

# An Oral History Interview

with

DUDLEY DUDLEY

*conducted by*  
Julie Ferdon

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*transcribed by*  
Jardee Transcription, Tucson

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Dudley Dudley

Dudley Dudley was first elected to the New Hampshire State Legislature in 1972. She subsequently volunteered in Congressman Morris Udall's bid for the 1976 democratic presidential nomination and served as Udall's First District Coordinator through the New Hampshire Primary.

JF: This is Tape 21 of the Morris K. Udall Oral History Project. Good afternoon, it's Thursday, October 11, 1999, and I am with Ms. Dudley Dudley at the Exeter Inn in Exeter, New Hampshire. My name is Julie Ferdon, and I would like to welcome you, and thank you for your participation.

DD: It's my pleasure.

JF: Let me begin with some brief biographical background. When and where were you born?

DD: In Exeter, New Hampshire.

JF: You were?!

DD: Yes.

JF: And you were in Durham, New Hampshire during Mo's campaign. When did you....

DD: That's right, I was born in Exeter, and my parents lived in Durham, and so I've lived in Durham all my life.

JF: A native.. Where did you attend school?

DD: I went to Robinson Female Seminary, which was in Exeter, New Hampshire, and then the University of New Hampshire.

JF: And what is your profession now?

DD: I'm retired. I have been a nonprofit administrator.

JF: What kind of nonprofits have you been working with?

DD: The most recent one was called WILL, the Women Legislators Lobby, and was a national organization of women state legislators, organized to work with their members of Congress, to get them to reduce the federal budget appropriation for military weapons.

JF: Going back to 1974, what was your profession then? Were you working with nonprofits then?

DD: In 1974, no. I had just been elected to the New Hampshire State Legislature in 1972, I think. Mo ran in 1974 or 1976?

JF: He announced in 1974. It was for the 1976 campaign.

DD: Right. Good. So in 1974 I had just completed my first, somewhat tumultuous, term in the state legislature.

JF: In 1972 were you active with any presidential campaigns?

DD: Udall was 1974, 1972 was.... Who was 1972? McCarthy was 1968.

JF: McGovern.

DD: McGovern! Oh, yes, McGovern absolutely. Yes, I was a delegate to the national convention in 1972 for McGovern, and worked for him in New Hampshire.

JF: In 1974, two full years before the actual campaign, Mo Udall came to Bedford, New Hampshire, and announced as pretty much an unknown that he was going to run for the Democratic nomination for president.

DD: I think I was there.

JF: That's what I was going to ask you, if you were there.

DD: I think I was there. I think that was at the Carpenter Hotel in downtown Manchester, which was the site of John Kennedy's announcement that he was going to run for president.

JF: Did he announce it several places in New Hampshire?

DD: Probably.

JF: Because I had Bedford down, but I kind of recall that he announced in Manchester.

DD: Well, Bedford and Manchester--they're almost interchangeable, but you'd be more likely to say Manchester if it happened in Bedford, than the other way around. So maybe he did. Maybe he then went out to the Wayfarer or something like that. But I'm quite sure that it was he at the Carpenter. The presidential campaigns tend to blur together. (chuckles) But I think that's right.

JF: Were you already involved in Mo's campaign by then?

DD: I can't remember. I know that.... I don't know. I must have been, if I was there, to a certain extent, but I'm really not sure.

JF: Do you recall at all how you got involved? Did someone approach you?

DD: Well, I had just had my first term in the legislature, and during that term a proposal was made for this area, which was to build the world's largest oil refinery. It was proposed by Aristotle Onassis. It was a big secret, and it took some sleuth work on the part of a small newspaper in this area to tease that information out, and Onassis eventually came to New Hampshire and it was a very big deal. But it was my legislation that killed the proposal, and so I had established some name recognition as someone who cared about environmental issues in this area. And I can't remember whether I contacted them, or they contacted me. I don't know.

JF: Why Mo Udall instead of Birch Bayh or Fred Harris or Frank Church?

DD: I remember thinking that they were all good people--or Jimmy Carter?

JF: Or Jimmy Carter. (laughter)

DD: I remember thinking that they were all good people, and always sad that you have to go up against good people, but feeling that Mo, on the subject of the environment, which was key in my mind at that point, was by far the best. I also felt that he had the best chance.

JF: Jimmy Carter announced the following month. Do you remember anything about that announcement?

DD: Nothing. And I'm sure that I was barely conscious of it, because I do remember that for the whole duration of the campaign, right up until the weekend before the primary election in New Hampshire, I didn't even seriously--I didn't take Carter seriously. I remember feeling a little sorry for people who were working for him. (chuckles) Oh well.

JF: I think we all felt a little that way to some extent. Mo tells a story in *Too Funny to be President* that he also told on the stump numerous times, and told his entire life, about going into a barber shop in New Hampshire and telling them that he was Mo Udall and he was running for president, and them saying, "Yes, we were just laughing about it yesterday."

DD: I do remember that.

JF: Did that actually happen?

DD: I was not present, but I certainly heard him repeat that story. I don't know, but it's a wonderful story. I doubt it, but it would have been something that good old, self-effacing, modest Mo would certainly have thought of, yes.

