JF: This is Tape 45 of the Morris K. Udall Oral History Project. Good afternoon, it's Wednesday, May 17, 2000, and we're at the Doubletree Hotel in Tucson, Arizona, near Reid Park. My name is Julie Ferdon, and I would like to welcome Terry Bracy, Chair of the Udall Foundation, to another in a series of this oral history project.

TB: Happy to be here.

JF: Terry, thanks for coming.

TB: I'm delighted.

JF: Let's start at the beginning. Where and when were you born?

TB: I was born in St. Louis, Missouri, December 17, 1942. I was a war baby, and grew up in that generation. Lived in St. Louis, went to the parochial schools and the Jesuit high school. I was lucky enough to go there, mostly because I was an athlete--and then the Jesuit College, St. Louis University.

JF: Did you have any intent of going into the ministry?

TB: That's the last thing I had in mind. My intention was to get out of there after a lot of years. It was a great place to grow up, but I didn't feel that St. Louis held many opportunities for me, and I was interested in seeing a wider world. I came from a family, however, that didn't have any financial resources to speak of. They were smart people and well-educated, but we were without money for a lot of reasons. So I had to stay at home for college, and work at the same time. So I was sort of a city college kid--that was my orientation in college. And then one day I decided to take a fellowship at the furthest place I got an offer, and that was the University of Arizona.

JF: You applied for a fellowship there?

TB: I did apply. I had a professor who helped me at St. Louis U. and I didn't know what I wanted to do, so I thought, "Graduate school!" And I didn't want to go to law school, so I thought I'd probably be an academic. And I liked government and I liked writing--I was a good writer--but I was also very interested in politics, mostly because I'd become swept up by John Kennedy, I was part of that. And that really....

JF: Were you active in that campaign?

TB: No, I was really almost awakened by that campaign to politics.

JF: What year did you graduate from college?

TB: In 1964.

JF: So that was right during that time.
TB: Yes. Yes, and we had had, as a family, some political activity, but it wasn't the first thing on my mind. I was much more interested in girls and baseball.

JF: Why Arizona?

TB: I'd never been there.

JF: That was the sole reason?

TB: Well, I got an offer from the University of Missouri, and one from University of Illinois, and I think one from Boston College, and one, I think, from the University of Michigan. I don't know, I put them all down, and took out an atlas and looked at a map of the country and took the furthest one away. (chuckles) That was first calculus, but then I was sort of fascinated with the idea of the West. I'd been east, although not overseas. I'd been to New York, I'd been to Washington, I have relative in the East, and I'd traveled all through the Midwest, I knew that, I grew up there.

JF: So it was time to sample the Great Southwest?

TB: It was time to take a look at the West, yes.

JF: So when did you arrive in Tucson?

TB: I arrived on an August day, on a TWA Globemaster. I think it was five stops from St. Louis to Tucson, and arrived sort of late in the evening one evening, to a little tiny terminal, something like I'd never seen before. It looked like more a shack than a terminal. There were a few cabs, but not much. It was just a different place.

JF: Was that 1965?

TB: That was the fall of 1964. I was a graduate student in the Political Science Department, which, unlike many of Arizona's departments in that era, their political science department held some renown in the field. Currin Shields had been, I think, the head of the department at Yale, but for reasons, I think, of health, came out to Arizona and brought some very talented noted academics with him, and recruited some more. So in that department were Charles O. Jones, who is probably thought of as one of the leading historians on Congress, living--went on to many other universities--but Charles O. Jones, Conrad Joyner, Peter Toma, Cliff Lytle, in international relations--people who were substantial figures in their areas. And, of course, there was Shields, who was the ultimate tomistic didactic kind of guy. But I did well. I was used to this treatment, I'd had a lot of Jesuits, and so I sort of excelled in my freshman class, and Shields called me in one day, in the beginning of the second semester. I think I'd ranked first in my class in the first semester, or close to it, whatever. He said, "We have a fellow here"--who was one of the older guys, it may have been John Strayer [phonetic spelling]--but anyway, I can't remember--but one of the older guys had won a very prestigious fellowship, called the American Political Science Association Fellowship, of which there were maybe twenty given nationally, split between top political scientists and very top-level, up-
and-coming executive service people who would go to the Congress and have a chance to spend time doing real work, like writing speeches and so on, in congressional offices, and they usually were the pick of the litter. You know, you got Gerald Ford, who was minority leader; or maybe Adam Clayton Powell, who was chairman of the Education Committee; or maybe you were in Morris Udall's office, who was thought of as one of the brightest.... Anyway, long story short, the university was looking for somebody who wouldn't embarrass them, and who could travel quickly. And that's how I got to Washington.

