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INTERVIEW WITH:

The Honorable Beverly Mackereth (R)

196th District

York County

2001-2008

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY: Heidi Mays, House Archivist
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Heidi Mays (HM): Good afternoon.

The Honorable Beverly Mackereth (BM): Hi, how are you?

HM: Great, thank you. I am here today with Representative Bev Mackereth who represents the 196th Legislative District from York County, who served the House between the years 2001 and 2008. Thank you for being here with me today.

BM: Thank you for inviting me to be here.

HM: I wanted to begin by asking you about your childhood and your family life, and can you tell us a little bit about your background and how you feel those experiences shaped you to be involved in public service?

BM: Actually, I grew up outside Washington D.C., Silver Spring, Maryland, with my mom, dad, and I had three sisters. So, one of four girls; I was the second. I went to a private school until I went to junior high school, and then went to public school. My dad was a corporate attorney, anti-trust specialist, but he also did a lot of work on projects and did a lot of volunteer work. So, really, what I learned was really from watching him. The other thing was he cared about people. That was probably the resounding message all through when I was growing up, you know, give back, give back; you need to care about others. So, that's really what I took with me. I actually left home at age 17, went to college, and after that, I had absolutely no idea what I wanted to do. I had a degree in Psychology and Sociology; as you know, you can't do a whole

lot with that. But, I started working in York County and it really just led me, through all my work experiences, to the point where running for office made sense.

HM: Well, did you come from a family that was involved in politics?

BM: No, they really weren't. Actually, my parents were Democrats. And so, I grew up in a Democrat home in a very Democrat area. It's interesting, because my predecessor for this position, he says that from the time he was a little boy, he knew he wanted to grow up and be a State Representative, and now he's a U.S. Congressman. And when I speak to groups, I always say to them, "Ever since I was little, I had no desires to ever get involved as an elected official. I wasn't interested; there was really nothing I wanted to do for me, it was all about public service, giving back." That was the message that I had; being part of your community. And actually, no matter what perspective you come from, it can lead you to the same place.

HM: Well, how different was it growing up in, as you said a Democratic household and then coming to York County?

BM: Well, you know, it was interesting because even though they were Democrats, all they talked about was, again, the same message of giving back. What happened was I was an Independent all through college. When I moved to York County, I guess it was seven years after that when I really started to get involved in politics, and that was because I began working for a District Attorney. Our District Attorney; it's a Republican County, Republican District Attorney. And I started to really look at the differences between being a Republican, being a

Democrat; the issues, especially criminal justice issues, law enforcement issues, and government involvement – how much government should be involved in people’s lives – and that’s when, for me it was a very clear decision, that I was a Republican and not a Democrat. But, it was really after working in York County. And, of course, you take on the values and the culture of that area, and I think that’s what really did it. Before that, it just wasn’t something that I was interested in.

HM: Could you talk a little bit about some of the other areas that you were involved in before you came to the House of Representatives?

BM: Sure, I’d be happy to. Right out of college, I started kind-of in social work. I started at the York County Blind Center, very quickly went to York County Children and Youth Services as a case worker and a supervisor. That’s probably one of the experiences that I am one of the few that bring here to the House of Representatives. I have been in the worst homes that you can imagine. I dealt with the worst situations that you can imagine. So, I’ve had opportunities to see things that a lot of people did not. It was interesting but, I would tell you that when I worked at Children and Youth, that was the most difficult job I ever had, including being a State Representative. From there I had the opportunity to go work in the District Attorney’s office. I developed a victim witness program, a child abuse unit, stop violence against women program, and a juvenile prosecution unit. Great experience, and also at that time, in my own community where I lived, I got on Borough Council; I was elected to Borough Council, and for me, I didn’t see that as a political job; I saw it as a community service. I also then became Mayor. A Mayor’s responsibility is over law enforcement – a perfect fit; working with the DA, law

enforcement. Also had the opportunity, I did some consulting for the Office of Attorney General, here. And then one day I got a phone call – I had been up here lobbying a bill – and I got a phone call from, under Governor [Tom] Ridge [1995-2001], his chief policy person for criminal justice. She called and she said, “I heard you testify before the Senate Judiciary Committee and I love what you said, and we have a job for you.” So, I became the Deputy Director of the Governor’s Community Partnership for Safe Children, dealing with violence committed both by and against youth. Great experience, gave me the opportunity to work with every department in State government. So, here I was, I was a mayor still, I had the Local Government, 17 years with the County Government, and then I had the opportunity for two years to work in the Ridge Administration at State Government. So, I just started to learn as much as I could about how it all works, how it fits together, and that was just a tremendous experience. I then got a phone call and offered another job back in York as the Executive Director of, what’s called, the Healthy York County Coalition, and that dealt with all quality of life issues. So, here I had been dealing with children’s issues and violence issues, and now I got to learn about education, quality of life, healthcare, environmental issues – the whole gamut – in the private sector. And when this position opened up, it was an open seat – the person that had it before me – our State Senator, all our local Reps, I had known them; they all came to me and said, “Bev, you should run, you’d be great; we really want you; we need a woman; this would be wonderful,” and it took them about a year to convince me. And actually, they brought me up here and leadership up here said, “How do we make this happen?” and I said “Well, do I get all the Committees I want?” and they said, “No, but you will get them eventually, and we’ll give you three,” and they did; they followed through. They did exactly what they told me they would do. The other thing is they really had to prove to me how my being a State Representative would

actually make a difference, because that was my biggest fear; I'm going to come up here, I'll get involved in the politics and I'll forget about, or I won't be as involved in making real life changes for people and they told me, "No, you can." I think the comment I heard was about 10 percent of the Reps are focused on policy and the rest are on politics. But, both factions need each other in order to get the job done. And so, I came up here and that's what I did; I focused on policy and it has been extremely rewarding.

