Interview

with

Liz Patterson

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Interviewer:

Herbert J. Hartsook

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Drew Daniels
Interview begins

HARTSOOK: I’d like to begin with some biographical information. Not what would appear in your standard biography, but where you were born, and where you feel that you were brought up. I think of you in some ways as a child of Washington, D.C., and in other ways, you fit in so well right here in Spartanburg.

PATTERSON: I was born in Columbia and spent the first two weeks of my life down there. The family was really living in Spartanburg at that time; it was just that Mother's doctor was in Columbia and they used to keep you in the hospital that long. I was born between Daddy's two terms as governor and spent the first few years of my life here in Spartanburg, where Daddy practiced law. Then we went back to Columbia when he was elected governor the second time [1943]. That was when I was a little over two. Then, when I was five, we moved to Washington, when he was elected to the Senate [1945].

I lived up there until, in the eleventh grade, I decided I wanted to go to school in South Carolina. My family thought it would be a good idea, too, so I came down here and lived with a family friend and went to Spartanburg High School, and then went to college in Columbia [Columbia College, B.A., 1961] and to the University [of South Carolina, 1961-1962] for graduate school. While I was in graduate school, I applied to work for the brand-new Peace Corps, and I worked for the Peace Corps that first summer as a student intern. Then I just stayed on with them for about two years [1962-1964], only coming home to become involved in Daddy's campaign.

HARTSOOK: What family did you stay with when you attended high school?

PATTERSON: One year a Norwegian lady stayed with me, and then another year I lived with the Satterfields here in town. She was just one of my best friends and her parents knew my parents, and so I lived with them. It was really fun.

HARTSOOK: Did you go back and forth up to Washington?
PATTERSON: No. I hardly ever went up there.

HARTSOOK: That must have been a shocking difference, to go from the hub-bub of Washington to...

PATTERSON: Well, we lived out in Maryland, and, again, my family never really participated in much of the social life, and we'd always come down here for vacations -- Christmas, summer, Thanksgiving, Easter -- so it wasn't shocking. The only thing that was shocking was that the schools down here weren't quite as far advanced as the schools in Maryland where I went.

HARTSOOK: So did you stand out then, when you came to...

PATTERSON: Well, I don't know if I stood out. I just had already had a lot of the courses, so my senior year I had sort of an easy year. I don't know if I really stood out, though.

HARTSOOK: When did you first realize that your father was somewhat unusual, someone that was important?

PATTERSON: Well, it's funny, when you live in Washington, you go to school with people whose parents are ambassadors and generals and senators and congressmen. You don't really think you're different because there's so many people just like you are. So, that's funny. I really never had the feeling that I was different, and we never made a big to-do of it. One year I went to school in Columbia, in the fifth grade, during Daddy's campaign with Strom [in 1950, Johnston was challenged for re-election by Strom Thurmond]. And I don't remember anybody knowing who I was or me knowing who I was. When I finished Spartanburg High School, I remember our superintendent asking why my Daddy was there. I guess it was just because we never made a big to-do about that he was anything different than just everybody else's dad.

HARTSOOK: What is your most lasting impression of your father as a father and a family man?
PATTERSON: The most lasting is probably [what's] shown in a picture in there. I always sat on his lap. I always would sit on his lap and get really big hugs from him. Because of his size and everything, he was just a real lovable fellow. He always had time to give a hug, and that's what I remember the most.

HARTSOOK: Did he like little kids?

PATTERSON: I think he did. I never thought about him liking other kids, because, you know, I never saw him kissing babies or that sort of thing. But I don't think he disliked kids. I just always had the feeling that I was his only kid, although I'm sure he did the same for my sister and my brother.

HARTSOOK: What are your memories of your family homes?

PATTERSON: Very, very livable. Not real fancy, but very livable. And every room lived-in; no room off-limits. We were just a real close, close family. Real close.

HARTSOOK: You talked before about having dinner parties of up to six to eight. Was that fairly common or fairly unusual?

