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BIPARTISAN MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

INTERVIEW WITH:

**The Honorable Robert J. Flick (R)**

167<sup>th</sup> District

Chester and Delaware Counties

1983-2006

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**Heidi Mays (HM):** Good afternoon. I'm here today with former State Representative Robert Flick, who served the 167<sup>th</sup> Legislative District from Chester County for his entire career, which was 1983-2006 and Delaware County from 1983 to 1990. Thank you again for being here with me today. I appreciate you taking the time to be here.

**The Honorable Robert Flick (RF):** You're welcome, Heidi. It's my pleasure.

**HM:** Thank you. I wanted to begin by asking you about your childhood and your early family life and how you feel that that prepared you for public service?

**RF:** Well, I'm not sure that there was anything special about my childhood. You know, I was raised by my mom. My parents were divorced. My grandparents had a great deal of influence on me. Went through public schools. Attended Villanova and graduated there, then was in the real estate business as a real estate broker, and I would say that, I mean, that had the most influence on my position here in Harrisburg as a Member of the House of Representatives.

**HM:** Was your family political in any way?

**RF:** Actually, my mother was. She worked for the Assessor down in Lower Merion Township in the Assessment Office, and that was a political position, I'm going to say. It was what you might consider such as Row Offices and such, but it was a Township position, so she did work with the, the Party, with the Republican Party, and so she used to work the polls every Election Day.

**HM:** So that was your first introduction, maybe, to politics?

**RF:** It was, and when I was first old enough to vote, I remember the gauntlet you had to run in order to get in and vote, and I must say, there were occasions when I, you know, didn't prepare myself well and got in, and there were many more offices to be voted on than I was aware of. So, that was another strong influence that, you know, you need to know who you're voting for, know why you're voting for them when you go to the polls to vote.

**HM:** So, how did you decide to become a Republican?

**RF:** Again, I would say probably there was no question. My mother was, you know, Republican. My grandparents [were] Republicans, and, and I guess I just – it was a Republican area, and I guess I didn't really even give it much thought.

**HM:** Okay.

**RF:** I was going to be a Republican. I registered as a Republican.

**HM:** Okay. Do you feel like you always had political aspirations yourself?

**RF:** I never had any political aspirations. I enjoy being around people. I made my living through selling real estate, [which] meant that I was involved with local

municipalities and such. And it really was in the late seventies when Pennsylvania had a usury limit, which is a interest rate ceiling and, believe it or not, the interest rate ceiling was seven percent back then, and since the marketplace would dictate a higher interest rate, there was no mortgage money, and without mortgage money you couldn't sell houses, so I started getting involved right then and knew that, you know, government makes many decisions which impact the business community, so I, you know, started paying attention, started getting active.

**HM:** So, you talked about your business experience prior to coming to the House, and you attended Villanova for your college?

**RF:** Yes. Graduated 1966.

**HM:** And what was your major?

**RF:** I got a B.S. in Economics.

**HM:** Okay.

**RF:** I was a marketing major, I think.

**HM:** Okay. Could you describe a little bit about Chester County and Delaware Counties and their political scene?

**RF:** Well –

**HM:** About the time you were planning to run for the House?

**RF:** Okay. Back in the early Eighties, Delaware County was a very strong Republican county. There are those who refer to the elected officials as the warlords, and it was very, very political-based in every way. Chester County was a little more laid back. I was born down in Montgomery County, then moved to Chester County. My family, my aunt, and my grandmother, and my brother, and my sister all lived in Delaware County. So, I had ties, you know, in the area, and it was the 1980 Census, which really caused the reshaping of the boundaries of the Districts, and rumor has it that the individual representing the 167<sup>th</sup> back then what fell out of favor with the political hierarchy, and therefore, it was that District, which when Delaware County lost population, it was that District that moved into Chester County, and sixty percent of the District moved into Chester County, so it was expected it would become a Chester County seat, and it did, since, you know, I mean, the rest is history. I ran and won, and so, I mean, Chester County was also very political at the time but not quite as top heavy.

**HM:** Well, were you approached by the Republican Party to run, or was this something you sought out yourself?

**RF:** As I mentioned, when I was in the real estate business, I started getting involved. I was asked to be a Republican committeeman in Easttown Township, which is where my wife and I bought our first house, so I was a committeeman in Easttown. When we built

a house in East Whiteland, I became a Committeeman there and became the Chairman of the Party, so I was involved since [the] late Seventies, early Eighties in politics, and when the seat was redistricted – basically, Chester County looked at it as Delaware County was going to take five of our best municipalities out of Chester County and would be represented by someone from Delaware County. So, there's quite a bit of interest in that seat, and I was – people asked, you know, like, "Would you consider something you had interest in?" And I really didn't at the time, but I did – I called Governor Thornburgh, [Richard Thornburgh, Governor of Pennsylvania, 1979-1987] because I had helped coordinate his Chester County campaign and asked him, I said, "Well, you know, if I ran for this seat, do you think I could do a good job up in Harrisburg?" And he got back to me through another individual, the "Yes, by all means." He thought I could do a great job, and if I was interested, go for it, so, I mean, I had – that's about the extent of it.

**HM:** Okay.

**RF:** And then there were, there were five candidates in Chester County, and so they had to all coalesce around one candidate because didn't want to have more than one candidate from Chester County running against an incumbent from Delaware County.

**HM:** So how hard was that?

**RF:** It was difficult. I mean, we had to go around and meet all the committee people and speak at various meetings and such. I think everybody felt with my background and my political ties and my family ties that, you know, I could do a very good job, and I could, I

could win in Radnor Township, which was important. So, I got the endorsement, and I campaigned for a solid year from December of 1981 through the election in 1982. It was very cold through that winter and a lot of snow, and then there's very oppressive, you know, summers, so that was a solid year.

**HM:** And what techniques did you use during that campaign?

**RF:** I went door-to-door, and we did some mailings, but mostly it was door-to-door. I think I knocked on about ten thousand doors and had [the] opportunity to meet a lot of very nice people, and each subsequent campaign at least a few people would say, "Oh, yes, I remember you came to my house when," you know, "you were first running." And so, that was something I heard all throughout the twenty-four years. And I ended up in the emergency ward during the first campaign when I was bitten by a dog, believe it or not.

**HM:** Oh, my goodness.

**RF:** Bitten by a dog when I was knocking on doors. There were two little terriers, and they had me pinned at the front door. I knew I had to make a run for it to get out of there, and I, you know, spent more time with one. The other one got me in the back heel.

**HM:** Oh, my goodness.

**RF:** So, I went to the emergency ward to get tetanus shots and get patched up. So, running for office can be a very dangerous business.

**HM:** (*laugh*) How did subsequent campaigns change? Because it didn't look like you had much opposition.

**RF:** Well, as I've told other individuals seeking office, I mean, your first campaign is the most important campaign. Get out and meet as many people as you can. Make certain you create the, you know, the right relationship with the public back home and then work hard to build on that, so each subsequent election should be easier and easier because your base continues to grow and grow. The time when people get in problems with campaigns is when they, you know, maybe have been handed an office or didn't have to work hard to get in office, and then they never really worked hard to, to grow their base, so they become vulnerable. I had good support. I worked hard. I gave up my real estate practice. I actually gave up a 1978 Silver Anniversary silver T-Top Corvette, which I loved. I sold that. I didn't think I should be driving back and forth to Harrisburg in a Corvette. I gave up a Country Club membership, which the firm I worked with had for me, full golf membership. One of the finest Country Clubs around. Gave that up. I mean, people – when I was campaigning, people said, “Are you going to be part-time, or are you going to be full-time? Are you going to make a commitment or not?” I said, “No, I'll make a commitment,” so I gave that up.

**HM:** Was there any one issue that you felt strongly about that, maybe, pushed you to, to decide to run for the House?

**RF:** As I said, I think the governmental interference, I might say, in, in private sector operations was probably the, the strongest tie I had. There just – when you’re trying to make a living, trying to build a business, trying to grow, and you find that some people up in Harrisburg make decisions that impact on your ability to make a living, and they don’t know – they don’t necessarily understand the impact of that decision. I wanted to make certain I ran on the motto of “Flick means business,” and it was sort-of, you know, a double-edged sword. I was going to work hard and get the job done, but I also was going to make certain that the business community was represented.

**HM:** In your own words, could you tell me a little bit more about the 167<sup>th</sup> District, specifically the people, their issues? You’ve already discussed a little, I think.

**RF:** Well, I would suggest that it’s a suburban, residential community. I think they’re most interested with their schools, the state support of the schools, though in the 167<sup>th</sup> District, the school districts get minimal support from the state because of the property values and the income levels. The funding formula works in an inverse relationship, so they tend to get the least amount of funding, but they are most certainly very interested in the school districts, and we in Harrisburg make many decisions which impact school districts. It’s not always just the funding issue; it’s what we mandate that they do. And so, I would say school, you know, public education was probably the strongest issue in the area. Secondly, I would have to say quality of life, which would include, you know, recreational areas, recreational programs, open space, and good libraries, and just, you know, a nice place to raise a family. I mean, that’s what I think. When I think best of

how to describe the District, it would be that, you know, businesses would want to grow and expand in the area, and, you know, the individuals they would want to, you know, buy a home, you know, and live there and raise a family there. And the real estate's gotten quite expensive, so it's more difficult, but I guess it's more expensive all over.

