

PENNSYLVANIA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
BIPARTISAN MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

INTERVIEW WITH:

**The Honorable Thomas Michlovic (D)**

35<sup>th</sup> District

Allegheny County

1979-2002

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY: Heidi Mays, House Archivist  
January 24, 2006

Transcribed by: Raymond Whittaker

© Pennsylvania House of Representatives, Office of the Chief Clerk

**Heidi Mays (HM):** Good afternoon.

**The Honorable Thomas Michlovic (TM):** Good afternoon. Pleased to be here.

**HM:** Thank you. I'm here today with former Representative Thomas Michlovic who represented the 35<sup>th</sup> District from Allegheny County, serving from 1979 to 2002.

**TM:** Right.

**HM:** Could you start off by telling us what kind of experiences, in your early childhood with your family life, prepared you for public service?

**TM:** I think the biggest effect from my childhood was almost [being] one of in a family of 11. I was one of the younger, I was the ninth of 11 children. And so, you were always sharing. You were always squabbling and trying to fight for your share of whatever the goodies were, whether it was a meal or some other benefit. And I was fortunate to live in a mill town in North Braddock and the mill workers would walk to work and those times – I was born in 1946, it was the first year of the baby-boomers<sup>1</sup> – there were kids all over our neighborhood. And so, we had a gang of kids in the neighborhood and I somehow was the leader. I was the leader of that gang of kids, and we'd play ball and I made a lot of decisions, whether we played baseball or softball or whether we were going up the hill to play army or whether we were going to do this or that. And I didn't realize it at the time, but I had an affinity for leadership. Years later, I, you know, when I went through

---

<sup>1</sup> People born in the post-WW II economic prosperity, which increased birth rates in America.

high school, I came out of high school and started in a job in a soils engineering company. I was a surveyor. I had had technical training in high school. I was surveyor/draftsman, that kind of thing. And in the course of that, I got this job and we were building steel mills and the Vietnam War [1959-1975] was going on. I got a deferment, a critical skills deferment, because we were building steel mills, which were important to the war effort. And so, I worked there for a couple of years and my boss says, "You know, you're too bright to be just an assistant. You've got to go to college. And if you don't go to college, I'm going to have you fired," you know, and I knew he wasn't serious, but I never really had anybody that said, you know, "you're too bright to be here, you need to go to," you know, you need to move on to the next phase. So, I saved some money and I said, "Hey let's do it." So, I signed up for school, Davis and Elkins, in West Virginia, and I went down there with an eye toward an engineering degree, but in my first week there, I was elected as the President of the dormitory, just to sit on Student Government. And again, I realized I had an affinity for this thing. I had the talents to get along with people. Coming from a big family, it was always easy for me to talk to people and get along with them. And I also realized that I didn't really like engineering that much. In my job, prior to that, we would work all kinds of hours. I'd be working and building a bridge and then you would be done with a project and breathe and then you'd be on to the next one. And I couldn't commit my life to building, you know, roads, and a bridge, or a building, or something. Ironically, I spent the same amount of time in my later life going to meetings, but I never had a problem with that. And so, I guess I was just made for, you know, serving people and working with people. It was what I was meant to do. Well, I got drafted because I moved into college, and I was

drafted and went to the war. And went over there and was wounded, received the Purple Heart, and came back [and] finished out my military duty. And came back and now, I had money to go to college the rest of the way. I wound up at the University of Pittsburgh and got a degree in Political Science, because I realized that I wanted to do; politics. You know, in the mid-[19]60s, the whole thing of policy and questioning policy was fermenting, actually these were the late 60s and early 70s, so, I went a got a political science degree and then furthered that with – I hadn't run out of my money from the G.I. Bill<sup>2</sup> – I got a graduate degree in Public Administration with an eye toward public office. And as I was getting that, I was looking around to see which office and which job I should run for and realized that the Legislature was the lowest that was a fully paid, full-time position. And that's what I wanted to do. And so, I spied my Legislator. I found him, of course, with bad ambition; I found him to be wanting and decided to take it on. I ran and lost and at the time, too – this was right after Watergate, the early/mid-[19]70s – and I was working with Common Cause. I was one of the institutors along with my colleague, Allen Kukovich [State Representative, Westmoreland County, 1977-1996; State Senator, 1997-2004], to set up Pennsylvania Common Cause. And at the time, that organization was organized by Congressional District. Well, we were meeting here in Harrisburg and I got involved with state legislation and we were setting up the state thing. And I was kind of getting familiar with Harrisburg. Well, I ran against my opponent, a gentleman by the name of A.J. Valicenti [State Representative, Allegheny County, 1969-1978], called "Speedo" Valicenti, and I lost. And one of the people I had met here in those Common Cause efforts worked on an Insurance Committee and I applied for a job

---

<sup>2</sup> Also known as the Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944 – provided for college or vocational training for veterans of wars after WWII.

here. I received the job and I was working for two weeks and I bumped into Speedo on an elevator and he looked at me and he says, “What are you doing here?” And I said, “Well, I have a job with the Insurance Committee.” And he says, “Oh, no you don’t.” He had me fired. I worked for two weeks, got one paycheck and a pink slip and I was gone. And instead of just going home and brooding about it, I went home and said I’m calling a press conference. I said, “Speedo Valicenti had me fired, he took my job and I’m going to take his,” and from that day on, I started running against him. And I took a very different and more aggressive approach, not just talking about what a nice guy I am, but I went after his record and developed a technique. I had showed you campaign materials earlier of delivering my message through school kids. And I had a fellow teacher who offered all of his kids extra credit if they would work for a candidate, any candidate. And of course, I made it easier for those kids to work and I would take them out on a Saturday with a couple of my buddies and we’d each get in a car with three or four kids and we would just go through a neighborhood and deliver literature to everyone. And two, three weeks later we’d have another piece of literature, a different one with another story. And we did that four times in that District, so we got everybody a message four times and I had a mailing, which was a fifth time. And we won the election, and that’s my story of how I got here.

**HM:** Could you comment on the demographic make-up of your District?

**TM:** Sure. My District was a Union/Labor district. I had the United States Steel Workers – in my District of Braddock – plant, which is still operating today as we tape

this, some two decades later. It was the first integrated steel mill in the country. And that town, Braddock, was also the home of the Braddock/Carnegie Library, which was the first Carnegie Library of the 1400 that Andrew Carnegie<sup>3</sup> built around this country. So, and is also the location of the infamous Braddock's defeat where George Washington first showed the stuff of leadership some 250 years ago, as we sit here. So, that was there and there was also the Westinghouse plant and in the Westinghouse plant was the first commercial radio broadcast in the country with KDKA. And it was the first, right near there, is a little nuclear plant [Shippingport Atomic Plant]. It looks like a little globe that sat up on a hill in Shellfont, and it was the first location of an atomic plant in the country. A lot of history right around there and it was a working-class place. Westinghouse built large-rotating, these big turbine engines that opened the doors of locks and dams and the Panama Canal and all of this stuff. And so, there was a lot of history there. And the workers were my, I considered them, my constituents; my prime source of my constituency. In fact, one of the ways that I won this election – remember, my opponent at the time was the President of the Union down at the Steel Works – in the morning, I would go to those steel mill plants and shake their hands and ask for their vote. And they said, “Ah, we’ll never see you after the election. I’ll give you a vote, but we’ll never see ya.” And the day after the election, I was there, that morning, thanking those guys. I ran from the steel mill up to the Westinghouse plant and the universal comment, “We never saw anybody come back to say thanks.” And I think that “thank you,” which I did after each election, that “thank you” served me as much for re-election as anything I did in the next campaign. And it was an important technique.