JF: What, in your opinion, was the general response in New Hampshire to Mo? I mean, he was a westerner from Arizona, from a small Mormon town in Arizona.

DD: One-eyed Mormon, right. (JF: chuckles) People liked him. And there were, as you mentioned, some other really good candidates, slightly left of center--except for Carter. So that constituency was pretty much split. I don't know about Bayh, where you'd have placed him, maybe more in the center. But I can't imagine anyone not liking Mo when they met him. And of course in New Hampshire you have to meet someone more than once.

JF: You get spoiled up here.

DD: You get spoiled, yes.

JF: What was your role in the campaign?

DD: I was First District coordinator, exclusive of Manchester. (laughs) Manchester is the largest voting city in the state, and there are only two districts in the state. But I didn't have much of an affinity for Manchester, and it didn't make sense for me to have responsibility for that city.

JF: Manchester. Is that an industrial town?

DD: Yes.

JF: Did Mo have much support there?

DD: He didn't do very well in Manchester.

JF: Do you think maybe his environmental stance might be a problem?

DD: Right. Headquarters was in Manchester, but I wouldn't say it was his strong point.

JF: Who else in New Hampshire was involved in his campaign?

DD: Maria Carrier, Joann Simons, Phyllis Bennett [phonetic spellings]. Buck Howe was assistant press secretary, Phyllis was press secretary. Joann was Second Congressional District.

JF: What was Marie Carrier?

DD: I think she was just sort of over-all.

JF: And David Evans?

DD: David Evans was the....

JF: Were he and Marie Carrier co-chairs by chance?

DD: No.

JF: They weren't? Okay, I couldn't remember.

DD: No, he was the campaign manager for the state. And Maria would have been, I suspect, a chair, and probably there was a co-chair, but I can't remember who it would have been. Don't know.

JF: How about national staff? Did you have any contact with national staff?

DD: Yes, but I don't remember very well, and as I say, the campaigns do tend to blur.

JF: How about I bring up some names?

DD: Sure.

JF: Paul Tully?

DD: Oh, yes, Paul Tully. Yes. Paul Tully slept on my porch from time to time. Wonderful guy. Sorry about him.

JF: Yes, we've lost him. Well, Ron Pettine was another one I was going to talk about.

DD: Yes. Isn't that awful?!

JF: Two we've lost.

DD: Right. We did have a lot of people sleeping on our living room floor. And Mark Udall lived with us for about six weeks.

JF: Oh! I'd forgotten that. That's right.

DD: Yes, he was in the state. And Bambi [Ann Udall], too, came to the state. And of course Tiger [Ella Udall] was here a lot. But Mark--they were both just wonderful kids. And I think there were others of Mo's children, but I can't remember who they were.

JF: So Mark stayed with you for how long?

DD: Six weeks, I think.

JF: How old was he then? He would have been like twenty-two or -three, something like that?

DD: Maybe. I would think maybe even a little younger. I'm not sure that he was out of college, or even if he'd started. I think it might have been a "finding yourself" year. But he was just so sweet. You know, and I love the idea that he's in Congress now. That's wonderful.

JF: He and Tom.

DD: Yes! isn't that amazing?

JF: It is. And Anne, formerly known as Bambi--she's Anne now, Dr. Anne. (laughs)

DD: Is she really? Oh, isn't that wonderful?

JF: She stayed with you as well?

DD: I don't think she did. No, I don't think so. Reesha McMann [phonetic spelling]. I've forgotten what her role was, but she worked in the Manchester office. Maybe she was field coordinator, I'm not sure.

JF: What was your impression of the national staff and organization?

DD: I thought they were very good. There's always a split between the state and the national, in that the state feels it knows how to do things, and the national comes in--particularly the advance people—I've always felt that advance people were born with boots on--and they just come in and sort of push people around. But that's okay. They were fine. I don't remember very much.

JF: I'm trying to think who did advance then. Was Mark Brand involved then, do you know?

DD: Yes! That's what I said. Yes, Mark was. And actually Mark slept on our porch from time to time.

JF: Was he one of the ones that was pushing people around? (chuckles)

DD: A little bit, yes.

JF: And Al Thompson, but I think he did more with the [air]plane Tiger, I think.

DD: Yes.

JF: You spent some time with Ella Udall.

DD: A little bit, sure.

JF: Did Ella campaign around the state?

DD: Yes. She accompanied Mo. I don't recall her ever giving a speech or representing him, but she was there with him a lot of the time.

JF: New Hampshire is a very small state with huge political clout when it comes to primary elections. Why was it significant to Mo?

DD: Well, it was significant because he didn't win it. (chuckles) If he had beaten Carter, I don't know, I think it all might have been very different--but he didn't, and so that's why it was significant.

JF: What was the political climate in New Hampshire?

DD: In 1976? I don't know how to describe it, but probably not terribly different from what it is now, which is pretty conservative. And so Mo was working to unite the left, whatever there was of it.

JF: Conservative among the Democrats, the Democrats who were more conservative?

DD: Probably, yes. The whole state is.

JF: Do you recall what the strategy was of Mo's campaign?

