make a huge X over the letter meaning that it was--did not please him and that it should be rewritten. Many times even on a routine letter to a constituent in Georgia about a social security matter, the Senator would call in a secretary and re-dictate the letter to give it better quality or better tone.

I also learned something about the Senator's personality, I think, by the way he handled his mail. He had a strict policy with respect to his signature; he was known to members of the Senate as Dick Russell and to people in Georgia as Dick Russell, so he made a practice of

signing all mail which was directed to people in Georgia--Dick Russell. Mail that was more formal in nature or mail that was going to anyone outside the state was Richard B. Russell. He followed that policy very strictly. Among members of the Senate whom he knew well, he was Dick Russell; but if it were a new senator or a new official in government whom he did not know--until he knew him, all correspondence was signed, Richard B. Russell. The Senator would usually sign memoranda, either inter-office memoranda or a memorandum to an agency in government, with his initial RBR; and the Senator wrote very rapidly, and it was quite an art to be able to read his writing. He wrote with something of a scrawl the way most very busy men develop later in life, and it was frequent that quite a stir would be created in the Pentagon. Some memoranda would be circulated in the Pentagon, and it would contain the Senator's personal handwriting, and sometime the generals and people in the Pentagon were not able to decipher quickly the Senator's writing; but everyone recognized RBR, and those initials carried tremendous weight in the Senate and in the Pentagon and all over Washington. So, I would say that for the last twenty years nothing in Washington would get action like a memorandum coming across the desk of a bureaucrat with the letters RBR clearly written thereon.

CATES: Norman, I might ask you a question at this point concerning your personal life: How did the Senator influence you mostly on a personal basis? What I'm leading up to--did he have anything to do with your going into the practice of law?

UNDERWOOD: Well, the Senator's influence on the young people who worked in his office through the years--the greatest impact was just in being a part of what was going on in Washington. I was one of several patronage boys who went to Washington with no real interest in government or interest in following the law, and after spending some time there, by the process of osmosis you develop an interest in government and I came back to Georgia and went to law school as did several other patronage boys, but it was not the Senator's nature at all to undertake to advise young people as to what to do. His example, the kind of person he was, had a tremendously powerful influence on every young person who was ever associated with him, but it is my guess that very seldom did the Senator ever say to any young person, "If I were you, I would go back and study one particular discipline or another." That was just not his nature. His influence on all young people who worked with him was because of what he was, the kind of person he was rather than any--he didn't have to go to the extreme of articulating any advice; just being around him and associated with him had a great influence on all young people, I think.

I might clarify the period of time in which I knew the Senator. The two years I spent in Washington were 1961 and 1962. I went to Washington, January 1, 1961, and at that time Dwight Eisenhower was president and preparations were in progress for the inauguration of President [John Fitzgerald] Kennedy. I remember one interesting incident that happened during the period of time between the time of the election and the inauguration of John Kennedy. John Kennedy had been and was at that time a member of the Senate, a very junior member far down the scale from Senator Russell in terms of seniority, and there is a protocol in the Senate which is not formal but clearly established--junior senators normally go to offices of senior senators for conferences, discussions of bills, and requests for legislative action, and it would have certainly been the custom throughout Senator Kennedy's tenure in the Senate to have gone to Senator Russell's office for any business he wanted to transact with the Senator. Shortly after I got to Washington during the days preceding the inauguration of John Kennedy, during the time in which he was selecting his cabinet, I remember on one occasion--this was while deliberations

were going on with respect to Secretary of Defense--it was quite logical and normal that Senator Kennedy would have conferred with Senator Russell about an appointment to that position and to get his advice as to who would be appropriate for Secretary of Defense, and I remember that he called--Senator Kennedy called Senator Russell by telephone--Senator Kennedy's office was on the third floor of the Senate office building, as I recall--and he said to Senator Russell, "I'd like to come down to your office to discuss with you a matter of an appointment to the cabinet." And Senator Russell said, "I'll come to your office," meaning that even though Senator Kennedy was not yet inaugurated as president, Senator Russell was recognizing the protocol of Washington which would require any member of Congress to go see the president in the same way that junior senators go see senior senators. So, Senator Kennedy would have been happy to come down to Senator Russell's office, but Senator Russell, I think, demonstrated something in his character by saying, "No, I'll come to your office." I thought that was an interesting little incident that happened prior to the inauguration.

