

PENNSYLVANIA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
BIPARTISAN MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

INTERVIEW WITH:

The Honorable C. Allan Egolf (R)

86th District

Cumberland, Franklin & Perry Counties

1993-2004

INTERVIEWED CONDUCTED BY: Simon J. Bronner, Ph.D.
November 30th, 2004

Transcript by: Heather Deppen Hillard

1 **Simon Bronner (SB):** Good Morning. I'm with Representative C. Allan Egolf, of the
2 86th District, representing Perry County and Franklin County, who was a Representative
3 from 1993 to the present, 2004. The first question that I want to ask you is about your
4 childhood and how that prepared you for your service in the House.

5
6 **The Honorable C. Allan Egolf (CAE):** Well, I had a pretty – I would say – outstanding
7 childhood. Being born and raised in Perry County, a very rural area – and just a fantastic
8 experience really. I look back on it – I went to a one-room school. And we, in the
9 summer times, went swimming about every day in the local streams, local creeks [and]
10 bike riding wherever we wanted to. Our parents didn't have to worry about us – didn't
11 have to worry about crime. In fact, even still my brother – I probably shouldn't say this –
12 but he leaves the key in his car. It's still that way around there. But growing up, working
13 on the farms in the summer time for local farmers, getting a good work ethic from them
14 and from my parents, and I think that all that probably, you know, self-reliance in the
15 rural countryside probably prepared me for life in general, I think, very well. And I look
16 back very fondly with that – with that memory.

17
18 **SB:** Now, you had several careers before getting into politics. Can you describe them?

19
20 **CAE:** First one was in the Air Force. I went through ROTC at Penn State, [then] went
21 in to the Air Force [and] retired after 23 years. I was an Air Force meteorologist. [I]
22 actually wanted to fly, but I found out when I went for my first physical – actually for the
23 Navy at that point – found out I was color-blind. So, I didn't know that at the time, so

1 that kept me from flying, but [I] went into meteorology. [I] did as much flying as I could
2 and got my own pilot's license in Commercial Pilot rating. But, [I] had a very rewarding
3 career in the Air Force all over the world [and] then retired and came back to Perry
4 County and used my experience, my training as a meteorologist, and taught Earth Science
5 in Carlisle School District for four and a half years. And [then] this happened to open up
6 at the right time and [I] went in – never had been in politics before that – but ran for this
7 office here.

8

9 **SB:** What motivated you to run for office?

10

11 **CAE:** Well, it's kind of a funny story. I was not, as I mentioned, I was not involved in
12 politics at all, except that in the Air Force and wherever we were in the world, my wife
13 and I thought we should always vote and always did, Absentee, because I always felt that
14 if you don't vote you don't have a right, really, to complain about what is going on in
15 Government. So, when my predecessor, Representative Noye [Fred C. Noye; State
16 Representative, Cumberland and Perry Counties, 1973-1992], announced his retirement, I
17 didn't think a whole lot about it except wondering who was going to run. And a friend of
18 mine, an Attorney, mentioned to me, [he] said, "Why don't you run for that office?" and,
19 of course, I took it as a joke and just laughed about it. Then a short time later a local j
20 Judge, who was a friend of mine, also came to me and said, "You ought to consider
21 running for this job." So then I really started seriously thinking about it. And it sort of
22 came on me, just like about the voting, I thought, "Well, here's a great opportunity.
23 Right now, I'm not employed." At that time – I guess it was right after I was teaching. I

1 thought well if I – well, I enquired a little bit about it and found out how many hours
2 you’ve got to put in. My predecessor said 80 hours a week and I thought he was joking at
3 that at the time too, (*laugh*) but I thought, “Well, I don’t have children at home, so, you
4 know, if I put a lot of time into it, It’s not taking way from the family, at least the
5 children. So, I have no reason not to run.” So, it’s probably the same philosophy; if I’m
6 not willing to do it myself, then I shouldn’t complain about whoever does run and makes
7 it. And [I] then talked to my wife and my grown children and I got their opinions. And I
8 told my wife, you know, “Well, we’re in it together,” because I know from, you know,
9 just observing that, I mean, if you’re in politics and you’re in office, certainly you’re
10 going to have people that disagree with you. So I told her, “I know what to expect, but,
11 you know, you’re not going to like to hear bad things about me or hear people
12 complaining. So, I want you to be satisfied with this and I want a decision to be both of
13 us.” So, we did; we came to the decision to run, that I would.

14

15 **SB:** As a newcomer, what do you recall about your first campaign?

16

17 **CAE:** Well, I really dreaded campaigning. In fact, it was right about the time of the
18 check-cashing scandal down in Washington [DC]. And I thought, if I go door-to-door –
19 [as] I was advised by the retired Senator [William J. Moore], he said, “You’ve got to go
20 door-to-door and meet the people to ask for their vote.” – I thought if I do that, I was
21 going to get the door slammed in my face, but it was just the opposite. And we started
22 doing that and people just welcomed us into their home, and, you know, offered coffee to
23 us [and] just wanted to talk. And I only had probably one partially negative reception to

1 a person. But everybody was – it was just – it was great actually; a great experience. My
2 wife loved it and my brother and his wife went out with us and they kept asking, “When
3 can we go out again?” because they liked it so well. We’d all go to a district and they’d
4 go down one side of the street and we’d go down the other. So that was a good
5 experience.

