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BIPARTISAN MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

INTERVIEW WITH:

The Honorable Bruce Smith (R)

92nd District

Cumberland & York Counties

1981-2006

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY: Heidi Mays, House Archivist
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Heidi Mays (HM): Hi. Good afternoon. I'm here with Bruce Smith who is the Representative from the 92nd Legislative District from York and Cumberland Counties, and he has served from 1981 to the present [2006]. Thank you for being here.

The Honorable Bruce Smith (BS): I'm honored to be here and honored to be part of your work.

HM: Well, I wanted to begin by asking you what your childhood and your life was like in the early days.

BS: That's a tough question to begin with. Actually, we lived in Harrisburg – in a suburb of Harrisburg; Paxtang – and I went through Paxtang Elementary School and then graduated from John Harris High School. But this was in the [19]40's and [19]50's and my parents went through a divorce before it was fashionable to go through a divorce. I was the oldest of three children; my father was an alcoholic which broke the marriage up and (I) principally lived with my mother and was fortunate enough to go to college at Elizabethtown College. And tying in with my Republican idealism, which I had even then, my research paper my freshman year of college was on Dwight Eisenhower's [President of the United States, 1953-1961] first campaign election victory, and (I) got an 'A' on that paper. So, I've been a Republican my entire life.

HM: Was anyone else in your family active in politics?

BS: No, as a matter of fact, not at all. My brother was a truck driver and dropped out of high school. I encouraged him and he got his GED [General Educational Development], and now he's retired but he's – on an irregular basis – still teaching truck driving in a Vo-Tech School in Lancaster County. And my sister was a secretary – just like our mother – and she wasn't politically involved, but both of them are Republicans.

HM: Okay. How did you become involved in politics?

BS: I always had an interest in politics and when Pat and I moved to York County, I was involved in the volunteer organization, the Camp Hill Jaycees. And almost immediately after we moved to York County in 1965, there was upheaval against the Township Supervisors and there was a group called the Better Government League. And, just like that, in their second year of existence, they asked me to be president. And as idealistic as I was – and still am – I agreed, but, you know, that's not a good name for an organization because then you're implying that there's something wrong with the government – which there was. So, again, as an idealist, I ran for Township Supervisor after living in Newberry Township only eight years. [It was a] three-way Republican Primary [and I] came in dead last. I ran a terrible campaign and learned from my mistakes, and in 1977, I ran again and defeated the 12-year incumbent Township Supervisor and stayed involved in Newberry and then Three Mile Island hit [1979] while I was a Township Supervisor and a high school English teacher at Cedar Cliff, and my wife and I became very involved in Three Mile activity. Then my predecessor [State Representative, Eugene Geesey, Cumberland and York Counties, 1969-1980], as a State Representative, stepped

down to the surprise of many and, truthfully, I wasn't going to run for the seat because in Newberry Township we were involved in taking Newberry Township from not even having a Planning Commission, when I took over, to Zoning, and that's at least a six year process. Besides that, my best friend was Road Master, which is a political appointment, and I did not want to desert him [and] have him lose his job, until I found out that you could be a Supervisor and a State Representative at the same time. So, then I threw my hat in the ring. It was a six-way Republican Primary and I won by 3 or 400 votes. The funny part of the story, to continue it, is that in the General Election as a school teacher at Cedar Cliff, I ran against a Democrat [Harry B. Clark] who was on my own School Board, and it was the cleanest election I ever had. And after I won I went to the school board and asked for a two-year leave of absence without pay and they voted unanimously to give me that, if I'd finish that semester of January of [19]81, which I agreed to do. I took days off without pay from the School District when we were in session in January. When I won again in [19]82, then I resigned from teaching.

HM: Did you enjoy campaigning?

BS: I enjoyed campaigning and I enjoyed school teaching. One of the toughest things this year with my retirement was not campaigning. I miss that; I really miss that. And one of the things, if you want to be a successful politician, you have to like people, and I really like people and that's one of the things I really enjoyed about campaigning; meeting people, getting their views, explaining my views. Often times – not often time-

nearly every time, voting as my constituents would want me to vote because I think very much like my constituents, and I think that's why I lasted 26 years.

HM: With the Primary being held just yesterday, were you involved in the campaign at all?

BS: No, I was not. When I finally made my decision to retire – and that's the toughest decision, that decision to retire – but, when I made that decision, I announced in December that I wasn't running again to give anybody that wanted to run a chance to organize a campaign and run. And I had four Republicans and one Democrat running for the post and I continuously said I wouldn't get involved; I wouldn't endorse anyone, let each one win or lose on his own merits. And, that's what happened.

HM: Can you describe the 92nd District.

BS: The 92nd District as it is now?

HM: Well, we can talk historically. (*laughs*)

BS: Yes, well, that's the reason I say it that way – it's back again, to a great extent, the way it was in 1980. What has changed over the years is that with following each census the redistricting that occurs. And the reality is that York and Cumberland Counties are growing in population. So, when I ran in 1980 about a third of the District was

Cumberland County and two-thirds was York County. And, the funny part about my first election victory was that, being from York County, I concentrated on York County in the Primary and I came in second in York County. In Cumberland County I was known fairly well, but there was a Cumberland County individual involved in the race, so I came in second in Cumberland County – but first overall when you total the votes. Then, in 1982, I lost all of Cumberland County in redistricting and picked up more of York County. I even had the largest – one of the largest – municipalities in York County as part of my District from [19]82 to [19]92. [In 19]92 it changed again. And then, [in] 2002, I got Cumberland County back. So, I would say that a third of my District is now Cumberland County and two-thirds is York County. But, it's much more concentrated, because what was happening each time with each redistricting, York County would pick up another Representative. So, we are exploding in population and now it's a much more smaller, geographically, oriented District than it was before. I used to have to travel down to Wrightsville, 45 minutes from Dillsburg. Now, the furthest south I have to go is Newberry Township. But, now I go up to Mount Holly Springs and South Middleton Township. So, it's a rural area but it's also becoming more and more developed as farmland is lost to developments.

