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ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

INTERVIEW WITH:

The Honorable Ronald Raymond (R)

162nd District

Delaware County

1985-2008

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Jesse Teitelbaum (JT): Good afternoon. I am sitting here with Ron Raymond, a Republican from the 162nd District of Delaware County and who represented that district from 1985 to 2008. Thank you for being with me here today.

The Honorable Ronald Raymond (RR): Glad to be here.

JT: What I'd like to do is start out by asking you about your background, your family life, and your education.

RR: Okay, I grew up in a small town, Sharon Hill Borough, which was a town of about seven thousand people, and back in that time, in that era, which is about 5,000 people now, and basically, I have an older brother who was always interested in politics, who got me interested in politics, and he obviously was the smarter one of the two because he got me to get out and run for office and get involved much more than he did. But, my parents weren't involved in politics, but my brother and I both enjoyed it, got involved in Young Republicans at an early age, and I started running for office, probably, my early 20s, for committeeman. Ran for borough council when I was 23 years old, got elected, took office when I was 24, and been running ever since. And so, that's something that's been in my blood for a long time, and I just really, really enjoyed it. All I ever wanted to be was a borough councilman. I thought that would be a really neat thing, and that led to a career in politics. So, 33 years later, here I am finishing my 24th year as a State Legislator. Interesting stuff.

JT: Yeah. Were there any influences that shaped you to be a Republican?

RR: Yeah, basically, I come from an area, Delaware County, which has always been a Republican stronghold, and [if] you grow up in Delaware County, you're a Republican, and my parents were Republican, so we're Republicans. The city was always Democrat, so the suburban counties are always, traditionally, were Republican counties, so that's how that basically came about. So, that's why I'm a Republican because we have pretty good organization in Delaware County over the years and is probably one of the better organizations throughout my 33 years in politics in the State in terms of being Republican and working hard at it.

JT: Great. You mentioned that you were already on Borough Council in Sharon Hill.

RR: Yes.

JT: What led you to the House of Representatives versus another office?

RR: An interesting thing. I grew up in Sharon Hill and got involved in politics, and I got married when I was 20. We moved a block out of Sharon Hill to Folcroft Borough, which is the next town over. Sharon Hill and Folcroft Boroughs go to the same high school, Sharon Hill High School, so I knew a lot of people from Folcroft. I actually got elected to Borough Council in Folcroft first. Moved there in [19]72, got elected in [19]75. I only lived there three years, but that's the time when I found out that if you go out and knock on all the doors and meet all the people, you can win an election, and here I was a three year newcomer at age 23 in Folcroft Borough, I went out and knocked on every door in town, and because I had gone to high school

with a lot of kids from Folcroft, I had some kind of commonality with the family. I said, “Oh, I went to school with your son,” or “your daughter,” and I actually led the ticket when I ran in 1975. I remember I got 1,902 votes. I remember it like it was yesterday, and I learned at that point in time, that if you go out and work hard enough and meet the voters and form some kind of bond with them, you will win an election. And got elected in [19]75, served midpoint through [19]76, bought a house in Sharon Hill, moved back to Sharon Hill, and resigned from Borough Council. So, I had to start all over again, but I did, and I got back involved in Sharon Hill. Got on Borough Council in 1977 – I got appointed in [19]77, elected in [19]79. I got elected mayor in [19]81 at age 29, which was pretty good. So, it was just a progression of events happening, and then I was interested in the legislative seat, and this is an interesting story; Delaware County had a group of people known as the War Board who ran the Delaware County Republican Party, and the guy from my district who was our leader, Joe Dorsey [State Representative, Delaware County, 1967-1974], who was also Clerk of Courts in the courthouse and was a power in the county, he was our political boss, so to speak. So, I went to lunch with him. I said, “Look, I hear that our current State Rep[resentative]¹ is not going to run for office again, and I’m interested in running.” He said, “Well, my mayor, Frank Kelly [Mayor of Collingdale, 1971-2010] is interested in running, and,” you know, “what do you think about that?” I said, “Well, Frank Kelly wants to run,” without missing a beat, “he’s been mayor and put in more time than I have. He’s paid his dues. If he wants to run, I’m for him,” and Dorsey said, “Well, if he doesn’t run, I’m for you then,” and we shook on it. Well, unfortunate circumstances happened, and Frank Kelly decided he couldn’t run for mayor [Representative]. Dorsey calls me up and said, “Frank can’t run. You’re my candidate,” and just like that I became, at age 29, age 30, well, 31

¹ Gerald J. Spitz, State Representative, Delaware County, 1979-1984.

at the time, I became the candidate of Joe Dorsey and the Republican Party in that district, and the rest is history.

