



Oral History Interview of Jeanne Hession (OH-015)

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Oral History Interview of Jeanne M. Hession

Interview Date: September 10, 2003

Interviewed by: Robert Allison, Suffolk University History Professor and Joseph McEttrick, Suffolk University Law School Professor

Citation: Hession, Jeanne M. Interviewed by Robert Allison and Joseph McEttrick. John Joseph Moakley Oral History Project OH-015. 10 September 2003. Transcript and audio available. John Joseph Moakley Archive and Institute, Suffolk University, Boston, MA.

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Interview Summary

Jeanne Hession is a Suffolk University Law School alumna and its first female member of the Board of Trustees. This interview covers her attendance at Suffolk University Law School with classmate and friend Congressman Joe Moakley; her tenure as the first female class president; how Suffolk University has changed since 1956; the changing role of women in law; her friendship with Congressman Moakley; and her service on the Board of Trustees. In conclusion, Ms. Hession describes Congressman Moakley's legacy to Suffolk University and Massachusetts.

Subject Headings

Hession, Jeanne M., 1930-

Moakley, John Joseph, 1927-2001

Suffolk University

Suffolk University Law School

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Part 2

Congressman Moakley's legacy

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This interview took place on Wednesday, September 10, 2003, at Suffolk University Law School's John Joseph Moakley Law Library at 120 Tremont Street, Boston, MA.

Interview Transcript

PROFESSOR JOSEPH P. McETTRICK: This is an interview with trustee Jeanne M. Hession, with Professor Bob Allison and Joe McEttrick.

PROFESSOR ROBERT ALLISON: Thank you for joining us this morning. And we're doing this as a way of learning more about Joe Moakley and his political life, and we really appreciate the opportunity of talking with you. Now do you remember when you first met Joe Moakley?

HESSION: I certainly do, and I appreciate being here because Joe is a memory that nobody can ever forget that had known him for any period of time. But I met Joe in an evening class at Suffolk Law School back in 1956. Joe, of course, was in the state legislature at the time, and I happened to also live in his district, which was obviously just a precinct in those days. So I met Joe and he offered me a ride home from school. And that was nice, because evening division students were working all day, and a ride home instead of fighting the subway was not to be sneezed at. But Joe was always that kind of a person, always trying to help somebody, and he was unforgettable.

And then looking over at the golden dome, sitting here looking out this window, you can't help but think of all of the classmates. Several of them were in the legislature at the time, and if some of them weren't coming to Suffolk Law School at that point, Joe rounded a few more up and brought them in. There was John Costello and Joe, and Belden Bly from up on the North Shore, a Republican, which was very strange. I think he was probably the only Republican in the class. But Joe was forever trying to get people to get a better education and to do more with their lives, which is really what he did. From the time he was fifteen, as everybody knows, he went into the Navy as a Seabee and fought in the South Pacific. And that was Joe, always interested in people. And you weren't just a number that would count as a vote, but you were somebody that he wanted to get involved with and do something for and with.

So that was when I first met Joe, and since I lived in the district it was fine because I always got a ride home, which was very beneficial. That was the beginning of it.

ALLISON: What made you come to Suffolk?

HESSION: Well, I got out of high school and I went to work. I hadn't taken a college course in high school so I got a job as a secretary in a very small law office. And two of the lawyers that I worked—

(interruption)

ALLISON: —secretary in a small law office.

HESSION: I was a secretary in a small law office, and both the lawyers had gone to law school at night. So I thought, Gee, that's pretty good. I don't want to spend the rest of my life doing this.

(interruption)

ALLISON: So you had the two lawyers who had gone to law school at night.

HESSION: So I decided I would go to law school. And the reason I picked Suffolk was rather strange, and very fortuitous for me, because I love Suffolk Law School. But I signed up for Northeastern for some reason. And they got the bright idea at that time that—they accepted me; I had a letter, proving they accepted me. But then the night I was to start classes, they had changed their admission rules and they decided they didn't want me. So I was very unhappy about that.

And one of the lawyers I worked for had graduated from Suffolk, but the other one had graduated from Northeastern. So I went down to Suffolk and got a very warm welcome, and was

very happy that that was the way it worked out. And then the student body, I think, was terrific as well as the faculty, because everybody seemed to care that everybody else succeeded. I think today, there is so much competition and it may be a lot different. But in those days, we had classmates that came in from Worcester before the new road was built. They came in Route 9 every night. One of them, Bill Scannell, became a judge; John O'Connor became the clerk of the criminal court in Worcester. But these men came in every night along Route 9 to classes.

We had Jimmy Delaney, who was delivering milk—that's how long ago this was, so you know what time a milkman goes out in the morning. And he would be in, every night, coming in to class. He has at least two sons, maybe three, that have now graduated and passed the bar. He has a grandson who started in the law school either last year or this year.