HM: Well, We're going to move into your campaigns now.

BM: Sure.

HM: Can you tell us a little bit about your first campaign?

BM: Sure. My first campaign, I was a nervous wreck. I knew nothing about campaigns even though I had worked on several, but I had no idea what to do. In fact, I spent money that I would not have normally spent on a marketing firm to try to market myself. And, I didn't like anything that they told me because – that's my best advice for people, that's why I'm telling this story – I didn't like anything they told me, because they wanted me to be somebody I wasn't and I was really happy with who I was. So, everything they did, I just turned it around and said, "No, I can't do that, I can't do that. This is who I am." But, I spent a lot of money in the process. I wasn't used to the negatives. In the Primary, I had two opponents; in the General, I had two opponents, and I just wasn't used to being under a magnifying glass. It was interesting; the newspaper said to me after the election, I said, "Why did you treat me like that?" and they said,

“Well, we just thought you were too good to be true, so we figured there had to be something else out there.” Rather than just recognizing, you know, maybe it is what it is, kind of thing. So, it was tough. They tried to use against me that I had four kids, and how could a mother possibly be in Harrisburg and be a State Representative at the same time. Other than that, they really didn’t have anything except, “she’s not going to be able to do it, she won’t be able to do that.” So that’s really – oh, I was a career politician; that was one that kept coming up, because I had been the Mayor of this small, tiny borough that I didn’t even know who was a Republican or who was a Democrat on Council. So, it was an interesting experience. Again, it got very negative, you know, they would say things that weren’t true. It was a frustrating time, but after that, I was fortunate at the next election, I did have an opponent. The one after that, I did. This past time, when I decided not to run again, was the first time I didn’t have an opponent. But, it got easier because I realized all I needed to do was be myself. And the other piece of it was, when you’re first running for office, they give you a whole lot of sound bites. If they’re talking about education funding, say, “The State should be providing 50 percent,” well that’s not even true. So, after the first term I learned the issues well enough that I didn’t need to use the sound bites any longer.

HM: Were people involved in your campaigns? Did you family get involved in your campaigns?

BM: Yes, I’m very fortunate; I’m a very lucky person. I have a wonderful family and I have wonderful friends, and my friends and my family were there for me. Now, my kids – my one son was at an age where he was very interested; he came to everything with me. My daughters

were 15 and 16, they had other things that they were more interested in than this. Even though they stuffed things, they stuffed envelopes, they did work polls, they came to election night, kind-of thing, but they weren't as involved as my one son. My other son was a little too young. Actually, my youngest son wanted to work for the U.S. Congressman and not me, because he thought that would be a lot more fun. My husband, he was very involved, you know; he had to deal with a lot. You're out all the time, every evening there was an event. It's very hard for your family to hear people say things that just aren't true, don't ring totally true; that bothered them. But, you know what? We got through it and all of them were wonderful. My friends worked polls; my friends became my team and they had been there for me throughout the entire process, throughout the entire eight years.

HM: How did it feel whenever you were first Sworn-In?

BM: It was really cool. It was the neatest experience. Number one, anybody that has the opportunity to stand on the Floor of the House of Representatives in Pennsylvania has got to – it's almost like you can't breathe for a moment, because it is so beautiful and overwhelming and you truly realize what it means to represent your constituency here in Harrisburg. I was in awe. I just stood there and looked around and was like "Oh my gosh, I can't believe this." So, it was a wonderful day, it was a wonderful feeling; it was an awesome feeling, but it was also scary, because you want to do a good job, you want to do the right things, and you know what you're up against, for the most part; but it was scary. It made you feel very important; it made me feel very important.

HM: Could you talk a little bit about the people you were representing? Could you tell me about the district?

BM: Sure, I'd be happy to. We have a wonderful district. I have probably – I guess everybody would say that – but, the nicest people that are out there. They care; that's the thing that you get, they care. You know, I can't tell you how many people since I decided not to run again and to take a different position, have come in my office or sent me notes; have called me; have, everywhere I go, come up and say thank you. Do you know how much that means? That means more to me than anything that these people went out of their way to just say thank you for the job that I did. My district is mostly Republican, but I have Republican and Democrat friends. I don't care who they are, I was elected to represent all of them and I've been very lucky because they are wonderful people. I'm not going to miss them because I'm still going to be there and my job is still about public service, so, you know, they'll still be a big part of my life.

HM: There are a bunch of people that represent York County.

BM: Oh yes.

HM: So, could you tell me what specific area you cover?

BM: I have the areas west of York City all the way to Hanover and then North down to Dillsburg. So, it's the Dover area, the West Manchester Township area, Paradise, Heidelberg, Warrington Township, Wellsville, North Codorus, Heidelberg, and Spring Grove Borough, and

Jackson Township – I don't think I said that. It's a big area, it really is. I'm very fortunate because my colleagues from York County have also become my best friends. We spend a lot of time together and we try to do what's in the best interest of all of York County. So that, I'm not out there advocating and fighting for my little piece; we advocate and we fight for everybody. I could not have done anything that I was able to do without them. It was truly a team.