JT: Nice. Did you enjoy campaigning?

RR: I've always enjoyed campaigning. I've always enjoyed knocking on doors, meeting people, listening to them, you know, talking with them. That's one of the things that's really key and important to being successful in politics. You have to go out and meet the people, see what's on their minds, see what they're doing, how they feel about things, and that's a key element to any level in politics, whether it's borough council, the mayor, or state representative.

JT: Oh boy. Did it get easier as it went along?

RR: Yeah, it did, actually, and, you know, the first time I ran I knocked on about 10,000 doors, and basically, I did it mostly by myself, you know, because back in those days there were no BlackBerry's². There were no computers. There were no great street lists. There were no high tech help to be available for you, and it was all just knocking on doors and, and hustling around. Fortunately for me, we had a pretty good organization of committee people in all the precincts, so I'd have people go with me a lot of the time, but half the time I was by myself, and it worked pretty well.

JT: Wow.

² The Blackberry is a wireless hand-held device which supports conventional telephone coverage, text messaging, internet service, faxing and other wireless services.

RR: Now, the guy who was in there before me, Jerry Spitz, had it four terms, eight years. He had just beaten the last guy by 800 votes in his fourth reelection effort. The guy who almost beat him was running again for the Democrats, George McCluskey, who was a borough councilman in Norwood Borough and much older than me and had all the labor support and union support, which was significant in my district, and they just assumed that he was going to win. It was a Presidential election year, which typically bodes not real good for Republicans in that area of the state, because the votes more Democrats come out. And they just thought he was going to win, and I just went out and outworked him, and I had one other fortunate event happen that year; Ronald Reagan [President of the United States, 1981-1989] was running for President, and Ronald Raymond was running for State Representative. The confusion of the names and the similarities didn't hurt me at all, so I ended up winning pretty handily. I think it was probably about 55-45, so it was a pretty good win, and from that point on, it was relatively easier to win the elections after that.

JT: Describe for me the 162nd District in both geography and constituents.

RR: Over the time it's changed. At one point we started at the Philadelphia border and had Darby, Colwyn, Sharon Hill, Folcroft, Collingdale, Glenolden, Norwood, Prospect Park, Tinicum, and now we had Ridley Park and part of Ridley Township, so it's a stretch along the riverfront in Delaware County, from Philadelphia to almost Chester City. So, we're really the riverfront sandwiched between Philadelphia and Chester, and it's a middle class, blue collar area of a lot of union members in there, significant minority population, always 15 to 25 percent,

depending upon how it was reapportioned and stuff, and has been pretty stable that way the whole time I've been there and actually my whole life. I've lived between Sharon Hill and Ridley Park my whole life. I've been on the riverfront 57 years, and it's pretty stable that way, so it hasn't changed dramatically. The economic and social strata doesn't change a lot. Lower middle class to middle class, and that's pretty much it. We don't have a whole lot of extremely poor, we don't have a whole lot of wealthy people, but it's stable, and it's been very good that way. From my perspective, it's less susceptible to the political ebb and flow that you see in other districts. So, it's just a stable, solid area of hardworking people who are the salt of the earth and the backbone of this nation.

JT: What were some of the issues that were important to the constituents of your district?

RR: Always, and from the beginning until today, the important issues are always economic development, jobs, infrastructure, tax reform, supporting the schools because, you know, we're not the kind of folks who send our kids to private schools, but we had the parochial schools there for most of my life, and we had a lot of kids go to parochial schools. One of mine did, one didn't, but they're the issues. They're the key, you know, bread and butter issues that are important to people, pocketbook issues, and they were issues back 24 years ago when I started. They're still issues today. Quality of life, you know, security, safety, police, fire, and the interesting part about my district is I have 12 volunteer fire companies in nine towns, and we have all volunteer fire companies, and they're the salt of the earth, and one of my favorite stump speeches always is; the fabric of the community is made up of a couple things; your fire departments that are all volunteers, your police departments, your home and school associations

in the parochial school and in the public school, your churches, and the people in the public service in the community and your youth clubs, your athletic associations. That's the fabric of, of the community. That's what makes it a great place to live and raise a family, and that's always been things that I've tried to support over my years. If you look at all the grants and funding I was trying to get and have gotten, a large portion of it went to support those issues, and they're very good.

JT: Good. I read an article that came out in January of 2008 that described you as the "consummate constituent services Representative." Do you agree with that?