JF: Had they picked someone before who wasn't able to make it?

TB: He wasn't able to make it because his wife developed one of those kinds of pregnancies where she had to spend weeks in bed, and he didn't want to leave her. So I was his replacement.

JF: Had you heard of Mo Udall before that?

TB: "Heard of" is about it. Of course I'd heard of him, but I really knew who [Stewart Udall was, because he was in Kennedy's cabinet and became quite prominent. So I knew Udall.

JF: So at that point when you were going back for the internship, he was basically Stewart's brother to you?

TB: Yes, he was Stewart's brother to me.

JF: So this was after the first semester of your first year in graduate school?

TB: Right. So this was in January of 1965.

JF: And when did you go back to Washington?

TB: Went back to Washington?

JF: Right, for the internship.

TB: In January. They told me in December, and I showed up in January.

JF: It was a semester?

TB: Yes, I was there for a semester, basically. After doing that, I went back to graduate school, finished my master's degree.

JF: On the internship, when you arrived in Washington, do you have memories of the first time you met Mo?

TB: Well, one thing I remember is--and I told this story at his service in Washington--but I remember sort of as a starry-eyed kid, now very excited at this whole prospect, can't imagine how I
got here. You know, I was in St. Louis six months ago. Then I'm in Tucson, and I think I never want to leave there. You know, I'd died and gone to heaven. And now I'm in Washington! walking in the doors of the Cannon House Office Building. I remember locating his office and walking in there and looking at it, and as many people would--maybe just me--but I was naturally sort of looking around to see where I might fit in this. And the offices were then very small. A congressman had a very small staff, had really two executive-level appointments, and perhaps three secretarial appointments. The congressman's office was one office, and there was a narrow breezeway in some cases, which would include a personal secretary, and then there was another office which had everybody else. So I remember walking in the office, and there is Louise Greenfield at one desk, and Dick Olson at another, and Roger Lewis at another, and a couple of people I don't remember, who were then secretaries. And I thought, "Where do I fit in this?! There's no room!" And I was stunned to find that where my desk was, was inside Mo's office and behind a large bookcase. There was a little cubby hole in the back of the office, with a telephone, and that was my office.

JF: What a great opportunity!

TB: Well, from that position, I could hear every single conversation the man was having. After about three or four days, it was making me very uncomfortable, and I said, "Well, Mr. Udall, I'm a little uncomfortable back there. I can hear every conversation that you have, and I can't help myself." He said, "Well, look, ignore the personal stuff. Just learn from the rest." And I thought to myself "ignore the personal stuff?!" That he could even make such a statement! And you know, it's a funny thing that happened--I learned to ignore his personal conversations, but perk up when he was talking to the Speaker or to his brother about an issue, or plotting strategy, or talking to David Broder, or whatever. And he knew I was there and listening, and wanted me there. And I wasn't the only intern who got this treatment. He really, as you know, he really enjoyed young people, and he particularly enjoyed talented young people, and he'd turn them loose. So I got to write some statements for The Congressional Record, and during the course of that internship, Mo took me everywhere. For example, I was there in the old Rules Committee room, when Wilbur Mills, being treated as a traitor to the South, presented the Medicare Program to Judge Smith, the old baron of the Rules Committee, who used to clog legislation and protect the South. And there at one end of the table was old Judge Smith, kind of snarling, with a spittoon at his side, with a cigar about a foot long, fully burning, listening to Mills; Tip O'Neill next to him, and on down the list, down the row. And Wilbur Mills sitting at the other end of the table, ramrod straight, for forty-five minutes to an hour, addressing the minute details of the Medicare program, without a note! And I was sitting there with Mo, who was there to present a democratic study group amendment. So he was next in line after Mills. And so on his way over there he said, "Hey, Terry, come here. You should see this." And there I sat there and witnessed this history. I saw the South cracking apart in front of me in the House of Representatives. And whether it was to take me over to the White House, or to have me in committee, take me to the floor for a vote, he did all of those things. He created an experience that was indelible, and one which we are now repeating in the Foundation, with our Native American interns. And it's having the same results. It's revolutionizing their lives.