---

<sup>3</sup> 1835-1919: Scottish-American businessman and philanthropist and the founder of Carnegie Steel, later known as U.S. Steel.

**HM:** Did the District change over the years at all?

**TM:** Absolutely. In the early [19]80s, 1982 if I recall, they started the steel shutdowns. You had the Homestead plant [that] was shutting down, the Duquesne plant was shutting down, McKeesport was shutting down. Now, they weren't all in my District then, I think Duquesne was at the time and McKeesport. I had a little part of McKeesport at the time. But, they affected workers throughout the Valley, throughout the region. And so we began going to a lot of meetings where, you know, people were demanding action from government. And what do you do? I mean it's a private company saying, "We're shutting this plant down." And so, we began taking a serious look along with a great deal of help from the International Union of United Steel Workers and we set up this group called Tri-State Conference on Steel. And from that group, we began looking at the process of eminent domain in Pennsylvania Law and maybe taking over a plant and running it with the workers; with making an investment with some of the pension monies or some of the monies available to U.S. Steelworkers Union. And out of that came the Steel Valley Authority, of which I still am Vice-President today, some 20-some years later. And we have a program that was just expanded here to Central Pennsylvania, which is the SEWN Project: the Strategic Early Warning Network. And we go out and we send consultants out and review companies that are either going to change hands, the owner is getting old and looks to be moving on or companies that are in trouble, and we try to work with them and get help for them. So, back then, we were just attending meetings about these issues and trying to help steel workers keep their jobs. But, out of it

came a whole system of remedies for other plants later on. Not for those steel works. In the one case, there was a rather famous blast furnace called Dorothy Six in the early [19]80s and it was in the Duquesne plant. And it won the award, just the year prior to, for being the most productive blast furnace in the U.S. Steel's whole system and they were shutting it down the next year. And, I mean, those guys were just so angry, and part of what we did was with this Tri-State Conference on Steel and then the Steel Valley Authority is we were able to, with some of the resources of the Steel Workers Union, to engage a consultant off of Wall Street, Lazard Frere, who came down and did a feasibility study of whether or not we could make this work; because if we could, we were going to take it over by eminent domain. And they came back and said, "No you can't. You just can't make money in this plant." And the fact that it was their consultant, it was their, you know, he was coming back and honestly telling them that no, this plant can't make them money in today's market, the steelworkers bought it. And actually, we had guys threaten with guns to sit up in the hills and shoot at truck drivers coming in to dismantle the plant. It was a very, very hot situation. And through this feasibility study, we were able to, kind-of, get folks to settle down and realize that that was the end of that plant. And today, we have all new businesses on that plant; it still sits on the river. We have the Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank on that plant, serving 22 counties. So, we moved on, change happened, but it wasn't fun while we were doing it.

**HM:** Was that one of your hardest issues?

**TM:** Oh, yes. Guys losing their jobs and their careers, you know, they're young, they're in their 30's and 40's. They have a real change of life. They didn't know anything else; that's awfully tough. It was one of the toughest times in my career and about that same time, I had the Woodland Hills merger. The General Braddock School District, which was largely a minority/black population, was, through a federal lawsuit, going to be merged with the Turtle Creek Churchill School Board; Swissvale, Edgewood, all of which were white communities surrounding it. It was very, very dicey. But, we were able to work through it and, with my colleague in the neighboring District who shared some of those communities with me, [Representative] Ron Cowell [Ronald; State Representative, Allegheny County 1975-1998], we kept pounding away at trying to improve the proposals and the prospects. When it was finally handed down, we determined we're going to make it work and the people did too and it's been a success story. Not just on the football field, because they won a number of championships, but I think it's been a success story in the classrooms, too. I always say, those kids in the General Braddock School Districts, which was the minority districts, had no chance. I mean, they had no chance. The education, at that point – and this was in the early [19]80s – they just weren't getting enough to go out into the world. And now, they have a chance. A lot of them have succeeded. And so, I am particularly proud of sticking with it and taking all the hell, but I was fighting for those kids, even with some of my own family, who had kids in that other school district, you know, were not happy with it.

**HM:** Well, we talked about some of the concerns of your District. You were the Chairman of the Allegheny County delegation for awhile; how were the county's concerns different from your District?

**TM:** Well, the county's, there were two major entities. You've got to understand, in Allegheny County about a third of the county, now it's a quarter, but then it was about a third, was the city. And so, the city had specific interests with, you know, all the corporate headquarters and they were losing population, the shopping district, and such. Those were issues that were kind-of exclusive to them. The county had other issues and was more involved in that time with services; children and youth services, with mental health services, with the, you know, the state provides money for those things, but we implemented through those counties. And so, at the time, Tom Foerster and Pete Flaherty were the County Commissioners, and Tom Foerster was very aggressive about addressing those needs. And later in his career – he had come through the Pennsylvania Legislature he was a Senator<sup>4</sup> – but he became, the later he moved into his career, the more he became an advocate of people and services to meet the needs of those people. I got along with him fabulously well and we, I think, accomplished quite a bit. I was a sponsor of a bill on mental health insurance and it took me over 20 years to get the bill finally passed. And when it did pass, there was one vote against it on the Floor of the House and it was mine. And it was mine because it wasn't nearly what it should have been. It was just a, in my way of thinking at the time, I thought it was just a façade of a bill; after all that time, that's what we got. But, in my role as delegation leader, I always thought you were a convener. You're trying to get areas of commonality and get enough

---

<sup>4</sup> Thomas Foerster was a State Representative of Allegheny County, from 1959-1968.

