

PENNSYLVANIA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
BIPARTISAN MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

INTERVIEW WITH:

The Honorable Gaynor Cawley (D)

113th District

Lackawanna County

1981-2006

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY: Heidi Mays, House Archivist
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Transcribed by: Paul Scott

Heidi Mays (HM): Good morning.

The Honorable Gaynor Cawley (GC): Good morning.

HM: Thank you for being here with me today.

GC: Thank you.

HM: I am here today with Representative Gaynor Cawley who represents the 113th Legislative District from Lackawanna County. He has been serving the Pennsylvania House from 1981 to the current, which is 2006. I want to begin by asking you: what kind of influence did your family have on you in your early life and in your future career as a public servant?

GC: Well, actually, my wife really wasn't prepared for it and I wasn't myself. It just happened by chance in a conversation with someone and they were very supportive. My youngest daughter was born the Sunday before the Primary. We have four daughters. We have five total, but they have just been very, very supportive and understanding and can't really understand some of the things that go with public office, with the phone calls on the weekends and everything, but they became accustomed to it, as I did.

HM: Did anybody in your family – maybe your parents – were they active in politics at all?

GC: No, I was in retailing and I had a Woolworth Store in Seneca Falls, New York that I was running. Ironically, we were doing very well. We were gaining 18 to 20 percent a week in sales and I was offered a promotion. And when I asked where it was and they said upstate New York – I can't think of the town, but anyway – I looked and I said, this is, like, three blocks from Canada. You know, I played baseball back in the [19]60s and we did a lot of moving, so we had two children at the time and ironically, this was in I think [19]68, 1968, and a friend of mine who had been with the Woolworth company and his store was burnt down in Newark, New Jersey. I didn't know this, but he called me up right at the time I was being transferred to this new store in upper state New York, and he said that there was a new company in the Scranton/Wilkes-Barre area and that he was with them, if I wanted to move back. So, I went home and asked my wife. My wife never complained. We'd drive home every couple of weekends from Seneca Falls back to Scranton and I said, "Would you be interested in moving?" and she was thrilled. So, I was in retailing and the deal was that I would not have to move again outside of the Scranton/Wilkes-Barre area. So, if that remained the case, I probably still would have been in retailing because I loved it. It was very challenging; a lot of hours, like this, but I really enjoyed it. The training I received from Woolworths—they'd give you a test every month for four years; 48 tests. You start in the stock room, mopping, receiving freight. In the meantime, you are learning departments. You learn all the recipes in the restaurant; you go back in the office and learn all of the accounting. And really, after four years, they really did a great job of training people. You actually become a real merchant. So, I loved it. But then, after a few years with this other company – ironically

in those big chains, if someone leaves or retires or passes away, it causes a chain reaction. So, I had a choice to go to Dearborn, Michigan or Frederick, Maryland and I said, “But that was not the deal when I signed to work here.” So, I left and went with the Recreation Department, because of my sports background, with the city of Scranton. So, from the Recreation Department, I then became the Director of Public Works: roads and bridges and refuse, and then the Business Administrator at Licensing and Inspections. [I] became the Deputy Mayor under a Republican and a Democrat and I enjoyed it, but, as I mentioned, I was in a discussion with another person. I think I was ready for a move and he had suggested the Legislature, so it wasn’t planned. So, I have been down here since, and it’s been a great experience, a learning process. You know, I really think that if you aren’t a people person, you are going to have a rough time because you are dealing with the public constantly.

HM: I was wondering if you could go back and tell me a little bit more about this baseball career that you had?

GC: Like a fool, I left the University of Scranton and signed with the Detroit Tigers. [I] played a year in their system and did really well, although I broke my foot in the first game of the season. I broke my foot pitching, just the way I pitched. I threw across my body and I didn’t know it, but I had a fracture that I knew it hurt every once in awhile, but this finished it off the first game. So, there was a scout for the Houston Colt 45’s in the stands that night. And at the end of the season – I was off for the first six weeks, then I came back and finished the season, I don’t know what I was: seven and two or seven

and three or something like that – Detroit offered me a Double A contract. This was “A” ball that I was playing and they did that with all first year players back then. If the organization wants you, they’ll promote you with a higher contract, because in those days, I don’t know if it the same right now, other organizations can draft a first year player by giving him a higher contract. So, Detroit gave me a Double A contract with Knoxville and next thing I know, in December I think it was, I get a phone call from a newspaper saying I was drafted to the Houston Colt 45’s. They are now the Houston Astros, but that was before the Astrodome was built. [They] told me I was drafted by the Houston Colt 45’s and to a Triple A contract with Oklahoma City, so then I played a year with that organization out in California and down in Georgia. Then I was invited to the Winter League and that was great, because almost everyone in the entire Winter League, all different organizations, most of them had Major League contracts, and I had a Triple A contract. So, I mean, I met many people. I thought to myself, I have their bubble gum card. It was wonderful. But, I met the Manager of Boston. His name was Johnny Pesky and he was one of our managers in the Winter League. Houston had 12 players and Boston had 13 players and Luman Harris, his name was—he was the Manager of Houston and Johnny Pesky was the Manager of Boston. He was a very dear friend and he passed away—Tony Conigliaro his name was. He went up and was a star with Boston, but Johnny Pesky had mentioned to me that if I could get my release from Houston, that Boston would sign me and send me to Pawtucket, that’s their Triple A team, and win a couple of games and he would bring me up. But, I was unsuccessful in getting released from Houston. So, I had to wait three years to become a free agent and three years later, I was one year away from my start with Woolworths. I wanted to get

married to my childhood sweetheart, Cathy, who I chased since fourth grade, and so I didn't go back and to this day, I don't have any bad feelings because it was my choice. So, that was my baseball career, but I met many guys that I still communicate with. One is the CEO out in Chicago with Jim Beam and his name is Rich Reese. He was 10 years in the Major League, mostly with Minnesota. And I'm grateful and fortunate that God gave me that opportunity. So, that was my baseball career and it was really started by a man who passed away. His name is Freddy Battalia and he was instrumental with me in little league, the little league and the teener league and then amateur ball, afterwards, where you had ex-pro ball players and then amateurs playing. He was a great influence on my life, very big influence, and a very dear friend. Then I played amateur ball, after I came back to Scranton from retailing, and managed a team also: the All High Park Athletic Association, up in Scranton. And then I went to retailing in Luzerne-Lackawanna area. That led to my career in politics, as I mentioned. And I remember at the time – and it's the same way now – like many of the media, they want you to say nasty things about the person you are running against. And I knew the person: he was a two-term Democrat, and I said, "He is a very good Legislator. I think that I am a good Legislator and I am running," but I would not say anything negative and I don't regret that. Sports had a lot to do with my thinking and, you know, we are genetic and we're environment. In any sports: football, baseball, basketball, I never really bragged about, "We are going to wipe the field up with you." I just went and did it and to this day, I still feel the same way; don't spend your whole life promoting yourself; just find out what your responsibilities are and do them. Hope that whoever is judging you is going on your performance and not what you say. So, I have an old saying that I always say, "I

don't want to be all windup and no pitch." And so, here we are, I'm rounding third base, you know, in my trip around the bases of life. You know, I will never be bored a day in my life. I never was and the only one that is a little bit nervous about me coming home. My grandchildren can't wait. My five daughters can't wait; their families. My wife is a little hesitant because, she said, "I know I can put up with him on the weekends, but I don't know if I could put up with him seven days a week." So, I think we will be able to work it out, you know.

HM: (*laugh*) I would like to take a step back and ask you how you decided to become a Democrat?

GC: That was from environment. My father's family and my mother's family were Democrats. That is primarily, the reason why I am a Catholic. That's what your parents and your grandparents were and it is the same thing with Democrat and the Republican Parties. So, I registered Democrat and it was probably beneficial, also, because in Scranton, at that time, it was almost three to one Democrat in the 113th Legislative District. It's Democrat up in the northeast. To me, it's just not a big issue, Democrat or Republican. In fact, you have heard some of the persons that are leaving that state "Don't put a wall up in that middle aisle." I never did, because I realized that most of the Legislators down here, the majority of the Republicans down here, come from Republican Districts and the majority of Democrats come from Democratic Districts, so just because they are Republican, it doesn't mean that they are a bad person or a Democrat, they're a bad person. I think sometimes we get carried away by that

