

Ronald W. Lasch
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Working with Members of Congress

Ronald W. Lasch provides insight on how he established working relationships with Members of Congress.

Interview recorded June 24, 2013

You have to know what you're talking about. You have to be right when you're talking about it. And so, when I was engaged in those things, I knew that I, what I was saying was right. Whether they wanted to hear it or not, that's another story. Whether they liked it or not. It helped that I had gray hair. It helped that I had been there for a long time. It helped because I had a practice of not first-naming Members. I had a very old-fashioned view that I was a staff member. They were the Member of Congress. And I called them, "Mr." so-and-so. I never called them by their first name. And there were about a dozen of them who had fits that I wouldn't do it. One Member, right before I retired he said—from Florida, an older Member—he said, "Are you ever going to call me by my first name?" And I said, "Well, not while I'm here at work, but if I see you out someplace, I'll be glad to do it." And there was another Member from Texas, for a long time. He called me, "Mr. Lasch," and it was always with a little bit of a dart to it, because I wouldn't call him by his first name. And so, lots of times I think that saved me, if you will. Because there was that line. And I always referred to them as Mr., or Mrs., or whatever.