JF: Okay, we are now on Tape 19, Mark Trautwein, and we were talking about Mt. Graham.

MT: Yes, and I was saying that the process by which the legislation got passed was not a good one, and sort of violated the procedures that we certainly tried to insist on, but were sent off and made difficult to insist on, which was to have hearings and all that kind of stuff. People were quite rightly upset about that afterwards, although as many people were aware, it's not exactly an unusual way to legislate, and when things the environmental community approved of were legislated in that fashion, they didn't find any reason to object to it. So the process worked the way it worked, for better or for worse, and I think quite clearly it was for the worse. But I think that part of the wages of doing legislation that way is you get into these kinds of messes, because you don't have the opportunity to vet things in the way that a good legislative process does.

Oh, the one other thing I should say about "Where was Mo in all this?" is that this was very late in Mo's career, and at this point, his health was very bad. There was really, kind of, I don't think any question that from purely a physical point of view, Mo's ability to sort of start weighing in and taking on a major campaign, in which he'd be pushing everything uphill, that he was capable of that. He knew that, we knew that, everybody knew that at that point. So there was really no way that Mo was going to be able to.... We'd had our shot when the legislation came through, and we had the language, had the amendment rewritten to protect the Endangered Species Act. That was our shot, we thought we'd done a good job, it didn't work out, and then after that we were just left to deal with the mess that followed.

JF: Do you think that Mo's health at that point had anything to do with the way that he handled Mt. Graham?

MT: (sigh, pause) I think to this extent, that.... I don't think it changed his judgment any, because I think the same forces that were at work on him in the late eighties would have been at work on him in the early eighties. And I think he would have tried sort of to do the same kind of thing. He might have been able to bring more personal vigor to trying to resolve the issue better, or.... I mean, there's no question at this point he's tired, he's physically broken, he's thinking about his legacy, his taste for bruising battles and controversy is not great.

JF: How was he mentally at that point?

MT: (sigh) Well, it was a day-to-day thing with Mo. This was one of the most difficult things about working for Mo and watching him over the years--to watch him deteriorate. And deterioration was not only physical. There were many, many days when Mo's presence and mental clarity just weren't there. Part of this was a function of the disease itself, part of it was a function of the drug regime he was under. Parkinson's is an extremely ugly, difficult disease that requires certainly in the 1980s and early 1990s, the ingestion of large quantities of very, very nasty drugs. Mo was on quite a roller coaster. He would take these very heavy-duty drugs that initially would relieve him of a lot of
pain and discomfort and would make him feel great, and there'd be a period where Mo was really there, and it was wonderful. And then . . . You can't keep taking these drugs forever, you have to stop taking them to allow your body to recover and let the toxicity subside. And then he'd slide down into a place where he would become physically debilitated and mentally cloudy. And that would effect his emotions. Mo’s emotions were always very difficult to detect. He was an extraordinarily--his emotions were always very, very even. (chuckles) Knowing when Mo was mad took a metal detector to figure that out. But anyway.... So you were never quite sure on any given day where Mo was going to be.

JF: You would hear reports of him falling asleep at committee hearings or during meetings or presentations. Did you observe that?

MT: Oh, quite frequently, and later on in the career, the more it would happen. I remember any number of occasions where I would go over to Mo's office just to brief him on something, and he would essentially nod out in the middle of your talking, and you would have to--you would just kind of quietly get up and leave. That was hard. Everyone was trying to protect Mo. Mo was in a lot of denial about the state of his own health--never wanted any help.

I recall during the work on the second Arizona Wilderness Bill there was a meeting in Mo's office with the rest of the delegation. As I recall, all the members of the Arizona delegation were there, and their staffs, and this was an important meeting. It was a meeting to try to iron out the last remaining unresolved conflicts in the bill. And we're sitting there in a large circle in Mo's large office, I'm kind of on the opposite side of the circle from Mo. One of the things that happens with Parkinson's patients is that they kind of lose consciousness of their posture. So frequently Mo could literally be in a place where he's hunched over with his head down between his knees, talking, but his head is down between his knees. On this occasion, that's what was happening. He was sitting on the edge of his chair, hunched way forward, and he was talking and he just fell off the chair onto the floor, onto his hands and knees. Everyone in the room--except me--was sort of shocked to see this. I remember very distinctly that everyone, including all the members, turned and looked at me, as if to say, "Well, you're his staff person, you do something about this." And I knew that.... If I could have gotten fired for anything, I think it would have been to have gone over there and tried to pick Mo up and put him back in his chair. He would have hated me for that. You didn't do that.

