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ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

INTERVIEW WITH:

The Honorable Roy Baldwin (R)

97th District

Lancaster County

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Transcribed by: Erin Miller

Heidi Mays (HM): Good morning.

The Honorable Roy Baldwin (RB): Good morning, Heidi.

HM: Thank you for being with me today.

RB: It's a pleasure.

HM: I'm here with Representative Roy Baldwin who represents the 97th Legislative District from Lancaster County, and he's been here since 2003. Thank you for being here with me today.

RB: Thank you.

HM: I wanted to begin by asking you about your childhood and your family life and how that prepared you for public office.

RB: I started out my family life in Bridgehampton, Long Island. [I] actually grew up on a potato farm in two different locations. We stayed out on the Island until I was about six years old and then moved up to Western New York in Steuben County to a little town called Whalen, New York in 1956. And at that time I was already working on the family potato farm. We had about two thousand acres and grew around six hundred acres of potatoes, and you learn a lot by working on a farm. First of all, you know, I would say

the work ethic is something that, you know, was ingrained in me early on and I remember my dad was saying once, “You know, the one thing I never want to see you is standing on a street corner.” You know, “never be idle,” and he actually drove that point home one time when we were on the farm and didn’t have a lot to do, and he said, “Roy, I want you to go out and dig this hole, six foot long,” you know, “four foot wide, and six foot deep.” And so, my brother and I, who was two years younger, went out and did that, and we came back. He said, “Okay, go fill it in.” So, you know, that was one way of learning something. But I grew up in Western New York, and the one thing that was predominant in our town was if you wanted to go on to college, and I was the first generation to actually get a college degree, you were looking at either being a doctor, a lawyer, or an engineer, so I chose, you know, studying to be an engineer and went to Cornell University in 1966 and that was a great part of my life also. One of the things that I did at Cornell was I was very much a part of the community and I joined a fraternity, Alpha Tau Omega, and ended up being President of that fraternity and, you know, that, early on, gave me an impression of how to deal with people. During that time of my life, we were going through the drug stage, plus we had a lot of other things happening, you know, with the Vietnam War, so it was quite a challenge to actually lead a fraternity and deal with, you know, drugs and the Vietnam Revolt. And we also had a major happening on Cornell’s campus during my junior year where we had what we called the Black Uprising where the black students took over the Strait Community Hall, and so it was very challenging during those years. But, I ended up studying and graduating from Cornell with a degree in B.S. in Ag[ricultural] Engineering, which is very similar to mechanical engineering. And while I was at Cornell, I met my wife at Uris Library. We actually go

back there, you know, every time we're at Cornell and go to the area that we met, which is the historic part of the library, so it's great.

HM: Did you come from a political family?

RB: No, my family, you know, really didn't dabble in politics too much. I think one of the reasons why I ran for public office was that my father when I was probably eighteen or nineteen years old had a chance to run for the school board and they had a contest, and he didn't really work for, you know, that position and consequently, he lost. And now, my first, you know, kind of entry into politics was running for a school board position, so I'm sure, you know, the fact that, you know, he wanted to be a candidate but then didn't actually get elected had an effect on me.

HM: Well, you talked about growing up in New York and going to school there. How did you land up in Pennsylvania, in central Pennsylvania?

RB: Yeah, well, the only time I had been down to Pennsylvania in my early life was actually when we sold potatoes down here. We would sell potatoes to Charles Chips and Weis and Frito Lay and Martin's Potato Chips, so I can remember coming down here and getting used to Lancaster County, which is unique in itself with the Plain People. But the reason I came down here is in 1972, unfortunately, my dad died. And what happened was that my mother sold the farm to his partner, so I had an option, at that point, to look for other employment. And naturally, I went back to Cornell University to their

