Fred Harris represented Oklahoma in the United States Senate from 1964-73. In 1976 he sought the Democratic presidential nomination as a populist candidate. Like Morris K. Udall, he was unsuccessful.

Following the 1976 campaign Harris joined the faculty of the University of New Mexico where he teaches political science. He is the author of several books, including two mystery novels.
This is Tape 42 of the Morris K. Udall Oral History Project. Good afternoon, it's Tuesday, May 9, 2000, and we're in the office of Former Senator Fred Harris at the University of New Mexico in Albuquerque. My name is Julie Ferdon, and I would like to welcome you, Senator Harris, and thank you for participating in the Morris K. Udall Oral History Project.

FH: Good. Good project.

JF: Although we'll be concentrating in this interview on the 1976 presidential campaign, I'd like to touch on some other aspects of your life that brought you to that point. Let's begin at the beginning: When and where were you born?

FH: I was born in Oklahoma, in the little town of Walters, about 1,500 population, in southwestern Oklahoma, November 13, 1930.

JF: As I understand, your father was a sharecropper?

FH: He was a little of everything. He'd come out from Mississippi with his parents in 1906, I believe, and they sharecropped on a place east of Walters, which he wound up eventually, just before he died, owning, and he lived on it, that very farm. But in the meantime, he was mainly a cattle trader, although he did some other things, too--farmed some from time to time, and did other things. But most of his life he traded cattle.

JF: You grew up during the Depression. In fact, your first mystery novel is set in Oklahoma in the Depression and deals with a cattle trader. What effect did growing up during the Depression have on you?

FH: I don't know, it's a period when people--in Oklahoma, particularly--had to really live by their wits, and kind of keep body and soul together by hard work, and a great deal of self-reliance. It's also a period when the government had to step in and kind of put a safety net under things, and also intervene in the economy. All of those things are things that stuck in my mind.

JF: As I understand it, you got involved in politics very young, beginning in high school when you were student body president. Then you went to Oklahoma University, and were president of the League of Young Democrats?

FH: I was.

JF: And from there you went to law school, again at Oklahoma University.

FH: That's right.

JF: When did you get your degree there?
FH: In those days you could do a combined degree, where your first year of law school counted as the last year of undergraduate school. So I got a bachelor's degree majoring in political science in 1952, and then a law degree in 1954.

JF: Okay, I think it was that way when Mo went to law school at the University of Arizona. From there you went into practice briefly. Did you have any specialty area?

FH: I practiced law for ten years in Lawton, which is a town very near where I grew up, but a larger town--it's the third-largest city in Oklahoma, but also in southwestern Oklahoma. And I did pretty much a general practice. I soon formed my own law firm, and was the founder and manager of it. We practiced every kind of law, pretty much, except criminal law. Normally we weren't involved in criminal cases.

JF: How long was it then before you ran for Oklahoma State Senate?

FH: I was elected to the state senate in 1956. I'd been out of law school only a year-and-a-half, and I was twenty-five years old, which is as young as you can be. What happened was that the incumbent state senator had come down with a brain tumor, from which he died, and there was a vacancy, and I got sort of pushed into it. Some of the other people that were running had quite a bit of opposition. One was the mayor of Lawton; the other was an incumbent state representative. The district included not only Comanche County where I was then living and practicing law--the county seat of which is Lawton--but also my old home county of Cotton County, the county seat of Walters, which gave me kind of an extra edge. And so I ran and was elected to the state senate, and then four years later reelected. But I continued to practice law from 1954 to 1964, when I was elected to the United States Senate.

JF: So that was 1964, and you were what, thirty-four?

FH: I was thirty-three when I first got elected to the United States Senate.

JF: That was the year that Senator Barry Goldwater was soundly defeated by Lyndon Baines Johnson.

FH: That's right.

JF: Do you think that had any effect on your election?