votes to get something passed. And at the time, this was in the late [19]80s, early [19]90s, the steel mills had gone down now, we have a rusting on the sites and people were anxious about jobs, as they always are, and so we had to convert those plants, those sites, into real jobs. We had the land. It was right next to the water, there were rail lines to them, and it was going to take a lot of money to do it. That was not going to come from the local government; it had to come from the State. The Feds weren't all that interested in doing mill site legislation at the time. And so, it was a matter of getting into a bond issue. And we got some very large bond issues in the late [19]80s, early [19]90s to do this work and we negotiated. Philadelphia got a new Convention Center, we got 90 million dollars for our airport expansion – which is now a world renowned airport – and we also cleared some of those mill sites. I remember Tom Murphy [Thomas; State Representative, Allegheny County, 1979-1994] as the one that really was, you know, [the] strongest advocate for getting our act together. He asked the County Commissioners, the Mayor, the university Presidents, everybody who was coming to us individually, he says, “You have to come up with a single plan.” And they did and they called it Strategy 21. It wasn't really anything more than a compilation of all of those projects, but it was a package and in order for Philadelphia to get our vote for their package, which was the Convention Center and some of their cultural amenities down in the Broad Street area, we wanted Strategy 21. So, sure enough, we got the deal, got the votes together and we started clearing the mill sites. And the whole notion, we met with Dick Ceyart, who at the time was President of Carnegie Mellon, and he said, “The future economy is going to be based on knowledge. It's going to be computers and it's going to be bio-tech.” And it's going to be all these things. I didn't even know what bio-tech,

bio-genetic engineering, what's that? I didn't even know it. And he was right, and we decided that the mill site that was nearest to the universities in Oakland, which is called Second Avenue site, would be all these high-tech companies. We wouldn't allow any other kinds of companies. And if you go down there today, the software engineering, not the software engineering, but the tissue engineering stuff came out of there, the high-tech transportation systems with the WEBCO, WEBTECH and some of those plants are down there. So, it was a plan that worked. It was a plan that worked. And my job was to get everybody together and it was pretty easy in that instance. But, there were other instances; I remember when we came near to a fist fight over the Port Authority and changing rules for the Port Authority of Allegheny County for the bus drivers. And those of us – and remember we're Democrats, generally pro-Union; I'm from a Union district – but what happened in the mid-[19]60s when they consolidated, the banks had a lot of debt from all of these little transportation companies. And so, they came up to Harrisburg [and] advocated to put them into one whole unit called the Port Authority to pay off their debt. Well the banks got out with their money, but what they had, they left us a mess of old equipment, work rules that didn't work and so, you know, we had work rules where there had to be two guys on a bus or a shift or on a train, and they didn't fit together. And over the 20 years that the Port Authority had been in existence, the work rules stood against any kind of pruning and necessary changes to get into the modern world. And one of them was smaller buses. You couldn't have a small bus because, you know, when they talked about a bus, they actually described the size of the bus. So, we got the small buses to go into the neighborhoods, saved on fuel, saved on time, and we used the big buses on the main lines, the bus-ways and such. And that fight was a terrible fight within

our Caucus because our delegation of about 22 Democrats was split right down the middle. The Democrats were in control at the time, and we couldn't get agreement on it. And that was a tough one. We finally won that with coalescing with the Republicans and some of us Democrats that led the fight on that. And we had to fight our whole Caucus because they, you know, the Philadelphia guys weren't going to, you know, take a vote against the Unions because they didn't have to in this instance. So, those were some of the things as delegation leader. But one of the biggest responsibilities I had as a leader was doing the reapportionment. In 1992, it was a reapportionment year and we had to lose two seats in Allegheny County, at the time, with our population. And so basically, the leadership – the way it works is, they split out Philadelphia, they split out Allegheny County and they would work on the middle part of the State and negotiate one region against the other and one District against the other. Well, Allen Kukovich was in our leadership then and he was put in charge of this task. And so, the carve out for Allegheny County, I was going to take the role leading the Democratic effort. And the way I did it was simple; we had a guy who was extremely important to all of us, his name was Vic Willam. And Vic, when I first started running, helped me run my campaign with all my literature; Tom Murphy's campaign, helped Mike Dawida [Michael; State Representative, Allegheny County, 1979-1988; State Senator, 1989-1996] run. And after we won, we, of course, got Vic to work on the next crews. And we got Joe Markosek [Joseph; State Representative, Allegheny and Westmoreland Counties, 1983-present] and Dave Mayernik [David; State Representative, Allegheny County, 1983-2002] elected and Tony DeLuca [Anthony; State Representative, Allegheny County, 1983-present] elected. And after those guys, we got Dave Levdansky [David; State Representative, Allegheny

and Washington Counties, 1985-present] elected. We got Ralph Kaiser [State Representative, Allegheny County, 1989-2002] elected. And all of these guys had used Vic Willam as their guru, as their consultant. And so, you know, we owed so much to Vic because he was really a brilliant guy. So, we got him a job here in Harrisburg on Ivan Itkin's [State Representative, Allegheny County, 1973-1998] staff, who was in leadership at the time. And Vic, as I said, helped all of these guys get elected, so I used Vic – who they all trusted, even if they didn't trust me, and I think a lot of them trusted me – but in this issue of reapportionment, you couldn't trust anybody. But, they trusted Vic because he helped them get elected. And I used Vic, and we interviewed each guy and went around and said, you know, "What do you absolutely need? What can you give up? What would you like to give up? What can't you give up?" And we went through each guy and I knew all the time that we're going to have to lose one Member. And I would ask them, "If we have to lose one, who has it got to be?" And I took, basically, a confidential vote of that delegation and that guy happened to be one of our older Members, who was in failing health and wouldn't admit it. So, we iced him out of the map and after doing that, he ran for Congress and lost and so we were able to succeed in getting that done. But, that process, I think, earned me the respect of my fellow Members of the delegation, because it was a fair process. We worked it around and I developed a basic consensus; and even with the Member that was left out, it was a pretty fair process for him, too. And we made the decision for him to leave because he was driving up here and couldn't see and he had sight problems, diabetes, he had other health issues and he wouldn't admit it and he needed to get out of the game.

**HM:** Is reapportionment always fair?

**TM:** No. No. You know, I taught a course for some time after my election with Dave Mayernik - who is very conservative, generally, [and] I'm very liberal – and we go into class and we fight in front of the kids and all. We have a great time. But, that's the one point that I make: when you come up here the first year, you think, "Oh, we're going to do this," and, you know, "this doesn't work that way, we're going to change this." No. It's not about "why?" It's about who, what, where, and when. You know, the right committee, the right person, the right time, you know, for ideas to move in. And, you know, that's the hardest thing for people to get to understand is that it's not a rational process. It's not rational; it's emotional, it's human. You know, they're a lot of things that come into play here that do not involve rationality. And that's why it's so confusing for people to see this process.

**HM:** So, what was it like for you the first time you saw the process on the Floor? What did you think?

**TM:** *(Laugh)* Well, I couldn't understand how they knew what they were voting for. I mean, I know the Democrats are up on one board and they're red and the Republicans are up on another board and they're green, or vice versa. But, outside of Party-line, you can't be voting for Party-line all the time; I knew that wasn't there. And I didn't realize then the importance of the Caucuses and how you go to a Caucus and the staff person tells you and brings up the major issues and you go over it and you get a chance to question them

and give an opinion about what you think, other Members don't agree with that. You have big debate within your own Caucus before you ever go to the Floor. So, when you go to the Floor, you've heard it all before. I mean, you know, so you're telling a joke or you're talking to your neighbor about this and people are watching you and they're saying, "Well, how do they know what's going on?" You know what's going on because the process drives you that way.

