Jesse Teitelbaum (JT): Well, good morning.

The Honorable Arthur Hershey (AH): Good morning.

JT: I am here with Arthur Hershey, Representative of the 13th District, including Chester and Lancaster Counties. [He] represented that district from 1983 to 2008. Thank you for being with me today.

AH: Glad to be here.

JT: What I’d like to do is start out by asking you about your background. Tell me about your childhood, your family life, and maybe some of the influences that led you to politics.

AH: I grew up in Paradise Township in Lancaster County. My parents had rented a farm. They got married in the Depression, so dad was nervous about buying a farm, and no one had any money to speak of. I had eight brothers and sisters; I was third in the line. We had daily chores. On a small farm everything’s pretty much done by hand. We did not have indoor plumbing. We had an electric jack pump that we watered the cattle with. Grew up along a major stream where we all learned to swim at an early age, and me and my brothers and I, we trapped muskrats in the wintertime and fished in the summertime and learned to swim, like I said, and ice skate when the ice froze. But, I went to a one-room school and I had the same teacher the whole time; I never had a substitute. When she was sick one day, they closed the school. And that’s a record I like to tell young teachers that today. Today, with all the benefits, you know, they have a lot of time
off and professional leave and personal leave and sick leave, but those were the days, and no one
had a lot of money, but, the teacher was the boss, and she made us listen. There was about
thirty-five to forty in the schoolroom, and I started school in 1941. I well remember the air raids.
The war was going on. I don’t remember – and I started in [19]43, to back up. I don’t remember
– I was five. I was born in [19]37, so I started in August of [19]43, and I was five – but I
remember the whistles would blow, and we would crawl under our desk for five minutes. And I
remember collecting metal cans for the effort. I remember they asked for milkweed pods. We
would go in the pasture and collect milkweed pods, and I thought they were used for parachutes.
They were used for a vest of some kind. They don’t use them anymore, but it was interesting
that, coming from a family that was conscientious objectors, that my parents left us collect these
things for the benefit of the country. But even in the school I liked spelling, I liked to read
literature, I liked history very, very much, and I don’t know what created that interest, but I
always had an interest in where we came from. I never dwelt much into ancient history, but
early American history. Like I said, the classes would be called up to the platform where the
blackboard was to recite. Teacher would ask them questions and then give them tests later on,
and when I was in fifth and sixth grade, sixth grade I started taking the tests for the seventh and
eighth graders, and I always passed those tests, and I made almost 100 in my history class. But,
that was always important to – and I see later it’s interesting to look back and see the decisions
people made at the time, and I’m very, very fond of Abraham Lincoln [President of the United
States, 1861-1865]. I just think he became President at the most crucial time in our nation’s
history when there was a very, very tough opinions on whether people should be enslaved or not
to do the work. He was correct, because I remember reading when he was 19 he was on a
riverboat going down the Mississippi River, and he observed a slave auction, and he said to his
partner, he said, “If I ever get a chance to hit that thing, I’m going to give it a good whack,” and he never forgot that, and I just think that we owe our early leaders a lot of respect for coming through what they did, especially the Revolutionary War. No one likes war, but the colonists felt that it was time that they be a free nation, and they hung together and had picked a great leader in George Washington [President of the United States, 1789-97], and I have visited where he crossed the Delaware River. I knew the gentleman, who retired now that played him, played General Washington. He was Jim Gallagher, a friend of Matt Ryan’s [Matthew J.; State Representative, Delaware County, 1965-2003; Speaker, 1981-1982, 1995-2003], and his daughter was our neighbor, so she invited me to go down one afternoon, I think it was on Christmas. They do it on Christmas at the same time that the President did. So, those things were very, very important, and I have a grandson that’s very interested in the Civil War. He knows more about the Civil War than I do, and I took him to Gettysburg when he was about ten or 11. I took him to the museum here in Harrisburg. He’s now in Iraq; he’s in the Army. He’s with a transport group. He transports generals and colonels from the airport to the Green Zone. But, when I look back on my childhood, my parents were very strict. They didn’t put up with any monkey business, and I’m glad my parents never left us use a lot of barnyard words, and I think that was good, and I think it’s still good that people respect each other and don’t be using barnyard words and cuss words all the time that really don’t help benefit society.

**JT:** What kind of motivation led you to the House of Representatives?

**AH:** Well, I started farming in 1959. I got married in [19]57, started farming in [19]59 and then the next year I joined the Farm Bureau. It was called the Farmers’ Association then, and then
after a couple of years, I got on several committees, and then I got interested in policy. Then, when I became Vice-Chairman of the County, then I was head of policy development. I got to come to Harrisburg and present the policies to the State Board, and then we visited our Legislators back then and through that interest in the Farm Bureau, then after I served two terms as president in 1972, 1973, then I was elected to the State Board to represent Chester [county], Delaware County, Montgomery, and Berks. So, then I got to more regional meetings. We’d go to Camp Hill once a month for a day and a half and go to regional meetings. In Berks County, I met way back then Michael O’Pake [State Senator, Berks and Montgomery Counties, 1973-present; State Representative, Berks County, 1969-1972], and he’s still here in the Senate. I got to know all the Representatives in Chester County and Lancaster County and one in Berks and one in York through agriculture. We’d come up at a time in [19]82 and [19]81, Mister Smith [Earl H.; State Representative, Chester County, 1973-1982] was ailing, and he didn’t announce whether he was going to run again, but people started putting pressure on me to run, and I thought about this, and I thought about the time, and my oldest son was 20, and I thought it was too early in my career. But Mr. Wilkinson said, who was one of my confidants [and who was] a large dairy farmer in Southern Chester County, he said, “You run for a seat when it’s open. You don’t do very well running against somebody that’s in office.” So, he was correct, and I always thought that agriculture needed more representation than just lobbyists. That’s what really motivated me. Then my son wanted to farm, and so. I think this was really interesting; Representative Pitts [Joseph R.; State Representative, Chester County, 1973-1996; U.S. Representative, 1997-present] was putting the thought in people’s head to ask me to run. A couple dairy farmers I knew; probably about four people that had, in, like, two weeks’ time, had asked me if I would consider running. So, it was a grassroots effort, and it was really, really the
right way to do because instead of himself coming, why, he sent people that we worked with day-n and day-out. And Ken Brandt [Kenneth; State Representative, Lancaster County, 1973-1990] was very helpful. I knew him from Lancaster County through a mutual friend of my wife and I, and he told me in 1981, that fall, he said, “You take the district, and every evening, you call ten people and tell them you’re thinking about running. Don’t tell them you’re going to run; tell them you’re thinking about running, and then see what they say and sort of draw them in,” and that was very, very positive. I did that for probably six weeks. Some of the people didn’t live in the district, but they said they would be supportive, and they would put the word out. Now, I had a few comments that were very unkind, probably out of jealousy. One man asked me if I thought I had time to farm and do this, and I told him we would work it out; my son was going to be taking over, but he didn’t take over till four years later. But, then the worst comment I had, one farmer asked me if I really knew where Harrisburg was, and I thought that was a low shot, but, you know, you just consider the source and move on.