And it was just amazing, because most of the classmates had been in the service and were going on the GI Bill. And thanks to Dottie Mac¹ when their money ran out—because they all had small families, and the money was very tight—and Dottie Mac would make sure that they didn't get thrown out until their government check came through. So it's incredible what the student body did at that time, as individuals. They were just terrific people.

Jimmy Linnehan,² who's former chairman of the board of trustees and is still on the board, passed the full CPA exam while going to law school at night and working full time as an accountant, with his six little children and coming down from Lowell. So it's just amazing, the caliber of students and the caliber of the faculty, because with the exception—as far as I know, only one person didn't become a lawyer from that class.

And the faculty were great. Most of us, myself included, couldn't afford to take a bar review, couldn't take time off to study for the bar. And our faculty somehow, in the period of time we were in law school, gave us what we needed to pass the bar, and to go on and to be lawyers. So

¹ Dorothy M. McNamara (1910-2003) was employed by Suffolk University from 1927 to 1974, serving as bursar for twenty-five of those years before becoming alumni secretary.

² James F. Linnehan, Sr., was a classmate and close friend of Moakley's and is a member of Suffolk University's board of trustees. OH-065 in the John Joseph Moakley Oral History Project is an interview with Mr. Linnehan.

it's just a tremendous school, and welcoming, very interesting people, I think, who did very well thanks to Suffolk Law School.

McETTRICK: What year was it, Jeanne, that you started the law school?

HESSION: 1952.

McETTRICK: And how many students were there in the graduating class?

HESSION: There were about sixty of us. There were, I think, probably five or ten in the day division, and the rest of us were evening division students.

McETTRICK: So you met Congressman Moakley when you were in law school, and then did you see much of him after you finished law school? Did your paths cross again?

HESSION: Yeah, we kept in touch over the fifty years, really. As a matter of fact, when they hung his portrait down at the Capitol, I was invited down. And that was the last time I saw him alive. We went down for the “hanging.” I had told everyone here, “I never went to a hanging before.” So we went down, and that evening, Joe—it was two weeks before he died, and Joe felt good enough that night that his staff and a few of us that had been invited down—Jimmy Linnehan, myself, my sister—all went out to dinner that night with Joe. And it was a great, great time.

It was very interesting because Marty Meehan³ and some of the other congressional delegation were there, too. And Marty Meehan was there, and Joe and Marty and Jimmy and I, we went to Legal Sea Foods. And we were all sort of together in one group, and then the table went around the room. And Marty was just fascinated because Joe and Jimmy Linnehan could—it's like when men talk about ball games and they know who hit what forever, and could rattle off numbers. Well, they were rattling off every election that Joe had ever been in and they could

³ Martin T. “Marty” Meehan (1956-), a Democrat, represented Massachusetts’ Fifth Congressional District in the U.S. House of Representatives from 1993 to 2007. He is a trustee of Suffolk University.

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remember every count of every—and Marty’s sitting there, honestly, just looking amazed and dumfounded to hear Joe and Jimmy Linnehan discuss every campaign that they ever had. It was very fascinating and we had a great evening that night.

But I would always hear from Joe, and Joe was, again, always trying to get people to go to law school. And he’d call and say, “What do you have to do to get into law school?” and he would send people. And even at Joe’s funeral, a lady came over to me and she said to me—I remember, I had never met her, and she said, “Joe asked you to talk to me about going to law school.” And I had talked to her on the phone, but I didn’t even know her. But he was always trying to get people. And we have somebody in the law school now, one of his former aides is in the law school. And he was always interested in people being able to get a better education and to help other people.

McETTRICK: What happened to you after you finished law school? We know where Joe Moakley went, but how did your career unfold from graduation?

HESSION: Well, totally different than I expected. The small law firm, I guess, decided they really couldn’t afford another lawyer. So I was out looking, and I wound up going to work for the legal department at Boston Safe Deposit and Trust Company, and became associate trust counsel there, ultimately. And that was through Suffolk too, basically, because somebody had called Malcolm Donahue⁴ to see if he could recommend somebody. And it was Malcolm who gave me the introduction to the trust company, and that’s where I started there.

McETTRICK: So you continued to stay in touch with the law school. And were you involved in alumni affairs? You eventually got on the board of trustees, so tell us about your relationship with the school after graduation.

⁴ Malcolm Donahue was a member of the law school faculty member from 1953-2001 and law school associate dean from 1973-1990. He is the son of Judge Frank J. Donahue (see footnote 5).

HESSION: Well of course, in those days Judge Donahue⁵ would run these alumni dinners. And what we'd do, we'd usually try for a table basically—oh, Joe had me elected class president. Joe was determined that Suffolk would have the first woman law school class president. So I came in one night and was informed that I was running for president of the class, which had never entered my mind. But then unfortunately, Joe said, “Did you see the signs?”