**HM:** Who are some of the Members that helped you out early on in your career?

**TM:** Well, I think a lot of my colleagues that I admired most, I think, were essentially my contemporaries. They came in with me or just a little before me. And I think that's true of every incoming class. They kind-of have a bond, you know, they're going through this process together, but the guys that are just a few years in front of them are the folks that they're closest to and I was no different. We used to come from Pittsburgh; we would come, Allen Kukovich, Ron Cowell, myself, Bill DeWeese [H. William; Fayette, Greene and Washington Counties, 1976-present; Speaker 1993-1994], Frank Pistella [State Representative, Allegheny County, 1979-2006], would drive up in a single car. We'd all meet at New Stanton and pile into one guy's car and drive up and have a raucous time on the way up. And I know other guys, [Tom] Murphy and [Mike] Dawida, Steve Seventy [State Representative, Allegheny County, 1979-1988] drove up every week on Sunday night; they all three drove together and talked about political stories. And so, it was fun, it was fun. I think that it was just so enjoyable. And when we got up here, we would go through all the machinations of law-making and politics and lobbyists

and then we would go out with one another and maybe play a game of tennis. I didn't play golf then, but we'd play tennis and go to dinner together. It was a very, very enjoyable time.

**HM:** You lived with several Members.

**TM:** Right.

**HM:** You purchased a house?

**TM:** Yes. It was called Green Street, 1616 Green Street, up here in Harrisburg. A number of us were renting and we were all buddies, so we decided the thing to do was to buy a house, let it evaluate over time and, you know, at the end of our careers sell it. Well, little did I realize that I was going to be the bookkeeper in this whole process. We went out to look at the houses and Tom Murphy is the guy who loves remodeling houses and you know, so he says, "I've got the perfect place." A lobbyist up here, Karen Ball, had guided him up in that section about 10 blocks, 15 blocks up from the Capitol. And the first time we looked at the house, we're all in this car, and we come driving down the street, real slow, and I can literally see through the front door transom. I can see sky through what was supposed to be a roof and I'm thinking, "Oh my God." And Ron Cowell looks over and he looks out there and he says, "I'm out." (*laugh*) "I'm out, forget it." And so, he says, "Okay, well, we'll put a roof on the thing, you know, it's a good buy." We bought it for a couple thousand, four thousand dollars, or something like that.

And we put 25 thousand dollars into renovations and fixing it up. And we each had a room in the house. There were three floors and we had a renter on the first floor and then the second floor there were three rooms and the third floor there were three rooms. And in the house was myself, Allen Kukovich, Huck Gamble [Ronald; State Representative, Allegheny County, 1977-1996], Tom Murphy, Mike Dawida, and Steve Seventy. And of all of those folks, the most colorful character was Steve Seventy. And Steve was a guy from the Southside who liked the numbers, he loved playing the numbers, he loved gambling. You go to a ball game with him and he would bet whether it was going to be a strike or a ball. He would, you know, a quarter. It was just in him. And he was just a wonderful guy, with a wonderful positive attitude. He was a musician, and he was the life of the party, because he would pull out his accordion and, you know, start playing, “Name this tune.” And he would throw a quarter on the floor, “Name this tune.” (*laugh*) So, Allegheny County was the life, you know. We’d have some time off from the Caucus and we’d go over to our – we had the whole delegation and one bank of offices over here in the South Office<sup>5</sup> – and everybody would start pouring in and we’d be over there singing. And you know, these were when you had late night Sessions and leadership were banging out some bill and everybody was waiting around to do something. Well, we were always doing something fun, you know. It was a great time and the House allowed me to gain friendships and trusts. And there were times when – you know, Huck Gamble was extremely conservative, I’m pretty liberal, Allen Kukovich very liberal, Murphy’s pretty conservative on fiscal issues and stuff – but they would vote with an amendment that I put up or I’d vote with an amendment they put up because of friendship. You know, the guy needed your help and he was your buddy. And it wasn’t

---

<sup>5</sup> The South Office Building was renamed in 2003, the K. Leroy Irvis Office Building.

a major policy issue that was going to make or break the Commonwealth. And it's what people don't understand; there's a lot of that that goes into every vote, every piece of legislation. And the other thing that you must learn here immediately and people don't understand is: you can never make a permanent enemy of anybody on that Floor. You need their vote for the next vote. So, you know, you learn to get along with people, find your areas of commonality and work them. I'll never forget, I had assault weapons ban legislation. I was a Vietnam War Veteran shot with an assault weapon, an AK-47, and, you know, there's no reason in the world, in my mind, that assault weapons ought to be on the streets. We're having people killed, you know, and it's so much easier to have people killed with an assault weapon. And so, I had this amendment and I had pictures of 40 different weapons that I was banning by name in this legislation. And I had a picture and put that on everybody's desk, 40 different pages of assault weapons. It was very controversial and the Legislature in Pennsylvania is strongly pro-gun. And I had a colleague who I served with on the Insurance Committee, an older gentleman, and, you know, of everybody on that Floor: that guy, I just never agreed with him on anything. I couldn't conceive of anything that I could agree with him on. So, I got up and introduced my legislation and the first guy that got up and spoke in favor of that legislation was that guy. And I was just bowled over, and it brought that lesson home to me, again, that you never know what, you know, people think about different issues and don't take them for granted and never make an enemy of them. There's something that you two agree on that you don't even know about.

**HM:** Well, what were the major issues with the assault weapons ban that you were trying, that people were opposed to it? Explain it to me.

**TM:** Well, the National Rifle Association was opposed to it.

**HM:** Right.

**TM:** It's who, what, where, and when.

**HM:** Okay.

**TM:** And the "who" was the National Rifle Association was opposed. A lot of Members were very nervous about that. They never take a vote against them. Now, there were a lot of Members that believed that, you know, the Second Amendment has no limits and all of that, but a lot more are concerned about the National Rifle Association, in my mind. So, that was the big thing.

**HM:** And you fought that fight for many years.

**TM:** Many years. I think one time I got about 55 or 60 votes on my assault weapons ban.

**HM:** Kept trying, though.

**TM:** Pardon.

**HM:** You kept trying though.

**TM:** You got to keep trying.

**HM:** Okay. Later in your career, did you serve as a mentor to anyone?

**TM:** Yes. A young guy came to my office one day and wanted to challenge an incumbent. And I was very strong about this. I would not, you know, one of my colleagues, I would not – whether or not I agreed with him or liked him – I would not get into that business. Because the Republicans, yeah, they’re putting up candidates against you, you’ve got to do the same against them. But, this young guy was going to take on a Democrat and I said, “I can’t do this publicly. The only thing I will do is I’ll give you the name of this guy and you talk to him and see if he’s interested.” And at that time, Vic Willam didn’t work here. He was still back home working as a consultant where he could. And so, I gave him Vic’s number and Vic took on that campaign and they won. So, Dave [Levdansky] now has served over 20 years in the House. And, you know I have always called him the “rookie” and gave him a lot of guff, but I admired his courage. He came in that first year when we were in that terrible fight over the Port Authority and he stuck with us even though he, too, was from a union District. I’ve always admired him for that.