curriculum center, not curriculum center, their career center, and interviewed with a company in New Holland, Pennsylvania by the name of, at that time, New Holland. It was Sperry New Holland, at that time, and they hired me as a engineer in their product test area. Now, that company went through several changes and I was with that company for about twenty-four years, so I had the benefit or the misfortune of going through those changes. It went from Sperry New Holland to Ford New Holland, and then from Ford New Holland to Case New Holland, so Sperry owned it when I first joined. Ford Motor Company bought it, and then Fiat ended up buying it, and I had three major careers there. One was in engineering and [I] spent, you know, probably around sixteen years of my life in that arena. [I] was able to get one patent that I was very proud of; that was my goal going into engineering is to at least, you know, invent one thing, and that ended up being a gear box on a disk motor conditioner that we were working on. And then, the second career was in sales and marketing. I was responsible for selling manufacturing services during a recession period in the farm equipment industry. We had excess manufacturing capacity at our plants, and so what we did is we went out and sold that to other companies around the United States and, you know, that was, you know, a great learning endeavor. And then the third area was involved in Human Resources, and more specifically, in team training and total management. It was a great opportunity to actually go back, and we went back to Xerox Business Systems to kind of reeducate ourselves on how to do business and total quality management and team building. During that time, we trained virtually everybody in the company on, you know, how to work as a team and, you know, you would think that, you know, everybody would accept that with open arms, but probably the biggest surprise that I had during that time was the fact that, you know,

people, a number of people, especially in manufacturing, you know, didn't want to have added responsibility or added authority. They were very content to do their job and, you know, come in at eight and leave at five and not be empowered, so that was something I hadn't expected.

HM: Well, you also talked a little bit about your first run, I guess, for the school board.

RB: Right.

HM: That was your first entry into politics?

RB: Well, actually, that was my first dabble in something I thought I wanted to do, and it just so happens in that particular year, there were seventeen candidates for the school board, and one of my friends who was a Republican committeeperson came up to me—and her name is Anne Chrissinger—and she said, “Roy, what would you think about running for Township Commissioner?” I live in Manheim Township, and Manheim Township is a township of the first class, so we're called Commissioners, and there are five Commissioners. And I said, “Well, I really don't know what a Commissioner does, so you'll have to help me out and explain it to me, and then I'll go to a couple meetings and decide.” So, I went to a couple meetings and found that, you know, I was really interested in running as a Commissioner. You know, one thing, they got paid, which, you know, the school board members don't and plus, they had, you know, more of a, in my opinion, a job that you could have meaningful impact across the whole township, and so

that appealed to me. And so, I went ahead and I ran and I won in that position and I served two terms, two four year terms, and the last two years of my second term I was President of the Commissioners, so it was very rewarding. One of the things that I believe in as I go through life is really to learn as much as you can, and so the idea of, you know, running as Commissioner, you know, really fulfilled that area for me.

Another thing that I really believe in as a person is to have a blended lifestyle and my four areas of, kind-of, the blends of my life. One was, you know, my vocation or work. Two was my community involvement and, you know, that takes on, you know, both the political aspect of when I was Commissioner; plus, serving on boards and commissions. Then the family: I have a family of a wife and three children and, of course, my dog Beau. And the fourth area is self, and by that, I typically like to challenge myself mentally and physically and I've done that by playing sports, usually tennis, golf, running marathons, biking.

HM: That's very interesting. How did you decide to run for the House of Representatives for the first time?

RB: Well, that decision was kind of forced on me by the, the current Representative and some of my fellow Commissioners in Manheim Township. Early on in my Presidency as a Township Commissioner, there was a group that approached us as far as building a baseball stadium in our township, and they wanted to build it on a piece of park property that I had secured. We had bought about one hundred and forty acres to add onto one of the major parks, which included a golf course, and that wasn't the vision, you know, of

that property, so we indicated, and the board was unified at that point that, you know, we didn't want it there. But we said, "If you could find," you know, "an adequate site somewhere else then," you know, "go for it." And what happened was that they tried to put the stadium on a series of sites that, in my opinion, were not suitable. One was on a piece of industrial ground that they would have had to rezone to commercial, and at that particular time, they had a commercial development along with the stadium, so that was kind of unacceptable, and they eventually voted that down. And then the second site that they looked at was a piece of open land, but it was owned by a ninety-eight year old gentleman, Mr. Hess, and they wanted to take that one by eminent domain, and, you know, that just wasn't right. So that fell through. And eventually, what happened was that they ended up trying to get back on the park site, which, you know, we had told them the year before that, you know, that wasn't acceptable. So, that gave me a sense while I was in office that a lot of my constituents didn't want this, you know. They were quite adamant that, you know, there were other places suitable for the stadium and one of the places that we looked at during that time was in the city and, eventually, it did locate in the city and, you know, they were doing quite well, and so it's kind of the happy ending to a story. And I think it's an example of how democracy works because, you know, I got the sense that people didn't want it. They came out in droves to indicate they didn't want it, but eventually it was placed in the right site, and, you know, now people are happy.