6

7 **SB:** When you came to the House was there anything that surprised you?

8

9 **CAE:** Well, I guess not a real surprise. I think I lived long enough and observed
10 Government in action. But one of the things that I didn’t like was the spending of
11 taxpayer’s money. [It] was just unbelievable, just the waste I could see, you know. Not
12 just here at the Capitol, but all though Government, I guess, was probably the biggest
13 surprise. But I don’t know; I can’t recall any other real big surprises.

14

15 **SB:** Do you have a recollection of the Swearing-In Ceremony?

16

17 **CAE:** Very impressive—very impressive. That was—and I think just coming into the
18 House for the first time and observing the magnificent facility we have here – the Floor
19 of the House and the rest of the Capitol. So, that was very impressive and awe inspiring.
20 I don’t know if that would fit into the “surprise” question. So, the whole atmosphere and
21 the way things were run and just sitting in the House and just observing. And I found
22 out, of course, that it’s one of the probably top two most beautiful Capitols in the country.
23 And I certainly can see that. And then the Ceremony that we had for Swearing-In and the

1 flowers that were sent by well-wishers and for others too, just all over the Floor of the
2 House, it was beautiful. So, anyway, it was very nice; a very nice experience.

3

4 **SB:** As you began your service did you have some mentors who guided you?

5

6 **CAE:** I had advice given by Senator [William J.] Moore, who was retired as I
7 mentioned, and living back in Perry County, and others here, I guess, locally from
8 Cumberland County. Now, at that time, I represented part of Cumberland County as well
9 as Franklin and Perry. And so, the Representatives from Cumberland County,
10 Representative Jerry Nailor [State Representative, Cumberland County, 1989-2006] and
11 Pat Vance [Patricia Vance; State Representative, Cumberland County, 1991-2004; State
12 Senator, 2005-present], had been in longer. They hadn't been in for a long time, but they
13 had been in one or two sessions before me, as well as Senator [Harold] Mowery [State
14 Senator, 1993-2004; State Representative, Cumberland County, 1977-1990], who had
15 part of Perry County. So, they all could give me, you know, good advice on different
16 things that I was experiencing. They had already been through different issues and could
17 talk about it. So, yeah, I would say they were the ones that I went to if I needed just to
18 get a background on something and what had been done before [and] who to go to about
19 particular problems.

20

21 **SB:** You mentioned that one of your issues was on "cutting spending." Was that a
22 primary one or did you have some others as well that constituted your motivation?

23

1 **CAE:** Well, family issues were big ones and just, yeah, the growth of government. It's
2 just one of those things that's natural. It's just a natural thing that government is just
3 going to continue to grow and get more costly. So that was a big one. That I wanted to
4 do whatever I could as one individual down here. So, that and spending, the family
5 values issue were the main ones.

6

7 **SB:** In your farewell address you also mentioned "individual freedoms." Can you
8 elaborate on which individual freedoms you were particularly trying to protect and
9 preserve?

10

11 **CAE:** Well, I don't know about a particular individual freedom, but again it just a fact
12 that Government gets bigger and bigger and we have more Laws all the time. And, of
13 course, every Law, somewhere or another, is going to take away some portion of your
14 freedoms. Otherwise, any Law that restricts your activity, of course, takes away freedom.
15 So, that was the issue with me there – just to try to keep Government from growing. And
16 so, along that same line I always looked when I was ready to vote on something, or
17 somebody came to me and wanted me to introduce Legislation, some questions I would
18 ask right away, you know, "Is it really needed?" Because, we found there is some
19 Legislation that other members will call "fluff" Legislation. They put it in simply
20 because some constituents want it. And so, rather than say, "No, this is not practical," or
21 "I don't really agree with you," they'll go ahead and put it in knowing it's not going to go
22 anywhere, and they call it, you know, just "fluff" Legislation. And, the other factor is
23 that between five and 6,000 pieces of Legislation are introduced every term. So, if every

1 one of those became Law, we'd be suffocating under Governmental Law. So those types
2 of things are what, I guess, motivated me to say, "Look at these things. What do we
3 really want to do here?" You know, "Is it really necessary?" and then, "What effect will
4 it be on the families? How expensive is it? Is it expensive? What's it going to do for the
5 taxpayer again?" Because, we have to fund everything by money that people have earned
6 and pay tax on. And, "Is it moral?" and, "What is the long-term effect on a number of
7 things, but primarily on individual freedom?" So, yes, those are the things I looked at.

8

9 **SB:** Well, you were involved in several issues that drew some controversy, one of them,
10 the Sanctity of Marriage Act. Could you speak about how you got involved in that and
11 the process of putting that through?