And I said, “What signs?” Well, he had his own campaign people make a three-color sign and had it pasted all over the school. I didn't even see them, which—he was a little chagrined that I hadn't noticed them. (laughter)

But anyway, I realized that this very week, a lady lawyer by the name of Mary Murphy died at the age of one hundred. And it turns out she was really the first woman law school president, but it was Portia, which was an all-woman's law school. So my record may still be intact as being the first class president of a law school class.

McETTRICK: And how many women were in your class?

HESSION: So there were two of us at that time.

ALLISON: Why did he decide that you should be the first woman president?

HESSION: Oh, that was just Joe's idea. And then Joe decided that there should be a woman president. And as he in the future would say—and at one point when somebody accused him of being anti-women. And he said no, and he could always relate to that story. So I guess he always considered he was ahead of himself in moving forward on ideas whose time hadn't quite arrived.

McETTRICK: So when did you join the board of trustees for the university?

⁵ Frank J. Donahue (1881-1979), Suffolk Law School class of 1921, served in several state and local political capacities, including Massachusetts Secretary of State, before being appointed to the Massachusetts Superior Court in 1932. He was a life member of Suffolk's board of trustees and served as treasurer of the university from 1949 to 1969. Suffolk's Donahue Building at 41 Temple Street is named in his honor.

HESSION: Well, it must be about thirty, maybe thirty-five years ago now. And I was on vacation in Hawaii, and Tom Fulham⁶ was president at the time. And at that time, the board was composed of just men. And pressure was being brought that they should have a minority, a woman at least. And so it was “the old Judge Fenton,”⁷ we always refer to him, and Tom Fulham who contacted me, which was a complete surprise out of the blue.

Oh, I almost forgot to say that for the alumni dinners, we would always get a table and I would wind up as the person in the class to call people to get a table full. So I suppose at that point I became known because religiously we went to all the law school dinners, which were a fundraiser in those days to try to raise scholarship funds. And so they knew that Judge Donahue’s little black book—saw that I had always bought a ticket and always—so that may have been part of how the name surfaced, and the fact that it was the time when the law school decided that they did have to have a woman. And that’s how I got on.

McETTRICK: And then Joe Moakley eventually joined you as a Suffolk University trustee, but that was considerably later.

HESSION: That’s right, a long time later. Jimmy Linnehan became a trustee; he was also a classmate. And I urged Jimmy to—that was when we first had alumni trustees, and Jimmy didn’t realize that you had to run. He thought that you could be nominated, and if he was nominated he said, Yeah, he would be a trustee. Then he found out he had to run. (laughter) But fortunately, he was elected anyway. But I don’t think he’s ever forgiven me the fact that he could have lost. And there was no way out of that.

But he’s one of the most articulate, bright people I know. He can go through a lot of complex problems, issues, and come to a practical solution. And his combination of his legal experience

⁶ Thomas A. Fulham (1915-1995) served as president of Suffolk University from 1970 to 1980.

⁷ John E. Fenton, Sr. (1898-1974), Suffolk Law School class of 1924, served as a judge for the Massachusetts land court for twenty-eight years before being elected president of Suffolk University in 1965. Prior to his election as president, he served on Suffolk’s board of trustees as vice-chairman, board chairman, university vice president and acting president.

and his CPA accounting experience—business expertise, I thought, was essential for the board, and that’s why I suggested that he run. And I think he’s made a very excellent trustee as a result.

McETTRICK: Now did you get involved at all in any of Joe Moakley’s campaigns, or with his congressional office?

HESSION: I certainly did.

McETTRICK: Yeah, tell us about that.

HESSION: I can remember when Joe first ran for Congress, and that was the school busing time. I lived in the district and Joe was running. And it was a very difficult time, because Joe was running, Louise Day Hicks⁸ was running against him, and Nelson—I can’t remember his name.

McETTRICK: David Nelson.⁹

HESSION: David Nelson was running, and I knew all three of them. And so now it’s a problem. Well obviously, I was going to campaign for Joe and I did. But it was difficult, and the issue revolved around the whole busing.

And I can remember working in Joe’s campaign headquarters on Election Day, the primary. And it was pouring rain and freezing cold, it couldn’t be a worse day. And I was in a very leaky campaign office that Joe had, and it was cold and it was miserable. It was near a school, and all the little kids were coming by. When I was a kid you used to pick up candidates’ little brochures. It was like collecting baseball cards; you’d collect cards from the candidates. So all the kids were coming in and they all would say one thing. And I knew, in my heart of hearts—

⁸ Louise Day Hicks (1916-2003), a Democrat, represented Massachusetts’ Ninth Congressional District from 1971 to 1973. It was in the 1970 election that Moakley lost his first bid for Congress. Moakley defeated Hicks in the 1972 congressional election when he ran as an Independent so he wouldn’t have to run against Hicks in the democratic primary.