**JT:** Did you enjoy campaigning?

**AH:** I did. I got to meet a lot of people. We went around to see the committee people, Mr. Wilkinson and I. We made appointments. And there were sixty-four committee people, and I visited all of them, either at a coffee or in their home, all but four out of that sixty that winter. And then in the first week of January, we went to see Mr. Smith and said, “You know, we haven’t heard whether you’re going to run or whether you’re not,” and Mr. Wilkinson said, “If you’re going to run, tell us.” He could barely walk on his own; he was seventy-two years old. He said, “If you’re going to run, tell us. If you’re not going to run, tell us. Then we’ll go and
make plans, but,” he said, “if you are, we’ll go back to farming.” He said, “Well, well, well, I’ll tell you what I’m going to do,” he said. “Tomorrow I’ll call my writer, and I’ll tell them, ‘Due to redistricting, and a lot of new people down in the Oxford area, which I’m not acquainted with, I decide it’s time to retire.’” So, he did. He called his writer and two days later had an article in the paper, and I had all my positions lined up. I had a statement on one page, I had my picture on the top, and I had a map of the district. I had about four papers in all, all in folders, and I had made appointments with all the newspapers in the district starting in Oxford with the Chester County Press, it was then the Parkesburg Post. Then there was the Coatesville Record, and on to the Pottstown Mercury. The district was the whole western side of the county. And that, that was a great day. I was really tired at the end of the day, but one very interesting thing happened in Coatesville; Ross Gardner was the editor of the Coatesville Record, and he read down through my résumé, and he said, “You’re were a 4-H leader?” I said, “Yes, I was [for] ten years.” He said, “My greatest experience in my youth was in 4-H,” and then he asked me where – this was on a Friday – he asked me where we had been to drop these off, and I told him, and he said, “I’m not going to put this in Saturday’s paper,” he said, “because it’s not a big, sought after paper.” He said, “I’ll put it in on Monday,” if it’s all right with me. I said, “That’s fine; you do whatever you want to,” and on Monday, he had my picture right in the front page of the Coatesville Record, and you couldn’t buy advertising like that, and that 4-H [Head, Heart, Hands, and Health] thing just touched him. And the county was very supportive. The commissioners, Earl Baker and Bob Thompson, they said we need a farmer in the district. Agriculture was our biggest industry in the county. I think it still is. It’s close if it’s not. And the legislative delegation was Peter Vroon [State Representative, Chester County, 1975-1992] from Valley Forge, Joe Pitts from Kennett Square, Elinor Taylor [State Representative, Chester County,
1977-2006] from West Chester, and they were very supportive and all got behind me. So, we had six people announce for the job, and we went to the convention over there at West Chester. It was a rainy night, and there were, I think, Earl Baker announced out of sixty-four there were fifty-eight or nine people present or proxies for the district, and the newspaper was saying how it was going to be a long night because three Members had the votes all split up. That’s one of the more uncertain things. You don’t know – I found out later a few committee people told several candidates they were going to be for them, but I thought I had forty-four votes, and Earl Baker said you needed thirty-five to nominate, and Art Hershey had thirty-seven, and the next person had nine, another one had eight, and one had three. But the one fellow that had eight, he felt he should be the candidate, so he took two weeks off school and challenged me. So, I had to raise some money and get some brochures out and fight a Primary, which I was successful. I won the Primary handily, and then on in the fall – why, we enjoyed the summer – and then on in the fall, I did some door-to-door, and we put together some brochures. My wife and I did a lot of that ourselves. I had, probably, ten sheets of plywood. We cut them in half and painted them white and put brown border around and “Hershey for Legislature,” and we put them on major highways in the district, and we had one stolen, which was funny, but I still have them in my garage. We had some really cheap paper ones, then. My first campaign cost eighteen thousand dollars, but it was a great experience. Then after two terms I went back and forth every night the first four years, and then, then we hired a full-time man in [19]86. My son and I formed a partnership with his wife and my wife, and then he pretty much took over the responsibilities then. I guess in [19]91 we sold our share of the cattle and machinery and built a house up in the woods, and then in [19]97 we sold part of the farm.
JT: Tell me about the 13th District, specifically the people, the issues that they were involved in, the geography.

