

PENNSYLVANIA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
BIPARTISAN MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

INTERVIEW WITH:

**The Honorable Lee C. Taddonio (R)**

25<sup>th</sup> District

Allegheny and Westmoreland Counties

1973 – 1982

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**Raymond J. Whittaker, III (RW):** Today we have the privilege of speaking with former Representative Lee C. Taddonio, who was a Republican member who served the 25<sup>th</sup> District, which encompasses parts of Allegheny and Westmoreland Counties from 1973 through 1982. Representative, thank you for joining us as part of this project.

**The Honorable Lee C. Taddonio (LCT):** Thank you for having me.

**RW:** I would just briefly like you to talk about your early life, your education, your educational career, and some of the careers you had prior to running for the House seat.

**LCT:** Oh, okay. Well, I will start off; I went to University of Notre Dame to become a civil engineer. The only thing I knew after four years of civil engineering was that I did not want to be a civil engineer. So then, I went to Pitt [University of Pittsburgh] to get my MBA and after that, I had a – I was in ROTC – so I had a military commitment coming up and as luck would have it I got assigned – this was during the Vietnam War, I was sweating that one out – but, I got assigned to Washington, D.C., to the Armed Forces Institute of Pathology. The reason I got assigned there was because they were putting in a computer system which was pretty new at the time. And through my college career I became familiar with computers, which they were brand new, and since I had the background they wanted me down there. So, I installed and led the installation of an IBM 360 [Model] 30 computer in the Armed Forces Institute of Pathology, at the time. I ran an organization of about thirty people. And, it was very nice. I was in the Army for a couple of years and I stayed on as a civilian, and my wife and I were living in Washington and I got involved in the Jaycees, because we were looking to meet people, that is the reason we

joined, to meet people. Well I found out very quickly that the Jaycees is a very active organization. I was observing the officers and so forth down there, I said. "These guys do not have a home life. They are here all the time." I thought I never want to do that. So, after we were down there about six years in Washington we decided we really wanted to come back to Pittsburgh. So, we did and we moved back here and we moved to Murrysville where I live today. That was back in 1969, and when we moved there, of course we went through a thing of trying to meet people again. My wife signed me up for a brand new Jaycee chapter they were trying to start there, because she knew I was in the Jaycees and it is a good way to meet people, and so forth. And, it turned out that the individual that was organizing the effort was a classmate of mine from Notre Dame.

**RW:** Oh.

**LCT:** And he was fresh out of another chapter in Monroeville. Again, like the computer thing I was the only person of the recruits that had any background in the Jaycees. So, at the organizational meeting my friend was the charter president the first year and I was the vice president, which lead to becoming the president the next year, you know, to a position I said I would never become. But somehow, it worked out and I adapted somewhat. At this time, I was working for Westinghouse Nuclear Energy Systems as a systems analyst, but it really was not that bad. I was looking for something else to get into. I had always been drawn toward government, fascinated by it, studied in high school and so forth. It happened at a Christmas party the then Westmoreland County chairman approached me and said they were looking for a candidate because they had just gone through reapportionment; they carved out a brand new

District, which they cut off parts of other Districts and it was going to go one third Westmoreland County, two thirds in Allegheny County. They were looking for someone to run from Westmoreland County, because they heard there was going to be three Allegheny County candidates running, which was fine with me. I said, "It sounds interesting. I'll take a flyer." Well, right after I filed, two of the three Allegheny County candidates dropped out.

**RW:** Oh wow.

**LCT:** So, there I was one on one with a seasoned Republican committee woman as an opponent, which, you know, could have been disastrous especially for a neophyte. So, I had to do some quick on the job training and learning, but I also found out that despite being a committee woman for so many years she wasn't universally liked. So, to take care of that, I was able to make some allegiances and so forth and triumphed in the primary. It turned out that the Democrat primary turned out the way they envisioned the Republican primary, that there were three Democrat candidates who split the vote and a Westmoreland candidate won, which did not set well with the Allegheny Democrats. They looked at me as being easier to defeat next time than this other guy if he was the incumbent, so I got a lot of Democratic support. The District that was carved out was about fifty-five percent Democrat. But, Ed Hussie, at the time was the legal counsel for the Republicans, was very involved with reapportionment. And, he did not look at the registration; they looked at the voting patterns and they saw that they voted Republican, which turned out to be true. So to make a long story short, it was a big campaign, I was learning on the job as we went doing all different things you are supposed to do, and in the end I won. And at the time I was working for Westinghouse. The legislative salary then was fifteen

thousand, six hundred dollars a year, which was a little less than what I was making at Westinghouse, plus the fact that I had a growing family and everything. I knew I could not really live on that, but Westinghouse was cooperative and when I went to run they were encouraging. They also took me on for a part-time consultant. Since I was on the computer end, that worked out real well, because I could do programming when I was there and when I was not there I didn't; I just worked on an hourly basis. So, that worked out quite nicely for the first few years I was elected. But, I guess that answers your question about what happened before I got elected.