HM: Well, we're going to get to them in a second.

BM: Okay, good.

HM: But, I wanted to ask you, what specific issues did your constituents bring to your attention?

BM: Everything. (*laugh*)

HM: Okay. I'm sure.

BM: Everything from roads issues, of course, transportation issues to healthcare issues; education issues. The biggest problem that impacts our area is property taxes. We want quality education but because of an old funding formula, our property taxes are at the point where many of our – and they remain that way, unfortunately – could lose their homes, have lost their homes. Property taxes is huge. The economy, of course, is a huge issue right now. So, much of what affects the entire state affects us. Just a few of them we could prioritize more than the others; but

we have all the same issues as the rest of the Commonwealth. And they bring all those to our attention. Unfortunately, as the economy gets worse and we put freezes on employment, what happens is State government becomes less and less responsive to the needs of people. As State government becomes less responsive and you can't get a person on the phone, they rely more heavily on their State Representatives. So no matter what the issue is, when you can't find a person to talk to, that's who you know; you know your State Rep[resentative]. It wouldn't have mattered if its local issues, county issues, state issues; no matter what. You're probably, as a State Representative, you are the person that's probably had the most contact with your constituency. I do breakfasts all the time. That was my favorite thing to get people out, to listen, to talk. We do all kinds of meetings; just to bring people out and listen to their concerns so they know who I am and when there's an issue, they call me. So, it doesn't matter what it is, I've heard about it, and my job, no matter what, whether it was a state issue or another issue, was to get them the help they needed.

HM: Well, you talked about the breakfast and the other ways you reached out. Did you have a district office?

BM: Yes. Oh yes, you have to have a district office. It's a wonderful location, people would stop in. It was great because it's right around the corner from the Hospital Annex. People would go give blood, and then they'd come over, walk over, and talk with us. It was right in the center of the district, the north end, all the way to the west. Lots of people stopped in to see us every day. We were very fortunate; great relationships.

HM: Do you have a newsletter?

BM: I had a newsletter. The newsletter went out regularly; we never missed – I think we did twice a year; the first year, I think we did three. We also would do a bulletin if something important happened; used our website, the breakfasts, whatever we could to get the information out. The other thing is, and I don't go to the grocery store anymore just because I hate going to the grocery store, but I eat at local restaurants, I'm in the community; you go to events all the time whether it be a library event or a veteran's event – we had a lot of veteran's events – just to maintain those contacts and that communication. I did a dunk tank one time. That wasn't fun; it was but it wasn't. Luckily it was a really hot day, it was my first time doing that fair and they said, "Oh, come on, come on, come on," and I was like, "Alright." So, I did the dunk tank and I won't do it again, once is enough, but people remember that and they remember who I am.

HM: Now I'd like to talk about your colleagues.

BM: Okay.

HM: Okay.

BM: Great.

HM: Whenever you first started, do you feel that anyone was able to be a mentor to you?

BM: Yes. They were all mentors, in one way or the other. They were phenomenal. York County is one of the most blessed areas in Pennsylvania. Frequently, I hear that the delegations, the county delegations, fight or they don't get along, or they may get along somewhat and they don't get along, say, with the Senate colleagues. Not the case in York County. Everybody worked as a team. I just can't tell you how fortunate I was. Steve Nickol [State Representative, York County, 1991-2008], who is also retiring, he, you know, is one of the brains up here, and so, when I would say to him, "What do I need to do?" he said to me, "Don't try to know it all because you never will. Focus on one or two issues that make sense to you that you're good at, that you know about. Learn everything you can and then you'll be the go-to person." And I did, I took that advice. Ron Miller [State Representative, York County, 1999-2010], who was my office-mate, we shared one of the suites for a while; first off, I'm directionally challenged, so I couldn't even find where I was going if it weren't for him. But, he was always there for me. I used to constantly say, "Ron, we need to talk about this issue," because it was somebody to debate with, to discuss, so that we knew what we were talking about and what we were doing, and what was going to be the best thing. Stan Saylor [State Representatives, York County, 1993-2010], he now is one of our senior people; just phenomenal, always there for me; answered my questions. The two of us probably fought, you know as much as anything, but we're like brothers and sisters and he says that all the time, you know "She's like our little sister." Everybody, everybody. Keith Gillespie [State Representative, York County, 2003-2010] who's on board now, Scott Perry [State Representative, Cumberland and York Counties, 2007-2010] who's on board now, Senator Mike Waugh [State Senator, 1999-2010; State Representative, York County, 1993-1998] – we just have a tremendous group and I could not have done anything without them.

HM: Do you feel like you've been a mentor to any of these guys?

BM: A mentor? No, I don't see it that way. I think maybe, if anything, I brought energy. I ask a lot of questions and I talk a lot, and so, I got them talking. You know men are different than women, and so men sometimes don't communicate as well, and so I was kind-of like the cheerleader and the, "Let's talk about this issue, let's talk about this issue," you know, "How do we do this? How do we do that?" We just were a great team, so I wasn't out there to be anybody's mentor, as much as I've shared the advice to the others that Steve Nickol, Stan Saylor, Ron Miller, all those guys shared with me, I've shared that in return. It's more like we're just a team and we work as a team and we all recognize each other's strengths and build on those.

HM: Well, during your tenure, what has your relationship been like with the Governor?

BM: With the Governor or the Governor's Office?

HM: The Governor's Office.