12

13 **CAE:** Well, that was back, you know, in the early, mid-nineties. And the issue of same-
14 sex marriage – my concern with that was not as the individual so much that decided that
15 they wanted to get married; it was going to be the effect on the family and on children.
16 And there's been a lot of research, and I did a lot of research on this to find research
17 studies that show the effects of divorce on children, the effects of not having what the
18 mother and father bring to the family, to a marriage, and to the children, primarily; and
19 how each one has a different influence on children and the raising of children. So, from
20 those aspects of it I thought it was important that we make sure in Pennsylvania that we
21 keep the traditional marriage and try to strengthen—and that's another thing always, as I
22 mentioned, what the effect on the traditional family is, we seem to be weakening
23 marriages; making it easier to get divorces rather than people trying to work out their

1 problems. And I look at, again, what is the effect on the children? If it's just two people
2 that have no children, they get divorced, well, it's just between the two of them. But
3 when there is children, they are the ones that are hurt. So all of these things I looked at
4 from the aspect of children and what the effect would be. So, that's why I felt that it was
5 very important that we keep the traditional marriage here. And seeing what was
6 happening in other States and the push that some States may legalize same-sex marriage
7 by the "Full Faith and Credit Clause" of the United States Constitution could mean that if
8 somebody gets married in another State and they come to Pennsylvania, then we have to
9 recognize that. So we needed to preempt that and that's why I introduced Legislation to
10 establish and reaffirm really what had been the longstanding tradition in Pennsylvania
11 that a marriage is between a man and a woman. So that was my motivation.

12

13 **SB:** When that went through you received some criticism in the press. How did you
14 react to that and what were your relations with the media?

15

16 **CAE:** I guess I just really just ignore it because I know what the press does. *(laugh)*
17 Generally, they're very liberal. Even from my first experience when I first ran, the one
18 local newspaper – we had an interview – they interviewed candidates and their first
19 question was, "Are you going to be like your predecessor?" They apparently didn't like
20 him and they did not endorse me and then when they wrote it up they actually started out
21 criticizing my predecessor. So, I mean, they almost had an agenda before I even went in
22 there. So I take what the papers, say, with a "grain of salt," really.

23

1 **SB:** You also were involved in issues of freedom of the press and expression regarding
2 limiting access to obscene material and child pornography. Could you describe how you
3 got involved in those issues?
4

5 **CAE:** Well, there again, I mean, we saw what the Internet's doing and how pervasive
6 pornography is on the Internet and how easy it is to get into it. And so I thought in
7 schools and libraries where children [HB 4-1999] – that's where children go; that's where
8 we think should be a safe place for children, especially libraries. Parents go in there –
9 they want to know that their children – it's a good family place. And here we have the
10 Internet coming in there and we found out it's a place where individuals come in there to
11 get on to the computers and go into porn sites and it's so easy. Plus, the fact that porn
12 sites are so easy for children to get into because they have names that are things that
13 children look at. Well, things like "Bambi" [and] Disney characters; some of the porn
14 sites use that to get into them and children can get into them without intending to and
15 they can't get out. They can't even hit the "x" or "close out" to get out of it; it just goes
16 into more pictures and so on for them. And so it's a real problem and it's a real problem
17 in libraries. And again, a lot of research was showing this, so again, it was something in
18 my mind that we needed to do to protect children. And you can't, as the papers say, and
19 a number of these things for example, call it "censorship." It was not going to be
20 censorship. What we wanted to do was require public libraries and public schools –
21 require them to filter. [It] would not be by Law that they had to filter—only if they are
22 going to take Government money, which almost all the libraries do and same thing with
23 the schools. They're publicly funded, so we didn't figure the taxpayer should be funding

1 this sort of thing. So this was to restrict it only in those venues and if they did not want to
2 restrict, it was their decision. If they did not want to put filters on they would not get
3 government funding. So it was not “censorship” as the Media called it at first.

4

5 **SB:** There was only one negative vote against that bill in our research, but you did get
6 into a heated debate with the negative voice of Representative Josephs [Babette Josephs;
7 State Representative, Philadelphia County, 1985-present]. What do you recall about that
8 debate?

9

10 **CAE:** Actually, I can’t even recall what her reasoning [was]. But, again, I knew we
11 were on the side of right. So I didn’t let it bother me. I mean, you know, you just expect
12 there’s going to be—you never get a 100 % on everything, on just about anything you’re
13 not going to get a 100 percent. So, I figure it was pretty good we only had one negative
14 on it. So, what her reasons were, I don’t even recall.

15

16 **SB:** Another Constitutional matter that you got involved in was the bills that were called
17 the “Patriotism Act,” by one name or another. Can you describe why that was so
18 important and the controversy about its being overturned?