HM: Did you have say in redistricting? Or did –

BS: Redistricting is done, usually, with the elected officials in mind, if possible. And, when you say, “Did I have any say in it?” you always can say what you want, but that doesn't mean you'll get what you want. When I had two precincts in Springettsbury

Township, for instance, from [19]82 to [19]92, that was terrible. Because, what would happen would be somebody would call me from Springettsbury Township and I'd have to say, "Are you sure you're in my Legislative District?" and they'd say, "Well, I'm not sure." I'd have to ask them where they voted, and if they voted at North Hills Middle School or Pleasureville Fire Company, they were mine; the other seven precincts belonged to somebody else. So, I didn't like that and I did ask, "Don't give me any partial Townships." So, I didn't have any partial Townships from [19]92 to 2002, but then with the redistricting in 2002, I lost one of my favorite Townships – Warrington Township – in York County. And I didn't know I was going to lose it until it happened. You have more influence on redistricting boundaries if you have more seniority, but you still don't always get what you want.

HM: You sent out newsletters and tried to communicate with your constituents. How do you take into considerations their thoughts, through questionnaires? Do you use those at all?

BS: I'm an English major. When I became a Township Supervisor for the first time in Newberry Township history, we had newsletters, which, principally, I wrote. So that when I became a State Representative – I think communication is a secret to success in any field, not only politics and government – so, that I sent out a newsletter in the Spring and then one in the Fall. In the Spring, I would ask questions about pending legislation to get the results and stay in tune to what my constituents supported and what they thought. And, I would say, 95 percent of the time I would follow the wishes of my constituents. I

can think of several instances when I might not have voted as they would want me to vote. But, that's a great way to learn what your constituents think. And I would follow that up in the first newsletter with announcements of upcoming town meetings. I held over 200 town meetings during my legislative career. And by those town meetings, I mean, I would go to each municipality and hold a town meeting. Now, I started with having them in the evenings; now I fluctuate between evenings, mornings and afternoons but still have the town meetings throughout my legislative district. So, between the town meetings and the newsletter questionnaires, I would stay in touch with my constituents and I think they appreciated that.

HM: What was your relationship like with the media?

BS: That's interesting. My relationship has always been good with the media. In fact, a little known fact about my background is when we moved to Newberry Township and I got involved in the Better Government League and we got Newberry Township to stay in the Recreation Board at that time – there was a West Shore Recreation Board – so, I'd go to all these Township meetings and the *Patriot News* would cover those Township meetings and they'd always see me there, so after a while the *Patriot News* said to me, "Instead of us sending a reporter, would you become a stringer for us?" And I said, "What's a stringer?" And they said, "Well you go to the meetings, you call us and we pay you," – I think it was – five dollars a meeting and 25 cents an inch for anything we sent. So, I actually worked for the *Patriot News* as a stringer for a number of years; and I also feel the public needs to know what's happening on the local level and on the state

level. So, I would always respond to the reporters' inquiries relating to what's going on in Harrisburg and what my opinion was, especially when I became Chairman of the Game and Fisheries Committee. I would get into the issues with whatever reporter specialized in hunting and fishing.

HM: What would you say the role of lobbyists is in the Pennsylvania House?

BS: Well, lobbyists are a misunderstood breed. And I say misunderstood because the public thinks of lobbyists as men and women who come with money to feed legislators. And, that can be true to a limited extent. I never accepted that much money from lobbyists because the reality is, the Game Commission and the Fish and Boat Commission don't employ lobbyists; they don't have money to throw around, so I wouldn't get much lobbyist monies. But, lobbyists are important because they can educate you on why they believe a bill should pass or fail and they can give you an Industry's point of view on why a bill should pass or fail. So, I would use them for education, but I wouldn't march lock-step to what a lobbyist group wanted because then I would also want to hear from the other group as to why what they say is a bad bill – they might think is a good bill. So, it's a way to learn both sides of an issue, as long as you're not beholden to a particular lobbying group.

HM: Speaking of education, whenever you first started in the House, did you have anyone try to mentor you?

BS: I had two outstanding mentors when I came to Harrisburg. The seating arrangement is done before you even get there, and I was seated behind Sam Hayes [Samuel E., Jr.; State Representative, Blair, Centre and Huntingdon Counties 1971-1992; PA Secretary of Agriculture, 1997-2003], who was our Majority Leader at the time, and a former teacher and a great instructor and a great speaker. So, I learned from Sam, and they put me right beside Don Dorr [Donald; State Representative, York County 1973-1990], a York County legislator. And Don Dorr – and I don't know how he did it – took the time to read and understand every bill, so that when I was puzzled about a bill or why he would vote for a bill, I would ask Don and he was able to explain it to me. So, that, between Don and Sam, I felt that I was really prepared to cast a vote more than the average freshman member.

HM: Alright. So, since you've been here 26 years, do you feel like you've mentored anyone?

BS: I would hope so. I would hope so. It's hard to say, you know, what would classify as "mentoring." Each York County Legislator that has come in, I have been able to work with and try to educate them through the process, so that I would say that I have a closer relationship – and that's natural – I would have a closer relationship with York County and Cumberland County Legislators than anyone else. I would also indicate that because of my seniority, for 12 years I have been the Central Pennsylvania Republican Caucus Chairman, so that we would meet intermittently whenever there was an issue of importance to Central Pennsylvania. I'll use an example of which we tried and failed,

and that was AMP¹. We tried to save AMP and we failed in that regard. But we've succeeded in a number of other issues, from Indiantown Gap Military Reservation, the Amphitheater there, to changing the Tobacco Settlement – by changing the Tobacco Settlement terms, we got more money for Hershey Medical Center than the original Tobacco Settlement terms called for; we changed the formula to benefit Central Pennsylvania. So, that I may have mentored some people unknowingly, but that's what comes to mind initially.

HM: You had talked a little bit about Three Mile Island earlier, and this is certainly a Central Pennsylvania issue. How did Three Mile Island impact any of your legislation decisions? I know that the event occurred before you actually started.