HM: Well, could you tell me about your first run for the House?

RB: Yeah, the first run was, in my opinion, challenging because I was running against an incumbent Representative and, you know, to beat an incumbent doesn't happen all that often. I think, at that particular time it was, like, three percent of the time it would happen, and I didn't have a lot of money, but I did have a lot of support of the people because of this issue. And what ended up happening was that I ran my own campaign, and it was probably one of the times in my life that I felt the most creative because, you know, I had to think about things and think about how to pay for them by myself and, you know, through my family. And so, my wife helped a lot, and we went back to what I learned at Cornell as far as picketing and demonstrating, and so we did a lot of that. We went to the different baseball sites and demonstrated, and we demonstrated along one of the major highways, the Fruitville Pike. And what happened was, the night before the election the township Commissioners decided to have—I was off the board by this time—a meeting to talk about the siting of the baseball stadium, and I think there were five hundred people that showed up and only three were for the baseball stadium, so it was a big rallying cry, and I think that really helped me win the election.

HM: Well, did you like to campaign?

RB: Well, it all depends. At that particular time, you know, I really enjoyed campaigning, but, you know, my – the last run, which I was defeated in the Primary, I saw the real negative of a campaign come out and, so I would say that, you know, as far as this job is concerned, the job as a State Representative, the thing that I enjoy the most is helping my constituents. That by far is the number one and I think, you know, the

whole politics part of it and, you know, part of that is campaigning is the thing that I like the least. But it, you know, it depends on the situation and, you know, how things are spun. I live in a world with spin, and one of the things that I don't do a lot of is, you know, I don't spin. I probably, you know, tell the truth too much and, you know, a lot of times that'll come back and haunt me in the newspapers or something.

HM: Well, can you tell me a little bit about the 97th District? You kind of talked about it a little bit.

RB: Yeah, the 97th District is comprised of Manheim Township, Warwick Township, the borough of Lititz and the borough of East Petersburg. And it's a compact District. It's a highly affluent District. It has probably, in my opinion, the most vibrant borough in Pennsylvania in Lititz. Lititz has industry and it has, you know, a very vibrant downtown. Retailers, you know, do very good there and so, you know, it was a pleasure working, you know, with the different aspects of the District. Some of the things that have happened in the District since I was a Representative is that we got a new hospital. The heart of Lancaster is located in the District and that's making quite an impact up in that northern region of my District, so I was glad to see that. I'm on the board of that hospital, so I paid very close attention to how they treat my constituents. Another thing is that I've been able to improve three intersections on Lititz Pike, or Route 501, and I've been involved in transportation, you know, ever since I was a Township Commissioner. And so that was very rewarding as to, you know, try to relieve the congestion on one of the major north-south arteries that we have going through our District. And we actually

have five of them, so transportation, you know, is on people's minds as far as, you know, I don't want to be sitting in a parking lot, I want to be getting to work, I want to be getting to the, you know, son or daughter's, you know, soccer game. And that's the other aspect that we have in the works that hasn't been accomplished yet, but we're looking at coordinating all the traffic signals in the major arteries in and out of Lancaster City. And what we've done is we've looked at an inventory of that, you know, how many signals are on which arteries, and now we're looking at the timing of that and, eventually, we'd like to get a regional controller that we control all the lights. In case of an emergency, we could set lights on blinking. You know, if you're going to work in the morning, you could set lights one way and coming back in the afternoon you could set lights the other way, so it's an intelligent way of dealing with congestion.

HM: What about the political makeup?

RB: Well, it's changing, you know. I would say, historically, the political makeup of my District has been, you know, high majority Republicans. Now, I see that changing and one of the reasons I see it is that the last school board race in Manheim Township, five Democrats won where before, it would be unheard of. I think there was only one Democrat that I know of that was elected to the Board, so I think that like many areas, as people move in, you know, you have different political views and, you know, different – I think there's a lot of Independents now, too, that are surfacing in the District. Although one problem with Independents is that they don't get a chance to vote in the Primary and,

you know, a lot of people say, “Why do I even bother,” you know, “registering if I can’t vote in one of the major elections?”