AH: The 13th District was, at that time, the whole western side of the county from north Coventry up into Schuylkill River clear down to the Maryland line, and it was an interesting district, and it was a lot of traveling because down next to Maryland the per family income was about one half of what it was in the northern side up next to Pottstown. Now, I got active in the Tri-County Chamber, which served Berks, Montgomery, and Chester County, and Frank Buzydlowski was one of their field men, and he’s now the lobbyist for Verizon, a very, very successful career. It was largely agriculture in the Honey Brook, West Nantmeal area. North Coventry was more urban. Warwick Township was about half agriculture and half urban. Then you come on down toward West Caln. It had a mix. It’s developing now, but it still has a lot of farms. I had Valley Township which was West Coatesville, and so that was part of Lukens Steel, so I had that, and Highland has a lot of horse farms. East Fallowfield; I didn’t have that then, but it’s probably about half built up now, and then we have strong, strong agriculture policies in Highland and West Fallowfield and Upper Oxford and Lower Oxford going down. Then you had Oxford, and it’s developing now, but there wasn’t houses between Oxford and New London like there is now. But, it was family issues, pocketbook issues, taxes. I thought I’d run on changing the way we run our schools. I ran on the campaign then to increase income tax and lower property tax, and I followed Senator Stauffer [John; State Senator, 1970-1988; State Representative, Chester County, 1965-1970] from Phoenixville. He worked on that for his career in the Senate, and we still don’t have a compromise. I know my Primary opponent; he said he was going to support something that was comprehensive and fair. Now, you know, that
doesn’t really say what you’re going to do, but I came right out then and said that I was for increasing income and lowering property, and now, now, I’m more for going into the sales tax. And if we could use sales and income and eliminate property, we would have a biggest opportunity for young people to buy a house that you would ever see. They wouldn’t have that bill in front of them that is running several hundred dollars a month for people, especially if you have a more expensive house. Our school district is pretty much agriculture, and there’s a lot of land in Act 319 [of 1974], and we don’t have a lot of industry, so it goes to the property owners to run the school. So, it’s a system that worked for years, but it’s not fair because you’ll get a time of low prices like we had in the milk in 2002. It was almost half per hundred weight what it is now. It’s down to 10 dollars and 50 cents – under 11 dollars for a year – and all dairy farmers were in trouble. They couldn’t pay their bills. And it has gotten higher since, but with the fuel prices, so did feed and fertilizer and gasoline, diesel fuel, all other supplies went up, but I hope things find a new value after a bit, and people know where they’re going. But, I worked hard. I think I had fifteen fire companies, so I got associated with those folks, attended all their functions, sent them mailers off and on. I got involved with homeschoolers with Joe Pitts. It took us six years to get that new home school law passed. I’m very, very proud of that. The teachers’ union just was relentless. They just thought they had to have every child under their control, but in democracy I really feel you offer choices. And so, one day they had a home school day, and five hundred parents and children came up here, and the Democratic Chair of the Education Committee said he was impressed by how orderly they were and how well-behaved they were, and I said, “These people are sincere. They’re serious about teaching their children at home because,” I said, “every child doesn’t work well in the buzzer system.” We call it “Bells and Buzzers,” and that’s a fact. Now, the parents have to be dedicated. They have to have a
schedule. You have to be disciplined. You just can’t get into the books when you feel like it. You have to have a schedule, and those kids by a long way do very, very good, and people say to me, “Well, what about socialization?” I said, “Do you really like the socialization they’re getting in the public school today at a young age?” So, when I grew up, I had a lot of cousins, and it was customary to visit on Sunday and go to uncles’ and aunts’ for lunch, and then play in the afternoon, either softball or played in the barn, we played bag tag, and so that was a great part of my socialization. I didn’t get very far from home till I got an automobile or till I got married.

**JT:** Do you remember your first Swearing-In Ceremony and what kind of feelings you had when you first came into the Capitol Building?

**AH:** I was nervous. I was nervous. I didn’t know one room from another because we didn’t have orientation then like they do now. After we were Sworn-In, then we had half a day of orientation, but I never saw my secretary till the Swearing-In day. I stopped in one day in December, and she was off that day. I just stopped in with our youngest daughter. We were taking a bicycle to Messiah College to my oldest daughter, and we stopped in the office, and it was in the Ryan Building where I’m now, but downstairs before it was remodeled. There was five of us in there on the left, and so I met Howard Fargo’s [State Representative, Armstrong, Butler & Mercer Counties, 1981-2000] secretary, and she showed me around and was very cordial and very kind. But, I just remember my wife’s parents came, our children came. And the festivities on the House Floor always get drug out to get the Senate over, and everyone makes their speeches. Some of the people ate their lunch and left, and I thought I wanted to visit with them, and we had flowers to carry, and my wife was carrying one, and I was carrying one. We
were supposed to go to the Minority Caucus Room, so I asked where that was, and I was told, but back then we didn’t even have places to park. I parked in the 5th St. Garage when I came for Swearing-In, but after that, we were assigned a parking space. But one thing I wanted to mention; the Speaker was K. Leroy Irvis [State Representative, Allegheny County, 1959-1988; Speaker, 1977-1978 and 1983-1988]. The Democrats had won the House by 75 votes. Two seats were, like, 30 votes apart, and so we were in the minority, but anyway, he was a great Speaker. He invited all the freshmen, men and women, to a restaurant over in Camp Hill, and he told us, he said, “You can come up here and do a lot of good for your people, or you can just be another political hack,” and that’s how he said it, and I thought that was so true, and he was, he was very, very intellectual and very kind and very, very, very smart, and he was one of the old-timers. And, I remember I had put in for the Ag[riculture] Committee. I was an Ag[riculture] guy. Senator Wenger [Noah; State Senator, 1983-2006; State Representative, Lancaster County, 1977-1982] went from the House to the Senate, so he went off the Ag[riculture] Committee. Ken Brandt went off the Ag[riculture] Committee, and another person went off the Ag[riculture] Committee, because they knew it was going to shrink from 14 to 10 or 13 to 10, but there still wasn’t any room. And Joe Pitts went into Sam Hayes' [Samuel E., Jr.; State Representative, Blair, Centre & Huntingdon Counties, 1971-1992; Pennsylvania Secretary of Agriculture, 1997-2003] office. He said, “I want this young man on the Ag[riculture] Committee,” and Sam said, “I can’t ask senior Members to get off the Ag[riculture] Committee.” But, then I got a notice from the Speaker that I was appointed the Joint House and Senate Conservation Committee, and I was really tickled about that because they were just getting into the Bay issues, and our farm was in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed; it’s south of Route 10 in West Fallowfield Township – west of Route 10 – and the Route 10 separates the Delaware Bay and the Chesapeake Bay, and
we vacation in the upper Bay down below northeast Maryland, we have a place at Red Point, and so we knew that the seaweed was gone. I remember back in the late [19]50’s and [19]60’s when the seaweed would grow up on the beach and with the tides it was gone, and I was studying all the scientists’ thoughts and objections, and this was just really exciting. And I remember one of the first meetings I went to, Senator Lincoln [J. William; State Senator, 1979-1994; State Representative, Fayette County, 1973-1980] was the Chairman, and he came to me, and he said, “How did you get on this committee?” He said, “This is a plum committee, and they don’t put freshmen on,” and I said, “I just got a letter from the Speaker saying I’m welcome to the committee,” and he was sort of cool for a while, but after he realized that I didn’t have an agenda, I wasn’t partisan, why, we became close friends. But, that was really a highlight to me to get on that committee because we did a lot of bird dogging for the Agriculture Committee and Environmental Committee, looking at issues. We were at the hardwoods in Western PA. We were up at Tioga County at the Grand Canyon. Different environmental issues, which later on we passed bills to address some of the issues. We got involved in acid mine cleanup and also, restoration of those coal fields to cogenerators, cogen. I think there’s twelve now in the state, and we were the forerunner of encouraging that to come to pass to get the legislation. We found out back when the country needed coal and energy during the war, why, there was such an effort to get the resources out of the ground, they wasted a lot, and they didn’t have good burners then to burn the coal, so anything that had a little bit of stone in they threw out, so now we have better, more efficient furnaces, and a lot of this stuff now can be burned again. So, they’re transforming these old slag piles either turn them back to the forests – some have built commercial development lots and industry, and some have turned them into parks. So, when
society makes a mistake, then the next generation has to correct it, so we learn a lot by these things.