FH: I think it did. Yes, I think it did some. It certainly was a help to me that the presidential candidate of the Democratic Party was a neighbor, Lyndon Johnson--well-known, very popular in neighboring Oklahoma. And also, that he was running so much ahead of the Republican nominee, Barry Goldwater. My opponent in the general election, famed football coach Bud Wilkinson, the Republican nominee, endorsed Goldwater, and I of course endorsed the Democratic nominee, Lyndon Johnson. Johnson carried the state very heavily, and I think that was a help in my own election.
JF: When you arrived at the Senate, there were two prominent Arizonans serving in the Senate then: Senator Barry Goldwater and Senator Carl Hayden. What were your impressions of those two men, starting, say, with Goldwater.

FH: I didn't have much contact with Goldwater, because he and I were not on a committee together. I saw him from time to time, I would see him on the floor of the Senate, of course. But even before I came to the Senate, people told me, and later senators told me, that he was a very nice person and congenial, easy to work with, and from what little contact I had with him, I found that to be true.

JF: How about Carl Hayden?

FH: Carl Hayden, I had to immediately see him. I was elected to an unexpired term for two years, and so I was running for reelection to the Senate almost from the time I first went there. It was very important for me to get on a Water Committee, one that's now called Energy and Natural Resources, in order to finish up a water project of my predecessor who had died in office, Senator Robert S. Kerr of Oklahoma. So the chairperson of the Senate Democratic Steering Committee, which names Democrats to fill vacancies on standing committees, was Senator Carl Hayden. I went to see him, and also, of course, I had an introduction to him from a former senator from Oklahoma, Elmer Thomas. I was the third United States senator from my fairly small city of Lawton, Oklahoma. There was Elmer Thomas, who had been later defeated, but was still living there, and had served with Carl Hayden. So I went to see him, and he listened to my pitch. I told him it was very important for me to get on that committee that Kerr had been on, in order to finish the Arkansas River Navigation Project, and he said, "All right, I'll help you do that. And when you get on it, I want you to help me finish the Central Arizona Project." (chuckles) I later saw him quite a bit in the senators' dining room and on the floor and other kinds of caucus and other meetings, and two or three things I remember about him. Once I remember we had a vote in the Senate. Well, first, once he said to me that he had been elected to the house of representatives in Arizona the same year Arizona became a state. He said he was coming back from Washington with his wife, and when the enabling legislation had been passed, and he got off the train at Chicago, he said, and had a picture taken for political campaign purposes. And he told his wife that he was going to go home and run for representative. And she said, "What would you know about it?" And he said, "As much as anyone else!" And he was elected, of course. He said he had first campaigned for office for sheriff, at a time when the best place to campaign near Phoenix was at stagecoach crossings. When the stage stopped to water the horses, people got out and stretched their legs and you could give them a card and campaign them. He also told me, as he had other people, two or three other things about campaigning. He said, "If you're shakin' hands and somebody asks you about an issue, just say, 'It's good to meet you,' and go on to the next person." Also, he said, "Don't talk to the press. They can't quote silence," he said. (chuckles)

JF: That's wonderful!

FH: One other thing I remember about him, he was getting up in years already when I went there, and he certainly was by the time I left. He, one time, Time magazine said, on a very
close vote, that "elderly old Senator Carl Hayden of Arizona, doddered in and voted, and doddered out." Soon thereafter, we were Democrats eating in the senators' private dining room, and he said from the end of the table where the senior Democrat sits in that room, he took issue with the article. He said, "I don't dodder--I shuffle!"  (laughter)

JF: That's wonderful. Did you end up voting for the CAP?

FH: I did.

JF: Was it a project you supported or worked for?

FH: I didn't know much about it, but I supported it in the committee.

JF: There was another Arizonan of some power at that time, U.S. Secretary of Interior Stewart Udall. Did you know Stewart when he was secretary of Interior?