**HM:** What do you think changed in the District? What changes did you witness while you were State Representative?

**RF:** Well, I guess you'd have to say growth. You know, I mean, growth is probably the most significant. There seems to be new homes being built in every nook and cranny. That doesn't mean that that's not good for the area. It means that there's more strain on the, you know, the transportation, roads, and the schools, and such like that, but growth, probably. I mean, I guess the best way I could describe the growth is when I first ran for office, I was in the most northwest corner of the District, and I was no more than fifty yards from being out of the District, so the, the entire 167<sup>th</sup> Legislative District was to the south and to the east. But, I represented it well, and now after twenty-four years, my house is in the center point of the District, so everything migrated west, and areas to the east would lose populations; areas to the west would gain, and so the demographic shifted.

**HM:** Well, that was my next question. How did reapportionment affect your District?

**RF:** Well, when I was first elected, as I said, it was sixty percent Chester County and forty percent Delaware County. Delaware County being probably 80 percent of Radnor

Township; that was the only municipality. Radnor Township was a great suburban area with good schools and, you know, just a terrific place. After ten years, I lost half of Radnor Township, so it became an eighty/twenty; twenty percent in Delaware County, eighty percent in Chester County, and then after ten more years, which would be twenty years, it was totally within Chester County. So, reapportionment changed it quite a bit, and people don't understand reapportionment well, and everybody thinks that, "Well, those politicians are changing the, the boundaries, and they're doing it for political reasons and such." You know, our Constitution says that each District must be, for the most part, identical in size in terms of numbers of people, not in geographic areas, so you have to make the numbers work, and so you may take a municipality. You might take several municipalities. You might take half a municipality. You might take a precinct, but you need to put together a map across, you know, our Commonwealth that, that provides equal districts, equal within one percent of the population is what it is. So, it changes, and over the years the technology has grown tremendously, and there were computer software programs that you could say, "Well, what if you put this voting District in and take that voting District out," and, you know, "How's the population changed?" and such. So, the most recent reapportionment, which was in the year 2000, and 2002 we ran for office. I had other Chester County Members all bordering me, and when, with the projected new Districts, I was losing fifty percent of my legislative District, and nobody wanted to move aside so that I could go through another Member's District in order to gain population. I mean, everybody gets very parochial, and everybody gets very protective. Say, "No, it's my area. I won it." And I always seem to be giving up areas. Some other Districts were growing, but I was giving up and getting new, so it's, you know, it's always an adjustment.

**HM:** What were some of the special projects or things that you brought back to your communities?

**RF:** Wow. Special projects. I had a particular interest in our emergency responders, police and fire companies, libraries – not that they’re emergency responders – but, I wanted to make certain that the police departments and the fire companies had the necessary equipment that they needed to protect themselves. So, I would try to work with our Leadership to bring back legislative grants for those entities, and, you know, maybe it’s new coats to protect them, and in some cases, it was used for infrared sensors to find out if there was someone in a house that was, you know, trapped inside, and the fire company wouldn’t know that they were there unless they had this technology. In other cases it was to buy new weapons or new bulletproof vests. So, I think those are the areas, you know, try to bring back as much money as I could for the school, but being a conservative Republican, you know, everything doesn’t get measured in terms of dollars, okay? I think – piece of legislation. I think you’re going to ask me at some point, Is there anything I’m disappointed about? I would say that yes; one area was, I always felt our school districts were the best in the Commonwealth. The best in, you know, the eastern states, and I always felt if the mandates from Harrisburg were just, you know, left alone and let our districts – they’re the finest in the country. Just let them do what they’re doing because they’re doing it well, so I tried to have legislation enacted for autonomous school districts. [I] worked with Dr. [Paula] Hess for many years. I mean, ten, fifteen years, trying to get someone to get through and say, you know, “We need, we need academically autonomous school districts. If you, if you’re above the bar, then you

shouldn't have to follow all the necessary rules that are in place to try to bring other school districts up to par," so I guess that got into, I mean, it eventually came into school choice and came into tax credits, and such, for low income, you know, families with good students and such. I was never able to do anything for my school districts who say, "Just leave us alone. I mean, we're doing perfectly well. Leave us alone," and I mean, they're the best school districts. I'd put them up against all in the country. And so, I'm sorry that I couldn't bring them some relief, but they somehow managed to deal with it anyway.

**HM:** Did you always have a District office?

**RF:** Yes.

**HM:** Okay. Did you just have one, or did you have multiple?

**RF:** No, I always had one District office. My District is not as large as some. I had at any given time six, seven, eight municipalities. I would always try to have the District office in the area which was most convenient for most people, not necessarily in the geographic center of the District but in the area where most people could be served, and I'm very fortunate to have had a District aide who worked with me. Doris – she started after I was first elected and was with me all twenty-four years, and up here, Michelle [Warren] started with me when I was first elected, was with me all twenty-four years, and down in the District we had worked in a, a part-time aide who became a full-time District staff, so we had no more than, you know, two people, one and a half to two people, and,

and Sharon, in the District, been with me fifteen years, so. Up here, Linda's, you know, was with me ten years, so. I'm easy to work for, I guess, huh?

**HM:** I was going to say they're very loyal, too, huh?

**RF:** Well, they are very loyal, and I always looked at it as we're a team. We're a part of a team. There's no, you know, person who necessarily runs the team. Down the District, Doris was in charge. She'd tell me where to go, what to do. Up in Harrisburg, Michelle was in charge. She'd tell me where to go, what to do, and so I, in essence, worked for four women, and my wife.

**HM:** *(laugh)* Very nice.

**RF:** But we're a team. I mean, each one had responsibilities, and I relied heavily on them, and they knew that, and, and I think that's the way many offices, or many, you know, political subdivisions, or even businesses need to be run. I mean, it's not, you know, heavy top down stuff. It's, you know, we're all part of the same team. Let's just do a good job.

**HM:** Do you remember your first Swearing-In Ceremony and how you felt during that?

**RF:** I do. It was very, how would you say it? I mean, there were flowers all over. I mean, it's a beautiful ceremony. I had my wife and our three little boys – well, actually, Jeff stayed home. When I was elected, the kids were ten, eight, and two, so Chris, who

was ten at the time, Mike who was eight at the time, came, and Jeff, who was two, stayed home, but I mean, to walk into the – I had only been in the Chamber once. I had never been in before I decided to run for office, and I came to Harrisburg and sat in the Chamber once while I was running for office just to see what it was like, and I mean, I was just in awe. It was so beautiful, and I was so impressed with all the, you know, the beautiful paintings and all the gold trim chandeliers, and such. I made sure when I got my seat that I did not sit under one of the chandeliers that weighs like ten tons, or there're ten ton ones and maybe two ton ones, I think. So, no, they couldn't be ten tons. Two tons, I guess. Are there ten?

**HM:** I don't know.

**RF:** I don't know. No. I'll have to talk to Ruthann [Hubbert-Kemper]<sup>1</sup>.

**HM:** I'll have to confirm that with Ruthann, yeah. (*laugh*)

**RF:** But I wanted to make sure I was not under one of the chandeliers.

**HM:** Was there anything that surprised you whenever you first came to Harrisburg?

**RF:** I guess I would say what surprised me was the number of people you had to work with. I mean, I didn't know anyone when I came here; absolutely no one. I had had at that time Speaker Ryan [Matthew J. Ryan; Delaware County, 1965-2003; Speaker, 1981-

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<sup>1</sup> Director of the Capital Preservation Committee

1982 and 1995-2003] down into my District, and he – he was just in the District to the south of mine. I didn't know him, you know, until that moment when he agreed to come down for a fundraiser, but what a wonderful gentleman he was, and we can talk about him later, but I mean, I guess I'm just going to say that I never thought I would ever know everyone up here, and I certainly don't know everyone up here, but one of the first things I did was I started meeting – at that time it was Governor Thornburgh – I started meeting with his Cabinet Secretaries. I had Michelle call them on the phone, say, you know, "Secretary Wilburn," Secretary of Education [Dr. Robert C. Wilburn, Pennsylvania Secretary of Education, 1983-1986], you know, "Representative Flick would like to stop by and say hi. He's a freshman," you know. And so, I went around and met every member of his Cabinet and just said, "Well, okay, your responsibilities are?" And, you know, "how do we work together?" So, I did that and started meeting people and writing names down, and I mean, they didn't have a whole lot of – as many liaisons as they might have now. I'm not sure that that's necessarily true, but I wanted to work with the Secretary. So, if I had a problem, you know, with one of my school districts, I called the Secretary of Education. If I had a problem with the Department of Environmental Resources, I'd call the Secretary, and, you know, let their office shoot me down to the proper level. I always figured it was easier to work from the top down than the bottom up. So, I got to, you know, know most of the Administration. Each new Administration I would do the same thing, although I didn't, you know, meet everyone in every Administration, but when I left the House, I knew every single Member by name, and, you know, the general area that he represented, and I thought that was important, too. I mean, that's the Republicans and the Democrats. That's 202 other people, and I used to know all the Senators, or mostly all the Senators, but over the years with the

turnover, we didn't see the Senate that much, so there were new Members would slip in. I don't know how I would have dealt with this year with fifty new Members. It would take a long time for me to get to know them, but I mean, it – actually, Matt Ryan, when I was then elected to my second term asked me to handle all the new Member Freshman Orientation. So, I did that for ten terms, and that was a leg up on getting to meet the Members before Session started and, you know, having dinner and breakfast and lunch and meeting with them. And I was responsible to set up a program along with my counterpart who at, at one point was Bob O'Donnell [Robert W. O'Donnell; Philadelphia County, 1973-1994; Speaker, 1991-1992] who ultimately became Speaker O'Donnell, and it was our responsibility to basically orient the new Members and let them know what to expect and how to conduct themselves and, and such. So, I was very proud to have, you know, get to know the new Members and know all of them. And it sure helped. I mean, when you had legislation running through the House, and you stood up on the Floor and said, "Look, I strongly believe this is good for Pennsylvania." I mean, most people say, "Well, he's a pretty straight guy. I, you know, I can agree with him."