RR: I'm darn proud of that, absolutely. I think that's – I always said that I am there to be the advocate for my district, and I am there to help my neighbors get whatever help they need with whatever problem they have, and that, from the beginning, I told my staff, I said, "Anybody walks in that door we help them. I don't care if they're Republican, Democrat, nonpartisan, not voting, whatever. If they're from our district, we help them. If they're from outside the district and it's something easy we can help them with, help them or direct them to the right person," and from the beginning we've always done that, and we've been very, very successful. That aspect is the key thing for me. The other aspect is they say bringing home the bacon, and I've been extraordinarily good at getting funding for my district on all kinds of different levels and different projects, and that's what you're all about. That's what you're supposed to do.

JT: Right. Getting back to 1985; how was your first Swearing-In Ceremony? Were you nervous? Was the building overwhelming?

RR: I feel embarrassed to admit that I had never been to Harrisburg prior to running for this office, and the first time I came up before the election to meet some groups that were looking about endorsing or supporting me, it was just awe-inspiring to come up here, and when you see the building, it's just absolutely phenomenal, and I must say even to today I still get a thrill riding into the Capitol and taking a look at the dome and everything. It's just a neat place to work, it's a really great place to visit, and I encourage everybody to do that. But from that point on, and there was just – overwhelming is the word I guess you would use for the first Swearing-In. I think it's a cross between being at your own viewing with all the flowers and the pomp and circumstance, and everybody's dressed up, and there's flowers everywhere, just to being just overwhelmed that you are part of something that's a very historical place and the longest-serving Legislature in this country. It's just a neat thing to do, and every Swearing-In, all 12 of them have been special. All 12 of them have been just awe-inspiring in terms of, you know, reminding you of what you're here to do, and you're representing 60,000 people, and it's been good. It's been good.

JT: Do you remember who sat around you on that first Session?

RR: Yeah, Delaware County, I mentioned before, we're a pretty tight organization, and we always hung together as a delegation, and back in those days I sat next to – Steve Freind [State Representative, Delaware County, 1975-1992] was on the House Floor back in the day, who's been gone for a while but is well-known for being a abortion activist, anti-abortion activist. He wrote a book, actually, while he was sitting on the House Floor, got published. He was there.

Mario Civera [State Representative, Delaware County, 1981-2010], Nick Micozzie [Nicholas; State Representative, Delaware County, 1979-present], who are still here today, and they're still going forward, they got reelected, were on the Floor and just a group around us. The Del[aware] Co[unty] people have always been close. Tom Gannon [Thomas; State Representative, Delaware County, 1979-2006] was there. Mary Ann Arty [State Representative, Delaware County, 1979-1990], Bob Wright [Robert; State Representative, Delaware County, 1981-1992] sat next to me, who represented Chester who was the only African-American Republican on the House Floor from Chester City. He sat next to me for a number of years, and he became a judge in Delaware County. You know, always a close-knit group and we always worked as a unit, because we had discipline back home. We had political discipline. We took care of Delaware County first, the state second, and we worked well together. And Matt Ryan [Matthew J.; State Representative, Delaware County, 1965-2003; Speaker, 1981-1982 and 1995-2003], of course, was here when I got here and served until he died. Was Speaker of the House and was, more or less, the den father of the group and always kept us in line and in tow, which was a good thing to have someone like that around with that experience and knowledge.

JT: Was there someone that you latched onto, say, as a mentor?

RR: You know, Matt always looked out for all of us pretty well, and everybody looked after each other. It wasn't one particular person or anything, but I got pretty friendly with Mario and Micozzie and those guys, again, and we all pretty much stuck together and had, not only the people here, but we had Senator Bell [Clarence D.; State Representative, Delaware County, 1955-1960; State Senator, 1961-2002] and Senator Loeper [F. Joseph. Jr.; State Senator, 1979-

2000], and if there was ever a mentor for me, Senator Bell was the mentor who was the longest serving Member of the Legislature ever, and when he died in office as a Senator, he, of all people, used to really spend time and effort with me and gave me a lot of good pointers and a lot of suggestions and just did it in such a nice way. He was a guy who was a Swarthmore College graduate, Harvard Law School, retired General from the National Guard, and a State Senator who was just a totally class act, but he was great, Joe Loeper was great and Matt Ryan. So, we had people who were significant players in the game up here from the county who we could go to and look to for help.

JT: Do you think that you became a mentor to anyone?