FH: Yes. I knew him almost at once. I rented a house out in McLean, Virginia, very near the place where Stewart and Lee Udall lived. He was secretary of Interior. And also, since I was very much interested in Indians--coming from a state with a lot of Indians, Oklahoma--I had a lot of contact with both Stewart and Lee, and later got Stewart to appoint my administrative assistant, Dr. William R. Carmack as assistant secretary of Interior for Indian Affairs. But I remember saying to Stewart, "I'm a little worried about buying a house. I only have two years assured, and then I have to run for reelection." And he said, "But that's the way it was when I came here, elected to the House. I bought a residence right away, and you should too, because it'll go up in value in any event." And that turned out to be true. I did buy a house in McLean, and when I left twelve years later, left out of Washington, it had tripled--something over tripled--in value, so it was good advice.

JF: You were both friends of the Kennedy's. Did you ever run into him either when visiting or socializing with the Kennedy's? Or did you socialize with he and Lee any other times?

FH: Yes, we saw Stewart and Lee socially a good deal, in their home and in ours. And I did see him at the home of Robert and Ethel Kennedy some. I never saw him at Hyannis Port.

JF: What was your impression of Stewart?

FH: Stewart I think is a really well-motivated person, very solid and very sincere and real, very much committed on issues, for example, of environment and preservation. I thought [he] was maybe the best secretary of Interior ever.

JF: How about his brother, Morris Udall? Mo had been elected to Congress in 1961 to replace his brother Stewart. In those early days in the Senate, had you heard of Mo, or met him?
FH: Yes, I heard of Mo almost at once, and had occasion to see him at various functions. I don't think I saw him much socially, but I saw him at Democratic things and so forth, and knew a lot about him, and knew him as a very progressive person, right on the issues, and well-motivated--and also at the same time, a person with a keen sense of humor. That's always been a hallmark of his image.

JF: Oh, yes. In October 1967, Mo broke with President Johnson and became one of the first legislators to announce his opposition to the Vietnam War. Do you recall that at all, or recall your response?

FH: I don't remember the circumstances. I know he did break with Johnson on the war, but I don't remember it at the moment.

JF: You stayed loyal longer, but I think split with him in the spring of the following year, 1968, I think.

FH: Along, let's see, it was close to summer. It was prior to the Democratic Convention in 1968. I had been deeply involved in the president's national advisory commission on civil disorders, the Kerner Commission, which Johnson appointed and put me on. I'd been very active in it. What we had to do was to look at the causes and prevention, and deeper causes of the riots which had taken place in the central cities, most of the cities in the country. And I simply had not focused on the war until rather late--I mean late relatively. And finally, when I did, primarily because of my association with Robert Kennedy and two or three meetings that he got together, small little groups, to talk with experts; and also because of my association with Clark Clifford, who about this time decided on his own, once being made secretary of Defense, that the war ought to be wound down, and we ought to withdraw. So it was in, I think, along about late June maybe--something like that--in 1968 that I first spoke out against the war.

JF: How did President Johnson take your defection?

FH: Johnson, both because of my coming out against the war, and also because of the report of the Kerner Commission, which he felt did not give sufficient credit to the Johnson administration for what it had done in the civil rights field and against poverty--he was wrong about that--our relations became very, very strained and cold, and weren't sort of healed again until later on, the year after he went out of office and I was the national chairman of the Democratic Party. I flew down to the Johnson Ranch and we spent the day together. But the change in my position on the war, added to the Kerner Report, in which I'd been quite central, the relations were cold, to say the least.

JF: I know for Mo it was difficult because his brother was serving in the cabinet at the time, too. And my impression is Johnson was not one to take defection well.

FH: No, not at all! He wasn't at all. I happened to be at a reception at the White House--this was before I came out against the war--but the day that Frank Church had done so--Frank Church was a senator from Idaho--and we were, he and I, over by the hors d'oeuvres
and Johnson came over and Frank Church offered a kind of an apology. He said, "You know, I didn't like to oppose you," in effect, he said, "but I felt I had to go along with Wayne Morris." Wayne Morris was a senator from Oregon. He didn't mean that Morris made him do it, he just meant, I guess, that he agreed with Morris' reasoning. And Johnson said to him very curtly, "Well, when you want to get the so-and-so dam built"--I've forgotten what it was, but obviously something in Idaho--"why don't you go see Wayne Morris about it." So he was not one, as you said, to take defection lightly.