**RW:** Well, not coming from a political family, necessarily, how did you find yourself becoming a Republican?

**LCT:** Well, I always registered with the predominant party. When I was in Washington I registered as a Democrat because of John Kennedy.

**RW:** Sure.

**LCT:** When I moved to Murrysville, I saw all local politics was Republican, so I registered as a Republican. I didn't know the difference between the parties. I didn't find out the difference between the parties until I came down here. I just figured that in Murrysville you are a Republican if you want to influence the local elections. You have to vote in the Republican primary, so that was the reason I was. I was not a strong party person; I didn't know really what politics was at the time. I was one of those new people who just was fascinated with the idea of

a representative government and democracy and all that other stuff, and so I put it to work and see what happens.

**RW:** So, you had two candidates from Westmoreland County in a predominantly Allegheny County District; what types of campaigning did you do to try to get your name recognized in the other part of the county?

**LCT:** Well, we did a lot of things. Door knocking was very popular then. I think I knocked on about a couple thousand doors. Every weekend or night I would go out and knock on doors. We had coffees in various areas where neighbors would get their neighbors to come in and I would go there and talk about different things. Send out mailings. The other thing was recruiting volunteers and taking advantage of drawing alliances; finding people that, for one reason or another, did not like the other candidate, so they were willing to support me or were willing to work at it. That was a key thing. A lot of people give you lip service; you want people that really want to do the work. That is where part of my Jaycees background came because in Jaycees you have to get people to work.

**RW:** Right. So, first campaign you won by a little over two thousand votes?

**LCT:** Yeah.

**RW:** Second campaign, was a little less than two thousand votes. But then, from there after you won pretty handily in each of your campaigns?

**LCT:** Yeah.

**RW:** What changed after the first two elections?

**LCT:** Well, remember, after I was elected and since I was in a Democratic District, I spent most of that first term trying to shore up my base and I did not pay as much attention to legislation as I could have. I was more concerned with building that base up so I could get reelected. And I remember I was working very hard at and I was talking to Vic Westerberg [Victor J. Westerberg; State Representative, Cameron and McKean Counties, 1964-1976], who was a chairman of the House Transportation Committee at the time, and I said, "You know, I am working real hard at this. Maybe if I work real hard at it the Democrats will get wind and they will not put up a candidate." He said, "Don't worry about it. They'll put up a candidate. This is a swing seat and they are going to go after you." So I said, "Well, the work I did was not in vein." That second election was probably the biggest event that I ever did in my life, because everything turned right for the Democrat. When I won my first election, it was during [President Richard M.] Nixon's landslide, before Watergate. So, Nixon swept people in the office and they said I won because of that. Now, this is two years later, there's Watergate, [Governor Milton J.] Shapp is running to be reelected, and we had thought he was not going to get a lot of support, but it turned out the other way; it was a Democratic year, a Democratic District, the Democrats put up a candidate who was my age and was the former president of Jaycees, very popular and very well known in Monroeville. I was a dead man. Well, we worked our butts off.

**RW:** Yeah.

**LCT:** I had over two hundred volunteers that election. And these were working volunteers, I emphasize that, and we had it organized to the hilt by District, by everything else, and we did everything we could possibly think of. Some things I think of today and wonder why I did them. At one point we were doing a fundraiser and some of the fire department people supported me and said “We do a bingo every week. Run a bingo – we know all about it.” Okay, that sounds good. He said, “The only thing is you have to give a big prize; you got to give a thousand dollars away.” Okay, that will get people to come. Well, the night of the bingo we were sweating that one. I said this is going to cost me money. Well, we did a little better than break-even, but it was an experience. But anyway, we won that election. Nobody was expecting us to win. We won as a Republican in a Democratic year and I think that put to bed the opposition, serious opposition, to think that they could beat me again and after that, the next three elections were fairly easy. They didn’t put up good candidates and we knew what we were doing and that kind of thing.

**RW:** Well, talk a little more about the District itself; the people, the jobs that they held, the demographics of the District, the geography. What did the 25<sup>th</sup> District look like?