**JT:** Very interesting. You mentioned that you had served on the Agricultural Committee, but you also had served on a number of other committees. Would you say that the Agricultural was your favorite because it was so close to you?

**AH:** It was my favorite. Another committee that I was appointed to right in the very beginning was Consumer Affairs, and I learn about all the utilities: gas, electricity, water, telephone, even taxi service was under the PUC [Public Utilities Commission], and that was very, very educational because when you’re dealing with people and utility bills, it was good to have a background in that, and I served in that committee for probably almost eighteen years. But in the second term, then, I was able to get on the Ag[riculture] Committee, and down the road I became Vice Chair, but I couldn’t become Chair till my partner in the House, in the same class that I was in, was Ray Bunt [Raymond, Jr.; State Representative, Montgomery County, 1983-2006]. When committees became opened, it – we were the class of [19]83. Matt Ryan asked Ray to take Agriculture. He asked Bob Flick [Robert J.; State Representative, Delaware and Chester Counties, 1983-2006] to take Urban Affairs, and he asked Bobby Godshall [Robert; State Representative, Montgomery County, 1983-present] to take Tourism. Well, now, there’s three in the alphabet ahead of me, so then the next year, the next term, two more came open, and there was a – I think Urban Affairs were open. Bob Flick moved on. That was open, and then Veteran Affairs and Emergency Preparedness, and Matt [Ryan] asked me to take that committee, and I did that for two years, and I was very successful in getting bills passed. We worked for the fire
companies, the ambulances. I got to go to the training ground over at Indiantown Gap, and I got to know the leaders in Veterans’ Association. They told us some of their stories. I did that two years and then Environmental Committee opened up. The whole time, then, Ray was chairing Agriculture. He liked the staff, and he liked the people. He didn’t have an agriculture background, but he said there wasn’t a better committee available, he was going to stay. So, then I did Environmental Resources four years, and the crowning thing there was the Ridge [Thomas; Governor of Pennsylvania, 1995-2001] Administration encouraged me to help write the Growing Greener bill, and I know the industry was all behind that, and he would like me to be the prime sponsor, which I was, and we got it out of the House, and then when it went to the Senate, the Senate D[emocrat]’s said that they would support it, but they wanted another $150 million dollars. It left the House at $400 million, and so to do that they had to amend it into another bill. So, I was never responsible as the prime sponsor of the end result, but I was glad to be the head of it going through, so it came out of the Senate and amended into a landfill bill, which is in Environmental Committee, but Sam Smith [Samuel E.; State Representative, Armstrong, Indiana & Jefferson Counties, 1987-present] was very generous about that. We both shared the seat with Governor Ridge when he signed the bill, but that did a lot for agriculture preservation parks, waterway cleanup. Just did a tremendous amount of work. And I think in government we have to be really, really sure that the money goes to the projects, not into engineers and lawyers and technicians’ pockets. Now, they’re needed to help set this stuff up, but we can’t just let them have a field day with the budget. It can happen in government very easy.

