

PENNSYLVANIA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
BIPARTISAN MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

INTERVIEW WITH:

The Honorable John B. McCue (R)

60th and 61st Districts

Armstrong County

1963-1964, 1971-1976

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August 24, 2006

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Heidi Mays (HM): Good Afternoon. Thank you for having us to your home in Kittanning today.

The Honorable John B. McCue (JM): Well, thank you for coming.

HM: I am here today with John McCue, who served as a Representative from Armstrong County between the years of 1963 and 1964 and again in 1971 through 1976. I wanted to begin by asking you about your childhood and your family life, and how they prepared you for public office.

JM: Well, I had a grandfather who was always talking about good things; that I could go to—whatever it was, to Harrisburg or to Washington [D.C.], and so on. And, he told me all of these stories, some of the old Irish stories and some of the Irish songs

HM: And did you always have political aspirations?

JM: Yeah. I think I decided I wanted to be the President back when I was five years old or something like that. (*laugh*)

HM: Would you say that your family was political?

JM: Not necessarily. I think that the grandfather was just doing that to keep me busy.

HM: Okay. How did you decide to become a Republican?

JM: Well, let's see—I didn't like it that the President at that time put us into War. I thought, "Well, that's not the right thing to do, I think I'll go in for the Republicans." But, it ended up that I was going anyway.

HM: Okay, and which President was that?

JM: Roosevelt [Franklin D.; US President, 1933-1945]

HM: Roosevelt. Okay.

JM: And, of course, he was a wonderful leader.

HM: So, you have been a Republican pretty much all your life, then.

JM: Yes, but I have argued with Republicans as well as Democrats, and I have a lot of friends that are Democrats.

HM: Could you tell me a little about your educational back ground, and your career before coming to the Pennsylvania House?

JM: Well, I grew up in Ford City, went to St. Mary's Catholic Church, then I went to the public high school, and got mixed up in some politics there. That was a lot of fun, and I studied about history and various other things like that. And, then, I went to Penn State [Pennsylvania State University]—at that time it was only Penn State—and I was involved in politics there. They have the students who get their places and go through. It was a regular (*inaudible*). So, I enjoyed that. And, I was also involved in, various items that they would have, different outfits that I belonged to, and they would have their parties. I was in the—what am I talking about? It is where you make speeches, back-and-forth.

HM: Debate?

JM: The debates. I was a debater. But they don't do that anymore. But, we enjoyed that, and I learned an awful lot about doing all of these things.

HM: Well, it certainly prepared you for law and law school, too.

JM: Yes.

HM: And where did you go to law school?

JM: University of Pittsburgh. I graduated from Penn State in 1942, and that was a year earlier than I should have, but they gave us extra times, and I joined the Air Corps, but they couldn't take us in for about another seven or eight months, so I finished at Penn

State, and I had, at Pittsburgh, one complete section, and then, after that, they called me, and I came back several years later. So, when I was in the Air Corps, I wanted to be a pilot, but I didn't make out on that, say, with others. So, then they made me a Private, which turned out to be all right. I joined this crew; I was in the ball-turret underneath, which was an important part, as well as the other parts of it. We went through a lot of places where we were fired upon, and we saw a lot of other planes go down. Fortunately, our plane was not hurt. There would be some things going through the—the bird—the thing itself, but it didn't cause anything; we always got back. That was a very fortunate thing. But, then, when I was discharged, I signed up again for the Air Corps, and then I went back to Pittsburgh. I went down there so I could get a commission. I took ROTC [Reserves Officers' Training Corps] there, and I did get a commission, and I was in various things like that, and I came home to Ford City and got there, and then when we were called to active duty again in 1950, they sent me up to the place in Erie, where I was on the staff of the brigade. So, I did that for a while, and all of a sudden, they asked me, "Do you want to go to law school?" I said, "Yes." (*laugh*). And, I went down to Washington, D.C., and we had that, and I became that, so from then on, I was on the staff of the National Guard for all those years, and I went from the lowest one up until I became the head of a (*inaudible*), and, also, I was given an honorary of being a General, which, there was no money on it, but it was certainly nice that I had all of these different jobs from being a Private all the way up to being National Guard in Headquarters. That was the end of me, but I enjoyed it, and I have all of these photos.