**HM:** How did you work with both Democratic and Republican leadership to resolve legislative issues?

**TM:** I don't know if you work with leadership. I'm not sure the question is phrased properly. You work with your colleagues on both sides. You know, over time, and it doesn't take long, you establish who you are and what you're about up here. And I was about a clean environment, a clean government and I was about those kinds of issues. I was labor-oriented. People know that – they may not agree with it; they may vote against stuff like that – but they respect you for that view. I think you're not [here] too long before you realize that everybody is a product of their own environment, their own neighborhood, their own District. And they're representing those people. So, I would, you know, I'd take positions and people would know that, you know, this environment: I know where Michlovic's going to be on this. But, they also knew that I studied the issue. I was honest about it. I wasn't doing it for any, (quote) "nefarious reason," a campaign contribution. They felt I was voting for it because I believed in it. And that is, you know, to my mind, is where we really want to be; to have the respect of your colleagues for your position. And in turn, you respect theirs.

**HM:** Could you comment on the changes in Party leadership throughout the years?

**TM:** When I came in my first vote was in Caucus; it's a vote for leadership. And prior to the vote, everybody's maneuvering to be in this position or that position and, at the

time, Irvis [K. Leroy; State Representative, Allegheny County, 1959-1988; Speaker 1977-1978, 1983-1988] and Manderino [James; State Representative, Westmoreland County, 1967-1989; Speaker, 1989], Manderino was going to challenge Irvis for Speaker. And they went through this whole thing and these were two of the most powerful people in the State. And, you know, they're calling you. One day one's calling you, next day – and I said to Manderino, I said, “Jim, I'm from Allegheny County. I'm with Leroy.” And Leroy was, you know, an icon in Allegheny County as a Legislator. And, you know, he says, “Okay, I respect that.” And so, after they made us go through all of that, they wind up at the last minute, the eleventh hour, making up their differences. Leroy was going to be the Speaker, Manderino was going to be the Majority Leader, but Manderino was going to have all the power, and Leroy would have a bunch of jobs and stuff. And I was ticked. I mean they made us go through that. I was ticked, you know? And so my first vote up here I voted against Leroy Irvis for Speaker and I voted against Jim Manderino, in Caucus, you know, for Majority Leader. And I'll never forget, I was sitting there and they say, you know, and everybody in the Caucus is happy because they don't have to vote against these guys, “So, all in favor of vote Leroy. Aye!” “No,” and everybody's like, “Who the hell is that guy?” And you know, then they go through the same process for Majority Leader. “We have Jim Manderino. Everybody in favor? Aye! Any “no's”?” “No.” They're like, “Oh my God, that guy's nuts. This guy is crazy.”

**HM:** And that's your first vote?

**TM:** Yeah, yeah, that was my first vote in Caucus. So, a little while later I feel this weight on my shoulder. Its big Jim Manderino [and he] has his elbow on my shoulder and he says, “You’re not going to do that on the Floor are you?” (*laugh*) I said, “No, Jim, I’ll vote Democrat here. I’m not going to do that.” But, he, of all the people that I served with, leaders that I’ve served with, Jim Manderino, by far – and I’ll think you’ll find that anybody who came in my generation will say, by far – Jim Manderino was the best Leader we ever had. He has a real empathy with people, with the people we were serving. He had the thick skin of a rhino. In fact, I once called him a “rhino” in Caucus. He used to slaughter my name and I was very particular about my name. Get my name right: Tom Michlovic. Everybody would call me Micklovic, Michlovich, you know, they would slaughter it, and particularly the Speaker, Jack Seltzer [H. Jack; State Representative, Lebanon County, 1957-1980; Speaker 1979-1980], who was Republican, at the time, and it got so –he would go to his aide and say, “How does he say his name?” He’d say, “Michlovic.” “Ah, Mr. Michlovick?” And I’d say, “Mr. Michlovic, Mr. Speaker.” And so, everybody knew I was particular about my name. I wanted them to say it right up front. And so one time, we’re taking a Caucus vote on, I don’t know, a pay-raise or gas tax or some tough vote, and they were trying to get a read. And they’re going through the list of names and Manderino’s going down and says, “Micklovick?” And I said, “The vote is no Mr. Manderhino.” And everybody in the Caucus cracked up. They were just on the floor because, you know, I gave it back to him. And he was mature enough to, he wouldn’t get mad over something like that. And that’s one thing that I appreciated with Manderino, was his maturity. He knew who was working hard. I got a call from him, one day, says, “Tom, can you use 10 thousand dollars for your local

office?” I hadn’t even asked him. I said, “Absolutely.” So, I can get another staff person and do more constituent service and work. But, he didn’t give that to everybody. He gave it to the guys that he knew, you know, were in trouble or working hard and didn’t put as much time in handling constituent stuff and needed help with staff to do that because they were working on bills in Harrisburg and stuff. And he would give you the run if you – Murphy, Dawida, and I were all on the Insurance Committee and we were his hounddogs on that Committee. and he fed us staff and he let staff go to us because, you know, we were after the right thing. And Bill Wachob [William; State Representative, Clearfield County, 1979-1984] and Joe Hoeffel [Joseph; State Representative, Montgomery County 1977-1984; U.S. Representative, 1999-2004] were on the Health and Welfare Committee and he had to keep leaders, he knew we had Chairman that were too close to the industry and were too susceptible to being there. And he would sic the young guys on them. But, he was smart enough to do that. And Leroy Irvis was the finest orator, perhaps, that I have ever seen in my career; could give a speech at the drop of a dime. But, Jim Manderino was the Leader, there’s no question about that. The later Leaders, Bill DeWeese; I always liked Bill personally, and he tells me to this day every time he sees me, I never voted for him, “You’re the only guy that never voted for me. I like you, but you never voted for me.” And I didn’t feel Bill had; one, the leadership qualities necessary to – I don’t think he had the empathy for people and issues. He wasn’t interested in issues and you can’t be a Leader and not be worried about your troops. So, those were my assessments. I mean, your earlier question about how do you work with leadership? I think you do your job on the Committee and you gain a reputation and an understanding and they begin to rely on you. I can’t tell you the

number of times I came out of the men's room running onto the Floor, there's a vote going on in Education. I would look to Ron Cowell's vote, "How's Ron voting on this?" And I would vote. I didn't listen to the whole debate. The arcane issues involved in that and, you know, I didn't have the Committee background and knowledge on that issue, so I voted with somebody I trusted.