BS: Right. Well, Three Mile Island² had a great impact, I think, on my legislative career and I'm not sure how much I influenced what happened at Three Mile Island. But when I think back, when Three Mile Island occurred I was still teaching, so I experienced first-hand the evacuation, the very poor evacuation plan. I experienced first-hand what it's like to be the lead official, the highest ranking official, in Newberry Township and we were the largest municipality on the West Shore of Three Mile Island. And it was interesting because the media concentrated on Middletown because that's where the plant was. And the funny part about it is that I had a former student who worked for Channel 27, and after a couple days of seeing nothing but, Middletown, Middletown, Middletown – and I knew how my people were suffering and their unfortunate experiences – I called

¹ Manufacture of electrical and electronic connectors, based in Central Pennsylvania.

² On March 28, 1979, the Unit 2 nuclear power reactor suffered a partial core meltdown.

Channel 27 [and] ended up having an ABC TV network crew follow me Saturday, Sunday and Monday after the accident, so that I was able to spread the word that Three Mile Island affected both sides of the River. And I was also able to, I think, partly influence Governor [Richard] Thornburgh [Pennsylvania Governor, 1979-1987] on the fact that we needed to do some research before Unit I was reopened. When I became a Representative, I was able to amend the bill that affected Three Mile Island – it was a Resolution that affected Three Mile Island – my very first term, with the cooperation of Susan Shanaman, who was [the] Chairman of the PUC [Public Utility Commission] at the time. The other thing that occurred, Governor Thornburgh said “We’ve got to be sure it’s safe.” So, it took seven years for the plant to reopen. To give you an example of something that people don’t realize about legislation is [that] the easiest thing to do in Harrisburg is to introduce a bill. So, on the – let’s see – the Second Anniversary of Three Mile Island, I was still angry about the accident because I saw how it affected Newberry Township and my constituents. So, that I introduced a bill that I knew wouldn’t go anywhere, but it got a lot of publicity, that would require anybody that worked at Three Mile Island to live within five miles of Three Mile Island. And the Utility people went crazy, because they would have all had to have moved closer to Three Mile Island. The bill never got out of Committee, but I had some fun with it.

HM: Do you think there are still safety concerns with Three Mile Island?

BS: I think there are a huge number of safety concerns, not only with Three Mile Island, but with any nuclear power. People don’t realize it but the United States has failed

miserably in supplying a location to ship those highly radioactive rods that fuel nuclear power plants. They're still being stored underwater down at each nuclear power plant, so that there are rods down at Three Mile Island, being stored at Three Mile Island underwater, because the United States hasn't figured out and solved the Yucca Flats storage facility. The other reality that is going to occur is once that's open you've got to transport those utility rods from Pennsylvania – in our case – all the way down to Arizona, or where ever Yucca Flats is; they don't want it open down there. It's the same thing that bothered me and still bothers me. It's called NIMBY – Not In My Backyard. But, people don't want nuclear power plants in their backyard. And I'm rather proud of the fact that there has been no new nuclear power plant constructed since the accident at Three Mile Island because we helped to make them aware of the dangers of living near a nuclear power plant. I also had a great experience to indicate how fouled up nuclear power plants are. I ran in [19]86 and my opponent [Paul Parsells] said, "Well Bruce Smith has never been on Three Mile Island. How can he be critical?" And my response was, "Yes, I've never been there, but I can still be critical. I don't want to go to Three Mile Island." So, as Chairman of the Game and Fisheries Committee, I said to my Executive Director, "I'd like to see fish ladders," and the nearest fish ladders on the Susquehanna River are at the York Haven Dam. So, I thought we'd be traveling down to York Haven, which is in my Legislative District to see the fish ladders, so I arranged a Committee tour. What I didn't realize is [that] the fish ladder's on the Three Mile Island side of the River. So that, we as a Committee, met up here on the plaza. I rode in a Fish and Boat Commission vehicle – we had about four or five vehicles – went in a caravan down to Three Mile Island – and this is long after the accident – we got to the sentry

posts where they were guarding Three Mile Island, nobody was there. We drove right onto Three Mile Island and the first lock we came to was at the fish ladder. (*laughs*) Believe me, I publicized that visit to indicate what's going on down at Three Mile Island, they weren't doing their job. Now, they've changed things, and hopefully so; but I went to war with Governor [Edward] Rendell when Governor Rendell [Pennsylvania Governor, 2003-2011], after 9/11 [September 11, 2001], had put troops in those outposts at Three Mile Island and kept them there for a period of time. Then, without consulting anybody, any legislators, or making an announcement, he withdrew the troops, and all of the Representatives and Senator Piccola [Jeffrey; State Representative, Dauphin County, 1977-1995; State Senator, 1995-present] had a press conference at which time, we criticized Governor Rendell for not alerting us to the fact that he was pulling National Guard troops. I received assurances from Governor Rendell's staff that they would keep us informed and they have done so ever since.

HM: During your tenure you fought against a high-voltage transmission line from Butler to Three Mile Island. Could you explain that as a grassroots effort?

BS: That was the best grassroots effort I have ever experienced, and, to put it in perspective, I've gone into detail about how we fought about Three Mile Island; a little known fact at the time – it's better known now – when it was obvious that the plant was going to be restarted, my wife could not live as close to the plant as we were because we were two and half miles from the plant. We could see the towers from our home; we saw them being built and I didn't have a problem with nuclear power at the time. It took the

accident to drive home to me what failure of nuclear power could do to an entire area - and this before Chernobyl, as a matter of fact, the disaster in Russia – so that, it became obvious that we were going to lose our fight and Unit I would restart, we decided to move as far away as we could from Three Mile Island and still live in the 92nd District. And at the time of the accident at Three Mile Island, all the kids at Newberry Elementary School, Fishing Creek Elementary School and Red Land High School were shipped to Dillsburg, so we moved to Dillsburg. It's 15 miles away, more than 15 miles away from Three Mile Island, and bought a house on the main street in Dillsburg. When the utilities decided they were going to build a cross-state high-voltage transmission line, they held some meetings with Legislators before hand and, lo-and-behold, they're running that line from, I think, Beaver County to Three Mile Island and it was going through Dillsburg. And, when I looked at the map, when I finally saw the map, it was going right next to Dillsburg or Northern High School, Northern Elementary School and Northern Middle School, and I alerted the School Administration to this fact and there was an informal meeting, a hearing, prior to them going public with where the map would go. The School Administration officials went to the meeting and, thankfully, the utility changed the line; they moved the line; they moved it a half a mile south so that it was right next door to our house; right next door to our house, and I couldn't believe it. Now, I have to backtrack a little bit; when the public became aware of the utilities' plans of going through Northern York County, there were several groups that got involved. And before they moved the line to my house – and I have to emphasize that – before they moved the line next to my house, there was a meeting in Dillsburg, I think it was at the firehouse, I believe it was at the firehouse, of people interested in not having this line go through Dillsburg, and we all