HM: Do you remember what the type of plane was that you were on in World War II [1939-1945]?

JM: B-17. It was a wonderful plane. It would have four engines, and sometimes if you knocked out one or two, usually the plane could keep going on fewer engines. They couldn't get more altitude, but if it was close enough to England, and they had enough time that they could get there, they could at least save themselves and get out. So, it was lucky, and we were lucky, because we saw a lot of planes go down. We would count the guys jumping out, hopefully they would make it. And, if we didn't see them at all, they didn't—.

HM: So, when did you retire from the National Guard?

JM: Well, the National Guard—I was finally made a full Colonel, and they got me in the one part near Washington [D.C.], and I was—what is the head of, like I said, why can't I say all these things? I was around Baltimore, is where the big one was—

HM: The Pentagon?

JM: Not the Pentagon. It was the head of a particular one. So, I was there for a while, about two years, and then I was retired. And then I became, the, like I said—

HM: Brigadier General?

JM: Brigadier General, yes. Then I would come back home, and they would call me to make speeches and watch parades, so I was very pleased with that.

HM: And you were very much involved in Veterans' issues whenever you came to the House of Representatives, too.

JM: Yes. That was one of the things that we did, yeah.

HM: And you have a picture, I think, of one of your bill signings, too.

JM: Yes. This [*referring to picture*] was one of our—one in the outfit who wanted to improve the section of the National Guard we had to do. So, on here, we are showing Governor Shafer [Raymond P.; Pennsylvania Governor 1967-1971] signing it, and I was a member of that. I was in the National Guard and in the House at that time. Now, the other gentleman is Stanley Root, who is active in the National Guard. He was not a member of it, but he was one of the signers of this. And, the gentleman in the back, that is Mister Snyder, so he was very pleased that day. He was in charge of the National Guard. So, it worked so well that we haven't had any problems.

HM: Was there any overlapping with your military time and your time in the Pennsylvania House?

JM: Well, they worked very well together. When I was stationed at Harrisburg, I had to be down there in Harrisburg, so I could get together, yeah. So, I never missed one or the other.

HM: So, how did you become involved in politics, in general?

JM: I guess my grandfather told me I was going to be a president someday. (*laugh*)

HM: So, what made you decide to run for the Pennsylvania House?

JM: Well, I always wanted to do that. I would follow that. I enjoyed that. You probably could have asked me, “How do we do that?” The first time that I ran, was the first time that the two persons who were going there did it together, so, it was a—

HM: Is that when you ran with Stu Helm [W. Stuart; Armstrong County, 1941-1964; Speaker, 1957-1959, 1963-1965]?

JM: Mister Stuart Helm. Yeah. And, he was the Speaker of the House.

HM: Well, that is quite an honor, huh?

JM: It was. And he and I were the two who were running for that office, right here in Armstrong County. That was the last time that they had the two running together. After that they divided them into –

HM: Individual districts.

JM: Yeah. So, the next time, I was given the northern part of Armstrong County, and I got to know everybody, and then the next time, I was given the Southern part, but it overlapped, and I didn't have to move from Kittanning.

HM: That's nice.

JM: And there were people that I knew there, too, so I enjoyed that. Of course, now then, it doesn't work like that, and we have something like five or six different ones and we don't know. But, I thought we had a good chance of working for our citizens if we worked for the whole place.

HM: So, you had a really good relationship with Stuart Helm, then?

JM: Yes. When I was running, he took me, put his arm around my shoulder, and we went from house to house. And that was a big help, because everybody knew Stu, so they were very kind to me, for years on.

