

Exit Interview with Robert Schmitt

An exit interview with Robert Schmitt was conducted by Marie B. Allen of the Presidential Papers Staff on August 31, 1978, at 2:00 p.m., in Room 492 of the Old Executive Office Building. Bob had just completed a five months internship in the Office of Fran Voorde, Director of Scheduling.

Presently a Georgetown University senior, Bob is a native of New Britain, Connecticut. Bob was elected as a delegate to the Connecticut Convention to Elect National Convention Delegates and then traveled with the elected Connecticut delegation to the 1976 National Democratic Convention in New York City. At the convention, he met Congressman Moffett of Connecticut who had, himself, no job to offer Bob, but referred him to Senator Gravel of Alaska. Bob became a research assistant, part-time, in the Senator's office where he was supervised by Jerry Udell, a friend of Fran Voorde. When Ms. Voorde started looking for interns in her office, Udell recommended Bob.

Originally employed for only three months, and then extended to six, Bob was part of Voorde's 14 member immediate staff. He spoke admiringly of the rapport and ability of the members of the Scheduling Office. Bob had expected his job to be rather routine, but found it to be interesting and challenging. His various tasks are described in the following categories:

- (1) handling routine mail and telephone requests for Presidential scheduling.
- (2) some case work, helping individuals with problems find help. Bob described a case in which a Pennsylvania man was poisoned at his job and could not find a doctor to treat him. Bob helped this man find a doctor specializing in chemical/kepone and other types of work-related poisoning.
- (3) public relations. Bob gave tours of the West Wing to persons referred to him from Phil Wise's or Timothy Kraft's offices, including the rock group, Fleetwood Mac.
- (4) helping Voorde's office in preparing a Presidential trip briefing book with profiles of the district key political figures, list of presidential appointees, demographic information, etc.

One of the highlights of his internship was the opportunity to have his picture taken with the President in the Oval Office.

Bob found the position of an intern to be somewhat anomalous, carrying many of the same responsibilities as staff members without the permanence of appointment. He felt that Voorde's office could have and would have retained him on the staff except for a problem posited by V. Gianinni concerning the costs of a full security clearance. Bob hopes to return to the White House Staff or to remain in political affairs through working in Congress or with a lobbyist.