**HM:** Well, since you brought up the, the new Member orientation program, do you feel that you were able to mentor people during, you know, with that role?

**RF:** You would have to ask someone else whether I, whether I'm a mentor. I've had Members say to me that they enjoyed, you know, the relationship. They appreciated the presentations, and I was always there to answer a question. I mean, that's the one thing I used to tell everybody is, Republican or Democrats, "You know, if you have a question/concern, just pick up the phone and call, because no one knows you have a question if

you don't tell someone you have a question." So I, you know, I always tried to treat everybody fairly.

**HM:** Well, I wanted to ask you about your first Harrisburg office. Do you recall where that was and what that was like?

**RF:** Michelle must have told you something.

**HM:** *(laugh)*

**RF:** I had a little office right down, actually here – it was in the Annex Building, which is now the Matthew J. Ryan Office Building. It's been turned into a very lovely office now, but it was probably eight feet wide by twelve feet deep, and you could put a desk and a chair in there, and the secretaries would sit outside in sort of a pool kind of area, and one time the Legislator next to me was moving – changing offices, and that office was available, and I asked if I could, you know, move into that office, and John Zubeck [Chief Clerk of the House of Representatives, 1980-1994], who was the Chief Clerk then, said, "Well, you would have to change all your stationery, change all your business cards, new phone numbers, everything would have to be different. Are you sure you want to do that?" I said, "Well, I'm only in my second term. I really tried to, you know, make certain that everybody knew how to get me and new addresses," so I said, "Well, let me think about it. I think maybe we can work this out." So, one night I took the numbers off the door, from above the door, I think they were. I unplugged the telephones. Actually had to take them apart with [a] screwdriver and all that. I stuck one wire through the

other wire and changed the telephones and changed the numbers on the door and moved all my furniture into the larger office, which was, I think, ten feet wide by twelve feet deep, and I had essentially changed the office; got a larger office and kept my phone number and kept my address. And the Chief Clerk could only laugh, could only laugh.

**HM:** *(laugh)*

**RF:** He said, “You realize you just broke so many,” you know, “fire code rules and all that?” I said, “It didn’t really seem to make a big difference to me.” So, I was able to keep that office, and then we moved about. I probably had a half a dozen offices without counting it.

**HM:** And, where was your last office?

**RF:** Last office was on the third floor in the Main Capitol, in the Main Capitol actually above the Governor’s Budget Secretary, one floor above, and a very nice large office; conference table, big windows looking out over the outside, and far too large for me. But, it was always important to me that Michelle and Linda or Mindy or whoever it was, you know, whatever they wanted because they worked there five days a week, you know, forty hours a week, and I was just coming and going, you know, when we were in Legislative Session. So, they pretty much, you know, had the say on where we moved and which office, and when that office came up, there was no doubt about it. We were moving.

**HM:** Well, you had mentioned that you or Michelle had made phone calls to Secretaries whenever you first came in. Did anybody mentor you since you, like I said, you were involved in the new Member orientation, but it was the second year. Was there a new Member Orientation party?

**RF:** There was. I would suspect that it was the Chester County – it was actually the Chester and Delaware County Delegations that mentored me. You know, in Chester County, Joe Pitts [Joseph R. Pitts; State Representative, Chester County, 1973-1996; US Representative, 1997-present], Elinor Taylor [State Representative, Chester County, 1977-2006], Peter Vroon [State Representative, Chester and Montgomery Counties, 1974-1992], you know, are three people that come to mind, and Art Hershey [Arthur Hershey; State Representative, Chester County, 1983-2008] came in with me, so we didn't – I think we had five seats then, so it's probably – that's five of us there. Delaware County had maybe seven seats or more, and Matt Ryan was the Majority Leader, and he was the senior Member of Delaware County. So, of all the people, I mean, I would say Matt Ryan was the one who I looked up to the most and the one who I admired the most. I mean, Joe Pitts and Elinor, they were second. Elinor made certain that I stayed in line. I don't know if you interviewed Elinor.

**HM:** Yeah.

**RF:** Elinor's a feisty lady.

**HM:** I'd like to talk a little bit about your committee work. You served on numerous committees throughout your tenure and acted as Chair on several different committees, you know, Session after Session. Did you have a favorite committee and why?

**RF:** Well, I guess I would have to say, since I couldn't be the Chairman of the Appropriations Committee that probably wasn't my favorite, though that would have been. You know, Consumer Affairs, you'd have to say. I mean, you know, that was the last committee I Chaired. I Chaired it for three years, but I think we did a real good job dealing with some issues which were very important to the Commonwealth. You know, the most recent was the Select Committee on Information Security, which I Chaired, which actually wasn't Consumer Affairs, but it was a committee that I introduced legislation to create, and Speaker Perzel [John M. Perzel; State Representative, Philadelphia County, 1979-present; Speaker, 2003-2006], you know, appointed me the Chairman of it since I was the Chairman of Consumer Affairs, so, I mean – and we shared some, some of the same staff and such, so. But, I felt it very important that when you read about different computer systems that had been hacked into and where personal information of individuals had been, you know, released to unknown people, I wanted to make sure that we didn't have the same thing happen in Pennsylvania, so I felt that we should, you know, get together, work with the Administration. I worked closely with the, you know, Rendell [Edward G. Rendell, Governor of Pennsylvania, 2003-2011] Administration, you know, with Chief of Staff on down, and they basically would make presentations to the committee on how they dealt with information security and how they kept up to date with the latest technology and such, and, I mean, we met with, you know, Attorney Generals, and you know, as many people as we could to find out how we could

protect the information which we stored here in Harrisburg, and Consumer Affairs only dealt with the public utilities and the Public Utility Commission. I mean, the longer you are here in Harrisburg, the more opportunity you have to get things done; the more responsibility you can take on your own shoulders, so, it was that. I mean, I knew I was, you know, coming to the end of my public career, and I wanted to make sure that I got everything done I could. We worked right up to November 30<sup>th</sup> of 2006, and then I carried all my boxes out to my car.

**HM:** *(laugh)* Well, you, you brought up several interesting points, if I could follow up?

**RF:** Sure.

**HM:** The seniority system here in Harrisburg. It's very important then, would you say?

**RF:** I believe that it is, and I think it's the same in any private sector company. I mean, absent being able to go out and recruit someone and hire them from another company where there might be a, you know, a more talented individual who might not be as old. I mean, I think you need to, you need to understand the impact of what goes on up here, and, and you need to, you know, over a period of time develop working relationships, so I think seniority's very important. I mean, every year you'll see new Members introduce the same legislation, you know, that basically would tear apart the fabrics of, you know – they're doing quite well, I think, up here this term, which I'm glad I'm not here to be a part of. But, I mean, I think that you just need to have senior Members making decisions based on the experience, not on seniority, based on the experience they have that they've

acquired, that they've worked towards, you know, over the time they're here. Now, if you have someone who's just a hanger-on, back bencher, doing nothing, learning nothing, well, then, you know, probably Leadership will put a very good Executive Director in to get most of the work done. But I, no, I believe in seniority, and I believe, you know, in Leadership elections. I might not have a problem. I mean, I moved committees. I don't think I was with any committee longer than, you know, six years. Three years I chaired, chaired the Intergovernmental Affairs [Committee]. I did that for six years, and did, I thought, some very good things. I mean, we, we took apart our whole workforce development system and restructured it. We ran that through Intergovernmental Affairs because it had federal dollars coming to match state dollars, so I took that on as a responsibility, and, you know, I think we did a real good job. Joyce Frigm did all the work. She was a super staff person, Executive Director of the Committee, and we made significant changes. Then I moved on to Labor Relations, where there were some issues. I actually worked with the Democrats on getting some workers' compensation reform done, but the major workers' comp reform was done before I got there. But there were little things, and I had the respect of the Trade Associations, the Unions that we were going to deal with just what I said we're dealing with, and this wasn't an end run. So, you know, that, that worked out well. Then I went to Finance; that was dealing with taxes. When Consumer Affairs came up, I said, "I don't want to be raising taxes." But, if I had stayed at Finance, I would've worked really hard to change the, you know, Act 511 taxes; local taxes. I mean, make it more standard throughout the, throughout the Commonwealth. I mean, we have twenty-seven hundred municipalities and they all have tax collectors, and they all tax different things, and there would have been a way to achieve some economies of scale, let's say. So, the reformers

up here now say that you shouldn't be able to Chair a committee, you know, for more than six years or something. I mean, that wouldn't be a problem with me, but some Members get into a committee, and they Chair it, and they, they learn the people. They learn the issues. They work hard, and you need to build confidence. You need to build bridges up here.

**HM:** Thank you.

**RF:** You're welcome. Long answer to a brief question.

**HM:** Well, that's okay. I think I, I wanted to ask you about having worked with the committee so closely; do you think that there's any particular legislation or issue that came across your desk through your committee work that you felt strongly about or passionately about?