One thing that is not widely recognized about Senator Russell, which I found out firsthand, is the extent to which the Senator read. I remember one Sunday afternoon I was in the Senator's office making use of the facilities to study for--in preparation for an examination I was having at George Washington University in the course in European literature, and we had been studying in some detail the [Miguel de] Cervantes' [Saavedra] novel, *Don Quixote*. As was his custom, Senator Russell came to the office on Sunday afternoon to read the Ath--the weekend mail. The mail service is very good in Congress, and a big delivery of mail comes in on Sunday; and the Senator very frequently came into the office on Sunday afternoon and opened the mail himself and read what came in and possibly made some notes or did some dictation in connection with the weekend mail delivery, but on this Sunday afternoon, Senator Russell commented in passing--asked what I was studying, and I told him I was preparing for an examination in European literature and that I was studying *Don Quixote* which was, of course, a great Spanish novel, very long, five or six hundred pages. The Senator said that that was one of his favorite works and that he had read the novel *Don Quixote* five times, and we proceeded to have a discussion of *Don Quixote*, and the Senator remembered a tremendous amount of detail and obviously had a great fascination with that book; and in the course of that discussion and some that followed, the Senator wanted to know what else we were studying in European literature, and I explained that we had covered the *Iliad*, the *Aeneid*, and had devoted a lot of attention to Homer, and the Senator asked me was I reading the trans--had we studied the translation; and I explained that it was the English translation, and he explained that when he studied those works he had studied them in Greek. So, that is a feature of the Senator's personality that is not widely known, I think--that he had a fascination with the classics, had read very broadly, and had apparently read some of the classics in their original language, at least in the original Greek.

I recall, too, a similar discussion I had with the Senator involving a history course which I was taking at George Washington University. I explained to the Senator the nature of the questions that were asked on the final examination in the particular history course that I was taking and it was a custom of the particular professor I had to ask only one or two questions on the final examination. For example, he would say, "What was the significance of the French Revolution in terms of the development of western civilization?" And, of course, that was just a license to write anything you wanted to write to demonstrate what you had learned in the course, to give you a free hand to show if you knew anything; and if you had nothing to write then, of course, you were not able to score very well on the test. The Senator commented that history

tests had certainly changed since he was a student of history, and I gathered that he thought it was a change for the better. He explained that too many history teachers he had studied under had expected him to memorize dates, and he commented to me that he had always had trouble memorizing dates in history and therefore was not a very good student of history, but in the course of demonstrating the difficulty that he had, he said such things as, I could never remember that the Norman Conquest was in 1066 and that Marie Antoinette was executed in such and such a year; and he remembered the year so his conversation was proof of the fact that he in fact did retain a great many dates, but he apparently had some reservations about the manner in which he had been taught history, which put more emphasis on remembering dates than on understanding the events and being able to relate them to modern times or being able to relate them to larger circumstances. I got the impression that the Senator would have been regarded as a history student of some stature with respect to American history, modern European history, and history of the Civil War. I did not get the impression that he had read broadly in western civilization history except for fairly modern times. He knew a great deal about the Bolshevik Revolution and the history of Russia during the twentieth century. I think he had an extraordinary grasp of European history of that period but probably had not devoted any particular attention to European history in general as he had to American history; but he obviously had read a great deal of American history and history of the Civil War, and as is well known, [he] had a great affection for the major figures of the Civil War--[Robert E.] Lee, Stonewall Jackson, and other significant figures from the South in that war.

CATES: Norman, let me ask you this question. You say that you were up there during 1961 and 1962; I believe the Cuban crisis probably occurred while you were in Washington, is that correct?

UNDERWOOD: That's right and--

CATES: Well, let me ask you this question then: How did you view the way Senator Russell conducted himself and was involved in the Cuban crisis?