HM: Do you remember who you ran against in your first election?

JM: No (*laugh*).

HM: Okay, Peter Calarie?

JM: Peter Calarie, yes. He was a good friend. We were good friends all our lives.

HM: Do you remember anything else about your other campaign runs? Did you enjoy campaigning?

JM: Yes. I liked the idea of going from door-to-door, telling the people who I was. Probably, some of them knew, but it was so nice just to feel that you were going to see somebody, especially in the rural areas, where they wouldn't see people. Because, the trouble was that when I got in, it would be hard to get out. "Well, don't be in a hurry to go. At least have a cup of coffee." (*laugh*) That was nice. So, I had a lot of good friends.

HM: Since you were an attorney already, did you have name-recognition?

JM: What do you mean, 'name recognition'?

HM: Did people know you by name?

JM: Oh, yes, yes. And, I have to say, just by going to their house, maybe they would come down and look at me in my office. Not necessarily, but I got to know a lot of people in that, too.

HM: Did your law office ever serve as a district office, since during this time, I know that there weren't any district offices?

JM: What do you mean 'district office'?

HM: A place for people to actually come and maybe have problems with their PennDOT or, things like that.

JM: That's right. Since, there wasn't any other separate place, if I wanted people to come, they would just come into my office. It was a lot better later when they did have that, because I'd have the office full of people wanting things, and they didn't want me as an attorney. They wanted me to help them in Harrisburg. *(laugh)*

HM: As a legislator, huh?

JM: I was proud that they did, but it has changed quite a bit, now.

HM: Did your family get involved in politics—your immediate family? Did your wife help?

JM: No.

HM: No?

JM: Well, when I ran for something, they would all help. They would go door-to-door or with me at times, but they were not involved themselves.

HM: In your own words, can you tell me a little bit about the area in which you served?

JM: What do you mean?

HM: Can you tell me a little about Armstrong County?

JM: Oh, about Armstrong County. Well, first of all, it was the entire county for the two Representatives. We would have the entire mount from way up in the north at—there is a little pin that goes up there—and all the way down into the end where the river runs dry. And, we made a lot of friends, and even yet, somebody on the street yells to me, “Hey, John, hey, McCue” (*laugh*) And, even if I can not remember their names, I remembered who they were. And that went on all those years, even to now.

HM: Would you say Armstrong County is a Republican County or is it more Democratic?

JM: Well, it could be either way. Most of the time, it was Republican, as for the Harrisburg—the things that we had down in Harrisburg, but not always. It was pretty even. The persons who were running as candidates, we got along pretty well together, too, so it was nice.

HM: So, everybody knew each other, and it was a cordial relationship?

JM: Yeah.

HM: Would you call your seat a swing district? Meaning, did it go back-and-forth between the candidates?

JM: Yeah. (*laugh*) Nobody had a right to anything, but there were those times when one could do a little better job than the other.

HM: Did the national politics ever affect you as a candidate?

JM: Well, no. I would have my own feelings on that, but I didn't have anything to do with whether or not they were elected.

HM: I wasn't sure if the [Lyndon] Johnson [US President, 1963-1969] landslide had anything to do with, perhaps, you leaving office in [19]64.

JM: No, no, I wouldn't say that. No, it was just that we had a fight on, and that one I lost out. And, I always looked at that as something that was very good for me, because then I could go back to my law office, and considering that I was in the mid fifties, had I been reelected at that time and stayed on for a while, I probably would not have had a business as being an attorney.

HM: How long were you an attorney?

JM: Fifty-seven years.

HM: And you just retired this year?

JM: Yeah. *(laugh)*

HM: *(laugh)* Can you tell me how you were able to reach your constituents?

JM: Well, I'd go door-to-door when I am campaigning, and that seemed to be one of the best things because the people were so glad that you could come to see them. They would say, "Come on in, and have a cup of coffee." "No, I have to keep going."