JF: It's a very real eye-opening experience, to go back to Washington.
TB: There's nothing like it, in terms of your education.

JF: Had Mo had interns before you?

TB: I believe there may have been one.

JF: He'd only been in Congress a few terms or something.

TB: Yes, he was a young congressman. Julie, I don't know [the answer to] that question. There may have been one. I was clearly, if I wasn't the first, I was in the first group of Udall interns. And I was there at a time when he lost his family.

JF: I was just going to ask you about that. You were there during....

TB: I was there during that time. I was there, first of all, in, as I said, the first of 1965, for basically that semester. I got to know Pat and some of the family, some of the kids.

JF: What were your impressions of Pat?

TB: Well, she was charming to me. She was very pretty and perky and charming. She was sort of dismissive of the whole congressman thing. But I never really got to know her--I never really got to know her. I mean, I have known Pat for a long time, but I don't really know her. But she liked me, we sort of hit it off. I did some--when they went out of town one time--actually, when they went out of town one time, Mo lent me his car, and I had his car in Washington. I was boppin' around Washington in Mo's Volkswagen, which was great. I had a few dates, and they were in the Bahamas.

JF: With the congressional license plates?

TB: The price was I had to pick him up. That was the trade-off. I had to pick him up, which was an easy and delightful trade-off to make. We clicked. And I don't know, we clicked in part because he lost his kids right after that. I went back to work for him full-time at that time, in 1966. The kids moved back to Tucson with Pat, and it was a very unhappy and angry and....

JF: How did Mo take that?

TB: Quietly and painfully.

JF: Was it totally out of the blue to him?

TB: No.

JF: Something he'd anticipated?

TB: No, I don't think it was totally out of the blue. I think Mo's relationships with women have
been complicated. But you know, with Mo, I think I was pretty close to Mo, and Mo would even ask me sometimes about personal relationships, relating to his wives. But I never offered any opinion about that, or talked about it, unless he talked about it. And I asked him to do the same with me. (chuckles) And so we just didn't bother each other about prying. You know?

JF: It must have been of some comfort to have you there. What was his relationship with the rest of his staff as you observed it then, with Roger Lewis....

TB: Well, yes, it was good--very good. Roger was sort of the guy who organized everything, and Dick Olson was the creative guy, the writer, and they were both very good, both extremely talented people. Dick and Mo would clash from time to time. There was kind of an ego clash, I think, more than anything else. And Dick contributed heavily to Mo's early writing. But it often became sort of a competition between the two of them in the production of the newsletter. Dick drove Mo crazy because he's a procrastinator. He's a typical newspaper guy. But boy, when he got down to write, he could write, he did it. But Mo had a touch and a genius in his written word, and a way of injecting and massaging language, which may have been even better than Dick's. And so they'd go back and forth. So that was Dick's role, basically, and Mo was always mad at him because the newsletter draft was always late. Mo's newsletters were a big part of his self-expression, and a big part of his ego. He loved to write, and he was good at it.

Roger is a guy, always hard to kind of figure out. He was a very quiet man. The absence of ego was even quite unusual, how little ego Roger seemed to have. I'm not sure I ever understood him, but I always liked him.

JF: Who was Mo's personal secretary then?

TB: Louise Greenfield.

JF: What was she like?