UNDERWOOD: Well, it is an interesting commentary that I did not notice anything different about Senator Russell's activities during that crisis. The Senator was privy to top secret information all the time, and I'm sure that on a day-to-day basis he had very startling information disclosed to him, but that was never evident from his personality or countenance, or it was never discernable to those of us in the office. So, the things that I knew about the missile crisis during that period--and I think this is true of his staff generally--we learned from the newspaper and not from the Senator. It was not his practice to talk about any meeting that he might have had at the White House involving the National Security Council, and I suppose if I had been more observant I might have detected some variances in his habits or some unusual concern on his part but none of that stands out in my mind, and that's--that would--is very indicative of the way Senator Russell conducted himself--is that he was very stable, and no matter what the nature of the crisis, his habits, his conduct didn't vary very much.

CATES: Would you mind stating what his habits were as far as to the hour that he would come to the office and how late he would stay there and etcetera?

UNDERWOOD: The Senator in those years had a practice of coming to the office or arriving on Capitol Hill probably around seven-thirty or eight o'clock. He ate breakfast in the Senate cafeteria. One of the fairly regular breakfast partners in those years was Sam Rayburn of Texas. The Senator would usually arrive in the office at his desk eight-thirty or nine o'clock after he had had breakfast in the Senate cafeteria, and almost without fail there would be a committee meeting in the morning. One of the committees that he was on would be meeting, and he usually spent his mornings involved in committee work; and then, in the afternoons Senate sessions occupied a great deal of his time, or continuation of committee work, and he spent a good deal of time in his office at his desk during the afternoons when he was not directly involved with proceedings on the Senate floor. He followed the practice of staying in his office quite late--seven-thirty, eight o'clock--almost every night. This was when he was reviewing the mail that I spoke of earlier. He took great pride in the mail, and in order to do the mail properly, it takes time. So, he would spend the time necessary to read every piece of mail and respond to it, and that's when he did--late in the afternoon is when he did his heavy dictation, answering correspondence and preparing memorandum and also conferring with staff and conferring with other senators. It was common for other senators to drop by the office late in the afternoon, and they'd discuss whatever legislative matters were before the Senate at that time. But his working hours, his practice of staying late produced considerable burden on his staff people who were, who had families because they normally were required--

(interruption)

There's one other thought that I have about the way the Senator handled his mail, which I think is interesting and reflects something about his personality. Every prominent man gets a great deal of mail which is written by people who are very pathetic people--people who write in and ask for money, ask for relief, just ask for sympathy. Frequently the letters reflect mental disorientation, and basically the letters are quite sad. It would be very tempting for a person like Senator Russell who is so awfully busy to merely delegate all of this class of correspondence to some staff member to be answered or to answer it with a form letter, but I remember very well that the Senator would frequently dictate fairly lengthy letters of personal advice to very humble people in Georgia who had written him with some personal problem. An example would be a military man who had some disability and was having a hard time making a living. Many of these kind of people would write the Senator and request his assistance in obtaining veterans pensions and other benefits that inured to veterans. Frequently the writer for one reason or another simply wouldn't qualify for a gov--for a veterans pension because the disability he had was not service connected--just for some reason did not qualify him for any benefits under the veterans programs, but the Senator would usually write back a very sympathetic letter, a warm letter sometimes suggesting a course of action for the writer even if he didn't give him any specific assistance with respect to government programs. This was something that no one would have blamed the Senator if he had simply delegated all this kind of mail to some staff member to be answered routinely, but even when the Senator was very busy and his time was so valuable, he took a great deal of that time to answer mail to people in Georgia along the lines that I just described.

CATES: What you're saying then is that he really had very few form letters and that most of the letters that he wrote were--actually all of the letters that he wrote were signed by him and he saw

them before they went out?

UNDERWOOD: That's right, even letters which would almost qualify as form letters; the Senator saw all of those letters. By that, I mean if there was a particular piece of legislation--for example, a piece of labor legislation that was normal for the Senator to get hundreds of

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letters from people in Georgia expressing an opinion and asking for the Senator's support on one side or the other of the legislation, it was quite proper to answer all those letters with basically the same letter simply stating his position. It would have been a simple thing for the Senator to have let some staff member handle all those letters without ever taking the time to read the letters himself, but he didn't do that. He looked at every piece of mail and the letters--many of them were the same; they all applied to the same piece of legislation or the same matter under consideration, but nevertheless the Senator looked at all of them and related the answer to all of them to the letter that was written. That was necessary to his view because he didn't want a letter to go out giving his position on a piece of labor legislation which was not responsive to the letter that he had seen. So, that was his reason for looking at every piece of mail.