BM: Okay, because there is a difference. I think I've been in two meetings with the Governor. He honestly wasn't real responsive. His office, on the other hand, I found to be different. When I have met with his chief policy person on several occasions about issues and I've always gotten a tremendous response. Most of his Secretaries within his Cabinet, Secretary of Welfare, Secretary of Health, especially the Secretary of Welfare and the Secretary of Education and the

Secretary of DCED [Department of Community and Economic Development]; those are the three main ones. Any time we've had a County issue, they have been willing to come down and work with us. They have turned things around, they followed through and, again, I've worked with all of them, but it's really been those three who have had a tremendous impact on some of our problems in York County. So, they deserve the credit for that because – you know, I would hear them speak and say “Well, we would do, we would do” and I said “okay, well you do for me and for York County,” and I think Estelle Richman [Secretary of Public Welfare] has been probably been down to York County ten times, if not more than that; just to deal with issues that I've asked her to look at. So, I have found his cabinet to be extremely responsive. On the other hand, I've really had very little communication with the Governor.

HM: I had noticed you had several bills signed too.

BM: Yeah, well, I wasn't invited to the bill signings. (*laugh*) There were quite a few of my bills that I wasn't invited to the bill signings. Yeah.

HM: Is there a story behind that?

BM: No, I just think they forgot. Yeah.

HM: Okay, that's sad.

BM: Yeah, I just think they didn't think about it. That's the difference between, you know, being of a different party. Finally the biggest one, which was the Education Funding Formula Change, that I worked on from day one – I'm the one that got leadership to agree to the study that brought about where we are today with the new funding formula – they did call me about that one; that's the only one in all these years I had heard from them, and it was way up in another area and I couldn't; they called me the day before and it just, it wasn't going to work. It's just one of the things that happens.

HM: Okay.

BM: You know, that's the politics and I don't worry about the politics. I don't even know how much the Governor – I mean I know his office knows what my role was; but remember, under a different Administration, it really takes saying, "I don't need my name on that. I just want it to happen. We need to move with that." It really takes working both sides of the aisle if you're going to get something accomplished, especially when you have an Administration of one party and you're the other party. And that was more important to me than anything; getting things done.

HM: Well, you talked about the camaraderie between your York County delegates. What was the camaraderie like in the House with just everybody else?

BM: We've been through a tough time, and I think I have to mention that it's been very difficult. Some things have happened which have not made us look so great in the public eye.

So, that's been a little bit difficult. However [excuse me], I feel like I have had a great relationship with all of them, because every time I've had a need and I could justify it and I've gone to leadership, they've always been responsive. And honestly, Democrat side as well; I've been able to do that. So, I will miss the people in the House and the staff more than anything. The people that do the everyday job, the Executive Directors of the Committees, the ones that you go to to get answers for your constituents, we are so fortunate to have such wonderful people and I will miss them. Unfortunately, I'll probably still use them for their knowledge and expertise because they are so good. But, I can't walk out of here – there's always going to be a few that you just didn't get close to, but the majority of them have been phenomenal.

HM: Can you tell me a little bit about what it was like to be a freshman member and what it's like now that you're a seasoned veteran? What's the differences between, you know, what time can do for you?

BM: Seniority, for one. When you get the seniority, people look at you differently. When you're a freshman, it's almost like you don't really know anything. As you grow as a person and as a Representative, and as you feel more comfortable addressing issues, people respond. That's probably the biggest difference that I see. As a freshman, I was scared to death. You know, you're thrust into this world that you don't know a whole lot about, the politics are huge, the paperwork. Oh my gosh. I used to go home and had so many bills to read because I thought, you know, "Got to read them all." I would have so many bills to read that I switched from taking showers to taking baths so I could read in the bathtub. That's how much work there was. Well see, now I learned you don't have to do that. You know which ones are really going to go

somewhere, which ones aren't going to go somewhere. So, you're more able to make good decisions and understand the process better. And it really does take time. An incoming freshman, they've got a lot to learn, and they need to take the time to learn it, and to get that team behind them and find their mentors.

HM: I'm just thinking that we've had a huge turnover.

BM: We've had a huge turnover. Huge, and it's not going to be easy with that kind of a turnover. You know, everybody comes in and I'm still very idealistic; I see the good, it's hard for me to see the negative, it's just not my personality. And I think you have to come in there with that kind of an attitude. But you also – you know, I wanted the world right away, I wanted everything, I wanted property taxes reduced and I wanted all these other things to have happened; it doesn't happen overnight, it takes time. For me, I'm not a real patient person; that was probably one of the problems. You know, if I had to pick an area that I had a weakness to be a State Rep[resentative], it's the patience piece. I'm not patient. I want things to happen and I want to have control over that. You don't have that. We're structured much like that representative form of government; we choose others to represent us. They cannot possibly represent every single one of our needs, so they do the best they can to do the compromise and represent that. Is that always what I would've liked to see? No, it isn't. And so, because of that, you know, if you're impatient like me, it does make it more difficult. Looking back, I know that everybody in the leadership roles always tried to do what they thought was in the best interest of the entire caucus. They get a bad rap all the time, they shouldn't, they shouldn't. I guess, you know, the buck stops at the top and that's kind-of why they do, but they shouldn't.

HM: Well, since you touched upon some of these other issues, you served in the Majority –

BM: Yes.