Democrat, Republican and become a pimple on the rear end of progress by being that way. I, again, I think that it's worked. It wasn't a plan, it was natural with me and I have dear friends on both sides of the aisle and I think in my perspective that is exactly how it should be. Just because a Republican has a bill, that bill is not going to be detrimental to the people I represent. I have no reason why I am not going to support it. So, I have done that and the influence with Tom Tigue [Thomas; State Representative, Lackawanna, Luzerne & Monroe Counties, 1981-2006], he is basically the same way. I never knew Tom until we got elected in 1981, although we live 15 minutes from [each other]. My sister knew him, because she lived in Pittston, at the time, but that man probably – I mentioned Freddy Battalia and many people up in Scranton, but Freddy Battalia was a big influence on my life growing up and Tom Tigue was a big influence on my life here and a very, very positive influence. I never even discussed this with him, but I discussed this with other members. I don't know. It's his makeup. I kid around when I'm happy. We all do, I guess, but I always say that I want on my tombstone, "Here lies a man who would have been a saint had it not been for temptation." Tom Tigue is the type of a guy that keeps you away from temptation. With our free time, it's always, "What are we doing? Are we going to a movie?" Italo Cappabianca [State Representative, Erie County, 1979-2001] was a Member here; he passed away a few years ago. I guess the best way to describe it is the same way everywhere; it's birds of a feather. And we were dear friends with Cappi. We lived with him, Tom Tigue and I, and I mentioned to Tom, "Nothing can be better than this, staying with you and Italo Cappabianca." Well, I found out a few years later that if only Cappi were still alive, he would be in to live with the people I live with down here now and to be away from home. You can't beat it. They're

just wonderful, wonderful guys and they are saying “Oh, Gaynor doesn’t have any emotion and he is just going to say he is walking to the store and leave us,” and that is what they are saying now, the Members that we live with: Harry Readshaw [State Representative, Allegheny County, 1995-present], Bill Keller [William F.; State Representative, Philadelphia County, 1993-present], Paul Costa [State Representative, Allegheny County, 1999-present], Tim Solobay [Timothy; State Representative, Washington County, 1999-present], John Yudichak [State Representative, Luzerne County, 1999-present] and a new member we got. He is from Philadelphia – he took Alan Butkovitz’s [State Representative, Philadelphia County, 1991-2006] place – is John Sabatina, Jr. [State Representative, Philadelphia County, 2006-present]. He just moved in. There are three apartments where we live and each apartment has three rooms and we are all together. The room, I don’t know if Tom mentioned this, but the living room where we actually have the television and a little table, where Tom’s son-in-law—he was a Major League baseball player—he sent furniture from San Diego down here to Harrisburg. A couple couches and a dining table and a great big entertainment center. A big television, thanks to Andy Ashby. You know, it’s livable.

HM: *(laugh)*

GC: What make’s it really livable are the guys. They’ll all come downstairs. Last night, for instance, the ones that were in Harrisburg—Tom and I are down here this week because this is a lot of work to get rid of – 26 years of – or go through them, or what you are going to save – 26 years of files. Even last night, we went out to dinner and then we

came back to the apartment and watched the football game. And Tom's bed is in the corner of the living room. I have the middle room and then Bill Keller has got the other room back near the kitchen. So we banter each other and it goes on all night and Tom is saying to Michael Diven [State Representative, Allegheny County, 2001-2006], who is one of our roommates and Tom will say to Mike, "Well, why don't you go upstairs to your apartment and stop bothering me?" But it could not be better. In all honesty, I only wish that Cappi were alive and with us. But getting back to Tommy; the free time that we spent is not going to get you in trouble. And this is just me, the little thoughts – kidding. My wife doesn't like me to say that, but it's true. If you are away from what is going to get you in trouble, the chances are you are not going to get into trouble. So, we've gone to Baltimore to see games; we've gone to Reading, Hagerstown over the years, if we are out early during the summer. Or movies; we've gone to movies galore, and Italo always liked the black-and-white ones which you couldn't find other than on television. So he is really, really highly respected by me and anyone who comes in touch with him; he is a good person. That was a big help to me, being with people where we're, you know, away from home. Sometimes, you know, there is a knock on the door and you open it and there is temptation. So, he's helped in keeping us the way we should be; out of trouble while we're down here.

HM: Thank you for sharing that. I would like to ask you a little bit about campaigning. Your first campaign was against an incumbent, as you mentioned, and at the suggestion of someone else. Why did you decide that it was the right time to run?

GC: Well, because I was really at a crossroads, myself. I did not know what I was going to do, but I knew that it was time for me to leave the city and it was just knowing – I didn't really discuss it with anyone prior to that, but outside the Police Chief and the City Solicitor, I, you know, ran all the departments. I wasn't looking, by the way. When I was running Recreation, I was offered the Public Works job and I was there for a couple of years and then, Licensing and Inspections, where you have to blight anyone with licenses. Restaurants and so on and so forth, and the Housing Code and the Electrical Code, and as the Business Administrator you have to sign off on everything that is being purchased prior to it going to the Purchasing Department, along with the City Controller, who is a separate elected officer in the city. I was just in that mood and wasn't thinking of State Representative, whatsoever; it was the last thing on my mind. And it was mentioned to me by a person – the same name, but Bob Casey, his name was, but he was not related to our new United States Senator, but he is a dear friend, a former employee that I worked with, with the city, and it was just over lunch. I guess it showed that I was down and he had mentioned it so he put the thought in my head and I said, maybe I'll do that. And so, a lot of campaigning and, what I didn't know at the time, was my own family's, and it's, you know, you're influenced by your family and you make judgments by them, but my mother is going to be 89 this December and she was well liked. My family were well liked. I guess it helped me. It wasn't a plan, as I mentioned, but I was always basically a gentleman when I was growing up. Never really looking for trouble and you meet a lot of people in sports and I was more grateful than anything. Well, I don't pitch anymore, but I never really even got joy out of striking someone out that I knew that couldn't hit. You know, I would have rather be in a tougher game, which I

have been in many of them, and have a bigger challenge because that's more rewarding. So, it's all of these things. When I ran, many people said, "Oh, I love your brothers," or, "I love your sisters," or "Your mother is a wonderful woman." And then, other ones that knew me – I was speaking at sports banquets prior to making the decision to run for office as a Legislator, and I guess somewhere along the line, it all added up and it helped me and it was a very close election. I ran a write-in on the Republican ticket. That was on my first election. I think I won nine to one and I just about won on the Democratic side because the incumbent is usually supported by the Party, and he passed away. He was a good Legislator and that's when people looking for a little juice. No, I have nothing bad to say. I just think that I could do the job and, as far as I know, he is doing his job and, you know. So, I've been extremely fortunate down here. Busy when I go back home because I had – one year, I remember, it was like 80-some engagements that I had to speak at, but I don't think that any of them were smaller than maybe 300, but it was usually 4 or 5 [hundred]. Penn State had an affair where there were 1,000 people and Joe Paterno¹ was the speaker. I'm like anyone else. I'd say, "Oh boy," when I would have to on a Sunday night. It always seems like you're flicking the channels and all of a sudden, you'll see something, for instance The Halls of Montezuma, you know, an old movie and I'd say, "Oh boy, would I love to just stay here and watch this," but you've got to get up and you got to get moving. So, I believe in my heart, I mean, I would be at many things I had to go to, I'm upset driving to the affair and on the way back home, I'm saying, "Thank you, God, that it went well." I think that the public that I represented over the years, even on some issues that I was involved in, whether it was for vouchers or

¹ Elected to the College Football Hall of Fame in 2006, "JoePa" served as the Penn State football Head Coach from 1966-present (2010). He was also the Assistant Coach for the team from 1950 -1965.

whatever – I wasn't big on hunting. I fished when I was small and a lot of people read it the wrong way and said, "Oh, he's anti-sportsmen." I'm not anti-sportsmen, I just honestly felt that there were a lot of things down here that were very serious issues and so it never entered my mind. I mean, ironically, I was the Chairman of Fish and Game for awhile and I really think they were happy to see me leave as the Democratic Chairman. Some were, anyways, because I was always battling over someone trespassing on someone else's property. You know, I get along with people and I want to and I do get along with them, but sometimes, you are focused on issues. There are issues that are not completed right now and I have folders on them all and I'm going to give them to Representative Shimkus, [Frank Andrews; State Representative, Lackawanna County, 2007-2008] who will be Sworn-In in January. You can spend and, believe me, I have mentioned many, many times that whether it was down here in Harrisburg or back home, I wish the days were longer because there's some very, very, very serious issues that the public have. And I have always said, about us, that we're not any better than anyone. We're a little more fortunate than a lot of people, but we're not any better and I hope that the majority of the people that I represented really know that that is true. That's how I really feel. I think that they did. I honestly can't tell you the last time that I had an opponent, either Democrat or Republican. I mean, it was years ago, and I think that is because, first of all, I'm saying, boy, oh boy, it's a humbling experience when you don't have it, but the constituents, I hope that they realize that I respected them and they really did respect me by what transpired. There was no one always running around looking to unseat me. So, the Members this year will be Sworn-In in January. What they don't know – some of the new ones at least – what they don't realize and they are going to

realize real soon is one year from January, not two years – you know, it’s a two year term – but one year from January, they’re going to be getting ready to campaign for the Primary. So, when I didn’t have opponents, I honestly said, “Now, I have to really work harder.” But some of the issues are so challenging and that is why I was saying that I wish there were more time. So meaningful to, sometimes, few people, but very serious. I know that they deserve my attention, and my attention usually went to where the biggest crisis was, even though it wasn’t – for instance, with the flooding. We live in an area in Scranton that we don’t have any flooding. We might have a little water in the basement once in awhile, but that’s it. But the people down along the river in Scranton and in other areas – this just took place the week before last – devastating with streams and creeks. And those are issues that I just fit right into, because I knew that is where I should be. That’s where I should be focused. So, my whole career has been trying my very best. Believe me, and sometimes you feel like the [19]64 or [19]65 New York Mets. They didn’t win too many games, but, I usually – and that’s where I’m saying I think my constituents who weren’t involved with those type of issues – thank them for tolerating me and understanding that that’s where those hours were in a day. You know, whether it was on the phone or actually going. Back in the early [19]80s, I didn’t really realize either what the, I think it was, six years with the city, all of the things I did, it was a learning process and when I got down here, I used an awful lot of things that I was involved in with the city of Scranton. For instance; the streams and the creeks and the condition of the bridges. So, back in the early [19]80s, I found out about the Capital Budget and I always put in authorization to authorize the Governor, whether it’s through the budget or borrowing money or bond issues, to do Capital Budget projects and

ironically, I have been involved in some very devastating flooding; 700 homes under water, up above their stoves in their kitchens. Their basements inundated and everything that comes with backup; whether it's a combination of sanitary and storm. So that's where my time has been, with toxic waste up in the Borough of Throop; 500,000 tons of battery casings. That's 10 stories high, dumped into a hole in the ground back in the [19]60s. We had the EPA [Environmental Protection Agency] involved and the Commonwealth involved. It's very frustrating because their decision is that they are only going to remove some, yet very little, that they consider high contamination. And I'm saying that up in New York State along the Hudson, they had a similar problem. The battery casings are what we do know is in there, but there are some-400 firms, from as far away as Texas, that were dumping there. So, we really don't know what else is in there. Groton, Connecticut, where they had the nuclear submarines – and I'm not saying it's there, but we don't know, we don't know what was dumped there – but from Groton, Connecticut, came waste into this area. It's frustrating; it's very, very, very time consuming and I can see where other constituents are saying, “But I have a problem that is serious, also, so you really—,” I mean, you have a career dedicated to the people you represent. That's where it comes in back home that your family understands and that makes it easier.