19

20 **CAE:** Well, again there was – If you read the papers they had it wrong. This was not
21 mandating students to say the Pledge of Allegiance [Act 157-2001]. It was mandated the
22 schools to offer the Pledge of Allegiance or the National Anthem at the beginning of the
23 school day every day. It mandated the schools to have a flag in every classroom. But, if

1 students wanted to opt out, and it was very clear, and it's been, again, researched [that] it
2 had already been decided by the courts in other States that you cannot mandate and
3 require students to say it. So, in the Legislation I had, they could opt out for personal or
4 religious reasons. But I felt that the school is a place for children to learn. We mandate
5 other courses that they have in school so all we're doing is mandating that they
6 essentially have a course, in other words, offer the Pledge. And it was in already existing
7 Legislation, existing Law combined with giving – that they should be studying in school
8 – Civics, the history of our country, the Constitution, what the flag stands for. So, it was
9 all intertwined. It was not just the saying the Pledge, but they were supposed to be
10 studying all the reasons the flag is a symbol of our country; why our military men and
11 women fight to uphold those things that the flag stands for; and why it's important – and
12 hopefully they'll learn Patriotism from that. You can't force Patriotism on somebody. It
13 should be something that they realize themselves after learning about the uniqueness of
14 our country and our great Constitution that we have; something that was a whole new
15 experiment in Government. What the Founders meant and why, and what they had
16 experienced that gave them that wisdom. And it was almost a miracle that we got the
17 Constitution that we have and the country that we have and that we are a different
18 country from every other one in the world. That's what I wanted them to learn and this if
19 just part of it.

20

21 **SB:** Do you consider those values in decline or a problem?

22

1 **CAE:** I do, actually. And again, in researching (*laugh*) and some of the studying I've
2 done, and the history – which I like studying history. One of the most popular textbooks,
3 actually, and a number of the textbooks that they use, but even the most popular one has,
4 I think what I recall now, three or four lines about George Washington [US President
5 1789-1797] and that's it. They talk about a number of other things, you know, race
6 relations and so on, which is important, but I think (*laugh*) the most important thing they
7 ought to be learning is about our Founders and what they went through, why the readings
8 and so on that they had – they had some great advice – and why they thought it was
9 important to have our Bill of Rights. And why they thought it was important have our
10 balance of powers, the three branches of Government, etcetera, without going into all the
11 details. And we need to study that because when you don't study [and] don't learn about
12 anything, that's the quickest way to lose it. And we're not doing it in schools; we're just
13 are not studying it in many, many of the schools – I mean very little about George
14 Washington, Thomas Jefferson [US President 1801-1809], James Madison [US President
15 1809-1817], the other Founders. It's just not in the history books anymore.

16

17 **SB:** Those were Statewide, even National issues. Were there issues of particular
18 importance to you for your District?

19

20 **CAE:** Are you saying, “Were there some issues?” or those particular issues that we just
21 talked about?

22

1 **SB:** Were there additional issues that were important for you to get through for serving
2 your constituents in your District?

3

4 **CAE:** Well, my District was very rural, as I mentioned, so farming is a big part of the
5 industry in the three counties that I represented. So I was very interested in agricultural
6 issues. In fact, one of the bills that I had which became Law [Act 49-2004] was on the
7 hauling of [what is] called nutrients, but its manure, from one farm area to another place
8 to apply it. We have existing Law that says where you can apply it, how much you can
9 apply and how many acres you have to have for so much for the – what we call –
10 “CAFO,” Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations. So, it’s a concern with the
11 environment, really. If you put too much manure – too many nutrients – on one small
12 area, you can get into the ground water; it can run off into streams, kill fish; it can get into
13 wells and pollute. So, that is an issue in our area. So I had a bill that was supported by
14 just about everyone, farmers [and] environmentalists, because it set requirements and
15 restrictions as to where – when you transport manure away from the farm rather than
16 applying on your own farm – it goes elsewhere. Originally, it was beyond any control.
17 So, I had a bill to take care of that and to restrict and require certain application methods.

18

19 **SB:** Was there Legislation you found more difficult to pass and that you had to either
20 apply pressure, or else feel frustrated about its success?

21

22 **CAE:** Well the one that just passed here before—the one we talked about earlier, the
23 filtering of computers in the libraries and schools – the American Library Association

1 fought that very big. *(laugh)* They were very much against it. It didn't surprise me when
2 I found out the person that was really pushing it was a member of the ACLU [American
3 Civil Liberties Union] originally, and she now is in a position at the American Library
4 Association. So, I guess it didn't surprise me with her background why she so set against
5 any filtering. And that's their statement that they put out; they opposed any restriction of
6 content of any kind to any patron no matter the age. So, they didn't want that at all. Of
7 course that came down to individual libraries. So, individual library staff would just
8 regurgitate the policy that came down from the American Library Association. And
9 when I would talk to them and talk with them individually why they were opposed to it,
10 they couldn't really tell me, but they were. So, at first, it was convincing Legislators that
11 there was no good reason that the American Library Association was against this and
12 why they needed to support it. So, that was a battle and it took quite awhile to get it
13 through but we finally did.

14

15 **SB:** Well, you mention this lobbying that occurs. How did you, as a Legislator, deal
16 with the many lobbyists who want to influence and try to persuade you?