JF: Did he ever say anything to that effect?

MT: No.

JF: You all just knew it intuitively.

MT: This was something everyone knew. He didn't have to say it. But you know, the amazing thing about that incident was that there he is, on his hands and knees.... (with emotion) God bless him, I can't imagine the kind of humiliation that must have been for
him. He's so proud and he always tried so hard to not give in to this, and to not display this. And here he is in front of the rest of the delegation on his hands and knees, having fallen off his chair, and what he did was--I wish I could remember exactly what he said, but it was something typically funny and self-deprecating, and it was something like, "The chairman has left his chair," or something like that. Very painfully, he picked himself up and put himself back in the chair and we went on with the meeting. And, you know, it was both wonderful and horrible all at the same time. It was horrible, for all the obvious reasons--and for some not so obvious reasons. It was horrible because you've got this whole roomful of people not acknowledging that this thing has just happened. Everyone's seen it, everyone's dumbfounded by it, but no one's going to say anything about it. This was typical. This sort of thing happened a lot.

JF: Trying to ignore it happened a lot?

MT: Yes. It was out of respect.... I think it was maybe partly out of embarrassment, but also out of respect and affection for Mo. But it was also wonderful, because just to see this man struggling with this thing in a way.... This thing that just so stripped a man of his dignity--a simple everyday dignity, of just being able to conduct himself the way everyone expects to be able to conduct themselves, and calling on all the best parts of himself to maintain that dignity: his humor, his self-deprecating, taking the pressure off of everybody else by making a joke about himself. You know, I think few human beings can even understand what it was like to be in the position that he was in, much less to be able to call upon that part of their nature under those circumstances.

JF: He had also lost his wife, Ella, in 1988 or 1989.

MT: I think 1989 would be my recollection.

JF: I think 1989 is what I was thinking, too. I don't know quite how to put this, but did that affect his work in any way? Could you tell? I mean, in addition to the disease?

MT: Only in that it was a devastating emotional experience for Mo, and I think it probably affected him the way it would affect anybody who suffered that kind of emotional loss. I was not close to Mo personally, not close to what went on in his marriage, but Ella was an extraordinarily important person to him. She was, among other things, a real truth-teller to him. I'm sure he missed that.

Mo was also so much invested in Mo Udall, the public man, where really, from what I could tell, that part of him had grown so and crowded out Mo Udall the private man so heavily, that I think his response after that, was to pick himself up--just like he did in that meeting, pick himself up, put himself back in that chair, and go about the job of being Mo Udall, which was the job of getting these things done. That was an attitude that affected all of us.

People have asked if Mo stayed too long. There are many answers to that question--many good answers to that question. Clearly, from a purely physical point of
From a political point of view and a career point of view, the answer is not that easy. Yes, of course there was a long process of physical deterioration that was very, very ugly, and very much affected his ability to function. There's no question about it. On the other hand, you know, we all had a sense that this man, this politician, this public figure is totally unique. He can do things that no other public figure can do. The combination of his personality and his character, his credibility, his position as chairman of this committee, was extraordinary. He could promote an agenda and get things done even in a diminished state, that no one else could do. And the record speaks for itself. I mean, up until the day he quit, he was getting stuff done. And he was getting stuff done because of his personal nature, his character, and the love, respect, and affection that people had for him, which allowed them to see right beyond and through the physical destruction that was obvious for anybody to see.

And it was also, frankly, a function of the kind of work ethic that he and Stanley Scoville had established with his staff and his whole operation. It was not an uncommon problem in Congress for members to "stay too long at the fair," and to be in positions of great power and responsibility, but sort of be dysfunctional. There's a lot of history and a lot of record of staff assuming the role of the member, and abusing that role. I think, without question, and without reservation--and it's one of the things that I am most proud of, and I think everyone who worked for Mo can be most proud of--which is that we handled that problem and that issue, I think, in an extraordinarily sensitive, responsible, credible way. I think we did things the way Mo wanted them done--the way Mo wanted them done, and not the way we wanted them done. I think that's a monument to him.