PATTERSON: Mamma would probably do that maybe three or four times a year. And of course if she did, then we got to help. Like we got to serve the tomato juice, or we got to pass [out] the napkins. The cocktail hour at our house was tomato juice and crackers and cheese. We'd get to help with it. That's what I remember. And I remember who they were. One time, I remember, we had a yard party to benefit somebody who was running for the Senate in our area of Maryland. I remember having that out on the yard and we got to help with that.

Mamma and Daddy didn't entertain a lot. They entertained like bringing the preacher home for Sunday, or if anybody from South Carolina was up. We quite often had people from South Carolina spend the night at our house, because we had an extra bedroom. They did give
one very important dinner party. Vice president and Mrs. Truman came to our house. He taught me to play chopsticks. When I told him that Sallie had sat on President Roosevelt’s lap, he asked me to sit on his lap but he said, “I will never be president.” Only a couple of weeks later he was president. He later invited me to the White House but mother declined the invitation saying he was too busy. We sent him a tie.


PATTERSON: Well, Senator Russell was single. He never married. He came. The [Allen J.] Ellenders came more than anybody, because I think that was Mother's best friend. There were different ones. Nobody came on a regular basis. I don't remember anybody who lived real close to us except Senator [Hubert H.] Humphrey, and he and his wife maybe came once or twice. But, no, there weren't any regular ”let's get togethers” with any members of the Senate.

HARTSOOK: Was he close to other people in the delegation?

PATTERSON: Yes. Some more than others. Again, and that sort of got down to the social life I guess. Like he and Mendel [Rivers] were friends, but not real big friends, because Mendel was more social than Daddy. He and [Congressman Robert W.] Bob Hemphill were very close.

HARTSOOK: That's what Tom [Chadwick] said.

PATTERSON: Bob's family would come eat with us and stay with us occasionally. So they were close. I was trying to think before that though. That's the first one I remember. I'm sure there were other members of the House who... [I remember] the Maybanks came once. [U.S. Senator Burnet Maybank]
HARTSOOK: What do you think made the two of them so close?

PATTERSON: I think it was the similarity of the background. Hemphill was from Chester, and his family had been very modest, and I think he'd even been brought up in a textile family.

HARTSOOK: He certainly comes across as having been a very personable...a good friend to his friends, Hemphill.

PATTERSON: Oh, he was. He was a lot of fun, he and his family.

HARTSOOK: Do you know why your father moved during the 1920s from his home in Anderson County to Spartanburg?

PATTERSON: To practice law. When he graduated from law school, he decided this was the place to practice. I think my mom had a lot to do with it, because this was her home. She'd started teaching school here, and they were to be married.

HARTSOOK: And he probably made some good contacts through her family.

PATTERSON: Right. I think it was a combination of marrying Mom and starting his life. This is the only place he ever practiced law. I think he just decided to practice law here.

HARTSOOK: Sitting at his desk, under his portrait, in the reading room at the Caroliniana, I've had untold numbers of people come up and they see the portrait, the desk, your brother's bronze baby shoes, and they want to talk. And I've always been amazed at how many of them want to talk about your mother. I think almost all of them say that she was probably one of the brightest people they ever met. You've talked a little bit about her, but can you tell us more, what she was like, how involved she was in issues? I mean, she sounds very intellectual to me.
PATTERSON: Well, she read a lot. She was a smart lady. I guess because she was a teacher – and she was an English teacher – she always wanted Daddy's grammar to be right. And ours, too. But she definitely was a strong suit for Daddy. I've had people say that she made him, that she took a country boy and made him. But that's not, I don't think, altogether true. I think what it was, was that she helped him express himself, maybe, better. She wrote a lot of his speeches, with the help of other folks. She was a smart lady. She had a lot a political savvy, too. She was good at remembering names, and she could make good speeches. I think they were just a good team.

HARTSOOK: When somebody would write a speech for him, it looks to me like he would go through and annotate it pretty closely.

PATTERSON: Oh, he would. He would. I was never that involved with seeing them as they were written. I just heard them when they were given, and it seemed to me as though very rarely was he reading a speech.

HARTSOOK: What was he like as a speaker?

PATTERSON: Like all politicians, sometimes very good and sometimes very bad. During the campaign, he usually was real feisty and fired-up. I wouldn't say he was a great orator, but I think he was a good campaign speaker.