HM: Can you talk a little bit about your District and its geography and has it changed through re-apportionment?

GC: Yes, well, right now, the District has a part of Moosic, the Borough of Moosic, it didn't have before up until the last re-apportionment; South Abington Township, which is about 10 minutes from my home in High Park; Clarks Green, that's up in Clarks Summit area; South Abington Township, along with Scott Township, have water contamination from solvents that got into their wells. I mean, this is a real serious problem right now. I have a little more than half the city of Scranton and Fred Belardi [State Representative, Lackawanna County, 1979-2006] had the other half. That will now be Ken Smith [State Representative, Lackawanna County, 2007-present] who is replacing Fred and Frank Andrews [Shimkus] replacing me. Other than that, I have all of the west of the river. I have what is called the Minooka section of Scranton, which is new with the re-apportionment. That's on the other side of the river. I also have where the baseball stadium is; it's called Montage Mountain. That's new also, but the vast majority of the constituents live in the city of Scranton. Probably about 75 percent of the constituents live in the city. Its going to change the more outward migration you have in the cities, you are going to be picking up new areas. And historically, that's how it's been in most of the cities in Pennsylvania; 50-some cities, their population's not growing, it's receding, and so that's the challenges that they are going to face in the future, new constituents.

HM: What were your first impressions when you came to Harrisburg, seeing the House for the first time?

GC: The first time I saw the Chamber – beautiful, I couldn't believe it. You know, I had never saw anything like it and then we went up to the fourth floor, Tom Tigue and I. It was actually sixth – it was the fifth floor, but room six something. No windows up in the Capitol. We went down to the fourth floor and opened the doors and saw the Senate and when I looked in there, I was struck by the Senate because it's so condensed. I looked and I said, "If there is a heaven on earth, this has to be heaven." It was so beautiful, but it didn't take me long to realize that – not realize – it didn't take me long to not notice it anymore. You know, it took a long time to become – you know, you are walking some hallway and all of a sudden you are saying, "Which way do I go here?" That's going to happen to anyone that walks into – it's like walking into a new facility until you are used to where all of the rooms are. Tigue and I were offered, when they put the East Wing up, by a Member who passed away, Benny Dombrowski [Bernard; State Representative, Erie County, 1971-1991], from Erie. He was in charge of the offices and he offered. He said, "Which one do you guys want?" He was very close with us, especially with Tom, and we went over to the East Wing. We were there from its opening up until we moved where we are now, in the third floor above the Chamber. But, Tigue and I hung around together all these years and I don't regret it, and hopefully he doesn't.

HM: Well, you said that you didn't know him before you started, so when did you meet him?

GC: I maybe met him right after the Primary, up in Pittston or Hughestown. I'm not positive, but we just clicked from the very beginning and we stayed together. There was

one period when my one daughter Claudine, she had finished school up at the University of Scranton, and she was moved to Rossmoyne with an insurance industry over there. So, she had come down to the area near Camp Hill Mall, the Rossmoyne Exit. So, probably for about a year, until she went to Philadelphia, I moved in with her, my daughter, but other than that; Tigue and I have been together for more than I guess we have been with the wives.

HM: Would you say anybody mentored you whenever you came to Harrisburg? You talked about other people being influences.

GC: Oh, there is; Democratic Chairman, the late Packy Cummings his name was. He had great expressions and I will never forget them and there is another person named Carl Rack. They were the elders of the Democratic Party. They were very influential with the Senator Mellow [Robert J. Mellow; State Senator, 1971-2010] and all of the Representatives from up in our area. And I remember Packy Cummings' sayings, using expressions. I use them to this day. Any of the guys we live with, ask him what Gaynor says. It's really amusing and Packy Cummings' phrases like – and I think about it all the time – “When your hand is in the doggie's mouth, say, ‘Nice, doggie.’” He was bad when times were good, you know, but they were very, very influential in my political career. Joe Corkron, he is with the Treasurer's Office now. He was down here in Harrisburg a little while. He was a County Commissioner for 20 years. Packy Cummings is the one that got Joe to run and Joe is about 10 years younger than me. And he did an excellent job up in Scranton as a County Commissioner of Lackawanna

County. And he was influential with that Triple A baseball stadium and all of the development that took place right as you enter Scranton, before you go down into the city. All those people I've come in contact with from a political standpoint; there is too many to mention. The Neighborhood Association, people associated with Neighborhood Association and Council. I've always had a good relationship with the officers of the municipalities and in Scranton; we'd go to flood meetings. Probably back in [19]85, there was a big flood. There were several in [19]86, the following year. A monster in [19]96, but I was always welcome in City Hall and whoever the Mayor was, we'd sit down and in the Council Chambers and discuss, meet with the Department of Environment Protection and Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency (PEMA) and Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the Army Corps of Engineers and we put a lot of hours in over flooding. And I mentioned [19]85, that was a very devastating flood up in Scranton and there were authorizations in the Capital Budget back then for the Lackawanna River and there are 12 or 13 streams and it's just so time consuming and so much. You just can't quit on it and just two years ago, one of the flood projects started along the Lackawanna River. A lot of people would say to me, "Oh thanks, Gaynor, you have always been there when we needed you." And I said, "You know, it's sad." I mean, I was there because I'm supposed to be there. I wasn't doing anyone a favor, but the sad thing is that it's always the tragedy, itself, that makes things happen and it's sad because we knew. So many floods that we've had up there, and I mean that. Some people – that every time there is – forget declared disasters, Presidential declared disasters. That's the only time you are going to get any help of substance and that's not near anywhere near enough when the President declares it, after being

requested by the Governor – but, for every one of those declared disaster, there are probably 100 undeclared disasters. So, it's not going to hit as many people and they are not going to – just what happened several weeks ago. To those people, that is just as big of a disaster as when the river went over or the streams went over. All you read in the paper is, you know, they have been told to go and look for their homeowner's insurance and I mean, to me, those people are victims. They did not cause the flooding, but you hear a lot of people say, "Well, you know, you have to make sure they have insurance," and that's the answer. That's not the answer there. The answer is you protect them or you move them. And I don't want to hear anything about, "Well, they shouldn't have built there." Most of those properties that have been damaged over the past 20-some years I have been down here were passed down from generation to generation. If they weren't flooding, they would have the beautiful homes along the river like they do down in Philadelphia. You know, Boat House Row, or whatever it is, but, I don't regret the issues that I have been involved in. I'll never ever give up on anything. I mean, when I leave here, now I am going to be someone else's constituent. Those issues will always be on my mind and always be on my front burner and I am going to keep on looking toward the state and the federal government to partnership with the local governments to take care of these things that should have been taken care of years ago. One person mentioned to me, "Well Gaynor, you should let the river and the streams dictate where they want to go, that's the answer." I said, "You're right, but you're 200 years too late. You know, you are absolutely right, but now we are back to reality. We have people who live in those vicinities and they pay taxes just like anyone else and they have to be protected or purchased. Then you could go back to letting the rivers and the streams" – but the more

development you have – and we're in a valley up there like Pittsburgh is, and it comes down off the mountain and the more development you have – although, you know, one thing that has been helpful the last 10 or so years is when there is development, they're required to have retention ponds and de-soaping basins. Even with that, the flooding has not lessened over the years; it has increased, because the water is getting to the streams and the river much quicker than it did in the old days and, of course, development took place. Other than that, I mean, it was just time for me to go. Just like when I left the city. And Tom was saying that he thought that he was going to leave and we were discussing this for – and finally, some people were calling me in January – I am sorry, in December – the rumor was out that I wasn't going to run. I told them, "Well, I am going to run, but if I am not going to run, I'm not just going to wait till the very end and then leave everybody in a helter-skelter situation." So, I told them, "You'll know by the beginning of January." I got up out of bed on a Saturday morning and I just, I don't think I was dreaming about it, but I just sat up and said, "That's it. I am not going to run." My wife was downstairs and I got on the phone and called my family, my mother, and my brothers and sisters. I knew there was no turning back and I don't regret it. I don't regret it because, like I mentioned to you before, I am going to be involved in those issues and until, you know, I hit home plate, because I think that they should be addressed; whether it's environmental issues, whether it's the flooding, whether it's a dangerous situation. I mentioned Minooka before. There are two lanes heading south on Barney Avenue and two lanes heading north in the middle of a neighborhood. Now, I could practically – and I told this to PennDot, but we haven't been successful in straightening it out – those two lanes are very, very serious problem with pedestrians. A couple people were hit, there