**HM:** Well, you served on many committees while you were here.

**TM:** Oh, yes.

**HM:** Could you describe some of the important issues or aspects of your committee work throughout your tenure? Some of them being Veterans Affairs and Emergency Preparedness –

**TM:** Well, I was lucky in my career, later – well, let me tell you, I had served, probably about 10 terms, 20 years, and I still wasn't a Chairman. And there were people in the other class – the whole rule around Harrisburg is generally seniority, with few exceptions, almost no exceptions. People were named to committees based upon their being the next in line and seniority. And that's probably a wise process because it's an understandable and it's an easy process. You don't get into all kinds-of problems and fights over it. And when my turn came up, Bill DeWeese, who was Leader, named guys in the class behind me to Chairmanships. And it wasn't just me. It was Frank Pistella, who was also from Allegheny County, and Gaynor Cawley [State Representative,

Lackawanna County, 1981-2006] and Tom Tigue [Thomas; State Representative, Lackawanna, Luzerne and Monroe Counties, 1981-2006], I believe. And so, at the time, we had some Members, primarily Dave Mayernik, Ralph Kaiser, and Harry Readshaw [State Representative, Allegheny County, 1995-present] who were close to the Republicans, John Perzel [State Representative, Philadelphia County, 1979-present; Speaker, 2003-2006], and we worked with them. Well, they said, “No, we’re not going to let this happen.” And we went and got an arrangement with the Republicans to vote with us to require seniority to be the basis of Committee Chairmanships in the Rules of the House. It would take it out of being a Caucus issue. So, soon after that happened, he had to name me to Committee and I got Tourism, and it’s a Committee nobody wanted, but my God, we had, there were so many issues; filmmaking, you know, we went to Hollywood with the Governor to promote films, we went to towns all over this state to see what historic aspects they had, what tourism assets they had. And it was a wonderful committee. And Bob Godshall [Robert; State Representative, Montgomery County, 1983-present], who I disagreed with on guns, oh just, he was, you know, the most forceful gun battler on that Floor, always we battled on that issue, but here I was the Minority Chair on his Committee and we got along fabulously well. And I think we did a lot of good work. We worked on the issue there of the State Parks, lodges in State Parks and they’re still working on that, today. So, the next term after Tourism became popular, everybody wanted that committee. I was bounced off that committee because I never voted for Bill, you know, DeWeese. So, then I was assigned Veterans and Emergency Preparedness Committee. And I really didn’t want that committee, even though I was a Veteran. And I understand being a Veteran I was appropriate to be named there. But, it

taught me another lesson even later in my career: there is no bad committee. There's no bad committee. I mean there's important work to be done in all of these committees. And shortly after I was named Chairman, 9/11<sup>6</sup> happens, and all of this work needed to be done on communications systems and emergency communications, security and emergency preparedness and volunteer fire companies and emergency medical systems, hospitals' ability to be equipped with to deal with catastrophes. And I'm sitting right in the middle of it again. And so I say, "there's just no bad committee." You just wait for the right time and that's a very important committee.

**HM:** What legislation or issues did you feel were your most important? We've talked about several.

**TM:** Well, very early on, I had my community mental health director come to me and asked me to sponsor this bill and I say, "Well, where is it?" And he says, "Well, it's House Bill 400?" I said, "Well, I want to read it." He never had anybody ask him to read the bill. (*laugh*) And so, I got the bill and I read it, and I say, "Okay." And he asked me to see if I could find out some information when it's going to move. And the prime sponsor of the legislation was an older gentlemen [by the] name of Amos Hutchinson [State Representative, Westmoreland County, 1969-1988] from Greensburg. And I went over to Amos and I said, "Amos is there anything going on with this bill?" He says, "No, I've been putting that bill in for a long time and it hasn't been going anywhere." He says, "You want it?" He says, "Why don't you put your," you know, so he gives me this bill.

---

<sup>6</sup> Terrorist attacks on the United States on September 11, 2001, in New York City & Washington D.C. where planes were flown into the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. A third plane was obstructed from attacking the U.S. Capitol and crashed in fields in Somerset County, Pennsylvania.

Well, I was a young guy and I thought, “Oh, this is going to be great.” So, I put it in my name and put in the Committee and got a bunch of co-sponsors and I’m asking the Chairman when it’s coming out – 20 years later! (*laugh*) It literally took 20 years, probably dozens of hearings, public hearings on legislation. We got some mental health coverage and even then, I voted against it because it wasn’t nearly good enough. I was on the Conservation Committee then. And, in fact, I sponsored a bill to have a special investigation of Dick Thornburgh [Pennsylvania Governor, 1979-1987] as Governor, because of coal mine operations and campaign contributions and such. Well, we did get the Committee and we gave it subpoena power and we went out for an investigate, but Bud George [Camille; State Representative, Centre and Clearfield Counties, 1975-present] changed the whole complexion of the issue from coal mining abuses, because he’s sitting up there in the coal mine fields, and a lot of those big coal operators were not happy with being investigated. But, we had plenty to investigate and we wound up investigating landfills and went all over the State. And it was pretty clear that they were looking the other way and we were pouring tons of toxic chemicals and wastes into our landfills. I’ll never forget the hearing we had in Lehigh Valley, and Bud and I and Tom Murphy met with this citizen activist and she had the logs of all the trucks that came in and just pumped this – and they came in from Connecticut and they had the truck logs. She had everything organized and down pat. So, the next day, we get the guy from the Department of Environmental Resources on the line whose responsible – he’s the Regional Director – and Murphy’s going, “Did you know on such-and-such a day and this truck, and this day – ” he’s pounding this guy and pounding him for about a half-hour, you know, and the guys just, [grumble]. “And on this day, were you aware you

signed this document?” And it was almost like a courtroom, you know. Then Bud George says, “Okay, let’s move on to the gentlemen from Allegheny, Mr. Michlovic”, you know. And I said, “On such-and-such a day, did you,” and the guy starts crying. I mean, he basically broke down, you know, with the tension and everything and he’s crying and we had to quickly take a recess here and let him gather his composure and stuff. You know, it struck me how, you know, at the time, you think you’re just a kid that got lucky and got elected, but you have important responsibilities and these were important questions. And we were, you know, berating the guy, humiliating him in public and you got to understand your power. It’s significant and you have a responsibility and a duty to act appropriately. And we weren’t, I don’t think, in that occasion, even though what he had done wasn’t appropriate either. So, to answer your question, the environmental issues. Later on, I became very involved with communications with the whole – I want to use the word “divestiture” or splitting off of – MA-Bell into the four regional Bells, the Baby Bells<sup>7</sup>, and then the long distance carrier and that whole issue. Those were really important issues. I was named to the National Council of State Government’s Board on Communication. So, I had to gain some expertise on the issue from a national perspective. I was very involved with consumer issues on the Consumer Affairs Committee. And in some respects, I was better off before I was a Chairman than after, because I had such great committees: I had Insurance, Environment, I had State Government – where all the reform issues were there – and I had Consumer Affairs. And, God, there just was a swarm of lobbyists on all the issues of the day coming through your office. Utilities were all Consumer Affairs. Bill Lloyd

---

<sup>7</sup> January of 1982, AT&T settled a suit and agreed to divest its local exchange services. On Jan. 1, 1984, local operations were split into seven regional Bell Operating Companies.

