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INTERVIEW WITH:

The Honorable Michael M. Dawida (D)

26th and 36th Districts

Allegheny County

1979-1988

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Drew Greenwald (DG): I'm here today with former State Representative and State Senator Michael Dawida, who represented the 26th and 36th House Districts from the years 1979 to 1988. The 26th and 36th districts included parts of Allegheny County, and Mr. Dawida represented the 43rd district in the State Senate from the years 1989 to 1996. Thank you for being with me here today.

The Honorable Michael M. Dawida (MD): It's a pleasure.

DG: I was hoping to start by asking you if you could tell me a little bit about your childhood, family life, and how that prepared you for public service.

MD: It's interesting because in today's world you hear a lot about immigrants and so, well, my family are all immigrants from four different countries. They all worked in the mills and I'm the first college graduate in the Dawida family. It's a large extended family, but they all came here and they got the jobs that were available, which was mill work. So, they did that. I was the first to go beyond that. I can tell you exactly when I decided to run for office. It was January 22, 1961. At the age of 12 years old, I heard John Kennedy [President of the United States, 1961-1963] say, "Ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country." My mother said, I sat up and I was like a bolt of lightning. She said, I knew you were going to do something like this, and that's the way it got started.

DG: Was your family politically active?

MD: No. They voted, and there are certain cultural things. Part of the family is Polish, and they voted but never did politics. The other side is Irish, and they did politics. It's interesting why that is. There are cultural differences that come from the old country and also the ability to speak the language well and so on. So, we, as a family, always voted and always followed politics, watched conventions when they used to be authentic, not canned, until two o'clock in the morning. On election night, you always stayed up until two o'clock in the morning. In fact, Kennedy didn't actually win until, more like five or six o'clock. I never went to bed that night.

DG: How did you come to be a Democrat?

MD: I think it's a part of growing up working class. The two parties have a slightly different feeling about working people, and we were working people. So, to me, the Democrats represented the needs of the larger group of people. I was a bit more conservative in some areas. I'm pro-life, for example. But back then when I was growing up, there were lots of Democrats who were like me. I think part of the phenomenon, the Trump phenomenon¹ that occurred was the Democrats sort of not paying enough attention to the working-class Democrats they had always had. Now, that's not to say I'm a Trump supporter, because I'm not, but I understand why some of them left. Now, they may be coming back as witnessed in local races, but that was the issue. Democrats, to me, were the working people. We were working class, and even though I'm no longer what you call working class, I still feel that they represent the majority of the public.

¹ Referring to the election of Donald J. Trump as President of the United States in 2016 in part from the support of moderate, working-class Democrat voters.

DG: Sure. Could you describe your educational background?

MD: Yeah. I was, as I said, the first college graduate. I went to the University of Pittsburgh and then I went to law school in St. Paul, Minnesota, Hamlin University. So, I'm also the first graduate program – and it's interesting to see how the world's changing. All my kids now have graduate degrees. We have many such people in the extended family, but when I started I was the first.

DG: Could you describe your career before you ran for the House?

MD: Yes, I worked first with drug addicts and street gangs. I worked in the South Side of Chicago for a while. I worked in New Castle Youth Development Center. The state of Pennsylvania had initially been one of the first states to really say that juveniles should be treated differently than adult offenders. The idea was to try to make them better citizens, and I was part of that initial, new movement. Then, I wound up in Chicago and started working with street gangs there, which was a fascinating thing, but I burned out. Then, my wife and I got married and we went on a six-month camping trip. That sort of formulated what I thought I wanted to be. Wound up going to law school – found out while I was camping – but, I formulated the idea that we should do something more than just make money. So, what happened in politics is that in Minneapolis and St. Paul, in Minnesota in general, they have a different kind of primary than we have. Everybody could vote. It's not a closed primary. So, knocking on my door was the State Representative from my district. I wasn't even registered to vote there yet, and she said, oh you can, you can just show up on Election Day, and so I did. When I came back to Pittsburgh, I was

one of the first people to door knock every house in the district. That's how I defeated a 20-year incumbent [Charles N. Caputo; State Representative, 1967-1978]. It was the first time many people had ever seen anybody knock at their door. The district was in the South Hills of the city, and it's hilly. I remember my dad coming with me many a time, and he said, boy, son, I'll do the door knocking but you got to take the high side. Well, they were all high sides.

