Interview

with

Mary Winton Hughes

University Libraries
University of South Carolina
Interviewer: 
Herbert J. Hartsook

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Synopsis: 
Hughes’ career as a Senate staff member in the office of Fritz Hollings.

Transcriber: 
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[Begin Tape 1, Side One]

**Hartsook:** The first thing I'd like you to talk about is your background--where you were born, your parents' education and occupation, and where you were educated.

**Hughes:** I was born in Abbeville. My father was a dentist and my mother was a schoolteacher. He went to Emory. She was a graduate of Winthrop. I went to Abbeville High School, public schools in Abbeville, and then to the University of South Carolina. While I was at the University of South Carolina, when I was a senior, a good family friend was a cousin of the man who was the chief highway engineer at the time and she got me a job there. I worked part-time there until I finished. I was a semester late finishing Carolina because I didn't complete a typing course, which I think is interesting since that's what I do for a living now. When I was a senior in college is when I met the Hollingses, when he was governor. They helped me get a job with Congressman Mendel Rivers in Charleston. I went down there in March of Sixty-three and came to Washington with him in January of Sixy-five to stay a month and I'm still here. I went to work for Senator Hollings in November of Sixty-nine.

**Hartsook:** How did you happen to meet--you say you met him when you were in high school...?

**Hughes:** No, when I was in college. His first wife's first cousin transferred to Carolina and was a sorority sister of mine, was a KD. She transferred from Randolph Macon. We got to be good friends and one day she said to me--“I know where we can get a free lunch if you know somebody who has a car.” I said “I've got a car. Where's the lunch?” She said “At the governor's mansion.” So, we just got to be friends and have been ever since.

**Hartsook:** Was he an easy person to get to know?

**Hughes:** No. I was scared of him because he was always in a hurry and always busy. But, he was a very pleasant person. His first wife was a good friend and she, actually, is the one who called me and said “Mendel Rivers needs a secretary. Can you come down here and interview
with him?” And I said “Yep.” So, I did and two weeks later I started to work for him. Then, when I came here, Karen [Kollmansperger] was leaving to go back to Tennessee to work on a gubernatorial campaign and Senator Hollings asked me didn't I want to take that job. I said “Yes I do. Thank you very much.” So, I came over and started the first of November, which was a year before Mr. Rivers died.

Hartsook: How big a staff was it in Sixty-nine? Let me put it to you a different way. Did it feel like a family or did it feel like a bureaucracy?

Hughes: Oh, no. It felt like a family. But it still does. It's larger but it still does. We had one legislative assistant then and, I guess, one legislative secretary and that was it. Now, with four or five of them, we can't keep up with all the mail and work.

Hartsook: Was Michael Joy the AA [Administrative Assistant] at that time?

Hughes: Yes.

Hartsook: Can you give me a character sketch for him?

Hughes: Brilliant, who got bored.

Hartsook: Hard to imagine.

Hughes: Yes. But, when Senator Hollings was first elected, Mike was legislative assistant. He came up right out of college and was just, I think, really a genius. Everybody said he was the best vote-counter around. Then, that was important. You needed to know those things. Then, two years later he was made AA when Crawford Cook left. I think Michael had the need to be more than he'd been as legislative assistant and, therefore, he really was kind of bored. Crawford had done a lot of political stuff in his first two years, but Senator Hollings had just been re-elected for six years then and there wasn't a whole lot of that to do. I think Mike really did just get bored.
Hartsook: You said that vote counting was important then as though it's less so now.

Hughes: I think it's almost more given now. I don't know why I say that because I'm not really into legislation, but how people are going to vote is more predictable now.

Hartsook: And there's certainly a lot more people formally counting votes.

Hughes: Right.

Hartsook: What were your original duties and how has your role evolved over time?

Hughes: My original duty was a military case worker. That was obviously at the height of Vietnam, so I dealt with a lot of people who for legitimate or not so legitimate reasons did not want to go to Vietnam or wanted to be transferred here, there, and yonder, dealing with families when somebody was injured. People would call me at home at night. One of my favorite stories was John Jenrette was in the state legislature then, but he was already claiming to run for Congress. He rang me up at home one Saturday and said somebody was being shipped out the next day and they'd just gotten orders and they had all sorts of family problems. You'd call and talk to the duty officer and the stories you got like that weren't always totally factual. I'm not blaming that on John Jenrette, but people would call you and tell you things that were a lot more drastic than they actually were, sounded a lot more drastic.

Hartsook: How long would you work on a typical workday?

Hughes: Shorter than I do now. Probably 9:00 to 6:00. Some days longer because quite often three of us rode together and we would give the senator a ride home. That made the day considerably longer. But, 6:00 was pretty standard.

Hartsook: Did you know most of the other people working for the other members of the delegation?
Hughes: I was going to say I knew more of them then than I do now, but that's not really true. I think I probably did though. Everybody's staff was smaller and there was probably more camaraderie.

Hartsook: I know the senator said in one of the interviews that he feels like he doesn't know some members of the delegation nearly as well as he used to, that there used to be more opportunities for them to meet as a delegation or at functions. I'm sure that was even more so, too, because they would have all been members of the same party.

Hughes: Yes. And, as I said the staffs were smaller and we did more things. Now, when you are invited to a reception--I think this is not true for the younger ones--there are not many of them that you want to go to anymore. When you finally get out of here, you are just so tired and want to go home. There are several that there are a lot of people from South Carolina. You enjoy going to those. There's an association for everything in this city and every association has at least one or two members from South Carolina. That association has a reception and they would like somebody to come and you could go to six or eight things a night. He [Senator Hollings] could go to ten or twelve. You just can't physically do that. And I don't know that people will ever understand that. People think--“Well, gosh, I just come to Washington once a year. It looks like the senators could come to the reception.” But, you just can't.

Hartsook: How do you pick and choose what you go to?

Hughes: The people I know and the size of the group. If it's strictly a South Carolina thing I try to go to all of those. If it's not, I generally don't go.

Hartsook: How about the senator?

Hughes: Close to the same thing.

Hartsook: How many will he go to in a week?
Hughes: Not a whole lot. Every year the electric co-ops come up and have a big reception. They bring eighty or ninety people and he always goes to that. The bankers do the same thing. The chamber of commerce used to do that. Now they do something in the state. Those kinds of things he goes to all of them, but the rest of them, unless there's a sizable South Carolina contingent, he generally does not go.

Hartsook: In the late Sixties and early Seventies would you have gone often?

Hughes: Oh yes. I thought it was a wonderful, wonderful treat to get invited to a reception. I know that age has a lot to do with that, but I don't know that the young people are crazy about that now. There weren't nearly as many receptions then as there are now. I think it's just been overdone.

Hartsook: Do you remember any particular meeting, meeting somebody you thought you'd never meet or somebody that surprised you in the impression that they made?