got involved. And the difference between that issue and the Three Mile Issue, this was a cross-state high-voltage transmission line. And, Representative LaGrotta [Frank; State Representative, Beaver, Butler and Lawrence Counties, 1987-2006], out in Beaver County, became involved in a grassroots effort out there. The Game Commission, to their credit, was the only State Agency that said, “We don’t want this high-voltage transmission line, because it goes through” – I think it was – “five game lands.” So, they made an issue of it. And then there was a group in Newberry Township that got involved. And the greatest, I shouldn’t say greatest, one of the neat things that occurred and scientists will debate why this is – and I didn’t do all the planning, these groups did the planning – so, one night, it was a Saturday night; first of all, they had a picnic; and then at the picnic they said that, “We are going to a high-voltage transmission line,” which was close to Pinchot Park, and they gave each of us a fluorescent light – you know, one of these lights like this – and we went there and we went under this high-voltage transmission line – and Channel 21 was there – and we just held the lights and they lit up. Now, that was stray voltage, but were was it EMF’s [Electromagnetic field], I don’t know. But, we beat that transmission line; we beat it in a unique way that the New Jersey PUC, who would have been a beneficiary of the high-voltage transmission line – once it got to Three Mile Island they were going to generate electricity to New Jersey – New Jersey PUC had learned that we had a lawsuit, and our lawyer for the lawsuit was retired PUC Chairman Susan Shanaman, so the lawsuit was going to challenge the high-voltage transmission line. One other issue involved with that that I’m proud of, when I heard where the transmission line was going through York County, I called the PUC and I said, “I understand you’re going to have hearings to receive citizens’ input on this high-

voltage transmission line. I'd like to have a sitting in York County." The PUC, when they finally announced the series of meetings throughout the State, no meetings in York County. So, I called the PUC as soon as they announced the meetings. I said, "I thought you were going to have a meeting in York County?" They said, "We couldn't find a place." I said, "Really?" Within an hour I had a location, called them back, the Chairman or his staff immediately reconsidered and the location that I had received – I called the Superintendent of the West Shore School District and told him the story, he said, "You can have the meeting in our Administration building anytime you want." PUC scheduled a meeting [and] instead of a one-day meeting, they had so many people testifying against the high-voltage line that it took two days of listening to testimony. So, the New Jersey PUC knew we had citizens against, knew we'd pursue the lawsuit and said, "We don't want the electricity supplied by that," and the whole thing fell apart. Bring it up to date, there's a new movement by some utilities to construct a high-voltage transmission line that will go through York County and they're not saying where. As of today, they are not saying where it will go, but they are also meeting with people who were part of our group who beat the old transmission line. So, it's an ongoing story, but the difference is there is a new Federal law that makes it easier for these transmission lines to be constructed, even though citizens might not want it.

HM: That's a great story. Thank you. You've always been a member of the Fish and Game, or the Game and Fisheries Committee. I'm sorry.

BS: That's all right.

HM: You must enjoy hunting and fishing, yourself.

BS: I do. I do.

HM: Can you explain how being an avid hunter and fisherman helped you understand the issues as a member of this Committee?

BS: First of all, I'm very proud to say that since the Game and Fisheries Committee was created, I have served longer than any other individual as Chairman, as Majority Chairman, of the Committee. I'm in my 12th year and I'm very proud of different accomplishments that will continue after my service is done. And, yes, you need to be a hunter or a fisherman to understand the hunting and fishing issues in Pennsylvania. And I guess what really prepared me for it; I do go to a hunting camp for the opening day of deer season, and the unique thing that the average Pennsylvanian doesn't understand about hunters is every one has his own theory about hunting, about deer and about what's good for the deer herd, and how many antlerless deer should be shot. Everybody's got their own opinion and they're quick to offer their opinion. Right now, I have a hunting license bill that needs to be passed if not by the end of this year, sometime next year, because the Game Commission is in dire financial straits. The other reality is, we're the only State that has a separate Game Commission and Fish and Boat Commission, and one of my accomplishments was to introduce a Resolution that would determine how much money you would save by combining the two Agencies. And that's a neat part right now,

when I talk to hunters who don't want a license increase, because every single hunting organization when I talked about combining the two Agencies – we could save five million dollars a year if we'd combine the two Agencies – every single hunting organization, every single fishing organization said don't combine the two, even though we can save five million dollars a year. So, last year we passed a fishing license increase; now the Game Commission needs money, we're asking for it to be 30 dollars for a hunting license. Right now, you fill your gas tank – I just filled it last week and it was 42 dollars. I took my grandchildren to a movie, bought them popcorn and soda, 32 dollars. And these hunters will buy hunting boots for a hundred dollars, a gun for 500 dollars, [but] they don't want to pay 30 dollars for a hunting license? It's been a challenging Committee and if I didn't love hunting and fishing, I'd have given it up the Committee a long time ago.

HM: Why won't the two Agencies merge?

