

Her career took a profound turn, however, soon after this first book. She accepted a congressional fellowship from the American Political Science Association which paid for her to work on Capitol Hill for a year so she could observe the inner workings of Congress while working in a legislator's office. She obtained a prize placement in the office of Jim Wright, who hailed from her native Texas and was then House majority leader. Using her own experiences and interviews with congressional staff and members, she provided an inside account of the majority party of the House of Representatives, just as it was becoming a dominant organization in the legislative branch. This research led to the publication of "Majority Leadership in the U.S. House" in 1983, which paved the way for dozens of scholars doing research on congressional parties and agenda-setting. Beginning with this book, she adopted the elite interviewing methods used so effectively by Fenno, her mentor, and would continue to do so for the rest of her career.