[William, Jr.; State Representative, Somerset County, 1981-1998], who was a very bright guy from Somerset, [was] on that committee. And we had stuff going on there, so there were a lot of fun issues. Plus, you had the delegation stuff with Allegheny County and we were pushing our proposals. We were trying to, you know, it's a two way street with the county too. You're trying to, for example, there would be times I would go up against – even though I was an ally and a friend/political supporter, and he of me, of – Tom Forester. There were times when I'd be on top of Tom Foerster badgering him about the mental health fund or this program not running in my District, you know, or the county maintenance and the roads. So, it's a constantly volatile process. One time you're the receiver, the next time you're the giver.

**HM:** Some other things: the Lobbyist Disclosure Act of 1999. Would you like to talk about that?

**TM:** I had worked on that, another long-time issue. Allen Kukovich and I, having come out of Common Cause, kept pursuing those issues. And Allen took the lead on campaign finance reform and I moved to lobbyist disclosure. And early on, Bob O'Donnell [Robert; State Representative, Philadelphia County, 1974-1994; Speaker 1990-1992]. who became Speaker, was the prime sponsor on lobbyist disclosure. Sometime later, when after he left, that mantle fell to me and we finally in [19]99, through the good offices of Al – I can't remember his name, a legislator from Carlisle a very bright young Republican – Pardon?

**HM:** Masland?

**TM:** Al Masland [State Representative, Cumberland and York Counties, 1993-2000], who had a lot of respect in his Caucus. He and I teamed up and worked with Senator Jubelirer's staff over in the Senate and we got a lobbyist disclosure passed.

Unfortunately, a year or two later, the State Supreme Court felt that we were getting into their business of overseeing the practice of law and ruled it unconstitutional. And this issue, still for the House of Representatives, still sits today, unresolved.

**HM:** How did you work with lobbyists?

**TM:** I was very wary of lobbyists at first. In fact, Huck Gamble particularly – who was my roommate and long-time friend – always used to laugh about when I first came up here. I wouldn't even talk to a lobbyist or anything and years later, I, you know, get along with them. I sure changed over the years. Well, I hope I did. We all hope we change to some degree. But, I got along well with them and I think one of the things that, you know, there's a lot of talk and people are cynical about lobbyists, but they are a very important part of the process. And when I was putting in the lobbyist disclosure laws or proposals, I always said this: lobbyists are extremely important to the system. Without them, I couldn't have, on moments notice, what a deep-mine issue is or what the technology is. They, through this process we've invented here, they come in with information on how much tonnage, how many jobs are affected, what the technology is, what the safety levels are, you know. You couldn't get that information just on your

own, back then especially when you didn't have Internet and Google<sup>8</sup> to check it out, you know. You had to go over to the library and pour through books and stuff and even then you couldn't find it. So, you know, they're a very important part of the process and I think they respect when you listen to them. And give them a fair hearing and you make a decision and you tell them, "Yeah, I'm going to be with you on this one or I'm against you and here's why," and just so they know they don't have to spend all their time worrying about your vote [because] you already told them how you're going to go and follow through with that. And if you treat people with respect, I think they respect you back.

**HM:** How did you get along with the media?

**TM:** Pretty well, pretty well. I was always, you know, I think the media kind-of favors good government guys and I always tried, again, be honest with them given my opinion. A lot of conservative media-type, particularly radio disc-jockeys, that didn't like me for my positions on guns or abortion or any number of things, but hey, you're not going to please everybody.

**HM:** Well, in 1979 you had the Harrisburg Report and that was an hour long TV show with Ron Cowell.

**TM:** Yes. Right. When I came up, Ron and I had had a conversation even before – you know, right after I was elected in the Primary, before I was elected in the General,

---

<sup>8</sup> American public corporation specializing in Internet searching and online advertising

because my seat was very high Democratic seat, I was going to win that General Election after I won the Primary – we started talking about, you know, maybe doing some outreach through cable television. And cable, at that time, was just starting this whole notion of a local channel and, you know, with local issues and so they were looking for things to put on that local channel. And so, we began talking about doing this and when we came up and researched it, there weren't any cameras around. There weren't any studios; there weren't any places to do this. And we found a camera over in the Department of Education and so we talked to the Secretary, and Ron, of course, is this big education guy, and the guy didn't want to say no to him. And so, once a month, we got use of this camera. We would march over to the Education Department and go up six or eight floors with our notes and we'd sit there in front a camera and go through this. And if you know Ron Cowell, Ron is never for a loss for words, you know, so we filled an hour easily. And we'd go through a report and say okay, this is what the issues were this month and I'd take a half dozen and he'd take a half dozen and we'd give a little background on the issue. And then, often times, we would have a guest. It might be the Secretary of Treasury, Catherine Baker Knoll [Pennsylvania Treasurer, 1989-1996; Pennsylvania Lieutenant Governor, 2003-2009]. It might be somebody, you know, a fellow colleague that had piece of legislation and, you know, we got everybody on. Everybody except, Ron would not let Allen Kukovich on the show. And he had this, he wouldn't let Allen on. So, Allen had a show, too, and one time we were down – this is long past the time past when the single camera over in the Department of Education, we had a studio and we had some staff to help us – so we were going to be taping a show and Kukovich was taping his show immediately prior to ours. And so, he comes in and he's

walking out and he says, “You going to do your show?” I say, “Yeah.” He says, “Oh.” And I said, “We’re having Secretary of Education Scanlon on.” And sure enough, here in walks the Secretary of Education, you know, so we sit down and everybody gets miked up and Allen gets this sock and he’s interviewing the Secretary awhile and Ron’s not there yet. And we got the cameras on and, “Hello, Mr. Secretary of Education,” and he’s going through this, you know, and Cowell comes walking in through, and his eyes about this big and he [Kukovich] says, “Oh no, Mr. Cowell. Oh No.” (*laugh*) And Ron didn’t know what to do or what to say. It was hilarious. Another time, we’re taping a show, Kukovich is behind the backdrop, and he’s throwing pennies over the, you know, and Ron did his report and \*clink\* and \*clink\* another penny, you know, and we’re, “What the hell is going on?” But, they were some good times, some fun.