Hughes: The first person that I met when I came to Washington that surprised me, this was when I was working for Mendel Rivers, was Billy Graham. It was the day of Lyndon Johnson's inauguration. He came in and I described him later to somebody and didn't realize how foolish this sounded and said he was really nice and was the kind of person you'd invite to your cocktail party because he was very pleasant. I went to something recently and met Bea Arthur, this is how my tastes have changed, and thought that was exciting. I used to love to go the big Democratic dinners because you saw all the politicians and whatever. That hasn't been too much fun for the last twelve years, but I think it would be more fun now.

Hartsook: What was the senator like to work with early on, and has he changed much over the years?

Hughes: I can't say that he's changed much, maybe a little shorter of temper. He has always been exceedingly demanding, but he never demanded more, that sounds trite, more of anybody than he demanded of himself. He's a workaholic. I always said he had that stubborn German
work ethic that if he goes home before 7:30 at night he feels like he really hasn't put in a hard day. He is not long of patience and he certainly doesn't suffer fools well, and never has. But, other than maybe being a little shorter of patience, I don't know that it's any different other than just the volume of the work, which has nothing to do with him.

Hartsook: How does he attract good people and then keep them for such long periods of time?

Hughes: I can only speak for myself and, just from talking to other staff people, I think everybody's just really impressed with his ability and how smart he is and that it's just almost an honor to work for him.

Hartsook: Is he the kind of person to pat people on the back when they do a good job or does he just assume that they'll do a good job?

Hughes: He assumes that they'll do a good job but quite often he remembers to say thank you and say you do a good job. But, he expects and assumes that you'll do a good job and you just do. I guess he does get to the point where he takes it for granted, but he's pretty good. People know when he appreciates things.

Hartsook: How are people hired? Through word of mouth or...?

Hughes: Some [of] that. People just kind of hitting at the right time and a lot of it I really can't answer because people sometimes are here and I never knew they were being hired. Troy, who's been a legislative correspondent, just came in; she and Eddie Moore both came in looking for jobs and volunteered for a while. Space was made for them. Since we haven't had to have a whole lot of turnover, I don't know that there's any direct answer to that.

Hartsook: But isn't that really uncommon to have such a low rate of turnover?

Hughes: I think it probably is. I don't know that it is in the South Carolina delegation necessarily. I think a lot of young people come to work for Senator Thurmond and work a couple
of years, but I think that's part of the plan when they're hired. We really do have people that have probably been here longer than anybody else.

Hartsook: How have your duties changed since you came on staff?

Hughes: I started off doing military casework and Betty Bargman was the senator's secretary then. She left and went back to South Carolina and a girl who had been hired when he was elected from Columbia, whose name is Donna Hall, became his secretary. About a year later she got married, so I just kind of fell into it. At that point, being his secretary meant doing everything. Three of us now divide that. There's no way one person could do everything. Betty [Pittleman] does his personal finances. I basically just keep up with his schedule and invitations. Some days we get as many as fifty a day, plus the telephone calls.

Hartsook: How many phone calls are common right now?

Hughes: Just to me, invitations and appointments, I would guess a minimum of fifty. Some of those are repeat things, they want an appointment and they call back the next day to see if you've gotten [an] answer or wanting to speak. They might call you four times before I finally get an answer for them. He likes to make the decisions on those, particularly things he does in the state. There are an awful lot of things that come in here that I know that he's not going to do that have nothing to do with South Carolina and I'll just decline them. But, that takes time.

Back to how we have divvied it up, Karen does office dictation. That keeps her plenty busy because he probably sees more of his mail and answers it personally than a lot of senators, which sometimes bogs him down a little bit. But, he thinks that gives him a better picture and I think it probably does. When I first came up here, members of Congress used to sign all their mail and used to read every piece of mail that went out of the office and read everything that came in. You couldn't do that now. It takes two people just to open it, working all day long. They answer the phone and open the mail and deliver it in bins like that.

Hartsook: I know one of the historians who's worked at the library came to me with a question and I had no clue. It was about the lynching law and I told him just to write and see what kind of
response he gets. He got a letter back within a week. It was short, half a page, but it was very detailed and it sounded like him [Hollings]. I take it Karen doesn't have to do a lot of editing.

Hughes: She doesn't do much because that makes it very obvious. When we talk about transcribing his stuff, when he talks it sounds wonderful, but when you put it on paper it quite often is not, it's train-of-consciousness kind of thing and the sentences are not always perfect [Laughter]. But, she doesn't do a whole lot and most of his are short and to the point.

Hartsook: That must be the law background. He refers to that a good bit, doesn't he, his training in the law?

Hughes: Yes.

Hartsook: What kind of changes besides growth have you witnessed in the office over the years? Do you have contact with more people now than you would have in the less busy time, or less contact?

Hughes: You mean people in the office?

Hartsook: People in the office, people in other offices, people in the delegation offices.

Hughes: Less contact with people in other offices and, I guess, less contact with people in the delegation office, because everybody is a little more into doing their own thing. I say that, I don't know that in Sixty-nine or Seventy that we had a whole lot of contact between offices. Probably we did but I don't remember it that much.

Hartsook: As the appointments secretary, do you basically craft his schedule for the day?

Hughes: Yes, I do. Having been with him so long, I know when he likes to have appointments, approximately how much time to allow, and I quite often mess up on that, and who are his friends here in this city. The only South Carolinians I don't set up are those who just have
to have a morning appointment and can't do it any other time, because he generally has committee meetings in the morning. I'll just set them up with staff. When you say craft his schedule, I do that but he quite often changes it.

**Hartsook:** Does Peatsy [Mrs. Hollings] also have a good bit of input into the schedule or is it really him?

**Hughes:** Not really other than there's some things at night she likes to do. He's never been a real social animal. His preference would always be to go home. Doing the party circuit doesn't do a thing for him for lots of reasons. Number one, he's always liked to watch his diet because he's a health freak and he'd just rather go home and read, stay ahead of the game. But, there are a lot of things that she's involved in that they do and he generally has a good time, I think, after he goes. So, she has input that way as to what he's going to do. As far as during the day, she doesn't.

**Hartsook:** Can you tell me what a typical day is like for you? What time you get up, what time you get here, what's the first thing you do?

**Hughes:** I get up somewhere between 7:15 and 7:30. I get here by 9:00 most days. The first thing I'd like to do is get everything on my desk organized, but generally the phone starts ringing two minutes after I walk in. I have a cup of coffee and get ready for the day ahead. A lot of times when he goes over invitations and stuff, he does it in the late afternoon so I can start answering those the next day. Even with the best laid plans, you can start doing something and the phone rings, and the phone rings and the phone rings and the phone rings, and two hours later you still haven't gotten to the thing you started with at 9:15.

**Hartsook:** How do you actually do his schedule? When he gets into the car in the morning does he have a daily schedule?

**Hughes:** Yes. I do it the night before and give it to him and give everybody in the office a copy so they will know who he's seeing. A lot people, like if Joe Jones is coming in Laura may
know she's worked with him on some project that the senator may need to know about before the guy comes in. Everybody's very good about that input, because he couldn't possibly know everything that everybody in the office is doing. I do a weekly schedule that gives him an outline of everything that I've put on the schedule for the week--committee hearings, luncheons. At this time of the year, one of my biggest jobs is getting a tennis game every morning because he plays tennis at a quarter of seven five days a week for an hour. I do a weekly schedule that I give him and then every day I do just a one day schedule.