**LCT:** Well it’s a bedroom community, a suburb, mostly Monroeville. Monroeville, they have a big shopping area on the eastern part of Pittsburgh. A lot of middle class housing that was built after the war. And then it has a couple of smaller communities like Pitcairn and Wilmerding, which were like mill towns with more blue collar people in them. Out in Murrysville, where I

came from, it was a little more affluent but still, of the similar to Monroeville. So, I would say, basically a conservative-type District. It was Democrat by registration, but like I say, not by voting pattern. Monroeville was almost fifty-fifty; actually, it was a little more Democrat registration. Murrysville was Republican registration but it was only, like, one third of the District. At the time, there was not much in the way of low income people there, except a few in the Pitcairn, Wilmerding area, which were working poor. But that is basically the flavor of the District at the time.

**RW:** Did you have a District office?

**LCT:** Yes. The second term I had a District office in an old log cabin. It was interesting, because you went into the conference room where you walked in where the secretary was and the ceiling was like twelve feet on one side and on the other side it was like ten feet. It wasn't a lot to look at but it had a lot of exposure, on a busy Northern Pike in Monroeville, which had a lot of traffic. We put a sign up there and got a lot of exposure. We did not get a lot of constituents stopping in, but you saw the sign every day. It was a period when it was relatively novel to have a District office.

**RW:** Right.

**LCT:** My office was open like only three days a week for a couple hours that week. But it was there. I mean, it was the first step.

**RW:** What types of issues or problems did people come to you with from the District?

**LCT:** Well, people always have their own variety of things, but there were some local issues that I got involved in my first term. One was the Route 22 bypass in Murrysville. This is an issue that, for about five or ten years prior to my election they proposed to do a bypass through Murrysville, you know, make the Pittsburgh Parkway longer and eliminate traffic in Murrysville, but it got bogged down. It had become bogged down because there was a doctor there, Dr. Townsend, whose wife had been very involved in environmental movement and the establishment of a park there called Duff Park which ran along the creek, Turtle Creek, near the highway. And she died, and, of course, he was looking at it as a memorial to her and the line of the highway would take a good bit of Duff Park. He didn't like that; he was politically connected with Shapp and he stopped it, basically it was an environmental thing. So, it was at an impasse when I got elected. I was thinking that ninety percent of the people in Murrysville want this bypass, he is out there standing there stopping it; I have got to be able to do something about that. So, I worked and worked at it. Finally, I got Townsend to agree to a compromise that, working with PennDOT, we moved the highway down so it wouldn't affect as much of the property, take a little bit of Duff Park but not that much. He was willing to go with that; our supervisors weren't. They said, "We want it all or nothing." And I said, "You are going to get nothing."

**RW:** Yeah.

**LCT:** “No, we are going to get everything.” So, we had meetings and they wouldn’t budge. They would not take the rational approach. And I’m saying, “Look, all these people want this. You guys are making a ridiculous stand.” I was thinking, how can I get the people involved in this? So, I came up with the idea of what they call, plebiscite, where we can bring in the voting machines and people can vote on it whether they want it or not. So, everybody agreed to that. I figured, well, we have it made now. Well, that was my first term, when I learned things. When you have an election you have got to get the word out to people. Of course, I don’t have a lot of money to do that and we had meetings and things that we needed to do, but there were a couple people that weren’t happy with the compromise in addition to the supervisors. One was a guy named Junior Hall, who is since deceased, but he had a couple pieces of property there, commercial property, right along Route 22, that the line would go through. Another was a group of people in the neighborhood called Marlee Acres, who thought this highway was going to go too close to them and it is going to be noisy. Well, we went through this whole thing and about a week before the election Junior Hall buys these ads in the local paper: Trees and Weeds Versus the Highway. He is trying to frame the issue; you are going to vote for the highway or you are going to vote for trees and weeds. They figured that they were going to get their way. Obviously, he swayed everybody to vote against the compromise route. They voted against it and, as expected, the administration backed off from it and said, we have a lot of highway projects around and we’re not going to build this one. It is interesting; now, here it is, almost fifty years later, they just finished about five years ago redoing Route 22. It is not a bypass; they just made it from three lanes to four lanes. It is now practically impossible to get from one side of the town to the other. They have five additional traffic lights; it’s a mess. So, yeah, it all came out of this whole thing that we could not pull it off. But as I say, I learned things from it.

It was fun while it lasted, but I would have much rather have seen rationality take over. Another issue big at the time was a hospital in Monroeville. When we moved out there, there was no hospital. You had to go to Oakland or Wilksburg Columbia Hospital which had a terrible reputation. And I was sensitive to this because when my daughter was two years old and we were in Washington she dropped a glass Pepsi bottle and it exploded. Pieces of glass went right up next to her eye. Just sliced her head and we had to take her by ambulance to the hospital. She turned out fine, but that brought to my attention the need to have a facility nearby. And since we didn't have anything, I said we need to do something about this. Well, there was a group working on that in Monroeville; they hadn't been getting too far along. Then, Columbia came along and they were trying to do something. So, these two kind of got into a fight with each other; one did not want to move, the other – and I like I say, Columbia had a bad reputation, so the people did not want Columbia coming and building another Columbia hospital there. So, it got to be a real free for all, an impasse. I got involved; I tried to organize the public support for getting the compromise and got the various municipalities to pass resolutions, calling all these people to get off their duff. Finally, it came to pass and it became Forbes Hospital in Monroeville. Of course, now we have UPMC fighting them.