HM: I was wondering if you could tell me a little bit about something that you sponsored called the World of Wellness?

RB: Yeah, the World of Wellness was inspired when I went over to watch my son compete in his first Ironman Competition, and that’s over in Kona, Hawaii. And I will have to tell you that he just competed in his sixth one on Saturday, and he had a great time of nine hours and forty-five minutes. And for anybody that doesn’t know, the triathlon in Kona is two and half miles swim in the ocean, one hundred and twelve mile bike ride on the lava surface road, and then twenty-five, 26.2 miles run, so during that week I was over, there were a number of inspirational seminars given by physical doctors and physical therapists and nutritionists talking about, you know, good health and wellness and, you know, how much importance there is on good nutrition, and how much importance there is on activity. So when I came back, I decided I’d start the World of Wellness, which basically is an umbrella group and an advocacy group of all the things that are happening in the Lancaster County when it comes to either nutrition, activity, wellness, or preventative health. And I established an Internet site called WorldofWellness.com, and if you go on there, you can look at all the associations within the county that are doing something in regard to preventative health and wellness. You can look at coming events that we have. We have a calendar of events there. There’s a way of tracking your minutes if you want to exercise, and it’s not just static, either. It’s a

dynamic advocacy program because we would do things like walkie-talkies, and those are where you go out into a neighborhood or you go out into a retirement community, and, you know, you walk for a mile and then you talk about issues, so that's a walkie-talkie. And the other thing that we've done is played water volleyball with seniors at Brethren Village. That's another retirement community. The average age of the seniors, I think, was like, eighty-five years old and, unfortunately, we haven't been able to beat them. But, you know, this is—and I—and the one thing that I've found in working with seniors that are active is that their, you know, mental capacity is so much better than seniors that are latent that it's really a striking difference, you know, within that age group. So WOW has been something that many people in my District have joined up too, and what I'm actually doing now is looking at, you know, giving that concept, the Web site and the whole vision of that initiative, to someone else. And I have had around six people or organizations respond that they'd like to take that over. So I just want that to continue, and we work with children and really, our emphasis was trying to reduce obesity in children and try to reduce major illnesses in adults, and that was just fun doing that.

HM: That sounds like a really wonderful program.

RB: Thank you.

HM: I'm going to jump ahead a little bit because we haven't really gotten into your House service, but I wanted to also ask you about – you were a member of the Bike Caucus?

RB: Right. The thing that I have grown up with, as I had mentioned earlier, was sporting events and early on, like, way back during my high school and college days, you know, I was the typical three sport athlete where I played soccer, basketball, and baseball. And after college, what I did is I took up tennis and played that for a number of years and enjoyed that until my back kind of gave out. And then, I took up running and biking, and I get a lot of enjoyment from biking. I used to bike back and forth to work when I was working at Sperry New Holland and I have biked back and forth to Harrisburg to work before, too, and that's about forty-five, forty-eight miles, and it's just a great way to have your mind go off into a different place that it typically doesn't go. And so, one of the aspects of riding for me, other than, you know, just the exercise is, you know, thinking about things in a totally different way, and so I like that. I like the, you know, the aspects of biking. I do a lot of what I call functional biking around my home, and that is, you know, to go to get a grocery list of things at the market for my wife or, you know, go down to the Kmart store or Wal-Mart or things like that where, rather than taking a car, I'll take the bike. And that goes back to one of the things that I did when I was a Township Commissioner, and that was I had the vision of having non motorized paths in the township so that you wouldn't have to use a car, and those non-motorized paths would connect parks, schools, commercial centers and, you know, that is slowly happening. Every time a development is coming in now, they set aside space for a path.

So the Bike Caucus, you know, was fun for me. We had jerseys made up, and every time I'd go out and bike an event with my jersey on, people say, "Where can I get one of those?" You know, they're pretty snappy.

HM: Well, could you tell me about your first Swearing-In Ceremony? How did you feel?