**RF:** That wasn't my own legislation?

**HM:** Yeah, that wasn't your own legislation, but because you were in that particular committee?

**RF:** Well, in Labor Relations we dealt with sprinklers, dormitory sprinklers. There were some fires in dormitories, and, you know, many of the Members felt that we should be able to provide a fund from which colleges and universities could borrow. I worked with Mike McGeehan [Michael McGeehan; State Representative, Philadelphia County, 1991-

present], who's a Democrat Member and, you know, we shaped his bill up and got his bill out, and his bill became law. I did that with a number of Members. I mean, I didn't, I didn't have to introduce all the legislation, you know, but I had an idea, actually, when later in my terms if I had an idea and I thought it was something good, I'd give it to one of the freshman and say, you know, "I think this is, you know, important, so go ahead and do it." Passion about other legislation? I don't know. You sort of caught me off guard on that one.

**HM:** I'm sorry.

**RF:** No, that's okay. I mean, I felt it was the Chairman's responsibility to move the legislation that came to the committee, not as, maybe, as it was introduced, but to work with the Members who introduced the legislation, to have hearings to get input, and to see if we couldn't come up with something that was, you know, largely acceptable to everyone, and then amend the bill, and move the bill. I didn't think that it was, you know, the committee Chair's responsibility to be a holding tank, although there was, obviously, legislation that ran counter to, you know, philosophies in our Caucus or in, you know, my – not necessarily my belief, but I mean, I, I would find it hard to report some of the bills out. But, we always tried to work with people. I mean, Consumer Affairs was consumer issues, so we worked – I mean, if we had to work with the consumer groups and the banks, you know, we, we'd work with them. Had to get some acceptable.

**HM:** You also belonged to several committees and commissions outside of the House. Could you talk about your involvement with them and the accomplishments that you had with these groups, such as the Pennsylvania Housing Advisory Committee, TEAM Pennsylvania Work Force Investment Board, Keystone State Games Co-Chair, NCSL [National Conference of State Legislatures], ALEC, and you were also highly involved as a Little League coach and umpire?

**RF:** Used to be.

**HM:** Okay.

**RF:** Well, let's work backwards. TEAM PA, that was an organization which was initially a result of the Governor's Executive Order to oversee all the statewide job training programs that we had. The Governor asked me to be on that, Governor Ridge [Thomas J. Ridge, Governor of Pennsylvania, 1995-2001] at the time. I had been working on legislation to do what he was able to do easier by Executive Order, but we then put in statute many of the ideas that he had and many of the ideas that our Caucus and the other three Caucuses had, so it's now in statute. So, that was a very hands on, active board which oversaw the specific regions of the Commonwealth state plans. Each region, instead of saying there's a state plan and you will operate under the state plan, we tried to turn it so it was a bottom up, that each individual area, say like where I am, Chester County; Chester County would come up with its job training plan, would work with other counties so that you have filled up your region kind of plan, and it was my belief, the Governor's belief, and the board's belief that if you put all the plans together

into various areas, you know, it then became the State Plan, so it worked well. And we weren't telling people what to do; we were saying there's money available. You tell us how you think you can best spend it to create jobs and opportunities, so that was that committee. Keystone State Games is the reason I'm up here today. Pennsylvania has its own Olympic program for high school students. It's expanded into seniors and some pre-high school, but track and field, baseball, you name it, the Keystone Olympics, you know, has a program, and I wanted to be on that committee. You mentioned I was a Little League coach. I think being a Little League coach, and I actually was a Little League coach before I was even married. So, I was a Little League coach first, got married second, had kids third, and coached for many, many years. I probably coached for twenty, twenty years or more. And I believe, and still believe that it's, you know, it's the relationships and it's the responsibilities that children learn early on when they're working together that helps them grow and develop, and I think, you know, pride of what you do in sports is good, so. Oh, I had three boys, you know, we would have enjoyed three girls as well, you know, if we had them, but, you know, each was active in sports, and so I was active, and, and I think it's just a good learning area. So, Keystone State Games was, you know, part of it. The national organizations, again, it was sort of a feeling that you don't always have to reinvent the wheel. What Pennsylvania's struggling with, Florida's struggling with, Texas is struggling with, you know, Michigan might be struggling with, so if we get together as legislators from across the country, the group I was most active in was ALEC, which is American Legislative Exchange Council, and it's the more conservative organization, and it is a public/ private sector cooperative effort. ALEC does not receive any public dollars. They're funded by the private sector and by dues from public and private members, so they're not taking state grant money or federal

grant money. So, it's where the private sector and the public sector work together to come up with solutions to problems which are, you know, obvious and apparent and have more of a national, you know, a multi-state kind of interest. I worked on a lot of our welfare reform. I worked with colleagues from other parts of the state. I remember a Senator from Virginia, and that probably – before that I was involved, I guess, in some youth sports organizations and civil immunity against frivolous lawsuits, and there was a young boy that was hurt **[End of Side A]** that may have cost him his eye. I don't remember, but it was not a negligent act, but the family sued the baseball coach and the youth sports organization over in New Jersey. I thought, "This is crazy." I mean, you know, absent negligence, and I mean, if you put a little boy in a catcher's gear with no helmet and have him catch batting practice, I mean, that's gross negligence, and you ought to be liable, you know, if any injuries happen. But just run of the mill, someone trips and, you know, breaks their arm or does something, you know, you shouldn't have those lawsuits coming. So, we changed the law in Pennsylvania. I worked with the Democrats, worked with Bill DeWeese [H. William DeWeese; State Representative, Fayette, Greene and Washington Counties, 1979-present; Speaker, 1993-1994], Bob O'Donnell, and we got legislation through. Trial lawyers are a very powerful group up here, but they agreed, you know, with the intent, so we worked it through, and it became model legislation which was adopted in other states. And that, along with the welfare reform, which we passed up here, became a model for other states. Those are, sort of, efforts that I worked on through ALEC and through which I was their, you know, Legislator of the Year a couple times. I mean, the way I look at things, if there's a problem, you know, let's try to find a solution. I mean, don't turn your back on the problem, and it's not my solution that's the correct solution. I mean, it may be someone

else's, or it may be a combination, but let's all get together. That's why people sent us here to try to get together, meet with our fellow Legislators from other parts of the state, maybe groups and organizations, and sit down and discuss, you know, what are the possible solutions to this problem? Come up with the best solution and then enact it. So, I was sort of a problem solver. I look for problems.

**HM:** Well, that's good. (*laugh*)

**RF:** Yeah.

**HM:** Sometimes. Well, your involvement in ALEC; did, did you have the opportunity to meet President Reagan [Ronald Reagan, 40<sup>th</sup> President of the United States, 1981-1989]?

**RF:** I met President Reagan a number of occasions. I, you know, was very pleased to be invited to the White House. I sat in the White House, in the East Room of the White House, in the first row with President Reagan maybe twice as far as you and I are, speaking, you know, to a group of people, and I took my camera. I wasn't supposed to, but I didn't use the flash and I had some, you know, pictures that people couldn't believe that, you know, I was that close. But yes, I met President Reagan. I met President Bush, Senior [George H.W. Bush, 41<sup>st</sup> President of the United States, 1989-1993]. I did not meet President Clinton; [William Jefferson Clinton, 42<sup>nd</sup> President of the United States, 1993-2001] was never invited, probably wouldn't have gone. And, you know, I met President Bush [George W. Bush, 43<sup>rd</sup> President of the United States, 2001-2009] a

number of times, but, you know, some of the people – and I guess I would say, “So what?” I think the significance of having met individuals, be it Governor Ridge or Governor Casey [Robert P. Casey, Governor of Pennsylvania, 1987-1995] or, you know, any person in any office, you know, be they President or something else, just the realization that they’re just like you. They’re just, you know, same kind of person; got a family, got a job, got to make decisions. And I think that the only difference between the position I held and maybe the position – well, I won’t say the President, but I mean, a Member of Congress, we’ll say – the only difference is that you’re making tougher decisions. I mean, I can’t begin to imagine how difficult it must be to sit in that Oval Office and send troops in harm’s way and such. I mean, they’re very tough decisions, but someone – we’re a democracy, you know, we elect individuals to make decisions. We’re a representative democracy. We elect people to make decisions on our behalf, and the higher up the ladder you go, the more difficult the decisions are. And it personally offends me when people degrade the office because it’s not an easy position, so.

**HM:** Well, I’d like to talk a little bit about our House Leadership. You talked about relationships and bipartisanship and problem solving, so I think maybe this might be the appropriate time to talk. What was your relationship like with the Leadership that you served under?