Hartsook: And you usually meet with him in the afternoon to go over...?

Hughes: No. I just give it to him and if he has any complaints about any of it, then that's my first order of business the next morning, rearranging things. But, normally he doesn't. Some days, he just doesn't want to sit down and meet and greet. He accuses me of going out and calling people in [Laughter]. He's a very single-minded individual and when he has his mind on the budget or whatever, he doesn't like to stop and just chit-chat. He was on the Intelligence Committee and they had briefings all the time and he'd just miss people. But, the staff was very good about picking up the slack.

Hartsook: What happens when he gets sick? Does he get sick?

Hughes: No.

Hartsook: So he rarely misses a day?

Hughes: I cannot remember since I've worked for him, other than when he had the surgery this year, him being out. I can't ever remember a day in Washington where he has not come to work because he's sick. I can remember him coming with an upset stomach or a bad cold or whatever, but missing a day here, he's just never done it. He had an appendectomy the first year he was here, an emergency...

[End of Tape One, Side One, Begin Side Two]
Hartsook: I'm just going to throw out some more names for character sketches. We mentioned Betty Bargman who I think currently is with John West. Can you tell me what she's like?

Hughes: Fantastic. She had worked for the senator when he was lieutenant governor and governor. Then, when he went out of office as governor, she went to Georgia and worked for Carl Sanders when he was home. She came up here for a couple of years--well, no I guess it was longer than that because she was still working for him when I came over here. But, she decided she wanted to go back to South Carolina and she went back about the time John West was elected governor and she worked for him. Then when he went out of office, she went to work for Jim Waddell. I guess it was a committee job. Betty's delightful. She is fun. She's good. We always teased her about being an accident waiting to happen, but a very pleasant person to work with.

Hartsook: What qualities do you need to be good at this?

Hughes: I think a good disposition and a lot of patience.

Hartsook: Do you have to have good diplomatic skills?

Hughes: I think they help. I don't know that everybody has them. Being polite is the most important thing, but I think that's important in any job. I don't think you have to be a diplomat, but some are better than others. Just be nice.

Hartsook: How about Michael Copps?

Hughes: Mike was very bright. He was hired as a speech writer. He'd been a professor in New Orleans and he became AA when Mike Joy went up to the Budget Committee. He was very good. The senator probably made him a little more nervous than he did....Mike tried to maybe to please him a little too much. You didn't want anything to go wrong and things always are going to
go wrong. Mike was excellent, very good, and very dedicated. All the AA's we've had have been slightly different, which is interesting. None of them were alike, but I guess no two people are alike. Mike and Ashley were totally different. Mike and Mike Joy were just a hundred degrees apart.

Hartsook: In what way?

Hughes: Their personality, the way they did things. Mike Joy is, as I say, very bright, but he is a B.S. artist of the first degree and Mike Copps has none of that. He's equally as bright but in a totally different way.

Hartsook: Joy, he would never try to put something past the senator, though, I take it.

Hughes: No. I don't think so at all. He might now. He wouldn't have then. He's more of a talker now than he used to be at that time. Mike Joy could be one of the good old boys, which Senator Hollings certainly isn't, doesn't ever come across that way. And Mike Copps could never be one of the good old boys, if you know what I mean.

Hartsook: Is Copps professorial?

Hughes: Yes.

Hartsook: He seems very well liked by everyone I've talked to.

Hughes: He is. I think everybody who's worked here has been well-liked and still is. Off the top of my head I can't think of anybody that I'm delighted they're gone.

Hartsook: How about Ralph Everett?

Hughes: Ralph was wonderful. He graduated from Duke Law School and had worked for the attorney general in North Carolina. The senator was looking for another lawyer and Ralph
came to work for us. He started doing project work and then moved into the legislative stuff.

**Hartsook:** What's project work?

**Hughes:** Loans and grants, stuff like that. They divide the legislative work by committees in Congress and he handled all the legislation that was handled by the Commerce Committee as well as several other things. So, when the senator became ranking member he was the logical one to go there and he did a fantastic job on the Commerce Committee. He's probably one of the most well-liked staff people that's ever worked up here.

**Hartsook:** What is he doing now?

**Hughes:** He's practicing law.

**Hartsook:** In South Carolina?

**Hughes:** No. Up here.

**Hartsook:** Douglas Frederick Dent?

**Hughes:** He was one of the first. Doug came up here with the senator. He was involved in his first campaign. I cannot tell you now when he left.

**Hartsook:** I know he was here at least through Seventy-one and that his title was, at one time, special assistant, which...?

**Hughes:** I think he did the loans and grants projects and stuff like that. He left to go back to law school and I think he worked for us part-time in the state while he was in law school. But, I think if you asked him he would still say that he works for Senator Hollings. He's one of those people that if we need something in Greenville he's perfectly willing to go right out and do it. He's set up things for us in the campaign. When the senator was first elected he hired one person
who had been in Washington and that was Karen. Everybody else came up from the state, was young and enthusiastic, and didn’t know their head from a hole in the ground about Washington, but managed to find out very quickly. It was kind of unheard of to have a green staff, but he did it and they did it, and did it well. I don't know that anybody does that anymore. Everybody hires people who have some Washington experience.

Hartsook: Do you think the senator's detail orientation helped with the green staff?

Hughes: Probably. Yeah, and I think the staff that he brought, they were very interested in doing a good job and they thought they were working for a brilliant guy who was going to make a name for himself. That's when Mike Joy was so great. He probably knew every Democratic legislative assistant within two months and had a good working relationship with them. And Crawford just knew everybody.

Hartsook: Michael Fernandez?

Hughes: He was the press secretary. He was very good, had a lot of good political instinct. He managed to get us through the problems that arose in the presidential [campaign]. He was always pleasant and never lost his cool. I lose my temper occasionally and stomp around. Karen does, everybody does. Mike Fernandez never, ever, did.

Hartsook: Why did he leave?

Hughes: He got a fine job with Eastman Kodak in Rochester, New York. He's an elected member of the school board there now. He and his wife were down for the inauguration.

Hartsook: So you really keep track of all these folks. Does the senator as well?

Hughes: Yes.

Hartsook: How about Rita Liddy [Peatsy Hollings]?
Hughes: She was the hardest working member of the staff when she was here. She was the receptionist, but back then the receptionist answered the phone, opened the mail, did everything. Now, I don't know whether you've been in here and watched Joanie, but there's no way [someone] could do all of that. Plus, Peatsy was big in reading things and kind of briefing the senator on stuff. We've got agriculture bulletins and she sent those out to everybody. She and I lived together. A lot of her school teacher business came out when she was here. She was always educating people. She was good.

Hartsook: How did she happen to come on staff and leave school teaching?