have been accidents and, especially because of the passing lane, and it's only a mile long each way. I still don't know, they had redevelopment back there in the [19]60s, but I don't know why it goes from two lanes north and south to one lane. And I explained to PennDot that I can drive from Scranton on Route 11, two blocks from my home on Main Avenue which is in West Scranton, follow the river all the way down to Harrisburg, and there are very few miles that it's not just one lane north and one lane south. You know, sometimes you hear, "Well, we have to consider vehicular traffic and the movement of such." I'm saying, "Well, to me, safety comes before convenience." And as I mentioned, where this two lane is a two lane highway, you would start where the two lanes in Moosic and that's only about two blocks. Now you're in Scranton and it will run for one mile. Now, you're back to one lane going down Pittston Avenue into the city of Scranton or coming out of the city Scranton on Cedar Avenue and that's. It hasn't caused any problems. I mean, I think we, all of us, are in a hurry to go no where today. Because of a little traffic, it's safer. You know, it's like going through other communities; the Borough of Taylor; the Borough of Old Forge; the Borough of Moosic, Pittston, West Pittston, all the way down for miles. It's one lane north and one lane south and the traffic moves and it's, you know, in my eyes, the way it should be because there are many homes. You're not talking about a shopping mall where there is very little pedestrian traffic, but those are – so, will I forget them and say I have nothing to do with that anymore? I mean, technically, from a legislative standpoint, I don't, but as a constituent and then a citizen in the 113th, I'll be involved. Why? Because I should be; because I know enough about it, and I know how this operates down here. And I just want to remain persistent and that pays off. Sometimes it takes a long time, as I mentioned.

Twenty years went by with the authorization for flooding verses reality. It's took 20 years, but that's okay. You know, someone else is always there ready to pick up where you leave off.

HM: As long as you're there to –

GC: Yeah.

HM: – remind them what they're supposed to be doing, they'll be fine. I want to ask you about your committee work here in the House. You have been on several different committees and you have been Chairman of many. Would you mind commenting on some of those and some of the more important aspects of that work?

GC: The Intergovernmental Affairs, that's the one I'm the Chairman of now until Thursday. We didn't have many meetings at all. Prior to that, Local Government was Lynn Herman [State Representative, Centre & Clearfield Counties, 1983-2006]. That was very active. A lot of bills would come out of it, and then there was the Game and Fish Committee. I was the Chairman of the Fish and Game Committee. That was the one where I spent more time – I think I was the Chairman – I was in favor of the moratorium on hunting, or trapping bobcats or, you know, they were an endangered species and we had a lot. I usually stick to my guns, but I do it in a nice way. But once I feel, not know, that this is the right way to be, I hope that the result isn't an earthquake. You know, but I respect those guys on all the committees. Democrat and the Republican

Chairman, I have gotten along with them because you should. You should get along with them and you should be respectful and I think that when you do that, it usually means you get better results. So, once in awhile I did – I can't even think of any now, but prior to me being Chairman, I was on a lot of committees. Of course, you are assigned committees when you first get here. When Jim Manderino [James J.; State Representative, Westmoreland County, 1967-1989; Speaker 1989] was in charge of the Democrats, Tigie and I were on Appropriations and Tigie was on Veterans Affairs. The committee system, the system itself, is great. It all now depends on the people within the system. What they are going to do with that and sometimes it would excite me when I felt that this guy isn't moving this bill just because he doesn't like this person. This place, you know what I mean? Like, I would always try to say, you know, in my way, "What are you doing here?" Not nasty or anything, but get the message across and thank God that was the exception, but it's here and, again, with the Democrat and Republican, also. Those are the big challenges that we face in getting the things done that we have. Those are our challenges over here and in order to meet those challenges, we have to make sure these challenges are as little or eliminated if we can. But, we're all human beings and we all have personalities and I remember saying to Tom Tigie when I first got down here, "I thought that everyone felt just like me from Scranton." I thought that and Tigie said, "You're going to find out they don't!" (*laugh*) This is a very diverse state, whether it was on gambling, whether it was on, I mean, vouchers. I was for vouchers for helping non – I am 100 percent for supporting the public school system, always have been, but I am also 100 percent where we can legally, and by law, support non-public schools. Well, that upset some people because, "Oh, no, you're favoring something that

might do away with your jobs.” No, I’m not. I’m helping constituents that happen not to go to a public school and I believe that they should be helped if we can help them, without robbing Peter to pay Paul. So, liability insurance [and] medical malpractice were some big issues. Many of the bills that I put in, which I was dead serious about, would be just buried because of lobbying, the groups it was affecting. They, you know, make their calls and all of a sudden it’s not moving. You know, if I was just coming in and knew what I know now, I would say those are the things that we have to, in a respectful manner, say, “Excuse me, this is going in and here’s the reason why it’s going in.” Now, Tom Tighe mentioned something that struck home with me maybe five, six, seven, eight, years ago. We’re sitting on the House Floor and he said someone was up above – a bill that would be a deterrent to crime and Tom said, “Do you know how many Members stood up here since we have gotten here and said this is going to be a deterrent to crime?” He said, “We shouldn’t have anymore crime in Pennsylvania with all of the statements made to that effect.” And he couldn’t understand, you know. But, in general, I honestly think that the vast majority of the Members are good persons with good intents. Sometimes the system, we get caught up in it and that leads to negative happenings, and I think that whether it’s political or whether it’s personalities, whether it’s somebody that’s just more worried about shining their name on their front – and I don’t have any on my mind – but those are the things that we are going to live with. They are always going to be that way. But, I think we have to keep that at a minimum and always work at trying to get whatever side to understand that this is what we need. Then hope that we could then meet with the people that it’s going to affect, either positively or negatively, and try to get them to understand. So, it’s time consuming and if you want good things done, you have

got to be willing to put the time in, and I mean put the time in because there is not enough time to begin with. So, you really have to put the time in and be willing to meet and discuss. You know the play is supposed to come later. Mentioned it before, the movies or take a trip to Reading or – Tommy mentioned to me recently; it seems like we have more work. We don't have time to go, "Let's take a ball game. Let's go to Reading or, you know, or to a movie or something." But the truth is, the more you do, the word gets around. "Oh, this guy will help you." There is a lot of problems out there so I said that the reason is that we do have more stuff to do today [is] because some of the things take years to get done and when you first start out, it might be one issue. All of a sudden, your table is full of those things that take years to accomplish, to complete. So, that's why I think if we could take care of these little things that I am talking about, with the personalities and the Parties at the very beginning, and start nipping them in the bud, hopefully, you won't have this terrible load the longer you're here. You'll just be able to keep on going and keep on moving onto a – I mention this a lot; I wish I could spend all of my time on about three subjects, [but] I can't. You know, I really can't because you're being pulled. I'd come down here with a list every Monday until now, and the older I get, the more lists I have to make. I would come down with a list and two or three phone calls change that list totally, because I consider some of the list a fire. Speaking from a fireman's perspective, it's a brush fire. Well, the phone calls, maybe, are general alarms.

HM: *(laugh)*

GC: So, now you have to put this on the back burner and pull this out, so that throws you right off when something else comes up. I think that the best thing you could do with those issues that you have in your District is, instead of complaining about it and whining about it, attack it. But when you attack, you better be prepared that it's not going to happen instantly, even though you want it to. That gets frustrating because you are saying, why? I mentioned Throop before, I mean, I just couldn't understand why they don't take money that was awarded in a lawsuit over time, with the property owner and the Federal Government and the State Government chipping in to remove all of that material, even if it took 25 years. Set that plan in place instead of just saying we're going to put a tarp over it. We're going to spend 200,000 dollars a year, the company is for security and a fence, and I'm saying use the thousand dollars a year to keep on taking a bite at it. Get rid of it and properly dispose of it in a site that is prepared to take this material because once its gone, it's gone forever. That's a lot of issues here that we have. That's why when you have people that we hang out with down here, some of the other Members, that helps you with your frustrations. It really does, because we all need that little charging and that little energy from someone that's – you know, I remember my wife, at the beginning, I guess that too many times I thought I was alone, I'd be on the phone and I would be talking. And my wife would say, "Gaynor, why don't you go to the office. We can't watch this program that we're trying to watch and everything," and I would say, "You're right." The one time I said something to Cathy, "If I did everything you wanted me to do, I probably wouldn't get re-elected one time." You know, you do have to be tolerant and you are being paid by those people that have problems. So, it's so a battle within yourself that you have, you know.

HM: Well, you talked about some of your issues already. What Legislation do you feel is some of your most important ones that perhaps got passed or maybe didn't even get passed?