BS: The two Agencies both specialize, they both specialize, and it's not a matter of what the Agencies want – I'm sure the Agencies would rather stay separate; they'd rather stay separate because they're oriented toward hunting and fishing. So, that the Agencies, when I did the Resolution, both opposed it; but, the key was, so did the hunters and so did the anglers of Pennsylvania. I think, somewhere down the road it will be looked at again because as the years go on it's going to cost more than five million dollars a year to have separate Agencies. But, there are certain issues that I experienced as the lead with the Central Pennsylvania Caucus on divesting the Capital City Airport and Harrisburg

International Airport [HIA] that I learned that will be challenges to merge the two Agencies. When the Capital City Airport and Harrisburg International Airport were being run by the State, they would lose money for the State year after year after year. And the State wasn't investing any money in the two airports, so that the Central Pennsylvania Republican Caucus, under my leadership, looked at divestiture. And one of the problems with divestiture was the fact that there were, I think, five different Unions involved, and each Union wanted to protect its members and the employees at the two airports. That's the same thing with the Game Commission and the Fish and Boat Commission. Right now each of the Commissions has different rights through the negotiation process over the years that both Unions would like as part of the merger. There's something else involved too, and that's Department of Conservation and Natural Resources [DCNR] has a lot of state forests and people get mixed up with State Forest and State Game lands. So, Representative Staback [Edward; State Representative, Lackawanna and Wayne Counties, 1985-present] had a Resolution that studied that particular merger, to merge all three; DCNR, with the Forests; and the Game Commission; the Fish and Boat Commission. DCNR said, "We don't want it. We don't want any parts of it," because their Rangers and people have different rights and different salaries per hour than Game Commission and Fish and Boat Commission. So, with the divestiture, (which) I'm very, very proud of the airports, we got and created an authority that runs the two airports and there's no way you'd have a new airport facility constructed like we have now at HIA if the State were still running it. So, that's another accomplishment that I'm very proud of that Central Pennsylvania Caucus was heavily involved in. And the way that ended up, Senator Piccola and I had identical bills in the

House and Senate for the divestiture; his bill got through before mine did, but I'm very proud of that accomplishment also. But, there are a lot of problems involved with merger of the two Agencies, but somewhere down the line it will be looked at again and a decision will be made.

HM: Have the issues that have been introduced to your Committee changed over time, or are they still pretty much the same issues?

BS: That's a great question, because some things never change. When I took over the Committee 12 years ago, the issues were deer management and the number of antlerless licenses issued and the Game Commission needed a license increase. My first year as Chairman, I had a fishing license increase and a hunting license increase that needed to be passed. We got the fishing license increase passed in six months; the hunting license took four years. The deer management issue dragged it out for four years and right now, I have a major problem with the hunting license increase. Guess what? Deer management, number of antlerless licenses, no deer in the woods according to some hunters; some things never change.

HM: What major pieces of legislation were you involved with as a member of this Committee?

BS: Definitely hunting license increase, fishing license increase, I'm the Prime Sponsor of the hunting license increase this time [HB 2600-2006], and the other reality that the

people in the Legislature know, you accomplish a lot through amendments. So that, I have had amendments inserted into a number of bills; for instance, to create the elk license. That was done through the amendment process, but originally, I had introduced an elk license bill [HB 2433-2000]. I used that as an amendment in another bill so that, yes, when you look at the record, I'm not the Prime Sponsor that created an elk license, but in reality, I did it through the amendment process. Another bill that I'm proud of is the penalty structure for violating game laws [HB 1064-2004]. It used to be a cut and dried, for this violation it costs "x" amount of dollars, no matter what the conditions were of the citation. So that, I introduced a bill that would do a sliding scale, the same as other crimes in the Commonwealth. And the sliding scale – first of all, the person would be cited for a violation. And then the District Justice would listen to the recommendation of the prosecuting officer, who was a wildlife conservation officer, and the wildlife conservation officer could recommend a certain penalty. And then the District Justice would say, "I agree," but it's a sliding scale. That took place because the Game Commission, in one of their license – when they introduced the antler restriction, where you could only shoot a deer with six points or eight points depending on where in the State, they said they'd only fine violators 25 dollars. It came to violation time they were fining them 150 dollars. So, we changed that through the sliding scale. Another bill that I'm proud of will create point-of-sale licenses for the Game Commission [HB 1924-1996]. In other States, you can just slide a credit card through a machine, or last year's license through a machine, and you automatically get the same thing, if that's what you want. But, your license is printed out; you don't have to reveal social security number time after time; it's stored one time and you'll have the same number continuously. Both

the Game Commission and the Fish and Boat Commission are going to point-of-sale as of next year. Fishing licenses in January and hunting licenses next July will be done through point-of-sale. Another bill that I introduced that I'm proud of is that you can now use decoys and mechanical devices to lure coyotes when you're hunting coyotes. Coyotes impact the deer herd. It could be another reason hunters aren't seeing deer because coyotes are all over the State. And contrary to what some hunters believe, the Game Commission never stocked coyotes. Some hunters swear that they've stocked coyotes, and how dumb would that be to stock coyotes? So, I probably introduced and passed into law at least a dozen bills affecting hunting and fishing.

HM: Okay, switching topics. Can you tell us about the legislation that became known as "Potty Parity?"

BS: *(laugh)* You did your homework.

HM: *(laugh)* In 1989, House Bill 1926 was sponsored by you but didn't go anywhere until Representative Rudy [Ruth; State Representative, Centre County, 1983-1996] sponsored – *(laugh)*

BS: She stole that bill from me and I would tell Ruth Rudy that she stole that bill from me. And that's an example of being a naïve legislator; absolutely naïve. What year did I introduce that?

HM: 1989.