**RF:** I had a very good working relationship with the Leadership, be they the Caucus Administrator who assigns the offices and the parking spots or the Majority Leader or the Speaker, and I had good working relationships across the aisle. As I mentioned, the first major piece of legislation I had enacted, I worked with Bill DeWeese, who at that time

was the Chairman of Judiciary Committee, Majority Chairman of Judiciary Committee, and he then became Speaker, and he was Speaker for a term and has been Majority Leader of the Democratic Caucus for, you know, many years. You know, I could talk to Bill and say, “You know, I think we ought to be doing this. I think we ought to be doing that.” He didn’t always listen as attentively as I thought, but, I mean, you could talk. I mean, I just think everybody needs to, you know, maybe not posture and just sort of see where we have common ground and work towards that common ground. But the one thing that people probably don’t understand up here is that Leadership – Majority Leadership or Minority Leadership – it’s the Majority Party that sets the agenda. And people elected us to come here to Harrisburg, and we ran on a platform, and the Republicans generally ran on a platform that was different than the Democrats, so why wouldn’t we, when we were elected, try to implement our agenda? And that’s why people say, well, we’re political up here. Well, we are political up here, but we don’t necessarily share the same philosophy, and there are times when it’s hard ball, and, you know, you play hard ball, but that doesn’t mean that our Leaders – I’ll go back a little bit. When I was first elected, it was Matt Ryan [who] was the Minority Leader. He was the Republican Leader, and Jim Manderino [James J. Manderino; State Representative, Westmoreland County, 1967-1989; Speaker, 1989] was the Majority Leader, he was the Democrat Leader, and Jim was a really nice guy. He was sort of a little roly poly and, but, he was as Democrat as, you know, through and through. Monessen, you know; steel country. And Matt Ryan was, you know, suburban Republican. So, there were a lot of things they didn’t agree on, but they would have spirited debates in the Chamber and passionate debates, and after, you know, the issue was voted on and we left the Floor, they’d, you know, leave side-by-side, have dinner often, and I don’t think they do that as

much up here now as it used to be, but they were, you know, they worked well together, and each one – it was like, I'll say, a chess game. Each one tried to outmaneuver the other, and so with Leadership comes responsibility and the ability to get things done, also, so that's why Majority and Minority is very important, and as you see from the recent election, you know, there were 101 Members elected from each Caucus, from each party, and then there was one seat that was, you know, in doubt. It was back-and-forth and back-and-forth, and that one seat, you know, determined the Majority, and with the Majority comes, as I say, the responsibility to pursue your agenda. We were in the Minority the first twelve years I was elected. We were in the Majority the second twelve years, so I know it both ways. When we were in the Minority, we would put together our agenda, and basically it was, if we ever become the Majority Party, this is what we're going to do, so we had a game plan in place, and when we became the Majority Party in 1996, I guess it was – no, 1994, the election of 1994 taking place in [19]95, you know, we were ready to go. That was in Ridge – is that right, the years?

**HM:** It was, it was [19]96, but –

**RF:** No, I'm going to say it was [19]94, but I'd have to go back and recalculate. Off the top of my head, I'd say it was election of [19]94, taking office in [19]95.

**HM:** Okay. Well, I wanted to talk about the number of times that you served as Speaker Pro Tempore.

**RF:** Yeah, that was always interesting.

**HM:** Yeah. What were those experiences like?

**RF:** Well, I mean it was a source of pride. When Matt Ryan was Speaker, yeah, I did not serve as Speaker Pro Tempore, but I would observe that, you know, there were people, and so when Speaker Perzel was elected – when John Perzel was elected Speaker, I shot him a letter and said, you know, “I’d be very happy to serve, you know, as Speaker Pro Tempore if, you know, in your absence if you need a break or something like that,” and he took me up on it. And so, it’s a different perspective, I guess you would say. I mean, instead of sitting rank and file in the seat looking up, you’re looking down. But it’s, again, you know, with it comes responsibility. I mean, you’re running the Chamber, and, you know, everything’s done constitutionally, and you need three readings, and, you know, Members proceed to vote. The yeas and nays will now be taken, and the Clerk, you know, record the vote, and I mean, there’re all certain things you need to say and do, and Clancy Myer [Parliamentarian of the House of Representatives, 1978-2006] was the Parliamentarian. He helped a lot, and I had fun with it a couple times. I remember we were doing budget, and I was asked to be Speaker Pro Tempore, and there were some Members that on every amendment would get up and want to speak and share with the Body their opinion, the same opinion they shared with the Body the previous amendment, the previous amendment, so through a little wit I used to try to let them know that they were irritating the Member, and, you know, “For what purpose does the gentleman rise again?”

**HM:** *(laugh)*

**RF:** So, those are some of my reflections, so, I mean, I mean, you can move the process forward quickly, or, you know, slowly. So, I enjoyed it. It was fun.

**HM:** Oh, good. Did you personally embrace the technology that the House has been implementing?

**RF:** Did I learn how to do Emails and such? Yes.

**HM:** Yes, cell phones and Blackberries<sup>2</sup>.

**RF:** Cell phones, I have an iPod<sup>3</sup> even. Yes, I was fortunate to be a Chairman, and, you know, I was able to get – I mean, it all started out with we had computers, and our Caucus computer system and the Floor computer system were different. When Speaker Ryan decided we were going to put computers on the Floor, he wanted it to be in a very rigid kind of way. He didn't want people surfing the, the net, so to speak. So, we could only go on and get bills and get amendments, and such. Before we had computers on the Floor, the pages had to hand out paper to every Member and you would have paper on your desk, swear to God, that high, you know, from bills that have been and amendments and all that, and some people just never cleared their desk, and so the end of May – at the end of June when, you know, we're going into summer break and that, crews would come through and just clean out the House. But, I mean, other than that, there was just paperwork all over, and so it took the Members a little while to get used to it, you know.

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<sup>2</sup> Wireless, hand-held device introduced in 1999, which supports Email, text messaging, Internet, faxing, telephone, Web browsing and other wireless services.

<sup>3</sup> A brand of portable media players designed and marketed by Apple and launched in October 2001.

“I can’t pull up the amendment,” but, there was staff on the Floor to help, help us do it. And it really wasn’t, in my opinion, it wasn’t as easy as holding an amendment and looking at it and reading it. The scrolling down was more difficult for me. I mean, I guess it’s what you’re used to, but, I mean, it was important to know what section of the bill was taken out. You didn’t have the bill in front of you, but you could scroll up and down, maybe with the bill – any amendment to find it, but it just wasn’t as easy, say “Okay, on page three.” Well, here’s page three of this amendment changes, you know, “should” to “would” or “must” to “could,” or, you know, but I adopted it and used it. And Emails; Email is something that in my – there, too, talk about technology. I’ll tell you two things. I have two strong beliefs; one, when they put cameras on the Floor, our Sessions went twice as long because people spoke to be seen on TV. Is that good? Sure. Is it necessary? I don’t know, but if we continued to research, study, vote, debate the way we used to, there was no reason for everybody to get up on every issue and talk about, “Well, I think this,” and I mean, I don’t care what you think. You know? We Caucus on bills, we know the amendments, we know what we’re doing, we’re voting our Districts. All the votes are, you know, publicly recorded and such. I just think putting the TVs in the Chamber just made more political the situation. It further divided the two Caucuses. Each Caucus wanted to get on record, you know, in front of the camera to state their position, so everybody knew back home what they were doing, and I don’t know that it’s served any good. The other thing is Emails. Used to be that someone would sit down and write a letter, or pick up the phone and call and say that, you know, they felt very strongly about the issues; this issue or that issue. Well, now with Emails, you can just blast the Email to everybody. I mean, you can send an email to five thousand people, ten thousand, one hundred thousand. So, the Emails, I mean, I would

get one hundred Emails a day, and you'd have to go through them to find out which ones are important and which ones aren't. Which ones are, you know, some pro tax group, you know, sending to everybody in every state, and which one was a constituent needing a problem. So, I think Emails have made the job less personal. I mean, I enjoy talking to people on the phone, corresponding with them. I mean, you need to have procedures, so we had a procedure in the office. If we got an Email, if I saw the Email, and it was a constituent concern about a piece of legislation, you know, I would send it to staff, ask them, you know, "What are the pros and cons?" Because, I mean, we have four thousand bills introduced. You don't necessarily know each one. But, we would answer whatever Email came, we would answer it with a letter, and that's probably old school, but I thought it was important. I mean, you could just easy shoot back, "Thanks for your Email," you know. "That bill's not running. I don't support it, or it has big problems. See ya," you know, but I mean that's so impersonal. So, whether we got a phone call or a letter or an Email, we would always send a letter back and say, "Thank you very much for writing, and it's very important," you know. "Your views are very important to me," and they are, but we don't sit up here, I mean, people didn't send me here to count how many are for and how many are against. People send me here to make a decision on what is the best way to deal with the issue. So, for the most part, again, because I represent a suburban area, and it's pro-business, and such, my views and the views of my constituents were pretty much in sync, but not necessarily all the time. So, those were two things that I would say that technology that maybe hasn't helped as much as it's divided; it's divided the Caucuses. I think it's divided the public on many issues. I mean, it's too easy for people to be polar.

**HM:** Well, I'd like to talk a little bit about your legislation now.

**RF:** Okay.

**HM:** We haven't talked about that yet. (*laugh*)

**RF:** Yes.

**HM:** The first one I wanted to talk about is the Workforce Development, and could you explain what this legislation was creating?

**RF:** Okay, well, it's House Bill 2 [1995]. It became law. It was signed into law by Governor Schweiker [Mark S. Schweiker, Lieutenant Governor of Pennsylvania, 1995-2001; Governor of Pennsylvania, 2001-2003] out in Pittsburgh. And I met Governor Schweiker at the Harrisburg Capitol Airport, and we flew on the State Plane, which I had never done before. We flew to Pittsburgh, signed the legislation, flew back, so that was sort of neat. As I had said, with the TEAM Pennsylvania concept, it was legislation which, I will say "attempted" because you never know whether you do, but attempted to make individual groups and organizations accountable. They were receiving State dollars, training dollars. We wanted people to get jobs. It was my feeling that provider groups were getting the money, as in welfare reform, some of the welfare reforming did. But, the provider groups were getting the money, and it really wasn't getting to the people who needed the money, so this made people more accountable, and again, as I said, it was up to each individual area. I think there were twenty-four areas in the

Commonwealth, and each area, region, you know, had to come up with a plan on how it was going to spend the money, and if it didn't come up with a good plan on how they were going to spend the money – and if they weren't held accountable in reporting how many jobs they created – then they didn't get the money and their plan wasn't approved. So, this put into statute the whole process of doing that; basically coordinating, trying to come up with some cost effective measures, creating some efficiencies, and basically putting the responsibility more on the area that was going to use the money, that needed the money to create the jobs, you know, to let them decide how it was best spent rather than from the state telling them. So, that was that legislation.