HARTSOOK: What role did your uncle Bill play in making his success?

PATTERSON: Oh, outside of my mom, he would have to be the second. Uncle Bill aspired to be in politics and to be more successful in politics himself. The two of them were very, very close. Very close.

HARTSOOK: Do you think he would have gone as far as he did had he not had Bill to help him?
PATTERSON: I think Bill was a tremendous asset. I think he helped him all over the state. I don't know if he would've gone as far or not. I think we all depend on others for our success, and he was one of those who you'd have to give credit to.

HARTSOOK: Would [newspaper publisher] Wilton Hall also be in that really small group of people?

PATTERSON: Yes, Wilton would. And that was primarily because of the support he was able to give through the newspaper and through printing and things like that that you can't do these days. He would print all of Daddy's campaign material and do a lot of things that because of ethics laws you can't do as much [of] these days.

HARTSOOK: Bubba Meng told me once that he thought your father was planning on retiring when his last term ran out and that they were considering buying a home in Columbia. Do you know anything about that?

PATTERSON: Oh, they had already built a home in Columbia.

HARTSOOK: Why Columbia?

PATTERSON: Well, when Daddy was governor, Mother made lots of friends in Columbia, at the First Baptist Church, and their best couple friends were always in Columbia.

HARTSOOK: Who were those people?

PATTERSON: Well, the Bagnalls, the Wolfes, the Seastrunks, the Ulmers...there were about six or eight families that...the Pulliams.... They all seemed to be at the First Baptist Church and they were all good friends. Mother was pulling him, I think, that way because of those friends.
HARTSOOK: You've talked about how he would consult with your mother on many issues. Who else? If he had a really difficult decision, other than somebody with a particular interest in the...?

PATTERSON: Of course, Uncle Bill would have been the next person.

HARTSOOK: Anybody else besides some of the people we've already talked about?

PATTERSON: I really can't remember anybody.

HARTSOOK: Anybody on his staff? I mean, were there people on his staff that he...?

PATTERSON: Oh, yes, very much so. Bob Alexander was one of his really key people for many of those years. Bob is deceased, but he was definitely.... You know, before Tom was in the office, I guess Bob was the only one that Daddy would really, really talk to on issues. Bob was a smart, smart fellow.

HARTSOOK: And he obviously trusted his judgment.

PATTERSON: Yes.

HARTSOOK: Did your dad serve as a mentor to any of the more junior members of the delegation or other members of Congress?

PATTERSON: I'm sure he did. I've had members tell me that. Birch Bayh at one point told me that Daddy helped him a lot when he got there. Of course, Daddy also supposedly helped Lyndon Johnson a lot when he first got there. There were others. When they were new, Daddy tried to reach out to them and help them. As far as members of the delegation, you know, because Hemphill didn't come up until later.... I'm sure that's where that kind of friendship was. And
Tom Gettys, also.

HARTSOOK: Professor [Robert M.] Burts [who was working on a biography of Johnston at the time of Burts’ death] has been puzzled by the lack of references to a fellow Honea Path native, John C. Taylor. He had expected to find correspondence and references. Apparently they shared very similar backgrounds – member of Congress in the Thirties, candidate for governor in the Fifties. Do you know anything that would explain...?

PATTERSON: No. My sister read that one, and I don't know the gentleman. I wanted to go back and get my book. He ran for governor in the Fifties? I'll have to go get the book that Don Fowler put together on the state primaries, because that name doesn't ring anything. And the Taylor name...I mean, we go over to Honea Path a whole lot and I don't know many Taylors over that way.

HARTSOOK: What do you recall of his personal feelings towards other leaders in the state? "Cotton Ed" Smith?

PATTERSON: Well, of course, he ran against "Cotton Ed" and defeated "Cotton Ed." I don't think he was ever...I don't know. I know that as a child he looked up to Cole Blease. He looked up to "Cotton Ed" at one point, I think. And I'm not sure if he looked up to them so much as how they sat on issues as that they were trying to make things better.

HARTSOOK: How about Jimmy Byrnes?