HM: And in the Minority. (*laugh*)

BM: Yes. I would've been very disappointed if I had left and we went back in the Majority, because it's such a difference. Being in the Majority makes all the difference in the world; you set the agenda. There are some critical issues that I believe need to be addressed. I do not believe that they are going to see the light of day for quite some time. You don't have the ability to affect the change and to affect the decision-making when you are in the Minority. It's the bottom line. You also can't set schedule. I like to set my own schedule, I like to know where I'm going to be when somebody says, "Can you do a speaking engagement at 7:30 at night?" I'd like to be able to say yes and know I'm going to get there. When you're in the Minority, you don't know anything. You don't know anything. So, that's a frustrating thing for somebody like me.

HM: Well, we talked about coming to Harrisburg and deciding what Committees you were going to be a part of. So, I'd like to ask you, I mean, you got all the Committees you wanted?

BM: Yes, I did.

HM: So, how do you pick a favorite?

BM: I can't.

HM: Because that's my question.

BM: If your question is picking a favorite between Children and Youth, Aging, Health and Human Services, Education, and Judiciary, that's tough because they all deal with a lot of the same issues, believe it or not. And in my new role, I'm going to kind-of be like that umbrella over a lot of those issues. I loved Judiciary; it was an exciting Committee, so that definitely is one of my tops. I love Education issues, because I think that's the crux of it all; making sure that our youth get the education they need. Plus again, if you look at my constituency; property taxes, how we fund education, how we pay for education, all come under that. This last term, right now, I was a Chairman of a Sub-Committee on Basic Ed[ucation]. And so, it was exciting to me and I'm really, really going to miss it. Again, we were in the Minority and that does make a difference, because we can't move our agenda and we can't set our agenda. But, all of my committees were – that's me, that's who I am, and it was a perfect match for me.

HM: It might be a hard question too; what was the most rewarding experiences that came out of your Committee work?

BM: Well, believe it or not, the change to the Education Funding Formula was huge and I hope that can be sustained. For my area, a growing area of Pennsylvania, one of I believe only seven counties with significant population growth, we were getting less money per student than we got

in 1991, because they took growth out of the funding formula. The only way we will ever reduce our property taxes is to change the funding formula first. We did that. That came out of a study that I was able to get our leadership to agree to. It wasn't the most popular decision; it was the right decision and I'm very proud that we've gotten there, because we now know what we need to do. Now, whether going forward, that happens – I can't do anything about it; that's on somebody else, but we know what we need to do and we know what the numbers look like. That to me was extremely rewarding, just being able to get that done. Megan's Law; I was at the table for all the Megan's Law discussions and all the changes that we made to Megan's Law. That was extremely rewarding and we did it the right way, because it wasn't about one person putting out a piece of legislation and saying, "Okay, everybody; cosponsor," and then, you know, trying to ram it through. That wasn't what it was like at all. It was really about a piece of legislation that we worked on as a team, that we came together; it was a Sub-Committee of the Judiciary Committee that we listened to everybody and that we crafted with everybody's input. So, it was a great process and I'm thrilled to be there. There was an energy piece of legislation that affected one of my major companies. We got it through the last day that we were here, I guess a couple months ago, right before the election. That was big. I didn't know if it was going to go through. That was one where I had to talk to the Governor's Office, talk to the Senate, partner with the Senate. It actually came out of the Senate. Senator Mike Waugh introduced it initially, then he rolled it into a different bill, came over here, we had to roll it back-and-forth into several but we got it done. I can tell you that my business leaders came up here for some of the discussion, just to educate us, and when they walked out of here they said, "There's no way. That's never going to happen," but it did. It did. So, those are probably the three that really stand out. There were a lot more; a lot of bills that I had put in other people's names so we could

get it through, because that's not the issue. It's not about your name being on something; it's about fixing the problem. So, there's a lot. I actually am leaving here feeling very good about what I've been able to do.

HM: Well, I'm going to ask you now, what were the biggest challenges –

BM: Biggest challenges?

HM: – in the committees?

BM: In the committees?

HM: In the committees.

BM: When you move to the minority, that was a huge problem in the committees, for me. There were times, and I won't mention names or committees, where I would raise my hand to ask a question and I wasn't called on; that's challenging. I wasn't used to that. I wasn't even used to ever hearing that from anybody, and it wasn't just me that wasn't called on, just Members on the other side were called on. So, that was just wrong. Other challenges? It's just slow. Slow, slow process. And, the other piece, when things get thrown in. In my new capacity, I've just found out about something – I thought we had taken it out in Judiciary, found out before it came to the Floor, it was stuck back in; it's creating major problems at the county level and it should never have been in there. So, there's a lot of those kinds-of things, but for the most part, I loved my

committees. I loved them. I was very lucky. Got on the ones I cared about, the ones I had passion for, the ones I thought I could contribute to, and, for the most part, you know, we've been able to do some good things.

HM: Well, now I'd like to move to your specific pieces of legislation. Okay?

BM: Okay. Sure.

HM: Well, during your freshman term in office, you were able to successfully sponsor two bills –

BM: Two, right.

HM: – that became law. The first one was House Bill 1028 which became Act 30 of 2001, and it amended the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency Law. Would you explain how this law was amended and what the process was?