⁹ David S. Nelson (1933-1998) was the first African American to serve as a judge of a federal court in Boston. He was appointed to the position in 1979 by President Jimmy Carter.

and they said, Well, I like Joe Moakley but Mrs. Hicks is gonna win, and that was what they were hearing at home over the supper table because of the busing issue. You know, everybody really liked Joe, but the issue was very traumatic because people wanted their children in their own neighborhood. And the whole idea of busing was just frightening to everybody.

So sure enough, after a very cold and wet day with the leaky roof, of course, I had been invited to the victory party, and so I didn't feel like going to any victory party. I was cold and I was wet, and I knew—so I went down to one of the precincts where they were taking the count. And the way the numbers were coming in, you knew from the very beginning what had happened. So then I said, “Well, I'm supposed to be going to this victory party.” And I looked miserable, I felt miserable, I was miserable. And I went to the “victory party,” which was of course a disaster.

And then the next time around, Joe ran as an Independent, and so in the election, he won the congressional seat and stayed there forever after.

ALLISON: Were you involved in the second campaign?

HESSION: Well in the second campaign, I didn't sit in any leaky [office]—I always went around collecting signatures and doing things like that. But even up until the very end, a few years ago, I was doing it out in Braintree, standing on the street with a sign on Election Day, trying to get people to vote for him. And most people that were going by would toot and wave and smile. And they all liked Joe, I mean, at that point there was no question. And I don't know why I did it, I mean, he didn't need anybody out. But we always were in touch and I always, to that extent, always was involved in his campaigns.

McETTRICK: So were you in Dorchester in the 1970 election? Had you campaigned for him in Dorchester?

HESSION: Yes.

McETTRICK: So had you gotten involved in politics otherwise, or did you just make an exception for Joe because he was a close friend?

HESSION: No, I had never had anything to do with politics. But of course, being in that class, everybody was in politics, and so you got Tom McGrimley, who ran for local office out in the Jamaica Plain area; I went to some of his things. And John Costello who ran for lieutenant governor unsuccessfully, unfortunately. And you sort of absorbed the whole climate, and with a lot of it—because most of the classmates, they'd be still sitting in session. And they'd come over or run over for class; then they'd run back for a roll call. And we used to study in the state house under that dome, because if they were there for an important roll call—we'd be studying for the May exams and I'd go over and join them there, and we would sit there. And then if there was a roll call, they'd get up and run in and vote, and then come back and we'd finish studying. So we did that all the time.

McETTRICK: Now do you remember taking the bar examination? Where did that happen?

HESSION: That was over in the Fenway, I think, English High School. Is that where English High is?

McETTRICK: Yes.

HESSION: It was over in the Fenway, and you asked me, "Do you remember it?" Who could forget that? In those days, it was two days. And I can remember coming out in the morning at the lunch break, and thinking that I had already blown it because I had run out of time. The tests we were having at the law school at that time were geared at a different timing than the bar exam that I took. And I remember getting down to the last question and I had about two minutes to read it and answer it. And so I threw down an answer, but it was on bills and notes, which I wasn't very good at anyway. And so I thought, "Well, good, I didn't have time enough to get into any trouble."

So at the second day of the—and of course, at lunchtime we met people that we knew, and if you weren't going to talk about the exam, we'd have lunch together; if you wanted to talk about the exam, forget it. So we were to go out and we were to have lunch. And then the next day, in the morning another classmate showed up and he had missed the first day totally, he had his dates mixed up. And he thought we were kidding when we said, "No, you missed the exam yesterday." And so he didn't become a lawyer on that exam.

McETTRICK: Now did Joe Moakley take that exam with you?

HESSION: Yeah. And Dan Healy, who then went into practice with Joe in South Boston at the time, took it too. Dan was always—all through law school he kept saying, "I have a friend at B.C. [Boston College], and they're getting much more than we are, and we'll never pass the bar." And then after the exam, Dan and I passed the bar, and his friend from B.C. hadn't.

McETTRICK: Well there you go.

HESSION: Don't edit the script; we believe these things.

McETTRICK: So what did you see of the school, then, as it changed? You saw it in the fifties, and then you saw it occasionally, at least, as one of the alumnae of the school. And what reflections do you have on that, as time passed and different people held different leadership roles in the university and the law school?

HESSION: It's very impressive, because when we were in the law school, at that time the college was attracting a lot of teachers. Teachers were going for master's degree in education and we all shared one building. And the people at night that were going to the school, so the university as such, were basically teachers because they were working all day. So I didn't have too much familiarity with the rest of the university at that point until I got on the board, and then I became involved with the—well, thanks to Judge Fenton, he was going to make the most of his "token woman," if you will. (laughs) So I was on, at one time I think, eighteen committees. And I was going to all the meetings because I'm not basically just a joiner. If I'm on something,

I try to get involved in it. So it took a great deal of time, but I got to meet some very wonderful people and to see what a dedicated faculty we have, not only in the law school but throughout the university.