JF: In your 1976 book entitled *Potomac Fever*, you mentioned that on the eve of President Johnson leaving office in 1968, you were with him in the White House when an aide came in to say that Interior Secretary Stewart Udall was waiting outside, wanting him to sign a paper to form a new park, and that Johnson refused to, complaining that all kinds of people were asking him to sign all kinds of things at the last moment.

FH: That's right.

JF: What more recollections do you have of that incident?

FH: I spent.... As I said, our relations had been quite strained for a good while, but I went down there, it seems to me it was on a Saturday before he was leaving out of the White House on Tuesday. I spent at least an hour there. Johnson had always liked to talk to me--well, he liked to talk to anybody. He once said to me, after some meeting I went to, "You go back down there and tell 'em you told me what to do," he said. "That reminds me, one time I came back from talking to President Roosevelt"--I guess he was in the House then--"and I told Sam Rayburn that I went down and I told Roosevelt this and that. Sam Rayburn said, 'That's a damned lie. There's only one talker when you're talkin' with Franklin Roosevelt, and that's Roosevelt!!'" At any rate, Johnson, I don't know, liked to talk to me--maybe to everybody--and so we spent a whole hour, and all around things were being crated up. There was the noise of crates being nailed together, and you could see them there in the room. Things were being boxed up and crated up, and they were to leave on Tuesday. And every now and then he got a message, somebody came in with a message. But the one that I remember most--or maybe that's the only one he told me what it was--or whoever it was--said, "Secretary Udall is out here." And it seemed to me that he wanted the president to sign.... (phone rings, tape paused)

JF: We were talking about....

FH: Either the woman said--who brought in the message--or the president said--and I think it was the person--or it must have been him--anyway, somehow I came to know that what Udall wanted--Stewart Udall--was to sign some executive order setting up a park or refuge or something like that--and the president refused to see him. He said, "No, I can't see him." And then he said to me--but I don't think tied directly to what Stewart wanted--but he said, "If I did everything people wanted me to do at the last minute here, they'd send me to the pen." (laughs) I think he was talking about in general, not the Stewart Udall request.

JF: Do you have any idea what national.... You had mentioned that it was a national park
that he wanted?

FH: I thought it was a national park, but it was something like that, that the president could
do by executive order, as Bill Clinton has lately done with some things. But I never did talk
to Stewart about what it was--or if he ever did see the president.

JF: You much later co-chaired the Hubert Humphrey campaign for president when LBJ
didn't run again--co-chaired it with Senator Mondale.

FH: That's right.

JF: I'm curious: Both Hubert Humphrey and Robert Kennedy were friends of yours.

FH: Yes, very.

JF: They both ran that year.

FH: Very close friends of mine.

JF: Why did you pick Humphrey over Kennedy?