**HM:** And how has it been running? Successful?

**RF:** It's been running well. I would suggest that it was created during the Ridge Administration. I thought it was being implemented very well during the Ridge Administration. The Rendell Administration has embraced many of the concepts, working hard to try to make certain that they create incentives for jobs to be created, but it's not necessarily the same way, sort of falling back into the trap of, of having the state dole out the money, and again, you know, to those groups and individuals that it feels can best use it as opposed to, you know, having people submit a plan to earn the responsibility to get the money. But, it's running fine. I mean, many hard people work at it. Governor Rendell kept me on the board, and, you know, I worked hard with a number of people in his Administration, and I don't want to say it's not – it's just with each Administration there's a different little tack that people take, and so there might be a, you know, little diversion or such.

**HM:** Well, you mentioned the welfare reforms. So, another piece of legislation that caused a bit of controversy?

**RF:** It did.

**HM:** Yeah.

**RF:** I was on a TV program in Philadelphia, major TV program, because I felt that – well, let me back up. First, there were able-bodied individuals who were receiving cash assistance, and these were individuals that could very easily go out and get a job. They had no deformities. They had no problems. They were single. They weren't, you know, women with children. They were single, able-bodied individuals, and we were giving them cash. We, the public, were giving them cash assistance. I say that's, in my opinion, that's not the area that is most sensitive, most needed, so I authored legislation to do away with that. I also, we found and were told that, you know, many of the individuals who were receiving cash assistance weren't employable because they had, you know, maybe drug-related, or you know – I don't want to say "drug-related." They had problems. I mean, they weren't, they weren't focused, and, you know, they had some handicaps, and they, and they might be, you know, using drugs. So, I said that I thought that we should test, you know, randomly test, not everybody, but randomly test, and, you know, [if] people were using drugs, they shouldn't receive assistance. I mean, it wasn't good for, you know, their family or them. Well, that was very spirited in the debate, and I can remember on the TV some lady called in, said, "Well, I wonder if he's ever been

tested.” I said, “What?” “Has he ever been tested?” I said, “Drug tested? No, ma’am, I haven’t been.” “Well, I think you should be.” I said, “Well, I’d be very happy to right now. You know, I don’t have a problem.” I, unlike, you know, Bill Clinton, I can say I never used drugs. Never smoked marijuana, never used any drugs at all, and I didn’t think that we should – I mean, welfare, the welfare budget is now the largest segment of state dollars going out. Larger than public education, and as a society we can’t have, you know, the responsibilities of all people, you know, being shouldered by a few. We need to make certain that’s how – first, we did welfare reform that said, you know, we’re only going to provide benefits to those who really need them, and those who can go out and get a job, get a job. Then we came in with our job training program. We’re organizing, so we made sure there was money available. Since we told the people to get a job, we’re going to make sure that they could get the training necessary to get the job. So, I mean, you know, work together, and, you know, yes, I had my house picketed one time, and, you know, but these are decisions that you need to make. You can’t be the nice person. I mean, it’s sort of like – I have three children. Could I give each one of them everything they wanted every time they wanted it? No. I mean, we couldn’t; we had to make decisions. So, you know, one got this, one got that, but I mean, you had to make decisions, and that’s – we’re making decisions up here in Harrisburg just like any family is making based on their family budget. How much money’s available, and where should we spend it? Where can we, you know, create the most good, incentiveize in the most areas? So, I mean, you just need to make responsible decisions. So, I mean, they’re tough decisions. As I said, the higher up the, the chain you go, the tougher the decisions. Most of our decisions deal with money.

**HM:** *(laugh)*

**RF:** Tough issues.

**HM:** Well, yeah. Act 66 of 1996 changed sabbaticals for public school teachers. Could you explain how this piece of legislation came about?

**RF:** Well, again, it came about as a result of school districts, and my own school districts, school board members, telling – I mean, why should we have to pay half, fifty percent of a teacher’s salary so they can take a vacation and, and go somewhere, travel abroad or whatever? And there’s no accountability to making it be a study program or such. They could, you know, just take half the year off, and they would receive fifty percent of the salary. And I think they could only do it every five years or something like that. Well, I decided, I mean, not “I decided,” I mean, I felt that that was not, you know, the best way to handle it. So, they were called ‘travel sabbaticals,’ and we changed the law to provide that school board did have authority over sabbaticals, and travel sabbaticals were no longer acceptable unless there was, you know, an, an educational component to it. So, the school board members could say no, and one of the areas, I mean, was split sabbaticals, too, which would mean it covered two school years. So, it was a disruption in two years’ time, not necessarily one. So, we worked on legislation, we were able to get it through, get the support of the other Caucuses. It was legislation that went through, and, you know, it was reasonable, and when you, when you try to be reasonable, you know, you can get things done. If you are, you know, too ultra, you

know, left or right, nothing's going to happen because there's, you know, it's like the weight's pushing equally hard on either side, and you have to find common ground.

**HM:** Another –

**RF:** I worked on all the easy areas; education, welfare, job training.

**HM:** Well, easy for some, I'm sure.

**RF:** I'm just teasing.

**HM:** Another controversial piece of legislation involved amending the Pennsylvania Election Code, which was House Bill 1760 of the [19]97-[19]98 Session. Would you like to talk about that? That was the absentee ballots and residential requirements. I don't know?

**RF:** Yeah. Well, again, that was legislation, again, that dealt with – as, as you're aware, and everyone's aware, the absentee ballot issue was a real big issue in 2004 in the Presidential Election. And right now in Pennsylvania, and probably many states, you don't even need a photo id or anything. I mean, you can register to vote. You can register by mail. The welfare offices, the Department of Transportation, are required by law to ask you if you want to register to vote and to process the registration, get it into the right county. I'll give you an example; one of my opponents was registered at home in the District, in the Pocono's and at Penn[sylvania] State University. Three valid

registrations and could've voted in any one of those or all of them. So, I mean, we try to come up with some reasonable expectations, you know, of what a person should do, and I mean, one of them is you should, you know, have to prove, you know, show photo id, I mean, to get registered to vote. And, and when you go to the voters, I mean, our election laws are so generous, generously skewed towards the individual to get everybody to vote, but then you don't know who's voting, and you don't know who's voting, how many times they're voting, because people say, "Well, you're discriminating because, you know, either a poor person won't have a photo id, or a senior citizen won't have a photo id, so you're singling out, you know, broad groups of people, and that's discriminatory." And that's not, that's not the issue, but as always happens, you know, people will paint the picture they wish to paint, and I learned very, very early on in politics, it's not necessarily reality that matters; It's perception that matters. And whatever the public thinks is happening or whatever the public believes should be done is what they're going to, you know, bank on and not necessarily what should be done. So, I mean, this was an area, whether you have, you know, reasonable expectations of people carrying identification when they go to the polls to vote.

**HM:** Seems very straightforward. (*laugh*)

**RF:** You would think so. I mean, it was last year when we changed the election laws to get polling places out of bars in center city Philadelphia, get them out of, you know, residences. And I don't know of any actual case where there is one, but it was intimated that – I mean, there were political bosses that had the election box, you know, right in their house, and you would come in, and, I mean, maybe the curtain didn't even close,

you know, I don't know. But, it's very intimidating for some people, so, I mean, you try to make certain that, you know, there's independence and, you know, some, some reasonableness to it. So, we took the polling places out of the bars, or asked the bars to close during the, you know, at [*inaudible*], you know, so.

**HM:** I don't know. It doesn't seem possible it can be going on in Pennsylvania in 2007.

**RF:** I know. There's some crazy laws

**HM:** I wanted to ask you; you worked to get the state money as well as federal money to preserve Paoli Battlefield. Can you tell me about that process?

**RF:** Yeah, that was a fairly long process. Basically, the Paoli Battlefield is a Revolutionary Battlefield, was where a battle actually was fought. There were a number of Revolutionary soldiers that lost their lives, and they were buried on that site. The site was owned by a preparatory school and had been kept in its open state, but the prep school was wanting to expand its facilities and was going to sell the land, you know, to fund the capital campaign, and the community did not, you know, want to see that lost. So, I mean, little boys and girls in kindergarten, first grade, you know, they'd bring in pennies. There'd be a jar in classrooms. So basically, I worked with Congressman Weldon [Wayne Curtis Weldon; US Representative, 1987-2006], and he was working to secure federal funds. I was working to secure state funds. And Governor Ridge was the Governor at the time, and we had to raise, I'm trying to think, probably one million and a half dollars, or something like that, in order to pay the prep school market value for the

ground and save it, and, you know, I was able to convince the Governor to do that. And since we're doing archives and such, up here you just don't get a half a million dollars, you know, because you're a nice guy, so, I mean, the Governor had a number of issues that he was working on that he wanted to secure, you know, passage of, and I mean, philosophically, I agreed with just about everything Governor Ridge did, so he had my support on most issues, but there was one sticky wicket, I guess you would say, that he couldn't get enough support, and I said that I would help him, you know, on this one issue, but I need, you know, half a million dollars to save this battlefield and called on him as, you know, as a war hero to, you know, we need to save this ground. So, he anted up and agreed to, you know, the half a million dollars. But, I mean, it was give and take, give and take, and now, I mean, that's important. We're trying to, trying to get some more money so we can modernize the area there, but, I mean, it was a cornfield is actually what it was. There was a park with a monument for the soldiers, you know, who were buried, but this was the actual cornfield where the battle took place, so.