Did Mo stay too long? Well, yes and no. In the final analysis, for me, it wasn't my decision to make. They never asked me for my advice on it, thank God, I'm glad he never did. It was my job to carry out his wishes and the wishes of the committee. Even in a diminished state, we were able to do that. We were able to know what -- you knew what Mo wanted done, and how he wanted it done, and you were going to be faithful to that. There wasn't any question about it. It was hard. On a personal level, it was extremely hard, it was extremely hard. And there were some moments with Mo where you just... There was one day when he had to get to the Rules Committee. He had a very important bill before the Rules Committee, and Stanley and I went over there to brief him before we walked over to the committee, and we got there and couldn't find him. After a while we sort of hear this plaintive call from this little private bathroom, "Help! Help!" We walk in there, and there's Mo... One of the things that would happen occasionally is that Mo would become frozen, like a statue, couldn't move. And the only way to break this was to move him in some fashion--move an arm or a leg or something, and then it would kind of free him up. We go in the bathroom and he's standing there at the sink and he's frozen. Stanley and I spent twenty minutes, Stanley standing on the toilet, trying to move Mo's shoulders, and I'm down on my hands and knees on the ground, trying to move Mo's feet. We finally do it....

JF: That must have been hard on a day-to-day basis.
MT: It was terrible! But then the next day he could be (snaps fingers) all there, all there-it was like nothing had ever happened.

JF: What period of time was it that he was that bad? Just like the last year before, or two years before [retiring]?

MT: Well, it's hard to say, because it was such a gradually progressive kind of thing, that it wasn't like one day you woke up and all of a sudden things were really bad. Plus, when you're living it day to day, day to day, you just sort of don't really notice, until all of a sudden you kind of say, "Hey, you know; it's been a little worse more often than it used to be," kind of thing. Or something like this bathroom thing would happen. "Wow, that's a new one."

Certainly up through the mid-eighties and stuff, the problems were really quite minor. It really wasn't until the later eighties that the more severe effects and problems started manifesting themselves.

JF: Let's back up just a little bit, a couple more things about Mt. Graham. And then I just have a couple of general questions. We talked about some of the University players. I'd like to ask just your impressions of a couple of people--one University player we missed, and then the players on the conservationists' side. Dr. Henry Koffler. Did you have any contact with him at all, or any impressions of him?

MT: Very little. I recall one meeting when Dr. Koffler and (sigh) Mr. Beigel and some of the other University folks came to town to talk to Mo. The only thing I remember, we had a meeting, I was in the meeting, there was sort of a general discussion about Mt. Graham. It was fairly general. It was not untypical of a lot of the meetings that Mo had with a lot of people, where (chuckles) people would be ushered in, you'd spend a considerable amount of time with Mo sort of doing Mo's schtick, which was Mo telling stories and jokes that people loved and would laugh and have a wonderful time. I'd heard some of these stories hundreds and hundreds of times, and I would laugh the hundredth time, just as much as I'd laughed the first time, because of the way Mo would tell these stories. Anyway, he'd have that. And "Gee," you know, it'd be getting late, "what did you come to see me about?" You have kind of ten minutes to sort of kind of go through the substance of what they came for, and you kind of go through it, and then they'd be out of there, and everyone would always feel like they just had this great meeting with Mo Udall, but he'd agreed to do nothing (chuckles) kind of thing. And it was that sort of meeting, except that at the end of this meeting, Dr. Koffler asked to speak privately with Mo. That was extremely rare. I don't know what happened, what was discussed, what transpired between them in that conversation. (chuckles) I do know that it was shortly after that, that Mo made the "Mark, you gotta get me out of this," comment to me. But that was really just about the extent, that I can recall, of my contact with Dr. Koffler.

JF: How about the environmentalists? Were there any that particularly stuck out in your mind, or that you had dealings with?
MT: Well, yes! I mean, between... Robin Silver and Bob Weitzman, who were really.... My hat's off to them in terms of their energy and their relentlessness on this issue, but they really did their cause a disservice, I believe.

JF: In what way?