**RW:** Right.

**LCT:** But, at least that was a little bit of a victory. I'm not taking a major share of the credit for that, but I mean at least I was involved in it and working on it and it was important to me. The other piece of legislation that I was very involved in, in fact I started picking up from when I was running the first time, I got that from Jim Bedford, who was going to be one of the other

Republican candidates that had to drop out – I got him to be my campaign manager my first term – but, one of the issues with him was constitutional spending limits proposed by Milton Friedman, who was a Nobel laureate economist. We got to talking about it and the more I heard, the more I liked it. So, I introduced it that first term. Of course, it did not go anywhere because I did not have the capability to do much with it, but I just bided my time until – well, the next two terms the Democrats were the majority and when that happens the party that is in the minority can just object to what the other party is doing; you can't do anything. Finally, my fourth term, Republicans got to be in the majority. [Richard] Thornburgh was running for governor. I got Thornburgh interested in the idea, and so he added it to his campaign. I thought we are moving; the boat is finally going to move. So, I got together with some people at Carnegie Mellon, Alan Meltzer, a noted economist, and Peter Ordeshook, another professor there, and they worked with me on developing this concept. We got a lot of other things going also. We had a statewide tax limitation committee trying to get this bill pushed. It was introduced, it became House Bill 1; the first bill introduced that year. That title is usually reserved for legislation that the leadership wants to highlight. They held the number for us and I figured, oh, we have almost got this knocked now. We have the governor and everything else. Well, the governor's legislative assistant, point man, was George Seidel, who was with the teachers union before that, and guess what? The teachers union [PSEA] was not in favor of this. They hated it. There were two groups that hated it; teachers union and local governments, mainly because it restricted the teacher's unlimited salaries. So, I think it had the effect of, at least, moderating what the governor's involvement. We still were able to get it through the House, a very strong vote, but the Senate wouldn't take it up. The Senate was in Democratic hands. So, finally I got to the point where we can do a parliamentary maneuver. We amended a Senate Bill that amends the

Constitution with our bill and sent it back to them because then they could not let it sit in committee. They have got to vote on it on the floor. Ironically, the bill we picked was a bill that [Vincent J.; State Senator, 1977-2008] Fumo, Senator Fumo, had sponsored. Fumo was not a friend of this type of legislation. He was ticked off; of course, we would amend his bill. Anyway, we amended it and sent it over there. A constitutional amendment has to pass two separately elected legislatures and it has to be done ninety days before the election, which meant we had to pass it in July. So, this is July and when we recess we're not coming back until September, so this was our only chance to get it passed. So, it went over to the Senate on a Monday. Ed Early [State Senator, 1975-1986; State Representative, Allegheny County, 1971-1974] amended it over there and put it in. When we were counting the heads we had the votes. Well, the bill didn't get voted on until the next day, so overnight PSEA [Pennsylvania State Education Association] went to work and changed enough votes that the Senate decided to table it. And that is the closest we came to a constitutional spending limit, because that killed it for the year. But we had a good bill. Still, I firmly believe –

**RW:** You still think it would be relevant today?

**LCT:** Oh, I think it would save us, because right now everybody wants money. Everybody has a cause that is needy that you cannot vote against. Nobody is up there saying we do not have enough money to spend. You know, if you have your home budget you have so much money coming in and you know how much you can spend and you don't overspend. There is no control in government; government just keeps writing the checks. So, it keeps going up and up and it never stops. This constitutional amendment would give them some backbone; it would stop it.

Unfortunately, we did not get it and I say it has to be a constitutional amendment, because if you make it legislative they can always vote to override it. But so far, I have been hoping that it is going to come back up again; somebody will champion it or whatever else, but it hasn't.

Although, I did see the Senate did introduce a similar legislation earlier this year, but I do not know if anything is going to happen to it. But that, that is probably my biggest disappointment is the fact that we didn't get that passed.

**RW:** You were successful in some of your own pieces of legislation; I think you had five pieces of legislation signed into law, plus a pamphlet law that was introduced. Why did you find success in those certain areas that you legislated? Were those projects that were needed?

