I was appointed administrative assistant to President Truman on August 6, 1947, and remained in that post until January 20, 1953, when I resigned at the end of his term as the thirty-third president of the United States.

In that capacity I was responsible to the president for personnel management within the executive branch of the federal government and for the recommendation of all those to be considered for presidential appointments—as well as termination—in the executive and the judicial branches. I was the president's direct liaison with the U.S. Civil Service Commission and all departments including the FBI, the members of Congress, the Democratic National Committee (DNC), and others. Approximately two hundred appointments to the highest level were made annually and a far greater number of such appointments as federal district and appellate court judges, postmasters, collectors of internal revenue and customs, U.S. marshalls, and others. (Full field investigations by the FBI were first initiated by me as a requirement for all presidential appointments.) It was my responsibility to assemble and recommend appointees to boards, commissions, and courts established by law or Executive Order. In addition, at that time all appointments and promotions of regular officers in the military services required Senate confirmation, and these lists were also cleared through my office before being considered by the president.

Included in my responsibilities were those of director of the Liaison Office for Personnel Management, established by Executive Order; thus, I coordinated planning and policy in the personnel and personnel-management field for the executive branch (as distinguished from the examination, recruitment, and classification of employees subject to the Civil Service Act).

In my work with the Civil Service Commission, among other matters, I was responsible for the complete revision of the Classification Act in
1949, which set the grades and compensation of federal employees. The revision was the first in many years and encompassed the establishment of new grade schedules, the upward revision of salaries to $15,000, and the addition of some two hundred new “super-grade” positions with a top salary of $20,000. Designation of those positions was subject to my approval.

I recommended—and by Executive Order President Truman provided for—the appointment of career administrative assistant secretaries in certain of the departments to provide administrative continuity on a nonpolitical basis.

Messages, Executive Orders, and addresses of the president relative to the Civil Service and to employee organizations were also the responsibility of my office.

The Economic Cooperation Administration and the Office of Economic Stabilization, comprised of the Office of Price Control and the Office of Wage Control, were organized and staffed by me prior to the appointment of the administrators of those offices. This was subject, of course, to their approval and to any changes they might make, thus assuring a completely operational office and a quick start.

I was the president’s representative in the acquisition of office space for new agencies and in the transfer of agencies and offices to new quarters insofar as the executive branch was concerned. I performed a similar function for the Executive Office of the President, such as assigning offices and conference rooms and locating the present White House office dining room.

I was in charge of all advance work for the president’s election campaign, beginning in September 1948. These arrangements for the president’s formal public appearances generally involved close liaison with the Democratic National Committee [DNC] and with local political and civic bodies. An example would be the president’s report to the nation from the San Francisco Opera House after his Wake Island conference with General MacArthur or his appearance in Detroit for the celebration of the city’s Centennial Exposition or his appearance at Soldiers’ Field, Chicago, for the Shrine Convention.

A great part of my duties were in the political field, as the direct contact for the president with the DNC and local political organizations concerning patronage, primaries, general elections, and organization. In this sense, I was representing the president in political matters. I also served as his personal representative to the 1952 Democratic National Convention in Chicago and carried his instructions to Tommy Gavin of the Missouri delegation, designating the president’s choice of a presidential candidate; this constituted the first public notification of Mr.
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Truman's endorsement of Adlai Stevenson. During their terms as chair­men of the Democratic National Committee, I worked very closely on an almost daily basis with Bob Hannigan, Howard McGrath, William M. Boyle, Frank McKinney, and Steve Mitchell.

After David Niles's death, his assistant, Philleo Nash, was transferred to my office and continued the work relating to minority and ethnic groups done under my supervision.

I was chairman of the White House Loyalty Review Board, which reviewed any charges of disloyalty or derogatory information affecting any employee on the staff of the Executive Office of the President. General coordination and supervision of the Loyalty Review Program for the executive branch was also my responsibility.

The president called on me for many special assignments of all kinds—for example, to secure the necessary steel in time of shortage for a new municipal stadium in one of our large cities (as requested by the mayor) or to see that Mr. Truman's views were made known in the redistricting of the Missouri congressional districts.

I was exceedingly fortunate to have the assistance of Martin L. Friedman, with whom I had been associated in the Air Transport Command during World War II and who came to the White House from the Civilian Personnel Division of the Office of the Secretary of War. He was ideal for this work because of his broad technical background, practical experience, and unusually keen judgment. The relationship was excep­tionally fine and gratifying to me.