



Adam Benson

MSJ92, NEWSPAPER ADMINISTRATION

POSITION: Press Secretary for Representative John Dingell (D-Mich.)

PREVIOUS POLITICAL POSITIONS:

Press Secretary and Spokesman, Paul Kanjorski for Congress (Pennsylvania's 11th District), 2008
Press Secretary, Joe Turnham for Congress (Alabama's Third District), 2002

NEWSPAPER ADMINISTRATION, HUH?

I don't think it exists anymore at Medill. I left Medill and went into television for 10 years, with stops in Seattle, Kansas City, two stops in Detroit—I'm originally from Ann Arbor—and Louisville, Ky. I also worked as a freelance producer at CNN's Washington bureau from 2002 to 2004.

HOW DID YOU GO FROM TV TO POLITICS?

I had always had an interest, but life drove me into politics a little bit. I met the wonderful woman in Kentucky who is now my wife. She looked at my resume and saw my tendency to move around about every year or so in TV, and said, boy, that's not going to work for me. I also started to make the move into politics after Sept. 11, and I think that got me thinking about public service. I joke that I was a little too old at that point to do some other things, but it certainly made some sense to go work in Washington and be a part of the process at what was really an important time.

IS THERE AN ADVANTAGE TO HAVING A VETERAN JOURNALIST ON A CONGRESSIONAL PRESS STAFF?

It is helpful as you ready for an interview to have someone who thinks like a reporter, talks like a reporter and has a sense of the things that are discussed in morning meetings and newsrooms. I think that's helpful to bring to the table in any congressional office. We think to ourselves that working in newsrooms isn't rocket science. There's a lot of gut instinct involved, and some of that does take a form over time. Particularly in a congressional office, where the public eye is constantly focused and constantly looking at what members are doing, you can bring insight as to how it will play out in the public arena.

WHAT'S THE MOST FUN YOU'VE HAD WORKING FOR REPRESENTATIVE DINGELL?

Getting the congressman on "The Daily Show" was very fun. The congressman is 84, and he's open to any new idea. It was very satisfying to see him do so well in a forum where people don't expect to see him—they probably don't think of him joking around with Jon Stewart. But the audience was terrific, it's a great place to discuss the issues, and Stewart is as good an interviewer as there is out there.