DD: No, I don't. David Evans--you should talk to Dave, he'd be great.

JF: I recall something to the effect of them canvassing as many houses as they could.

DD: Oh, yes, they certainly did canvas. I mean, I think of that as just being what you do in a campaign. I can't remember, in terms of radio spots or television or newspaper. I know that Phyllis Bennett would say that they had a very active press operation.

JF: "They" being?

DD: The campaign.

JF: Mo's campaign?

DD: Yes.

JF: Do you remember what I would call "the Carter Brigade"? Apparently the first Sunday in 1976, something like ninety middle-aged....

DD: Oh, came up from Georgia, right?

JF: Middle-aged, non-college-student Georgians paid their own way to come to New Hampshire and knock on doors, and apparently hit a huge amount of households, and followed them all up with personal things. (D.D. How clever!) Do you recall that?

DD: Yes, I do. And I remember thinking it was sort of pointless, because he wasn't going to go anywhere--but I was wrong.

JF: How do you think New Hampshirites responded to these Georgians?

DD: I think they liked the idea that these people were so committed that they would come to New Hampshire at their own expense, and the fact that they weren't college kids, and that they weren't just in it for a lark. They knew something specific about their governor, and they thought he was a good man, and wanted him to be president. So it was a very good tactic.

JF: Most of the other, at least local, campaigns, as I recall, had a lot of college students, a lot of younger people. Does that turn off voters here at all?

DD: It seems to me that someone else has brought people in as Carter did, since then, but I can't think of who it was. (pause) Maybe [Paul] Tsongas a little bit, just up from Massachusetts--that hardly counts, you know. It seems to me it's just the way it's done, is to have a lot of college kids working for you. So I don't know that it turns people off. It's somewhat expected.

JF: College students, I think, are the only ones who will bear with the life of the campaign road.

DD: Sure. I mean, who else is going to live a life sleeping on a living room floor?

JF: That's right, exactly. I remember during New Hampshire, Mo--well, all of us--would get frustrated, because it seemed like Carter just wouldn't answer the issues, wouldn't address them. Do you recall any of that?

DD: No, I don't think I do. I'm sure it's true, but I don't remember it.

JF: What was the attraction of Jimmy Carter in this state, do you think?

DD: I have never known! I really haven't.

JF: It still eludes you?

DD: Yes, it still eludes me. And in 1980, I worked to draft Kennedy to run. And we raised a lot of money and did that. I think now, hmm, was that why Reagan won, why Reagan beat Carter? But I just never really had a.... I just never really could connect with Carter. I just didn't.

JF: My next question was going to be, Carter won--what happened? (laughs)

DD: Not sure.

JF: Twenty-twenty hindsight, is there anything you would have done differently?

DD: Gosh, I cannot think enough of what our strategy was, to think of what we should have been doing differently. I mean, you can look at Carter's having brought those people from Georgia, and think it would have been great if Mo had brought them from Arizona, but I don't know.

JF: Do you think Mo spending more time would have made a difference?

DD: Well, you know, that's always a question, and Carter probably did spend more time in New Hampshire than [Mo] did, although I don't know that. There were dreadful scheduling arguments, but I think that's no different from any other campaign.

JF: And who were those between?

DD: I can't remember who the scheduler was: tall, thin, very thin guy. I can see him in his office in Manchester. But it would have been between him and--he would establish the schedule, and then there'd be all these competing requests for Mo's time. And, oh, between the first city and the second, and towns that thought they hadn't had their fair share of him. I think Mo would have been a wonderful president, but he wasn't an outstanding candidate. And I think too often the qualities that make you a wonderful president are not the same as make you a wonderful candidate. And the

question of whether or not he had the fire in his belly is a valid one. I don't know that he did. I think he knew he'd be a good president, but I'm not sure that he really--for all his gregariousness and charm, I'm not sure that he was an extrovert. I think he was a very gentle, thoughtful, sensitive, insightful person who didn't get up in the morning and say, "Oh, great, I'm gonna wade into another crowd of people," as Clinton does. You know? So in that way, I think the campaign lacked a candidate with that really wild and crazy passion to be out there campaigning. I don't think he had that.

JF: So when you say he was less than a perfect candidate, it was just he didn't quite put the energy (DD: Exactly.) or the drive into it?

DD: Yes.

JF: After New Hampshire, did you stay active in politics?

DD: No. Oh, in politics, yes, but not in his campaign. Then I ran for reelection myself, and then I ran for governor's counsel, which is a funny, anachronistic office here in New Hampshire, which made me the highest-ranking woman in the state's history, 'til then, and the highest-ranking Democrat. But I wasn't involved in his campaign any further.

JF: I was going to ask you this last one, if you thought Mo would be a good president or not. (chuckles)

DD: Oh, yes! You bet I do! He would have been a fabulous one. I don't think Jimmy Carter was a bad one, and in fact I think that he probably gets a bum rap. But Mo would have been better--he would have.

JF: I'd have to agree.

DD: I bet!

JF: Okay, thank you very much for your participation. We appreciate it.

DD: You're welcome! Good.

[END OF INTERVIEW]