HM: Had a lot of houses to hit, huh?

JM: And when I'd see them on the street, they would say, "Hi, John." (*laugh*) Yeah. So, I had a lot of friends, no matter what party they belonged to, and I didn't ask them whether they were a Republican or a Democrat. I just said, "I would like you to do it for me." Well, I don't know if they did it or not, but most of the time, I was successful. I lost the last time in that, someone had, came in with the type of the one where they put their name on there so that in the right Republican, there were two candidates running for it. So, what that did for me, it split up that, so that the Democrat candidate had the more votes, and that was just the way that it was. I didn't very well like that at the time, but, as I say, maybe it was a good thing for me just to retire.

HM: Whenever you came to the House, do you feel like anyone mentored you?

Perhaps, maybe, Stu Helm?

JM: Mister Helm of course. Well, locally, we were neighbors, and I had known him for a lot of years when I was just a young fellow and he was running his gas station. So, that's the way that was, and I thought that that was all right.

HM: Did you ever share a drive back and forth to Harrisburg with anybody?

JM: Yeah, from time to time. Senator Pechan [Albert; State Senator, 1949-1969] would offer a ride on there. For the most part, I think that almost everybody wanted his own car so he could come and go as he wanted, but, then, others, maybe we would get together and go there and back, which was all right, too.

HM: Because, I was thinking that it was a pretty long drive out here this morning.

JM: Oh, yes. (*laugh*)

HM: So, I wasn't sure if you broke up the time with any conversation with other people?

JM: Oh, yes. (*laugh*) Some wonderful ones, some of the dumb jokes that we had. I had to do the same thing for the National Guard in Harrisburg, so even when I wasn't running for office, we would have about two or three working together, and then everybody would have some sort of a joke.

HM: Could keep you busy, going back-and-forth. Since it is so far away from Kittanning to Harrisburg, did you spend the week whenever you were in session in Harrisburg.

JM: No. I did do the work down there, did the work in the offices, taking care of people who have something for – what do you call them? For the things that I was elected to do, and then other people would come in and want me to do some legal work, and I would have to go to the court house and look up things. So, I'd try to do that on Thursday and Friday, and then I would try to listen to some people on Saturdays and Sundays.

HM: So, it was a full time job.

JM: And then, on Monday, we had to be there at one o'clock, so what I would do is go into my office around seven, and go up to the courthouse and look up the things that I needed, and then about nine o'clock, nine thirty, I would go back to the office and we'd get that typed out, and finally, I would have to leave about ten o'clock because I was going to drive to the airport and to be there when they take off at twelve o'clock, and then that's a half-hour to Harrisburg, so then I would get off the plane at twelve-thirty, and my son, Michael, who worked for the House, would be down to meet me in his car. Drive me, and I'd be there at one o'clock for the count. *(laugh)*

HM: I didn't realize that you took an airplane. That must have been very handy, then.

JM: Well, at that time, airplanes were more than—it wasn't that they use to have all over Pennsylvania, but it's not as good now as it was then.

HM: Well, that's great. Do you still keep in touch with any of your old friends from the House?

JM: Well, not directly, but when I see them, I do. There's ones that are good friends from other towns, as well as this.

HM: Do you remember who some of those guys were?

JM: There was this one fellow who was from Pittsburgh, and he was also a lawyer, and we would work together and we would come back-and-forth.

HM: How do you feel about your son Michael working at the house?

JM: Well, I was glad that he was able to find a job. It was odd the way that he did. All the time that I was in there, he was very much interested in politics and so on. So, when he graduated from High School, he said he wanted to go down and look at me. So, for the next weekend, I said, "Well, come on down." So, he did, and he went down on the Floor with me, and he wondered about all these fellows passing out papers, so he went down and he said, "Can I help you pass out papers?" So, he did. *(laugh)* So, this went on for several days, maybe a week. So, someone would say, "Who is that kid down there putting those papers around" "Oh, that's Mike McCue." *(laugh)* So, then they put him on the payroll.