DG: So, that was your first campaign, 1978. You mentioned it was an incumbent—

MD: Charles Caputo.

DG: Charles Caputo. Could you maybe compare that to the first time you ran for the Senate?

MD: Before that though, there was interesting race because I was reapportioned out of existence. That was the beginning of using reapportionment – you see, reapportionment's not an old thing in Pennsylvania. It only started in the [19]60 Census because of a court case that occurred in 1954 which said that all the districts should be roughly equal. So, in the 60s, they just did it that way. It wasn't done with a whole lot of forethought, but by the 70s and 80s it became used for political for purposes. By the way, both parties do it, it's just the Republicans in Pennsylvania have been more effective at it. So, they've used it to change the district. I woke up one day, and I didn't represent most of my street. Eighty-two percent of my district was gone. Where I lived was in a completely different area through a long, thin, meandering line along the Monongahela River. I won that race, and that made it possible for me to then run for the Senate, because I became very well-known as the person who has now upset two incumbents.

That really changed things for me in a big way. The Senate race and then the county race after that, it was a different world that was just evolving into this sort of negativity. Those were where the first negative campaigns were starting to be run. You know when I first ran, we never even mentioned the opponent's name, let alone these horrible negative commercials that you see ubiquitously all over every race. We didn't mention them. That was the way it was done, and I still think it ought to be done that way.

DG: After you won your first election, do you recall how you felt on the first swearing-in day here?

MD: Yeah, well, we had a couple hundred people with us. It was the large extended family and friends who had helped us. It was like being on top of a cloud. It was everything I'd always wanted, to be able to do something that would be worthwhile, to do something that would help my community. It was all within reach. And I still think that that exists, it's just the current politics are a little more negative, and so I don't think that's what people are talking about as much. But I still think people feel that way even now, that they're there to do some good for their community, for their family, for their state.

DG: Could you describe your district before it was reapportioned and after it was reapportioned in the House, and then maybe compare that to the Senate district and what that looked like?

MD: That's the interesting part about it, is the 26th Legislative District was all city. Five very compact districts in the city of Pittsburgh, the South Hills, they were Carrick, Overbrook,

Brookline, Beechview, and Mount Washington. They were tightly-knit communities. They were close to each other. I could drive from one end to the other in just a few miles. Then, when I got reapportioned in [19]82, I wound up in what is known as the Steel Valley, Homestead, where the steel industry was located. It was 82 percent the other fella² and 18 mine, and I was able to win that race by about 3,000 votes, which was probably the best campaign I've ever run. Actually, I should say my wife ever ran, because she organized them. It was in the Senate district, you see, where I was, my neighborhood was in the Senate 43rd, but everything else was not. So, all of a sudden, I became very well-known in the Senate district, and we had an older Senator [James A. Romanelli, State Senator, 1975-1988] who was not well, and he said he wasn't going to run again – he wound up running again – but, I was able to win that, and that was probably the first and only time anybody's ever door-knocked every house in a Senate district, with family and such. It was really a fascinating eye-opener because the district was completely different. It had East End communities. It had Squirrel Hill in it. It went all the way out to the eastern suburbs. I realized there's a bigger world out there, and that allowed me to start looking at bigger issues than just the more mundane, local issues that I grew up with.

DG: Sure. What made your district unique? What were the issues that your constituents really cared about and how did that compare to maybe another Representative's district?

MD: It was working class. It was blue collar. It was people who had immigrated to the country from a variety of different ethnicities but who all shared one thing: they came to America to make it a better place. It's ironic that in today's world where we're hearing so much about immigration, we had the same problems back then. I can tell you that my Catholic, Ukrainian,

² Representative Robert P. Horgos, 36th District, Allegheny County, 1981-1982.