FH: It seemed to me that I had already kind of made the decision mostly earlier. What
happened, when Lyndon Johnson was running for reelection with Humphrey as his running
mate, of course, as vice-president, I got a call from Mondale who was, of course, from
Minnesota and a U.S. senator then, and a very close friend of mine, my seat-mate in the
Senate, and he said, "They want us to...." No, I'm sorry, where Mondale called me is a little
bit later. This call was from Orville Freeman. Orville Freeman was secretary of
Agriculture, and he asked me to head up a group called Rural Americans for Johnson and
Humphrey, and I agreed to do it. And this was at a time when my other seat-mate, Robert
Kennedy, was for Lyndon Johnson. For a good while after this, Kennedy, though he did
drop with Johnson on the war--and I was with him when he went over a speech about that
with me once--but even though he came to disagree with Johnson on the war, he still for a
long time continued to support Lyndon Johnson to reelection. So I agreed to do this thing
for Johnson and Humphrey. And then Johnson withdrew, and Humphrey announced, and I
came back to town, and Robert Kennedy tried to call me, but we never did make connection,
and he was my very close friend. And Humphrey called me and I went out and had
breakfast with him at his South Capitol apartment--my wife and I did--and he was trying to
decide what he was going to do for sure. But I felt then that when Walter Mondale called
me and asked me to co-chair with him the Humphrey campaign, that it was something that
just about another fourth way to do that from what I'd already agreed. I'd already agreed to
Johnson and Humphrey's reelection, and Humphrey was a major part of that for me. So it
was really--I mean, it's an odd circumstance to be in where you've got two very close
friends--and they were very close friends of mine, I saw them a great deal of the time, both
of them, separately, of course--each knew about the other. Time magazine once said about
along this time that I was the only person who could have breakfast with Lyndon Johnson
and lunch with Hubert Humphrey and dinner with Robert Kennedy. And that was true, they
all knew about each other, and my friendship with them. So I did that, and it was really a very painful thing for me to do, not to support Robert Kennedy, but I thought really I had already pretty much made that decision earlier.

JF: After Humphrey got the nomination, you were one of two people that he considered for vice-president, the other being Edmund Muskie. Was the fact that you were being considered for vice-president a surprise, or was that something that you had sought?

FH: Well, there was, incidentally, a "Periscope" item in *Newsweek* which I know, had learned, came from Frank Mankowitz, who was Robert Kennedy's press secretary—although it was a blind item in "Periscope," that said that Robert Kennedy was considering me for his vice-presidential running mate. Then as time went on.... And incidentally, Walter Mondale and I extracted an agreement from Humphrey, he actually read us a speech, where he was to divorce himself from the Johnson war policy and called for withdrawal and an end to U.S. involvement in Vietnam. He also promised that to Larry O'Brien whom we eventually brought in to head up the campaign on the day-to-day basis. It began to be brooded about that I was on a list—rather long list at first—for the possibility of being Humphrey's vice-presidential running mate. And that came to be sort of cumbersome and awkward for me. So I called him one night from New York—I'd been in New York doing a bunch of things, interviews and so forth—and I called him late one night, my wife was with me, and I said to him, "Listen, I'm going to be on a national television show tomorrow night and I am going to announce that I am not willing to be considered for vice-president, I'm going to take myself out of it so you won't be embarrassed"—we were very close friends—"so you won't be embarrassed by any feeling that you ought to be doing this. It's been awkward for me." So he said, "No, don't do that, Freddie." (chuckles) He called me Freddie, like he called Mondale, Mondaleyo, and various things—Humphrey. He said, "No, don't do that, I really am considering you. Go on and do that television interview and help yourself, and we'll see."