HM: So, he started off as a page?

JM: Yeah, but on his own. Nobody told him. So, then he stayed down there, and he had different jobs, but he has been there for all those years.

HM: Yeah, he is still employed there.

JM: Yeah.

HM: Is there anything that surprised you whenever you first came down to Harrisburg, about the Capitol Building, or the process in which laws were made?

JM: What do you mean?

HM: I'm just thinking about the House floor itself.

JM: You mean the people or the building?

HM: I think a little bit of both. Because I know that different people have called the House Floor a cattle or a livestock auction, and I think that before you actually watch it on PCN [Pennsylvania Cable Network], people think it is very orderly, and they don't realize everything that goes on there.

JM: I do have to go back, on some things here—

HM: Sure. That's fine.

JM: When I was, oh, ten years old, we were on my father's vacation, so we went through Harrisburg. We went up to the Capitol, which I thought that was absolutely wonderful. We kept on going up through New York State and up to New England. We'd stop at every—what do you call it—like we have, where they would have their people

working for them. So, I would try to meet somebody who was the head of each one, and I did have my picture taken with a couple of them. Up in Maine, and Massachusetts, and so on, and I was ten years old. So, I decided, “Well, I want to do that.”

HM: You wanted to be a legislator.

JM: Isn’t that funny? I forgot that I would say that.

HM: So, what did you think about being on the House Floor and watching it all happen? Did you think it was organized, chaotic?

JM: Well, it has to be chaotic. Each person there is representing somebody from their own district, or another district, or whatever, so, sometimes everybody agrees. It’s pretty hard if everybody can’t agree. So, it just goes like that. Sometimes it’s longer than others.

HM: Yeah. Whenever we were reading some of your debates on the House Floor, we noticed that you were very vocal about rural issues. And, probably, against maybe some of the city people, maybe, Philadelphia or Pittsburgh. So, I guess rural issues were something that you felt strongly about.

JM: Well, I did. The way that they would do that, these Philadelphians, or Pittsburghers usually would say, we need so much money to do this or that for schools or what. Well,

if they didn't have enough to do it, then they would go to Allegheny County. And they would say, well, now, if we do that, you'll get so much money to do that. And, often, it stops there. Sometimes, they would have to go to some other place, and that is just the way it was. So, the result was that areas like this didn't come in with this same thing.

HM: Were you helpful in getting Route 28 through this area expanded?

JM: Well, I did—Yeah. I was in favor of it and I worked on that, and I also worked on some of the items that you have to do when you are driving a car, and we were so pleased when we got—the one going down the river now is a lot better than — you'd have had to come on the old one just for, about a half a mile and if you kept on going, you'd go up and down and around. I had a legal office, not only in Kittanning, but also in Freeport. And, so, often, I'd be going down (*inaudible*) or coming or going around, and I got to know every place that had water or ice on it, so I was so glad when they got this other thing. It is still one of the best around here. We have good places, but we don't have the good people building but, we keep hoping maybe things will come along. Let's see, what else were you reading? When do the—

HM: I'm just trying to think. You were involved in the board of directors at IUP [Indiana University of Pennsylvania], as well?

JM: Yes.

HM: And, were you instrumental in getting the campus here in Kittanning?

JM: Yes. We had about seven people who started that, and one of them was Senator Pechan and there were other people—I can't just—

HM: That's okay.