TB: Louise is wonderful. Louise was very capable, very charming. A little wild, maybe, after hours. She had come to Washington from Idaho, and then, like most of us, connected with some.... I don't know which senator or whatever, but in any event, the marriage broke up and she was left there with a couple of kids, and went to work as a personal secretary. She was a very good secretary. I remember in 1965, meeting her and getting to know her and like her a lot. I even did a little of the night life with her. But I remember that she ran into a big financial bind, and Mo cosigned a note to buy her house, which I thought was a pretty nice thing for a guy to do.

JF: Certainly is. How long did she end up working for him, do you recall? We’re getting ahead of ourselves here a little bit.

TB: Well, I think that she worked for him, and then there was—they didn't really settle on anybody until they found Bonnie Kell.

JF: Do you remember any particular legislation that you worked on during that internship? Or was
it just....

TB: Yes. I worked on--it was like Stewart was talking today--Mo, that January, was leading a rebellion of his own in the Committee on Post Office and Civil Service, run by the courtly presence of one Tom Murray of Tennessee, who had only one problem as a chairman--he never called meetings. And Mo was concerned that the postal system was falling apart, was lost in nepotism and corruption, and was about to become a huge embarrassment. And since he was on the committee--not his first choice, incidentally, to be on the post office committee. It was a bad appointment, caused by his election in a special election, coming in late after everybody'd been assigned seats, so he got this lousy committee. But, you know, Mo being Mo, you're going to figure out how to use whatever you've got, so Mo decided that they needed to get a grip on the salaries. It had the civil service salary system in it, and it had the federal judge's pay system in it. It had the congressional pay system in it. And one of the things that Mo saw was that there was corruption everywhere, cash was all around, and the members of Congress, because they made nothing for salaries--$22,000 or something--that they.... In the back door they had law firms, so the special interests would go hire the law firm of the Honorable Emmanuel Celler of New York--very dignified chairman of the Judiciary Committee--and it may not win the case for them, but it certainly gave them access. So there were a lot of big ethics issues floating around at the time--not to speak of the oil industry and how it ran the southern patch.

So Mo saw reform of the salary system, giving people a decent enough wage that they don't need to do those things; and then as part of that, putting down ethics restrictions is the way to go. He eventually achieved that over the years, but clearly nothing was going to happen as long as Tom Murray ruled the Post Office and Civil Service Committee. So Mo organized, that winter, a revolution among the members--Arnold Olson of Montana, Thaddeus Dulski of New York State--put together a coalition of people, divided up the spoils, and took over the committee. And I worked on that all January.

JF: Was this his first major sort of foray into fighting the seniority system?

TB: I think it was. And it was an important one, and it was patterned, to some degree, after the Education and Labor Committee fight that Stewart led in 1958. And in a sense, he was doing what Stewart had already done once before. And it became, again, another step forward for the reformers, and it put fuel on their fire.

JF: It was a similar situation with Stewart, wasn't it?

TB: Very.

JF: They wouldn't call meetings.

TB: Couldn't get a meeting! The committee had no rules. What were the rules of the committee? There were none! The rules of the committee were, call up the chairman's office and see if you can get an appointment. That was the rule.
JF: So you then went back at the end the internship?

TB: Yes, I went back to Arizona in the fall.

JF: So you worked in Washington through the summer?

TB: Right. This also happened to be a point in my life when I became quite ill, and almost deathly ill—probably living too much of the high life and staying out—like a virus or something, and my pancreas went into spasm, and I developed what they first thought was kind of a common case of pancreatitis, but it turned out to be something considerably worse. So my life, from the time I was in maybe my fourth month with Udall in Washington, I found myself in an emergency room at Georgetown Hospital, and then hospitalized, just then for like a week or so—but sick, real sick, for the next two years. But, you know, I came back here and did finish my master's degree in 1965, I guess. No, 1966. Yes.

JF: When you were in graduate school, is that where you met John Gabusi?

TB: I did. I met John there. I met my wife there, Nancy. I met Nancy here. She was an undergraduate at the U. of A. She came out to marry a cowboy and found me! What a mistake, huh? And John Gabusi was a very close friend of mine in graduate school, as was Earl DeBerg. The three of us hung around together. Earl's been a very successful pollster in Phoenix. I still count them among my very close friends.