Polish grandfather was not allowed to be a foreman because of his background. This was in the [19]50s. This is not ancient history. It's history, but it's not ancient history. There were these kinds of prejudices against all our new groups. The Irish had the same thing – I have that side of my family. There were signs that used to say, Irish need not apply. Those were real. And so, when all this happened, to me, I said, we got to do better than that. It's ironic, as I said, that we're beginning to have this same argument. If you're a student of history, you'll note that about every 20, 30 years America goes through this kind of thing. But, my district was largely European with a big dose of Central and Eastern Europe as well, and they were almost 100 percent working class people who just wanted to make it in America, and they did.

DG: Yeah. Sounds like sort of the classic Pittsburgh story.

MD: It is, it is.

DG: Did you have any challenges in keeping your constituents informed on issues of what was happening in Harrisburg?

MD: One of the wonderful things about what happened when I got elected was the advent of something that didn't exist before, and that is staff. We actually had staff both in Harrisburg and at home who could help make things work and allowed us to write newsletters. The first newsletters, I literally took them to people I knew who owned businesses, once a month, and I would just toss them on the stoop and say, will you pass these out? And they did. Then, we were able to mail them after a while. That allowed us to let people know about the many things

that were available to them. For example, I'm now past 65 and I get a free bus pass. That's true anywhere in Pennsylvania, if you know about it. I hope if anybody's listening, they'll realize that. It's a wonderful thing. There're so many things that government can functionally do for you and that is the central issue that faces us today: Is government good or is it bad? Now, the answer, of course, is that it's both at times, but it can be really good. In many cases, it is critical to people being able to function in their lives. I'm telling you, if it wasn't for Social Security this country would be really in a problem, especially among the elderly. The elderly of Pennsylvania have many, many services that are not available any place else, and that's because of the State Lottery. So, I guess the issue was communication became really possible. I had a TV show on the cable network. Now, a couple hundred people watched it at any given time, but they ran it 80 times a month. So, it's amazing how many people saw it and realized that there was something – because we would try to make every show every month a different topic and get people to be aware of what's available for them and also to ask them their opinions on things. And they do tell you their opinions.

DG: Very good. So, I'd like to shift a little bit and talk about some relationships with different legislators you had here in Harrisburg. So, did you have any mentors when you began your career in the House and if so, who were those people?

MD: One of them, oddly enough, was the name of who this building is named after, Mr. Irvis [K. Leroy Irvis; State Representative, 1959-1988; Speaker of the House, 1977-1978, 1983-1988]. Mr. Irvis was the first black Speaker, the only black Speaker I guess, and he was a very wise man in many ways. There were six of us that bought a house together. Tom Murphy [Thomas J.;

State Representative, 1979-1994] became the mayor of Pittsburgh [1994-2006]. Tom Michlovic [Thomas A.; State Representative, 1979-2002] was a rabble-rouser, first-rate, and always trying to make things better. Steve Seventy [State Representative, 1979-1988] from the South Side, taught me many, many practical things. Maybe he didn't know so much about the legislature but practical things. We had many, many of the senior members that were quite willing to be helpful to you. I remember one of my first meetings with, who became the Speaker, Jim Manderino [James J.; State Representative, 1967-1989; Speaker of the House, 1989]. Jim Manderino was an interesting guy, tough, tough guy of the sort you don't see anymore. He came up to me when I was trying to get smoking banned on the Floor of the House. Not before the big legislation, but just to get it banned on the Floor, and he told me, "Kid, this is what I think of your idea," and he blew smoke in my face. Nonetheless, he voted for it. He voted for it, which told you something. He sort of sat back and said – you know. There were many such people. Like I said, we had six of us living in a house, and that was a wonderful, wonderful opportunity for us to kind of go over things afterwards. If you can imagine, we had a house without a telephone. There were no cellphones at the time, and we did not have an in-room house [phone], and nobody had a cellphone. So, when you got back to the house, which was on Green Street in Harrisburg proper, you were away from the world.

DG: Yeah, yeah. Did you end up taking a mentor role on for anyone after you served for a while?