Hughes: She'd always been very active in the Young Democrats in Charleston, in the Charleston County Democratic Party. Her mother was the original ‘Yellow Dog’ Democrat. She worked in his campaign and he offered her a job up here and she took it. I'll never forget, he got a letter from her class saying--“Dear Senator Hollings, you said in your campaign that you were all for education. If so, why did you take Miss Liddy away?” [Laughter] And he was about ready to send her back to Charleston after that.

Hartsook: Was that the campaign where she appeared in one of his spots?

Hughes: Yes.

Hartsook: Was she already on staff?

Hughes: No. She was just working in the campaign. She was still teaching school. He was elected in November and was sworn in two days later. She came up, I think, in December. I was living with a girl from Tennessee and she moved in with us. We lived together until they got married.

Hartsook: She has wonderful diplomatic skills.
Hughes:  I think that goes back to the school teacher in her.  She was on a panel during the campaign this year at the University, at the law school.  It was a group of service organizations that women were involved in that had put it on.  She was there representing the senator and there were a couple of young people who were heckling her, asking obnoxious questions that had nothing to do with the subject, but I think she handled them beautifully.  She does that well.

Hartsook:  Does she have a staff?

Hughes:  No.  Betty does a lot of work for her.  She tries to keep up with her schedule or, if she's involved in Ford's Theater or involved in raising money for the heart fund or something, Betty helps her.  But, that's it.

Hartsook:  So, basically, she does her own scheduling and things like that?

Hughes:  She makes her own decisions.  As I say, Betty keeps up with her stuff, but she writes her own notes.  She's a prolific writer and she fusses at all of us if thank you notes are not done immediately from him and whatever.  She's excellent at that.

Hartsook:  Is she a real visible presence here in the office?

Hughes:  Yes, she comes in at least every Tuesday because the ladies of the Senate meet for the Red Cross meeting.  Two or three times a week, maybe for an hour at a time.  She's not here all day every day, but she is quite often.  Probably less than some, more than some.  She does have a desk back there.

Hartsook:  I heard the senator in an interview once some years ago say that she drove him in every morning and that they would talk at length on the drives in.

Hughes:  She used to.  She doesn't do that anymore because she goes to exercise class at 8:30.  So, somebody in the office picks him up and brings him in, because they only have one car here.  That is the only thing I would criticize about him is his driving.  I wouldn't want to ride
with him in Washington. He's very impatient.

Hartsook: Does he drive very much?

Hughes: No, he doesn't. We try to avoid that if we can.

Hartsook: Who usually picks him up?

Hughes: Eric Mann picks him up some. I pick him up some. Andy Brack picks him up some. James Assey picks him up some.

Hartsook: This is after his tennis game?

Hughes: Yes. Generally about 8:30. Then, sometimes, she comes in and gets him at night or one of us takes him home.

Hartsook: What does he do on the drive? Does he bring work or talk about...?

Hughes: At night he talks because he can't read. When he can read he reads the paper or *Time* magazine, and he talks too. He'll read the paper in the morning and comment on what's in the paper and we'll get into a discussion on that. Every now and then he'll look up and tell you you're in the wrong lane. [*Laughter*]

Hartsook: Going back to some more names from staff. How about Trip [King]?

Hughes: He's been there a long time. About six years ago, I said that in the next campaign we are not going to do so-and-so and he said “I'm not going to be around in six years.” But, he's still there. I think Trip, and my memory is not very good here, but I think Trip maybe got involved in working for us when he was in Wofford. I'm not positive, but I know he worked in Greenville for a long time and then came to Columbia. He's very good. Trip’s biggest problem, I would say, is that he doesn't delegate well. Consequently, sometimes it gets overwhelming.
He likes to be in charge of everything. I have a very good working relationship with Trip. I think he's excellent and he's like all of us, he hangs in there because he's crazy about the senator.

**Hartsook:** Is the position of the state secretary pretty much divorced from what all is going on here in Washington?

**Hughes:** No. Well, I don't know whether you'd say it's divorced. What he does is, while this office is probably more oriented towards legislation and what's going on in Washington, he's more with keeping up with what people want and need in the state. With the advent of the computers and the fact that our computers are hooked up to the state offices now, Andy Brack does the newsletter every week that goes to all the staff that lets everybody down there (and some of the people in this office) know exactly what the senator's working on all week, what's on the floor of the Senate, and what the issues are. I think that's very helpful to the state staff. A lot of times what you read in the paper down there is not exactly what's going on.

**Hartsook:** That's something new that Andy's come up with?

**Hughes:** Yes.

**Hartsook:** He's real impressive.

**Hughes:** He's a real go-getter. I enjoyed watching how he handled himself in the campaign.

**Hartsook:** He took a lot of heat off the senator, I think.

**Hughes:** He did indeed. I would get just furious with people and Andy would smile and disarm them. He's very good.

**Hartsook:** How about Mary Jo Manning?

**Hughes:** She is another one I worked with for Senator Rivers before she came to work for
Senator Hollings. Right out of law school, Mr. Rivers hired her on the Armed Services Committee. Kind of a first. First female attorney that he had hired. Then she came over here. She's one that's brilliant and still works for us. She _____ but she was very involved in helping us with the campaign. We tried, at one point, to get her named to a Democratic seat on the FCC, but it didn't work. They ended up naming somebody from South Carolina but it wasn't Mary Jo.

Hartsook: It must be a real invigorating period right now [following the election of President Clinton].

Hughes: It is. Well, it's invigorating but it's overwhelming because there are so many people who haven't had a shot at a job in twelve years who want one and there are an awful lot of people who have been in the jobs for twelve years who think “Gosh, we ought to just stay. We'd be perfectly willing to do that.” We, as Democrats, know how to be out of power. I don't think the Republicans have quite figured that out yet.

Hartsook: How about Betty Pittelman?

Hughes: She does a little bit of several things. She keeps up with his personal books. She does the office accounts; she pays for the newspapers, etc. And she does the vouchers, like if a staff member goes to South Carolina, she does the voucher to get the plane ticket paid for and whatever if they're going on business. She keeps up with Peatsy's schedule. If somebody calls here and wants to speak to Peatsy, Betty's the one who takes the message and deals with them.

Hartsook: How long has she been on staff?

Hughes: I would say fifteen years, but that's a guess. She has worked, I think, for Allied when Allied owned the place in Barnwell and she was a receptionist for a while. She just moved up and she's married since she's been here and has two children. Her mother lives in Estill. I don't really know how Betty was hired. I think we were looking for somebody and somebody recommended her. Or she may have just written and said she was looking for a job, but I don't think anybody knew her.
Hartsook: Did you play any role in the Sixty-six campaign against Donald Russell and then Marshall Parker?

Hughes: No. I was working for Mendel Rivers then. Mr. Rivers and Governor Hollings got along very well, but there was definitely a little jealousy there. I worked in Washington on Monday, got on a train on Monday night and went to Charleston, and voted on Tuesday. I went to the victory party, this was in the primary, and was back at work at 9:00 on Wednesday in Washington. But, no, because I was up here I didn't play any part in it other than voting.