JF: So your relationship with him—you were more than just passing acquaintances.

TB: Oh, absolutely. In fact, when an opening, a few years later, appeared, Mo got a subcommittee and wanted to take on postal reform, and was thinking about hiring a new staff person, I recommended John Gabusi, and he hired him.

JF: You mentioned Mo loaning you his car. John gave me some story about him loaning you his car. Is that.... (chuckles)

TB: Now, wait! This is Udall history. This isn't mine! I had a few wild oats in my younger years. Luckily, I survived them, even if John's car didn't.

JF: (laughs) I won't follow up on that. What did you do after graduate school? That was a master's degree that you got?

TB: Right. Well, actually, I continued for a few months doing what I was already doing while in graduate school, although, again, I was fighting a pretty bad illness, and I was at one time, I think, thirty days in Tucson Medical Center on I.V.'s and the whole deal. But when I was well enough, I finished my master's degree, and I was hired by KVOA television to cover politics during that election year. They had decided to do expanded political coverage, and they needed somebody who understood it, and they thought maybe they could teach to be at least respectable on television. And they went to the Political Science Department and I was recommended. So I had kind of a night job
doing the news as a reporter—not on-camera anchor, but I did stand-up reports, and I was a reporter. And I also had a nightly show that I shared with another guy. We called it "See How They Run," and I did generally arrogant interviews with politicians every night.

JF: This was just during one campaign?

TB: Right. Among those I interviewed was Mo Udall, and Barry Goldwater, and Jack Williams who was then running for governor, and stuff like that. So I got extended for a few months, but that was going to wear out. I actually asked Dick Olson if he thought there was any chance that there'd be a spot for me back there, and he said that they'd all been very impressed with my work, and Mo liked my writing, and he thought there was a spot going to be opening up, and encouraged me, without being 100% sure, to come back. So I didn't exactly tell Nancy I didn't have a job. And we drove across the country and I knew I didn't really have a job, but I thought I did. And Nancy thought for sure I had a job. I remember we sort of did the country and we stopped in St. Louis and saw friends and family, and actually stopped up in Detroit and saw her family and brothers. And then on the way down to Washington, [we] got caught in an incredible snowstorm in the Pennsylvania mountains and were snowed-in for two days. When we got there, and we were snowed in--luckily we had a hotel room--I remember calling Dick Olson from a pay phone that next morning and saying, "Hey, Dick, this is Terry Bracy [and so on and so forth]. I just want you to know I'll be there tomorrow morning." He said, "Oh. Well, why don't you come on by?" "Well, yeah," I said, "but, I mean, to work, right?" And he said, "Well, the job that we thought we had didn't really open. But we'll figure somethin' out." I didn't tell Nancy about that one. And I showed up the next morning....

JF: Were you and Nancy married at this point?

TB: Yes, just married.

JF: When did you get married?

TB: In 1966, in the summer, August.

JF: That's when you were at KVOA?

TB: Yes.

JF: Is that where you met Chris Helms?

TB: Absolutely! He was kind of my boss. He was a senior reporter there. He taught me how to edit sound on film, taught me how to use an Auricon camera. Wonderful guy, very funny. I loved him. Yes, that's where I met Chris.

JF: Okay. So you'd just arrived in Washington, again, without a job, which you thought maybe you had.
TB: And anyway, to make a long story short, they brokered together this thing where they used my writing ability and so on, and I worked doing sort of press and writing for five congressmen, and they all paid me a little out of their staff. And the congressmen were Mo Udall; Brock Adams of Washington state, who went on to be Transportation secretary, and a senator, and the first Budget chairman; Henry Reuss of Wisconsin, who for many years was the famous chairman of the House Banking Committee; Bill Hungate of Missouri, who became famous during the Watergate hearings and stuff, and became a noted federal judge; and others on and off, but those were the core people. So I was shared for about a year. Then when the opening did occur, Mo asked me to work full-time on his staff, and I did. And the day after, Brock Adams offered me the job of being his administrative assistant for a lot more money, and Nancy said, "You're crazy!"