RR: Yeah, I pretty much tried to do the same thing for new Members in our delegation as people did for me. When Steve Barrar [State Representative, Delaware County, 1997-present] got nominated and got elected, he and I became good friends and I worked with him a lot. And an interesting story – and Tom Killion [State Representative, Delaware County, 2003-present] got elected, and Tom Killion, Steve Barrar, and myself grew up within a mile and a half of each other in Delaware County in my district. Those two grew up in Glenolden, I was in Sharon Hill, which was separated by one town, and didn't know each other growing up, but a mile and a half apart and, you know, maybe three years apart age-wise – pretty close – and we all end up in the Legislature here together, which is an interesting story. From the lower end of Delaware County, and it's a neat story and we've been good friends and worked well together. Bill Adolph [State Representative., Delaware County, 1989-present] from Springfield's another one. We all sort-of knew each other from back home because we were all involved politically in our municipalities

and stuff, but when we get up here as Legislators, you have a bond, and I've roomed with Barrar and Bill Adolph for 10, 15 years.

JT: Wow.

RR: It'll be 24, so spent a lot of time together up here, which is a good thing. You get to, you get to know people that way, and we had Tim Hennessey [State Representative, Chester County, 1993-present] from Chester County with us, and George Kenney [State Representative, Philadelphia County, 1985-2008] was a frequent visitor who got elected when I did 24 years ago, actually, so interesting stuff. Yep.

JT: Yes, I'll say. Over the years you served on a number of Committees: Intergovernmental Affairs, Liquor Control.

RR: Right.

JT: Did you have a favorite?

RR: My favorite has actually been Liquor Control Committee, from the perspective of that it's a exciting, fun Committee to be on, and, and I'll tell you, another reason it's fun is the Democrat Chair of Liquor Committee is Bob Donatucci [State Representative, Philadelphia County, 1990-present], and Bob's been here longer than I have, and he's been on Liquor longer than I was, but Bob Donatucci and Ron Raymond's districts meet in the middle of the airport, and the border of

Philadelphia's in the middle of the Philadelphia International Airport, so our districts meet there. We had adjoining districts. He's a Democrat, I'm Republican. We got on the Liquor Committee together, or actually, he was there before me. I became Chairman, and we worked so well together on Liquor and issues regarding that, that he and I did a Committee to study the Philadelphia International Airport and transportation entities, and he and I were Co-Chair of that Committee as well and worked well together, and, and the last six years have been a lot of fun because of working with Bob, and he's a neighbor down there. We've become good friends, and we take the bipartisanship to a high level in that we always did what we thought was right, and we always did it together. We never had arguments or words with each other. We never undercut each other, and it's been a really good relationship.

JT: Great. Speaking of the airline flights, I was going to ask you; you were involved with that –

RR: Yes.

JT: – recently. Is there an update to that? Has that been resolved?

RR: Yeah, we're still fighting that. The thing that's going on – the International Airport's two-thirds in Delaware County, but it's owned by the city of Philadelphia. The FAA [Federal Aviation Administration] is a Federal Agency that we have no control over that, that is trying to implement a program that would cause over flights over residential areas of not only my district in Delaware County, but also in New Jersey, and at a much lower altitude, at a much quicker pace than they do now. Now there's just takeoff, go down the river until they're at 10,000 feet,

and then they can fan out. They wanted to change it so that they can take off and at 3,000 feet fan out, which over top of schools and hospitals and residential areas and just, you know, wildlife sanctuaries; all kinds of bad things. We're opposed to that. We've been fighting it for a long time. The airport's been trying to expand into Delaware County and take homes in Tincum Township, which is one of my townships, and we've been fighting that. We don't want the Airport to take more homes and more property in Delaware County. I'm not a proponent of having more increased flights out of Philadelphia International Airport. I'd like to see the flights stopped at where they're at and make the airport more efficient and look for other avenues. So, for 24 years I've been fighting the fight on behalf of Tincum Township and my district about over flights and encroachment by the airport and the good neighborly policy that the Airport should have that they hadn't had for a long time, that they're getting back to under Mayor Nutter, and it's been a big fight. Now we did it, took it up on a local level. All my municipalities have fought the FAA. The county has, the Legislators, Donatucci, Raymond, everybody has, and we got involved with Congressman Sestak [Joseph; U.S. Representative, 2007-present] and Congressman Andrews [Robert E.; U.S. Representative, 1989-present] who's New Jersey. Senator Specter's [Arlen; U.S. Senator, 1981-present] involved. Everybody from them on down is involved fighting the FAA, and we're making a lot of progress. I have to give a lot of credit to Rob Andrews and Joe Sestak for taking it up and continuing to fight in Washington [DC] where they can really hurt them in terms of their finances and budgeting and what's going on down there, so they're doing good. Specter's been really a champion following up with that stuff. So, the Airport's an interesting thing in the district in that it's the economic engine of the region. Tincum Township's a 4,400 person town that has 14,000 people come to work there every day and mostly Airport-related businesses, who pay income tax to Tincum Township. A lot of

people in Tinicum and my district work at the Airport or in Airport-related businesses, so we want to keep the Airport vibrant and working and doing well, but we also want to protect the integrity of the quality of life of the neighborhoods. So, it's a fine line, but I think we've done a pretty good job up till now, and I'm sure Nick Miccarelli [State Representative, Delaware County, 2009-present], my successor, who's worked on those issues with me, and the people in the office will continue to do that.