**LCT:** For various reasons, like, you know, areas, certain laws, they really don't affect a lot of different places. They are easier to pass, or if there is a general consensus for it, if it's not controversial they are easier to pass. But, if you have really got something that is sea changing you have to fight and you're going to win or you're going to lose. But a lot of times, a lot of those bills they did not involve a lot of controversy, a lot of work, but it's just a matter of building a consensus and putting it out there. Legislators, like anybody else, they like to go along and get along with people. Somebody says they need this for their District, they will give them the vote, that type of thing.

**RW:** One of the issues you were involved with that is still coming up today is downsizing the legislature.

**LCT:** Yeah.

**RW:** That has been introduced the last two sessions. Why did you feel that was a necessary piece of legislation to champion?

**LCT:** Well, actually I don't anymore. The fact that my experience in the legislature showed me that I think it would be bad. Part of the problem with the democracy right now is that money is controlling everything. Now, the larger you make a District, you make the legislature smaller, you get more constituents. You make it more difficult to run for that office. It makes it more expensive, so you have got to sell your soul to get the money to vote for that. Now, the legislative district, I think we had about twenty, twenty-five thousand voters when I was there. Now, that is about the most you can get to without a huge amount of expenditure, because TV is overkill, but you can do word of mouth and a lot of other things, but once you get beyond that number it makes it more difficult to get elected. In fact, that is one of the reasons why I opted not to run for the Senate when I had a chance to do that. If I want big contributor support, I may have to make compromises to get the money to be elected; I didn't want to do that. Like I say, I think that is the thing people don't realize. They look at it as strictly an economic thing; that you're going to save money on the legislature. Well, you're not looking at what it is going to cost you in the long run.

**RW:** One of your big emphases was on computer systems, computer software, you even introduced one of the first bills that we have been able to find addressing computer hacking back in the 1979-80 session.

**LCT:** Yeah.

**RW:** What type of reception did you get from the House when you introduced this type of dynamic that we are so used to today?

**LCT:** You talking about the computer voting?

**RW:** Yeah.

**LCT:** Yeah. Well that was, again, a lot of sales people coming around at that time because they have got this great product; they're going to do computerized voting. I was probably one of the few, if not maybe the only one, who had ever worked with computers in the House. It is interesting even in light of the Bush election. That first proposed system was a punch card system.

**RW:** Right.

**LCT:** And I was not even worried about the hanging chad. But, the thing is that it's very easy to change programs to alter the vote. The hacking thing which people are now getting to realize scares me even today with the stuff we have now, the electronic systems and so forth. I think we should go back to the old voting machines still today. Because the more decentralized you are the more difficult it is to rig anything. Now when you centralize everything and computerize it,

you make a tempting target. When I went out explaining that to people on the floor they went along with it; they stopped it a couple times. Trying to be efficient is one thing, but in government you don't want to be efficient. You know what I mean? There's too many evils out there.

**RW:** I believe in the early [19]80's, you developed a word processing system for the House that was able to detail and print out lists. How did that come about?

**LCT:** Okay. We were talking about the modernizing and so forth and when I came here I was impressed with the state-of-the-art that we had in equipment and so forth. At that time we had what they called magnetic card typewriters, which were precursors to word processing systems today and every legislator had access to them, which was pretty good at the time. IBM was the primary supplier of these things in the House, so the IBM salesman stood to make a lot of money, obviously. But computers started developing and the capabilities were changing. The caucus, you have four caucuses, but the House Republicans were interested in computers for the caucus. The Democrats had already moved in that direction, and so they came to me since I had the background. I came up with a system to select it. Well, it was interesting because I had done that type of thing before. The Democrats in the House had selected an IBM minicomputer. Despite IBM's name, it needed to be programmed. They didn't have what they call off the shelf software like PC's do today, which means you had to have expertise too how to operate this bugger.

**RW:** Right.

**LCT:** Now, I think I looked at four or five different manufacturers, but at the time Wang was just coming into prominence. They were actually ahead of their time, because they were selling a computer bundled with software much like PC's today with word processing and database and so forth. It was basically easy to operate too, so you didn't require the higher level of skill of an individual to run it and you could take it out day one. So, I convinced them to go with the Wang, which they did, and they installed it over in the Irvis Office Building. Immediately they started transcribing the county voting list because they used it for mailings and newsletters and things like that. We had about five or six clerk typists and a manager. Now, the political things being what they are, the person that leadership chose for the manager didn't have a computer background. I thought, if I could work with him maybe we could work it out so I tried. And one of the things I tried to instill in him was the concept of backing up things.