PATTERSON: I never really heard him say. You know, he and Jimmy Byrnes, there were lots of differences with them. Jimmy Byrnes represented the textile executives and the more socially-elite folks [more] than Daddy did. So I don't think they were very close.

HARTSOOK: I would have thought that it would have galled him tremendously when Byrnes came out in favor of the Republican presidential candidates.
PATTERSON: Yes, I never heard my family talk...

HARTSOOK: How about [Burnet] Maybank?

PATTERSON: Well, he and Maybank worked together well in Washington but they were not good friends in state politics, which I didn't know until later years.

HARTSOOK: How about Fritz [Hollings]?

PATTERSON: Well, I think Fritz -- and Fritz can probably tell you, too -- I think Daddy saw Fritz as he saw himself when he ran against "Cotton Ed." You know, "This young man who wants to take my job." type-thing. And I don't think Daddy really held any ill-feelings against Fritz; it was just, "this good-looking, young man who's trying to take my job."

HARTSOOK: It was just a terribly bitter campaign.

PATTERSON: It was, but when you saw how the family then rallied behind Fritz when he took Daddy's place after Russell appointed himself, you realize that it might have been bitter, but it wasn't really something we couldn't overcome. [Hollings challenged Johnston in the 1962 primary. Johnston passed away in 1965 and then-governor Donald Russell stepped down to be appointed to the U.S. Senate until such time as a special election could be held. Hollings challenged Russell and the Johnston family threw its considerable weight behind Hollings’ candidacy.]

HARTSOOK: So it was more incidental than it was a general...?

PATTERSON: Right. I think so.

HARTSOOK: Do you think he thought Hollings would make a good senator?
PATTERSON: I don't know. I don't think he had any reason to think he wouldn't. I just think he didn't want him to have his job.

HARTSOOK: Do you think your mother should have been allowed to fill out the term until the special election could have been held?

PATTERSON: I don't know if my mother could have, because she wasn't well. I think what was the hurt was [that] Donald Russell didn't offer it to her. At no time did he offer it to Mother or offer it to my Uncle Bill. I think if he had offered it to Mother, she wouldn't have taken it.

HARTSOOK: Really?

PATTERSON: I really do. Because she was not well. See, that's why during Daddy's last campaign, that's really why they moved to Columbia, was so she could be close to her doctors.

HARTSOOK: Of course, if he had offered it to Bill, Bill would have tried to keep it.

PATTERSON: Bill would have taken it, yes. Probably so. But I think there was always feeling that Russell should have at least offered to Mother. Instead, he didn't. But I don't think she would have taken it.

HARTSOOK: Is it also true that Russell never came to the house to pay his respects?

PATTERSON: No, he didn't. Not that I remember.

HARTSOOK: Now Hollings did, I think.

PATTERSON: Yes. Hollings, then Strom did.
HARTSOOK: Why do you think he [Russell] was so obtuse about the...

PATTERSON: I don't know. It was strange. You know, there are some people that don't want to intrude when there is a death or a tragedy or whatever, who maybe thought it was just as appropriate to be elsewhere. I don't know. I know when Strom came, we thought he was a little bit crass, because he came in waving all the newspapers in Mother's face, which I thought was a little extreme. But that's Strom. [There is also a story that Thurmond came to claim the Senate 1 license plate.]

HARTSOOK: Do you remember when Hollings came?

PATTERSON: I was trying to think. I remember he came, but I don't remember whether I was there or whether I visited with him or not. But I know he came.

HARTSOOK: Who else do you remember from that time? It seems like there are just a handful of people in a situation like that who will say something that actually makes you feel better. Do you remember anything like that?

PATTERSON: Of course, I remember all the group coming at the time of the funeral, the group that came from Washington. Humphrey was real close to Daddy. No, they didn't see eye-to-eye on a lot of issues, so I remember when he came and visited with us. They were neighbors and family friends [who came]. Our mailman from Maryland used the train to attend the funeral. But, no, I don't really remember anyone else.

HARTSOOK: Can you tell who set the daily agenda for work in the Washington office?

PATTERSON: Probably not his administrative assistant, who was Baxter Funderburk. Probably someone like Bob Alexander.
HARTSOOK: Who managed the office?