17

18 **CAE:** Actually, I welcome lobbyists because it's a good way to get information. As I
19 mentioned earlier, we have five to 6000 pieces of Legislation coming across our desk in
20 every term. And there is no way you can read all that and learn about it, so lobbyist are
21 great because they are concentrating on individual issues. And they come into the office,
22 they can tell me all about why they want it. And sometimes I'll even ask them, "Well,

1 what's the other side? What's the downside?" and they generally tell you so they're a
2 very good source of information.

3

4 **SB:** Now you served in the House during 9/11, 2001. What do you recall of that crisis
5 and how the House responded?

6

7 **CAE:** Well, for one thing, we set up a Sub-Committee on the Committee that I was on,
8 the Veterans Affairs and the Emergency Preparedness Committee. We had a Sub-
9 Committee on "Homeland Security," which then I was the Chairman of. So, we went
10 around the State and had Hearings from the different aspects, from down in Philadelphia
11 to shipyards to containers coming in, knowing what the threat was there to the railroads,
12 etcetera; and the response that hospitals should – how they should be prepared for a
13 terrorist attack. So, all those types of things we had hearings on and preparing – and its
14 being put together, a report – that we should do as a State in conjunction with the Federal
15 Government and Homeland Security.

16

17 **SB:** Do you remember where you were and your personal reaction?

18

19 **CAE:** Actually, I was headed to Baltimore that morning to Johns Hopkins Hospital,
20 where I was going down to prepare for a prostate operation. We got to the hospital and
21 met with a doctor and immediately after that they closed down. The hospital people were
22 sending the hospital employees, nurses and so on, home because the schools were letting
23 their children out. So, that was very vivid in my mind at the time and the effect and what

1 was happening in shutting down the schools. We didn't get the full report, of course,
2 until later.

3

4 **SB:** In your 12 years of service, were there other moments that you thought constituted
5 "crises" or "Emergencies in the State?"

6

7 **CAE:** No, I can't recall of any at this point.

8

9 **SB:** How about the medical malpractice, which has been called "a crisis" or a "State of
10 Emergency" in the State.

11

12 **CAE:** Yeah, I guess, I wouldn't call it a "State of Emergency" at least in my mind, my
13 definition of an emergency, but certainly, I think it has reached almost a crisis stage. In
14 fact, (*laugh*) I have maintained since early on that the only way we're going to change the
15 problem there – to change the problem of having so many lawsuits, frivolous lawsuits,
16 very expensive lawsuits against doctors – the only way we're going to change it is to
17 have a crisis where people see their own physicians leaving, going out of practice and
18 that's what happens. So, I guess we've reached that crisis. And we did finally get some
19 Legislation done here in Pennsylvania, [but] not enough. I guess it's going to have to get
20 even worse. We did a number of things – I won't go into them unless you'd like to hear
21 about it—one we didn't do is putting caps on the non-economical damages. So, that's an
22 area that we still need to work on because we're seeing the doctors'—of course their

1 insurance is going up and up, and it's driving them out of the state. People are seeing
2 their doctor's leave.

3

4 **SB:** At this point, I'd like to show you some photographs and to describe your
5 involvement in outreach as well some of the issues that are involved. The first one shows
6 you at Fort Indiantown Gap. And I wonder whether you could describe your
7 involvement and why this was important to you, and how you became involved?

8

9 **CAE:** I guess this was the one on the dedication of the Veterans' Memorial. Fort
10 Indiantown Gap has a National Cemetery there. So Pennsylvania wanted to – [and] had
11 been working for years – to get a Memorial there for the Veterans. So, it was a matter of
12 raising the money and at one point they had actually gone out and asked the voters to
13 vote on a bond issue. It really wasn't stated well and I think people misunderstood; it
14 said about going into debt and so it was voted down. So, the different Veterans' groups
15 had worked for a number of years to try to raise the money and we did get some State
16 money to go along with it and I don't remember the exact cost, but it was in the millions
17 to do this and we finally did. So, I think it was a big plus for Pennsylvania. Pennsylvania
18 has historically been about the number one State, or very close to it, in providing
19 members for the military in the different wars that we've had. So we've been very
20 supportive in the Defense of our country, and so it was important to the Pennsylvania
21 Veterans to have this – to have the Memorial for their service and their sacrifices. So, I
22 was glad to be a part of that.

23

1 **SB:** You have been honored for your service on behalf of Veterans. Do you think that
2 not enough people are involved in this effort?

3

4 **CAE:** In what? In the Defense of our country, you're talking about?

5

6 **SB:** Veterans affairs. You have been quoted about benefits for veterans and...

7

8 **CAE:** When we went away from the draft and are depending on a volunteer force, I
9 guess the number of Veterans in the House of Representatives and Senate, I think, has
10 gone down. I don't know the figures, but there are very few Veterans any more in
11 Legislature. And since I had a career in the Air Force, I feel strongly, again, about the
12 sacrifices and the necessity of having a strong military. And the people that volunteer to
13 do that and the sacrifices they and their families go through; moving constantly; moving
14 and having separated assignments—what we call “remote assignments,” where one
15 member of the family is gone in a remote region [and] their family is back home. So,
16 sacrifices that probably the general population doesn't see, or realize. So, I felt anything
17 that we can do to for those Veterans and to show our appreciation as citizens for them, we
18 should do.

