

Warren Featherstone Reid
Assistant to Warren G. Magnuson, 1949-1981

Preface
by Donald A. Ritchie

During the years that Warren Featherstone Reid served on the Senate staff as an aide to the chairman of the Commerce Committee, the chairman of the Appropriations Committee, the president pro tempore, and the senior Senator from the State of Washington, he needed only one calling card: "Assistant to Warren G. Magnuson." Reid's close association with Senator Magnuson stretched from his appointment on the senator's patronage as an elevator operator in 1949, to their mutual retirement from the Senate in 1981. Over the years, Reid had the opportunity to witness the inside workings of the Senate as an institution through one of its most influential members. In these oral history interviews he recounts his experiences and observations.

Featherstone Reid was born in Wenatchee, Washington, where he lived until he came to Washington, D.C. to attend George Washington University, supporting himself as a Senate elevator operator and member of the Capitol Police Force. In 1950-1951 he served in the United States Air Force, and then returned to Washington State, where he completed his B.A. at the University of Washington. He also attended law school there, and received his J.D. in 1961. After a stint on the staff of the state legislature in Olympia, Washington, Reid returned to the national capital to work for Senator Magnuson.

Specializing in health and education matters, Reid worked with the senator on the Commerce Committee and the Independent Offices and Health, Education, and Welfare subcommittees of the Appropriations Committee. When Magnuson became chairman of the powerful Appropriations Committee and also president pro tem of the Senate, Reid became his chief aide and troubleshooter. From this unique vantage, Featherstone Reid discusses both the legislative and the appropriations processes, the influence of lobbying by private groups and by presidential administrations from Lyndon Johnson to Jimmy Carter, the impact of the media on state and national politics, and the transformation of the Senate from a small community with an "Inner Club" to a large, complex institution whose procedures have been opened to public view through various "Sunshine" regulations. Throughout it all, Reid also narrates the remarkable political career of one of the Senate's great "Work Horses," Warren Magnuson, his personality, his elections, and his legislative accomplishments.

After he left the Senate, Reid became chairman of the Washington State Board of Health. In 1994 the Washington state legislature authorized an annual Warren Featherstone Reid Award for Excellence in Health Care. He died on October 20, 2002.