**RW:** Right.

**LCT:** We installed it and I think we had six or seven legislators on the system with their applications. Everything was going well and I remember we went home for Christmas time for our recess and I got a call from Harrisburg. "Something is wrong with the computer." "Oh, okay. Well, let me fix it. Well what happened?" He says, "Well, the disk is making a noise." "Yeah, did you put the back up in it?" "Yeah, I did that and it is still making the noise and it still doesn't work." I said, "Oh, your disk drive is bad," you know, "the heads are ruining the disk, so take the other backup and put it in the other disk drive and start it up." "What other backup?" Oh boy. So, we destroyed our only backup that they had set up. Well, I'm thinking, well, this

could be a problem but maybe it is not as much of a problem as I think because everybody is at home, they're not in Harrisburg.

**RW:** Right.

**LCT:** Well, that held true except for one thing; the legal counsel at the time was working on something for the majority leader, and he was working on the computer. Now, he wasn't really a friend of this selection, because the political aspect of the selection was, of course, that we kicked out a lot of the IBM equipment, and the IBM guy just comes up and badmouths everything about this selection, bending the ear of legal counsel about why this is such a terrible thing. And so, this just reinforces it. So, this is Murphy's Law, you know, if it can go wrong it will and at the worst possible time and it came true. So, long run is, we did finally get the data recovered from the old disk, but it took some time. It was slow, pain involved and so forth and we lost political capital in the process. That was my last term and I left. After I left there was no champion for that computer system, so it was replaced with something else. What I thought would have been a very good selection could have worked out really well didn't at this point because lack of good staff.

**RW:** With the amount of technology we have today at our fingertips, at our disposal to use, do you think it is helping the process more or hindering the process more?

**LCT:** It helps; it allows you to do a lot more. There's so much more you can do now that you could not even touch before. Information – if you use it the right way it can be great. That is

one of the things I was involved with; I was on the Legislative Data Processing Committee too. I oversaw the House data processing committee. One of the things we were looking into then at the time was large display screens, because when we were considering amendments, you didn't know what amendment they were talking about. In fact, one of the big reforms that we did make that came about to be pretty good was, we put numbers on the amendments. They weren't numbered and you couldn't tell which was being discussed. Once they had numbers, at least you knew what they were talking about. The idea with large display screens was you could put a screen up at the front of the House and you can see it all. But of course, now they have PCs at their desk, which is better. But, that's the type of thing we were looking at back then. As technology changes you have to adapt and go with it and see. But now, there is so much more you can do. Of course, it can be abused too, which we found out too.

**RW:** Right. Yeah, even with all this technology one of the public's, I guess, greatest criticisms is the partisanship that we have seen in federal government, state governments. What was the atmosphere like when you served? Was there more camaraderie? Was there more a bipartisan nature?

**LCT:** There is a big change now. You talk to anybody that served back when I did, they're all glad they are not there now. I didn't know the difference between the parties until I got down here. Then I found out. Well, you know the Democrats they do one thing and we get on the floor we fight like cats and dogs. The difference was after that evening we would go down to the local watering hole or whatever and we would socialize and we would talk to each other and play games and whatever else, you know? And they were friends. I do not think that happens today.

It's much more vindictive. I mean, people don't respect the other person as much. That makes it very difficult to do anything, because people will just oppose it because of personalities. It used to be, there were certain understandings. Like this year for instance; you know there is going to be a tax increase. And usually before things started, you know, the majority party knows that they are going to have to put up some tax votes. Well, they'll try to extract their pound of flesh out of the other guy, but they are eventually going to give them the tax votes to keep the government moving. Now, I'm not so sure; they're not as willing. And they don't want to do the responsible thing; they want to do the political thing. It just makes it difficult to work. It is happening at all levels of government.

**RW:** Do you still stay tuned? It sounds like you still stay tuned into what is going on, at least within the state government.

**LCT:** Yeah I do. I still get some of the emails and so forth and stuff going on, listen to it and see, oh he is doing this and oh look what they are working on. You know, you can see if people do stupid things like the fracking industry during the election they set it out basically. Now they have got a big campaign, they are spending millions of dollars saying don't tax us. They are going to get taxed. There is no way, I mean, where were they before? People don't want to believe what is reality and what they need to do. It would have made more sense for them at the time to pass a tax, maybe a smaller one, than what they are going to get now. It's like the supervisors back in Murrysville; they wanted the whole cake.

**RW:** Right.

**LCT:** They think they can get it; they can't.

**RW:** You already mentioned some of the people you worked with. Talk about some of the leadership that you worked with, worked for, governors, majority leaders, speakers during your time there and what kind of role they played.