19

20 **SB:** The second picture that I have shows you with a car in the Capitol. Can you
21 describe what this event is and what the background is?

22

1 **CAE:** This was a car that a retired Policeman actually built and it talks, and it moves by
2 remote control and it looks like it's going to crash and do things – different things – to get
3 the kids interested. He takes it around to different schools and places where [they] bring
4 the children in. And he'll have somebody standing back somewhere unseen with a
5 microphone and they also can hear the children. The children will ask the car questions
6 and they can then talk to them. The idea though is to promote safe driving, which
7 specifically goes to non-drinking. They want to instill in the children the effects of
8 alcohol and drunk driving. And my interest in it was that I've had a bill in for a long time
9 to reduce the amount of blood-alcohol that it takes to declare someone as being drunk
10 [HB 2269-1996, HB 642-1997] – DUI – “Driving Under the Influence.” And we had a
11 hard time getting that through the Legislature for, I don't know, various reasons. I could
12 give, I guess, what I think the problem was; the Legislature just didn't want to vote on it.
13 But finally, we actually got mandated by the Federal Government to lower the blood-
14 alcohol content. So, I was then put on to a Task Force to look into it, to try and get a
15 good bill – good Legislation –which we did, I think, for Pennsylvania to comply with the
16 Federal Government requirement and to do the job here.

17

18 **SB:** Was that a particularly tough Legislation to get?

19

20 **CAE:** Not once we had a Task Force. Once we had the hammer from the Federal
21 Government – which I don't necessarily like – I believe in the Tenth Amendment, that
22 the State's Rights – we should do it as a State and not do it because the Federal
23 Government—the Federal Government doesn't have any business getting into the States'

1 business. What they'll do is they'll withhold funding—and it's sort like legalized
2 extortion, I guess. They say, "You'll do this or we'll withhold transportation money from
3 you." Well, in any case, that got the Leadership's attention, so they said, "Well, we've
4 got to do something," and so they formed this Task Force and I was on it. So, that's why
5 we got it through. So it wasn't, by that point, it wasn't hard to get it done. It passed
6 pretty easily once we got the Legislation introduced.

7
8 **SB:** And a third photograph shows you hard at work at a house. Could you explain what
9 this was about?

10

11 **CAE:** Well, that was what we called, "The House that the House Built" for Habitat For
12 Humanity. The Speaker of the House, I guess, got the inspiration to do this – to build a
13 house or apartments here locally in Harrisburg and asked members of the House to
14 donate their time, and that's what we were doing there in that picture. We all donated
15 whatever time we could afford and then went out there and actually got to work. We had
16 professional builders there telling us, you know, and guiding us what to do. And we built
17 a couple houses there under the Habitat For Humanity – I don't know if you're familiar
18 with that, where the individual owners have to give some sweat equity, but we all had a
19 good time, the Legislators.

20

21 **SB:** Well, that leads me to ask about the Representative as a public figure. You had been
22 a private citizen in the various activities. Was that an adjustment for you to be in the
23 public limelight to do these kinds of outreach?

1

2 **CAE:** Well, I suppose early on it was. Probably the biggest thing was just going and
3 speaking to different groups. So, you know, I got used to that very quickly – speaking to
4 different groups, whether it was Lions Club or the farmers, or you know, whatever
5 groups; the Scouts. I supported the Scouts very strongly – the Eagle Scouts – giving
6 them Citations, and so on. So, speaking is probably the biggest adjustment, but then you
7 adjust very quickly and going to things like this – Habitat. That wasn't, I mean, we were
8 just working with fellow House members there and not really in the public's eye. I don't
9 even know that very many of them knew we were doing it.

10

11 **SB:** Reflecting on your 12 years of service, what do you think are the biggest changes
12 that occurred?

13

14 **CAE:** The biggest changes in the House? Well, of course we had Leadership changes.
15 The biggest change was from the first session when I came in, in [19]93-[19]94, our
16 Party was in the minority. And then the next term we got the majority and it was very
17 close. I think we had the majority by one person, but it's been increasing since then. So,
18 that was the biggest change going into the majority and being able to get Legislation that
19 we wanted passed and getting it done.

20

21 **SB:** And in the House, [does] the Party structure with the majority and minority make a
22 big difference?

23

1 **CAE:** Oh, yes, well, it does, because the majority Party assigns all the Chairmanships of
2 the Committees. And the Committees are where the work is really done – holding
3 Hearings, voting on which piece of Legislation to come up for a vote. And that varies
4 with the Committees. Some Chairmen will allow all Legislation that’s assigned to their
5 Committee to come up for a vote, other ones don’t; they pick and choose. But also the
6 number of Members on the Committee—the majority party gets more members on a
7 Committee than the minority. So, right there you generally have more votes, although
8 it’s not – in fact quite often – it’s not on Party lines. A lot of people think it’s strictly
9 Party line voting and there’s great partisanship, but it’s not; there’s great bipartisanship
10 down here, I think. But still, it definitely makes a difference as to who is in control.