CATES: The two years that you were up there, what would you say was the main topic that he got letters on? Was it desegregation or the military or the Cuban crisis, or exactly what would you say?

UNDERWOOD: During those years the Kennedy administration put forward a broad array of legislative proposals including medicare, federal aid to education, some new labor legislation, and such proposals as the establishment of a Department of Housing at the cabinet level; and all of those issues illicited considerable mail and considerable comment from people in Georgia. There's no question, I think, that in terms of history the most significant incident that happened while I was there was the Cuban missile crisis, but that was not the sort of issue that illicited that much mail. There were no two sides to that; people in Georgia were almost unanimous in their opinion of what ought to be done. Another reason why, I suppose, that didn't get as much mail as some others was that by the time people would have had time to write about it and express their opinion, the crisis was over. So, the big issues while I was there was fairly balanced, domestic proposals--aid to education, the creation of a new Department of Housing, medicare and a number of other significant pieces of domestic legislation, most of which by now have come into being--but they were new and merely legislative ideas during those times. They were introduced by the Kennedy administration.

CATES: What was the most amusing thing that happened to you while you were up there with Senator Russell that concerned the Senator, most amusing or most unusual thing?

UNDERWOOD: I suppose the most amusing--it's amusing now, but it was not amusing at the time--was one evening the Senate was in session quite late, and it was in the area of nine or ten o'clock, and the Senator had been on the Senate floor and he asked me to

go to the parking garage and drive his car up to the, over to the Capitol. He had decided not to go back to his office that night but to go directly home, and his car was parked near his office in the Senate Office Building parking garage, and he implied that either the keys were in his car or that he had given me the keys earlier in the day when I maybe had parked his car. The implication was that I had possession of his car keys, and I went to get his car and the keys were not there, and I retraced my steps carefully to try to decide whether or not I had been given the keys; and I went back to the Senator and told him that I didn't have the keys, the keys were not in his car, and that I was not able to locate them at all; and the Senator looked in his pockets and he didn't have the keys and he asked me to make another effort, a special effort to locate his keys and bring his car to him. I tried again and spent quite a bit of time trying to find the keys and was not able to locate them. So, I went back to the Senate chamber and told the Senator with all the courage I could muster that I didn't have the keys, that he had not given them to me, and that I was sure that if the keys had been misplaced he had misplaced them and suggested that he look in his desk and everywhere he had been that day. Well, he proceeded to conduct an impatient search and finally located the keys in a secret pocket of his overcoat. He had an overcoat that had a large pocket and in the lining of the pocket there was a secret pocket where you were supposed to store valuable items, I suppose, in order to avoid them being stolen if you hung up your overcoat, and the Senator's keys were in his secret pocket and that was a very great relief to me that I had not misplaced the Senator's keys, and it was very amusing that the Senator had seen fit to put his car keys in his secret pocket; but that was not amusing at the time because it was very frightening to a nineteen-year-old student to think that I might have been involved in something that would cause the Senator to have to spend the night at the Capitol or to take a taxi home.

One thing that I did that gave me a view of the Senator I had not had before was that I--the Senator asked me to help him move once. He had a very small apartment in the Woodner Hotel, and he bought an apartment in a condominium--the same one he was living in at the time he died--and he asked me to help him move, and we moved all of his possessions in an automobile which indicated that he had not collected very much in the way of household furnishings. His apartment in the Woodner had been a furnished apartment, and I suppose he bought new furniture for the apartment in the condominium; but we moved his personal effects from his small apartment in the Woodner to the condominium, and I was struck by the fact that he had not accumulated very much in the way of clothes. He only had three or four suits, and they were quite old. He obviously had not spent any money to speak of for clothes. I remember that he had a little ball of string which looked like it had been compiled by taking a string that is used to wrap laundry, and each time the laundry would come back he had obviously taken the string and sort of made a little ball out of it; and in the process of moving his personal belongings, this little ball of string was in a drawer, and I said, "Senator, do you, want take this string along?" He said, "I certainly do. I've been saving that string, and I fully intend to take it," and I think that is reflective of the Senator's personality. He was very conservative, personally speaking, with his personal finances. He did not waste money for anything and that carried through, of course, into his philosophy of government, and he was very much concerned about waste in government and that reflected in his personal life. Another illustration of that was that he frequently asked me to--