**JT:** Sure. What legislation, either as the prime sponsor or just involved with, would you say that you were most proud of?
AH: The Acre bill. It was House Bill 1646. It’s signed into law as 2005 as Act 38. A little background on that: people were moving in our townships from out of state, from Maryland into Adams County and Franklin County into Columbia County from New Jersey, [and] in our area from Delaware County, and were getting on the supervisor’s boards and taking a dim view of modern agriculture. They got a feeling that hog barns with lagoons would hurt the environment, so they’re going to outlaw them. Large chicken houses they didn’t want, and we have a lot of good farmers, but I said, “If a farmer isn’t doing his job, then we’re going to deal with that. But if he’s doing his job, he needs to have the freedom to expand.” And they were cutting down our farmers’ ability to expand, and it was against the Right to Farm Law that Senator Wenger got passed in [the] early [19]80’s. People were suing over corn dryers running at night. They were sued one time for a farmer that spread lime, and the lime dust blew over on their laundry. You can’t help that. Wind came up while this was going on. So, he got the Right to Farm law passed, and we developed Ag[riculture] Security Areas, and farmers in the Ag[riculture] Security Area, he has some protection against these nuisances. But passing these ordinances that weren’t legal, farmers were spending sixty, eighty thousand dollars to get permits out of the township. They had to go to court, and so Senator Madigan [Roger A.; State Senator, 1985-2008; State Representative, Bradford County, 1977-1984] introduced a bill, and I don’t remember the number, and the Senate passed it overwhelmingly. It came over to the House, and our House Leaders wouldn’t take it up, and I was disappointed. I went to see our Majority Leader [Sam Smith] and I said, “You know, farmers need, they need this to grow. If we don’t allow farmers to grow, agriculture is going to be diminished in Pennsylvania, and young people aren’t going to stay around and farm because to take a son in the farm or a daughter, you have to expand. And
with modern technology and automation you can operate large operations, just so you’re a good manager.” And so, he said, well, the next bill that comes in, why, we’ll support. So, the next term Senator Madigan sends another bill over, and we worked on that, and we got it passed, and then the Governor vetoed it because he said he wanted odor control, so he said he would put together a bill that he hoped we could accept. So, his staff put together a bill, and they made the Secretary of Ag[riculture], the Secretary of Environment, the Secretary of Commerce, and one other – it might have been Banking, I’m not sure – to be the clearinghouse. If a farmer in the township disagreed, he would appeal to this board. Well this, people said, “That’s too political,” and my campaign manager said, “Art, that’s just way too political.” He said, “Look, it’s all controlled by the Governor,” and then we couldn’t get the bill out of committee. People said, “We’re not going to support that. It’s not a good thing.” I tried to get it out of committee, and then my friend from Blair County, Jerry Stern [State Representative, Blair County, 1993-present], he said that he talked to the Attorney General, and he said, he would agree to take a look at these disputes. So, then we asked the Governor, and the Governor agreed, so that’s what we did; we made the Attorney General the clearinghouse, and it has worked well. There are some disputes, and there’s going to be a couple [that] wind-up in court, but it is working well. I think that finally the township supervisors agreed that there had to be some floor put in because as new people came along, they didn’t understand agriculture. They would just turn their nose up and say, “We’re not going to let you do that.” And so, when the Governor signed the bill – not that he not sign the bill – we passed it, and we were in that Fourth of July, 2005, and he called us in on a Sunday afternoon. I was at a reunion in Bedford County, and my wife and I drove into Harrisburg. I was Supposed to be here about four o’clock, I get here about five or six o’clock, and Jay Howes, my ag[riculture] guy, said that the Senate’s voting on the Acre Bill;
would we like to go over and watch? And this was really exciting, so we went over to sit in the
gallery, and they had just brought the bill up, and Senator Waugh [Michael L.; State Senator,
1999-present; State Representative, York County, 1993-1998] was talking about the merits of the
bill, and he got a little long. He got a little long, when he got done, the Senators sang out “E-I-E-
I-O!” Everybody laughed, and then the floor leader spied me up there in the gallery and he
stopped the proceedings, introduced me, and they stood up and gave me standing ovation. That
was really encouraging, and they passed that bill 49 to one. They wanted to pass that 100
percent, but a Member in Montgomery County, very strong ties in the environmental field, said
she just couldn’t go along with it, and so I went back to my office, and I told Jay. I said, “You
know, Jay, I’m not quite ready to retire, but I could. I could retire right now because this is a
great thing we accomplished.” And so, that’s, that’s the crowning bill. Another bill that I did
this year is the Cord Blood Education Bill. There is so much benefit to saving cord blood from a
birth that the public aren’t even aware of all the diseases and illnesses it can treat; eighty or
more. And other states were doing this, just make it an education, saying to the doctors and
nurses in the maternity rooms and birthing centers, “We have a method to save the cord blood if
you would like to do that in case you would have a child down the road that would need some
attention,” and I could name several instances where people did this. A family come up from
Tennessee, and they had a child, and he had an ailment – I forget the name of it – and the doctor
said, “The only way we can cure him, if you have another child and it would be normal, and we
would use the cord blood to treat him.” By the grace of God, she got pregnant again – which
was difficult for her – they had another healthy child, and they used the cord blood to cure the
older boy and what a strong testimony. They were right there in the gallery in the Rotunda
telling the story, and the chills went up my back. Where society still wants to use embryo, which
I don’t feel it is morally right to use these live embryos to treat these different ailments, when cord blood is so much more readily available and more richer in the elements it needs to do the job. So, when the Department of Health put out a brochure, we weren’t happy with it. It didn’t give an endorsement. It’d give a couple warnings about this and this, and we said, “Hey, this isn’t what we wanted. This missed the mark,” and we had some brochures from other states, and they graciously – I think somebody put their own stamp in there – and we got to the Department of Health, and the leaders they said they will take another look at it, and they produced a brochure that we can really accept and get out there. Another bill we did in Agriculture is the Veterinary Upgrade. The veterinary bill law wasn’t upgraded in 20 years, and we spent two terms doing that, which was very, very helpful to the veterinary society and also three small colleges that do veterinary assistants. They wanted to be clear that they were veterinarian assistants. There were some people out there driving their veterinarian around carrying his bucket and carrying his suitcase, and they wanted to be called veterinary assistants. They had no training in that area, and so we made that a point that these two-year junior colleges were veterinary assistants, that they were recognized.