Hartsook: Soon after he was elected, he toured Vietnam and came back with some serious reservations about the way President Johnson was waging the war. Was that your time period?

Hughes: No. I was here in the Cambodia thing and the Cooper-Church Amendment when he voted for that, but I was not really involved too much in--my memory's not too good on that--but I do remember that at that point that was a pretty brave stand for somebody from South Carolina. The mail came in by the bucket loads. I think he went to Vietnam twice, maybe just once, but he went shortly after he was elected. I mean, he went between November and January after he was elected.

Hartsook: Yes, I think so. And came back very vocal. Does he think of himself as a veteran, because he certainly doesn't wave the banner of having served in World War II?

Hughes: Very definitely he does. But, no, he doesn't use that.

Hartsook: He doesn't brag on it--and so many do.

Hughes: He can almost refight the whole war, the part he played in it. And he does on occasion. We jokingly refer to how he singlehandedly won the war. [Laughter]

Hartsook: You were here when he started the hunger tour and produced his book. That also
is a very unusual and courageous thing. How was that perceived at the time? Did any of his advisors counsel him to leave well enough alone, because it certainly was an unpopular issue to be brought up at home?

**Hughes:** It was, but if anybody did I'm not aware of it. I think he feels that what he did for establishing community health centers and things like that was one of his finest contributions then. That book he wrote and rewrote and rewrote himself. It was kind of an obsession with him.

*End of Tape One, Begin Tape Two, Side One*

**Hartsook:** Who does he go to, to bounce ideas off of, both on staff and outside of staff?

**Hughes:** Peatsy first. On staff, almost everybody. It depends on the issue. David [Rudd] is probably involved in a lot of stuff. There's so many things he's involved in. If they're commerce issues he deals with those people, used to be Ralph Everett, now Kevin Kirkland. Kevin is excellent. He doesn't yet have quite the close relationship that Ralph did because Ralph was and is a member of the family, kind of. If he's going to talk about trade he gets Ivan Schlager, who works on the committee. Budget is Barry Strunk, who is the guy that met you at the door, a Carolina graduate by the way. Depends on the issue, really.

**Hartsook:** How about in Congress?

**Hughes:** The Senate itself, I don't think, has nearly as much camaraderie and closeness as it did, say, fifteen years ago. I don't know why that is, whether it's strictly the partisan stuff, but he has a good relationship on the Republican side with Ted Stephens. A lot of that is because they've been social friends for a long time. As far as counseling with some to bounce ideas off, I wouldn't say he does that too much now.

**Hartsook:** How about any people in business in South Carolina or outside of South Carolina?

**Hughes:** He talks to an awful lot of people. Obviously, Hootie Johnson, Henry
Tecklenburg, Francis Hipp in Greenville, Frank Hipp, all the textile people, people all over the state. As far as calling them up and saying “Listen, I think I'm going to introduce the VAT tax,” he does not do that very often.

**Hartsook:** How about for political things? Does he go back to people like Crawford Cook?

**Hughes:** Occasionally, but he's always been one who thinks he's got more political savvy than just about anybody else, and he does have better political instincts than just about anybody I know. In this town, he did talk to Crawford, not a whole lot, but I would say he talked to Ashley [Thrift] and David [Rudd] more about his campaign than anybody else.

**Hartsook:** In Seventy-one, he became chair of the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee and I've often heard that post described as a stepping stone for national campaigns and know that he was mentioned as a vice-presidential possibility in Seventy-two. What do you recall of that period, the work with the Senate Campaign Committee and the vice-presidential feelers?

**Hughes:** The Senate Campaign Committee then consisted of Nordy Hoffman, his secretary; she was a wonderful woman who had worked for Nordy for years, and one other paid staff and three or four young volunteers. They were physically located in this building [Russell Office Building]. You were asking about senators and friends, go back to that year. That's the year that Joe Biden ran. At that point, the Campaign Committee never had enough money to give to anybody other than an incumbent senator who was running, and then that was like maybe $20,000 an election. But, Joe Biden was running in Delaware and nobody gave him a chance. Nordy and Senator Hollings decided he had a shot and they gave him money and he won. They've been very close ever since. I remember that he traveled a lot. He did make a lot of friends all over the country and he raised a lot of money for the Campaign Committee. That might have been where he started thinking about running for president. I don't think that's really true because I think he's probably had that in his mind forever.

**Hartsook:** So there wasn't a feel that this was the first step?
Hughes: Not in my mind. It may have been in his, but it wasn't in my mind.

Hartsook: Were people in the office involved in that?

Hughes: Mike Joy was. He was designated as the person in the office that could deal with that sort of thing. I don't think he could sign checks, but he was involved in a lot of that stuff, working with Nordy. But, the operation then and now are like black and white. Now they probably have thirty people on the staff.

Hartsook: I'm sure. And if you've gone about ten years earlier, I don't think there was a campaign committee. I think that was one of LBJ's creations.

Hughes: Probably was.

Hartsook: In Seventy-three the Congressional Quarterly noted that during the previous session the senator had voted against the majority of Southern Democrats on forty-eight percent of the votes that had a split in the party and they described his voting as a shift from a practice of basically conservative politics as governor to practicing a moderate politics not far that practiced by many national Democrats from the Northern states. Were people in the office aware of that kind of thing?

Hughes: If so, I can't say that I was. If you go back to Sixty-eight and the book and the hunger tours that certainly wasn't, I don't think he's ever been somebody you can just brand. He still takes an awful lot of very conservative positions and very, not liberal, but very moderate positions. There are those who would have said in Sixty-eight that the fact that he talked about hunger was that he was a screaming liberal. He certainly didn't do that to appear to be liberal. He did it because he really believed that. I don't remember thinking “Gosh, he's getting more liberal” if that's what you're asking.

Hartsook: Well, no. What I'm really saying is have you had the feeling from the get-go that you're working for basically a maverick that votes his own ideals?
Hughes: Very definitely yes. [Laughter]

Hartsook: Does the staff feel that?

Hughes: I think it's one thing that everybody admires. He votes his conscience and convictions and it's not always popular.

Hartsook: Is there any backlash from that from other members of Congress or other Southern Democrats?

Hughes: Well, he's done it both ways. He voted for the Panama Canal Treaties and he voted for Judge Bork so I'm sure that people on both sides have been angry with him on occasion, which he's very aware of. But, it doesn't bother him.

Hartsook: Which would kind of go with seeking his own counsel as well, not being part of a block. Was the time of the Watergate investigation a particularly interesting time to be up here?

Hughes: I thought the whole thing was kind of a depressing time. I didn't like Richard Nixon, but it was depressing to almost see the government fall apart over something that was so trivial.

Hartsook: Is that how it felt up here?

Hughes: It did to me. I'll never know what they were trying to find at the Democratic headquarters, but why they let that just build into what it ended up doing was depressing to me. As I said, I did not like Richard Nixon at all, but I didn't like the fact that he let that happen.