BM: I'd be happy to. Under the Ridge Administration, prevention of crime, prevention of youth violence, actually prevention of substance use, teen pregnancy, school drop-out, delinquency, and violence were a priority. Every time an Administration changes, priorities change. When the priorities change, all the things you've been doing for years just go away. Billions of dollars are spent on programs that just disappear because a new Administration comes in and changes priorities. The Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency had done, under the Ridge

Administration, some of the prevention stuff, but then they also were doing what they historically did, and what they've always – kind-of their mission was – which was more of the reactive stuff. Like, “Here’s money, put some police on the street. Here’s money, create this program,” or, whatever that is. For juvenile delinquency, there are ways that we can prevent some of those problems, but it was never part of their mission to look at prevention. We did that right before the end of the Ridge – that was [Mark] Schweiker [2001-2003], actually; right into Schweiker – in order to make sure that that became part of their mission. Because prevention has got to be a part of the solution or we’ll never get there. So, that’s what that did.

HM: The second bill was House Bill 846, which became Act 95 of 2001 and would become known as the Long-Term Care Residents –

BM: Yes.

HM: – and Employee Immunization Act. Could you tell me a little bit about that?

BM: Love to. Actually, this is a bill that we were seeing a good bit of our senior population who were admitted to nursing homes. They weren’t given flu shots, pneumonia shots, but they also weren’t educated about them and they weren’t making it available. This was Pat Vance [State Senator, 2004-2012; State Representative, Cumberland County, 1991-2003], Senator Pat Vance’s legislation as a Representative, when she was a Representative, and when I first came in, she said, “Let me help you; let me give you a bill,” – you asked about a mentor, and I was thinking locally, I mean, Pat is local and I worked with her on many issues – But this is one she

came to me very early on – you know what? I think we talked even before I became a Representative, and she said, “Do you want this? I’ll walk you through it.” So, she taught me how to make that happen, how to make a bill become law by using that bill. That was hers; that was her idea. That was a need that was identified and she helped me to learn how to do it. So, it was pretty neat.

HM: What a great story.

BM: Yeah, it was. And she’s a phenomenal woman, by the way. I think she does that - anybody that really could use somebody to walk them through the process, she did a great job for me with that.

HM: Would you like to talk about any of your other legislation?

BM: Well, again, the most important pieces were the education study; that was critical, which then led to the change in the funding formula. Both of those were – they don’t have specific bill numbers, because I had them rolled into the education budget for each of those years. That was [20]06 and then also this past year, [20]08. So, that’s how I got those done. Megan’s Law, that isn’t under my name, but I was a critical piece of making that happen; that’s important. Again, there’s a lot of other bills out there, I can’t even think of them right now. It’s not about the bills that you pass as a legislator; it’s about making things happen any way you can. So, you know, I never focused on bills that were in my name because they were in my name. That’s just not how I thought about it.

HM: Well, I would like to ask you about the smoking law –

BM: Oh, sure.

HM: – that just went into effect in September. As a cancer survivor, how do you feel about Pennsylvania’s role and do you think that they went far enough?

BM: I would have gone for a total ban and that’s what I was really advocating for, which would mean that everybody – private clubs, bars, taverns, restaurants – would all be treated the same. That’s really what my constituency said to me, “If you’ve got to do it, treat us all the same so that,” you know, “they won’t have the opportunity to have people go to their establishment versus our establishment, and it would be across the board.” That’s what I would have liked to see. The bill became a compromise bill, that’s how most of the things that you see happen; they are compromises. It’s a start; it’s better than what we had. You know, being up in Pennsylvania, you wouldn’t have thought on an issue like this, where all of our surrounding states and many other states have passed legislation like this, that it would have been so difficult but it was. So, I’m glad that we got where we are. This is the one – I’ll tell you what; I got a threat when we were working on this in the Health and Human Services Committee. I used to have people, fifty, sixty people a night call me. It was pretty interesting; it was. A lot of angry people out there about it. I think we’re seeing that it’s okay, and maybe that’s what we need to do, you know, this was a step and then maybe we’ll move to the next step. There’s always going to be people that

say, you know, “How can you say that secondhand smoke causes cancer?” even though we know it does.

HM: Well, what do you think the hardest issue was?

BM: The hardest issue? I’m focused on the property tax issue and I really think that’s it; we still haven’t solved it. I really believe it’s the property tax issue. What kind of system would work and meet the needs of all of Pennsylvania? There are more, even with the new funding formula, there are really more losers than winners. If you’re a Representative representing one of those areas that has lost student population and you’re a loser, are you going to vote for it? We were very fortunate to move just to get the funding formula changed, but the property tax piece remains the same. Now, depending on where you live in PA, you may say, “Wow, I get back x-amount of dollars from the gaming and that’s really helped my property taxes.” In York County, it hasn’t made a bit of difference. In fact, if anything, they’ve all continued to go up and they will continue to go up. That’s probably the most frustrating issue out there for me because of my constituency base.

HM: Is there any legislation that you had hoped would have passed?

BM: Lots. You mean about that issue? Or about any issue?

HM: About any issue.

BM: Yeah, and some I wish hadn't passed, by the way. Oh, yeah, there's plenty that I wish had not passed and then there are, of course, those out there that I thought would make things better and that's in every respect; that's in healthcare, energy, environmental. I mean, you're always going to have things that you think are better for Pennsylvania and for your district than others. It's based on how many votes I get.

HM: I didn't even think of the flipside to that.

BM: Yeah, there are quite a few pieces of legislation I wish had never seen the light of day.