GC: Probably, Sam Hayes [Samuel E., Jr.; State Representative, Blair, Centre & Huntingdon Counties, 1971-1992; State Secretary of Agriculture, 1997-2003] who was here in the early [19]80s, he'd come out with the Omnibus Bridge Bill—Orphan Bridge Bill. It was period of, say, about four or five years that went by in the early [19]80s, the middle [19]80s, I had a Scranton map and I was aware of some of these things, as I mentioned, from running the Department of Public Works whether it was stream flooding or property erosion or bridges, condition of bridges, or, I remember PennDOT calling me up saying, "Mr. Cawley, we went over this list that was just passed in the Capitol Budget in the bridges and we're sorry, but these are not bridges that you have here, here, here and here." I said, "What do you call them?" They said, "They are box culverts." And most of them that I was talking about are on state highways within the municipalities and I said, "This is a bridge. This connects this tooth with this tooth and that is a bridge. That connects this side of Kaiser Avenue with that side and the law says that's in there and that is a bridge. You could call it a box culvert." Well, those bridge bills – I remember distinctly the city of Scranton that was one bridge – I mean, they probably have right now, well, they are in the process right now with the, they just finished one on (*unintelligible*). The one I was talking about I remembered it was about eight or nine years ago I read in the paper that the city of Scranton was using community development

block grant money from the feds to replace a bridge over a railroad on Lyndon Street in Scranton. As soon as I saw it, I said, “I know I have that, because they had bridges that they said you have a list here, could you show us where they are?” It was really because I just paid attention and went out and put the time in and with my map and followed the railroads and blah, blah, blah but, this one on Lyndon Street, I called Mayor Connors, who now works for Governor Rendell [Edward G.; Pennsylvania Governor, 2003-2011] as a Legislative Liaison up in the Northeast. I called him up and I said, “Mayor,” I said, “You don’t have to spend that. Use that community development funds on something else. You just have to pay five percent of what that is in the Bridge Bill.” We went and met with PennDot and PennDot fixed it, so that, to me, was serious: an accident waiting to happen. They still are, the bridges, but that, to me, saved and will save literally millions and millions of dollars of local funds. Because if it is in the city of Scranton and it’s not on a state highway, which many are not, that would instead of costing the tax payers in the city one hundred percent, it will cost them five percent. Now, that’s tax payer’s money in Washington and the state also. So, I am always saying, “I don’t want more than I should receive, but I insist on my fair share.” So, the bridges, the flood projects, there were some bills I put in that – there was a bill that would mandate that PET [Positron Emission Tomography] scans be paid for through your insurance company. (*cough*) The insurance industry was against it, but, I mean, I am the type of a guy that I don’t go to bed at night. I just believe, in my heart, that in order to solve a problem, you have to know what the problem is. In order to know what the problem is, you have to put the time in to communicate with other people to define the problem. Now, you start setting your priorities. Once you’ve really defined what the problem is,

that is time, but once again, it is worthwhile once you do it, because you know what you are talking about then. This PET scan, a woman called me [and said] that her husband had passed away and she was just – and I said to her, “Just put this all in a nice, you don’t have to get the thesaurus out or anything, put down your story for me in a letter.” So, her husband went back several times with cancer, they found someplace else and she honestly felt that this PET, which they couldn’t afford it at the time – I believe it was called a PET scan, I can’t think of the term but its PET scan – she felt that if her husband had had that at the very beginning, they could have picked up the cancer at any place in the body. But the insurance industry was against it, so it never moved. I had Capital Budget requests and went in the Capital Budgets that regarded flooding. If you could think of Shipoke, down here along the river; we lived there in an apartment that Cappabianca owned, Italo, in 1996. So, the day after it flooded up in Scranton, that was flooded down here. Thank God we were in those townhouses that your second floor is actually your first floor. It has a breezeway so the only damage we really had was it went half way up our steps. It was about six feet high, the Susquehanna, when it came over. There was a couple of big fires down there with some of the older homes, but I wanted to, because we talked too many times, we’ve talked a good game during the crisis. “Oh, here is what we have planned and this is what we are going to do.” Well, as soon as the sun comes out three days later, we forget about all those little things. Mitigation it’s called. Where I wanted funds, and to this day, there are no funds in the state budget and there ought to be – I think the state budget – you’ll see when it comes out and it should be in February – will probably have a million dollars in the budget for flooding. I mean, basically, that means that the only time you are going to get financial help, which you

should get for all those damages, instead of re-cooping four thousand dollars for every twenty thousand dollars in damage that you have at no fault of your own caused by a lack of planning and resources by the people you give your money to, the government. Well, where was I at here?

HM: You were talking about Shipoke and –?

GC: Yes, very little damage. Now, take one home in Scranton that is under water. That's going to happen, if not this week, next week, two weeks. It is going to happen again. In Shipoke, our furnace was upstairs on the second floor. That was actually a first floor. You walk up about 10 or 15 steps onto your first floor. Our washer and our dryer is up there; our electrical panel is up there; our hot water heater is up there, along with your furnace; all of the things that most homes, to this day, have in their basement. So now, you are talking about thousands of dollars, that with this money from mitigation and here is the thing, it would actually save insurance companies a bundle of money and it would save those home owners a bundle of money. In the long run, it is the right thing to do. That we would have grants and no or low interest loans for existing homes that are in danger of water – to, move those facilities up out of the flood range.

HM: Okay.

GC: It has never taken place, you know. Sad, yes. I will never stop saying it shouldn't be done, because when we had 46 counties declared disasters, I think it was two years

ago last November, I had proposed – and it all takes money – I had proposed a nickel on a pack of cigarettes and one percent on alcohol sold at the state stores for a five year period, which would have raised something in the neighborhood of 350 million dollars, for a five year period. And the answer was, “Well, you know, we can’t afford to raise taxes.” Well, that lousy nickel that I wanted on a pack of cigarettes went a few months later – it was a 95 percent increase, but that went to pay for the MCare with the medical mal-practice insurance. So, I was very upset about that because I think that it, you know, again, to accomplish any of this that we are talking about in the areas of hazardous waste and flooding and environment, it takes dollars to do it. Well, I think we ought to start, even if we take a little bit that’s there all of the time and maybe, as I mentioned before, 25 years from now, by doing a little bit consistently, we are going to have a lot done in the 20, 25 year period but that is a big challenge that we from the Legislature, the House, the Senate and the Governor’s office have to agree to. And it’s not easy. I thought for sure that this would pass because, I mention Italo Cappabianca, he was always saying you don’t need insurance. I said, “Cappi, you don’t have any flooding up in Erie.” Well, they did a few years later but I said, “Having insurance is like me saying to my grandson, who now wants to take my car out on the highway, ‘Make sure you have insurance. Make sure you have insurance, Zachary.’” You know he is going to crash the car.

HM: *(laugh)*

GC: You know what I mean? *(laugh)* You know you are going to be flooded again. Well, you are going to be paying insurance from now until doomsday. How do you

eliminate that? By action, by purchase. You know, back in 1996, the city – and it was really because they just didn't have anymore money. I had a list of about 50 homes and businesses that should be acquired. It was 75 properties, at least. They only had enough money for 18 homes. Well, those 18 homes have been hit several times since and they – and the businesses – and they are going to continue to. Until such day as you either protect them or you get them out of harms way. I mean, those are monstrous issues to me. Again, my career has been based on health and safety and the telephone. You know, when they call, I'm there. I mean, only four people on a block were affected by a development that took place. Only four people. So I, you know, go to the officials and say you ought to do this, you should take care of this. I mean, I'll do what I can do from the state's standpoint, but this has to be – well, when it's not addressed, I say, "People, get yourself a good lawyer. I mean, you didn't cause this." But see, what I am trying to say is those little four homes were just as important to me as the 700 homes. They were very important to me. Where I live, I don't know, you are tempted to say, "Oh, that's a shame what is happening down there, but when are you going to pave the court or when are you going to do this or do that, you know?" And I am not knocking people, but when it does not affect us directly, sometimes we are a little concerned about it, but when the concern passes, in the darkness, it is soon to be forgotten. But we are not committed to doing something about it. You know, and there is a big difference. I'm using my brother, Pat's, terminology, but there is a big difference between the word concern and commitment; major difference. It is finding the time when there isn't any and, you know.

HM: What do you think the hardest issue you ever had to face or maybe the hardest vote you ever had to take was as a Representative?

GC: The toughest vote? I would say it probably dealt with medical malpractice because you had the insurance industry, the doctors, the hospitals and the lawyers. You'd be a fool to say that there is not a problem with health care. There absolutely is a major problem with health care. Even people who have health care, they really can't afford it. They are paying a fortune. So, what I did was – the venue – a couple bills that I voted on I was hoping – again, with this consistent maintenance instead of the one massive change. It's been positive what took place, but the problem still exists. Now, I remember saying to the medical profession and the lawyers, I said, "I have to tell you the truth. I asked my children, 'Did you cause this?' and 'No, Dad, we don't know anything about it.' 'You're right, I don't know. I know I didn't cause this.' 'Well, who caused it?'" I said, "I think that it is the people that are involved in it. If I was in charge, I would call everyone in and nail the door shut and everyone has got to give a little bit and it could help." That is a major issue and that is health and safety, is affordable health care. That is really going to be the flooding of the whole state, also, is an issue like that and somebody's got to, you know, roll your sleeves up. Lots of people do and put the time in to start addressing it, and there is going to be some – you know, there are some people like me when I was, and still I am the same, I remember reaching for another piece of pizza at home and my mother would say, "Gaynor, you already had two." – (*cough*) excuse me – and I would say, "Mom, I'm hungry." "So is your brother Pat, or your brother James, or your sister Linda, or your sister Sue Ellen. They are not home yet and that is for them." Well, I can