JT: Great. Well, over 20 years you were involved with a number of pieces of legislation. What were some that were very important to you, whether as a prime sponsor or just indirectly related?

RR: Well, in the ones that I particularly did myself that became law, I think the best thing I ever did was the Do Not Call lists. The Do Not Call legislation was mine, and for once Pennsylvania, which is never known as a cutting edge Legislature or a cutting edge state, in terms of legislating anything, we were one of the first states in the country to pass the Do Not Call legislation, which prevented people from calling into your home unless you wanted to be called, and we got that done, and it was, you know, huge. If you remember back to the day when you could sit down at the dining room table for dinner with having five, ten phone calls; we got that done. The Feds followed and did the Federal Do Not Call list after us, so that was the most successful and the best thing I did in terms of legislating. A couple other things I'm relatively proud of that we worked on; we did the Sellers' Disclosure list. If you sell real estate, you have to fill out a form that tell – you have to let the people know, who are buying it, any defects in the property that you're aware of. So that if somebody buys a house and finds out later there was major defects in the electrical system or they find things, and then there's some recourse to go back on. What

used to happen is that you buy a house; you didn't know these things [and] you ended up suing the realtor. You end up suing the people you bought the house from and everybody involved. So, now there's a Seller Disclosure law that requires you to disclose defects in the property, which I thought was a good thing. I also did a bill that established the Pennsylvania Business Resource Center. Back when Tom Ridge [Governor of Pennsylvania, 1995-2001] came into office, Chick Tulli [Frank J.; State Representative, Dauphin County, 1991-2002], who's a retired Legislator at this point, and myself were working on some ideas in economic development, and Pennsylvania didn't have a Pennsylvania Business Resource Center that brought all the state Chambers of Commerce's and State – every county has their own little economic development – brought them all together in one office in Harrisburg that will work together not just to market Delaware County or to market Dauphin County, but to market Pennsylvania as a whole and to try to promote to a company out there to, “Come to Pennsylvania. Whatever you need, we have.” So, we established the first Pennsylvania Business Resource Center offices here in Harrisburg, and Governor Ridge was involved in that very much, and we got that done and went forward and did a pretty good thing in terms of supporting economic development and getting things going. So, they were three of the things that I think were the key pieces of legislation I was involved in. We did a whole host of liquor legislation in the last six years, Representative Donatucci and myself, opening the system up; Sunday sales, better store hours, premium stores, all kinds of nice things to improve the system, and we think has gone a long way, and we're happy to do all that stuff. We got more liquor legislation done in the last six years than I think they had in 25, 30 years, because we worked together on it, and it made sense. And we had Jonathan Newman as the head of the LCB [Liquor Control Board] at the time who was very,

very cooperative and now PJ Stapleton [Patrick J; State Senator, 1969-2000], another very cooperative leader, and it's been a good working relationship.

JT: You also served on the Consumer Committee for over ten years.

RR: Consumer Affairs Committee has always been of interest to me from the perspective that it dealt with the telecom industry. It dealt with the electric, you know, electric power industry and all consumer related issues, and I always thought that was an important issue for my district and something that was interesting as well. So, I spent a lot of time on that Committee and was, you know, involved in electric deregulation, power plants, stranded costs, just the telecom thing, the movement from, you know, your landline in your house to your cell phones, to Blackberries, all that kind of stuff. It's just been fascinating to be a part of that, and it's been interesting to be working on those issues.

JT: Not any particular Committee in general, but how was working in the Committees? Was, was it fun? Was it exciting? Was it all just work and busy?