**LCT:** Okay. There was Herb Fineman [State Representative, Philadelphia County, 1955-1977; Speaker, 1969-1972, 1975-1977]. It was interesting. Herb Fineman was a very strong Speaker, did a fairly good job when it came to legislative stuff. I remember my second term. Marty Mullen [Martin P.; State Representative, Philadelphia County, 1955-1962, 1965-1982] from Philadelphia, had decided he was going to challenge Fineman for speakership. The majority party always usually gets the Speaker, but it's voted on by the whole House. But if he could split up the Democratic vote he could get elected Speaker. So, he was trying to work with the Republicans to vote for him, because he could get maybe fifteen or sixteen Democrats to go and then he could be Speaker and, you know, the Republicans could get something out of it. Well, I thought, this is going to be interesting. Swearing-In day was really very interesting that year, because they actually had a significant vote. All the families there and the flowers and all this other stuff; here we are having this big fight for Speaker. Well, I remember they took a standing roll call. I had never seen them do that before. But, Fineman got about eight or ten Republican votes; Mullen was expected to take all of the Republican votes. Well, turns out Fineman had done favors for these guys and he called them in. That's the way he operated; he kept a big book. He always had some favors to call in when he needed it and he saved himself as Speaker.

Unfortunately, it turned out badly for him later, but it was really a, a novel thing for me to learn at that point in time how these people work. [James J.; State Representative, Westmoreland County, 1967-1989; Speaker, 1989] Manderino; I'll tell you what, I had so much respect for that guy. I probably don't agree with two percent of what he stands for, but he was there when Milton Shapp was going through all this corruption stuff and it was one thing after another. The House had a Republican majority, so we were organizing investigating committees and so forth to go after him because we were trying to get the governorship next time. Well, Manderino was on that investigating committee defending Shapp and so forth. He did so much to defend him with so little it was amazing, because he made the Republicans look crazy. And I said, how can that guy do that? He has got talent. I mean, because everything in the Shapp Administration was bad, there is no way of painting it, but he was able to turn it around and kept the Republicans from making any footholds in it. So, you know, it's amazing to see him work, you know, doing how he did those things. Ken Lee [Kenneth B.; State Representative, Sullivan, Susquehanna and Wyoming Counties, 1957-1974; Speaker, 1967-1968, 1973-1974] was a Republican Speaker. He was an interesting guy as far as having respect of the caucus. He was the type of guy the caucus would talk about the legislation and they would be divided here and there and Ken would sit back, listen, and then finally he would come up and say well this is the way it should be and everyone would agree. I mean, it's amazing the talent that is evident. Sometimes, they get it wrong. I remember Butera [Robert J.; State Representative, Montgomery County, 1963-1978] was a majority leader at the time, was making a big thing about the income tax passed the term before. It was the first time and was very unpopular. We had a surplus of money which Shapp wanted to spend. Butera said, no; we're going to make him refund that money, cut the taxes, and we'll get the credit and we'll win the governorship. Well, he was only half right; they refunded

the money, cut the taxes, but guess who took the credit for it? The governor. So, I mean, if you are in the minority, don't think you're going to change things. People get carried away with what they think they can do. Some of the other people, Leroy Irvis [K. Leroy; State Representative, Allegheny County, 1959-1988; Speaker, 1983-1988] was very good. Although, I think I was unjustly accused by him one time of being racist. I think he might have been overly sensitive. But, I think overall he did a decent job, yeah. He was a good conciliator, you know, could work with people.

**RW:** Well, what made you want to retire at the point that you did?

**LCT:** A few things. One of the main ones was financial; my daughter was graduating high school and was going to go to college, which was a big number even then and at the time our salary wasn't that good and it didn't look like we were going to get any increases. So, that was one thing. The other thing is that when I first ran I didn't aspire to make this a career. In fact, I remember our first term in office when they had a vote for the tax increase, I remember one of our Democratic legislators who had to put up the majority of the votes was almost crying on the floor one night saying he's going to have to vote for this tax increase and if he does he is going to lose the election and if he loses the election he won't be able to work, he won't have anything he can do. And I thought that's a sad thing; I don't ever want to get in a position like that. But anyway, I also feel that this is not a profession in itself; it should be a volunteer-type of thing, where you know you come in you put in your service and you go on. So, that was some of my thinking as well. Plus the fact that when you are down here it starts to change you and some of the changes I didn't like. So I figured, you know, it was time. It was time to move on. I still

think it was the right time to move on. It wasn't the easiest thing to do to transition to something else, but it was [time].

**RW:** In your farewell speech, it wasn't very long but it had some pointed points in it and you addressed some of them – the feelings of not being too wedded to this place, it was a special gift to serve, and not questioning other member's motives when introducing legislation. And you see that I think as a theme throughout the years.

**LCT:** Yeah, yeah and I did, questioning the motives of one of my colleagues who was questioning me one time on some issue – I forget what it was now – but like, my motive was personal or whatever else; it was totally unfounded. It just kind of hurt me a little bit, but as I say, take people for what they say. I mean, give them the benefit of the doubt. Sure, there are a lot of people in politics that do things for political reasons but usually you know that; usually you can figure that out.