still hear my feet stomping going up the steps. You know what I mean? So, 20 minutes later, I was hungry. So, I would come down for something else, but again that's us and we are involved with this process. Some of us just want stuff that we really can't afford, you know, but it really doesn't stop us. We'll do anything to get it and it's the same way with these issues. Who it affects, who does it affect positively, who's going to hurt because of this, so I think that we have got to find that balance and you don't kill, but you have to give a little bit. That will affect campaign contributions, advertising, whatever, but I think it's worth it. In the long run, it's really, really worth it and I think if you take the approach that I'm talking about, they will understand. They don't like it, but they'll respect you because they know what your mission is. It isn't hidden, there is nothing I did down here – (*cough*) excuse me – that there was a motive. “Well, I'll see if I can do this with this one or try to get this, or I need some campaign contributions, or blah, blah, blah.” There was some that I just honestly – and I was warned over the years and, “You better raise money. You know, you are going to get some opponent someday. You're going to wish you had money because it takes money to sell you.” And I said, Look, I hope I sold myself all those weekends. I mean, I meet with more people on the weekends and I'm out there. I'm down in the cellar when it's flooded; I'm not walking up and down the street with a suit on. That's where I should be, helping that older couple pump their basement out. I just hope that they will know that if I give my very best to them when they need me, that they say, “Well, he is worth another vote,” you know? But it takes time. You know, the promotion would take less time, but then you would still have to come back with – instead of just the wind up – you'd have to come back with the pitch later on, anyway. So, I was fortunate because I did that from the very beginning and

there was some people that would say, “I really don’t know what you do, but I heard that if we need help, you are there and that’s good enough for me.” So, I hope it works out. I hope that’s the way it’s going to be with more Members down here and because I, you know, as I mentioned before, I think most of them are very, very good. I think communicating with them more often like this at a table and discussing things would help more. I mean that’s what solves problems with people we love, that we argue with all the time and we, you know, when you sit down, and maybe it’s the Irish in me or it’s the sports, I have a tough time saying I’m sorry, but I try to show it. Maybe that’s the iron worker part or, you know, but you should say it and I didn’t say it enough. But I feel it and I don’t try to make excuses to myself when I’m doing something that I know. You know, I don’t try to say, well, you know, this one made me do it or this one. You know, I’m real with myself and hopefully, I got a little bit better as the years went on. Correcting my human ways, I guess.

HM: What do you think the toughest issue is, right now, before the Legislature?

GC: I think one of the tough issues are what millions of people have to pay in taxes and how can we rein in the cost of health care. For instance, I hope and pray – with the slot machines – I was wishing they would just say, “Here, you can tell the Mayor we are giving him five hundred slot machines up in Scranton,” and let the Mayor decide where he wants to put them. Whether it’s in a grocery store – one, measure the place, “Yes, he can have one.” Share it like they did the lottery machines. Again, there’s people that would say, “Oh, there he goes again, Mr. Gambler and everything else,” but if I had that

and I said we'll never call you in Harrisburg again, we won't need you anymore. I just hope that the revenues from those slot machines are going to ease the property taxes, because as I mentioned to you, just the average person I represent: by the time they pay the necessities, in probably eighty or ninety percent of the people I represent both in the families, both the husband and the wife, worked and they are not working because they are bored, they are working because they have to. They move from, they need help and Mike Diven, who lost the last election and he is leaving this session. He is finished, but he came up with an idea and it was right in our apartment and we were discussing it a couple of years ago. They thought it was off the wall, but he came up with an idea that all school teachers, every school teacher in the 501 school districts, should be under the state umbrella because it would save over three or four hundred million dollars a year in costs. Well, I mean, at least do it in a few of them. You know, do it. I don't see any reason why it can't and the more we save, I believe, add that to whatever else we have reducing property taxes, because people today are probably and it's the stuff we did with the pay raise and everything else. I mean, it was like when – and I voted for it and I wanted it just like – was it a mistake? Yes. It was obvious, because what we did it to a society that was already irritated because of their own struggles. You know what I mean? Like, really irritated. [They] really have had it. In other words, they are tired, like they don't have all of the – they can't even go away one week down the shore, many of them; probably most of them. You know? And when I talk about the city, we have too many people living in the city of Scranton that are elderly – I'm not saying get rid of them – but our population of elderly is high and low income is high. Not enough of the real tax payers and that's the out migration of those people who, for 25 or 30 different reasons is

saying, “The guy is causing trouble across the street, let’s get out of here,” and sell their house, now. Well, we can’t and they’re gone, you know? And check with all the other cities in Pennsylvania. I’ll guarantee it’s the same story, you know? Then you have the malls and everything starts going up and its like [*inaudible*] and people start using their automobiles when they used to walk and so that’s the way it is. So, now you’ve got to make all these big adjustments, but it hurts and a lot of people said it’s amazing that the people that have big fire departments and big police departments have high taxes because of that. Well, a lot of that blends into itself. I mean, it’s related, you know. Those are issues that we face also, but I think, in general, I think that we have got to do – and regarding the health care, I had a bill in, and a lot of people thought it was grandstanding but I don’t remember anything big in the paper about it or anything else, that I honestly thought that we should contribute a percentage of our pay toward health care and I think everyone should. If everyone, from an affordable standpoint, pulled the wagon and nobody rode the wagon, we wouldn’t have heaven, but we might have purgatory instead of hell. You know, because if everyone contributed a little bit, we would have more affordable health care then, and we contribute nothing. Now, I did it because I believe, in my heart, that we’re better off than most of our constituents. There are some people that are a lot more fortunate than we are. They have a lot more money than we do too, but the reality is that we have much more than a lady on the bus and her husband who’s struggling. I have always struggled and their families struggle and they can’t unless they are somehow, and with the grace of God, their children become very brilliant and can get a scholarship some place, it ends up without that – our five daughters, I remember them all saying, “We now have to go to Philadelphia or Baltimore or New York to get a job,

Dad, because you made us go to college.” And I would always say, “You’re set. You are here now. You’re staying here; you’re staying here. You don’t pay anything; you don’t have to pay anything, honey. That degree is going to get you those interviews.” I could have been the best surgeon in the world, maybe in the city of Scranton, but if you don’t have that paperwork, I can’t even apply. You keep on knocking, that’s going to get you the interviews and, thank God – the daughter that lives the furthest away is about 10 minutes away, of the three out of the five that are married. They’re all within shouting distance and I’m saying, oh my God, I am so fortunate. But in order for me to be comfortable with myself, I know there’s other people that have struggles, and those issues, I think, we are mandated to start addressing. Because what I mentioned here before, because when the pay raise came up, it was like just sort of pushing someone down steps that we just knocked down already. Now, we just, boom, you know? So, you know the calamity happened. So what should we do? We should learn from those lessons, you know, and as I mentioned, I was always saying, “Something is wrong with me. I asked God to help me pitch a no hitter and I’d be the best person in the whole world, but I had three of them this year – this was in high school – and I’m still not happy.” Then I realized, Hey, wait a minute. You are never going to reach heaven here, you know. That’s impossible. You’ve got to make the best of what you have and stop being so, like, greedy. You pitched a no-hitter. You should be like, saying, thank you; thank you to the hitters, you know, that didn’t hit the ball, but instead – so, you know, I guess you just get wise too late in life, I don’t know. I think that the good things, the good times, the good memories, someone said, “You cherish them, you know, you hold onto them and then you promote them through the ages because they are precious and we

are going to have the good and the bad happen in our life times. Some bad memories are going to happen and good that we have no control over.” I’ve always tried to not pay attention to the middle, that’s the big middle right here, right there. It’s junk, whether it’s, “I’m not talking to him because I don’t like him.” I don’t want to hear that. I’m too busy. I don’t want to be bogged down with all these grains of sand. Then when something really tough comes along, you are not going to be able to handle it.

HM: Well, I would like to ask you about the experiences that you’ve seen with Democratic Leadership and maybe Republican Leadership and what your relationship has been like with them through the years?

GC: I’d say its been as well as I could expect based on the fact that I am going to do, respectfully but, still do what sometimes the Leadership doesn’t want me to do. You know, someone along the line said, “You’re off the Reservation.” I said, “No, I am not. What Reservation are you talking about? My Reservation is back home, you know, not down here.” I mean, we all represent the same amount of people. You know, we all have basically the same amount of taxes coming in from the same amount of people. We just got to force ourselves to not be tempted to control everything and control all the money and control this and – some people said to me – I said, “I never ever to this day, I have never liked politics ever.” That’s why it was unannounced way back when we were talking, when I said I decided to run. I never had any desire to, I never was interested in the subject and I found out that I was right, back then. It is not politics, as someone said is not the last great blood sport. Politics, to me, is just like running that F. W. Woolworth

store. You know, you establish what your priorities are and you put it down. You identify the problems, put it together and meet the challenge and attack and do it. So, a couple statements made over the, “Well, you’re in the wrong business.” I said, “I’m not in the wrong business.” I despise and I’m using politics as a – and it’s not a good word. If someone calls you a politician today, they may as well call you a bum. “You’re a real politician. You don’t know my name. Well, what’s my name?,” they’ll say. And I will look at them and say, “Look, if you don’t know your name how am I supposed to know your name?”

HM: *(laugh)*

GC: You know, but I’m kidding.

HM: Right.