PATTERSON: Well, Baxter was supposed to manage it, because he was the administrative assistant, so I guess he did. But Daddy and Mother more than any...a combination of. Daddy had a pretty strong hand in how it went.

HARTSOOK: Did she have a daily role in the office?

PATTERSON: No. No, just a periodic role.

HARTSOOK: Can you give me an idea of the mood in the office and how they envisioned their work?

[Tape stopped, then restarted]

HARTSOOK: It seems in most offices there is the push-and-pull between constituent service and legislative issues. I was just curious how that worked out in the Senator's office.

PATTERSON: I remember, number one, that office was real close. We used to have a Christmas party, and [other] parties. And there were a lot of folks who went up there young and worked through college and graduate school and law school and everything, so it was basically a young, really close office. And almost all of them were from South Carolina. Dick Riley was one of those young people as was Ross Anderson [Federal Court Judge]. And I know there was a lot of joking.

Baxter was the administrative assistant, but he really wasn't the strong person in the office. I remember in the later years it was Bob Alexander and Tom Chadwick who sort of kept things rolling, sort of kept things in order. Of course, the lady out front thought she did, because she'd started working for Daddy’s Spartanburg law firm when she was a teenager and followed him to
Washington.

HARTSOOK: That would be Virginia [Perrott]?

PATTERSON: Yes.

HARTSOOK: What was she like?

PATTERSON: Oh, she was wonderful. She started working for Daddy when she was like fourteen or fifteen, here in town.

HARTSOOK: Was she the keeper of the gate? Did you have to get past her to get to your father?

PATTERSON: Yes, but she was good about it. But she was the keeper of the gate.

HARTSOOK: How long did they work together?

PATTERSON: Until Daddy died.

HARTSOOK: But I mean, when would she have started?

PATTERSON: She started when he was a lawyer here in town when she was fourteen, working after school.

HARTSOOK: What was Baxter like? It sounds like everybody...?

PATTERSON: He was interesting. I always enjoyed him; he was a good-old guy. He was the person who, I guess, was responsible for making sure there was enough stationery, enough stamps, and that sort of thing. But I don't ever remember him really being involved in issues.
When a constituent would come in, sometimes he'd sit in the room with that constituent and with Daddy, or whatever. But I don't remember him ever really being that much involved with the day-to-day operation of the office.

HARTSOOK: Would you say your dad really played a major role in the leadership in the office and setting the agenda?

PATTERSON: Oh, yes. Yes.

HARTSOOK: Was he big on constituent service?

PATTERSON: Well, whenever anybody came up, he wanted to see them. He didn't want people to not be able to come in and see him. I mean, he liked taking them for lunch. He liked for them to be able to see him. So, yes, he was big on constituent service. And, you know, he had the offices, here in Spartanburg and one in Columbia, too, to help with constituent services.

HARTSOOK: What about the roles played by the state staff? Were they mainly involved in the case work?

PATTERSON: Yes.

HARTSOOK: What was Andy Faucette like?

PATTERSON: Andy was like Daddy's best friend. Mamma often said that he went on their honeymoon with them. I don't know if that's true or not. He was real low-key. He didn’t enjoy practicing law, so this was sort of a good way for him to help. And everybody liked Andy.

HARTSOOK: Was it a real shock when he passed away?

PATTERSON: Oh, yes. He and Daddy were real close. [Andrew McC. Faucette was
Johnston’s law partner, then Home Secretary. He died of a heart attack in Sept. 1961.

HARTSOOK: Did that leave a big....?

PATTERSON: It left a void.

HARTSOOK: It took a while to fill that position, didn't it?

PATTERSON: Yes, it did. It took a while. And Daddy never felt comfortable filling that position later. He ended up getting Jess Bullard, who did a good job as far as the veterans.

HARTSOOK: Yes, and then I think your uncle...?

PATTERSON: My uncle did for a while, yes. Out of Anderson, and he'd come to Columbia some.

HARTSOOK: When you have somebody, though, like Andy in that role, could he pretty much feel like the home office would take care of itself and then he could concentrate on...?