**RW:** You said you had an opportunity to run for Senate. Did you have any other opportunities after you retired from the House to seek further office?

**LCT:** I could have run again for my seat, I guess. You know, at one time I think I was considering it very lightly, but not real seriously. I was content just to be out of the political thing, actually.

**RW:** What then, what did you do then with yourself in the years immediately after retiring from the House?

**LCT:** Well it's, it is not that easy for a retired legislator to find work unless you want to be a lobbyist, which I didn't want to be. But I went to Pitt and taught in their Graduate School of Information Science because of my computer background and legislative background and so forth. And I had always been curious about – just like I was curious about serving in the legislature, I was curious about what it would be like to teach. Well, I don't think I was really cut out for it. After a few years, like six, seven years I went on to I went to a Small Business Trade Association, SMC Business Councils.

**RW:** You spent a good number of years representing them.

**LCT:** Yeah, almost twenty years, yeah.

**RW:** What was your role within them and what did you do? What was your role?

**LCT:** Well, it was kind of neat. Like I say, it was hard for me to find a good job fit when I left the legislature. First of all, because of my background, I was into so many different things. A lot of times people in careers stay in one area and specialize, specialize, specialize. I wasn't; I'm all over the map. So, trying to find somebody that wanted to hire me for those qualities and could pay me decently was difficult. I found Associations was actually a pretty good fit. I went to this SMC Business Councils as their vice president. Leo McDonough, who was the president,

had lobbied me during my legislative terms and he knew me. It turned out when I got there, they were like in the Stone Age; no matter what I did, it was an improvement. But it was fun, because I got to use all my different experience; from the legislative to the computer to almost anything. I got involved in everything and I read everything about that Association and kind of grew with it and went through it awhile and ended up being president before I retired. It was probably as good a post career for a legislator as there is. You know, like I say, you always like to be in something that you feel like you are making a difference, you know?

**RW:** You still made trips to Harrisburg every now and again for that organization as well.

**LCT:** I did, yeah.

**RW:** So you were still sort of connected with the legislative process?

**LCT:** Yeah. We used to have an annual trip, well, one in Washington and one here in Harrisburg. We used to bring a busload of members down and go lobbying for a day. Plus, we used to have legislative events back in Pittsburgh. We would have a reception at the first of the year and we would have a captains group which would meet in different legislative Districts that met with their legislators. We tried to promote how they should make their needs known to the legislature and so forth.

**RW:** Looking back now, thirty years after you have been in office, what are some of the aspects that you enjoyed the most about serving?

**LCT:** I guess the friends I made. One of the biggest things I learned when I first ran I got to know areas and people in my immediate vicinity I had no idea existed before. And it was very eye opening and I think it has kind of changed me somewhat, just to see what is there. You tend to get a very narrow focus in life, but when you are forced to go out there and talk to everybody you get a different view point of what is going on.

**RW:** You already mentioned your regrets about the spending cap bill being one of your biggest ones, but do you have any other disappointments or any piece of legislation you wish you would have gotten passed while you were here?

**LCT:** No. I mean, that one and the Route 22 bypass were the biggest regrets, yeah. I was involved in my last term, particularly, on abortion legislation.

**RW:** Right.

**LCT:** That was eye opening too. I mean, just to see the animus in people, I mean, how downright angry and hateful people can be. I mean, you toss all the civility out the window. If you are not on the right side, man you are dog meat.

**RW:** What would your advice then be to someone wanting to get in to public service?

**LCT:** Go in for the right reason. I mean, go in try, but don't try to make a living out of it. You can't compromise your principals; you have got to have a moral standard to go by and stick with it.

**RW:** I think my last question then would be how would you like your tenure as a State Representative to be remembered?

**LCT:** How would I like to be remembered? That I did a decent job and I would like to see people think that he did what he could. Might mention another thing I did my last term; it was kind of off the wall thing. It got to the point where you get the feeling of people not getting their moral house in order. I put together, for lack of a better words, a retreat for legislators. We had about, about six or eight legislators that would get together and I got a local priest down at the Catholic school in town and we had a little day of reflection. Then out of that, I started something like a, I would say not a prayer group, but something like that. Once a month we would meet, talk about things that are going on in our lives and how to attack them and how to keep on the right path and that kind of thing. My understanding is that group survived me for quite a few years. I don't think it's still going on, but it did go on for quite a while. But as I say, I think it's important for there to be some kind of grounding for people.

**RW:** Well, I really want to thank you for taking part in this project and talking about your legislative experiences and your experiences in general.

**LCT:** You are welcome.

**RW:** Thank you so much.

**LCT:** I appreciate it.

**\*\* NOTE:** *Transcript has been edited by the Narrator.*