Hartsook: Did you get the feeling that people up here were watching just the way people all around the country were, staying up late at night to watch the hearings? I mean, did everything stop during Watergate?
Hughes: It was on hold, absorbing what's the latest bomb that's coming, what's the latest shoe that's going to fall?

Hartsook: Did you know any of the people who were involved?

Hughes: No. I had a close friend who worked for Ehrlichman, a girl I went to school with.

Hartsook: What do you remember about the 1974 election? It was a great exciting gubernatorial election. That was when Pug Ravenel won the Democratic Primary and then was replaced with Bryan Dorn, and Westmoreland, the chosen candidate, lost out to Edwards.

Hughes: I wouldn't swear to it, but isn't that the year Gwen Bush ran against him?

Hartsook: Yes.

Hughes: Our race was obviously almost non-existent. Senator Hollings worked but nobody was talking about the Senate race at all.

Hartsook: Did he use that as an opportunity to talk about issues or did he just use it as a breather?

Hughes: I don't know that he's ever not talked about issues whether people wanted to hear them or not. He's always felt the need to educate the people. I don't mean to make that sound quite as 'better than thou' kind of thing, but he wants everybody to know and understand what he knows and understands. I don't know whether you remember the newsletters he used to send out because we don't do that quite as much anymore. He always used those to discuss issues. Our newsletters were never--“Senator Hollings Greets Visitors in the Office,” or whatever. It was always talking about tough things like the Panama Canal Treaties and telling people everything he knows. So, I don't really remember specifically in Seventy-four what he talked about, but if he didn't talk about issues it would be surprising, because he always has.
Hartsook:  I get the impression that he really is legitimately uncomfortable about raising money for campaigns.

Hughes:  He is.  I would think most of them are, but I hear people in this city, Ralph for one, talk about people calling him three or four times saying “You gotta give me money” and you gotta do this, that, and the other.  He does not like to do that.  He doesn't even like to talk about it.  I can understand that.  I think that's the worst part of the job, and it's criminal that you have to spend as much money as you do.

Hartsook:  Were you involved at all in Pug Ravenel's campaign?

Hughes:  No, because I was up here, other than just peripherally being excited about it and thinking “That's a great thing.”  But, when Pug was removed from the ballot, I had known Bryan Dorn for years and thought he was a wonderful man.  The contrast was terrible.  He was in Congress when I worked on the House side and I thought he was a nice guy, very capable.  He would have been a good governor.  I think Jim Edwards was probably a good governor, but those were some weird years.

Hartsook:  I'm sure everyone assumed Westmoreland was going to take [the nomination].

Hughes:  Because of the hero status.

Hartsook:  Sure.  Well, I think the Democrats had also tried to recruit him to run, much like what we see today with [Gen. Norman, Jr.] Schwartzkopf.  Everybody wants him to run.  In Seventy-six, the senator was an unsuccessful candidate for Senate majority leader.  What do you recall of that?  Why do you think he was unsuccessful?

Hughes:  I can't answer that specifically.  I think that, number one, Robert Byrd had been in the leadership for a long time.  Everybody used to laugh about his little black book.  He did favors for people and kept a record of it and didn't hesitate to remind people.  I have never heard
Senator Hollings say this, but there are some of us on the staff who think that Senator Kennedy had committed to helping him and then backed out at the last minute. I've never heard him be bitter about it, about anybody. Hubert Humphrey got in at the last minute. His campaign manager, so to speak, was Gaylord Nelson, who was a wonderful guy from Wisconsin and a very unlikely ally, because Senator Nelson was very liberal. But, he and Senator Hollings got along beautifully.

Hartsook: And they were close?

Hughes: Yes, and he's now head of the _____ Center. They're still good friends. They don't see each other very much, but....

Hartsook: How about his relationship with Kennedy? Am I right that they're not as close as they once were?

Hughes: They've never been as close as the South Carolina press or as the Republicans have said. They've always had a cordial relationship but have never been close friends.

Hartsook: I thought they were tennis buddies.

Hughes: They have played tennis together but not a whole lot. He was extremely close to and a great admirer of Jack Kennedy's. As I say they're friends, but never very close friends.

Hartsook: Do you remember anything about the effort in Seventy-six to get the post office budget back under Congressional control?

Hughes: Not really enough to even discuss it. I remember that Billy Keyserling was on the payroll then and that was one of his.... I think he was a staffer when that occurred.

Hartsook: In Seventy-eight, when Governor Riley was elected governor, was Riley favored by the senator?
Hughes: As far as I know.

Hartsook: I would think the two would be good allies.

Hughes: Oh, yes. I think they have a lot in common. To my knowledge they always had a very good working relationship. He and John West were wonderful friends and classmates. They had a basic disagreement over the Medical University of South Carolina, but they're wonderful friends. What I'm saying is that he probably had some disagreements with Governor Riley, but I think he was very pleased with his election.

Hartsook: Did you get a lot of mail on the Panama Canal issue?

Hughes: Yes.

Hartsook: Does he take that mail to heart?

Hughes: Yes.

Hartsook: Is it typical for an issue like that, will he actually sit down and read mail or will you gather...?

Hughes: He certainly doesn't read it all. He gets it by the thousands. But, when we start getting a lot of mail on a specific issue, we, once a week say, try to give him a pretty good cross-section of all of it.

Hartsook: So you might give him twenty letters that you think were particularly eloquent or...?

Hughes: Yes, ones that you can tell are not form letters. Form letters, to me, are a waste of time, and postcards.

Hartsook: Do you count them?
Hughes: I don't think we count them. We try to answer them if they're from the state.

Hartsook: So you don't say “On this bill we've gotten form letters. There are 187 letters asking you to vote pro?”

Hughes: I don't think so. I shouldn't say that totally because I'm not involved in legislation, but I don't think we do. I don't know that you could physically keep a record, an accurate count, the way it comes in sometimes.

Hartsook: In ‘Eighty he served as chair of the Budget Committee for just seven months. Do you remember all of that? Was that a real exciting time?

Hughes: It was. He inherited a very bright, capable staff that Muskie had hired, and that's been a subject he's been interested in as long as I've known him, balancing budgets. He thoroughly enjoyed that. Then the Republicans took over the Senate and he took ranking on Commerce rather than Budget. I think he's toyed with the idea lots of times of going back, but he didn't and hasn't. But, he's still very involved in the Budget Committee. It's probably his favorite committee.

Hartsook: Commerce certainly has a lot of interesting things coming up.

Hughes: It does. Technology is a big thing that he's interested in. He's done some good things there and a think he's going to do a whole lot more. Of course, the communications field is just such a...there's more coming through that committee than you could keep up with.

Hartsook: Shall we talk about the presidential campaign?

Hughes: Sure.

Hartsook: I take it you played a pretty big role in that?
Hughes: Well, I think everybody was just totally consumed by it just because he was. I, blissfully, never actually went over to the campaign and the girl they hired to do scheduling was wonderful. She and I worked together very well and she handled that all nicely. So I was not too involved. She's now director of scheduling in advance at the White House.