**HM:** Very nice.

**RF:** Yeah, well, sometimes you're lucky, too. I mean, if the Governor didn't have an issue that I couldn't help him with, maybe he wouldn't have helped me.

**HM:** Are there any other pieces of legislation? I just touched on a few. You gave me a whole packet as you came in of all the legislation that you had passed, and I just touched on a few. Is there anything else that you'd like to talk about legislatively?

**RF:** I mean, there's a variety of legislation. I guess I would say the, the last two pieces of legislation that I was able to help get signed into law was one dealing with our tuition account program, TAP 529; 529 is a section of the internal revenue code, which basically says that you can put money into an education savings account, and when the money is, you know, returned, not returned, but when the distribution of the funds is not taxable, so you can save for your children's college education, your grandchildren's and such. Well, I have five little grandchildren. At that time, I think I had three, and I wanted to open tuition accounts for them, and I found that only Pennsylvania's tuition account program would be free from taxes upon distribution. If you invest – and each state was enabled by the federal law to set up a tuition account program – if I invested in, say, Delaware's tuition account program, which might have been managed by Vanguard, let's say, Pennsylvania would tax the proceeds coming back because they would only exempt out of Pennsylvania's program, which happened to be managed by a Delaware company, and I said, "This is silly." This is how we get legislation sometimes. "This is silly, you know. If I want" – Vanguard is, you know, an economic engine in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, has its headquarters here, and because they don't manage Pennsylvania's plan and they do manage other plans, if I invest in their plan, the kids gets taxed. So, I went about to change that and worked with the Governor, worked with the Senate, worked with all four Caucuses, and we were actually able – the bill was, coincidentally, House Bill 529, which I reserved that number because, you know, it was important. We did move the legislation, got it through over to the Senate. I met with Senator Jubelirer [Robert C. Jubelirer; Pennsylvania Senator, 1975-2006; President Pro Tempore, 1987-2006], President Pro Tempore, I said, "This is, this is very important, very important, very important. This is one of the bills you have to make sure you get done, you know,

by June 30<sup>th</sup> when we break for summer recess.” And he agreed that it was important; didn’t necessarily commit that he would get it out. And I met with the Governor’s Office, and I said, “This is very, very, very, very important, and we got to make sure we get it done, you know, before the, the budget process is ended.” So, the Governor’s Office said they would. Well, the Governor’s Office actually went one step further. I joined a colleague of mine in introducing legislation which said that the contributions would be tax deductible in Pennsylvania, Mike Turzai [Michael Turzai; State Representative, Allegheny County, 2001-present] from Allegheny County, and that legislation passed the House also. So, what was agreed to be done was that the Governor’s Office agreed, the Senate agreed, that they would put in the tax code bill the language which I had drafted for the dispersement of any of the fifty programs, plus the language which enabled deductions for any contribution up to, I think it was, twelve thousand dollars. So, that became part of the tax code and became law, and I was very happy, and I have five little tuition account programs, one for each of the little grandchildren, and they’re with Vanguard, and the distribution will be tax exempt in Pennsylvania. So, I feel I accomplished something. And the other legislation was the technicality in the law. We had, a number of years ago, a volunteer fireman, who was fire police, died as a result of a heart attack while, you know, working with the fire company fighting a fire and handling traffic, and all that; he dropped dead. And for the most part, there is a board that determines whether or not that is a compensatable area for death benefits, because we provide death benefits for firefighters who die in the line of the duty or even police; I think we do police, too. But, the board ruled that because the gentleman had a history of a heart problem and was overweight that this was not a direct result of, you know, fighting the fire and being on the scene and doing – although he

dropped dead right on the spot – and so they denied the family any benefits. And, I mean, I went to the funeral, I went to the ceremony, the annual award banquet for the fire company, and, you know, was back to back with that guy, and I said, “Well, that’s just not right.” So, I introduced legislation that tied to a federal law, and said that – because the federal law changed the year that he died, but after his death. He died like in the late September, and I’m going to say, I think it was maybe November 1 the federal law kicked in, so he didn’t get that benefit, either. So, I drafted legislation with the help of staff Rick O’Leary, and we drafted legislation that said, “In the event an application was submitted within sixty days prior to the enactment of the federal law, that individual would automatically be covered.” There was only one individual that met those standards, and we got it through the House, we got it through the Senate, and I don’t want to talk out of turn – actually, there was a technicality. The first piece of legislation that we enacted was somewhat ambiguous whether it was the certification process had begun or the death certificate was filed, was within sixty days. The Administration interpreted that it was the death certificate, said that was not the intent of the legislation. The intent – in the whole law, all the way through the law speaks of certification of death, so you should not interpret this one section as certificate of death because the whole law talks about certification of death. It’s a process that goes through. So, so we had to go back and change legislation again, and I promised the family I’d do it. I introduced a piece of legislation, had it referred to my committee, we voted on it, had it sent to the Floor, got the Speaker to agree to run the bill. We did that inside of seven days in the House, and it went over the Senate. The problem was the Senate was on election break at the time, and so it took several weeks before they came back, but when they came back, they took it up quickly and passed it, and we sent it to the Governor, and the Governor signed it into law.

I think the whole legislative process took about sixty days, which is fairly quick, but that family, you know, was able to receive the benefits. They were justly due. I mean, we have to take care of our volunteers. So, I guess there're two pieces that, you know, at the end, granted, you sort-of go out with a little flame.

**HM:** Yeah. Do you believe your issues changed over time?

**RF:** My issues? I don't think my issues changed over time. My ability to get things done changed over time. I don't think there's any legislation which, you know, I authored and had enacted, you know, that wasn't introduced over – other than the last several I mentioned. I mean, this was legislation that I introduced the first Session I was here and second Session, and third, and it takes time to get things done, to build a consensus, so I wouldn't say issues changed over time. You know, pretty much I was pro-business, pro-family, you know, conservative lawmaker. I thought, you know, we didn't want to tax the hell out of people and spend all their money. Let them, you know, spend the money, and let the communities closest to the people, you know, deal with the decisions that impact their families and their residents.

**HM:** Did you ever get frustrated?

**RF:** Oh, always. *(laugh)* Always frustrated. I mean, with this piece of legislation about the fireman, I sat there with the Secretary of General Services, the Chief of Staff for the Governor's Office, and I had with me documentation that I asked the Reference Bureau to pull up. I said, "No, no, no, you're reading it the wrong way. This, you know, a to b

to c to d to e. You've got to read it, you know, in that sequence," and [they] said, "Thank you very much, but we don't see it that way." So, yeah, I was frustrated a lot, but, I mean, with frustration comes renewed effort. So, you know, it's twenty-four years I enjoyed. I felt very challenged. I think that most people would say, you know, you did a pretty good job, and so.

**HM:** Do you think the successes are that much sweeter after feeling that frustration?

**RF:** No, I mean, I never look at things as confrontational, and, I mean, I think if you looked at it as confrontational, you know, they win, I lose, you know, then maybe, you know, that's it. But it's just a matter of working through the system and, and getting people on board building bridges. So, I mean, you feel, maybe you feel all the effort was worth it, but, I mean, that's not like anything where you raise the flag and say, "Ha, ha. Beat you now." I mean, we're a team. I mean, every Member up here in the House or the Senate and the Administration, you know, from the staff people to the elected officials, we all have a responsibility. We all have a, you know, a piece of the puzzle to work with, and we just need to work together. I mean, sometimes it becomes frustrating when you can't see other people focusing that same way.

**HM:** What aspect of your job did you enjoy the most?

**RF:** Working with people and helping people. I mean, that was what it was all about. I mean, it was never about me. It was never about, you know, the office. It was about you're in a position to help people, and the more people we can help, the better. I mean,

helping them cut through red tape. I mean, not helping people get ahead to the extent that someone else didn't get ahead. I mean, it's just, people have problems and helping **[End of Tape 1]** people resolve their problems.

**HM:** Well, what did you enjoy the least with this job?

**RF:** *(laugh)* Raising money. I mean, I did not like to ask people for money. And I was always, I always felt fortunate when I was able to run unopposed and know I didn't have to raise money. I didn't have to spend a lot of money. I mean, you raise some money and such, but that's the part, part of the process that is most uncomfortable.