MD: Yeah. Chris McNally [Christopher K.; State Representative, 1989-1994] took my place, and he was a young fella who was very, very articulate. And then when he left, I actually

recruited Harry Readshaw [Harry A., III; State Representative, 1995-present] to be – it’s kind of funny me saying mentor, because he’s older than I am. But, you know, I could help him. The one skill I had was figuring out how to get things done. As we will talk about later, I suspect on some of the legislation, I used to have to find ways that were nontraditional to get things accomplished. To put it in sort of a short way, I passed 11 major pieces of legislation in my day, but I never gave a speech at the end of it. I’d say, that doesn’t ring, that’s not what I think of as the legislature. That was where Mr. Irvis helped. He said to me, “If you have the votes, shut up and vote. If you don’t have the votes, talk until you think you might be able to convince somebody.” Although, most of the time it doesn’t work. So, yeah.

DG: Could you explain the role of – you talked a little bit about camaraderie, inter-caucus, but maybe with those across the aisle and how that maybe differed between being in the House and being in the Senate?

MD: Well, the House is a far more fun place. You can have many more relationships. In our day, they were across the aisle. Our delegation, the Allegheny County Democrats, used to have parties in this building, because Steve Seventy was an accordion player of some renown, I might add. He would play music, and we would just have a couple bottles of wine and such, and everybody came because Steve was well-liked and everybody got invited, so that camaraderie was developed. We started with six guys in one house, and then it became bigger, and bigger, and bigger, and that helped us a great deal to get things accomplished across the aisle and otherwise. Other things that it did was I used to play tennis with the Speaker of the House, who was a Republican, Jack Seltzer [H. Jack; State Representative, 1957-1980; Speaker of the House,

1979-1980], in the old days, and we would talk to each other. The last thing I did was I never – for years I didn't always drive. I would ride with people to and from. You know, you get three or four hours in a car with somebody, you get to know them pretty well. We did it across the aisle, a ride is a ride.

DG: Could you talk about your relationship with the media, maybe how it was in Harrisburg and how that compared back in Pittsburgh? And also, maybe what your relationship was like with lobbyists?

MD: First, the media is different now than it was then, because there used to be quite a bit of media here in Harrisburg. If you called a press conference in Harrisburg, you were liable to get 15, 20 people to show up. Now, there's one or two at best in most cases. In Pittsburgh, you don't get anybody to come up. So, the media has changed because there are fewer of them. So, what they do to best describe them is they literally have to wait until they find out what the story is. Somebody has to cover it, and then they'll cover it *en masse*. So, you don't know what they're going to cover until they cover it, and that's a little bit difficult compared to what it used to be. So, there isn't much of an independent media, and that has changed the way that politics is conducted. There's no question about it. Lobbyists are a whole different matter. Lobbyists are there because they want to impress upon you the rightness of what they're for or what their client wants. Sometimes, it's a good thing, because they do have more information and knowledge about their subject than just about anybody. Sometimes, it's a bad thing, because they're not trying to do what might be best for the people in my community, they're doing what's best for their client. I'll give you an example. I did a little bit of lobbying myself after I left the

legislature, lasted not very long. One of the first people that I was asked to take on was somebody that wanted to make it easier to spread the sale of cigarettes. I'm the reason it's hard. I said, I can't do that. But, that person pays good money to have someone represent them. So, it's a very difficult thing. Some lobbyists represent very good things, and some don't.

DG: Okay, let's move into your legislation. First, I'd like to start with asking you about the committees you served on, both in the House and in the Senate. Did you enjoy the committees you were on? Did you prefer the committee structure in the House or the Senate more?

MD: Actually, it was more fun in the House, but I got more done in the Senate in the committee structure, because you're always a chairman in the Senate, whereas in the House, I never was. We started out, Tom Murphy, Tom Michlovic, and I – the three of us who got elected the same time against incumbents in Allegheny County – were assigned to the Insurance Committee. I think it was more of a penance. We had all beaten incumbents, and I don't think it was done because of any reward. But, it turned out to be the best thing, because we changed the way that committee ran itself. Traditionally, the Insurance Committee was run by the insurance industry. We said, that's not the way this committee should be, and we were able to change that and passed a number of very good pieces of legislation among us, and just changed the way the outlook was. The whole idea was of insurance, in our opinion, was to help people get what they need in life, not necessarily to make the profit all that much larger for the company. So, we were able to do that in a lot of different ways. That was fun. And then, I got into the legal issues and that committee was run by a guy named Dave Sweet [David W.; State Representative, 1977-1988] who was one of the brightest and best legislators to perform. He's now a lobbyist, but he