JF: The day after Mo offered you the job?

TB: Yes--and I'd accepted it.

JF: What was the position for Mo?

TB: It was kind of the third executive in the office.

JF: Did they have legislative assistants at that time?

TB: Yes, Dick's title was legislative assistant, and Roger's title was administrative assistant, and my title was staff assistant--I think, I'm not sure. Eventually they made me a press secretary, too, at one point. I did all kinds of things there. I answered his mail, mostly, in the beginning. I got very good at it. I was a good writer by nature, and I could pick up his idiom quickly. I did so well that he had me responding to his mother on occasion.

JF: Now, be honest, did you at least for a short time have any regrets going with him and not Brock Adams?

TB: Never. No, I was swept up by Mo Udall. Mo Udall was the most impressive man I've ever met. He remains that. This was a guy.... See, I was an athlete, and he was a terrific athlete. I mean, he had been a really big-time athlete. And he flew his own airplane. He didn't depend on a lot of people, he could do his own writing, his mind was just beyond anything I could remember. I mean, his memory! He was so talented. I thought, "Gosh!" I mean, he was like a teacher, and he liked to teach. So I was totally swept up by Mo Udall--totally. Not that I didn't like Brock--and we're still very close friends--and others--but there was never any question in my mind from the day I met him, really--from the day I met him--I think it was set.

JF: That you'd be going back there.

TB: Yes.

JF: What were some of the earlier projects that you worked on?
TB: Oh, well, they used me to help figure out how to get the best P.R. for the Central Arizona Project. I knew how to operate a radio system in that era where people didn't. That was the new technology. You could get a recorder-coupler set to a tape recorder, and you could interview a congressman and feed it to all the radio stations in the district, and basically be on the radio all week. So I would do things like that. I got to be a master at that. All my clients dominated their radio. But I also did, for the Central Arizona Project Association, some work, most of which had to do with figuring out how to make the best use of Senator Hayden, who was not in his best years at that point. So I got pretty good at getting a good sentence out of Senator Hayden.

JF: Give me an idea of timing here. When you came back and started working for Mo and Brock Adams and the others, and then later went to work for Mo, how long a period of time was it that you worked for . . . .

TB: I think I did that thing in 1966 and most of 1967. I think I went to work for Mo late in 1967, would be my guess. Maybe it was 1968. I'd have to look at the . . . . But it was all during that period. So that's how I got my humble start.

JF: Now, 1968 is when Mo challenged House Speaker John McCormick for the speakership, sort of unheard of thing at that time. Were you involved in that?

TB: Tangentially, yes--more as a rooter than as a participant, although I was apprised of everything that was going on, and I was offering ideas here and there and so on. Mo mostly treated this as a member-to-member thing. I'm not sure at that point in my development I had much to offer in terms of wisdom, about the House. That certainly wouldn't be true now--but then it was. But I was around, and it was exciting, and it was clear that he was becoming somebody Big Time.

JF: Were Roger and Dick behind him doing that, or were they more spectators as well?

TB: I put them a little further up the food chain than I was, but still largely it was an operation that Mo ran with a committee of colleagues really led by Brock Adams--young rebels who really wanted to do the job.

JF: Who were considered the "young rebels" then?

TB: Mo Udall. But he was considered more moderate, and somebody that the southerners could talk to. But Don Frasier. The people who hung around the DSG: Frank Thompson, the Democratic Study Group crowd. Dick Bolling was kind of the architect and strategist of that group. He was a brilliant guy.

JF: And where was he from?

TB: Missouri--Kansas City. Wrote a great book called House Out of Order. I recommend it to everybody. It really paints a picture of the House of Representatives in that era. And you had to understand that Carl Vincent was the chairman of the House Armed Services Committee. In 1963, if you were a young member of the Armed Services Committee, and if you wished to be recognized in
committee, you would first line up at his personal office before the committee session, and get his permission. That's how it all operated.

JF: I can see where that might have driven Mo a little crazy.

[END TAPE 45, SIDE A; BEGIN SIDE B]