PATTERSON: Oh, yes. Very much so. Andy and Roberta McCain ran that office.

HARTSOOK: Relative to his era and region, your father was remarkably liberal. [A student once did a paper looking at this precise question and analyzed a number of Senate votes and found that Johnston did vote often in favor of economic equality.] John Huss says in his book [Senator for the South], "The Negro on a segregated basis has not a better friend than Olin D. Johnston." That's right back at the time when all that [the Civil Rights movement] is starting to heat up. Do you think that's accurate, that appraisal?

PATTERSON: Probably, yes. I mean, he certainly wasn't an enemy of them. He didn't want to.... I would hope that John Huss got that opinion from other folks, because, of course, he
wasn't... Dr. Huss, being a minister and just knowing Daddy through the church, he didn't know him in the total community. He wasn't completely unbiased, I guess I'm saying.

HARTSOOK: Do you remember what brought that book about? I mean, your father wanted it done, didn't he?

PATTERSON: Dr. Huss had written several books, and he and Daddy were good friends. And Dr. Huss loved politics and I think he saw this as a way to continue writing and also to touch a little bit into politics.

HARTSOOK: Another Burts question: was your father's passion for preserving a way of life in the South basic to his view towards blacks and Civil Rights legislation?

PATTERSON: Go over that again?

HARTSOOK: I think what he's asking is – if you flip that question around – was he afraid of where the Civil Rights movement might take us and change the fabric of Southern life?

PATTERSON: I don't think he was afraid and I don't think it was a passion. But maybe, like everybody, anytime there's a suggestion of a change, not knowing where it's going to take you, he might have felt like, "Leave well enough alone." But I don't think there was a passion or a fear.

HARTSOOK: What characteristics made your father a strong leader?

PATTERSON: See, it's hard for me when somebody talks about him being a strong leader. I just saw him as an elected official. I don't consider him as a strong leader, but I guess he was, because he could work with other people to get things done.

HARTSOOK: People talk about the Johnston "machine." I mean, obviously he had something that brought compelling loyalty.
PATTERSON: It's interesting, of the Johnston machine. . . . That very few of them are the people that you.... You know, he wasn't really that close to the Barnwell Ring, and he wasn't that close to the delegation. So it's interesting who his machine was. It really was, again, just the common man. I guess it was just his quiet way of getting things done, or working with others. I'm not sure.

HARTSOOK: I know Senator Hollings implies that he had a remarkable ability to bond with the common man and that people sensed that shared history.

PATTERSON: He did that. I can still see him, like, again, at the textile mills, standing around talking to folks and not feeling that he was any different than they were or in a little country store, just eating a banana and standing there talking to them. So I think that's probably true.

HARTSOOK: One of the things that always has intrigued me is if you look at The State paper on the eve of the 1962 primary, The State paper says it's a toss-up. And then, of course, the next day, it's a two-to-one victory. Tom [Chadwick] made the point that your father's supporters weren't vocal, they didn't write letters to the editor, they weren't on the street corners, they weren't talking. They were working, and they spoke up at the polls, and that silent majority, in a way, they voted their feelings but they didn't wear them on their sleeve.

PATTERSON: That's true. That campaign, to me, was so different, because Fritz was young and so attractive.

[Side 1 ends, Side 2 begins]

PATTERSON: ...and I think that's why we were all nervous, because we saw all of these young people out working, and thought, "Oh my goodness. We're going to lose."
HARTSOOK: If your father is to be remembered by only a handful of actions or initiatives, what do you think those should be?

PATTERSON: A couple of the issues would have to be labor-related; child labor laws and things like that, that I think he believed [in] very passionately, about better working conditions. And those all came from his years in the textile mills. Of course, he'll always be remembered, I guess, for his conflict [while Governor] with the Highway Department. That was, again, where he felt like one group of bureaucrats was too powerful and doing too much to affect the state. I think he was very proud of what he did to help the textile folks as far as the cotton issue. I remember him spending many hours on the trade issue, the price of cotton, one-price cotton. And, again, I think his stand on issues like Medicare, being able to say he was for that. Those are the ones that would come to mind first off. And I must not leave out his work with FDR on Rural Electrification.