And it's incredible to me. I can remember going up one time when there was a question. The students were upset that the cafeteria wasn't adequate. And so I went up with Brad Sullivan, who just died recently, and met him and went in unannounced to see if it were true that you couldn't get a seat in the cafeteria.

(interruption)

McETTRICK: Yeah, I had just asked from 1956 onward what changes you sought in the university, the college and university as time went on?

HESSION: Well as I say, when I was in the law school, everything was in the one building. And it was just an old building and not terribly adequate. And a lot of the students going in the evening were also teachers who were going for master's degrees, and that was the big influx. So primarily the people that I was exposed to were evening division people. So after I got on the board and discovered that there were a lot more aspects—when you have a college of liberal arts, college of arts and sciences, a business school. All of that was all new to me because I was solely focused on the law school.

But Judge Fenton was chairman of the board at that time and decided that since they had this “minority person,” she should be on every committee in the university. So I wound up on something like eighteen committees. So I became very familiar with all of the faculty and the courses, and all of the problems around a university, and raising funds and getting the name out. And attracting students, and getting them the education they needed, and getting them placed. So that was how that happened.

One of the things was, when I was in the law school, the campus basically was Conda's Restaurant. And between classes we'd all go over and get a cup of coffee and stand outside.

And that was the lounge, if you will, standing on the street or sitting in Conda's Restaurant. In those days, there were a lot of boarding house people, who were basically minimum wage people who were just about existing. So the fact that the students now wanted a cafeteria was amazing, and that they had one and they didn't think it was adequate.

And Tom Fulham thought it was adequate. And so I decided, well, since I'm a trustee and they're complaining, I'll go see this cafeteria. So Brad Sullivan and I, we went to the cafeteria, and lo and behold, naturally Brad was known as the dean. So if anybody was with him, obviously those two people should have a seat. So we got a seat, but some of the students were, in fact, standing.

So when I see now that we have dormitories and dining rooms and lounge areas, it's incredible from this one building, practically back to the time when Archer rented out a room in his living room for twenty-five cents a pop. The changes in that period of time have been unbelievable.

McETTRICK: Was Fred McDermott¹⁰ the law school dean when you were a student?

HESSION: John O'Brien¹¹ was when I started and McDermott came in after that. I was out by the time McDermott became dean.

McETTRICK: So who are some of the other figures that you recollect over time? You mentioned Tom Fulham, we had Vincent Fulmer,¹² we had Dan Perlman.¹³ We had Judge McLaughlin;¹⁴ he was very active.

¹⁰ Frederick J. McDermott (d. 1964) served as dean of Suffolk Law School from 1956 to 1964.

¹¹ John F. X. O'Brien was a member of Suffolk's law school faculty from 1948 to 1976 and served as dean of the law school from 1952 to 1956.

¹² Vincent Fulmer was a member of Suffolk's board of trustees from 1973 to 1993 and served as its chairman from 1976 to 1979.

¹³ Daniel H. Perlman (1935-1994) served as president of Suffolk University from 1980 to 1989.

¹⁴ Walter H. McLaughlin (1907-1994), Suffolk Law School class of 1931, was appointed chief justice of the Massachusetts Superior Court in 1970, retiring in 1977. He also served on Suffolk's board of trustees and as Law School Committee chairman.

HESSION: Judge McLaughlin was on the board; he came on the board just before I did. And I always can remember the first board meeting I went to, and Dorothy McNamara was there and she was very pleased. I think Dorothy McNamara probably had a hand in my name surfacing as the woman that they should pick. So when I was going into the meeting she said to me, “Don’t be nervous.”

And I said, “Well, why should I be nervous? They asked me; I didn’t ask them.” I mean, I was puzzled because I always figured trustees had to be extremely wealthy, which I certainly wasn’t and am not. But I thought, Well, they asked me. So I got into the room, and it was very interesting because I wound up sitting next to Judge Donahue, who was a very interesting person in his own right. And so I was sitting beside him and opposite Judge McLaughlin, who also—both of these were very colorful judges. And sitting there, opposite one and beside the other, with Judge Fenton presiding at the other end of the table—and it was very interesting.

And then John Griffin,¹⁵ one of the trustees who was from the business end of the world, came down at the end of the meeting, and he said, “I would like to shake your hand.” And I could see relief in his face because he said, “They told me you weren’t one of those feminists.”

So I said, “You know, they were warning me not to be nervous, but,” I said, “I think, when I looked around the room, some of those trustees were more nervous.” As to, What had happened when they opened this board to a woman? And so it was very interesting. But the board had fascinating people, every one of them totally dedicated to Suffolk University. And it was marvelous to see the time and the attention that they brought to that board, and the interesting topics that would come up.