was as good as it gets on that committee. That was maybe the one that was the most fun. The Senate was different because I was chairman and I got lot of things passed. A lot of things, there was health issues and welfare issues and insurance issues and financial issues that were complex. Again, because you have staff, you can get those things accomplished. It's one of the big issues of our current life is should legislators stay there for a long time? I'm twixt in between, because sometimes they stay here way too long, but it does take a while to learn your craft. So, many times people who are here for a short period of time don't know what they're doing, and so the staff becomes absolutely critical. Whether they're serving the public or not, you don't ever know, because they're not elected. I would say to you that the issues of the Senate and the House, it's why we have two different bodies. They operate completely differently, and I wouldn't say one is better than the other. I can tell you this, though. When I was in the Senate, I used to gravitate to the back of the House when there was a big debate, didn't even really think about it. We never had those kinds of debates in the Senate. It was all stand around and chat with each other and then whatever happened, happened. The House was much more raucous, but I liked it.

DG: Sure. Let me ask you about the major pieces of legislation in which you were involved, what your role was in getting them passed, and how you got them over the finish line.

MD: Well, the first thing I did was – I always had allergies towards smoke. I found out that basically if I'm around smoke, I would be sick all the time. So, I wanted to change that in not only Pennsylvania, but as it turns out, it wound up changing for the whole country. It took nine years. We started out, as I mentioned before, getting smoking banned on the Floor of the House.

Got it banned by one vote. One vote. One of the guys who voted for it got up and said, "I voted the wrong way," you know. He could've asked for a revote and it would've changed it. He basically said, "I got to quit these things anyway. So, record me as having voted yes, but I wanted to be no, but I'm not going to ask for a revote on the whole thing because I got to quit these things." That's how close it was. In 1979 and [19]80, 52 percent of the public in Pennsylvania smoked. So, how do you get that changed? It's 17 now, by the way. You can see why the mood has changed. It took years, and every time I'd come close, the tobacco lobby, which was quite potent, spent a lot of money, they would somehow find a way to get it buried at the end. So, what I wound up doing, and it's not well-known to this day, you ask any of my fellow members and they all remember that I was the guy that did this, but they don't remember exactly how we did it, and that was that we amended a bill that was a very unusual bill. About every 20 or 30 years, the legislature goes through major parts of the law and sees if they're still okay. This was the Fire and Panic Act dealing with public fires. I amended that, and of course the first question was, this is not germane to the subject. I had all of the information. There are 300 thousand fires a year, 20 thousand people die, ba-diddy-duh-duh. I had all the numbers, and a large number of them unfortunately were from cigarette smoke. So, it actually made the argument. At that point, it passed pretty overwhelmingly and became the law. It was hard, and I won't go through the details of it other than to say that the industry did not expect to have as great of an impact as it did. Because, essentially what we wound up doing was just saying, you have a right to clean indoor air. When you do that, you basically make it almost impossible to smoke indoors, and that's the practical side of it. The hotel industry discovered that they make 20 percent more per room when there's no smoking in the room. They changed from being against to being for it. So, what I had always thought of as a health issue became something

completely different, but it worked. The health issue, of course, came with it, and so to this day, Pennsylvania's Fire and Panic Act says you can't smoke indoors, you know, and that you have the right to clean indoor air. It was a real simple piece of legislation. The original bill was pages, and pages, and pages. What wound up passing was one page, but it did the job, and they didn't expect it to have this great of an impact, and they didn't expect that the other 49 states would then follow. So now, you can go to North Carolina, South Carolina, wherever they grow tobacco and they have this law or something like it or close to it, and that makes me feel pretty good because it's very rare that – what I call myself, a back-bencher, that's the English parliamentary term for not one of the leadership but one of the guys just sitting in the back but figuring out stuff – and I figured out how to do this, and it became a national kind of thing. That, to me, I cannot imagine how many lives have been saved, let alone how many fires were kept from happening, how many, you know, any number of things that occurred, was because this law changed the way we did things. And now, because of that change, people aren't smoking as much. And then, the legislature, because we used tobacco as one of the – it's what you call a sin tax – and since, particularly the Republicans, they don't like taxes, that's one of their bellwether issues, they keep adding on to the tax, so that now what used to be a 25 to 30 cent pack of cigarettes when I was in the legislature is now seven dollars, and most of it is taxes. It helps the government, and it has lowered the number of smokers by two thirds. And once we got the number lower, it became easier and easier to enforce, because enforcement of the law was the hardest thing initially. People didn't want to do it, but now they do.