HARTSOOK: Your dad was a master campaigner.

PATTERSON: He loved to campaign.

HARTSOOK: Have you emulated any of his campaign practices?

PATTERSON: Evidently I didn't do them good enough. But I enjoyed campaigning with him. Things have changed. I don't think his campaign style would be as popular today, because his was the stump meetings, going to the gatherings, going to the country stores, and whatever. His was not a television campaign. And I like his style, and I enjoyed doing his style of campaigning, but I'm not so sure that's what gets you elected any more.

HARTSOOK: He probably would have had a very hard time raising the kind of money you need in a campaign.
PATTERSON: And he had a hard time in that last campaign with Fritz, because Fritz did a little bit of T.V., and Daddy felt like he had to, and Daddy was not telegenic. So it was not a good...it was showing the difference in the generations. He wouldn't have felt comfortable raising that kind of money. He didn't like to spend money.

HARTSOOK: The film clip that we have, showing them [Olin and Gladys Johnston] together, he says with great pride – I mean, obvious great pride – that your mother always handled [his] campaigns. We've talked a little bit about her role in the office and in the campaigns. Was her influence unusual, do you think, among Senate wives?

PATTERSON: Not unusual, but there were a whole lot of wives who were not interested in it. But there were some who were just as involved as Mother. I mean, for instance, Lady Bird [Johnson]. Muriel Humphrey. So some of them were just as involved. I would say it was sort of a give-or-take; fifty per cent wanted to be a part, and fifty didn't.

HARTSOOK: In today's environment, what do you think your mother would have done? Would she have gone into politics herself?

PATTERSON: Oh, she might well have. She might well have gone into politics herself. Because she was very much a believer in using your abilities and doing whatever you thought you wanted to do, and that you could do it. So she might have gone into politics.

HARTSOOK: Do you think you get your service orientation from your mother?

PATTERSON: Probably. I think Mother and Daddy were such a good team that my sister and I get their desire to work for people, to work with people. I think we get them from the two of them.

HARTSOOK: Were they really proud when you got involved in government?
PATTERSON: I think they were. Of course, I was not involved in politics until after Daddy died, but Mother seemed to be pleased that I was doing that. I just think they wanted us to be involved in the world, and that made them feel good, that we were all contributing in some way or another. I hope.

HARTSOOK: Is that what drove your mother, do you think, that service-orientation and making a contribution?

PATTERSON: It probably did.

HARTSOOK: Can you explain to us the sequence of events of your father's last illness? For instance, I can read the clippings, I know when he went into the hospital and things like that. I also know that he took work in with him, because one of the things we did when I started working with the collection, I pulled the papers out of the two briefcases that he had taken with him that last time to the hospital.

PATTERSON: Oh yes, he took things.

HARTSOOK: Could you just take a second...?

PATTERSON: He was at the Democratic National Convention that year – that was the Lyndon Johnson convention – and he became ill. He just didn't feel well. And they ran some tests on him and weren't sure exactly what it was, but that was the first, sort of, time. Then not long after that, Mother was in South Carolina and I was staying with him, and one morning he had a slight stroke. We put him on the plane that day and flew him back to South Carolina. I don't think that was even in the papers. When he got to Columbia, they ran tests and said he had an aneurysm and that they would need to operate. The operation was after Christmas; I can't even remember when that first operation was now.

HARTSOOK: And he was losing weight, correct?
PATTERSON: Yes. And when they went in to take care of the aneurysm, they found a problem with the colon, a melanoma on the colon. And so they wanted to take care of that before they did the aneurysm. So they took care of that, and then he went back into the hospital in March for the aneurysm, and had successful surgery for that, and then got a staph infection and died. They could not treat the staph infection properly because his liver was damaged. It was only then that they realized he most likely had hepatitis during the war.

HARTSOOK: The doctors felt, from everything, it looked pretty good? The prognosis...?

PATTERSON: Yes. He went back in the hospital between surgeries. I guess the first surgery was before Christmas, because he went back in the office in Washington for a few weeks in January and February, and then came back for that second surgery.