I can remember saying something at the first meeting—and I wasn’t sure, but I figured, well, I’m here; if they ask me, I’m not going to be quiet. You can see, I’m not too quiet. And I made

¹⁵ John Griffin (1903-1987) taught at Suffolk’s College of Liberal Arts from 1934 to 1937 and assisted in the establishment of the College of Journalism in and the College of Business Administration in. After incorporation of the three schools as Suffolk University in 1937, Griffin was elected to the board of trustees, on which he served until his death in 1987.

some statement, and Walter McLaughlin almost spit across the table at me and said, “You’re absolutely right!” And I thought, Well, I guess that wasn’t too bad.

And then every once in a while, Judge Donahue, who was sitting to my left, I remember. And he kept saying, “What’d he say?” because sometimes he couldn’t always hear, but his whisper was anything but discreet. So if he was disagreeing with somebody, he would very vocally shout it. So I thought, This is going to be a very interesting experience.

END OF PART 1

(interview picks up during casual conversation)

ALLISON: —at the dedication of the law school, too, I think.

HESSION: No, he told that everywhere. In the district, you know, people would be amazed. And as I say, so many politicians—how many times have we had people that say they graduated from Harvard, and it turns out they never darkened the door of Harvard? Joe was the opposite; Joe would go out and tell the people he was asking for votes, that I got him through law school. I mean, it was so totally different from these people that put on this big front.

McETTRICK: Well, why don’t we start with that point. We have been told that Joe Moakley claimed that he had gotten through law school through your efforts. Could you tell us a little bit about the history of that comment?

HESSION: Well, when we were in law school, as I say, nobody had time, money, or anything else. And so we all shared whatever we had with each other. Well, working in a law office as a secretary, I would type out some of my notes and abstracts of cases. And then Joe got the bright idea, wouldn’t that be nice to get his hands on some of those? So I would make carbon copies because it was before the days of Xeroxing. As Jimmy Linnehan said, “Boy, if we ever had those notes and Xeroxed them, we could have made a mint.” So anyway, they’d all fight to see who got the better copy of the carbons.

So Joe frequently, even when he was campaigning and asking people for votes, he would get up, and unlike the politicians who'd pretend that they'd graduated *summa cum laude* from Harvard, Joe would tell his constituency that I got him through law school. But that's the kind of a person that he was. But as I say, again, it reflected those times when people were all working together for whatever each one was trying to do.

McETTRICK: So how did it happen that Joe got on the board of trustees?

HESSION: Well then, we realized how much Joe had been doing for the school, and not only encouraging people to come to the school but getting grants and funds for the school. And so we realized what he was doing, which he would do anyway, whether he was on the board or not. But we really wanted someone who had been very active and helpful to the school. Anytime there was an emergency or a need, Joe was always there. So we asked Joe—and there was a question, too, since he would be in Washington—would he be able to be actively involved? So then, I think that's the only reason why he hadn't been asked earlier to come onto the board.

And I think we were all very impressed with what he had done. I mean, we all considered him an outstanding statesman, reflecting in what he had done and achieved, not just in his own district but worldwide, and especially the El Salvador situation.¹⁶ What he had done in human rights, all of the things that are so important and always a part of the Suffolk mission. I think that was the thing, and as I say, I think we regret that we hadn't done it sooner. But mostly, Suffolk was a growing institution, and it is a growing institution. And for a while, we felt you

¹⁶ Starting in 1983, Congressman Moakley introduced legislation to protect Salvadorans in the U.S. using the "Extended Voluntary Departure" provision that allowed a temporary stay of deportation and work authorization. Moakley was finally able to pass legislation that granted Temporary Protected Status (TPS) to Salvadorans in the Immigration Act of 1990 (PL. 101-649). TPS grants temporary legal residency and work authorization to immigrants fleeing civil wars, natural disasters or other conditions in their home country for a set period of time. In El Salvador's case, TPS has been extended several times since 1990. The TPS designation has been used by other countries experiencing civil unrest and is administered by the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). (See <http://www.uscis.gov>.) Also, in December of 1989, Speaker of the House Thomas S. Foley appointed Moakley as chairman of a committee to investigate violence in El Salvador, specifically the November 16, 1989, murder of six Jesuit priests, their housekeeper and her daughter at the University of Central America in San Salvador. The committee is commonly referred to as the Speaker's Task Force on El Salvador or the Moakley Commission. The Moakley Commission investigation revealed that the Salvadoran military was responsible for the murders.

had to have someone that would be around to go to eighteen meetings between board meetings. And I think that's the only reason he wasn't asked sooner.

But to have him as an alumnus of the school, perhaps one of our most prominent—at least in my mind he is our most prominent alumnus—who had achieved so much and done so much in a lifetime—I think that's where we come from.

McETTRICK: So how would you sum up Joe's legacy to Suffolk University, or Suffolk University Law School? What points would you emphasize?

HESSION: Well, I think his inspiration of what a person can achieve, a person who probably never expected to go to college. He had started out as a tin knocker and never expected to be anything more than that, but somehow went through college and on to law school, into government, and into very high office in government. My idea of Suffolk University is a place where people who come from modest means can get an education and achieve things that they never dreamed of. And I think it's the American way, I think it's the Suffolk way. It certainly was Joe Moakley's way.