BS: [19]89. We Republicans were in the minority. I had a constituent, right now she lives right up the street from me, Nancy Grove Nichols, and Nancy saw another State pass “Potty Parity,” and Nancy wrote me a note saying, “Wouldn’t this be a good idea for Pennsylvania?” And I looked at it and I thought, “That is a good idea.” So, I sent a memo – this is what you do when you have an idea for a bill – I sent a memo with my legislation to all the Representatives and said I was going to introduce the bill and then I had a press conference. I made *USA Today* with that press conference. And that night, or the next day, I had a TV crew from Philadelphia come up to Harrisburg, interview me live right by the fountain, on “Potty Parity.” That was my first experience with Bob Durgan.³ Bob Durgan called me and wanted to interview me on Monday about “Potty Parity.” So, the mistake I made, I made two mistakes; one, when I introduced the bill, it was right before a Penn State home football game and I used the Penn State home football game as an example of the unfairness of “Potty Parity,” where women need longer time in restrooms than men, and I used Penn State as an example. We weren’t in Session and back then, I don’t think you could introduce a bill when you were not in Session, so I didn’t introduce the bill. I went on the Bob Durgan show the following Monday, in fact I went to the Penn State game and that’s where Bob’s staff called me – and I didn’t know anything about Durgan, at the time, – so I go on his show on the Monday morning and he’s eating me alive for a solid half-hour saying, “What a dumb idea. How stupid is this. You’re just trying for publicity.” And I tried to explain to him the reality of it takes women longer to use restrooms than men, and lines, and he just kept

³ Local Radio (WHP 580, AM) conservative talk show host.

eating me alive. So I said, “You women out there, help me,” and they started calling in and they started eating Durgan alive. Until the show was over, he apologized to me and they made him aware that it takes women more time to use restrooms and Durgan never bothered me on that issue again. But what happened was, for some reason, the Democrats went into Session before the Republicans, we boycotted a Session or something dumb, and what’s common and not fair but happens on both sides of the aisle, you steal good ideas. And when you’re in the majority, your bill moves and the minority’s Member’s bill doesn’t move. And Ruth Rudy introduced the “Potty Parity” bill and I was smart enough to know my bill was dead, so I went over and I said to Ruth, “I’ll work with you on your bill and I’d like to see it become reality, because I think it’s a good idea.” Ruth promised she’d keep me posted. Then what happened was, I went to hunting camp. On the first day of buck season I get from my hunting camp a call from my secretary. She said Ruth Rudy’s bill is being considered in Committee tomorrow morning. So, I had to give up a day of hunting; I had to depend on my staff to tell me that they were running a version of my bill – they just changed some words, and as I said, that’s common. I had half a dozen bills stolen by the Democrats when I was in the minority. And that’s the reality of my legislative career; my first term we were in the majority; for 12 years, we were in the minority. But, let me finish with “Potty Parity” and then give you an example of how the Democrats were good to me – I worked with the House Republicans to have us support Ruth’s bill; I worked with the Senate to have the Senate Republicans, who were in the majority, to work with Ruth’s bill. Ruth’s bill became law; I was the second sponsor. She introduced her bill first, but I announced publicly that I was for “Potty Parity” first, but I did make mistakes and I learned from my

mistakes. The other thing I want to say about being in the minority, I've always had a good relationship with both Parties; I run my Game and Fisheries Committee in a bipartisan manner. When we were in the minority, there was pressure in my legislative district for – at the time it was called the New Cumberland Army Depot – now, I think it's DDRE; they keep changing the initials. But, it's the largest employer in York County. But, the trucks going through the neighborhoods was causing concern. When we were in the minority, I introduced an amendment to the Turnpike bill to put an exit at the New Cumberland Army Depot, so that the trucks would not have to go through my neighborhoods, so that my constituents wouldn't be complaining about that facility. Now, this was before BRAC [Base Realignment and Closure] and the closing of Military bases, but this was very, very important. Thanks to Democratic support and the cooperation of the Democratic Chairman of the Transportation Committee and Rudy Dininni [State Representative, Dauphin County, 1967-1990], who was minority Chairman at the time, I was able to get that amendment in. And the Turnpike Commission found that they couldn't build an exit, because if you go past DDRE on the Turnpike and you look at the Army Depot, there's a huge marsh there and they would had to have gone through wetlands. So, what the Turnpike did that was very smart was that they said, "We'll construct a road right along the Turnpike within our right-of-way that will go right into the New Cumberland Army Depot. All the trucks will take that from Interstate 83." Consequently, there were very few complaints about DDRE or New Cumberland Army Depot and it has continued to be a great facility, and BRAC's elimination of military bases as recommended by Congress and the President, they have never considered closing the Army Depot and I am very, very proud that the Democrats

worked with me on that and the Turnpike Commission followed through on an amendment I inserted into the Turnpike bill. So, you can have cooperation between the two Parties, but they do steal.

HM: Can you explain your involvement in getting Celestine named as the State Mineral? [HB 700-2003]

BS: That was one of my unsuccessful efforts. In fact, I just met today with the group from Northern Elementary School, or Dillsburg Elementary School, and one of the teachers or parents asked about that bill. I had a group from Wellsville, which was in my legislative district at the time, and the teacher was a member of the Rock and Mineral Society of Central Pennsylvania, and these students – and I went to Wellsville to visit a classroom and they blindsided me. They wanted me to introduce a bill to make Celestine the State Mineral. And they had samples of Celestine, they had where it was in the State; they educated me on Celestine as the State Mineral. So, I promised them that I would introduce a bill to make Celestine the State Mineral. They were very excited about it. It turned out that I approached the Chairman to which it was referred; it was Paul Clymer [State Representative, Bucks County, 1981-present]. And Paul agreed to have a hearing on the bill during the summer. The problem was in the summer the kids are on vacation, but I communicated with the teacher [and] the teacher got 10 kids that would testify. One kid gave up vacation in Pittsburgh to come in and testify, so they had a great hearing over in the South Office Building– no, North Office Building, excuse me – and these kids testified [and] we got all kinds of publicity on it, and Chairman Clymer moved the bill

through the State Government Committee, it passed the House of Representatives, and I couldn't get it through the Senate; I was very disappointed. I was criticized for that and that's the reality of introducing a bill – even though the kids were for it – the media eats you alive on different things like that; “Don't you have better things to do than to work on Celestine as the State Mineral?” We had a press conference in Harrisburg where R.J. Harris of WHP [580 AM], at the time, was President of the Harrisburg Rock and Mineral Club, and he participated. We put a big push on, but I couldn't get it through the Senate.

HM: You talked about several pieces of legislation. Of which would you say you're the most proud of?