11

12 **SB:** How about the seniority system? Did you feel you had more power after ten years?

13

14 **CAE:** Oh yeah. I think, well, for various reasons. I mean first of all, of course,
15 Chairmanships of the Committees are based on seniority. Now, I’m not here long
16 enough. I’d have to be here another term or two before I would be up for a
17 Chairmanship, although I had a Vice-Chairmanship of the Veterans Affairs Emergency
18 Preparedness Committee and the Chairmanship of a Sub-Committee. So, part of that was
19 based on my background, my military background, and part on seniority. But seniority
20 certainly plays a part and just the fact of being here longer and having experience makes
21 a difference also, just in general, in getting known and people know where you stand, and
22 whether they can depend on you or not and, you know, just what your philosophy is, and
23 so on. So, you know that all adds to it certainly.

1

2 **SB:** Reflecting on your service, what do you consider your greatest accomplishments?

3

4 **CAE:** Here in the House? Probably – well the number of the bills – the last one that
5 mentioned earlier, on the Internet filtering. I felt that that was one of the biggest. My
6 first bill came through because of child abuse ending in the death of a child, and I
7 doubled the penalties for that [Act 31-1995]. Now, I don't know how, you know,
8 significant it is as far as preventing child abuse, because many times in that sort of thing
9 the perpetrators don't even look at what the penalty is going to be. So, I don't know how
10 significant that one is, but I did want to get that through. So, probably, the Internet
11 filtering is probably the biggest accomplishment.

12

13 **SB:** What are your greatest frustrations or disappointments in your service?

14

15 **CAE:** Well, frustration is just the time it takes and the effort to get Legislation through.
16 However, on the other hand, I always have to remind myself that's good; that [it] was
17 designed by the Founders. They don't want Legislation just to go through "willy-nilly,"
18 you know, with great speed. That's why we have the system we have. And when I go
19 out to schools and talk to the kids, I tell them, "You know it's very frustrating when
20 there's Legislation you want to get through, but on the other hand it's also very good
21 because otherwise we would get frivolous Legislation." So, I guess it's both frustrating
22 but also satisfying.

23

1 **SB:** Why did you decide not to return to the House?

2

3 **CAE:** Primarily because of my family. My issues that I mentioned was mostly family
4 oriented. My grandchildren were growing and two, or three years, makes a big difference
5 in their lives. It's not very long in mine, but to them, they change significantly. I just
6 didn't want to – I thought I need to do it now, or it wouldn't really matter that much
7 because I would probably reach the point and say, "Well, I should have retired earlier
8 because the kids are grown and gone now." Well, the big thing is they live very close to
9 us. If they were in California it probably wouldn't have made a difference, but they're
10 right here; they're within a half-mile of where we live. So, I wanted to be with them and
11 have time with them. In this job, to do it right, you don't have very much time for
12 yourself and for your family. So, that was my reason for deciding now.

13

14 **SB:** At your Farewell Address you singled out the support of your wife in your 12 years.
15 Was she also involved in political discussions, or with your...?

16

17 **CAE:** Primarily, she went with me a lot of the places we go and she likes to meet
18 people. So, when we went to Franklin County to whatever, where there's an annual Farm
19 Bureau banquet or whether it was a Roritan club meeting – we had many functions like
20 that and I really wanted to support those functions in the local community – she usually
21 went with me, if she could at all possible. She teaches piano at home and when she
22 would take on students she would let them know that, "We may have to change the
23 schedule. We may have to cancel or reschedule your piano lessons." And she did that

1 and I felt that that was a sacrifice. But, she traveled with me and that's really where we
2 talked about a lot of things, was on our travels to meetings, maybe across the county,
3 because, again, there are just things going on every day, every evening, practically, so I
4 wouldn't see her very much if she didn't go with me to those types of activities.

5
6 **SB:** And if you had advice for the new Representatives coming in what would it be?

7
8 **CAE:** My advice would be to set standards like I did so you have guidance as to what
9 you do. And weigh every piece of Legislation you're voting on – how it's going to meet
10 those and the way you vote – how it's going to meet those standards you've set and those
11 principles. And it makes it so easy. It just has not been hard for me at all, because I look
12 and say, "Well, does it meet these standards?" If it does, I vote for it; if it doesn't, I vote
13 against it. There are many pressures here. There are many pressures to compromise, to
14 vote for something to get something for maybe back in your District; some help on a road
15 project, or whatever it may be, or some funding for something. And once you
16 compromise then it's going to be very difficult ever to say, "No, I can't do it based on
17 principle." Or, "I can't do it because of my constituents," because then the argument is,
18 "Well, if you want to get something for constituents and you vote for this even though
19 you don't think it's right, maybe, in the long-term for your constituents." So, those are
20 the types – I think that has made it so easy. It's so easy to make decisions, and that's
21 what my advice would be to a new person coming in; set those standards and stay with
22 them.