DG: Were there memorable events in the House during your term, either political events or just social events that happened that you'd like to touch on?

MD: Oh, yeah. There are many. Terry McVerry [Terrence F.; State Representative, 1979-1990], Republican legislator from the Mount Lebanon area, decided that the way we do divorce in Pennsylvania, and it was that way in most of the country, was not helpful. He instituted, and I helped, but he was the leader in no-fault divorce. You can't imagine what a change that was. There was a whole industry, a cottage industry, of lawyers that used to – they had to make up stuff. They actually would have people come in and catch you with another woman, only it wasn't real, it was just pretend, and they would then pretend in court that you were doing something, and you deserved the divorce. That would take years, and years, and years. The Catholic Conference – and I'm a Catholic and religious and so was Terry – they were a little concerned about this, because they thought it made divorce too easy. In fact, it did not really do that, and it changed the way we think about it in a more positive way. Another issue I remember, there was a fella named Gerry McMonagle [Gerald F., Sr.; State Representative, 1979-1984] from Philadelphia, and he was not a legislator who ordinarily did a lot of things. But, he got up and gave a speech and by the end of it changed everything on the one issue, and it was the workers' right to know the chemicals that they're working on. Gerry told the story of his Philadelphia-based company that he worked with, and how he knew people that died and how he thought he was going to die. He was down to 98 pounds. The place was absolutely rapt. Everybody was listening to this guy who had really never given a speech before then on the Floor of the House, and he changed the vote. He changed it. The law now in Pennsylvania is that people have the right to know the chemicals they're working on, all because of – so, things can happen. They don't often happen, but things like that have happened many times. The last thing for me was the organ donation, the law which we got passed here and is now in all 50

states and 4 countries – it might be five now. There was another one considering – but the point being, it’s become a law that, well, what has that done? It saves, I’m told, 25 thousand lives a year. What back-bencher gets to do 25 thousand lives a year that you helped save? There’s more that can be done, because we couldn’t get everything I wanted to do 20 years ago, but they’re working on it now, and I think it will happen in the near future. So, what I’m getting at is if we can focus on doing issues that are of some value to people, it’ll happen. It’ll get done despite the inter-ness and fighting that goes on between the parties right now. It can still happen. I’ll leave you with this story about my son who says I’m hard to buy for because I don’t need or want anything. He’s probably right. So, one day, five or six years ago, maybe it was six or seven years ago, for Christmas he got me a tour and a tasting at a new place in Pittsburgh that sells Pennsylvania-made whiskey.

DG: Wigle?

MD: Wigle.

DG: Yeah.

MD: You know it? All right. So, I took my dear friend who has since died, and it was one of the last places I got to take him. We had such a great time. I get there, and he says, “Are you Senator Dawida?” I don’t get that very often, it’s been a while. I said, “Yeah.” He said, “Well, I want to thank you.” It was one of the Wigles, or one of the family that owns Wigle. He said, “You probably don’t realize what you did, but you and a bunch of other legislators passed a law

25 years ago making it possible for Pennsylvania wineries to sell their own wine.” What that did at the time was increased the number of Pennsylvania wineries by 10-fold, because you could make a living. You didn’t have to be a gigantic place. It established a cottage industry that by ones, and twos, and 10s, and 20s developed quite a few jobs associated to it. Well, what they did – they being the whiskey people who wanted to do the same thing with whiskey, because Pennsylvania, until a decade ago had no whiskey being made in the state even though we were where it first happened, you know, the Whiskey Rebellion³ and all that – they literally changed two words. They did an amendment, like I used to do, and they did an amendment basically saying – an amendment to the law of wine – and they added distilled spirits. So, if you make distilled spirits you could do your own sales. What has happened? A 10-fold increase in the number of people making distilled spirits in Pennsylvania. Again, a tremendous growth and the same thing is happening in beer. Probably because of your age, you probably drink, what do they call it, IPAs [India Pale Ale]?