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

BM: What did I enjoy the most? The people, the people; and I'm talking about my constituents and my colleagues and the staff and just getting to know everybody. We're very lucky; we have a lot of wonderful people and having the opportunity to work with them just has been phenomenal and having the opportunity to serve the people of my district has really been phenomenal. I guess it was two, three weeks ago I was asked to come to our senior center and my whole community, I didn't know why I was going, and my whole community honored me that day. I was so overwhelmed, I can't tell you; because it was the school district, and it was the senior center and it was the community center and it was seven municipalities that go into that area, and they all came. They started reading off all the things I had done and I was like – you don't think about that, you know, you don't think as you're doing it, "Oh, let's chalk up another one." You never think like that. All the seniors – and in our senior center, the average age is 85

and older, so that's the average age there – and they're all giving me a hug and saying, "thank you," and that's what it's about. That's what made the difference for me; having the ability to do that for others.

HM: Well, what did you not like about your position?

BM: What did I not like? Well, the hours were tough, because I love my family and I love my friends and I love my dogs; I have dogs too. I've always wanted to say my job is my job and I have a life, because I think that makes for a healthy person. This is a 24/7 job. And I wouldn't mind, you know, when people call me at my house or if they walk up, you know, my neighbor sometimes would walk up to talk to me about an issue; that doesn't bother me. But if I was having dinner with my family and people came and sat with us because they had problems; that got a little tough. Our hours up here; now we've changed some of the rules but prior to that, you know, you could be up here 'til three, four o'clock in the morning and then have to be back up by eight o'clock the next day. That was hard for me, that's not how I work. Actually, I don't think very well during those hours either, so it just wasn't the way it should be. People always say, "I understand, oh you have a family. I understand, but we want you to come," and you go. I'll never forget, as a freshman, Governor Tom Ridge said – he had a meeting with all of us – and he said, "Don't forget about your family." You can go to these events and you can say, "I'm coming, I'll say a few words, but I'm not going to stay for dinner, because I really need to get home." It doesn't work; I tried and people were like, "Why are you leaving? You shouldn't be leaving, we need you to stay," and then you felt guilty and for a person like me, I was like, "Oh, I

better stay.” Lots and lots of time away from your family and your friends; that was the toughest part for me.

HM: I wanted to ask you since you have told lots of people that you are a breast cancer survivor –

BM: Yes, yes.

HM: Do you feel that you’re an advocate for that now?

BM: Absolutely.

HM: I’ve heard you speak before, so, you know –

BM: Oh yeah. I want to be an advocate. You know what? If you go through that, you almost have to figure out a reason why it happened, otherwise, at least somebody like me, I do; I kept thinking, “How could this be? Why did this happen to me?” and then I realized that, because I’m in a position that I have the opportunity to talk to people and people do listen, I had the opportunity to reach more people than just the average person does. So, yes, I do see that because I think that’s got to be the reason I had to go through that whole year of chemotherapy and radiation and three surgeries, and it was just an overwhelming time in my life, but I think it has made me a better person and it certainly has given me opportunities to educate women, all ages, about the need for preventive care and what they can avoid and prevent if they just do the

right things. So, I want to be an advocate for that, because if I don't share my lessons, you know, what good was it?

HM: Do you feel it was tough being a woman legislator?

BM: Do I think it was tough being a woman legislator? You know it's interesting because I've always worked – this is a man's world and it continues to be a man's world, and yet, when I worked for the District Attorney that was a man's world too. So, I always felt very comfortable in that environment. Some of my colleagues don't feel – my female colleagues – don't feel the way I do about that. The hard part about being a woman is that your values are a bit different. Your values are family first and there's not a lot of time to do that. The men, frequently, it's about the job first. For me, it's about family first. So, that was a little bit of a conflict at times, with schedules. For me, it wasn't that – I like working with men, in fact, I like that sometimes more than working with women. The guys I worked with, and the women I worked with in the House, are just wonderful people; I enjoyed every moment of it. Again, schedules; that's a big thing. Women like to work during the day; men like to work at night. That just didn't cut it for me. I didn't want to be here at ten and 11 at night. I'm very big on, "Don't procrastinate, get it done and get it done now." Men don't seem as concerned about that. I think it's just a difference in thinking. The other thing is, there's a lot of things that I'm passionate about that I don't think are on men's radar screen, and that's why you need diversity in the House and you need diversity with your lawmakers, because the only way you'll get everybody's perspective is to do that. I think I'm one of the few that have teenaged kids and had teenaged kids the entire time I was here. There are unique aspects of being a mom with teenaged kids. Real quick, a

funny story: one of the Rep[resentative]s who have already retired, he sat two seats down from me for six years. He was a very conservative Rep[resentative], a wonderful guy. But, every day around three, three-thirty, my phone would ring, my cell, and I'd pick it up and I would be on it, then it would ring again and it would ring again, and he'd be like, "What the heck are you doing?" and I said, "That's my kids, coming home from school; they got to report in." He was like, "What?" and I said, "Yeah, I got four of them; they have to report in," and he said, "Well, my kids never called me," and I said, "No, your wife; that's who they're calling." So, he was like, "Oh, I never thought about that." But, you know, it also gave me the opportunity, I talk to that generation all the time and so, there's a lot of issues that affect them. I would bring that up here and it's a little frustrating because those weren't their priorities as much as they were mine.

HM: Well, whenever you think back, you know, on your experiences here, is there a story or anything that you think you would like to share?

BM: I would just like to encourage others to take a risk – and it is one – and run for office, as long as you're doing it for the right reasons. It's about serving the people; it's about wanting to make people's lives better. It's not about giving, it's about empowering. As long as you're going to be here for the right reason, then you should go for it. I look back now and I don't regret one minute of the last eight years. In fact, I see myself as one of the most fortunate people ever, because I've had the opportunity to learn so much and to work with some of the best and brightest people in the world, in my mind. I just will have nothing but great memories and positive experiences to take away from here.