23

1 **SB:** Will you stay involved in politics in retirement?

2

3 **CAE:** I don't think I'll be very much involved. I will stay aware of what's happening
4 here. But, I mean, I'm not sure what you mean as far as being "involved," but yeah, I
5 want to keep in contact here with friends that are down here and find out what they're
6 coming up with, and then give my opinions. I certainly will call them and talk to them
7 about it, and let them know why I think they should vote a certain way.

8

9 **SB:** Did you make lasting friendships –

10

11 **CAE:** Oh, yes. Yes.

12

13 **SB:** – here in the House?

14

15 **CAE:** Yeah. Very much so.

16

17 **SB:** Who are some of those with?

18

19 **CAE:** Well, some of the local Members that I mentioned here in the local area in the
20 three counties and then others that I just worked closely with that kind of had, sort of, the
21 same philosophy that I have. Particularly, we have a Caucus called the Commonwealth
22 Caucus and it's growing. It [has] members that think, you know, on most issues quite a
23 bit alike, maybe more conservative in some areas.

1

2 **SB:** Is that something you helped form?

3

4 **CAE:** Yes.

5

6 **SB:** And why was that important for you?

7

8 **CAE:** Well, again, I guess, first of all, if you get to know individuals and different areas
9 of interest because of so much Legislation, a lot of times you depend on other individuals
10 that have an expertise in a certain area. And you like to go to them and talk to them and
11 say, “What do you know about this issue,” because that’s been maybe their main concern.
12 So, you need to have people that you can depend on and trust their word. And if they tell
13 you, “Yes, that’s a good bill” – if you don’t have time to really research it and it’s not
14 your area and you’re not on that Committee – you know, you go by that person’s word.
15 So, we had individuals that you could trust; you know, you could depend on their word.
16 And so we started getting together and meeting and saying, “Okay, what do you think
17 about this bill coming up?” and discuss things, and formed a small group. And then we
18 decided to – again, because of what I mentioned earlier – if you don’t know what effect
19 some Legislation is going to have on you, you can get pulled in different directions by
20 other individuals. So, it’s good to have some people you can go to; depend on; talk to.
21 And we decided to form – sort-of, formally form – that Caucus and then get other people
22 like-minded with certain issues that we agree with and it sort-of started to grow. And it
23 has an influence; now people come to us and say, “How is your group going to be on this

1 issue?” Leadership talks to us, so it gives us some influence [and] credibility and we can
2 make a difference. As an individual it’s pretty hard, but you get a larger group – and
3 there are other Caucuses that you’re probably aware of – we have a Pro-Life Caucus;
4 there’s a Timber Caucus; there’s a different Regional Caucus—Southeast, for example –
5 they tend to get together because their interests are similar. We have a Central PA
6 Caucus, same way and so on. So, there’s Caucuses for all different kinds of interests.
7 There’s a Sportsman’s Caucus, and so on. So, they’re all formed for those types of
8 reasons; [as] individuals that think along those lines on those particular issues.

9

10 **SB:** Of the ones you’re involved in, do you think that the Commonwealth one was the
11 most influential and could you give examples of the kinds issues it would be involved in?

12

13 **CAE:** Well, again, they’re overall more conservative; they’re not on a single issue like
14 the Sportsman’s Caucus or the Black Caucus, and so on. So, they went across the board
15 on things, but looking at them from sort of the same principles that I mentioned that I go
16 by, those types of things – they’re more interested in the cost of Government and the
17 expanding of Government; more interested in the things our Founders, I think, probably
18 would be a good description of what they believe – you know limited Government [and]
19 individual freedom. And again, of course, Government expands and takes away your
20 freedoms gradually. Those are types of things we all looked at. I’m sorry, what was your
21 question on that again?

22

1 **SB:** Are there issues that you could give as examples and do you think the
2 Commonwealth [Caucus] was particularly influential?

3

4 **CAE:** Well I think, just take one for example. We, a couple years ago, said we're not
5 going to vote on an increase in the budget – zero increase or we're not going to vote for
6 it. And we all even went to the point of even signing a letter to Leadership saying we're
7 not going to vote on it if you're going to increase the budget above the general income.
8 Because if the income isn't there and the revenue isn't coming in and you have spending
9 that's greater than that, you're going to have to raise taxes and we're against raising
10 taxes. So that was probably one of the biggest where we had an influence, I think.

11

12 **SB:** So, did this cause opposition or negotiation with Leadership?

13

14 **CAE:** Negotiation.

15

16 **SB:** Is that part of the process?

17

18 **CAE:** Yeah, that's part of the process.

19

20 **SB:** Well, I want to thank you very much for your time and sharing your memories with
21 us and I wish you well in your retirement.

22

23 **CAE:** Thank you very much. I enjoyed it.