

**Donald K. Anderson**  
**Clerk of the U.S. House of Representatives**

**Elevator Operator**

Donald K. Anderson describes his duties as an elevator operator in the early 1960s.  
*Interview recorded February 23, 2006*

I was an elevator operator from the fall of 1961 until late 1963. Virtually all of the elevators on the Hill were manual elevators, and they were killer jobs for students. Kids would literally die to get an elevator job. The average shift was about five hours. The place wasn't nearly as busy in those days as it is now, and if you had a quiet corner, you could literally get paid for studying five hours a day. Keep a book in your hand—hopefully the superintendent wouldn't catch you—but the superintendent didn't make his rounds very often, so the chances of being caught studying—which was forbidden, but nonetheless common practice—was not much interfered with. At that time, I was an undergraduate at GW. I originally was under the elevator patronage of the late George Mahon of Texas, who became chairman of the House Appropriations Committee and also was for a number of years “Dean of the House.” The elevator was, I thought, a delightful job. A lot of people have been inclined to dismiss it, but if you're a social person, you get a chance to chat with people all day long, and in those days, this was literally the little village on the Hill. It was a very small place compared to what it is now. You really got a chance to know the people who worked in the congressional offices by name. Most of my passengers got on, I didn't even have to ask them their floor. I knew exactly where they were going.