BS: That's a good question. I'd say I'm very proud of different things that I have done in a leadership role that weren't necessarily legislation. One of the things that I'm very proud of that I just said to Veterans; Cumberland County and York County had special ceremonies for World War II Veterans very recently and we had 1800 Vets and their families down in York – not all of them were my constituents – but, I'm a Veteran. I served two years; after I got out of college, I was drafted. So, I value the time that Veterans gave to their Country. I especially admire the “Greatest Generation” who fought in World War II [1939-1945], and my York County Representatives allowed me to be the final speaker at this recent ceremony. At that time, I mentioned one thing that I was very proud of; a group of Veterans came to me and said, “We were trying to raise, on our own, enough money on our own to build an amphitheater at Indiantown Gap Military Reservation at the National Cemetery, and we raised a lot of money, but we're short.

We're a million dollars short. Can you do anything about it?" And, in my capacity as Chairman of the Central Pennsylvania Republican Caucus, I let them speak to the Caucus and the Caucus took the position that we wanted a million dollars in the next budget dedicated to completing the amphitheater at the Military Reservation. So now, any Veteran that's buried at the Military Reservation has an outdoor, beautiful amphitheater that would not be there had it not been for the Central Pennsylvania Republican Caucus approaching our leaders and the Governor and saying, "We want a million dollars to complete this amphitheater." So, I'm very proud of that. I'm very proud of other bills, but that's the one that comes to mind immediately.

HM: Since you've indicated that you'll be retiring at the end of this term, is there any legislation that you'd like to see passed before you leave?

BS: (*laugh*) It ties in with what we've said; my top priority at this time is the hunting license increase. And, that's always a tough sell because any increase, whether it's a hunting license, a fishing license, any increase is viewed as a tax increase. So that despite the need; it's tough to get votes. That's why it took four years for the last hunting license increase. So, that's my number one priority and I will try very hard for that accomplishment in my final months of office. The sad reality is that if I do not succeed, whoever takes over as Chairman, whether it's a Republican or a Democrat, they will have to do something about the finances of the Game Commission. Sure the Game Commission can cut expenses, but they are in dire financial straits; [they] need the increase and will have to be addressed next term, if not this year, if I'm unsuccessful.

The other thing that really has to be done is that both the Game Commission and the Fish and Boat Commission don't receive any money from the State; nothing. Other States have other methods of income. For instance, one State has a fraction onto the sales tax on sporting goods that could be used for the Game Commission or Fish and Boat Commission. They need some additional funding besides license increases. *(cough)*

Excuse me.

HM: You served during Republican leadership and Democratic leadership in the House. Explain any difficulties you've had in serving constituents under the different leaderships. Considerable differences?

BS: The best example I can give you as a majority Chairman for 12 years; when bills come to my Committee, if I like them, I bring them up for a vote; if I don't like them, they're dead. So, it's much more rewarding and powerful if you're in the majority. When you're in the minority you do not control the agenda. And I've had that experience time after time, so that the votes that you put up on issues that the majority Party, in that case the Democrats, want to address. I have to tell you that sometimes, I have gone contrary to my leadership's desires. The one issue that comes to mind that I rarely have talked about that I'm proud of is, back when the Democrats were in control, they wanted to pass legislation that would prevent Pennsylvania from dealing with South Africa because of their Apartheid practices and penalize – *(cough)* excuse me – and penalize Pennsylvania corporations if they dealt with companies that dealt with South Africa because of their Apartheid practices. And, Republicans were supposed to oppose the

Democrats on that and specifically – I can still visualize the tally board; I was one of, maybe, two Republicans that voted with the Democrats that got that Apartheid issue to be part of the law, and of course, South Africa has changed its policy since then, but I was voting with the Democrats then and I'll vote with the other Party if their issue is the right issue and if I believe it to be true.

HM: Do you have any favorite stories you'd like to share of the House floor?

BS: Oh, you could go through a lot of stories. A number of them come to mind. Probably three come to mind that I'll try to abbreviate, but, I remember when K. Leroy Irvis [State Representative, Allegheny County, 1959-1988; Speaker, 1977-78, 1983-1988] was Speaker. At one time – and to acquaint our viewers with the reality of it, bills aren't scheduled for votes until leaders feel they have all the votes that they need, and then they'll schedule a bill for a vote and expect it to pass. Despite the debate, they'll expect it to pass – and one time, K. Leroy Irvis called a bill up for a vote, and it might have been a tax increase vote, I can't remember what the issue was. But, it became obvious that he didn't have the votes that he expected and suddenly, the board malfunctioned. The board went blank, he said it malfunctioned, and we were done voting for the day. Now, I have to tell you the Republicans did that one time; I can't remember the issue, but it happened to the Republicans also. It's another example of the power of the majority. The other story that I remember quite vividly, because, being a former educator, I cared a lot about vouchers and opposed vouchers. So, our leadership scheduled a voucher vote to determine whether vouchers would be legal in Pennsylvania

or not. And it was a priority of Governor Ridge [Thomas; Pennsylvania Governor, 1995-2001]. And he called a number of Republican members into his office and said, “I want you to vote for vouchers. And if you do vote for vouchers there will be some benefits for you in your legislative district.” So that they called the Voucher Bill up for a vote and – another fact that John Q. Public doesn’t always understand is when a bill is called up for a vote in the House, the rule says it can stay up there for 10 minutes, and that gives the various leaders a chance to go around and try to convince members why they should change their votes. And that’s the derivation of the word “whip,” both the Majority Whip and the Minority Whip but, thankfully, they don’t use whips anymore – so, the voucher vote went up and it was short. And it was up there long enough that those of us that cared could copy down the names and people in gallery who cared, could copy down the names of the people who were voting for or against vouchers. And suddenly, that vote was stricken for some reason and never recorded. And what that means is that if you look in the House Records you can never find who voted for or against vouchers. Governor Ridge was very displeased that that did not pass, but the fact is, vouchers never did officially pass in Pennsylvania. And as a former educator and a person who thought vouchers are unconstitutional – and I do believe they are unconstitutional – I was happy about that. So, again, it’s another example of what you can do when you have the power of the majority.

HM: What aspect of your job as a House member did you like the most?