Hartsook: When did you first get an inkling that he was going to run?

Hughes: Probably two years before he ran. You could just tell he was thinking about it.

Hartsook: In what way?

Hughes: In how things ought to be done and how-- “I could do it this way.” I don't know exactly how to put that, Herb. I think Peatsy encouraged him a lot and I think he should have done better than he did. But, I think he should have had a professional campaign manager with some national experience to do it. That was his decision not to do it that way. I think that was an error on his part.

Hartsook: I've heard many times that staff work was not adequate.

Hughes: It wasn't. You don't run for president like you run for senator from South Carolina. There was never really a national plan. You spend a lot of time reacting rather than acting.

Hartsook: Do you all look back on that as a wasted opportunity?

Hughes: I don't think in Eighty-four that the Democrats would have nominated another Southerner. I don't know that I think it was a wasted opportunity because I don't think he could have won, but I think he certainly could have done better.

Hartsook: Of course, his campaign did help shape some of the issues.
Hughes: Yes, it did. He was way ahead of his time, always has been. He talked about a freeze. If we had done that then, we wouldn't have the deficit that we have now. I don't really mean to be critical of Billy, but Billy [Keyserling] was just not the person for that job. But, I don't blame that on anybody but him.

Hartsook: Do you think the staff was real surprised that he had to back out?

Hughes: No.

Hartsook: I've read that the value in backing out as early as he did [was that it] still left him in good shape to raise money for his Senate campaign.

Hughes: That's probably true, but he had said all along that he was not going to end up in debt. If he had gotten twenty or fifteen percent of the vote in New Hampshire, he probably would have gone on to the South. To do that he would have had to spend a lot of money in a lot of states very quickly and probably would have ended up in debt. When he got out, I think we owed $50,000, which is nothing in a presidential campaign, and got it taken care of very quickly.

Hartsook: In an interview with Nordy Hoffman, Hoffman mentions a Berle Bernard as someone being close to Hollings that recommended he get out. I don't know that name.

Hughes: He's a lawyer here in Washington and he has raised money for us. He worked for Muskie when Muskie ran for president. He's a friend, but I know he's not the one who recommended that he get out. The senator got out because he wanted to get out.

Hartsook: Were you active in ‘Eighty-six when he was opposed by Henry McMaster?

Hughes: ....I just don't like that much unpleasantness and untruth.
Hartsook: Negative campaigning, I think people are so conscious of it now that they recognize it right away when they see. They don't like it and they don't want it.

Hughes: And you destroy people's faith in government. They make you think everything is terrible, and people don't have much faith to begin with.

Hartsook: And it keeps good people from running. No one wants to be savaged the way modern-day candidates are.

Hughes: Why would you put yourself through that? I've often wondered what makes people do it.

Hartsook: What have you decided?

Hughes: I can't answer that. I think his is that he just really thinks he can make a difference. He always has, obviously, since 1948. I think this year it surprised even him. Where it made me mad, some of the things that were said and done, I think it really a little bit hurt his feelings. “Here I have dedicated my life, so to speak, for forty-five years and this is what I get.” But, I think it takes a special breed.

Hartsook: Do you think Carroll Campbell did not run because he didn't want to be in a debate with Hollings?

Hughes: I haven't figured out yet why he didn't run. I think if he had been absolutely positive that he'd win, he would've run. Even though the polls showed that he would have won, I think he didn't want to take a chance. I think that would probably be one reason.

Hartsook: I also heard a lot of people say that he was too thin-skinned. He didn't want to hear what the senator might say.

Hughes: That could be. I didn't realize he was thin-skinned.
Hartsook: That's just what I've read. So much of what I know is what I've read. That's why I have to come here and talk. I know that in Eighty-six, early, the Republicans had targeted his as a winnable seat, but there wasn't the kind of nervousness here then that you had in this past campaign.

Hughes: No. They didn't put the resources...this last campaign, I think, was totally run from Washington. That was not the case in Eighty-six. You didn't have all the people from up here coming down there. I was never concerned that we were going to lose, though. And I was concerned on this one, not because of the candidate but because of the time.

Hartsook: During the campaign, did your movements pretty much mirror the senator's? Were you with him throughout?

Hughes: No. You mean, down there?

Hartsook: Yes, because I know you were in South Carolina for at least four weeks, weren't you?

Hughes: I was in Columbia for actually three and a half. I went down on the thirteenth of October.

Hartsook: What did you do day-to-day?

Hughes: Just try to put together a schedule for him. You know, dealing with everybody where he was going and put it down on paper, basically, and make a lot of contacts with them.

Hartsook: Were you also scheduling Peatsy and other...?

Hughes: No. Somebody else was doing that. We tried to coordinate theirs, but those last three weeks she was doing her very own thing, her own schedule. We were trying to
maximize...there were, obviously times where you had to bring them back together.

Hartsook: Who did you report to in the campaign? David [Rudd]?

Hughes: Yes. I wouldn't actually refer to it as reporting to anybody. Andy [Brack] and David [Rudd] and I worked very closely together.

Hartsook: I was just trying to figure out who would have been coordinating his schedule and Mrs. Hollings.

Hughes: Andy and I basically were putting together the schedule. We talked to Robin McCain in Charleston and Laura Morris was down getting some ideas of where Peatsy was going. We talked to Peatsy. But the main coordination was that if he was going to be in Charleston on Wednesday night that we needed to have her back in Charleston on Wednesday. But, people were coming up with different things for her to do and he was doing a lot of press and other work, filling in the spots. Andy and I basically were putting together the schedule, but you spend a lot of time on the phone talking to everybody to coordinate.

Hartsook: I'm sure you're glad to have that over with.

Hughes: I am, very definitely.

Hartsook: Andy did well. He certainly had a lot of responsibility placed on him for somebody that had not done that kind of thing before.

Hughes: He did and he did it very well.

Hartsook: I'm still just amazed at how he [Hollings] brings in such good people without really any way...I mean, how could you tell that Andy would be able...?

Hughes: ....to handle that? I don't know. I can't remember but somebody told him that he
really ought to get somebody in the state, since he was going to be up here so much of the time, who could deal with the press, who could be kind of a spokesman. I think Trip [King] really found Andy and the senator talked to him and was very impressed with him. The senator was doing several plant tours and, Andy, the way he put together press and things was very impressive to the senator. It was a pleasant surprise to everybody that he was able to handle himself as well as he did. I couldn't talk to the press. They make me nervous and I don't trust them a lot of times. But, Andy was wonderful. He was totally relaxed and did a great job. Somebody complained to me the other day that he should've worn a tie every time he talked to the press and I thought “If you could have seen how hard he worked if he did without a tie on occasion that shouldn't have been too bad.” He's a bright young man.

Hartsook: Can I go back to Peatsy for a minute? Everybody today is interested in women's history and women's issues. One of the things I always try to do is try to document the role of key women. For instance, we've got Olin Johnston's papers and everybody that you speak to that knew Johnston speaks very highly of Gladys. So, I just want to again ask a little bit more about Peatsy. How strong do you think her influence is on him and on other people here on staff?