CATES: Excuse me just a minute. (tape stops and starts again)

UNDERWOOD: Another illustration of the Senator's conservatism with respect to his personal

financial affairs involves his shopping habits. He frequently asked me to go to the grocery store to buy items for him, and he would write--he would make a list of what I was to buy, but he didn't just say buy sugar, milk, and cereal. He always expressed with some detail the quantity; for example, he would say, one pint of milk and one pint of half and half--that's half cream and half milk that he seemed to use--and he would say a box of cereal, and at least in the early stages, he would say what size box. Now, for example, a small box of Kellogg's Special K or whatever cereal it was he was getting, but he was very careful to clearly define the quantity of whatever it was that he wanted to buy.

Another thing I remember that is interesting is that when he sent his laundry to the laundry, he didn't just throw all the dirty clothes in a bag and send them and expect the laundry to properly account for them. He made a list of every item that he was sending to the laundry. One of my responsibilities from time to time was to go to the laundry to pick up his clean clothes, and he would always quickly look through the package when I would return and compare that with the list that he had made to make sure that all of his clothes were accounted for and returned. So, that illustrates, I think, an orderly, conservative nature that was very evident in his private and public life.

CATES: Norman, what was the temperament of the man? I'm prompted to ask you this because supposedly you had lost his car keys which he later found. What would you say was the temperament of the man; did you ever see him lose his temper, either to you or to someone else?

UNDERWOOD: I never saw him get extremely angry, never approaching loss of rational thought processes. He quite frequently would demonstrate some irritability with somebody for slowness in performing some duty or irritability that something was not happening the way it was supposed to happen. That was a fairly common thing, but it was very mild and on the surface, and I never saw him get angry enough to say anything that he--that was not well controlled, that was in any way irrational or the sort of thing that he would detract. In fact, I never heard him ever detract an expression. It was not his nature to in anger make a statement and later try to withdraw that statement. He was just not that kind of person. Whatever he said, no matter what the conditions were, it was always an accurate representation of his sentiments and emotions of the moment, and I never saw any evidence of a willingness to take those word back.

He did--I would--because of the nature of my relationship to him as just being a student I never had occasion to use this technique personally, but I remember some of his other staff members frequently would use a little technique that I'm about to describe--and you may want to ask Earl Leonard about this; Earl Leonard was a staff member at the time that I was there as a patronage boy and a student--but the Senator would often be invited to make a speech at some significant gathering or to appear on a television program; and being basically reticent and an inward sort of person, he did not accept those invitations readily, at least in his later years--partly because of his personality, I think, and partly because he was just so busy that he didn't have time to do them. But I remember on several instances when one of the staff members, such as Earl Leonard the press secretary, would ask the Senator if he would like to make a particular appointment to speak to the National Press Club or to appear on "Meet the Press" or a national television program and the Senator would express a negative view--he had no interest in that; he was too busy with other things, and he just did not do that--the staff member would say, "You're

absolutely right, Senator. You're too busy, and you just have no business being on that television program anyway." To which the Senator would reply, "Well, maybe we ought to think about that again. After all, this is an important occasion," and I think this was something in the Senator's nature that made him want to draw out all the alternatives and the possibilities. His initial reaction to an invitation or proposal of that kind very likely would be negative, and he wanted the staff member who was presenting it to him to make an argument for it, to be persuasive, to convince him that it was something that he ought to do. So, under those circumstances, I think, he did quite frequently change his position from what he would initially express it to be--through the use of that little device of getting out the alternatives and making sure that he understood all the facts.