BS: Obviously, I love people contact. I’ve often said and I firmly believe that teaching

prepared me for the Legislature. Not only do nearly all of my students and their parents vote for me time after time, but I've often said that when I would go into a classroom, and the classroom is 20 kids, there's one or two kids that I could never, never please; I could never satisfy, and maybe two or three that hated me. Politics is like that; I can never, never please everybody. So that was good preparation for politics. Another fact that I'm very proud of is that my last election two years ago – it was a Presidential election year – when I got the results I had, I thought, about 75 percent of the vote and I was very disappointed with that because four years ago, I got 80 percent of the vote. Later on I learned that when you compared all the Republican Representatives in the State that had Democratic opposition – I had 76 percent of the vote – I had the highest percentage in the entire State, with the Republicans who had Democratic opponents. So, I was very, very proud of that fact. I think [what] I enjoyed the most; constituent service. I love helping people and that's one of the reasons why I moved from being a Township Supervisor where I was working with 12,000 people, to being a State Representative where I served 60 to 70,000 people. And there's nothing I loved more than when a constituent would come with a really bad problem [and] solving it for them. There were all kinds of rewarding situations that I could talk for hours about. One comes to mind; I had a man who was a farmer who started coming to my town meetings, probably five years ago. There was a dam that should have been removed that was malfunctioning that was washing out his farmland and causing problems and flooding on his farmland. It took six years to solve that problem. Just this year he called my office and said, "They removed the dam." And, that's the kind of thing I'm very proud of. I can think of a lot

of situations where I've done that for constituents and that's just as important to me as lawmaking.

HM: Was there any aspect you did not like?

BS: There are a number of aspects I did not like. Probably, you have to mention the pay raise. You have to mention that because what happened after the pay raise was quite predictable, in that the media never let the issue go; day after day after day after day. So that it's difficult if you make a mistake, and the pay raise was a mistake. But, it's difficult for people to forgive and some people will never forgive the pay raise vote and it's obvious with the [Primary] election, which was yesterday, that some legislators paid the price for the pay raise vote. I'm very comfortable with retiring because; number one, I'm 72 years old; number two, I have 26 years as a legislator, 22 years in the classroom, 2 years in the Army – I have 50 years of public service – and, it is time for a new generation. But, I loved my job as a State Representative, I loved teaching, I didn't love the Army – but, two out of three isn't bad.

HM: In 26 years what do you think has changed the most about the House of Representatives?

BS: There are some interesting aspects that John Q. Public doesn't think about in the House. The first thing that comes to mind isn't a pleasant thing, but it's a good thing. My first couple of terms up here there was more partying and drinking in the House and at

our legislative affairs than you have now. Now, you go around the House and the Senate [and] there's very little alcohol available. It used to be much more prevalent my first two years, maybe my first four years. I think that's a great aspect of changes that have occurred. Another fact that most people don't think of, is there's a difference between the camaraderie between those of us, like me, who go home to bed every night. Those in York County and Cumberland County and within a 50 mile radius aren't stuck here in Harrisburg Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday – it's more like Sunday, Monday, Tuesday and then they head home Wednesday, but if there's a Committee meeting they have to stay Thursday – those members are closer to one another because they have to be; they're stuck here and they don't have their homes right here in Harrisburg. A fact that most constituents don't realize and the public doesn't realize is that those of us close to Harrisburg have to go to event after event after event, day after day and night after night, even if we're in voting session. A guy from Pittsburgh or Erie or Philadelphia when their constituents have an event Monday, Tuesday or Wednesday – well, Monday or Tuesday – can't be there, because they're in Harrisburg. I had an individual who was considering running as my replacement and when he saw my schedule, he decided against running because it's demanding. And not only that, I'm very conscientious about; one, my attendance in Harrisburg; two, I try to meet every school group that comes to Harrisburg, as I did today, I met and was photographed with each Elementary School in the Dillsburg area; three, I go to every Eagle Scout ceremony and every single Gold Scout ceremony, and they're on Saturdays and Sundays. So, that you're busy all the time, especially when you're close to the Capitol. And those individuals who are farther away from the Capitol spend more time together because they have to. We're a different breed and, therefore,

we being those closer to the Capitol, we have some camaraderie too, but its home each night to our own beds.

HM: How would you like to be remembered?

BS: I'd like to be remembered as a conscientious legislator; a caring legislator. One who loved my job and loved my constituents and, despite all that, my wife is really looking forward to my retirement.

HM: Well, upon retirement, do you have any plans?

BS: We plan to travel. It's the old story; we have kids and grandkids. I'm very proud of both. We have a daughter who graduated from Penn State and is now a member of the PGA [Professional Golfer's Association]. She's working as an assistant head golf pro on Maui, in Hawaii, and she won't be coming back to Pennsylvania, so I guess we'll have to visit her. She's married to another golf pro who's employed at the next course up from my daughter; he's at Wailea, in Maui. Our other daughter graduated from Chaminade University of Honolulu. Our younger daughter followed her to Hawaii. But, Rhonda married a Japanese man who speaks three languages. [He] Was immediately transferred to Italy, so both our grandchildren were born in Italy, then he was transferred back to Japan and now they're in New York City. I think he'll go back to Japan – his company moves him about every five years – but, he wants to go to London then. So, we plan to travel and enjoy each other's company. The sad reality of the wife of a legislator or the

spouse of a legislator is they spend a lot of time home alone, so Pat's enthralled with my retirement and we're both looking forward to it.

HM: Great. Lastly, do you have any advice for any new Members coming in?

BS: Yes, of course I do. Yes. Number one, stay involved with your District; learn the District; learn the needs of the District and enjoy the job. I've always said when I was teaching and preparing kids to go out into the workforce, if you don't like your job, get out of it. You have to like what you're doing, and I would advise any new Members, try to be conscientious and go to as many events as you can, but enjoy your job. But if you find you're not enjoying it then let somebody else take over. I've stayed on for 26 years because I've enjoyed it and I love people and I loved to help people. And that's the key to Harrisburg and to a long career for a legislator; you have to like what you're doing. Have meetings with constituents in your areas, learn what your District needs, and just plain do your best.

HM: Thank you very much. This concludes our interview today.

BS: Thank you. Thank you for asking me.