So those are the things that I think. You know, when you see the evening news and you see the John Joseph Moakley Courthouse, the federal courthouse, you see a lot of parks, you see a lot of things named for Joe. You turn on the radio and you hear another cancer grant given in Joe's name somewhere. And all kinds of things are being named for Joe. He's being recognized far beyond a little district in Congress. But again, part of that came from the fact that he got his education at Suffolk. And it was a springboard for him, and I think that kind of a person reflects so well on the school. It's still growing, and to me those are the important things.

McETTRICK: What would you say in terms of Joe's legacy for the city and the state? I think you started to describe that. Did you want to elaborate on how Boston is different or Massachusetts is different as a result of Joe's efforts?

HESSION: Well Joe had done so much. He had a very diverse congressional district. And he had the busing issue, which was very complicated, and he dealt with that. He had the black community, he had the Hispanic community, he had the inner city community; he had places like Halifax, remote places. So he had a varied constituency where people's—and I think he helped to mold people into one person, to achieve what we have achieved in those kinds of areas.

Building-wise, even when he was at the state house—the aquarium in those days was a little, tiny fish pool over in South Boston. And I can remember Joe, when he was in the legislature, they were trying to get money to improve the aquarium.

(interruption)

HESSION: You asked about some of the changes in the city. When I first met Joe, he was in the legislature and they were trying to raise funds for the aquarium. The Boston Aquarium, at that time, was nothing but one little, tiny building over in South Boston near where Farragut Park is. And they were trying to get funds because they—I think they had one seal. I remember my father taking me there and there was a seal, but there wasn't much else in the aquarium.

So Joe was trying to get funds through the legislature to do something with the aquarium. And I always remember—and this is typically Joe—he said, “There are more fish in a can of sardines than there are in the aquarium.”

So when you look at the New England Aquarium I always think of Joe, because the difference. So that's another kind of a thing, and of course, the fact that he brought diverse groups of people with different problems and issues, I think he did a magnificent job there. So that's sort of an intangible, if you will, but more real. But even the aquarium.

And when you look around now, I think over at the Mass Eye and Ear [Massachusetts Eye and Ear Infirmary], and several of our major hospitals have got very large grants, some through Joe's efforts and government funding. And also, just recently somebody left several million dollars in Joe's name in cancer research at one of the major Boston hospitals. And I think if you start

looking around the city, you'll find lots of things with John Joseph Moakley's name on it because of the people he affected. I think he changed people's idea. He did a lot for cancer research; Bridgewater State College got a lot of funding. The Kennedy Library, and St. Mary's Center in Dorchester, which helps women and children, single mothers, they've been benefiting through Joe's efforts. I don't think you can stop—if the list were listed of the agencies that had benefited through what Joe had done, just working quietly with individuals, South Boston, I'm sure, is loaded with areas that were improved because of it, but it wasn't limited to South Boston, it covered the whole area.

And then the Moakley Scholarship, the funds, and that's an incredible thing, too. The Moakley Scholarship Committee, just before Joe's death in a couple months, they formed a foundation, the John Joseph Moakley Foundation. And I'm a member of that board. And they raised a couple million dollars quickly. Now that was when Joe was dying, and did die.

And now, on the first anniversary of his death, they awarded thirty five thousand dollar scholarships to students primarily from the Ninth Congressional District, but for any student in Massachusetts. And then on the second anniversary, they awarded twenty scholarships. And that's the idea; we're trying to keep that going because education was very important to Joe. And having read upwards to four hundred applications each year—and it's a job to read those applications—but the backgrounds of the people, their achievements, they try to consider need but also what people are doing and what their goals are, and how they can carry on what Joe had done. So I don't think we can appreciate the numbers of lives he has affected, just by being what he was.

McETTRICK: Do you recall the library dedication here at the law school?¹⁷ What was that like?

HESSION: Snowy. (laughter) It was very, very nice. That evening, I got a call from somebody because I was going to be a person to say a few words and they limited the time. Now you're getting stuck today. But anyway, they called to see if I was going to make it in, because it

¹⁷ The John Joseph Moakley Law Library at Suffolk University Law School was dedicated on January 13, 2000. 120 Tremont Street, Boston, MA 02108 | Tel: 617.305.6277 | Fax: 617.305.6275

was snowing quite heavily that day; I don't think we had had any snow up until that point in time.

But the dedication, I thought, was very, very nice, and it filled the law school. And Joe's comment used to be that there were only two places in the law school—two rooms in the law school he had never been in: one was the library and the other was the ladies' room. (laughter) So he was very overwhelmed, I think, that the law library had been named for him.

And I'm sure that he's very pleased that his archives—that his materials are here and being so well taken care of, and handled so beautifully, and still available to the public beyond the tours and all the rest of it. The availability to make Joe's works known, and to keep going. When people see things like that, they can't help but want to continue it and do more in that vein, or beyond it.