GC: The bad part of the politics, “Let’s go and get something on this one. Let’s dirty up this one, blah, blah, blah.” I don’t want anything to do with it, whatsoever; nothing. “Well, you’re in.” No, I’m in the service business. I think I look at this like any other job that I have ever had. Whether it was out on the pitcher’s mound, I knew what my mission was and whether it was little Mrs. Murphy looking for the Goody Too Shoes doll in the Woolworth Store or Arlen’s Department, it’s the same. You find out what the needs are out there and you meet them. So, the political part I never enjoyed and will not, it’s just like, it doesn’t interest me whatsoever. It doesn’t interest me to do things

that are hurting other people. I'm not interested in that subject. Let somebody else who likes doing it do it, but I am not going to.

HM: Well, I have had so many people say that you are the sharpest wit in the whole entire Pennsylvania House and I am probably going to embarrass you a little bit here. So, be forewarned. (*laugh*)

GC: Yeah. I haven't hit a woman, yet. (*laugh*)

HM: In his farewell speech in 2003, Representative John Gordner, [State Representative, Columbia County, 1993-2003; State Senator, 2003-present] – this was on the record, so I'm not saying anything that isn't – said you played a matching face game. Could you tell me what that game was and how it's played?

GC: A matching face game?

HM: I think that.

GC: Oh well, once in awhile, late, you hear people “Move the previous [*inaudible*], I want to get out of here. It's snowing in the west and blah, blah, blah.” And there is a lot of things that I remember. The matching face, I probably was pretending, and God bless him, Rudy Dininni [State Representative, Dauphin County, 1967-1990], who was a

Member on the Republican side, and I was at the microphone one night talking like he did and they were all looking for Rudy Dininni and it was me at the microphone.

HM: *(laugh)*

GC: We did, and, I mean, Carmel Sirianni, [State Representative, Bradford, Sullivan, Susquehanna and Wyoming Counties, 1975-1988], God rest her soul, I'd tease her and she'd say, "I'll wait for you, Cawley." She was up in the northeast, out[side of] Scranton, but she'd say, "I'll wait for you on Route 81. I'll get you."

HM: *(laugh)*

GC: I mean, there was real friendship; that's what it was.

HM: Did you ever take a panoramic and maybe change the faces around.

GC: Oh, yes I did. Yes, Gordon, he liked that, did he?

HM: Yeah. *(laugh)*

GC: Yeah, what I did is I took – in fact, I just came across it recently with packing everything up. What I did was – and I think I beat them to the punch because this was years ago, but I took—and now they come out with them in the magazines. See? I am

not an entrepreneur, I guess. I said, like, if Tom Tigue married E.Z. Taylor [Elinor; State Representative, Chester County, 1977-2006], here is what their children would look like. I'd have Tom Tigue's forehead and E.Z. Taylor as the rest of it, and believe me, it was – I mean it. You forgot about hating. I mean, I guess I tried to rationalize – but I've never really been able to curse at someone or say something nasty about someone when I was laughing. So, I think it took the edge off by doing things and again, I don't like the part about – some people say, "Make me laugh." I mean, that's a challenge. I could make them laugh if I'm me. I am only as good as the as the audiences are. If they're at ease, I'm at ease. And I was at a dinner, a banquet, for Tom Tigue years ago. That is when we had a crisis up in Scranton. Well, northeastern Pennsylvania; 750,000 people had to boil their water because of girardiasis and they were saying that it was because the beaver's were pooping in the water. And when I heard that from very educated people, I said, "Are you – what? This is causing the girardiasis?" "Oh, yes." I said, "Who are you kidding?" I said, "Could you image how bad it was when the dinosaurs were around?"

HM: *(laugh)*

GC: I said, "What, are you nuts?" Anyway, I'm at a dinner for Tigue, and this is right in the middle of the crisis, and we had a great time. I think it was at the Mayfair Supper Club which is below Pittston, Yeatsville. I don't know for sure. Everyone was laughing in the place. Everyone had a great time. They had to have 500 people in a room not much bigger than this and it was packed. You were right among them and they were all roaring and the microphone went out and I start yelling that the beavers ate the wires and

blah, blah, blah. Because I was just telling that story. So, finally, I didn't know, I mean, and Tommy was there and former Mayor McNaulty was there. Kevin Blaum [State Representative, Luzerne County, 1981-2006] had a whole bunch of people there, elected officials or mayors. And I remember saying, "What am I even doing here?" and this is yelling, like, they could hear me. And I just said, "I don't represent a person in this room." I threw all my papers out and I walked out the door and they all stood up, clapping and everything. I did come back in, but I almost just went right out and got in the car and went home. I mean, but it is true. I think it's true, especially if you are laughing with, instead of at, somebody. And that, I guess, is environment with me. It was never a plan but, I mean, I know my wife said many times, "Mr. Personality, if they only knew how you really were. You know, they wouldn't even say hello to you if they only know what you do here at the house. You, Mr. Nasty, and, 'Don't ask me that again,' or blah, blah, blah." Well, those are the things that I regret in my life and I hope I have improved on them by keeping my mouth shut when it should be, but the humor is part of me and I think, in all honesty, it is wonderful. The day flies when you are happy. I mean, I insist that my employees – I was told, "They are going to run all over you." This is when I was managing in retail. "You are too nice to them." I said, "They're not going to run all over me. They are going to lay out in the middle of the road for me because I know how I wanted to be treated when I was mopping the floors. I know what it is to be treated decently and to be treated like you're a bum." You know? And what happened; they didn't. I mean, I said, "I have enough intelligence to find out the 10 percent who are going to try to take advantage of me trusting them. Well, I am going to meet them and say, 'Look, when you are fired, you know, I just want you to know, don't

curse my name to your wife and your children. Look in that mirror, that's the guy that fired you, you bum. Now, you better get up and do your work.'” And from my mother, I think more than anyone, my bark was much, much worse than my bite and, I mean, with the Department of Public Works, I mean, I threatened to put a guy in the Packmaster and press the button, and when his family was looking for him, send him up to the landfill, you know. But my mother, I remember I skipped school one time in my life and that's because my brother and I got caught with a friend of ours, a famous name in Scranton, named Joe Labraski, and we skipped school and went to my aunt's house and told her that we got out early and that was about three miles away, we walked. She said, “Now, we are going to take you home.” I was about eight or nine years old, “No, Aunt Mary, we're going to walk. That's okay.” Well, Aunt Mary called my mother and said, you know, “Your James and Gaynor were over here with Joe Labraski, Margaret.” Well, Joe Labraski's father came down the street right when we were almost home and drove his pickup truck over a curb into a field where we were and gave him a boot with the side of his shoe and he went right into the back of the pickup truck. My mother told my brother and me, “I will go to the electric chair over you two if you ever do this again.” We didn't skip school again and I looked at my mother and she loved us. Like, no one could say anything bad about us, but sometimes it works. You know what I mean? Not terror, but the nuns used to beat us up pretty good. We deserved it, but they didn't, like, there wasn't any damage, you know, outside of our own vanity being damaged. You know, if we got a whack in the side of the cheek or something, but that's how it is here.

HM: Can I embarrass you a little bit more?

GC: Yeah.

HM: *(laugh)* Do you recall Governor Ridge trying to get his voucher passed and walking around with dollar bills?

GC: Yes.

HM: *(laugh)*

GC: Yes, I do. Governor Ridge was calling Members into his office and I guess it was on a budget. I just remember the bottom lines to a lot of the stuff and, again, I'm not *[inaudible]* flowers and cards.

HM: Right, right.

GC: I remember going over there – and I remember the same thing with Governor Casey [Robert P.; Pennsylvania Governor, 1987-1995], God rest his soul. On a three billion dollar tax increase and the Leaders say, “He’s not moving and could you call him up and ask him and blah, blah, blah?” Well, I went up and I don’t remember, I’ll tell you the truth, what it was, but I think I did not agree to what he wanted me to do. And I came back and I took my change out and I put it in all my pockets and I walked down the back steps. The Speaker is on my right from the Governor’s Office and I yelled, “You better

hurry up, the money is almost all gone.” Well, the place broke up because it’s a little tense, you know, and I mean if someone says that they don’t sweat, they better go and see a doctor because it’s, you know, I pretended things, “Oh, nothing bothers him.” Well, it bothers me just as well anyone else, but sometimes you got to be able to roll with it. So, that humor, once in awhile, helps.

HM: On June 16, 2004, Representative Costa announced that the week was unofficially declared Gaynor Cawley Appreciation Week, which happened to be, I think, on your 63rd birthday, right around there?

GC: I don’t know, but I remember it.

HM: So?

GC: I remember the good and the bad, like you do. That was him and Michael Diven and they just think that they should be – they’re wonderful. I mean, and honestly, basically, it’s not because of me, but what they do to me, they do to other people, and guess what? You are making people that are almost invisible feel like they are somebody and they did it and they put it in and, oh, listen and the members were all, “That’s wonderful, I don’t remember anyone doing that for me.” See? And that was Mike Diven and Paul Costa.

HM: Now, what was this Rock to Grouse Nesting Award? There was something – ?

GC: Was that Diven again?

HM: I think that was around the same time, yeah. It was like the Twenty Second Annual?