RB: It was great. I was on a committee with Governor Ridge [Thomas Ridge, Governor of Pennsylvania, 1995-2001] when I first came to the Capitol, and when I saw the House Floor at that time, in the room, you know, there was something that clicked in the back of my mind that said, "Boy, wouldn't it be great to work here someday?" And when I got elected and, you know, was kind of, you know, a real celebration, that first Swearing-In Ceremony, and I enjoyed it. I had my whole family up, you know, all the flowers, and Matt Ryan [Matthew J. Ryan; State Representative, Delaware County, 1963-2003; Speaker 1981-1983 and 1995-2003] was there to swear me in. It was tremendous.

HM: What was it like being a freshman Member?

RB: Well, a freshman Member basically is kind of a drop back from all of the, you know, the euphoria that you get into as far as being elected because you're a rank and file Member and, you know, you just don't have a lot of, I guess, authority here to do much. I look at the House of Representatives, and I've told many people this, like a corporation in that, you know, you have your board of directors, which is Leadership, and they set,

you know, the course for the House and they make the major decisions, and so it's very similar. And I grew up in that environment, so as a newly hired person, you know, I tried to mind my p's and q's and, you know, do what I thought was most important during that time, and that was to build relationships. And so that's one of the things that I keyed in on is, you know, trying to get to know my fellow Representatives and Senators and staff people, and I knew I had to rely on those individuals in the future, you know, to have bills passed, so that was my initiative, at that point.

HM: Did anyone serve as a mentor to you whenever you first started?

RB: Yeah, I think I look at two individuals. One is the Chairman of the House Transportation Committee, Rick Geist [Richard A. Geist; State Representative, Blair County, 1979-present]. With my background on transportation, I really wanted to be on that committee, which I ended up being and, you know, Rick has been in the Legislature for a number of years, and he's kind of a no-nonsense type Representative and, you know, I like that. I like, you know, people that talk to you straight and not with a lot of frills and, you know, not with a lot of volume, and so I like that. And then my captain on the House Floor – he's captain, I'm his wingman – that's Bob Flick [Robert J. Flick; State Representative, Delaware and Chester Counties, 1983-2006], and I was, you know, very fortunate to have someone like that next to me on the House Floor. So, both Rick and Bob were mentors to me.

HM: You talked about relationships. What was your relationship like with the other Members from the Lancaster County Delegation?

RB: Well, that was probably one of the disappointments that I had coming in. I'm a team player and, you know, I've taught, you know, team organization and function and I've always preferred to operate in that way; more of a team player than a solo player. One of the things that I know, Tom Creighton [Thomas Creighton; State Representative, Lancaster County, 2001-2006], Representative Creighton, tried to do when our Delegation first came is to have regular meetings of the Delegation and make it a team effort. For a number of reasons that never panned out and so that was something that I could see would have been much better was, you know, the camaraderie of the Delegation. You know, I have, I'd say, all friends on the Delegation, but there were some different agendas of certain Representatives that didn't allow the team to gel.

HM: Could you talk a little bit about some of your major legislative issues?

RB: Well, the first term as a freshman, I had the opportunity to introduce a highway bill that was called the Billion Dollar Bill [House Bill 2745 of 2004] because it authorized 1.1 billion dollars worth of highway improvements across Pennsylvania. So, to have that bill as a first term bill was huge and, again, I'd have to thank Rick Geist for allowing me, you know, to really ramrod that bill. As you may expect, it included, you know, finding the bridges and highways across Pennsylvania that needed to be repaired, so, you know, it took a lot of work and, you know, the staff that helped me on that bill. Eric Bugaile

[Republican Research Analyst] did the majority of it, and Jason Wagner [Republican Research Analyst] also helped on that. I'd like to thank them, too, because, you know, it was a huge bill, very thick, and it took a lot of work but, you know, it was very rewarding. Second term, I had a number of bills. Probably the bill that I enjoyed the most, and I think might have the most, I guess, impact around Pennsylvania, is the At Risk Elderly Cell Phone Bill where that was passed, that was [House] Bill 1326 [of 2005], and it's now Act 76 [of 2006], and that gives seniors, at home, the opportunity to have a wireless phone programmed to 911 so that if they fall or need some kind of emergency treatment or need a rescue or even, you know, somebody trying to break in, they can just dial 9-1-1 and it'll, you know, connect them to that service. So, that was one of the highlights. Another bill that hasn't been passed in the Senate but passed in the House was a methamphetamine bill [House Bill 1311 of 2005] and, you know, I'd like to see that, you know, pass in the Senate, although I doubt if it will because the Senate has some bills similar to ours, so they probably passed theirs and sent them over, and I'm not sure if anything will happen. But it's against the growing threat of methamphetamines in Pennsylvania.

