

T. Harry Williams Center for Oral History Collection

ABSTRACT

INTERVIEWEE NAME: William "Bill" Morgan

COLLECTION: 4700.1180

IDENTIFICATION: William Morgan was majority counsel for the Joint Economic Committee and political consultant for Gillis Long.

INTERVIEWER: Gary Huey

PROJECT: Gillis Long

INTERVIEW DATES: July 19, 1987

FOCUS DATES: 1970-1985

ABSTRACT:

Tape 1723, Side A

Describes Gillis Long as a very complicated man; editor of *Daily Reveille* at LSU during 1963 governor's race; met Long during the 1970 Congressional campaign; dropped out of law school to become part of the campaign; describes Long as intellectually demanding and an avid reader; Long as the consummate politician and the segregation compromise in the 1963 governor's race; belief that Long ran for governor in 1963 because he was a Long; feels Long would have had a good chance if the Long camp had not been split between Gillis and McKeithen; believes the split occurred because both men had a claim to the Long name; believes McKeithen was progressive for the time; McKeithen and Long as political enemies and political allies before the 1979 governor's race; Long's reluctance to run in '79 because of financial cost; discounts Long's health as an issue; theory of Long's defeat in '71 due to rednecks, blue bloods, and white supremacy; how the Long name helped and hurt because of progressive views; possible reasons why Long supported Edwards over Johnston in the '71 runoff; Long's successful Congressional campaign in '72 and the role of the redrawn district; role the O.E.O. played in shaping Long's view of the disadvantaged.

Tape 1723, Side B

Gillis Long gained financial security at Kohlmeyer and Associates but turned down a partnership; perceived by Wall Street bankers as crazy because he was a Long; Long encouraged Morgan to quit his law practice and work for him because the contacts he would make would be beneficial later; says Long was not embarrassed to ask for money; Long's fundraising ability; Long's personal touch with people and ability to foster loyalty; Long demanded the best from his staff which included long work days because he demanded the same of himself; describes Long as the bridge between the old and new in the Democratic party; believes Long revived the party Caucus as chairman; the blueprint for the Democratic party was published when Long was Caucus chairman; Long's love for Congress and knowledge of the rules; describes Long's

strengths as eagerness, intelligence, fund raising ability, and use of polls; describes Long's weakness as not being media friendly.

Tape 1724, Side A

Long could be politically unforgiving which Morgan illustrates with a story about Ned Randolph; Long was very interested in foreign trade; Long's limitation on foreign issues because of his position on the Rules Committee; Long did follow oil and gas policy; Long felt the attempt to save the hostages in Iran was botched by the military bureaucracy; Long's pride for being part of the delegation that started the Arab-Israeli talks that culminated at Camp David; Morgan describes a working trip to Europe with Long as full; Long felt an obligation as a member of Congress to learn about other countries and announce his itineraries when traveling; Long's decision to not generate national publicity for himself; Long was well known in Louisiana and to leaders of the country but preferred to be viewed as a state congressman rather than a national congressman; Morgan believes Long's legacy was the influence he had on the people around him and the courage to improve race relations in Louisiana.

Tape 1724, Side B

Contents of Long's resource book; the benefit of the resource book illustrated by a story about arranging flights for Muhammad Ali on short notice; Long's fundraisers in Washington and New Orleans each year described as the big ones; Morgan describes the duties of the three people that ran Long's office; Long's indecision over the '79 governor's race; relates a story of Long waiting for Howard Hughes; speculation on how Long came to work for Hughes; describes Long as Type A personality; heart bypass slowed Long but did not make him less intense; Long did not compliment directly but found other ways of doing it; Long's pride in changing staffers circumstances for the better; Long enjoyed hearing appreciation from others.

TAPES: 2 (T1723, T1724)

TOTAL PLAYING TIME: 2 hours

PAGES TRANSCRIPT: 68 pages

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RESTRICTIONS: None