**JT:** Is it fulfilling, then, to see some of the bills that you’re involved with become Acts?

**AH:** Yes, yes, very much. The veterinary bill didn’t have any challenges. It had challenges in the process, but after we got it passed, they got the stuff worked out. There was some give-and-take between some of the lobbyists, and a couple days of maybe some ill feeling, but they got that worked out. But on the Acre Bill, there’s two now on the Supreme Court, and the Supreme Court ducked and run on the bill. They said the farmer wasn’t grieved, so they’re not going to
take a position. Well, the farmer can’t start with the process of building when the township says, “We’re not going to give you a permit.” So, we felt they ducked the issue and several Supreme Court members were retiring, and the Attorney General said he believes they didn’t want to deal with it, so they took a walk and just turned it back and now with the new court he reintroduced those two issues that they didn’t want to take a decision on because what they said didn’t have standing because a farmer isn’t going to go out there and break ground and pour concrete and then the township come and stop him, and then he’s grieved. You see what I mean? That he’s sitting there with money spent and not knowing if he’s going to get a permit or not so he has to know up front, so I think they’re going to have a different agent explain that to the court. So, the future will show, but there’s two now in court, and most of the townships have changed their ordinances. But, you know, the conservation district has strong control over the water and the waste, so we can’t let people let them run over. You can’t let them get too full. What happened, some new places started up, and this happened with dairy lagoons; they didn’t have the equipment ready to spread, and they got fuller and fuller and fuller, and then you got a heavy rain, and you know they’re built like this, so they collect a lot of water, and then they broke out of the side and started running in the streams. That’s what happened down in North Carolina. That hurt the pork business more than anything else when Hurricane Floyd came through about ten years ago and dumped eighteen inches of water in that valley in twenty-four hours, and they had built a huge hog barn and a huge lagoon that overflowed and just ran down the stream, but one thing the environmentalists didn’t say, every municipal sewer in that valley overflowed, also, and I reminded people about that. They said, “We never thought of that.” I said, “Well, that happened.” But, that got on the internet, and the internet was getting big then, and it said,
“Environmentally these weren’t safe. Don’t allow him to build,” and you know, you can’t do that; you have to correct it. You have to go back and correct it and learn from our mistakes.

**JT:** With you retiring now – and I had a conversation with Senator Madigan; he will be retiring as well – do you think farmers will still have a strong representation in the Legislature in the coming years?

**AH:** You know, we hope so. We have some new members that are in Ag[riculture] Districts that have a strong interest in agriculture they expressed to me. They would like to be the ag[riculture] voice. One is right here in Cumberland County. They’re going to have to work their way up. They can’t all of a sudden be a Senator Madigan or a Representative Hershey, and they know that, but they expressed to me a strong interest, and I know of two in last year’s class, a strong interest in being an ag[riculture] leader, and so hopefully, Senator Madigan and I can be consultants down the road in some form if they need us. But, you talked about my mentors. There was a mentor to me. I went on a trip to Mexico with him on a dairy tour. It didn’t suit Ray Bunt to go, so I was the Vice Chairman of the Ag[riculture] and so I got to go with him, and we were in four provinces in Mexico, and he’s just quite a great guy. Senator Wenger was a big help to me in my beginning career, a mentor. I knew him from ag[riculture] stuff, ag[riculture] relations, and he gave me some tips on how to run the office and how to work with the staff because everybody’s different, and you just don’t know what to expect. When you come up here it’s just like, “Well, what are we going to do?” “Well, what do you want to do?” You know, “Well, we recommend this,” or “We recommend that,” and then other people are doing it a
different way, and so Representative Pitts and Senator Wenger and Roger Madigan Ken Brandt were some of my very, very good mentors.

**JT:** Do you see yourself as a mentor to anyone in the House now?

**AH:** Yes, I do. I’ve been – they’re begging me to stay. When I go to the Farm Show after I announced that winter, “What’re, what’re you stepping down for?” And I said, “Well, I reached the age of three score and ten, and my wife has been very, very patient these years. We got a lot accomplished, and I know there’s more to do, but,” I said, “while I still have my health, we have some things we want to do, and I think it’s time that we manage our schedule,” because campaigning is really excruciating right now if you have a contest. It’s one thing to have an opponent; it’s another thing if they raise a lot of money. If they don’t raise a lot of money, you still got to watch out what you do and get around among the people, but if they raise a lot of money, then you’re forced into a different mode of campaigning.

**JT:** Over the years that you’ve been in office, there’s been a number of advances in technology, specifically, laptops on the Floor, the PCN [Pennsylvania Cable Network], the camera feeds of the Session Days. Do you have any thoughts on the technological advancements in the House?

**AH:** It’s very, very helpful. I know I don’t miss handing out all those resolutions on the Floor. Now, I’m not a high-tech guy, but I can manage my laptop to bring the bills up and amendments, but I didn’t learn to type in school, so I just sort of left my staff do that, and maybe I should do some poke-and-seek, but I may still – I don’t know. My wife thinks when I’m home more I
should check on our emails and follow what’s going on. She does all that. We’ll wait and see, but it is very, very helpful. Sometimes, I think, information is flowing too fast. Sometimes things get put out there that if people would only give it a little more thought they would’ve positioned their comments differently. It happened to one of our Senators here in Berks County over the pay raise. I don’t like to get a lot of emails, especially the frustrated people. When you have to sit down [and] write a letter to somebody, you had to personally put your thoughts down and then address the envelope and mail it. Now, in the heat of passion, they can just bounce out a couple paragraphs and send it to me and say, “Now I really told him what I think.” And I’m so thankful for research staff that help you answer that stuff because they tell you the background of the subject. They tell you what was brought up in the last Session and what might be possible to do, so they really insulate you from getting hurt because there’s no way we can – we’re getting emails on the economy, you know, and we didn’t have a whole lot to do with it. Yet, in part, we are part of government, and the state is overspending and that’s the fault of our leaders. You shouldn’t be spending twice the rate of inflation because sooner or later it’s going to catch up, and now it did.

**JT:** Yeah. Did you have a relationship with the media, whether it be here in your Harrisburg office or in your district?