By the time I got to Chicago for the convention—which incidentally Mondale and I tried to get changed—we feared just what did happen in Chicago—Humphrey's choices were down to two, me and Ed Muskie. Before that, there'd been a bunch of other people talked about, and by then they had all been eliminated. I got practically an hour-by-hour, sometimes minute-by-minute, report—I was one floor down from Humphrey's suite in the hotel—as to what he was thinking and so forth. He had a press conference set for a certain time, and I said, "Well, he won't announce until he talks to me, I know, one way or another. If he's not going to choose me, he'll certainly talk to me first." There were two or three false alarms, and the press conference was missed. Humphrey had a hard time staying on time, and it got way past that. The night before, he was to finally make the decision, I got a report just before he went to bed that he was sort of leaning toward Muskie, but he was asked at the last, "Well, who [would] you rather be with?" and he said, "Harris." And then in a kind of... they said he sort of threw up his hands and said, "Let's go to bed." So he went to bed, still undecided. The mayor of Pittsburgh, a supporter of his, was for me. The mayor of Philadelphia, a supporter of his, was for Muskie. The head of the AFL-CIO was for Muskie. The head of the UAW, United Auto Workers, was for me. And his staff was split right down the middle. Mondale was for me. And so he had a hard time finally making the
Eventually he called me and said, "Could you come up?" Well, I went up and walked through a reception room, with a bunch of staff people and others there, into a bedroom. He took me back to a bedroom and we talked for a little while. You know, he said, "Is there anything I should know about you that would make it a problem if I were to choose you for vice-president?" And there wasn't, and so we talked a little more. And then he said, "Would you hold on a moment?" Well, he left. What I didn't know at the time was he'd walked just across the hall to the other bedroom where Muskie was. Then he came back and talked to me some more, and then he asked me to hold on again, and went across the hall into the other bedroom, to talk to Muskie, as I later learned. Then he finally came back in and with tears in his eyes, he said, "Fred, I'm gonna have to choose the older man." That was his exact words, and I said, "Well, if that's your choice, I'll nominate him." And he said, "Would you go with me to tell him?" By then I knew it was me and Muskie, of course. So we walked into the other bedroom--opened the door, the door was closed--there stood Muskie against the other wall. He turned around and Humphrey said a rather long sentence for Muskie, I guess, he said, "Ed, shake hands with the man who's going to nominate you." And I did, I did nominate Muskie.

JF: That's a great story. From there, in 1969, you chaired the Democratic National Committee. You were still a senator at that point.

FH: That's right. I decided that it was worth doing in order to reform the Democratic Party. The convention in 1968 was terrible. It was a part of the awfulest year, really, of that half-century, probably, 1968, with Robert Kennedy killed, and Martin Luther King killed, and that terrible Chicago Convention with what somebody called a police riot--one commission did. I thought the party ought to be reformed, modernized, made more democratic. That was the main reason why I had Humphrey agree for me to be chairman of the Democratic Party. I had actually campaigned for it then, to get myself elected by the national committee, but Humphrey made the first decision.

JF: When you were overseeing these reforms to the delegate selection process, did you have any thoughts that you might one day run for president, or that you might be the beneficiary of those reforms?

FH: I didn't. I thought at some point I might run for president. You know, I think everybody who goes to the Senate sees presidents up close, and you come to think, "Well, I could probably do that." It's like Jimmy Carter said, he had presidents and presidential candidates--he met them when he was governor--and he thought to himself, "Well, I could do that." Well, I think that's true of every senator, you think, "Well, I could do that." Also, you come to feel, as I eventually did, that you can only do so much as a senator. The great old senator, Richard Russell, of Georgia, said to me one time, "Former governors generally have a hard time here in the Senate, because when you're a governor, you make a decision and execute it. And when you're a senator, you make a decision and talk about it." So you come to feel as I did--a lot of people do--that you'd done about all you can do in the Senate, and that if you were president you could actually get some of these things accomplished.
But at that moment when I was chairman of the party, that wasn't very importantly on my mind. I just wanted to see if we couldn't bring back into the party a bunch of these young people, and anti-war people, and more progressive elements that were very much alienated from the party. And a vehicle for doing that, I thought, was to modernize and democratize and reform the party.

JF: You were at the DNC how long?

FH: Sixty-nine and seventy [1969-70], and then I stepped down, and Larry O'Brien came back in again. We call Larry O'Brien "the once and future chairman." He was the chairman before me, and then for a while he was the chairman after me again.

JF: In 1971, you announced that you would not seek reelection to the Senate, but would instead run for president as a people's candidate. Were you concerned about your reelection to the Senate then?

FH: That wasn't why I ran for president. I just thought that, as I said, in order to really accomplish some things I wanted to do in regard to issues, the presidency was the place to do it. I would have had a tough reelection campaign, but that was nothing new. I'd been elected to start with by 51%, and then I was reelected by 53%, so I'd always had a lot of opposition, and the opposition was intense, especially after my efforts on race and poverty and the Kerner Commission and my efforts eventually against the Vietnam War, and a more national stance I took as chairman of the Democratic National Committee. But I had long since decided I wasn't going to run for reelection. And I decided at first to see what I could do about running for president. As it turned out, I couldn't.