Back to my earlier point, he was not at all wishy-washy or vacillating in his emotions, sentiments, or language. If he became slightly angry and expressed a point of view, there was very little possibility that upon reflection that he would change that. He was likely to have had his feet solidly on the ground and stated his position accurately the first time, and it was not in his nature to later render an apology and detract the statement.

CATES: I understand what you're saying here is that he would not really attack a person; he may not like something that someone was doing, but he would not attack the person as such. My question now is, how would he show this irritability that you mentioned; would he come right and say it, in other words?

UNDERWOOD: More in the tone of his voice than any other way, I think. An example would be that if a staff member advised him that tomorrow morning at ten o'clock there's a meeting of the Appropriations Committee and at eleven o'clock a meeting of the Armed Services Committee and at twelve o'clock it was necessary for him to be on the Senate floor, he was very likely to reflect whatever irritability he might feel by the tone of his voice, by not so much with what he said but the way he said it. He was likely to put his head, tilt his head back as was customary and say something to the effect of, I just don't see how I'm going to do all the things I have to do tomorrow. It was always the tone of his voice rather than the language itself. He had instilled into him, quite obviously, the Southern tradition of courtesy, and he just simply didn't bring himself to being rude to very many people.

CATES: How did he regard sarcasm in other people--as an example, of maybe insincerity?

UNDERWOOD: Well, he--I think he had a great capacity for being able to spot a phony, and if there was any one class of politicians, any one stereotype of senator that I would say the Senator had less regard for, it would be a politician who rather obviously was insincere and tried to make use of flattery and overstated most things. That kind of politician--sort of the back-slapper, glad-hander--the Senator was likely to have little regard for that kind of person. Although if there were redeeming features of his personality, I think, the Senator had the capacity to see through that and to see that that might be the gimmick that the politician used; but the Senator was not of that kind himself, and he didn't have much patience for small talk and flattery and some of the trappings of politics that are so prevalent in Washington. I think that was one of most distinctive things about Senator Russell was that he just did not give the appearance of the classic politician who always had a flattering thing to say about everybody. The Senator just was not that sort of person. He was, in Washington, was pretty much strictly business. He

had--he loved to talk about his campaigns--when he had campaigned in Georgia back in, I guess, 1936--and he used all the normal devices of politics, of kissing babies, and going to people's houses and sitting down and having long talks with them; but it's my observation that in Washington, in his element in the Senate, he was strictly business and didn't have very much time for the trappings of politics.

CATES: How large was his circle of friends in Washington; would you have any knowledge of this?

UNDERWOOD: No, I just simply would not be able to comment with any accuracy about that because my--just the nature of my relationship with him, of just a student. He didn't bother to tell me about his friends. It was obvious to anyone, even in Georgia, just by following the public life of the man that he was an important Washington person, and you can deduce from that that he was invited to most of the important Washington social activities; but it was my observation that he did not participate in too many of those, but he quite obviously was friends with most of the significant and powerful people in government.

CATES: Norman, what would you say was his most outstanding personality trait?

UNDERWOOD: Discipline. By that, I mean not wasting time, not spinning his wheels as the expression goes, and making sure that something was accomplished during each unit of time, energy, or effort that he expended. Later in life after I returned from Washington, when I would talk with staff members, I found out that he finally began spending some time just relaxing because it was necessary to conserve his strength; but when I knew him, he came into the office and immediately buzzed for a secretary and began dictating or buzzed for a staff member to begin reviewing whatever matters were under consideration in the Senate; and it was obvious that this had been a lifestyle of his throughout his life, probably even more so when he was young. He just worked hard everyday, and at the end of the day he had something to point to that he had accomplished, and that requires a highly disciplined personality. Typical terminology for that, I suppose, in politics is dedication, but I think a more accurate term is discipline, just to--he made himself work and made himself understand. He was unquestionably the most authoritative parliamentarian in the Senate during his time and perhaps the most authoritative parliamentarian ever in the Senate. Well, you don't get that by reading *Robert's Rules of Order*. He had come very close to literally memorizing the rules of the Senate, and those rules are expressed in a book of considerable length--several hundred pages including rules and comments on their application-- although the way the Senator mastered those rules was by spending time working very hard, just devoting the time necessary to literally memorize those rules, and that characteristic carried through to everything he did in his legislative work.