RR: You know, I tell people back home. I said, you know, "My job's broken up into two different jobs." One, back in the district is this constituent service outreach. I go out and meet with, you know, fire companies, American Legion Posts. I go to schools. I go anywhere people want to talk to me. I had a town meeting in every town every year, and I invited the whole town to the town meeting, and you do that back there, and you take care of people's needs and wants. You come up here, and you serve on Committees where you look at issues that impact the good

of the whole, and the Consumer Affairs Committee was great, Liquor Committee was great, a number of these Committees, and they specialize in what you're looking at, and it was always interesting, always fun. The politics stopped on Election Day for the most part. People think, oh, you're R[epublican] and D[emocrat], and you fight all the time. When you get up here, it's more regionalized, and people tend to gravitate to each other when they have interest in issues, and the R[epublican] and D[emocrat] stuff goes out the window, and on Consumer Affairs Committee we've always worked, you know – of course, 12 years in the minority, 12 years in the majority, I had. Or, you know, maybe like 12 years, ten years, and two more years in the minority, so 14 minority, ten years in majority was a pretty good run. So, you get to see both sides of the coin, but usually, we work well together no matter who's in the majority, and most issues are decided on a regional aspect. Urban issues, suburban issues, and rural issues; three different groups, and it really breaks down that way. So, it's interesting from that perspective, but Committees are where you get the detail, and you get, get to know the things that you want to know about if you want to work at it. Some people want to work at it. Some people don't want to work at it. One thing Matt Ryan told me when I came up here, he said, "Look," he said, "pick one or two things and become an expert at them, and you'll be a player up here, and you can do some good. If you just want to be an inch deep and a mile wide," he said, "you'll be able to vote on everything, but you won't be an impact player," and he was absolutely right. Good point.

JT: Yeah. What kind of obstacles are there when trying to get some of your legislation passed?

RR: Well, a couple obstacles are if you're in the minority, you're not going to get, for the most part, get bills brought up and become law, so you have to do it in amendment fashion. You have

to amend your idea into a bill that becomes law, and then you can take the credit for it. And [when] you're majority, you can get the bill done in, in the form or fashion you want to get it done in, and that's one obstacle that you really – it's a majority party controls the flow of legislation, whose bill gets brought up, and of course, you want your own Party to have the bragging rights – excuse me – for whatever gets done. That's one obstacle. The other obstacle up here has always been it's a seniority kind of place. When you're a freshman or you're second-termer, you know, you can't get a lot done because senior members get the sway. Rarely do you see people who are newer Members get out on the forefront of an issue and carry the ball across the finish line, so they're the two biggest obstacles to it, but I submit that anybody wants to come work hard enough at something and get involved and, and make themselves a part of things, you can, whether you're a freshman, whether you're a senior Member, whatever. If you want to work at it, you can be a player. That's changed over the years. It used to be you didn't get a chance, and now you can get a chance, and it's more open system in terms of getting your ideas out there.

JT: Yeah. What do you think is the toughest or hardest issue that's before the Legislature today?

RR: I think the toughest issue, right as we speak; the toughest issue now are economic issues in terms of the economy's slowed down. We're in a recession, sort-of. Revenue's not coming in to meet the budget we passed last year. There's going to be a short fall, and it always revolves around taxes and requests for money. There's always more requests than we have, and you got to pare it back. Under Ridge, Governor Ridge, I think, caught a really good wave in that we had

pretty good economic times and every year we had surpluses, and every year, at least my memory's not failing me, we used to get the budget done in April or May. Never went to June, we always had a surplus, and we always spent more money, and it was great. And if you're a Governor or Legislature, you get lucky as how the economy is. A lot of things you can't – we can't drive the economy, and I don't think a President can, either, but you can do some things, but you get lucky at times, and we were lucky then. We're unlucky now in that it's a bad economy. Money's not coming in. Jobs are being cut. It's going to be difficult, and it's always the toughest issue. How much funding for the schools? How much funding for highways and mass transit? We didn't get to the point where we had thousands of bridges that need replacing because we kept paying attention over the years and spent money on them. We didn't. When times were tough, they cut those things. So, that's probably always the toughest thing to the budgeteering and figuring out what's going to happen.

JT: Over the years there's been a number of technological advancements with regards to the House specifically; laptops on the desks; there's been the PCN [Pennsylvania Cable Network], the live feed that people can see. Do you have an opinion on the modern technology that's in the House?

RR: Yeah, absolutely. I'm all for it. Actually, I had the opportunity seven, eight, nine years ago to serve on a Computer Committee here, which is a group of, of House Republicans who were interested in this stuff, and we – probably going back ten years, to be honest with you – we looked around the country to see what was going on. California was one of the first Legislatures to have laptops on the Floor and have a screen up where everything came up electronically, and