JF: Did you seriously think you had a chance of winning, or was it more to make a statement?

FH: Then, I was hoping to have a chance to win, but I could see very soon that I couldn't. By the time I decided, which was quite late--you need to be running for president full-time for two years, at least, ahead of time--and by the time I decided to run for president for the year 1972, McGovern already had well locked up, I discovered -- but only after I'd sort of gotten into it -- a good portion of the people that I had to have. And so people said, "Well, didn't you run for president in 1972?" Well, the answer is, actually no, I sort of jogged for president in 1972, and for a very short period. I never entered any primary or anything. In 1976 I actually ran for president.

JF: It was reported about your 1971 race that you were sort of forced out of the race after, I think, six weeks or so, after spending $300,000--in a couple of reports I read--that were advanced to you by millionaires. Is that accurate?

FH: I can't believe that we spent that much money. I don't think it's that much money. But I don't really have any....

JF: Three hundred thousand now is nothing.
FH: No, but it was a lot then. I did have one very strong supporter in a Wall Street broker--a personal friend who'd married a woman from Oklahoma--but the amount of money that he put into the campaign would have been only a fraction of that. We spent hardly any money. I mean, it doesn't seem to me now that it was very much money, but I don't remember the amounts.

JF: When you returned to the Senate then....

FH: In 1972, you know, that was prior to the Campaign Reform Act of 1974, so that we didn't--there weren't the kind of reporting requirements and so forth, and that's why I haven't any recollections about the amounts.

JF: It's a long time ago.

FH: Yes. But in one way you could say the reason why I couldn't run was because I couldn't raise the money. But actually that's a symptom of not being able to put together a campaign. If I'd have had a good campaign, and a good campaign was a possibility, I could have put together the money. So it's a kind of a symptom, rather than a cause--the lack of the money.

JF: When you returned to the Senate to finish out your term, I understand that you worked on land reform and strip mining, and those were two things Mo was very involved in then--he was chief sponsor of the Strip Mine Control Bill--and also sponsored bills to establish a national land use policy. Were you at all aware of those issues with him at the time, have any communication with him at the time about those issues?

FH: I think the answer is yes, but my present recollection isn't distinct about any of that. I mean, I was quite aware of his progressive position and leadership on a number of those kinds of issues, but so far as our conversations about it, or collaboration about those issues, I have no present distinct memory.

JF: At about the same time, at around 1971, Mo was very involved in sponsoring the Campaign Finance Reform Bill. Did you have a position on the bill at that time, or was that already after you had left?

FH: Yes, and I held some hearings. I began to hold some hearings as an individual senator, even though the subject matter was not within the jurisdiction of some committee of which I was chair, or even a member. And one of those issues was campaign finance reform. I held hearings on that in the Senate, and Common Cause and others testified. Also, earlier, before Lyndon Johnson left office, he had all the Democratic members of the Senate Finance Committee, of which I was a member, to the White House to discuss public financing of presidential campaigns. And we all agreed to support that idea. The only thing that was debated at the meeting at the White House was whether or not the public financing for presidential campaigns ought to be made available for the 1968 campaign, when Johnson would have been running, or whether it ought to be made applicable only to the campaign
after that. And we decided if it was a good idea, and we thought public financing was a good idea, that it ought to be made effective at once. So the Finance Committee reported out such a bill, and it was passed and became law. However, Robert Kennedy and others who were soon to become candidates themselves, or supporters of other candidates than Lyndon Johnson, decided that that was going to put too much money in Lyndon Johnson's pocket, and so that campaign financing system and that law was repealed in the same year it was passed.

JF: Heavens!

FH: Congress repealed it. We didn't get a campaign financing law, and the Campaign Finance Reform Law generally, again, until 1974.

JF: Interesting. I wasn't aware of that.