Hughes: I think her influence on him is great. He probably says that she's his best sounding board and she is quick with an opinion if she has one. She's not bashful about sharing it. She's very well read and, office-wise, she sometimes, we think, gets a little lost in minutiae. But, she is excellent keeping up with things to make sure he knows everything and she disagrees with him when she thinks he's wrong, which I think is great. A lot of times staff won't do that. We, fortunately, have staff who will and I think a staff who just says “Yes, you're the greatest” all the time is not a very good staff. And he takes that well, he'll argue with you but he listens to people who he thinks are competent, and she certainly falls in that category. They might argue vociferously but he listens, and you can always tell that he's listening. I mean, if I tell him something or whatever, he might say “Ah, you're crazy as hell!” but if you keep talking to him he does listen.

Hartsook: Will most of the staff argue with him if they think he's wrong?
Hughes: I would say a lot of people who talk to him about issues, probably ninety percent of them will. David [Rudd], of course, tries to have an overall vision of everything and he certainly doesn't hesitate to tell him. Ashley [Thrift] had quite a problem with that thing the most. He might have a discussion with him, but as far as arguing, he had problems telling him he thought he was wrong. That's not a criticism of Ashley, that's just his nature.

Hartsook: Well, I can imagine it would be kind of an awesome task to take.

Hughes: Yes, because you could get screamed at on occasion when you do it. [Laughter]

Hartsook: Are any of the staff jealous of Peatsy's position?

Hughes: No.

Hartsook: There's no feeling that she interferes or anything like that?

Hughes: If so, I'm not aware of it. I think at one point there were some staff people who might have been just a little scared of her. But I don't think that lasts long. She might fuss at you but she's also a good friend to everybody. She likes to try to get everybody together at least once a year. She used to have all the interns out for dinner every summer, but it got too big, just too many people.

Hartsook: Can I finish up by going back and talking about a few more staff? How about Bubba Meng?

Hughes: I love Bubba. Bubba's a good friend, and Bubba I'm sure told you that his first political job was with Olin Johnston. He was the kind of person who's everybody's good friend. He'd stop at a little country store and say “Hey, how are you? I'm Bubba Meng.” He was a different, particularly at the beginning, staff person from the kind you have now. People just don't have time to do that anymore, but Bubba spent an awful lot of time on the road and I think he did a great job for the senator in dealing with a lot of the little people. Those are the kind of people that
elect you, and they love Bubba. And they love Senator Hollings because they love Bubba. You can't beat that. He took everything very personally. He just wanted to help everybody. Towards the end, he was too busy to get out and do that stuff, and there was probably too much to do. I don't know that I'll say he lost interest, because he certainly didn't. He just didn't have the opportunity to do that kind of stuff as much.

Hartsook: I'm surprised you don't hear more about people just getting burned out.

Hughes: Yes. There are a lot of days I feel that way. I feel like if that phone rings one more time I'm just going to blow my brains out. People will call and say--“Gosh, I need an appointment in September,” and they want to spend fifteen minutes telling you what they want to do. You just wail out--“Give me a break!” But, I think Bubba just needed to make some more money. He needed to. He's always felt like the senator was like a father figure, and I think still does. And it's mutual. The senator is very crazy about him. That year after Pat divorced him, when the senator went to South Carolina, he generally stayed with Bubba and Becky for a long time.

Hartsook: How about Joe Maupin?

Hughes: He's wonderful. Joe Maupin was an army liaison up here and he was ready to retire from the Army. He had been in the ROTC unit at P.C. [Presbyterian College] years ago and they liked South Carolina and they were thinking about going to South Carolina. The senator needed somebody in the Charleston office because he'd had a young guy there who'd left and needed a man. Strom always had a retired Navy captain so this was kind of good. With somebody in the military he could deal with all the military stuff. Joe's good because he's old but he's more mature. He can go represent the senator at almost anywhere, and he's done that. He's spoken to the American Legion, he's done it all. He's got a lot more political sense than I thought he would. You don't think of an Army person being political, but he's got excellent political instincts.

Hartsook: Is he somebody that the senator picked out himself?
Hughes: Yes.

Hartsook: Is that true really of most of the staff?

Hughes: I don't guess it's true that he finds everybody. He has the final say on hiring them. He found Bubba, he hired Bubba, he hired me, he hired Karen; I'm not sure how we found David.

Hartsook: How about Ashley [Thrift]?

Hughes: Ashley had worked over on the House side and I think actually Larry Thompson might have helped find him?

Hartsook: Who is he?

Hughes: Larry is a young man from Charleston, who works for the city, but he went to Carolina and he had been in one of Peatsy's classes at St. Andrews. He had been a Young Republican until she got hold of him and she straightened him out. He left probably ten or fifteen years ago and went back to Charleston. He worked for us part-time while he was at Carolina and then he came up here and worked. He went back to Charleston and was head of the office of revitalization and was involved when they were building the Omni, he basically watched every brick go in to make sure it was done right. But, he was working here when Ashley was hired. Ashley probably--I don't know the details on this--had applied for a job because he had been working for Congressman Mann on the Judiciary Committee. He and Ralph were the L.A.'s, they were the two.

Hartsook: If you had to leave Washington, what would you miss?

Hughes: The people. Mainly the people. Washington's a fascinating city because everybody's from somewhere else. I have friends on and off the Hill, so it's a nice mix of things to talk about. You don't simply have to rehash the day at night. You can find other things to talk
about, but there's enough of it. Everybody's kind of consumed with Capitol Hill. If you didn't love it you couldn't work here.

Hartsook: As the senator's gained in seniority have you found new things opening up to you? Have you gone up the pecking order as well in Washington society or other events or things outside the office?

Hughes: I wouldn't say necessarily. That's probably true for David. I'm invited to more things, but there again, if it's not something that really appeals to me, I wouldn't go.

Hartsook: Do you keep a home in South Carolina?

Hughes: I did until last summer. I'm an only child and my parents are both dead. When my mother died, I sold our house in Abbeville, but we had a summer cottage on a lake outside Abbeville. I kept that, but it got to be too much of a hassle trying to deal with it long distance so I sold it last summer. Karen and I and two other friends, Peggy Rankin, who used to work here, Peggy Rankin Hudson, and her husband, the four of us, bought I guess it's been ten years ago, a one bedroom condominium at Keowee.

Hartsook: That must be great.

Hughes: It is, but we never get to use it. I had never even seen the place until the weekend before Hugo hit. Karen and I went down to do some work on it and redo it. Fortunately, of the stuff we bought and were having done, none of it had been done before Hugo breezed in and blew away stuff. But, now that is the only property I own in South Carolina.

Hartsook: So you really consider yourself a Washington person?

Hughes: No, I do not. I'm still a voter and a taxpayer in South Carolina. If you asked me where I was from, I would definitely say from South Carolina.

[End of Interview]