JM: So, we got the thing going, and, yeah, my friend, Simmons, and so, we made a deal to buy from the people who were in there—and so on—so we agreed to pay a certain amount, but we didn't have any money. *(laugh)* So, my friend Jim called me one time, and says, "Well, Jack, I've got the money. We can do it." I said, "Well, how did you do it?" And he said, well, his father had died, and he took his share of what his father had left to get it going, but with the idea that he would get reimbursed for that, which happened, and we got the students coming in. What that was for, was to have here in Kittanning, to have everything of the four years that they had in Indiana, and they could stay here in Kittanning. And, we have quite a few older ones who were attorneys and various things. Well, then, as time went on, the people in Indiana kept cutting off different things, so that it wasn't any good. So, it was a lot better when they did move down to below the river here, and so, I was the last one left of that seven. They all died except the one who is the minister, and he had to retire and go back to his hometown. As far as I know, he may still be living, but he was a very nice person. But, we were the last of the people, although we did have other ones coming in. We kept it going, but it wasn't so good with the relationship that we had with the people over there. Not that there is

anything wrong with what they were doing, they were keeping us from having those same things. The first couple of years, kids could be living right here in Kittanning, walking up to that school and doing whatever they had to do, and at the end of four years they could get a commission. So, I hope it works a lot better now down below here.

HM: Okay.

JM: That was on there—something like thirty-five, or forty years or so—but I was the last of the originals, and I didn't wait long enough to become the president.

HM: Well, I wanted to ask you, can you recall what committees you were on?

JM: In the Legislature?

HM: In the Legislature, yes.

JM: Well, I was on the ones for birds, and, the ones where the attorneys—

HM: Judiciary.

JM: On that, and the Military.

HM: Okay. Were you vice chairman, too, of Military and Veteran's Affairs?

JM: Yeah, I think, at one time, I was.

HM: In your freshman term, I think.

JM: Yeah, and then later on I was the head of it.

HM: Yeah. Do you remember how you got to become vice chairman in your freshman term?

JM: I suppose Mister Stuart [Helm].

HM: I was guessing maybe Mister Helm had a part in that. That is pretty impressive, to be a vice chairman in your freshman term. (*laugh*) What do you think of—well, especially since your son, Michael, is the sound man—what do you think of some of these technological advances that are going on in the House now? Could you imagine operating a laptop on the House floor?

JM: No, I cannot. I have to tell you about—maybe you meant to ask me—everybody had a desk right in front, so whatever you had, everybody opened the door and put it in there, and when it got too crowded, you threw it away. Then, every so often, we would have to write letters to our constituents. Well, later on, each one would have a secretary to do it, but when I went down there, they had several secretaries. So, that was

downstairs, in the main door. So, if you wanted your letter written, you'd get in line, and there would be any number in front of you, and you'd have to wait your turn. And then we would tell whoever this nice lady was, and they were good (*inaudible*), and so forth. So, when they would be prepared, and, they would send them up to my desk in the office in the main place, and then we'd mail them off, and that's the way we got around. So, it wasn't exactly zing-zing-zing. (*laugh*)

HM: Yeah. So, whenever you started, you did have an office? Or did you just have your desk on the House floor?

JM: The desk on the House floor. That was my office. (*laugh*)

HM: Wow. So, did you have a locker? Is that where you put your coat and your hat?

JM: Yeah. They were there. They weren't great things. You could put your coat in there. You didn't have to lock it unless you wanted to.

HM: Okay. What if you needed to make a phone call back home? Did you have to— was that one common phone, too?

JM: Yeah, yeah, you would have to find a phone.

HM: So, it's not like today? Where you can just go to your office and make a phone call?

JM: Then, later on, next time, we would have our own offices—a floor—either up a floor or down a floor. It would be full of other people. So, that, at least, was some help. I understand, now, each Member has a complete thing to himself.

HM: Do you recall who you shared your office with, the second time around?

JM: Yeah. Why can't I say his name? His father had been there and he had been there—

HM: Roy Wilt [State Representative, Mercer County, 1969-1981; State Senator, 1981-1990]?

JM: Yeah. How did you know?

HM: Well, we had talked to Mr. Wilt.

JM: We shared the same office, so we were good friends there.

HM: Do you have a favorite memory of serving in the House?

JM: Well, I don't have any bad memories there.

HM: Well, that's good.