**HM:** I know, now, why he was not invited to the show.

**TM:** No, Kukovich was not invited on our show. (*laugh*)

**HM:** Well, how did technology during your tenure change? Specifically –

**TM:** Oh, dramatically, with the computers through the [19]80s and then in the 90s, it really just took off with the Internet. Now, remember, computers were around to consolidate and organize and coordinate lists and files. And I saw the need early on to coordinate through my legislative work and people and constituents and apply that on the political side, which is kind of common sense. And so, in order to be fair about it, I

bought a computer for 10,000 dollars in 1982 – with my own money – I spent 300 dollars a month for 36 months, or something, to pay this thing off. And you know, it was the first generation [and] it was a terrible computer, by our standards today. It couldn't do anything that I had envisioned on it. But the important thing that I got was, a friend of mine who had been my campaign manager and friend lost his job in the mill, and I was able to get him onto my staff and he became very interested and works in computers and worked on my computer. And when other guys started buying them, he would go help them set up in their offices. And today, I'm pleased to announce that Jerry Fitzgibbon still works for the House and that is what he does for Western Pennsylvania. He goes around to the legislative offices and helps the staff and puts in the new technology. But, that was really something. In fact, I got into the technology even before that, because I came to the Floor and we would have a process of amendments and just tons and tons of paper would come flying over your desk, and I said, "This is a waste." I said, "[If] we had computer terminals, we could put this on a terminal, we could read – " And so, I went to Leroy Irvis and I said, you know, "Mr. Irvis, can't we put a dummy terminal on the table?" And he says, "Young man, I think you have an idea there. I'm going to appoint you to the Committee on Technology," and I got appointed. Secretary of Budget Bob Wilburn was assigned by [Governor Dick] Thornburgh to integrate the State's technology. We had 2,000 different computer lines going out from the Capitol all over the state. We had instances of three different terminals in the Department of Welfare offices functioning on different programs and, you know, if you wanted to do this program, you worked on this terminal, if you wanted to do that program, you worked on this terminal and another one, you'd work on that one. And, you know, it was just – and

so, they were trying to integrate it and we were looking into this contract for Boeing<sup>9</sup> to come out here and do it and it was going to be a multi-million dollar contract, big deal. And along came [Microsoft] Windows<sup>10</sup> and that innovation just eliminated the need. And everybody started buying Windows and buying into Windows and Microsoft and Word and you know everything was integrated and the Internet started taking off and bingo, we were there.

**HM:** Could you talk about your office when you first started? Did you have staff? Did you share an office with anyone?

**TM:** When I first started, I shared an office with a guy from Munhall. His name was Bill Knight, we'd called him "Gummy" Knight [State Representative, Allegheny County, 1979-1980]. He was a beloved Mayor of Munhall for many, many years, who took Donny Abraham's [Donald; State Representative, Allegheny County, 1975-1978] place, who was unfortunately a young legislator, first elected in [19]74, who was killed in a tragic auto accident. And so, Gummy took his seat and Gummy, you know, he was an older gentlemen, he had no interest in – he just somehow threw his name in the ring and he got elected – found out when he got up here, he didn't like the job. So, everyday, he would sit there and he would throw all the papers on his desk in the trash can and put his feet up on his desk and read the [paper]. (*laugh*) And I looked at him – and I'm working on all these amendments and issues and trying to read through all this literature – and I'm looking at Gummy and he's reading the Racing Form with the horses. It's like, "Wow."

---

<sup>9</sup> Aerospace and defense corporation which is the largest global aircraft manufacturer by revenue and the 2<sup>nd</sup> largest defense contractor in the world.

<sup>10</sup> Name for several families of propriety operating systems by Microsoft.

But, I shared a secretary with Huck Gamble, or no, I'm sorry, with Steve Seventy, and then about a year or the next term everybody got their own secretary, and I fortunately wound up with Denise Milus who served as my secretary for the rest of my career.

[She's] still here on the Hill, she's a great gal.

**HM:** What are your fondest memories of serving in the House?

**TM:** I think the fondest memories are of the times on the Floor when, you know, the thing about the Pennsylvania Legislature [it] is very different from Congress. In Congress, when you take a vote, you get 20 minutes to get down to the Floor and vote. Once again, you're not listening to the debate, but you're not on the Floor, you're meeting with lobbyists or you're meeting with your staff or you're doing this or that and then you get a buzz and you got to run over to the Capitol to make a vote. In Harrisburg, you're on the Floor and you have to be on the Floor to vote. And that is the Rule and most Members, I mean there are isolated instances of guys voting other guys and, you know, when they're out of the Capitol, but for the most part, most people are in the Capitol complex or you know in the men's room or someplace around. And so, you get a collegiality, I mean you get to know who your colleagues are, all 203 of them really. And it's just amazing. You see guys on the way up here to Harrisburg. I bumped into a colleague I served with from my first term, you know some 26, 28 years ago. And, you know, I said, "Ken, how are you? I'm Tom Michlovic." He says, "Oh, yeah, Tom, how you doing?" You know, when you have that commonality and that respect for coming through this institution. And it is an institution, we have to understand, this is the first

and longest continuing democratic institution in the world, the Pennsylvania House of Representatives. And some great people came through there, and I'm sure there will be some great people to serve here in the future, too.

**HM:** Another way to build camaraderie was through the softball games and the basketball games?

**TM:** Right. We would do a lot of – Bob O'Donnell was a great organizer. He organized softball games. We played the Republicans and we played the media, you know, we played the secretaries or staff of the Governor's Office and then we'd all go out for beers afterwards and have a good time. And then, we had football games. Yeah, we were younger guys in our 20's and 30's and athletic and were having a good time.

**HM:** What do you believe are your greatest accomplishments?

**TM:** You know, I was thinking about that coming over here. I think my greatest accomplishment is representing my people to the best of my ability. And I also think, beyond just representing them, I also reflected them. My sense of honesty and fairness and respect mirrored the wonderful, wonderful people in the 35<sup>th</sup> District; of the hard-working people. And I can't tell you the number of times, you know, we would do something in office I didn't even know was done, you know. My staff person would do it, and into the office would come this little old lady with a batch of cookies or, you know, cakes or I'd meet somebody on the street, "Oh, thank you, thank you, you've

helped me so much.” I didn’t help you, my staff person did, but you were there, and you were the focal point. They came to your office and your staff treated them with respect, didn’t pooh-pooh their issue. And I think that’s my most important accomplishment. And I still treasure the thought when people talk about Tom Michlovic, they say, “He’s a good man.”

**HM:** Do you have any regrets?

**TM:** No, not really. Not that I can think of.

**HM:** Are you still active in politics?

**TM:** Yes, I will be active in the Governor’s race next year and I’m not in local races so much, but in the state-wide offices, certainly, I try to do my part and support our candidates. I have a position now with the Pennsylvania Securities Commission. I’m active with them overseeing the investment and brokerage community and enjoying it. And the great thing about that is, I only have to worry about one little slice of public policy and not the whole world and potholes and grievances and problems. I just worry about securities.

**HM:** Lastly, how would you like to be remembered?

**TM:** I would say just the way my people talk about me and that's I was a good man; I did a good job.

**HM:** Okay. Well, thank you very much.

**TM:** Thank you; enjoyed it; appreciate it.