HARTSOOK: And did the weight loss start with that?

PATTERSON: Yes. It started with the colon surgery, because of course he didn't eat very much. And he never really got...

HARTSOOK: In those last pictures that you see, he just looks...?

PATTERSON: Yes. He never got over the first surgery; he really didn't.

HARTSOOK: And yet he took work with him in...?

PATTERSON: Oh, yes. And they discussed issues, he and Bubba Meng. I remember him coming into the hospital to talk to Daddy about some of the things. I remember his concerns about Education reform.

HARTSOOK: Who was running things in Washington?
PATTERSON: Bob Alexander, clearing things with Mom and everything. The office was going on and doing well. Bob and Tom [Chadwick]. And Matthew Poliakoff, I think, was up there at that time.

HARTSOOK: How was the transition to Donald Russell handled, do you have any idea?

PATTERSON: I really don't. I wasn't up there, so I don't know.

HARTSOOK: He didn't keep any of the staff, I don't believe. I think he brought in all of his own people.

PATTERSON: Yes, I don't think he did either. I don't know of anyone that he kept.

HARTSOOK: Did that strike you as odd?

PATTERSON: Well, I guess you sort of anticipate that sort of thing when there's a change. He had all of his gubernatorial staff and a lot of them wanted to come to Washington.

HARTSOOK: It seems like you'd want somebody who knew where the pencils were kept.

PATTERSON: Yes. Well, that might have been one of his downfalls. But I don't think he...

HARTSOOK: Yet people look at it, and I think the perception at the time, and now, was that he [Russell] was fairly effective in his short stay.

PATTERSON: That's interesting. I don't remember who he had on his Washington staff, and I'm trying to think. I guess I didn't even go to that office while he was there.
HARTSOOK: I interviewed him, and I asked him if that had been a difficult decision, to step down and have [Robert] McNair appoint him to that seat, and if he had talked it over with his advisers. You know, I kind of envisioned him tossing and turning. He said he never thought of doing anything other than what he did. He's an interesting man. He lives in the present and the future; he doesn't really care a great deal about talking about the past. But that was his answer. He said it just never occurred to him to do anything else.

PATTERSON: Isn't that interesting?

HARTSOOK: Did you have any role in the 1966 campaign, Russell versus Hollings?

PATTERSON: Not really.

HARTSOOK: But the signals did go out from the family that...?

PATTERSON: Oh, yes. Uncle Bill was the signaler.

HARTSOOK: What did he do?

PATTERSON: I think he helped Fritz in the campaign. I'm trying to think. I just was not involved. I was working in Washington.

HARTSOOK: Bubba [Meng] told me that your mother called him to the house and said that she wanted him to go to work for Fritz, and that that would be a good signal.

PATTERSON: Yes, she did.

HARTSOOK: Do you think he would have won without her help?

PATTERSON: I don't know. I think people at that point were angry with Russell, and a lot
of the Johnston people were angry with Russell. So to get them riled up, I think it did make a difference probably.

HARTSOOK: When did you decide that you wanted to seek public office? Before you started working with [Congressman James R.] Mann, or during, or later?

PATTERSON: Oh, gee. Later. I always thought that [my husband] Dwight would do it, so I was always sort of pushing him in that direction. Two years before I ran for county commission, there was an election for the legislature, county-wide, and I sort of dickered with that when Dwight said he wouldn't. I was secretary of the [county Democratic] Party, and I said, "If we don't have enough candidates by filing time, I going to file." But we had enough, so I didn't have to file.

HARTSOOK: What was Mann like to work for?

PATTERSON: Jim Mann? Real laid-back. Very laid-back. [He was] easy to work for, because he didn't seem...you know, we ran the office the way we wanted to run the office. He never really made many suggestions about what we should do or how we were doing it. He was in Washington and didn’t come to the district office very often.

HARTSOOK: That's very different from the kind of role your father played in his office.

PATTERSON: Yes.

HARTSOOK: What was your office like?

PATTERSON: I think I was more hands-on. And our office was more close-knit, too. We were more like family. That's just sort of the way I like it. I like letting everybody have a role and everybody being involved.
[Interview ends]