**HM:** In your own words, how has the House changed through time since you've been here?

**RF:** Well, I'll give you an analogy, I guess. Imagine I'm a big time sports guy. I mean, I love sports, every sport. I don't like pro[fessional] basketball. I'll be honest. But other than pro basketball, I love every sport. And you've seen it happen in football and baseball; you have a lot of free agents coming in. I mean, used to be the Eagles. You know, they would come out with the same roster and just about year after year, you know who the people are; you'd learn them, you'd be faithful to them, you know their numbers, you knew their stats. Same with the Phillies, you know. I'm a Philadelphia kind of guy, and, you know, was it the New York Giants when they were in New York before they were San Francisco? Or the Brooklyn Dodgers before they were L.A. [Los Angeles], and you would know, you know, who everybody was, and you would have trading cards and

all that. They probably still have trading cards. They started now with free agents, and now you have free agents. They're moving from team to team to team. You have, you know – this year you have these people playing, next year you have a whole different – and, you know, whoever was on this team doesn't stay on. There's no loyalty to the team. People are free agents. It used to be here in Harrisburg, I think, there was a camaraderie; there was a loyalty, and I'm not saying it was, you know, the rich white man's club or something like that. I mean, there was camaraderie between people. There was a healthy respect for different philosophies. I knew some people wouldn't agree with me on some issues, but I knew others would. No matter what side of the aisle, you know, whether they're male or female, you knew upon whom you could count on, and I mean, it was more constructive, I would say, more constructive. I mean, you could work through the process and, you know, get from point a to point b, or from beginning to end. I think now you have too many individualists; you have too many single issue people. You have individuals who you would say drop a hand grenade in the situation just to blow up something because they don't like it – that's figuratively speaking – you have more people up here being against more things than you have people willing to work together. I left the House because it was changing, and twenty-four years, you know, was a long time. Had other things I wanted to do and, I mean, if you could – it's like if something escapes from the bottle, you know, the genie comes out of the bottle, you're not going to get the genie back in. But I think government ran very well when everyone was more cordial, more respectful, harbored the same, maybe, deep political differences, but respected individuals for their own opinion, and I think that's all gone. I mean, I see that it's – if it's not gone, it's certainly not the norm. It's not the norm. I mean, you have individual Caucuses. I mean, now you have, there's a Caucus for every health ailment

out there, which I'm glad, you know, there are focuses more attention. But you've got the sportsmen; you've got the inner city. I mean, you've got everybody breaking down into differences. They want to define themselves as being different. And it's hard to work in such a large group, you know, when everybody wants it their way, and while I'm on that large group, there're two hundred and three Members, but each Member represents sixty thousand people, and for you to be able to have a good working relationship with your District, you need to control the size so that an individual can, can be responsible. I mean, I always felt that I could get myself reelected because the District was small enough, and I had enough personal contact with, you know, many people that I could control my own destiny, so to speak. You go to a State Senate, that's four times as large. Now you have a quarter million people. You go to a Member of Congress, you know, that's eight times the size, so that's, you know, half a million people, or six hundred thousand people, and you can't control your own destiny. Therefore, you become dependent. I'm not saying that everybody is dependent, but when you move to larger-size Districts, then individual Members become more dependent on other people to get the work done, to give them resources, and you are one step further away from the public that you represent, so that's why I think, you know, it's very important to keep Districts a reasonable size. I mean, its grown men and women. We should be able to get along together, I mean, whether we're two hundred and three or, you know, one hundred and fifty-one. I mean, it doesn't make a difference. You just need to be able to work together. Respect each other's, you know, opinion. Disagree when need be. Take the votes, you know, let the die be cast.

**HM:** What was your fondest memory of serving?

**RF:** I'd just say all the very nice people I've had the pleasure of meeting, I mean, like yourself. I mean, you're just a wonderful person. I've enjoyed this, you know. It's taken us six months to get together, you know, for one reason or another, but I mean, I wasn't about to, you know, back off some of the issues in November that I was working on and, you know, in order to do an interview. So, I'm glad we did it, and, and another thing, I mean, you say with disappointment. We were working on home improvement contractor registration towards the end of the Session. Worked all summer, all spring, summer, and fall to get that in place. Had the support of the home builder community and had the support of the municipalities, the support of the Administration, all the Caucuses, and one person, one Member blew that whole thing up, and I'm, and I'm talking about being frustrated. I mean, it was unfortunate, because there are so many people getting ripped off by so many contractors. You know, all we wanted to do is have the Attorney General's office – they would have to register with them if they had been in bankruptcy in recent times, they had to report that. If they had judgments against them, they had to report that. I mean, we wanted to make home improvement fraud a criminal offense, not a civil, contractual problem in which you had to go to court yourself and go before the judge and say, "Well, I had a contract. Yeah, I had the contract, but he didn't perform, and he took my money and didn't do the work," and then, okay, well, fine, you might get a judgment, but you'll never get that money. I mean, make it a crime. I mean, we set it up so that if there was a distinct pattern of behavior, it would be a crime, and you would go to jail, so, that was a frustrating event. What was the question? *(laugh)*

**HM:** A fondest memory.

**RF:** A fondest memory. That was not it.

**HM:** *(laugh)* No.

**RF:** No, the people, I mean.

**HM:** Yes.

**RF:** I've enjoyed all the people I met, you know, the Members, the staff, all the Executive Directors I had, all the people in the Governor's Administrations, you know, be they Republican or Democrat. For the most part, everybody's up here to help us do what we need to do, you know, to move Pennsylvania forward, and it's not, it's not a difficult task if you get enough people working together with the same focus and the same attention. I really enjoyed everyone I met, and I miss them all dearly. I mean, I miss relationships. I don't necessarily miss sitting on the Floor of the House for, you know, ten hours just listening to people talk when they talked, you know, time and time and time and time again, so.

**HM:** Okay, now, I'm not asking you to tell tales, but do you have any humorous stories that you would like to share?

**RF:** *(laugh)* No.

**HM:** Okay.

**RF:** I mean, I could. I mean, they're not necessarily humorous. I mean, you know, on two occasions there were fist fights on the Floor of the House, you know, not a good thing.

**HM:** *(laugh)* They weren't you, were they?

**RF:** Wasn't me.

**HM:** Okay.

**RF:** No, I, I don't have any anecdotes or anything.

**HM:** Okay. What have you been up to since you've left the House?

**RF:** Well, if I weren't here today, I would be back in the shrubbery beds weeding, pulling out old shrubbery, putting in new shrubbery. My wife has me working. You know, got to go to the, you know, spend a little more time with friends and all that. Went to the Phillies opener and got to see the, the Leapfrogs, which is the Navy Seals skydive team that, you know, [I] have been friends with for about four years now, and, you know, it's – these young men and women that serve in our armed forces. You know, you just have to thank them, and they're, they're very dedicated individuals with a very difficult job. And these guys, why, they jump out of planes and skydive. I mean, they tour in and

out of Iraq and Afghanistan and, you know, don't have pleasant assignments, but so, after they do their jumping after the game, you know, I try to let them enjoy themselves, you know, one of the local bars, pick up the tab.

**HM:** Are you, or will you remain active in politics?

**RF:** I don't think so. I think, you know, there's room in politics for others to come and, you know, I've been involved in politics, you know, since 1976 so, that's thirty years – forty years, no, forty years, yeah, forty years – and so, I think most people have heard my thoughts. It's time for new thoughts, fresh ideas, so no, if people wish to, you know, speak and get an opinion, I certainly wouldn't mind, you know, sharing my opinion, but I think I'm out of politics and into the private sector or into just retirement.

**HM:** Okay.

**RF:** If the senior tour comes through and they need a caddy or something on tour, I could be easily persuaded to spend the rest of my life, you know, going from golf course to golf course to golf course. I'd have to make arrangements, you know, to bring my wife and not play in every tournament. I mean, could you imagine the thrill of, you know, like, caddying for Phil Nicholson or, you know, any of these? I mean, Zach Johnson just won the masters. Nice kid, you know. That'd be fun, so there's might be another career out there.

**HM:** Well, we'll have to see if we can get this released to a larger media now.

**RF:** Yeah, tell them I'm available.

**HM:** Okay. What would your advice be for new Members?

**RF:** Get along. You know, I think it's simple. I, I think it's up to each individual Member to go out and meet the other Members with whom they serve, not necessarily those only in their region, only in their Party. I mean, I'm suburban Philadelphia, but, you know, I need to know the people up from Bradford County. I need to, you know, know the people in Cambria County, you know. Get out and meet them. Use the committee system to get around and meet different people, different organizations. I mean, you need to listen. This is a position where everybody wants to hear you talk, and I think it's much more important for us to listen, and so I would just say get along. I mean, I know you know I went skydiving, but everyone gets sort-of comfortable in their little niche, and to move out of their little niche, you know, there's a comfort level that maybe you're not sure you want to do that. And it gets too easy for people to stay in office where they know what they're doing, they've created a network, and, you know, it's just maybe something where you stay in office as opposed to going out, you know, and trying something else; it's more comfortable. So, I mean, to the new Members coming in, I would say, you know, "listen to what the senior Members have to say, try to make as many friends as you can, try to understand the individual Districts, and just be nice and get to know each other." And to, you know, the more senior Members, I'd say, "Hey, there is a life after the Legislature, and, you know, when you jump out of a plane, you go skydiving, you know, like you see a whole other world. I mean, it's okay to be

nervous and be a little timid, but get out and do it. I mean, we all were successful before we came. For the most part we, present company not necessarily included, you know, we all were successful here, and, you know, we're in multi-career kind of lifestyles, so there's another career out there," and that's what I'm looking for, and maybe it's just with my grandkids, but that'll be fun, too.

**HM:** Absolutely. How would you like your tenure to be remembered?

**RF:** Fair and reasonable, you know, honest, straightforward, any of those, you know, kinds of thoughts, both sides of the aisle, I think. You know, just, you know, an openness, a willingness to try to work together, you know, no matter what the issue, so.

**HM:** Well, thank you very much.

**RF:** Well, you're welcome, Heidi. Thank you.

**HM:** This concludes our interview. It was wonderful. I appreciate you taking the time, and after six months, you know, it was great to hear your, your insights.

**RF:** Okay, now I'm going to learn more about, you know, the Archives and what you hold and all that. I was thinking I should have brought up one of my campaign buttons.

**HM:** Yeah. Well, next time you're in Harrisburg.

**RF:** Next time, okay.

**HM:** Okay.

**RF:** Thanks, Heidi.

**HM:** Thank you.

**RF:** I appreciate it.