JM: I remember when they'd have the all night meetings, and it would go on and on and on until daylight would come, and that is a very tiresome thing: to be there almost one day and then, continuing on. I don't know if they still do that, I guess they do. Then there's times when some group wanted to get a certain thing through; it didn't really matter if it was the Democrat side or the Republican side, he wanted to get it. And maybe, somebody wouldn't be in favor of it, so he would say, "No, I'm not going to vote for it." (*laugh*) Well, then they would keep it up and say, "Come on, now, you're going to vote for this." And, sometimes it would be, like, after he had really fallen asleep, he would sign his name on it. That, I didn't think was too good, but that's the way things work sometimes.

HM: What aspect of being a Representative did you like the most?

JM: Well, First of all, I liked going from house to house and meeting a lot of people and telling them my stories, and they were kind enough to me to let me get in. I did have a couple of things, I don't know whether you want to hear them.

HM: Sure.

JM: When they were having—different people working would be entitled to certain items. So, out here, they have coal or stone or something like that. So, you go down in there, and they wanted to have their thing in the—what do you call it when the people working people go in a group?

HM: A union.

JM: A union, yeah. But, they couldn't get it, because the deal was that they were farmers (*laugh*), so they are not entitled to it. So, I knew them all. All of these people are from right here, between here and Elderton, or the other way, Worthington. So, I said, "Well, why don't you come up, over?" So, a bunch of them came. They were sitting in the back, and so I gave the speech. The only difference was that they were underground, so they should be entitled to the same thing. So, eventually, that passed. It got in. So, I enjoyed that.

HM: Good. Was there anything you did not like about being a Representative?

JM: Well, no, I wouldn't say that, exactly. I would have arguments with others, but it was—I enjoyed these people, yeah. Sometimes, I enjoyed them. (*laugh*)

HM: Whenever you think about the Capitol, and whenever you think about being gone for thirty years, do you have any thoughts about what is going on in Harrisburg, today?

JM: Well, not too much. I try to listen on the thing, and I ask Mike how they're doing, and sometimes I can find him on the television, but he's not saying anything. (*laugh*) But, once in a while he shows up on PCN, and, of course, when the man who just died—

HM: K. Leroy Irvis [State Representative, Allegheny County, 1959-1988; Speaker, 1977-1979, 1983-1988]?

JM: Yeah. And he came in the first time I came in. So, we were friends for all those years even though I wasn't a Member. So, we felt so bad when he died in the place, there. And, let's see, when I first walked into the place, I happened to meet my old friend from the military, Harvey McClure [State Representative, Erie County, 1963-1964]. And he just had one term. It wasn't that he'd lost out; he just didn't want to come back from Erie every time. So, he continued, and he is still a good friend. We were in the same outfit in the army. We were both not marked as attorneys, just as members of the thing, so when we came up, he called me and said one time, "Would you like to go to a place to learn about the military?" And, I said, "Yeah. Sure." (*laugh*). And, that's what we did. So, eventually, in about the next few months, we both became attorneys, and then, I was moved from the one outfit that I was with up to the head of the National Guard, there. So, yeah, we were friends for a long time.

HM: Is there anyone else you'd like to talk about? You mentioned—

JM: Well, I guess there are a lot of them. (*laugh*) Did you have someone that I've—
Well, Wilson, was one of the persons down here.

HM: Ben Wilson [Benjamin; State Representative, Bucks County, 1967-1988]?

JM: Yeah. Burkhardt [Robert F.; State Representative, Allegheny Count, 1969-1974].

HM: Oh, right.

JM: – is another one, and Pat Crownover.

HM: Crawford.

JM: Crawford [Patricia Crawford, State Representative, Chester County, 1969-1976].

HM: Were those all friends of yours?

JM: Yes. And, I thought everybody was a friend, even if we weren't on the same side.

HM: So, the House was like one big family.

JM: Yeah. And, I think that was it when they had the two hotels in town. Whenever we finished doing, they would go down to one of the two, and have a beer or something.