MT: Oh, they were very personal with their attacks, and very loose with their facts. They had a way of vilifying individuals that did them no good whatsoever. They were pests, which they may well regard as a compliment, but I can tell you that everybody that I knew of--even people who were inclined to be sympathetic with them, and agree with them--just couldn't stand them, and wanted to walk the other way when they came, because they were humorless ideologues with an utter inability--and from what I could tell--lack of interest in understanding the process, understanding other people's points of view, understanding how they might be able to make the process work for them. They were mainly interested, it seemed to me, in finding "bad" people and hitting them over the head. Ultimately, I know that all they really cared about was stopping the University from building the telescopes. I don't have any grief with that one way or the other. The proof is in the pudding, ultimately. They were terribly ineffective, they didn't accomplish a damned thing. It isn't as if they didn't have some material to work with. Lord knows they burned up more than a few fax machines on the Hill. I mean, they used to literally render--I know in George Miller's office, they used to render George Miller's fax machine useless for days, just sending 200-page reports by fax over the machine. (laughs) It was crazy!

JF: How to win friends and influence people!

MT: Unfortunately, in the whole Mt. Graham issue, I don't think anybody comes out (JF: Smelling like a rose.) smelling very well. And that was what was so difficult--one of the things that was so difficult about the issue. There were no heroes in that story whatsoever. There's only failure and things to be embarrassed or sad about. There's only regret, I think.

JF: As you may know, Congress recently voted to create a federal Institute of Environmental Dispute Resolution, under the auspices of the Udall Foundation. Do you think such an agency, if it had existed during the time of Mt. Graham, would have helped in resolving that situation?

MT: That's a wonderful question! (laughs) I would have loved to have had such an entity around at the time--if nothing else, to sort of get the issue off Mo's back and off my back. Any kind of semblance of an impartial arbiter would have been wonderful. Although I would think that [the] effectiveness of that kind of instrument would require the willing participation of both parties to it, and I doubt if you would have had that at the time. I mean, it's ironic. I do think that the whole area of environmental mediation is moving to a very new and different kind of plane than existed during Mo's career. But ironically, what I see happening a lot is that science, good science, good environmental science, is being brought out of the classroom and out of the halls of academe and into
the areas of public policy decision-making. I think it's becoming increasingly crucial and important in resolving environmental disputes. The irony, of course, here on Mt. Graham is that you had arguing scientists.

JF: Yes.

MT: You had astronomers with their higher pursuit, dumping on biologists, who had their higher pursuit, dumping on astronomers. Not that I don't think that some kind of respected arbiter or process would have been useful. I think it very well could be. But ultimately, all of these kinds of disputes ultimately involve--someone has to make a decision, and usually that's a public policy figure of some kind, and it does involve the willing participation of people in the process, so that people are made to feel less like victims of environmental decision-making, and more like participants and partners in environmental decision-making. I think that's where things ought to be going. I would have liked to see that happen on Mt. Graham, and I'm not sure it couldn't have, but given some of the personalities involved, and some of the forces at work, and that kind of thing, it certainly would have been quite a test.

JF: In 1991, when Mo fell down the stairs in his house and was moved to a hospital and essentially resigned from the House not long thereafter, Congressman George Miller of California took over as chair of the Interior Committee at that time. Did you and Stanley stay on with Chairman Miller?

MT: I was the only Udall staff person--the only legislative Udall staff person, that George asked to stay on.

JF: Is that right?

MT: Initially Stanley did not stay on, and then after a short period of time--I think it was maybe about six months--Mr. Miller brought Stanley back, and Stanley served on the committee until Stanley's own death in 1995.

JF: What role was he in that?

MT: It was not an easy thing. Stanley had been staff director of that committee for, oh, God, fifteen years. And to come back in a (sigh) sort of lesser status, if you can put it that way, was not an easy thing for him to do. But he was brought back because of his absolutely boundless knowledge about the procedures of the committee and the procedures of the House, and the way things worked, to sort of give George his expertise in those areas. And he did so up until his death, with great distinction. I know that Mr. Miller and all of his staff people learned to value Stanley's very sage advice on how to get things done, and all of the incredibly complicated kinds of procedures that you need to know in order to navigate your way through the legislative process, and came to rely on it heavily.
JF: I'm assuming it was quite different working for.... You'd worked how many years with Mo? Seventeen or eighteen?

MT: I don't know. Well, twelve, from 1979 until his retirement.