we went out and looked at that and got that implemented here and to get laptops for everybody and the high-tech stuff, and it really is, from ten years ago to now, it's taken off and is really good. So much more is available. Just like computers, I mean, there's so much information available it overwhelms you if you're not careful with it, but it makes you so much more efficient in terms of helping constituents. Twenty-four years ago I got elected. You had a desk, a typewriter, and a telephone. That was it. That was it, and it was, you know, in order to get something done you had to put it in the mail, send it to Harrisburg. They had to hand-carry it over, and it took forever. Now, things electronically, it's just wonderful and I think it's a good thing. I think it helps everybody be better Legislators and more in touch with the people. PCN, the guy who is the head of PCN happens to be a Norwood Delaware County guy who's from my district³. He's done a really good job working there and the head of it and does a good job. I think it's really a fortunate thing for the public to get a chance to see and hear what's going on. The unfortunate part for we Legislators is, once they put the cameras in, the debate doubled and tripled in terms of length. Everybody wants to get up and say something on the Floor so that people back home know that you're working on their behalf, and I had a neighbor who every, every week he said to me, "Hey, yeah, I didn't see you on TV this week. Aren't you working?" And, you know, I used to hear every week, and that's important. So, people do get up and talk a lot more. So, you have the good and the bad. You hear a lot of long-winded, meaningless talk up there, but you also give the public an access and an ability to see what's going on and happening, and when there's hot issues going on up there, you get a lot of viewership, and that's been a great thing.

JT: Did you have a good relationship with the media in your district?

³ Brian Lockman, President and CEO of Pennsylvania Cable Network.

RR: I always try to get along with the media because they can make or break you, and I pretty much got along pretty well with it, and I thought that the media as a whole was pretty fair over the years. They always didn't write the story I wanted, but they gave pretty fair coverage. Going back in the early part of my career, *Delaware County Daily Times* had a reporter up here, Hal Ellis, who reported up here, was up here every day, and, you know, he'd be on us every day and keep an eye on us and report back, and he did a really good job, and we could get in the paper a lot. They, you know, as things got cut back and streamlined and high-tech, they got rid of that, and now they just do the normal high-tech stuff, and they pick up, you know, feed from different groups. But, if you work it, you can get in the news. If you put out the press releases and do the right thing, they give you coverage, and they've been pretty good. The biggest change, I think, is that we're sitting in the House Republican Studio doing this, and there was none of that before, so we determined long ago that if you depend on the media, especially in the Philadelphia media market where I'm at, you're not going to get enough coverage to make a difference, so you have to have your own media. So, we did newsletters. We did radio shows. We did TV shows that we sent out to our cable station – and the advent of cable TV's been huge, that we have access to cable channels to do shows to let the people know what's going on. Most school districts have school channels, and if you do something that's not political but is strictly a governmental, informative thing, they'll put it on the school channel. So, you get a lot of access, and it's been very good.

JT: Great.

RR: So, the changes are really good and the people that want to know what's going on in government can find out what's going on, and it's pretty open for everybody.

JT: Do you have a Web site?

RR: Web site, yep. Everybody has a Web site. Everybody's got, you know, I get more emails every day legislatively just direct to me, but then I also get it from my Web site as well, and on my Web site I had a online petition to stop the FAA from, you know, and I got thousands of people signed onto that, and it's been very effective in getting the message out and getting people engaged in issues like that. So, it's very good.

JT: Great.

RR: Absolutely.

JT: You mentioned off-camera earlier about playing some golf with some of the Members. How was the camaraderie among the Members?

RR: The camaraderie among the Members is really pretty good. Everybody pretty much gets along up here. You're up here enough, and you're up here two, three nights a week for a lot of weeks of the year, you get to know people, and R's and D's get along together, and it's, like I said, regional. You know, a lot of Pittsburgh guys and Allegheny County guys and gals hang out together, and the Philadelphia area guys, and we see each other out all the time and there's a lot

of events where we interact, and when they have different events that are sponsored by lobbying groups or associations and everybody gets together, and I have a lot of friends on both sides of the aisles. Ed Wojnaroski [State Representative, Cambria County, 1997-2008] from Johnstown. I'm not a good golfer. I never played it that much and didn't have a natural inclination to be good, but I played enough in outings and just for fun., yeah, but Ed Wojnaroski is one guy I played with on occasion, and a lot of us did that stuff when we could. Fun.

JT: You are on your last Session right now. Why did you choose to retire?

RR: You know, I always said to myself, "When I get up in the morning, and I don't want to go to work, and I'm not happy, and I don't feel like it's a fun thing to do anymore, I should stop." The middle of last year with all the acrimony up here and all the back-and-forth and the fighting and the rules changing and the nastiness, and the nastiness in the press and stuff, I got to saying, "You know what? This isn't fun anymore. I've had a good run. I've enjoyed it, and, and if I'm not 100 percent into it, I shouldn't be here." So, I gave myself till the end of the year, and I got to the end of the year in January. I decided that you know what? It's time to do something else, time to move on. I've had a good 24 years. Let me move on and do something else while I'm still young enough to do something and let somebody else get a shot at it, and that's what I decided to do.