HM: If you had to list one, do you have one fondest memory?

BM: Yeah, okay there is one: one night we were here really, really late, and I think it was the gaming issue and there was a lot of fighting back-and-forth and leadership was out, and there was a period of time we were due back, I think it was, like, seven o'clock, and we're all sitting in caucus and leadership's in the other room and we're waiting and we're waiting, and finally somebody stood up and said, "Let's tell some stories, you know, let's entertain ourselves. Let's tell some stories." And each one got up and told something, and these were people that had been here for 20, 30 years, and they started telling funny stories about each other. It wasn't as much as what they were saying as the feel that night in the room; the feeling of how fortunate we are that we're kind-of like the special people that have this opportunity that people don't get, and it was one of the neatest experiences. And I don't think I'm ever going to forget that night because it just meant so much to me. I didn't have any stories to tell then, but just listening. It was pretty incredible. So, that's one of my best memories.

HM: Well, can you tell me, you know, listening to your story today and knowing what I know about you already, just taking all your issues that you already amassed through your careers, tell me again, just how do you feel that you're going to be an effective person going into this next position, this next roll?

BM: Well, my new job is the Executive Director of York County's Human Services Department. Human Services encompasses children and youth, mental health, mental retardation, drug and alcohol, aging, veteran's affairs, and our youth development center in York

County. Going forward – first off, I’ve learned so much up here that I can take back with me. You know, I knew pieces of everything, but I didn’t know the big picture before. I don’t think I could’ve done that job eight years ago, not like I can do it now. It’s really about bringing everybody together, looking at issues from that holistic perspective, looking at families; you know, a lot of people in Harrisburg believe that as we start to talk about Human Services and they talk about welfare, they’re all these government gift programs, we give to people – that’s not what it’s about; it’s about empowering people, it’s about giving them the resources to be successful in life. I think I know so much more about the bigger picture now than I knew then. I’ve been able to walk in and say, “This is where I think we need to go, this is how I think we need to go.” I would never have known that before. I also think that I’ve learned just so much about myself that I’m going to be a better manager, and the other good thing is I have all these resources and I’m going to use them. I mean, I’ve also learned, you know, that if there’s an issue, a lot of times you do business the way you’ve always done it – we don’t have to. I’ve learned that from working with the secretaries. We don’t have to; we can ask to do tough stuff. We can ask to think outside the box. We can try to be innovative and creative and to use our dollars more wisely and more efficiently. One way, and one reason I’ve always been Republican, is because I’m very, very fiscally conservative. So, I’m going to continue that with my new job. I recognize that as revenues decline, if we continue with the economy sluggishness that we’ve had, the dollars aren’t going to be there. So, how do we do more with less? And how do we make the most of our buck? And how do we make sure that what we’re doing with our money is effective? And you know what? Each one of my colleagues up here, someday that’s what they want to see and then they’ll make better decisions. So, it’s kind of like I’m taking a step back. The other thing is, I’ll be dealing really – I thought I could make a difference up here

and I think I did; I think I could make more of a difference at that level. So, I'm going to try it and we'll see. Then who knows what I'll do.

HM: How are you feeling as you're preparing to leave the General Assembly?

BM: I'm sad. Today's probably not the best day to ask that. We just had a caucus where they said goodbye and that's hard. I am excited to take on a new challenge; I am sad to leave the Pennsylvania House of Representatives. I will never, never forget my experiences or how this place has made me a better person, never. I probably shouldn't say this, there's been a lot of negatives and, yeah, there's a reason for that and there should be. You're always going to have people, no matter what the profession, no matter what, that are not doing the right things. But that is not the bulk of the people who work up here. Most of the people that work up here are doing a great job for their constituents and for the right reasons, so I think that's important that people know. I'm going to miss everybody so much. I really will. My colleagues from York, they keep saying, "We'll never get rid of her," because I will; I'll always be knocking on their door and talking to them and being a part of their lives, because we've gone much further past being colleagues to being very close friends and I'm not giving that up and I don't think they would either. So, I thank the people for giving me this opportunity and I believe I've done what they wanted me to do here and I'm just very thankful that I had the chance to do it.

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

BM: As a great public servant. As the lady who changed the education funding formula, because for our area that's huge, and as somebody that was responsible and they could depend on, who had honesty and integrity and did it the right way.

HM: Do you think you'll remain active in politics?

BM: Probably not, because I think I have to be very careful; when you work for the County, you work for commissioners, two of one party, one is of another. I've always worked bipartisan, that's just who I am; I work with everybody and I want to continue that. At that level, it shouldn't be about the politics; it's really about developing good, sound policy; it's about making the County work as efficiently and effectively as you can; that's not about politics. So, I will still be involved with my colleagues but on a different level.

HM: Well, this concludes my formal questions. I want to thank you –

BM: Thank you.

HM: – for conducting this interview with me and I always like to give the Representatives the last word, so if there's anything in addition you'd like to share, you know, this is your opportunity.

BM: Well, I think I've said a lot as I always do. No, it's really just, thank you; thank you to everybody that gave me the chance to do this because it's been a phenomenal experience; one of

the best experiences anybody could ever have, and I see myself as one of the fortunate ones; so,
just thank you.

HM: Well, thank you.