**AH:** I did. I had a small paper in Oxford that I had a good relationship with. The West Chester paper only ever contacted me at election time. It’s amazing. No, the Lancaster papers, they would call almost all their Members at budget time to see what the response was, and I can only remember the West Chester paper doing that once or twice. Now, they’ll call one or two
Members, like, they used to call Elinor Taylor from West Chester or maybe Bob Flick in that area, but they haven’t for six years or eight years called me and wanted my comments on the budget, and they’re not very couth at printing our news releases anyway. And another thing that I’ll give them credit; they didn’t beat us up on the pay raise. Chester County is one of the highest family incomes in the state, and on the pay raise I am not ashamed to vote for it. I said we deserve it, but it wasn’t handled right. It wasn’t handled right. And the first time in my career the newspapers all joined together and took us on, and so it made a lot of fodder for talk radio. But personally, I think – I mean, an incoming Member will get paid the same as the Chairman, and the work is double. The work is double. And I think a Legislator in Pennsylvania’s pay ought to be commensurate with high school principals’. I really do. I don’t like where people are saying, “Well, I won’t take an automobile. I won’t take a per diem. I won’t,” this. “I won’t,” that. Well, is it going to be up to the lowest bidder? No.

JT: Very interesting. I like to ask the different Members that I talk to if they have a funny or an interesting story that they’d like to share about a particular day or a particular person or a particular event at the time of their House service. Is something that comes to mind when, when somebody asks you what you’re – an interesting story or an anecdote then?

AH: There is some. I’d have to give it some thought, but there is some interesting things. What they’re doing now more, they’re announcing people’s birthdays and clapping. We didn’t used to do that. My secretary – when I turned 70 they had a big party for me and they surprised me, they really surprised me. You know, I never had a birthday party in my life. We had cake at home, but we didn’t have neighbors in, you know, or school kids, you just, you had work to do. (laugh)
So, she had these big sheets of paper hanging out of the elevators, and the Speaker was very cordial. I should have a little time to think about that. There are interesting incidences, and sometimes people are misquoted, and it’s really, really funny. We had a couple Members that were of Italian heritage, and they used to comment in Italian language. I know before I came, and when I did come, it was always customary for somebody from Lancaster County to give the groundhog address on Groundhog Day, and Senator Wenger would do it in Pennsylvania Dutch, and the stenographer down there, would, like this, you know, and then asked him for his notes, and he didn’t have anything written down because I don’t think it’s a written language; it’s a dialect. And that was always funny, and then you’d have Sam Smith from Punxsutawney give his address, and then John Barley [State Representative, Lancaster County, 1985-2002] used to do one for Octoraro Orphie. You know, that was always funny. And St. Paddy’s Day was always a fun day because Matt [Ryan] always had the bills printed in green ink and a shamrock on the page, and then, I sat next to Tim Hennessey [State Representative, Chester County, 1993-2010] and he always had Irish stories, and the last couple years, he had young dancers come in on the Floor and do that, that fancy, tip-toe stuff, you know. There were fun times. They were fun times, but there was a lot of fun shared in the lounge back there. In the lounge and also in the – they call it the Barber Shop. That’s really a Members’ Lounge – but, there’s some good stories shared back there and some good laughs. But all in all, I enjoyed working with the people. I think I was more comfortable in the district helping people with their everyday, bread-and-butter issues, one-on-one, which I felt was my forte. A stronger feel for that than working legislation through the process, because what surprised me is how in Caucus, people would argue over the wording. This gets to be the lawyers’ job, you know, and I never – coming from the
farm, we just wrote down what we thought and our thoughts, but then they’re trained to challenge it, and so that I found frustrating. I called them wordsmiths.

**JT:** How would you like your tenure to be remembered?

**AH:** I would like to be remembered as a statesmen, as someone that cared about the people, someone that served honorably, didn’t abuse the system and respected the system, respected my neighbors, and I felt I did that. And I said I wanted to retire before I got cynical and said something goofy. I know years ago one of our church members, not from our church but from the conference, there was a book written on him. He was one of our early missionaries, and helped in economic development in Africa, and they wrote a book about him, and he didn’t want it printed till he passed away, and, and they asked him why. He said, “Well, I don’t know what I might do in my old age. I might go off the deep end and rob a bank,” he said, “so, I don’t want the book to come out till I’m gone.” But, God forbid I do anything like that. But no, I’m happy, and I got tremendous – we had a party in southern Chester County at the Spencer farm. They were very gracious. We had vendors supply the food. The mushroom folks that supplied the food, they gave me a nice stainless steel mushroom and a little plaque thanking me for almost thirty years of service. I worked for them in the Farm Bureau, and 150 people came that afternoon, and then my staff arranged a party here in Room 60 East Wing about a month ago, and over 100 Members came and wished me the best. That was very touching. And the Farm Bureau’s going to honor me Tuesday night a week. I’ve been getting more plaques than I deserve and I don’t know what I’m going to do with all of them, but I hope I leave a legacy of what I just stated.
JT: Any regrets?