JT: Will you stay involved in politics?

RR: I'm hoping I always – I just got done going through my district on sort-of a farewell tour at town meetings where I said, "Look, I'm not going to work for a county, state, or municipal government. I'm not going to run for office again. I will be John Q. Citizen voter out there, and that's what I'm going to do." I've had enough; 33 years of politics. My family's suffered enough, and when you do what I've done, you're not home at night, and you're not home on weekends, and you're out all the time, and it's about time that I stayed home for a while, and I don't want to be in politics, so to speak, but I, you know, have an interest in it, but I don't want to be that involved, no.

JT: Yeah. I like to ask the various Members if they have a story that they'd like to share, whether it's a funny story, a memorable story, a sad story, something that's personal to them that not many people would know about during your House term.

RR: Well, the thing I just mentioned to you about three kids from the same neighborhood growing up in Delaware County who, you know, Steve Barrar went to Interboro High School. Tommy Killion went to, I think he went to [Cardinal] O'Hara, or could have been Bonner – I'm not sure which – and I went to Sharon Hill High School, and just three kids ending up here and representing, you know, three districts in Delaware County is an interesting thing. I just did my, my Floor speech the other day, and I said – the Floor's broken up; 203 people sit there, and they're like little neighborhoods, and in my little neighborhood, I sit there with Barrar and Killion, or kids from my old neighborhood back home, and I sit in a row of Lancaster County Rep[resentative]s, and my wife's from Lancaster County, so they tolerated a Delaware County guy who votes labor and votes a lot more liberal than they do, but next to me was Gordon

Denlinger [State Representative, Lancaster County, 2003-present] who's from Lancaster County and nice guy; been a very good seat mate over the years. And behind me is Sam Rohrer [State Representative, Berks County, 1993-present] who sat next to me for one term and probably couldn't tolerate my votes versus his right-wing votes. Nice guy again, but they're brother-in-laws. Most people don't know that. I got one next to me [and] one behind me, and they're brother-in-laws sitting on the House Floor, and Sam Rohrer's from Berks County. A little story like that. I mean, that's an interesting thing most people don't know; two guys married to sisters, and – I think that's what it is – and sitting on the House Floor as brother-in-laws, and that's a neat thing. In front of us in the next row up is Scott Boyd [State Representative, Lancaster County, 2003-present] who's a House Member from Lancaster County, who grew up with my wife and her brother and her family and knows them very well, and, you know, another thing. So, another little wrinkle in the thing is that I've been pretty good friends with him because of the family ties. He's known my in-laws longer than I've known them. And there were neat little things that, that go on on the Floor that people don't know about and don't hear about, but as a whole, just working together and getting along together and getting to see people in a different light than political light is the fun thing, and, you know, they're all good people, and you really sit back, and I sit back on occasion – at least last year I have – looked around and said, “Boy, this really is a representative body of the whole Commonwealth; there's farmers, there's doctors, there's dentists, there's lawyers, there's schoolteachers, there's housewives.” Housewives are in there. There's – you name it, they're there, and it's a good mix and a good composite of everything and it really does do a good job in terms of representing the people.

JT: Yeah. After 24 years, how would you like your tenure to be remembered?

RR: Well, that the two things we mentioned earlier. Constituent services has always been number one. Taking care of your neighbor and taking care of people and treating people how you like to be treated yourself. Watchword number one. And the second thing was bringing home the resources and assets that I could bring back to the district to help my local governments and my fire companies and my police departments and my Boys' and Girls' Clubs and youth clubs have the available equipment and resources they need to be successful. And that's the two things that mean the most to me.

JT: Finally, do you have any advice for someone who would be interested in public service?

RR: Well, I could say the same thing; oh, absolutely get involved. I just, you know, like I said, I wanted to be a borough councilman because I just thought that was so interesting to be a part of the governing body that decided how fast the speed limit on your streets are and how often your trash is picked up and, you know, how much money you get for the youth clubs and the fire department and stuff like that and, just to get involved and see. Maybe you don't want to run for office. Maybe you don't want to be an elected official, but get involved and have your voice heard. Anybody who wants to get involved in this state and this, this country and express an opinion and work at something can be successful and can be a part of the mix. Don't be a part of the problem by sitting out there and criticizing all the time. Get involved and be a part of the solution, and it's easy to do. It's simple and I urge everybody to do it. It's just a great thing.

JT: Representative Ron Raymond, I'd like to thank you very much for participating in our Oral History program, and I wish you good luck in everything that comes from you.

RR: Thank you. I enjoyed it very much.

JT: Thank you.

RR: Thank you.