Maybe they would go from one to the other (*laugh*), and it was great. Well, then when they did away with the hotels and everybody had to find a different place, it was—you didn't know them as well as when you went and you were sitting down over a beer.

HM: So, you could drop your political differences, and everyone could just sit down and talk about whatever.

JM: Yeah. It was good. It felt good. You could see the other guy, and say to him, "Hi, Joe."

HM: Yeah. It must have been some really nice times, then.

JM: Yeah.

HM: Have you remained active in politics since leaving the House?

JM: Well, I go vote. (*laugh*) And, I attend the accounts, the parties that they have and different things and whatever I can do, I do, and there's times when someone who is running wants to get me as a—some kind of a president of a thing. And, so, I'm glad to do that.

HM: So, you have known the candidates, probably, from Armstrong County, throughout the years, too, I'm sure?

JM: Yes.

HM: Do you think you have any advice for new members? What would you like to tell somebody that's just starting their career?

JM: (*laugh*) That's pretty hard to say. If they get down there and they are going to represent the people that they know, and I think that's the first thing that they want to do, if they want to get this road straightened out, they are not going to fool around with the people (*inaudible*), but that is just an example.

HM: So, know the people that you're going to represent, and know their issues, probably?

JM: Yeah, and not everybody has issues, but they want something that's going to make their life a lot better.

HM: That's good advice. I see you have some notes. Is there anything else that you'd like to talk about?

JM: Well, I think you did a wonderful job here.

HM: Thank you. I just don't want to leave anything off.

JM: Well, Oh, yeah, there is something; I told you about the military, but then, the automobile laws. This last time that I was in there, I was on that company—not company, but—

HM: Committee.

JM: – Committee that changed the matter for the better, especially on the thing where somebody had violated something. Well, then they might say, “Well, you have to not do any driving for a month.” (*laugh*) It seemed to me to be sort of foolish there, so we did get together of setting up the way it is now. I think it’s something like six months, and if you’re doing that all the time, then they’re going to make it hard for you. But, I felt pretty good on that; I was on that. But for the people who are continuously doing it, we’re going to see to it that they do. But, if you just do it one time and you have to give it up for a month, it doesn’t really help anybody.

HM: What would you say the hardest issues that perhaps you faced as a legislator were?

JM: Well, I don’t know. Of course, I was not in favor of people taking their babies and not letting them come to the place. So, I was in favor of the child’s having come to see the light of day to try to make (*inaudible*). And, I think, for the most part, the legislatures that I sat with went along with that. And both parties would have, like, the same thing:

some were in favor of it and some were against it. But, it wasn't from one side or the other, yeah.

HM: Were you involved in any of the big budget battles?

JM: No. I was never on the budget thing.

HM: I was just thinking that about that time in the early [19]70s, I think was when Pennsylvania started increasing taxes, and I wasn't sure if you were opposed to that or for it.

JM: Well, nobody's in favor of taxes. *(laugh)*

HM: Very true. *(laugh)*

JM: But I didn't get into any arguments with them. I wasn't with those committees, so I guess when the time came I would vote my way, but I didn't get up and work on the thing.

HM: Well, I think your career certainly has been very interesting. You served, as you said, in the military, and then your long, outstanding career as a lawyer, and your career in the Pennsylvania House. That is really wonderful. Thank you very much for your service.

JM: Well, thank you. And, I still was with Indiana University, there.

HM: Yes, and public service, as well. I am sure lots of students will be very thankful for all that you've done.

JM: Well, I have to thank you for coming all this distance.

HM: Well, we certainly enjoyed you having us. (*laugh*)

JM: It takes at least four hours.

HM: It does. Especially if you get lost. (*laugh*) Thank you so much, Mr. McCue.

JM: Bless your heart. I'm so glad that you came. And you have these nice fellows here to help you.

HM: I know. I do. I'm very lucky. They make us look good.