JF: How did it differ, working for George Miller?

MT: It was different. Mr. Miller is from the Bay Area, California, San Francisco area. He had a lot of Mo's passion and shared Mo's environmental goals in very important ways. One of the things that was always most wonderful to deal with Mo was you never really had to argue with Mo about what was right and wrong and what you were trying to do. I didn't have to do that with George either. George was an enormously intelligent, creative, inventive, insightful, exciting thinker, and a very intellectually demanding guy, because he had a lot of his own ideas and his own insights into things. As a staff person, that was quite challenging, because you could walk into a meeting with George, and you just really had to know your stuff, because you never really knew what was going to be coming out of him and stuff. So in that sense, it was very exciting. But it was different in the sense he relied on a very, very few people for his advice and for getting things done--really, two to three people--and it tended to leave you out of the loop. When important decisions were being made, or important meetings were being held, very often you weren't there, and you would hear about it afterwards from somebody else. That was hard to live with, particularly after twelve years of having the kind of freedom and authority and responsibility and trust and confidence that I'd had from Mo.

My respect for George is enormous and profound, but it was hard for me to lose that kind of freedom and that kind of being in the middle of things and having responsibilities instead of tasks to do. And George was also different from Mo in that he really wasn't as much of a legislator as Mo. I used to say George wasn't interested in hitting singles and doubles--George was interested in hitting home runs. So, for example, we used to spend a lot of time with George working on forest management issues, old growth, ancient forests kinds of things--how to preserve it and stuff. George wasn't interested in passing a bill that would sort of set aside some old-growth areas. He wanted to change public policy in a way that changed the entire management of the entire forest. And in a way, he was right.

Some of the work that Mo and I did, when you look back on it now, it was right for the time, but there's a bit of futility about it. We were sort of there at a time when it was okay to create wilderness areas by drawing lines on maps, and that would protect the wilderness values in that area. Well, in many, many ways now, you can see that that just isn't enough, because so much--with the irresistible march of demographics and human development and growth in this country, and progress, [and so on and so forth], the importation of things into those wilderness areas that are destructive of those wilderness values is inevitable. You have to do more than just draw lines around these places. You have to change what's going on outside of them as well, so that all this sort of works together.
George understood that. I don't think anybody--certainly any politician--has found a way to fix this yet. I wonder often if Mo were still chairman, still doing this, how he would have adjusted to this kind of reality, because it is a more difficult problem. It's a whole new--I hate the word "paradigm"--but it is a whole new paradigm for how to deal.... It's like when we were talking before about this whole environmental mediation kind of thing. An environmental mediation process that was brought to bear on Mt. Graham wouldn't result in drawing a bunch of lines on Mt. Graham. "On one side of this line you can do this. On the other side of the line you can't do anything." It would be a more integrative kind of thing. "How could we make this whole area here work to achieve these disparate goals?" that's a much more complicated kind of thing than drawing lines on maps. And George didn't have the answer, and nobody had the answer, really, of how to do that, and this whole ecosystem management kind of thing. So it was very frustrating. And frankly, it had gotten to the point where it was clear. It was getting to be longer and longer between times when I could identify that I'd accomplished anything real on the ground. And I really had no interest in being there just to be there.

JF: When did you leave?

MT: I left in January of 1995, right as the Republican revolution was coming in. I had planned to leave, so the election had nothing to do with my leaving. I was not run out of town by Republicans. I left for a combination of reasons: one, because I was burned out, and because I wasn't getting the same satisfaction out of my work that I had with Mo. I think everyone who worked for Mo will tell you that what they did during their years with Mo is probably what they're most proud of in their whole lives. I think it was that kind of experience for people--not replicable. In it's totality, in the totality of the sense of what you were doing, who you were doing it for, why you were doing it, how you were doing it, it was just something that made you proud to come to work every day. So you missed that. And also my health was deteriorating. One of the ironies for me--this is just a personal thing--I'm a person who's lived with AIDS since about 1983, and so was Stanley Scoville. And here we had Mo dealing with his debilitating terminal disease, and here [were] Stanley and I dealing with our terminal debilitating diseases, and working on these sorts of timeless kinds of issues, designating wilderness for future generations and stuff. (sigh) I don't know if I can put into words what that felt like.