

Tina Tate

House Radio-TV Gallery Superintendents

Recollections of the first two superintendents of the House Radio-TV Gallery.

Interview recorded June 28, 2007

Well, Mr. Menaugh had been the original superintendent. The gallery was established in 1939, and he had been the original director. There have only been, now, four. I was the third. And, he had a wonderful relationship with Members of Congress directly, and this is another change. Directors, then, dealt directly with chairmen of committees, as well as not only the press secretaries for the committees, but the chief of staffs for the committees because it was a much smaller staff apparatus, and there was much less media coverage. And, because he had that comfortable relationship with Members, which I couldn't have at that time because (1) I was female, and (2) I was in my 20s—but you had somebody who had grown up in the House and had been in the House all that time and was very comfortable working with Members, so that was just a very different era.

When Mike came in as director, he changed a lot of things, and he was much more interested in really getting a professional television approach and taught me a lot about how to think about what these people were going to want. He would take me along to meetings, he was a good mentor in that regard, to learn from him what people expected and what they wanted. I did learn a lot about what was going to be the role I would do, and then I took it from there. I think it changed after he left because it changed radically with the onset of satellite trucks, and local television covering like national television did. So you didn't just think about the national groups; you also had to think about the local groups, and you had to think about what they would do on a day-to-day basis. So both Bob Menaugh's demeanor, character, and style and Mike's true interest in the technology and the newsworthiness of things were very good examples for me and very good help to getting me to my job—to do my job.