HM: As a member of the Transportation Committee, how do you feel about imposing California emissions standards on new cars in Pennsylvania?

RB: Well, I've been getting a number of Emails about that from my District, but most of those individuals say they oppose the bill, which would actually allow us to put out our own restrictions, and so I'm against the California standards and I'm for our own

standards. I don't want to be dictated to by California and I don't think it's wise to start a trend that way.

HM: What committees were you involved in, and then, is there a committee that you enjoyed the most or felt was the most productive?

RB: Yeah, the four committees that I was on – first of all, Transportation, as we said earlier, second is Tourism, third is Insurance, and then fourth is Elderly and Older Adult Services. And I guess the reason I was on Elderly is because I have eight retirement communities in my District and, you know, that was a large part of my constituent base and, you know, my in-laws are seventy-nine and eighty-one now, and so that gave me, you know, first hand knowledge of the needs of elderly people. And I think I spent a lot of time in retirement communities. One of the things that I can remember, a highlight of my District operation, was planning a World War II Awards Ceremony, and most of those ladies and gentlemen, you know, are in the high seventies or eighty year old category, and just to see these people come up and, you know, be recognized for their service during World War II, you know, it was great. I, you know, had such a heartwarming experience that I'd, you know, like to do it for, you know, all the wars, the Korean War and the Vietnam War, but I didn't get the chance to do that. But, I'm glad I got to do it for World War II Vets. Tourism; my District is comprised of, you know, a lot of tourism destinations. We have Landis Valley Museum, which is in Manheim Township, and then we have, you know, the whole borough of Lititz, which is really a tourist destination. And they have tourists that come from all over the world just because

of its unique setting and the fact that it was a Moravian-originated settlement. So that was, to me, again, an interest of the District, and I thought it was wise to be on that.

Now, I think that particular committee traveled to the best places around Pennsylvania, so I have to, you know, really earmark that as a fun committee to be on. Insurance Committee; that's a difficult one. I mean, we have, as you probably realize, Heidi, some real challenges when it comes to health care, and not so much, you know, as far as auto insurance or insurance for your house. I think those are pretty well set in Pennsylvania, but it was a huge challenge as far as health care. So being an engineer and coming off of a knowledge of transportation, you know, it was really surprising to me how complicated insurance is, and probably the biggest disappointment that I had in the House, my first term, was the fact that we didn't pass the Medical Malpractice Bill, which was caps on non-economic damages because, you know, I felt that definitely would have helped, you know, the insurance situation and the doctor situation in Pennsylvania. But I'd say my favorite committee is Transportation because of my engineering background, and I know one of the first comments that I heard about transportation when I was first elected as Township Commissioner is that, you know, it takes twelve years to get anything done in transportation, and I said, "Now, that's unbelievable." And one of the things I wanted to do was try to, you know, cut down on the process so that, you know, from conception to, you know, the final inspection, you know, wouldn't be twelve years. And we were able to do that in Lancaster County by establishing an authority called the Lancaster County Transportation Authority, and by establishing that – I'm actually a member of that – we've been able to cut down projects by fifty percent, so we're on our way.

HM: In March of 2003, you convened an Emergency Preparedness Summit to discuss ways to improve the crisis management in the 97th District. Is there anything that you'd like to tell us? Is your District prepared for future emergencies?

RB: Well, it was striking to me back then that as I talked to people at our town meetings and our Eggs and Issues Breakfast, a number of people didn't know what to do in case of an emergency and they didn't know who to call. They didn't know the procedure that we have as far as emergency management groups on the county level, state level, and the federal level. So, one of the things that we wanted to do was we wanted to make it easier for them to know what to do in case of an emergency, and we came up with these emergency information cards, and they're cards that they can put in their wallets. And it has a list of questions if, you know, you do something, see something abnormal or strange. Plus, it has a list of all the emergency numbers that someone may need in Lancaster County if they want to contact either the emergency management group, or they want to see if there's news about some strange happening, they can, you know, call numbers on that card. So, that's one of the products of that summit and that was, you know, something that is being used, and I'm sure if we do have an emergency will become very useful.