He made himself understand. He went to a committee meeting in the Armed Services Committee and discussed an appropriation for the Nike-Zeus missile program. He was not dealing in generalities and asking the military personnel general questions of a curiosity nature, but he understood the program. He knew how big the missile was and what its thrust was and what its capability was, and the only way you can do that is hard work, and he had a command of almost every area that he was involved in. Agriculture--when he was out to get an appropriation through the Senate for a utilization laboratory in Athens to study agriculture projects, he devoted the time necessary to understand what agriculture utilization research means. When he talked to

members of the committee, he didn't have to say, help me out on this program because you're my friend; but he was able to make a case for whatever project it was he was interested in, and that's discipline and hard work coupled with a good mind capable of absorbing information but I think unquestionably that was the most outstanding, the most unique feature of his personality--what I'll always remember.

CATES: What was your relationship with him after you left Washington?

UNDERWOOD: Only an occasional visit. When I'm--during my law school years I was not able to get to, Washington very often. If he came to Athens, if he came to Georgia, I would, of course, make an effort to be there and usually get to see him on a fleeting occasion--shake hands. Later, when I began practicing law, well, I would make periodic trips to Washington and go by and see him very briefly, but I was not able to spend any time with him to any extent after I came back to Georgia.

CATES: This question may not be germane, but I'm going to ask it anyway. Do you ever hope to get into the political arena as a candidate; and if so, would doing so have been inspired by maybe Senator Russell?

UNDERWOOD: Well, I don't think there's any question that any young person who had the privilege of working close to Senator Russell must have an indelible mark in their personality by virtue of an association with Senator Russell; but by the same token, I think, the close association with Senator Russell tends to make a realist out of most young people, and I think

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all of the young people who have participated in the patronage program have a pretty realistic notion of what politics is about. We recognize that participation in politics is not a matter of running for office and that contingency and luck and fortune have a lot to do with it. So, therefore, I don't think it's very realistic to set your goal or to plan to seek an elective office. If the circumstances are right, because of the background that most of us have who worked on the patronage program, it's very logical, I think, that some of us will get into politics; and all of us, I think, will to some extent bear the mark of Senator Russell, and I would hope would be affirmatively influenced by that association.

CATES: Norman, let me ask you this. I know we've been talking now--you've been talking about an hour--a little over an hour. Do you have anything else that you would like to say that might be recorded for future historians and researchers about Senator Russell?

UNDERWOOD: I think--of course, you could talk about Senator Russell interminably, but I think most of the things that I have covered are the sorts of things that might not be available from other people or from the press or from public accounts; and upon reflection I suppose I could think of other things, but this is a pretty complete report of my limited--and I would emphasize my association with him was limited; it was restricted to a student-statesman kind of relationship, and the things that I've said about him are the way I saw him from my vantage point; and it may well be that other vantage points would have produced contrary

impressions, but my impression that I will always--the general impression that I will always have of Senator Russell is a person who managed to maintain a very private personality through decades of public service. Most politicians--after a certain number of years in politics, they take on a politician's personality; their answers to questions, their responses and conversation is a political response. Even in private there is a political, slightly self-serving quality to conversations of most people who've been in politics for any period of time. My recollection of Senator Russell is a sharp contrast to that--a person who basically was a reflective inward-oriented person somewhat reticent, somewhat difficult to draw into conversation but who was a private person, who was a politician when he had to be a politician, but preferred to be a private individual who worked in government and decided questions on the basis of his genuine belief as to what the public interest was. That is the way I'll always remember Senator Russell, I think, rather than as a politician but sort of as a private, quiet, tremendously hardworking, kind sort of person.

CATES: Norman, I want to thank you for giving me this excellent interview. I want to say this, that if you do think of anything in the future that you might think that might be pertinent to this subject, don't hesitate to call, and we'll get it on tape. Thank you very much.

Richard B. Powell
Library for Political Research and Studies