GC: That's probably – they kept calling me Bobcat Cawley back then, too, because Tom Tigue had a bunch of sportsmen from the Pocono's send him a petition saying that they believed that the bobcat ought to remain on the Endangered Species List. And I said, "Well, I agree with that, too." I said, "You know, we've seen more of the Loch Ness Monster and Bigfoot than we have bobcat." And we went on with stuff like that, and caused some heartache with some people that said, "They hate us, that they are not for it." Well, I got myself in trouble once when I said my kids would rather have pet rabbits than shoot them, too, but basically, do you want to hunt? Go ahead. I'm not against you hunting. You can hunt all day long. I'm just not interested in going. I don't like hockey. I don't understand it, so, I am not against hockey. It's the same, but this is the way I am. With five daughters, I think that they love the way I am, you know? So those are just the little, I guess, the homeruns that you give up in your life, but I'd still throw the same pitch.

HM: Okay, so now that all these Members that I have been talking to have been telling me Gaynor Cawley stories, can you give me a funny story on someone else?

GC: On someone else?

HM: Yeah, or do you have anymore of your own? *(laugh)*

GC: Do you know how old I am? I mean, you know, let me see. Well, I used to always be on Tommy's case, well, because we'd call him the Colonel and he was a full Colonel and Silver Stars Recipient, which he probably never told you. And he didn't tell us either, but we had to find out. So, I'm always, like, his constituents love when I am speaking at his breakfast or, you know, he'll have a breakfast, maybe once a year, and I'll blast him and I'll call him Mr. Personality. When he was a Boy Scout, he would only walk the older women half way across the street and that his father, you know – I wrote a story about Tom Tigue, also, why he never smiled. I have it somewhere, I'll have to drop it off to you but, that night, at that *[inaudible]* dinner club that we were at, that night I started reading his life story about his home and his family and everything and that's when the microphone went out and they threw all the papers out, but, see, I could go on. I mean, if I started with funny stories, you'd burn out the machine.

HM: *(laugh)*

GC: You know what I mean? But I just – you don't need to joke about somebody you just like, you know. We could discuss Alan Butkovitz on our trip out to Pittsburgh or here in the Capitol. It's really Tom Tigue that I think mentioned a few times that I made Harrisburg tolerable to him because we were here together. But what he knows and

maybe isn't said enough and that is what makes it tolerable for me is other people. You know, and when my employees were happy – the best way I can describe it is, did you ever run into a waiter or a waitress that were nasty at a restaurant, that you couldn't wait to get out of there? Well, I wanted, and I told them, "If I don't see a smile on your face today, then you are in trouble. I'll put you in that tank with the Piranhas," and they would start laughing. But I wanted them to really be at ease, because I think when you are at ease, you can really travel that extra mile in your mission. You are sort-of, like I said to Tom, Tom Tigue was kicked out of the 100 yard dash when he was in school, and he was in the track meet, he was kicked out of the 100 yard dash for skipping. You know what I mean? But it does, it puts a little extra skip in your step when you are happy and that's the thing that I don't want – I am miserable. Believe me. Ask my wife; I am miserable. Ask Sally that, or Frankie back home at my office. I'm usually very, you know, very easy to work with but, once in awhile, I'll get, you know, very upset. And so, am I hiding that? I don't think so, but I am like anyone else. I mean, I think the things that I did, that I said over the years, you've got to make those corrections, but only me. Only I can do it. Only you can do it. Some people try to tell other people their faults. They know them, you know what I mean? So, I think it's benefited me to be myself, and it was almost natural; just try to identify with people who maybe need a little recognition at a dinner or something. I have done that many, many times. Some guy that was the best athlete in the school some place and I would say, "And the award this year goes to," and they had no idea and I would name somebody in the audience. You would swear that they just won a million dollars. They would jump. What does it take? Nothing. Two seconds of your time. Two seconds of your time to say hello to someone who probably

no one said hello to all day long, walking on the street like they were invisible. I get a lot of joy out of it.

HM: What was your fondest memory of serving here?

GC: The people that I've met.

HM: What do you think the major changes that you have witnessed through your tenure have been?

GC: Major changes. I think it has gotten a little bit harsher on our constituents over time. The system here – but different people in the different spots is basically the same. We have had a pretty good formula on our taxes that we had. Whether it was the sales tax and everything, because very rarely did we ever have to – I mean sometimes we spend too much, but very rarely did we have to raise taxes in the 26 years I've been here and that wasn't because of me. It was because basically, we had a pretty good formula as to how the revenues were coming in, which probably benefited the public. But I think, I mean, I know that the real necessities that our constituents have has increased and they haven't been able to keep up with it. So, that's the biggest change. Down here, I mean, the people I work with think and, like I mentioned, I am pretty good to work with, but sometimes I am a real pain. I like, maybe, say something that I shouldn't say or be a little more demanding, but usually I'm not. But they have been just wonderful. I mean, they do all the tough work. I mean, like I said to you, if your basement is flooded, I'll be

there, but they are there all the time on everything. Whether it's calling them back and will you please tell them – but they want to talk to you personally and most times and if I can I do, but there is sometimes I just can't. You might be two weeks behind on the other calls that you receive. “Will you please call them back?” “But they only want to talk to you.” “Call them back and tell them that, you know, I am only me and I can't be on that telephone with nine people at the same time. I want to solve their problem but if they only give you a hint to as what the problem is, you might be able to solve it before I even call them back.” Thank God that you have help like that; that understand you and understand the people that you represent. I mean, that was a big, big help. I started this little Hall of Fame up in this little part of Scranton for nobodies and this Sports Hall of Fame with this organization that I grew up with, All High Park baseball team and Teener league. So, I had lots of citations for probably up – I didn't do it in the last six or seven or eight years, I think. But, Sally and Mary Anne in Scranton, who passed away, now, it's Frankie that works for me; they all know these names. Like, Sally was mad when we, we must have had 50 citations for people who – it's amazing, because I just would call them up and say, “Send me your resume. We're going to have an outing at the ball field and blah, blah, blah.” You know, there was at least several of them that would say, “I thought no one ever knew that I played ball or blah, blah, blah.” That made me feel like a million dollars because they were happy. I mean, I mentioned this, I'm only as good as my audience, you know what I mean? If you can just do the things to put them at ease that puts you at ease, so now you have a happy relationship. So, I didn't see big things that change here. I am sure that someone mentioned – and they're not wrong – they probably mentioned that it used to be more friendly here between both sides of the aisle.

In general, they are probably more right than wrong, but I, from a different angle, I think it could make it that way by putting in the time, you know, by knocking on the door. So, it's not going to be any different because of the fact that, like I mentioned before, if we have arguments where people that we love in our own families and you have to watch what you say, of course, it is going to be this way with strangers, you know. So, again, I didn't speak² because I get too emotional, and Italo Cappabianca was the last time that I spoke. So they, "Oh, Gaynor we want you [to]. We wish that you would." I said, "Look, you all I know how I feel about you." I've talked to them many times, we've discussed [it] over the years. I've talked to everyone I've wanted to talk to. "I ain't going to put a show on for you and I am not interested in putting a show on and," and I said, "because the truth is, there are some things about this place I will miss extremely." I mean, big time. There is other things about here that is like walking out of a movie and you said, thank God it's finally over, you know? So, that's life, you know? So, I have always said there is nothing worth giving up over in your whole life. Don't take the bridge over it, but take it serious. Laugh when you can and cry when you have to, you know?

HM: What would your advice be for new Members?

GC: Your mission would be to convey to the people that you represent, including your peers, that if they ever need help, you're there and that is a very strong message because I mentioned to you. Some people say, "I don't even know what you do down there, but I

² When completing their terms of service, many Representatives make a farewell address before their fellow Members of the House of Representatives.

vote for you because I never ask you for anything, but I heard that if you need help, call Gaynor, you know.” If you are not that type of a person, go and check yourself out and make your corrections, a little bit at a time. There is a lot of things you are going to do that you’re, like me, whining all the way to a dinner and saying, “Thank you, God,” on the way back home. That’s just the way it is, but some things, you have to do a lot of things that you don’t really care like doing. That’s probably why I skipped school that day. I didn’t want to go to school, that’s obvious, but its not going to kill you to do your very best. But the main thing is, don’t worry. Don’t zero in on running around town with your horn stuck. Because, first of all, it doesn’t read well and second of all, your best promoter is the work you do. It isn’t what you say, it’s what you do. Don’t tell everyone what a great [*inaudible*] you are. Just quietly climb in between the ropes and let them decide and that’s been, to me at least, what people tell me. Like I said, I don’t have my plan. I don’t have a plan. My plan is what are my responsibilities and do them; that’s my plan. So, I don’t do things because I know that this one wants this and this one. Usually, if someone wants something and needs something that is legit, I’m there. I’m even there if it’s sort of like, I know it’s not that important. So, I get the message across, you know, the reason why I can’t make this call because they are down along the river. You know, I know your garbage is late, but they are down along the river taking out furnaces and it’s frozen, just like mine, so don’t get all excited about it. See, and I have a tough time saying no. I mean, I think most people do. Tom Tigie doesn’t, but he has just as soft heart as I do or anybody else does. It’s all just a toughie thing, it’s my mother’s thing. “If I ever catch you doing that,” you know, but Tigie’s great. They call him, like a friend of mine back home, Paul Catalano, and some friends say, “he’s Rush

Limbaugh and you're Mother Theresa's brother." So, maybe it makes a good combination, I don't know.

HM: *(laugh)* My last question; how would you like to be remembered?

GC: Just as somebody who cared. It's short, but it means a lot. A decent human. If you turn that off, I'll tell you one more thing that says the whole story.

HM: Okay, whenever we're done.