DG: IPAs?

MD: My son is explaining to this to me. I am not a beer drinker.

DG: Sure.

MD: I said to him, what’s an IPA? He said, well, it’s the fastest growing thing. Here’s the finale to all this. All these did good things for Pennsylvania. They did good things for job creation. At the time of maybe 20 years ago, it was widely viewed that there was only going be

³ A tax protest in rural western Pennsylvania against a federal whiskey tax, 1791-1794.

three to five people who owned breweries in the world. They were buying everything up, and they were all gigantic. Now, there are 25 of these places doing IPAs in every city in everywhere, and the same with wine and the same with whiskey. It proves you can change things. It proved we could change things with organ donation. It proved it with smoking. It proved it with the homeless. We can do things if we all think about it and work together. That's really where the battle is. I think, and maybe it's because I teach in college occasionally, and I've had the ability to see some really bright, articulate young people, I think these bright, articulate young people are going change the world. This new generation, which some of my generation doesn't think well of, is actually a lot less inhibited by past prejudices. I think they are going to make these kinds of changes constantly, and it will be a good thing for Pennsylvania, for our communities, for the country.

DG: Very good. Can I ask you why you decided to retire from the Senate in 1996?

MD: I ran for the county commissioner job in Allegheny County because I felt that that's where all the action from development could occur. I was right, by the way. We did new stadiums, you've probably witnessed a ballgame or two. People say we have the best baseball field in the country. Basically, we did in four years at the county a six billion dollars' worth of development. That's more than 50 years' worth, and then it all happened in like two and a half years. That was in a bipartisan effort, I worked with a Republican. So, it was time for that to change. But now, I am the head of Scenic Pittsburgh, which is a nonprofit part of a national effort for highway beautification. Lady Bird Johnson [Claudia Alta *née* Taylor, First Lady of the

United States, 1963-1969] started it 50 years ago⁴. I'm the Lady Bird of Pittsburgh. I'm sure you can see that. It's fun. This is sort of the culmination, because I go to communities, and I can get in the communities because I remember that I did things for them before. And I tell them, we can help you develop better zoning to protect the beauty of your community, and it works. Done over 50 communities in Allegheny County, we started with the city of Pittsburgh and are moving out and going out. Now, we've reached Butler County, so we're going all over the place for new communities to learn how to help themselves, protect themselves, and make their communities better. They can do it, they really can do it. You just got to know what you're doing, and I provide the expertise and they do the rest.

DG: Sure, sure. Do you have any advice you'd like to give any current members that might be listening?

MD: Yeah. I would hope you would take the bull by the horns and just start doing things and force the issue, try to get things – I know right now we have this thing where one side says I don't want to spend any money and the other side wants to spend lots of money. The answer is somewhere in the middle, and you've got to know that. I always appreciated my Republican colleagues because they examine both sides of the nickel before we spend it. But look, you still have to spend for some things. The government really does help people in a lot of ways. On the other hand, Democrats, you've got to appreciate that this side isn't totally crazy, but some of them may be on the far right and some on the far left. Most of us are in the 80 percent in the middle. You've got to figure out things that you can do together. When I was working with a

⁴ The Highway Beautification Act passed by the 89th United States Congress in 1965.

Republican in the county, this building a baseball stadium, is that partisan? Is that Democrat or is that Republican? It's not. It's not either, but it's a fun day.

DG: Yeah. Finally, last question. How would you like your tenure as a Pennsylvania state legislator to be remembered?

MD: I'd like to be remembered as somebody who tried to do his best, did some things that are saving lives to this day, and that made life a little better, made that 12-year-old who sat at, "Ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country," for people to know that I did for my country and my state and my local community. That's really what I want.

DG: Well, I think that's a nice place to end it, so Mr. Dawida thank you so much for coming in today.

MD: Thank you very much.