

T. Harry Williams Center for Oral History Collection

ABSTRACT

INTERVIEWEE NAME: Winston Riddick

COLLECTION: 4700.1179

IDENTIFICATION: Political ally and friend of Gillis Long

INTERVIEWER: Gary Huey

PROJECT: Gillis Long

INTERVIEW DATES: July 18, 1987

FOCUS DATES: 1960s-1980s

ABSTRACT:

Tape 1720

Meeting Gillis Long at a Young Democrats rally; discusses his and his wife's commitment to civil rights and the repercussions they suffered; being impeached while University of Southwest Louisiana's (USL) student body president because he integrated intramural sports; USL president abolishes intramural sports rather than allowing them to be integrated; taking job as a political science professor at Louisiana State University (LSU); Riddick's family anti-Long; Gillis's ability to form friendships with people who were traditionally anti-Long; relationship between Gillis Long and John McKeithen; Long's loss in the 1963 gubernatorial election; Long's support for civil rights; reasons for Long's election to Congress in 1962; Long's connections in Washington; the role of Russell Long in Gillis's early political career; McKeithen and the split in the Long family; War on Poverty; Gillis's family living in a chicken coop during the Depression; John F. Kennedy's brother-in-law & head of the Office of Economic Opportunity [OEO] Sargent Shriver; describes his role in securing passage for the constitutional amendment allowing Louisiana's governors [beginning with John McKeithen] to serve two consecutive terms; Louisiana's poverty and illiteracy; reasons for Gillis's loss in the 1971 gubernatorial race; Edwin Edwards and the black vote in the 1971 gubernatorial election; black newspapers and political leaders in New Orleans endorse Long for governor in 1971; Edwin Edwards' speech writers; reasons Gillis Long carried New Orleans in the first primary; in exchange for Long's support, Edwards promised to support him in a bid for Congress; describes reasons for Long's success in fund raising; Long's phone list; Long's staff service oriented; capability of Long's staff

Tape 1721

Reasons for Long's well-organized staff; discusses role of a congressman's staff in determining his effectiveness in office; importance of reading; Long's commitment to increased voter registration; membership on an ad hoc Democratic committee formed to pick candidates for state-wide elections (ca. 1967); attempt to get Louisiana Democrats loyal to the national party to head the state party; Gillis's wide range of friends; helping "loyal" Democrats win elections; Gillis's opinions about U. S. foreign policy; Ronald Reagan's foreign policy, especially in

Nicaragua; Jimmy Carter's foreign policy; Gillis's trip to Morocco; Richard Nixon; Watergate; Gillis Long's honesty; Justice Department investigation into Louisiana elections; working for Louis Lambert gubernatorial campaign in 1979; Gillis's decision not to run for governor in 1979; Gillis's lack of charisma in television appearances; use of direct mail to target black voters; Oliver North; Louisiana electorate's desire to be entertained; advantages and disadvantages of Gillis being a Long; impact of television on Louisiana politics; Edwin Edwards; Gillis Long's political weaknesses; reapportionment of Gillis's district to ensure his reelection; describes the sacrifices that Long made for his political career

Tape 1722

Gillis's friendship with Riddick's son Wade; discusses Korean airplane shot down by the Russians; Wade's fishing trip with Gillis; Gillis crushing a vertebrae on another fishing trip and use of experimental therapy to treat it; Gillis Long's legacy in the Democratic Party

TAPES: 3 (T1720; T1721; T1722)

TOTAL PLAYING TIME: 2.5 hours

PAGES TRANSCRIPT: 91 pages

OTHER MATERIALS: Transfer and copyright to Gary Huey

RESTRICTIONS: None