McETRICK: Were there some stories or anecdotes that you wanted to share with us, or other memories that you have of Joe, that we really haven't touched upon? Sometimes there's something that you meant to bring up, and you kind of forget it when the moment comes.

HESSION: I sort of feel like a broken record, because I think I've said it so many times to so many people, maybe I can't—

ALLISON: Did you get to know Evelyn¹⁸ well?

HESSION: Yes, I knew Evelyn. She was a lovely lady. And that's a story, too, because Joe loved to eat. And we used to go out a lot after law school to get something to eat on the way home. And I can remember down in the North End, a very nice Italian restaurant one night. And we were talking about a real property exam that was coming up. And we were totally confused, and we're talking about it. Well the waiter could overhear the conversation, which was just Joe and myself that night. And the waiter said, "Oh," and he looked at Joe. And he said, "Are you a lawyer?"

¹⁸ Evelyn (Duffy) Moakley (1927-1996) was Congressman Moakley's wife. They married in 1957. 120 Tremont Street, Boston, MA 02108 | Tel: 617.305.6277 | Fax: 617.305.6275

And he said, “No, we’re law students.” And it turns out the waiter was a lawyer. So we’re looking at each other. Now we’re tired, it’s late at night and we’re going crazy with an exam that’s looming over our head. And we thought, “Oh, good Lord, we’re going to wind up being a waiter.”

So that was a night. And then another time, I was down at the Cape, and Joe and Evelyn used to be down on the Cape, and he would stay at a place in Harwich that Anthony Athanas owned. So I was out one morning. There’s an ice cream place in South Yarmouth, and so I’m at the ice cream place. And who comes in and comes along—it’s an outdoor stand—but Joe, and Joe was getting an ice cream cone. And so we were talking and all, and he said, “Don’t tell Evelyn you saw me.” He said, “She thinks I’ve gone out to have a key made for the house.” Because she was trying to get him on a diet, and Joe was down having his ice cream.

So when Joe and Evelyn both got terribly sick, and neither one were expected to survive—and she, in fact, didn’t—I went down to the same ice cream stand. And he was in the hospital in Washington, and she was in the hospital up here. And I bought one of their T-shirts that said “The Caboose” ice cream stand, and I sent that to Joe with a note saying, “I hope I’ll soon see you there again,” because he just loved it.

But there’s so many times you think of him, when somebody asks, you can’t think of them too much.

McETTRICK: Well you mentioned that when you were in law school and then a trustee, that you were given all of these assignments because they were interested in getting a woman involved in things. How do you think the legal profession is doing now in Massachusetts with the role of women? Tell us about your observations on the current scene.

HESSION: Well, we’ve certainly got women judges in all of the courts now; we’ve got them in the law firms. And of course, I was sort of an anomaly at the trust company because, number one, they didn’t have a woman lawyer at that time, either, and there was no problem. I mean, I

didn't find it a problem. I had a small law practice of my own which didn't conflict with what I was doing for the trust company, and they were aware of it. And I never really experienced any problems, but I never went to work for a major law firm. Because in those days, the major law firms weren't hiring Suffolk graduates. They were hiring from the old school tie, you know, the Harvards, the wherever, the Ivy League schools, where they weren't hiring Suffolk people.

So it was a totally different world. Now we are placing students in the bigger law firms, and the women are doing well. The so-called glass ceiling wasn't a thing that I was contending with, because my world was totally different. I think, from where I sit, that women are doing very well. You know, the chief justice of the Massachusetts Supreme Court. We have Mimi [Marianne] Bowler, chief justice of the federal magistrates. You know, we've got women in high positions that are doing very, very well.

And being single, I don't have a family to cope with or children to bring up, so I haven't personally run into those kinds of issues. And I think people are resolving them independently, based on their own lifestyle. And I think now, if you can believe what you read in places like *Lawyers Weekly*, lawyers as a whole are trying to get more control over their time and not be so locked into billable hours, and to become major partners of major firms.

And to my shock, I guess, when—was it Gaston Snow, was the first major firm that went into bankruptcy? I couldn't believe it, because the old, traditional Boston law firms—and having been in the trust end of the business, they were sacrosanct; nobody could ever touch those firms. And to think that a firm like that could go into bankruptcy was appalling.

So I think so much is changing, and I'm not sure that it has so much to do with sex; I think it has to do with so many other things.

McETTRICK: Well, Jeanne, we appreciate your spending this time with us this morning, so thank you very much.

HESSION: Well thank you for having me, and I hope I haven't bored you to tears. And I hope there's something about Joe in there, because I seem to be talking mostly about Jeanne Hession and not Joe Moakley. (laughter) I didn't intend that.

McETTRICK: Well, thank you. We appreciate it.

HESSION: Thank you.

END OF INTERVIEW