HM: Well, what aspect of your position did you enjoy the most?

RB: Well, I think, again, helping people. I kind-of take after my mother in that regard. She was a very empathetic person. My father was always the authoritative, you know,

“Let’s get things done,” type of person, and so I have a little bit of my mother in me. And so, the opportunities to help the true people that need help in my District was very rewarding for me and also for my staff. We did have plenty of victims that in their own mind, you know, they had been victimized but, you know, in reality, you know, somehow, you know, they weren’t working for what they needed. So, that was a whole different subset of problems to deal with, but the people that are in need, and you could tell they were in need. And these were people that had slipped through the cracks as far as funding goes, people that, you know, couldn’t get insurance help for cancer treatments, people that needed shelter, you know. I know one of the first cases that we had during my first term was a mother of an autistic child came in, and for some reason the funding for that child had been cut off, and so she was having, you know, a really hard time, you know, taking care of him and still working. So, you know, we were able to get that funding restored. And, you know, experiences like that, to me, were, you know, very rewarding and I’ll never forget those. They were, again, heartwarming, but I also liked, you know, dealing and interacting with people. I’m very much a people person, and with this job you have to be because, you know, you can be in the supermarket, you know, you can be at the soccer games, you can, you know, be at a band competition, and, you know, people will recognize you, so you have the opportunity to, you know, engage people. And a lot of that engagement is fun, but some of it is not fun. And I’m also a soccer referee, and one of the things I always tell people is that being a soccer referee, you need to be tough skinned because it’s not the players that, you know, you’ll hear from, but usually the fans or the parents, so you have to develop that tough skin, and, you know,

that helped me as a Representative to deal with some of the more unsavory type individuals that would approach me or call me.

HM: Well, what did you like the least about serving?

RB: Well, probably, what I liked the least was the reaction to the pay raise and that whole episode. I think that, you know, the pay raise could have been done differently as far as the way it was orchestrated in the House, but a lot of that has to do with, you know, the behind the scenes negotiations and what happened between the Senate and the Governor's Office and the House. And the thing that I saw happening was the press climbed all over that issue, and I think that the press was unfair as far as the way they handled it, because in my District, right after the pay raise, you know, during the initial media frenzy, you know, I didn't get a lot of negative reaction. But, you know, they just kept hounding it and hounding it and hounding it and in my opinion, made it a much bigger issue in central Pennsylvania than in other parts of the State. So that aspect of it was very difficult for me and it was difficult for my staff, and, you know, to this day, the reason I voted for a pay raise: there were basically three reasons. One is because I felt that we were worth it, and I still feel that a Representative is worth it. Although, the one thing I've learned is that, you know, your constituents, a fair majority of those, have no idea what a Representative does so it's hard to, you know, explain to them, you know, why you're worth that. So the trick is, you know, to explain to people, you know, what we do, and when I say "we," I mean, you know, the good Representatives and, you know, how you do take time away from your family you do, you know, work seven days a week

and, you know, you don't just work when you're in Session. That, you know, you work when you're in the District and things like that. But anyways, the thing I was talking about the pay raise – and I just lost my train of thought. But anyways, the reasons why I did it: one is, I think we were worth it. Two, I had the opportunity to fund some projects in my District. We were looking at changing a route within Warwick Township and I needed some millions of dollars to do that, so that was a way of getting that. Plus, as a freshman and a sophomore Representative you don't have a lot of, you know, responsibility and authority and so, I wanted to be more of a player up here in Harrisburg, and so that was another reason I did it, was to “be a player.”

HM: Do you regret your decision?

RB: No, I don't regret it at all. I would say that if I didn't think we were worth it or if I didn't think that I did it with my true intentions of, you know, helping my District, helping my constituents and, you know, helping myself then I would regret it, but I don't. I think that if I was in charge of making that decision that I would have done it differently. I hope we all would have and I think there'll be some good to come out of it. But right now, I see where the media really is controlling the State, you know, as far as a lot of what we do and, you know, to me, that's a very bad sign. So, when you can have the media affect the way that you do business it's not good.

HM: What was the hardest decision you ever had to make up here in Harrisburg, maybe on a vote or on an issue?