AH: I do have a regret. I worked ten years ago when the State said it’s time to widen [Route] 41; it’s not safe. The lanes are built in the [19]50’s, early [19]50’s, so they’re narrow, and traffic is close to one another. If someone is inebriated or falling asleep, they’d drift over, and you have some head-on accidents, and we’ve had some deaths. Almost every year there’s someone killed. Just this spring, a young policeman from Pittsburgh, just finished up his week, and he was heading home. He didn’t even get out of Avondale one mile till a lady was really drunk, driving without her lights on, and drifted over and hit him head-on. And that’s why the State wants to divide the road. Congressman Pitts had the money lined up to bypass Avondale and bypass Chatham, but this group got organized and said they didn’t want a four lane road out in their township near these higher priced homes, you know, so they said if you want to divide the road, put another drive through Avondale, like over a block, but you couldn’t do that. The church parking lot was there. A group called SAVE, they come up with a lot of different ideas. They were going to make the trucks get off of 41, and we told them that it’s built with Federal money and State money, and it’s an Interstate highway, and it can’t be done. But, they hired a lawyer and had a meeting, and he was telling them how he found in the law where they could make them get off of 41, but I took our transportation specialist down. He told them that the place he was pointing in the law was put there for a town where PennDOT was building a bridge, and the town had narrow streets and it wasn’t conducive to heavy trucks, and they put a caveat in there that they’re really not allowed to go in there, and he thought he could use that for every road. And I told some people, you know, you give a guy enough money, he’ll tell you what you want
to hear. Well, that blew away. And then the last proposal that was better than nothing, was to just go around the edge of the town, and it would remove about three small businesses, but the Avondale Borough officials said they didn’t want that. So, now they’re going to start over, and there were so many studies done, it – as a farmer and how much money it takes to run your operation, it makes you sick when they’re spending hundreds of thousands of dollars on these studies. Four years ago, they said, “As soon as we have the EIS [Environmental Impact Study] done, then we’re ready to start. We have a plan, and we’re ready to start.” And then, the Governor has friends down there that gave him a quarter million dollars the Friday night before his first election, and the message was, “Let 41 alone.” And so, we talked to PennDOT people and they gave us the information, and you really, say, “Well, when are we going to do this?” “Well, you know, we’re worried about our job,” you know. “The Governor has friends,” and that’s a poor way to run a business, but that’s what happened. A quarter million dollars was raised on a Friday night picnic, and the county commissioner told me that, and that was the message: let 41 alone. They tried to block a road going up over the mountain there from above State College going up to Bolton, Milesburg, up there, and then Jubelirer [Robert C.; State Senator, 1975-2006; Senate Pro-Tempore, 1985-2006] said to the Governor on his Swearing-In day, “Aren’t you for economic development?” He said he was. He said, “Well, by you blocking this highway it’s going to hurt economic development in this region.” “Well,” he said, “show me the information and I’ll change my mind.” So, he changed his mind, and then they ran into that pyrite that they had to take a time out and find out what to do with that, and now they’re going to go ahead and build the road, but it was just people that were close to him that were very influential that he just responded to it. It’s not a good way to run government. Now, he did some good things, but he spoilt that down there in horse country, and they said they’re saving
lives and saving farms. Well, the farms are preserved for the most part. A lot of farms are preserved, and that’ll save the farms, but the highway has to be safe, and they’re not saving any lives. They’re not saving any lives by not widening that highway. But, it’s twenty-eight miles from Wilmington to Gap, and it’s a truck route from the port, and it’s not going to get any less, so hopefully, the next administration sees that as a priority and works out a solution, but that is a disappointment.

**JT:** Yeah. Thank you. Any advice for someone interested in joining the Legislature?

**AH:** My advice is to younger people that want to come in; before you come and start blowing off steam and telling where you’re coming from and what you want to do, speak to senior Members, especially in the area where you want to work, because they’ll love to tell you the pitfalls. They’ll love to tell you what’ll work and what won’t work and what’s a possibility. But, I know some Members within the Caucus of the first couple months and started, like they’re in school, you know, and in school you get away with it, but up here, you don’t get away with it. You’re tagged as somebody that knows it all and that won’t listen to anybody. But, if you want to really learn, just do one-on-one. Speak to the senior members about different issues, and they’ll love to tell you, and it’s very, very good advice.

**JT:** Very good. And finally, any plans for retirement?

**AH:** No. *(laughs)* I told people after we had that Dog Law fight maybe I’ll breed dogs, but, you know, I’m not going to breed dogs. We’re going to lay low over winter. I got some things to do.
First of all, I’m going to clean out my garage and my little barn down there. Get things in order. I had piled things around and piled things around when I would lease another car. I took a box and took things out of my car and set it aside, I think I have three of them sitting there, and it’s pens and pencils and brochures and booklets and campaign stuff. I just have to get rid of stuff, and we are going to turn over stickers and pins and stuff to you folks in the Archives. I’ll get a shoebox ready. I’ve been asked to serve on a couple boards. I’ve been asked to serve on Delaware Valley Agricultural College Board. They haven’t formally asked me, but they’ve been hinting and hinting and hinting. My son graduated there. Our son, Brad, graduated there in [19]85. I think that would be something that I could fit into. It’s up in Doylestown, but I’m not going to fill my schedule just with things to do, and there are a few things on the fishing line right now that I can’t discuss. But, 2010 we’re going to Switzerland to where the Mennonites came from in 1719. My family came – I’m tenth generation Hershey Appenswell. Sam Wenger from Akron will be leading the tour. He’s been over there probably ten or 12 times. His father was one of the best historians I ever run into. He told me, me and his daughter-in-law, we’re fifth cousins, and then he really told me how we – all that’s interesting how families go back five generations, how they start coming together, and I had my lineage memorized from 1719. We have a summer home in the Upper Bay down below northeast Maryland, and when we go there for a weekend I won’t have to hurry back to a parade, or we could stay, maybe, Monday or maybe as long as you want. But, I know there’s going to be family things. I have eight brothers and sisters. All spouses are in fairly decent health, so we’re getting together more, and my wife’s high school class gets together four times a year. I never got to one of those lunches. I have fourteen grandchildren. Some of them were in FFA [Future Farmers of America] or 4-H and Little League and football, and we go to some of that stuff. That’s some of the stuff I want
to do next summer, and then we’ll sort through the other stuff, and there’s going to be plenty of invitations for dinners at the local Christian school to raise money and there’s some of them we’re going to stay close, too, but it’s not that I have to go to be seen, so it’s going to be interesting how this all flushes out. They say you get busier than you were before, but the last three weeks, laying all jokes aside, we were out every night at some function in Chester County, and I won’t have to do that after December 1. I’m going to hunt two days the first week and two days the second week. My wife’s going to go up with me the second week just to, just to change the pace, and do a little bit more fishing in the summertime.

JT: Excellent. Well, Arthur Hershey, I’d like to thank you very much for participating in our oral history program today, and thank you again for sharing all your stories.

AH: You’re welcome. You’re welcome. It was a pleasure, and I’m glad my voice held up.

JT: Good, thank you.