RB: Let's see. That's a tough question, and I don't know if there were any hard decisions up here. Yeah, I think I voted primarily the way that, you know, I thought my constituents would want me to vote and, you know, that included votes on marriage amendment, on caps for non-economic damages, you know, against gambling, so I don't know if I had any tough decisions. Compared to, you know, other things, you know, in life, you know, I think it was fine.

HM: When you think back about your experiences here in Harrisburg, do you have a favorite story that you'd like to share?

RB: Let's see. Probably the funniest story I'd like to share was when we were meeting as a freshman class and we were having, you know, a good time. And this was after, I guess, the first term in office. We heard about a Member of the class that used to go back to the rear of the House and use this bathroom facility, and he had done that for over a year before he found out it was the women's restroom. So we were, you know, we broke out laughing about that and so that was by far the funniest time that I had. Some of the, the other times that I think were nearer and dearer to me is times where I had the opportunity to have people from my District come up and have them recognized on the House Floor. And the two that I remember distinctly were two State Champion teams: One was the Lancaster Catholic Boys' Basketball Team, and the other one is the Warwick Soccer Team, and, you know, to see all these young and impressionable people come in and look at the House and, you know, get a citation, you know, to me, it's

exciting. I mean, I can remember back when I was that age and had an opportunity to go to New York City to be recognized for something or other and, you know, it's very impressionable.

HM: Do you have a fondest memory?

RB: I'd say the fondest memory that I have would have to be my first Swearing In. I think that, you know, was a very special time when I had my family together and we had, you know, it seemed to be the culmination of that whole campaign and I had, you know, a lot of people come in that were part of that original grassroots campaign and it was just a lot of fun. The other thing I think, outside of here, that I'll remember the most is, you know, the difference that I think we've made in Lancaster as far as health and wellness, and to see how, you know, that's catching on in companies. It's catching on in schools, it's catching on in retirement communities, and I know it's not only Lancaster County, but, you know, I had a lot of fun because I'm an active guy anyways, and so I had a lot of fun, you know, with the advocacy of the World of Wellness.

HM: How would you like your tenure as State Representative to be remembered?

RB: Well, I'd like to have it remembered as kind-of a Representative that, first of all, spent a lot of time and effort finding out what his constituents wanted, trying to project, you know, their view up here in Harrisburg, really doing all I could to work for the community. I had another aspect of my first terms, you know, since I didn't have the

opportunity to be a real influential Representative up here because of the fact that, you know, you have this seniority system, I tried to be that back in the District. You know, be really a leader within the community for a lot of different efforts. You know, grants that we secured for different associations and clubs, the mark that we made in trying to advance tourism in my District, you know, the hospital, those kind of things is, you know, really being a leader of the community and working for the community.

HM: What are your plans after you leave the House?

RB: I'm looking at three areas. One is working for an engineering company. That's what I did as my last job before I was elected. Two would be to, you know, work for the Commonwealth somewhere, probably in Transportation, say, in PennDOT. And then, third is looking at, you know, being a government affairs type person in a lobbying firm. Those three. Now, if I had all the money in the world and could do anything I want, I'd be on my way to Greece right now, so, but that's not in the cards. I have my daughter that's a junior at Cornell and right now, my pocket's empty.

HM: Do you think you'll remain active in politics?

RB: I think I'll remain active in community service, you know. Whether that includes politics, I'm not sure. The last campaign that we ran where I lost in the Primary, you know, got really ugly and nasty, and there were a number of experiences that I had and my wife had that you really have to question whether it's all worth it. And that's not the

type of person I am and so my reaction to a negative campaign is not good and it'll take me a while to get over that. But if there's an opportunity that arises and I think I can make an impact for the benefit of the community, the benefit of people in general, then I'll consider it.

HM: Do you have any advice for new Members that will be starting?

RB: Yeah, my biggest advice for any new Member that comes in is respect the Institution. Unfortunately, a lot of the rhetoric that you hear now as far as a reformer or doing this and doing that, people lose sight of, you know, the history of the House of Representatives and why things are the way they are. And change is a lot of times good, but, you know, you shouldn't change for the sake of changing. Again, my advice is to, you know, just wait out change and make sure that what you do is for the best interest of the people of Pennsylvania.

HM: Thank you very much. This concludes our interview.

RB: Thank you.